

UNISON LONDON LGBT+ Committee

QUARTELY NEWSLETTER

June 2023

CO-CHAIR INTRODUCTION

Happy Pride month.

Yes, its June which means people complaining about the weather – either too hot or not good enough – and hundreds of corporations suddenly remembering the LGBT+ community is out there and sticking rainbows all over their corporate logos. Its also the time of year when attacks against the community spike. Already, there have been examples of people being physically and verbally assaulted as they go about their daily lives, and the anti-LGBT+ rhetoric on social media is beyond belief – particularly against our Trans family.

However, it's not all gloom and doom, and there have been recent wins in LGBT+ rights in various countries around the world. More importantly, UNISON has been working hard to improve the lives of the LGBT+ community, with motions going to various SOGs and a major motion to NDC to make 2024 the year of the LGBT+ Worker. Something we hope every delegate will whole-heartedly support.

So, lets end on a positive note, we both want to wish everyone a wonderful and safe Pride Month and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at Pride in London on the 1st July and London Trans Pride on the 8th July - Anu & Terry.



DO YOU WANT TO JOIN THE GREATER LONDON REGION LGBT+ MAILING LIST?

SCAN THIS QR CODE AND SEND US AN EMAIL



R.SEXTON@UNISON.CO.UK

LONDON PRIDE EVENTS GET INVOLVED, JOIN US!

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

LONDON PRIDE

Saturday 1st July 2023



MIDDLESEX PRIDE

Saturday 12th August 2023



We need volunteers! Are you interested in joining UNISON at these pride events? Let us know - fill in this form!



Click on register now or <https://shorturl.at/ijotD>

UNISON DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Bi+ members network meeting | 7 July | 10:30am - 1:00pm | UNISON Centre or MS Teams

Transgender, non-binary and gender diverse members network meeting | 7 July | 2:00pm - 4:30pm | UNISON Centre or MS Teams

Regional LGBT+ members open meeting | 13 July | 6:30pm - 7:30pm | MS Teams - email r.sexton@unison.co.uk to register

LGBT+ disabled members network meeting | 11 August | 11:00am - 1:30pm | UNISON Centre

Registration is open! National LGBT+ Conference | 10 - 12 November | Liverpool

WELCOME TO IDAHOBIT

The International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia

Article by Terry Eastham

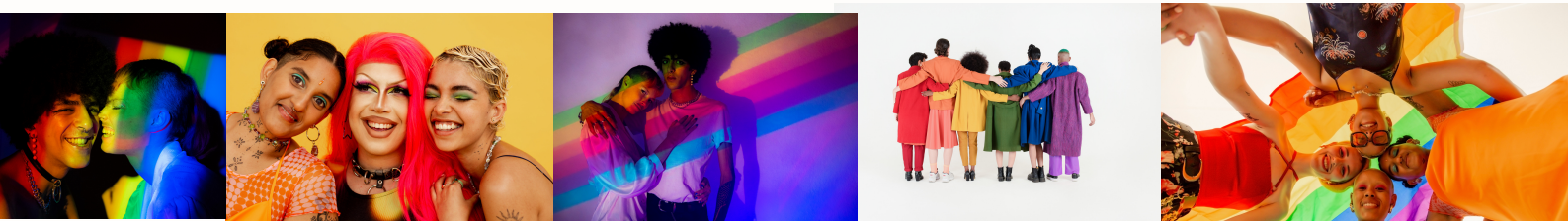


Spoiler alert, if you are expecting this post to be talking about Bilbo Baggins, rings of power or Gandalf, you are about to be very disappointed. IDAHOBIT has nothing to do with the work of JRR Tolkien or the movies by Peter Jackson. Assuming you haven't given up now you know what we aren't talking about, I hear you ask what is it?

The International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexphobia and Transphobia, or IDAHOBIT as it is known, was celebrated throughout the world on the 17th May. You may be wondering why, when there is LGBT+ History Month and Pride Month and various days dedicated to the individual parts of the LGBT+ alphabet, there was the need for another one. Well, while LGBT+ History Month and Pride month take place at different times in the year depending on geographical location, IDAHOBIT is the same day throughout the world. There is a difference to in the meaning of the day. History Month and pride are either looking back on or celebrating the wealth of LGBT+ history and people out there. IDAHOBIT is different because its aim is to raise awareness of violence, discrimination, and repression of LGBT communities worldwide, which in turn provides an opportunity to take action and engage in dialogue with the media, policymakers, public opinion, and wider civil society.

One of the stated goals of May 17 was to create an event that can be visible at a global level which due to the diversity of social, religious, cultural, and political contexts in which rights violations occur, doesn't need to conform to a specific type of action. You May be wondering why its on the 17th May, well that was the day in 1990, when the World Health Organisation removed homosexuality from the Classification of Diseases. Isn't that amazing, according to the WHO, us LGBT+ people have been classified as sane for the past 33 years. Apparently, the first half of my life, I had issues.

At this point, it is customary to list all the depressing statistics around homophobic and transphobic verbal and physical abuse as a way to explain why IDAHOBIT is so important but instead, I'm going to focus on two things, that are particularly relevant to IDAHOBIT here in the UK.



IDAHOBIT continued...

So let's talk about homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexphobia and transphobia, and let's start with the suffix 'phobia'. Now, I'm not an English graduate but, according to Google and around 147,000,000 definitions, a phobia 'is a persistent, excessive, unrealistic fear of an object, person, animal, activity or situation'. So, what we have to consider is why we use the words homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, etc? My personal opinion is that adding the suffix is a way to suggest there is something about LGBT+ individuals that the general populace should be afraid of and therefore legitimises persecution. The reality is that this particular suffix is not needed and should be replaced by homobigotry, bi-bigotry, trans-bigotry, etc. Let's see if that one catches on.

The other thing that really shows why IDAHOBIT is required is this. Since 2009 ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) Europe has produced their "Rainbow Map and Index" which ranks European countries on the basis of their "legal and policy situation" for LGBT+ people each year. It ranks countries from zero to 100 per cent, with zero per cent representing gross violations of human rights and discrimination, and 100 per cent representing respect of human rights and full equality. Until 2015, the UK consistently achieved the number one place in the Rainbow Map and Index ranking, but since then has slipped down the list. We placed 9th in 2020, 10th in 2021, 14th in 2022 and, this year, continuing the trend we slipped down to 17th place. Whilst there may be some that believe this is a great achievement, I think the majority of the population would be appalled by this statistic.

So, if you didn't have anything on for IDAHOBIT this year, you'll be able to think about the 17th May 2024. In the meantime, with Pride month coming up below are some practical tips on how you can support our LGBTIQ+ community:

1. Wear rainbow to signal your stance against LGBTIQ+ discrimination. It is okay to wear a rainbow ribbon, lanyard, or pronoun badge, even if you're not part of the LGBTIQ+ community.
2. Decorate your space. Hanging rainbow or educational posters in your office, meeting room or office kitchen is a small step towards building inclusion.
3. Attend or host an event. There will be many events held around London and the wider area to celebrate Pride month, and everyone, whether a member of the LGBT+ community or an ally is always welcome to attend.
4. Impact the community. Tell everyone you support the LGBT+ community and call out any homophobic (stuck with that word at the moment) language or actions.
5. Start planning for IDAHOBIT 2024.

Although IDAHOBIT is only one day – 17th May – it's vital to embrace the principles of IDAHOBIT and ensure LGBT+ inclusion all year round.



STONEWALL CHANGE MAKER OF THE YEAR

Greater London Activist - Ant Babajee

Ant Babajee, CRM Manager at Middlesex University and member of UNISON's Greater London LGBT+ Committee, has been named Change Maker of the Year by Stonewall.

On receiving this recognition, Ant says:
"It is really overwhelming to have been recognised by Stonewall for my LGBT+ and HIV activism and advocacy.

I have been co-chair of the LGBT+ Network at Middlesex for the past four years, and I was recently elected as the LGBT+ Officer of our UNISON branch.



Photo credit: Daniel Lewis

I am also a former BBC journalist, and I have been living with HIV since 2007. A lot of what I do as a Change Maker happens outside of my workplace, and I am incredibly thankful to colleagues at Middlesex for supporting all of my LGBT+ and HIV advocacy and activism.

I am always so keen to emphasise just how much HIV has changed – I continue to be shocked by how few people, even in our LGBT+ community, know about U=U [Undetectable equals Untransmittable] message, which means as someone on effective HIV treatment I can't pass the virus on, and PrEP [pre-exposure prophylaxis], which is a pill you can take that is extremely effective at preventing HIV.

With the unanimous support of my UNISON branch, last year I got a guidance document for managers on supporting team members living with HIV adopted by the University. It means so much to me I can bring all parts of my identity to work. I don't have to hide in the shadows. I can be simply myself – that is invaluable."

HIV STATISTICS

- There are more than 105,000 people living with HIV in the UK and around 37.7 million globally – similar to the population of Canada or Poland.
- As people can live longer, healthier lives with HIV, we have seen the number of people with an HIV diagnosis who are aged 50 and over increase in recent years: more than two in five people accessing HIV care in 2019 were aged 50 or over (41,855 – 42.4%).
- Having an undetectable viral load means there's zero risk of passing on HIV to your sexual partners – in other words, you can't pass it on. U=U [Undetectable equals Untransmittable] is 100% effective.
- More than 97% of people diagnosed with HIV in the UK are undetectable.
- 1 in 8 people with HIV said they'd not shared their status with anyone other than healthcare professionals.
- 1 in 5 people living with HIV said they needed help with loneliness and isolation in the past year.
- Two-thirds of people who want to get on PrEP face challenges accessing it for the first time.
- Almost a quarter of people on PrEP struggle to get a repeat prescription.

STAND UP FOR THE EQUALITY ACT STONEWALL

The Equality Act has been helping to protect our rights and lives from discrimination since 2010.

Imagine a world where you have to plan your daily activities around safe access to toilets. Imagine worrying about being told you can't use the changing rooms at the gym.

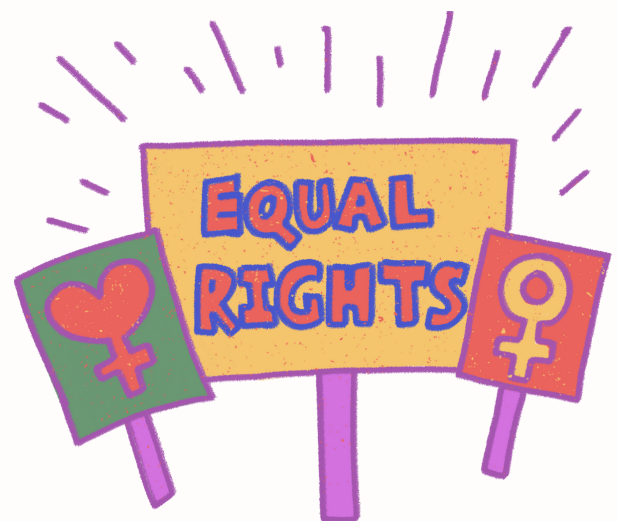
These are all very real worries for trans and gender non-conforming people in the UK today. And if we don't stand up now, it could become more difficult for everyone if the UK Government acts on recent correspondence with the Equality and Human Rights Commission about the Equality Act.

Recent correspondence between the EHRC and Minister for Equalities Kemi Badenoch shows the UK Government is considering amending the definition of sex in the Equality Act 2010 from 'legal sex' to 'biological sex'. Making a change like this would make it easier to exclude trans women in particular from everyday spaces.

A change like this would also open the door to all individuals' appearances being judged at every turn, whether they are trans or not. There is no way that these recommendations would be enforceable, or fair.

The Equality Act 2010 has been working for over a decade. It already allows single-sex spaces to be provided. The above changes would be unnecessary, unworkable, and unfair. No government committed to LGBTQ+ equality should aim to exclude trans people from everyday life.

If they did, this would represent an appalling rollback in LGBTQ+ rights and make it impossible for trans people and gender non-conforming people to exist without fear.



STAY CONNECTED KEEP INFORMED

LGBT+ AWARENESS DAYS 2023

LGBT awareness days are important because they help bring attention to the issues that members of the LGBT community face, and this list includes many days of visibility, awareness weeks, pride days, and remembrance days. Keep this page bookmarked so that you can stay up to date all year round in 2023!

- All month June - Pride Month
- 28 June - Stonewall Riots Anniversary
- 6 July - Omnisexual Visibility Day
- 11-17 July - Non-binary Awareness Day
- 14 July - Non-binary Peoples Day
- 16 July - International Drag Day
- 16 - 22 September - Bisexual Awareness Week
- 23 September - Bisexual Visibility Day
- 8 October - International Lesbian Day
- 11 October - National Coming Out Day
- 20 October - International Pronouns Day
- 24 October - Asexual Awareness Week
- 26 October - Intersex Awareness Day
- All month November - Transgender Awareness Month
- 6 November - Transgender Parent Awareness Day
- 8 November - Intersex Day of Remembrance
- 13 - 19 November - Transgender Awareness Week
- 20 November - Transgender Day of Remembrance
- 1 December - World AIDS Day
- 8 December - Pansexual Pride Day
- 10 December - Human Rights Day



SOCIAL MEDIA



@unison.ldnlgbt



UNISON Greater
London LGBT+

PRIDE MONTH

FOLLOW US

If you need to need to get in touch with the union for
advice and please email outinlondon@unison.co.uk
or contact UNISON on 0800 0 857 857