Contents

3 Introduction

4 Representing LGB people

4 Strengthening community groups

5 Making Wales a safer place

5 Promoting fairness at work

6 Education for all

7 Challenging homophobia

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Introduction

Just a few years ago politicians and policy makers rarely considered the lives and concerns of lesbian, gay and bisexual people (LGB) in Wales. Today, more than ever, our issues are being discussed and our concerns are being addressed.

In the last twelve months Stonewall Cymru has raised the profile of LGB equality issues and helped make change happen. We have been a voice for LGB people at key decision-making bodies - such as the Welsh Assembly Government, local councils, the police and the statutory equality commissions - and at discussions about the forthcoming single equality commission, new powers for the Assembly and the review of the voluntary sector scheme.

We have worked with Welsh employers to champion diversity in the workplace and help them implement new employment regulations, which now make it illegal to discriminate at work on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Our campaigning work has played an important role in bringing about the repeal of Section 28, and in the Government’s decision to introduce partnership rights for lesbian and gay couples.

Thanks to strong partnerships with other organisations we have been able to punch above our weight to ensure key decision-makers are aware of the issues facing LGB people in Wales.

We know we can not campaign effectively on behalf of LGB people in Wales if we do not regularly consult LGB people. Throughout the year we organised consultation events across Wales to hear about the experiences of LGB people. And we extended membership of the Stonewall Cymru Council to improve the representation of other minority groups.

In our second full-year in existence we have helped make a difference. However LGB people in Wales continue to experience unacceptable levels of discrimination, harassment and physical violence so we will continue our efforts to tackle these problems over the next twelve months.

Sylvia Jones & Neil Wooding
Co-chairs
Representing lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Wales

Stonewall Cymru is the only all-Wales organisation acting as a voice for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Highlights
★ We carried out the first-ever all Wales survey of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Wales. The survey report called Counted Out revealed LGB people in Wales continue to face high levels of discrimination and harassment. The report has been widely circulated and several key organisations, including the Welsh Assembly Government, are now formally considering how to respond to the report’s recommendations.

★ Our campaign for partnership rights led the Government to announce a new Civil Partnerships Bill. A quarter of all positive responses to the Government consultation on the matter were from Wales, in large part thanks to our campaign.


Over the next year...
...we will campaign to ensure partnership rights are not delayed and that they are fair. We will work with partner organisations in Wales to act on the recommendations of the Counted Out report.

Strengthening community groups

The capacity of the LGB voluntary sector still does not begin to match the level of need. There are about 20 LGB groups in Wales, with a further 14 mainstream organisations who support LGB people within their work by providing specific LGB services (such as an LGB youth group, a union LGB group or an LGB housing project).

Our 2002 audit of LGB groups in Wales found that 36% of LGB groups operate on no annual income, 36% operate on less than £1,000 per annum, and a further 14% operate on less than £10,000 per year.

Highlights
★ We held 5 workshops to map out service provision for LGB people across Wales - to identify existing services and gaps on a regional basis. Both LGB service users and service providers attended. In total 125 people attended including representatives from fifteen of the twenty LGB organisations in Wales.

★ We developed a LGB community development plan for Wales as a result of these consultation meetings, and we have drawn up a strategy to fund the plan.

★ This year’s annual conference in Aberystwyth will discuss and take forward the plan for regional community development.

Over the next year...
...we will continue to strengthen the LGB voluntary sector by taking forward the community development plan to improve the quantity and quality of services available to LGB people.
Making Wales a safer place

LGB people in Wales continue to suffer high levels of physical violence and bullying. More than one in three of respondents to the Stonewall Cymru Counted Out survey reported being the victim of physical violence or bullying.

**Highlights**

★ We instigated and are supporting the establishment of a LGB police liaison group in Dyfed-Powys, the only police force area in Wales that did not previously have one.

★ We worked with Cardiff University on a report about the problems and prospects of policing the lesbian, gay and bisexual community in Wales.

★ We have helped the police develop self-reporting forms to encourage the reporting of homophobic hate crimes.

**Over the next year...**

...we will be campaigning for Welsh police forces to increase hate crime reporting and for the establishment of a homophobic hate crime officer post for Wales. We will work with each force on the implementation of a new policy on policing public sex locations.

Promoting fairness at work

High numbers of lesbian, gay and bisexual people experience discrimination and harassment at work. In our Counted Out survey 25% of respondents reported having been dismissed from their job because of their sexual orientation. Almost 20% concealed their sexual identity at work. This year legislation came into force outlawing discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of sexual orientation.

**Highlights**

★ In partnership with the EOC we provided face-to-face training and information about the new employment legislation to over 50 large and medium sized employers.

★ We wrote bilingual guidance for employers about the new rules, which is being published and disseminated to hundreds of employers across Wales.

★ We organised two events - one in North Wales and one in South Wales - to promote the new employment legislation among LGB people.

★ We wrote and disseminated bilingual information for employees, which is being widely disseminated among the LGB community.

**Over the next year...**

...we will launch Diversity Champions Wales, an initiative offering employers ongoing advice and support to make their workplaces fairer for LGB people.
Education for all

Section 28 is gone, but its legacy lives on. Counted Out revealed that over half of those aged 18 - 25 had been physically assaulted or bullied. Researchers believe the prevalence of physical victimisation of younger LGB people may be indicative of school bullying.

Highlights
★ Our ‘No to hate, nail Section 28’ campaign contributed to the recent repeal of this homophobic legislation. We gathered over 500 signatures in Wales and lobbied Welsh MPs.

★ We have provided advice to educators, including INSET training on sexual orientation matters and support to a Welsh language theatre-in-education piece for years 11, 12 and 13 on homophobic bullying.

★ In partnership with FPA Cymru we are developing a teachers resource pack on sexual orientation issues for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils in Wales.

Over the next year...
...as the Wales representative in the GB-wide ‘education for all’ campaign we will be finding ways to help teachers tackle homophobic bullying and talk about LGB lives in a non-discriminatory way.
Challenging homophobia

The Counted Out survey highlighted huge concern among many lesbian, gay and bisexual people across Wales about society’s homophobia. Between 65-69% of respondents were offended by public statements about the morality of LGB people, by articles or editorials in the print media, by the way LGB people are portrayed on television and by name calling or public ridicule.

Our 2003 annual conference focused on how to raise awareness in Wales of the issues facing LGB people and how to promote the positive contribution LGB people make to life in Wales. The conference led directly to our successful bid to Comic Relief to take this forward.

Highlights

★ we have set up the Look Out project to monitor the Welsh press, challenge homophobic journalism and to provide accurate information about the lives of LGB people in Wales.

★ we have provided information and training to youth workers, parents and health workers, for example at the Sexual Health Network of Wales’s annual conference.

★ we have worked with THT Cymru on a health equity pilot project in Cardiff. The project contributed to an improvement in the health services provided for lesbian, gay, bisexual and other vulnerable young people in Cardiff by providing training and information to health care providers around the unmet health needs of these young people. It also reviewed policy and legislation and worked with a number of local partners to bring about proposals for future local service development across Wales.

Over the next year...

...we will provide information and training for Welsh journalists. We will also provide targeted materials for key groups that may not access the traditional media, such as black and ethnic minority communities and young people.
Stonewall Cymru Council
members 2003-2004
Rachel Auckland      Sylvia Jones (co-chair)
Julie Baker           Ian Lewis
Penni Bestic          David Lynch
Dean Braithwaite      Alex Mylles
Sarah Cole            Debbie Rees
Angela Davies          Steve Roberts
John Edwards           Hannah Rowan
Dafydd Frayling       Naomi Salmon
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