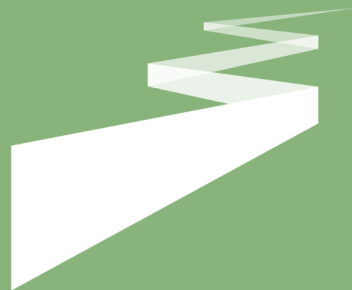


The Ideal Candidate



DISCUSSION PAPER | DIVERSITY SERIES | LGBT

Olivia Bailey | August 2016



**FACING
THE
FUTURE**



ABOUT THE SERIES

This is the second of five discussion papers the Fabian Society will publish as part of a series on representation. A paper on gender, 'Practising what we preach', was published in December 2015, and papers on race, disability and class will follow. Labour Party members are encouraged to discuss the ideas in this document and make a submission with their ideas to representation@fabians.org.uk. These submissions will be used in the development of a final report, which will make practical recommendations to the Labour party about how it can better reflect the country it seeks to represent by improving the diversity of its representatives, from officers in local parties through to parliamentarians.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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METHODOLOGY

Research for this report was conducted through desk based research, interviews and a roundtable with experts, and a survey of Labour party members. 3,107 self-identified Labour members began the survey (conducted in Autumn 2015), with 2,642 completing the last question. 14 per cent of the respondents (424) identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or a sexuality different to heterosexual (including queer, asexual, pansexual and polyamorous). This group is referred to as LGB or lesbian, gay and bisexual throughout for ease. 14 per cent is a higher proportion that researchers estimate is reflected in the total population, with estimates at around 5 per cent.¹

To determine the number of trans respondents, the survey asked participants to indicate whether they defined themselves as 'a man', 'a woman', 'trans man', 'trans woman', 'I'd prefer not to say', or 'other'. No respondents selected 'trans man' or 'trans woman'. The survey also asked respondents

to indicate whether their 'gender identity is different to the sex you were assumed to be at birth'. But, this question appears to have confused a number of participants. 220 participants answered this question with 'yes', 8 per cent of the total number of participants. Given estimates for the percentage of the population who are gender nonconforming to some degree sit at around 1 per cent, and given the lack of respondents indication they were a 'trans man' or 'trans woman' in the previous question, this number seems implausibly high and the question has been discounted from this analysis.² This unfortunately means that the survey results do not cover the experiences of trans people in the Labour Party, leaving this analysis to rely on interviews and desk research as well as the survey responses from those who referred to themselves as trans in open ended questions.

The survey was open access; anyone with the link was able to complete it. We promoted the survey through a range of different means in order to try to reach as wide a pool of party members as possible, including Facebook adverts, media promotion, and emails to Fabian members. The questions in the survey were designed to be as neutral as possible, and parts were modelled on the British Representation Survey, which has been used at recent general elections. While respondents were asked to speak about their current views of their local party, their reflections on being a candidate were not time limited, meaning that some of the experiences gathered may not have happened in the recent past. The survey was conducted in autumn 2015, and many of the problems outlined seem to have worsened in recent months.

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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Huge strides have been made towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans equality, thanks in big part to the actions of Labour party politicians. Section 28 has been abolished, equal marriage rights have been secured, and society is becoming more tolerant and accepting of difference by the day. LGBT representation seems to have improved along with this increased social equality. There are 14 'out' Labour MPs in parliament, 6 per cent of the total number of Labour MPs, and prominent out representatives in devolved assemblies and local government.³

But beneath these headline figures, it is clear that there is still more to do. There are only three lesbian or bisexual Labour women MPs, no trans MPs and no LGBT Labour MPs from a black, asian or minority ethnic background. Recent weeks have seen homophobic insults directed at Angela Eagle and other LGBT activists online. And we know too little about the state of LGBT representation in the Labour party because no one collects and publishes the data.

Using a range of evidence from LGBT members across the Labour party, this paper reveals that homophobia, biphobia and transphobia is still a problem within Labour's ranks. This ranges from direct discrimination in the selection process to unconscious bias from often well-meaning members, and it all seems to revolve around one central theme: that LGBT people do not meet outdated standards of what makes 'the ideal candidate'. They are not, in the words of one roundtable participant, the 'white man with 2.4 children living in a big house with a wife making jam'.

To ensure fair representation for LGBT people at every level, the party must take firm action to dispel these unfair standards. To do that, this paper argues it should do three things:

1. Labour must make sure it understands the problem it is facing

The Labour party has led on LGBT equality, but there is a danger that could lead to complacency about the problems that still remain.

Collect the data: Information about the sexuality of candidates and members is not collected centrally by the Labour party, which means the party does not understand the nature and extent of current problems.

- The party should monitor the diversity of candidates for all positions,

and it should publish that data every six months, following the recommendation of the 2010 speakers' conference.

- It should also consider commencing equalities monitoring for all new members of the party.

Remember LGBT diversity: While parliament is reportedly the queerest legislature in the world, LGBT representatives are overwhelmingly male, non disabled, white and cisgender.⁴

- The party should develop a specific strategies to improve the representation and member experience of trans people, lesbian and bisexual women and LGBT people who are disabled, black or from an ethnic minority.
- The party should publish targets to improve the representation of lesbian and bisexual women and trans people in parliament and devolved assemblies, aiming for at least one trans MP in 2020 and a significant increase in LBT women MPs. One way to ensure this is guaranteeing a space for an LGBT person on every shortlist, including all women shortlists.

2. Take tough action to remove the barriers in the selection process

Labour should take decisive action to support LGBT candidates through the selection process and ensure they don't face any discrimination. Of the survey respondents who'd stood for national or devolved selection, only half agreed the process was fair.

Zero tolerance for discrimination: Our survey shows that some LGB candidates faced unwelcome scrutiny of their private life during the selection process, and there have also been instances of 'dog whistle' politics where opponents have used phrases like 'the straight choice'. There is also a problem with party members making unsubstantiated assumptions about voter prejudice.

- Every candidate in an internal selection should be asked to publically sign a clean campaign charter, prohibiting all forms of discrimination and abuse.
- The party should review the rulebook and selection guidelines, and ensure that party representatives enforce the rules when breaches occur.
- Every member involved in a selection panel should be compelled to attend equality and diversity training before they participate, and party

officers should run this training locally for party members.

Ensuring transparency: Our survey reveals that lesbian, gay and bisexual candidates seem more likely than heterosexual candidates to find the selection process difficult to understand, and less likely to feel that they have been given enough information. They are also more likely to worry that they'll feel like an 'outsider' when thinking about future selections, and they are more likely to worry that they will face discrimination. Our research indicates that this is also a problem for trans members of the party.

- The party should overhaul the information they publish about selections and upcoming selections to make it much easier to find and much more detailed.
- In addition to this, the party should develop a central training module for candidates on how the selection process works, which can be run locally by experienced activists or by regional offices.

Better support and training: Our research suggests that LGBT people are more likely to worry that they don't have the skills and experience to stand for elected office, and to worry about some of the skills they'll need to use like public speaking. Once they have been successfully selected, there is very limited support available to them.

- The party should expand the training it provides to potential future candidates, and should develop specific modules for gay and bisexual men, lesbian and bisexual women and trans people. Other equalities affiliates should also consider developing LGBT specific training and mentoring programmes.
- The party should also do more to support and encourage LGBT people once they have been selected, building on the financial support that LGBT Labour offer out candidates. They should consider pairing LGBT candidates for national or devolved office with out politicians who have already been elected in order to provide advice and support.

3. Encourage more LGBT people to join and ensure they are welcomed

By increasing the number of LGBT people active in the party, Labour can increase the pool of LGBT candidates and challenge any prejudice in local parties.

Reform local parties: While the majority of LGBT members have a positive

experience with their local party, our research shows that more could be done to make local parties more inclusive and engaging. Just 11 per cent of local parties have an officer with the express purpose of supporting and encouraging LGBT members.

- The party should review how local meetings are conducted and encourage a more informal and participative format.
- Every local party should have both a women's officer and an equality and diversity officer.
- The party should publish clear guidelines for the chairs of local meetings, to empower them to challenge any prejudiced comments that arise in debate.
- Each region should be asked to run an event for LGBT members, and a member of regional staff should be given responsibility for LGBT engagement.
- Every new member should be sent details of the support that is available to LGBT people, including details of LGBT Labour and their regional staff contact.

A greater voice for LGBT members: LGBT Labour is currently the only organisation for LGBT party members, and its status as an affiliate means it receives no financial or administrative support.

- In addition to regional events for LGBT members, the Party should consider a national LGBT event similar to women's conference where LGBT members can network and discuss policy ideas.
- The party should also ensure that there is an LGBT representative on every regional board, as well as on the executives in Scotland and Wales.

Language matters: Phrases like 'hard working families' can often be exclusionary and off putting to LGBT people.

- The party should 'equalities proof' its core messaging before deploying it.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Please discuss and debate the ideas in this paper, and share your thoughts on the questions below by emailing representation@fabians.org.uk

Understanding the problem

- How can the party ensure its LGBT representatives are diverse?
- Do you agree the party should collect equalities data, and what targets do you think it should set for LGBT representation?

Encouraging and supporting new members

- How can local parties change to become more inclusive and engaging for LGBT people?
- What formal structures should the party develop to ensure it best hears the voice of LGBT members?
- How can the party ensure it doesn't alienate LGBT voters with the language and tone it adopts?

Removing the barriers in the selection process

- How can the party demystify the selection process and make clearer what is involved?
- What training and support should the party provide for LGBT candidates?
- How should the party stamp out discrimination when it occurs?

1. UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

The Labour party has led advances in equality, with a high number of LGB MPs and a proud record of legal progress. This can mean that LGBT representation is not given a high enough priority, despite the problems that still remain within the party – many of which have been laid bare during the recent political turmoil. To improve LGBT representation both locally and nationally, the party must start by improving its understanding of the extent and nature of the problem.

Collect the data

Anecdotal evidence suggests that LGBT people are underrepresented in local government and amongst CLP office holders, and information about LGBT representatives in parliament and devolved assemblies relies on potentially incomplete lists gathered by LGBT Labour. In order to improve LGBT representation, the party needs to first understand the scale of the problem.

The party should monitor the diversity of candidates for all positions, and it should publish that data every six months, following the recommendation of the 2010 speakers' conference. It should also consider commencing equalities monitoring for all new members of the party, or commissioning surveys of a representative sample of members.

Remember LGBT diversity

While parliament is reportedly one of the queerest legislatures in the world, LGBT representatives are overwhelmingly male, white, non disabled and cisgender.⁵ This is also reflected in the LGBT organisation within the Labour party, LGBT Labour. As a number of LGBT Labour activists reflected, the number of women actively involved in LGBT Labour is small and has been declining in the last couple of years.⁶ There are only three out lesbian or bisexual Labour women MPs, a fraction of the total number of LGB Labour MPs. And, evidence gathered by LGBT Labour suggests about 9 out of 10 of the Labour LGBT councillors that they are aware of are men.⁷

Trans representation also stands out as lagging behind. Published information indicates that there are currently only two openly trans Labour councillors, and no openly trans MPs. Trans members in LGBT Labour feel that the movement is not adequately addressing their concerns, and there is a bubbling tension between trans activists, feminists and LGB activists in

the wider political arena.⁸ As one survey respondent said, 'I'm trans. This country, and this party, are far from being trans-friendly.'

While progress on LGBT representation should be celebrated, the catch-all term 'LGBT' should not become a fig leaf for the damaging impact of cross-cutting forms of oppression. LGBT equality will not have been secured until all LGBT people have equal access to power. The party must resist treating equalities issues in silos, and should encourage more collaboration between equalities groups as well as running cross-sectional events and training themselves. Specifically, the party should develop a specific strategy for women and for trans people, inviting LB women and trans people to two listening events centrally. It should then publish a strategy for each group, setting out the action it will take. The party should also work with BAME Labour to develop a similar process for people who define as both BAME and LGBT, and Disability Labour for those who are both disabled and LGBT.

Once the party has started collecting equalities data, it should then publish targets focused on the diversity of LGBT representatives. In parliament, they should aim for at least one trans MP at the next election, as well as increasing the number of lesbian or bisexual women. The party should consider guaranteeing a place on every shortlist for an openly LGBT person, including all women shortlists. The party should review in collaboration with regional offices what targets might work for local government.

2. ACTION TO REMOVE THE BARRIERS IN THE SELECTION PROCESS

"I am aware that being LGBT might mean I would receive a more/less fair treatment depending on where I stood. Although I am not out to everyone, I was outed online by some trolls so am worried this might happen again and it would damage my chances."

Survey respondent

Research from Stonewall in 2013 revealed that more than a third of LGB people would expect to face barriers from the Labour party if they wanted to become a councillor or MP.⁹ Our research found evidence to support this fear. Only half of the 33 LGB respondents who participated in a selection for national or devolved office said that they found the process fair, compared to two in three heterosexual respondents. And one in five of the 74 LGB respondents who participated in a selection to become a councillor said they'd faced unwelcome scrutiny of their private lives. Trans people often face multiple barriers, with one trans activist claiming that had their gender status been known they are unsure whether they would have won their selection.

To increase the number of LGBT people selected for office, the Labour party should tackle discrimination where it occurs, provide better support for LGBT candidates, and take action to demystify the process.

Zero tolerance for discrimination

*'Even people who can be right on in terms of equality issues will still have this idea of an ideal candidate – and that includes a wife and two kids.'*¹⁰

Our survey reveals that in some places and in some cases, LGBT people do still face direct discrimination in the Labour party. One in six LGB candidates for council selections told us that they faced unwelcome scrutiny of their private life, compared to one in 10 heterosexual candidates. Six out of the 33 LGB people who participated in selections for national or devolved office told us that they faced questions that directly related to their identity. One respondent wrote *'My nationality, sexuality and nature of my work came under scrutiny by members and the selection committee (the latter were particularly harsh)'*.

In addition to this overt discrimination, Labour also has a problem with the politics of the dog whistle. Candidates reported this manifesting itself in

lots of different ways. One spoke of events being organised in a selection contest which enabled opponents to promote their 'family credentials', and another reported use of the phrase 'straight choice', echoing the famous case in Bermondsey in the 1980s. There are also examples from the last Labour government of senior Labour figures briefing the press about a gay MPs living arrangements as an act of political revenge.¹¹

Another problem seems to be the impact of unspoken prejudices which work against LGBT candidates. One example shared with us referred to a parliamentary selection process with a lesbian candidate. The LGBT person speaking in favour of this candidate felt uncomfortable discussing sexuality and felt that, while there was no overt homophobia, that the atmosphere 'was just different' and that there was a sense she was 'not the right sort of person for this area'. A survey respondent said similar, stating: *'It's hard to pinpoint or prove but I felt that somehow my face didn't fit. I'm gay with a PhD and a relatively posh accent. I felt that somehow the members didn't relate to me and wanted someone more like them as councillor.'* And trans activists Anwen Muston and Natasha Kennedy have argued: *'especially in close-run elections like 2015 selection panels will choose "low risk" candidates most likely to appeal to the highest number of voters. Because trans people are a relatively unknown quantity this means we are less likely to be selected or to be selected late.'*

As the Stonewall workplace guide says, *'Even those with the best intentions can find themselves favouring people who look, sound or act like them – often without realising they're doing it'* and in politics that seems to be exacerbated.¹³ Not only are people making decisions based on their affinity with candidates, they are also making assumptions about the type of candidate that would perform electorally well in their area. That often means making unsubstantiated and generalised assumptions about voters, or certain groups of voters, being intolerant to LGBT candidates. As one senior LGBT Labour member argued *'there's a gap between social attitudes, which have actually moved quite a long way, and people's perceptions about voter perception'*.¹⁴

There is no evidence that LGBT candidates perform less well at election time, or pay a penalty with the majority of voters as a result of their sexuality. But LGBT people are still having a tougher time in selections for high profile positions. Our survey revealed that just half of our lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents who stood for national or regional office felt that the process was fair, compared to two in three of the heterosexual respondents. And one former trans candidate suggested that had their gender identity been known

before their selection they think that the result could have gone differently. LGBT people are also less likely to be selected for high profile by elections, with reports suggesting Labour's NEC has only, ever, shortlisted one openly gay candidate for a Westminster by election.

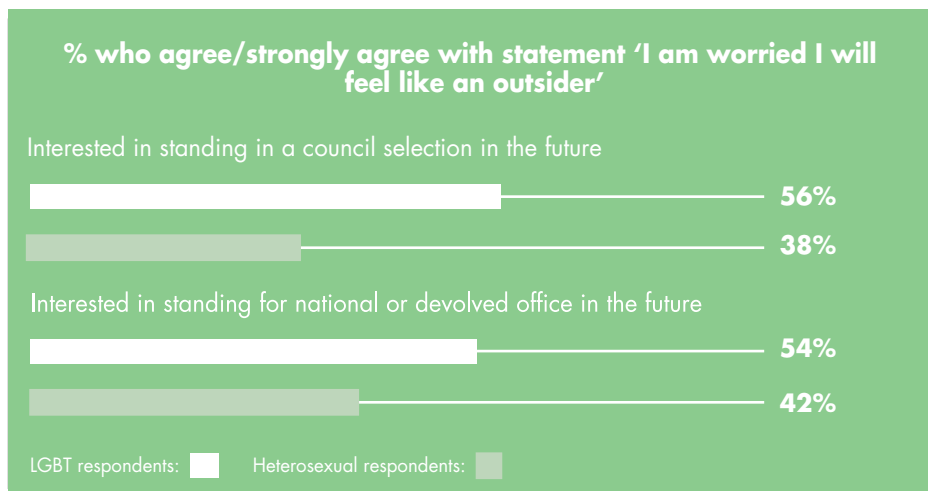
The Labour party must take action to tackle discrimination in both the formal and informal parts of the selection process. First, they should review the rulebook and selection guidelines to ensure it is completely clear that questions related to a candidate's sexuality are unacceptable, and ensure that party representatives enforce the rules when breaches occur. The party should also review how the rules can be better applied to informal parts of the process. Second, the party should require all candidates to sign up to a clean campaign charter, which prohibits all forms of discrimination and abuse – including the use of dog whistle politics. Thirdly, to ensure that the selection panel aren't unconsciously discriminating against candidates, the party should also insist that all panel members have to attend equality and diversity training beforehand. This training should be run by the party regionally, and should include unconscious bias training and myth busting about the electability of underrepresented groups. This training could also be open to party officers, who could then be empowered to run the training locally with members.

Make the process more transparent

LGB candidates are more likely than heterosexual candidates to find the selection process difficult to understand, and less likely to feel that they have been given enough information. In council selections, one in four LGB candidates disagreed the process was easy to understand and one in five said they'd been given enough information. This is in contrast to just one in seven heterosexual respondents on both questions. The figures are similar for national and devolved selections. This chimes with our research about other underrepresented groups, and is likely to reflect the experience of trans members. Women, for example, are 12 points less likely than men to agree that the selection process for national or devolved office is transparent. One survey respondent summarised the problem when they said: *'I would like to stand as an MEP or councillor but fear my status as a trans woman will get in the way and prevent this. I have also been told that the selection process for MEPs is VERY opaque and that there are problems with the candidate selection process, especially in London.'*

Part of the cause of this problem is the nature of the powerful cliques and groups who hold political power in local parties as well as nationally, who

often control information about selections. Too often LGBT people and other underrepresented groups are absent from their ranks, and therefore have less access to political information. As one LGBT survey respondent put it *'the process needs to feel like it is open to all not just a select few - at the moment selection within Labour feels like something you get invited to'*. Our survey also showed that LGBT members considering standing for elected office in the future are 12 to 18 points more likely to say they are worried they might 'feel like an outsider' than heterosexual respondents.

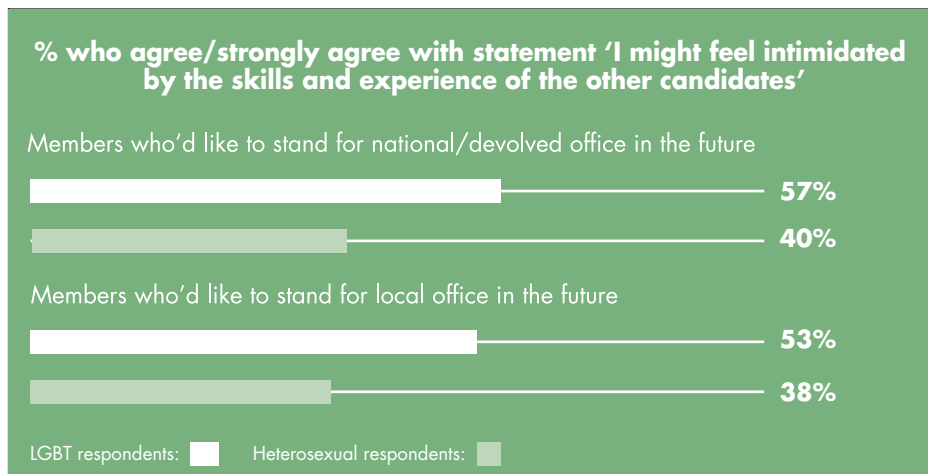


68 LGBT and 280 heterosexual people told us they'd be interested in standing for council in the future. 74 LGBT and 221 heterosexual people told us they'd be interested in standing for national or devolved office in the future.

Our survey also reveals that LGBT members are worried about facing discrimination in the selection process, perhaps caused by experiences of homophobia elsewhere in their lives. For example, nearly half of those who indicated they want to stand for a national or regional selection in the future said they were worried about comments about how they look, and about their private life. The reality was less stark, with around one in five who have stood for national or regional office saying either had happened to them.

The party has taken action to try and demystify the selection process, with initiatives like the future candidates problem. But there are a few simple steps that the party must still take. First, it should overhaul the information it publishes about selections and upcoming selections to make it much easier to find and much more detailed. This should be very clear that discrimination will not be tolerated in the selection process. In addition to this, the party should develop a central training module on how the selection process works, which can be run locally by experienced activists or by regional

offices. The party could also work with LGBT Labour to produce a handbook and other information for potential candidates.



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As one roundtable participant put it: *'At the moment we just chuck LGBT candidates at the selection process, and cross our fingers that they come out successfully at the other end.'* To tackle this, the party should expand the training it provides to potential future candidates, and should develop specific modules for gay and bisexual men, lesbian and bisexual women and trans people. Other equalities affiliates should also consider developing LGBT specific training or mentoring programmes, for example Labour Women's Network could run training for LBT women.

The party should also do more to support and encourage LGBT people once they have been selected, building on the financial support that LGBT Labour offer out candidates through the Chris Smith list (a project to distribute financial grants to LGBT candidates run by LGBT Labour). They should consider pairing LGBT candidates for national or devolved office with out politicians who have already been elected in order to provide advice and support. In time, this could be run regionally to support council candidates. To do this successfully, the party will need to routinely collect equality data on the candidates it selects so that it knows who to target. As an LGBT Labour activist said *'Whenever there is an election, [LGBT Labour] have to scramble around to try and find out who is out so we can give them money because nobody asks them.'*

3. ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING NEW MEMBERS

Labour must also do more to increase the number of LGBT people active in the party. This will increase the pool of potential candidates, and it will also help to dispel myths and challenge prejudices in local parties.

While research shows that LGBT people are likely to see the Labour party as more inclusive than the Conservative party, Labour must not assume that local parties are impervious to the homophobia, biphobia and transphobia that remains prevalent across wider society.¹⁷ Stonewall research shows that one in five LGB employees says they've been bullied at work because of their sexuality, and one in four are unable to be open to their colleagues about their sexual orientation. Nearly half of trans people not living permanently in their preferred gender role state they can't do so because it might threaten their employment status.¹⁸ The recent turmoil in the Labour party has exposed the extent of homophobia still present, with homophobic insults reportedly being directed at Angela Eagle and other members during meetings and online.

Ensuring inclusive local parties

In a Fabian pamphlet *Making Mass Membership Work* (1993) Gordon Brown wrote that *'the style of our meetings has been a turn off for many members'*. Despite many attempts at reform in the following 23 years, that statement remains true for lots of local parties across the country, and there is limited evidence that the recent surge of new members has translated into activists on the ground. Just 21 per cent of survey respondents agreed that *'constituency or branch meetings are always productive'* and just one in three members agree that they *'enjoy attending meetings of the constituency or branch'*.

Our research shows that this problem is slightly worse for LGBT people. Lesbian, bisexual and gay survey respondents were five percentage points more likely to disagree that they enjoy attending meetings, that there are 'people like them' in the party; that people are treated fairly; and that meetings are productive. And trans members interviewed suggested that there is not always a culture of support and understanding. One interviewee told us that since she'd come out as trans she'd been invited to speak about her experiences all over the country, but that she had never been invited to speak by a CLP.¹⁹

There is evidence that the number of homophobic incidents has increased during the recent turmoil within the Labour party. For example, Angela Eagle's constituency Labour party has been suspended by the NEC after a number of complaints about homophobia.²⁰ Eagle has also been subjected to abuse online, and homophobic insults have been directed at activists across the party.²¹

Prior to the recent troubles in the Labour party, many LGBT respondents reported very positive experiences, with one writing *'there is no issues with being gay for me with the party. I have been welcomed and people have offered help when asked.'*²² One trans member expressed similar, saying she had 'nothing but admiration' for the way her local Party had treated her. It is also worth noting that the experience of LGBT members does seem to vary significantly in different parts of the country, with some local parties in London and places like Manchester having higher numbers of active LGBT members and other parts the country having very few.

There are a number of steps the party could take to improve culture and format of local Labour parties for LGBT people, as well as other underrepresented groups. First, they should review how local meetings are conducted and encourage a more informal and participative format. As Refounding Labour argued, what is needed is *'an enabling culture that encourages CLPs to adapt and innovate according to their own local circumstances.'*²³

Second, to ensure there is always someone focusing on LGBT engagement, it should be compulsory for every local party to have both a women's officer and an equality and diversity officer, with parties ideally encouraged to have a standalone officers for sexuality, race and disability. If parties are unable to fill these positions, then they should take that as an indication that they need to build their membership and spend more time reaching out to the community. Just 31 CLPs currently have an LGBT officer, with an additional 40 having an equality and diversity officer.²⁴ Taken together, this means that just 11 per cent of local parties have an officer with the express purpose of supporting and encouraging LGBT members. To empower chairs of local parties to tackle prejudice when it occurs, the party should publish clear guidelines about how to tackle discrimination, along with information about how to make a formal complaint.

Finally the party should overhaul the support it provides to LGBT members to make it clear that there are support networks available to them. Each region should be asked to run an LGBT event, and a member of regional staff should

be given responsibility for LGBT engagement. All new members should be sent details of the support that is available to them, including LGBT Labour and their regional contact.²⁵

A greater voice for LGBT members

In addition to ensuring officers in local parties are focusing on LGBT engagement and inclusion, the party should also review the structures it puts in place to ensure LGBT voices are heard throughout the party. LGBT Labour is currently the only organisation for LGBT party members, and its status as an affiliated socialist society means it receives no financial or administrative support. While LGBT Labour runs an impressive programme of events and campaigns, it is run by volunteers and is limited in what it can aim to achieve.

In addition to regional events for LGBT members, the party should consider a national LGBT event similar to women's conference where LGBT members can network and discuss policy ideas. The party should also review how LGBT members can better feed in to the policy development process, building on LGBT Labour's representative on the National Policy Forum. It is also important the party considers how trans voices may be heard properly within this process, perhaps considering a standalone trans networking event organised centrally. The party should also ensure that there is an LGBT representative on every regional board, as well as on the executives in Scotland and Wales.

Language matters

One of the most important things when it comes to attracting new LGBT members is the tone and delivery of the party's political agenda. The most important aspect of this is the language used, which can often be exclusionary and off-putting. As one roundtable participant put it, there is too often a rush to talk about families and football as a way of sounding connected to ordinary people without thought to those the language might exclude. For example, it has been argued that the oft-repeated refrain from the last election, 'hard working families', implicitly endorses nuclear, 'normal' families.²⁶ Similarly, other equalities campaigns have been at fault here. For example, the women's movement often focuses on motherhood and childcare without referencing those who do not have children.

While focus groups and polling will inevitably reveal the popularity of these phrases amongst the majority, the party would surely not lose ground by making slight alterations to ensure the language they use can find appeal

amongst all of their supporters. It should 'equalities proof' its messages before it deploys them.

Promoting LGBT role models

The party should also recognise the impact that LGBT role models can have when it comes to attracting LGBT members to the party, and encouraging them to get involved. This anecdote from former Labour general secretary Ray Collins underlines how important role models can be:

'I remember I went to Eastern Labour party conference and I talked about politics and the personal, I talked about my partner... This man came up to me afterwards, practically in tears said that was an amazing thing, I can't come out in my local party, and the fact you've said this today means I am going to go back to them and come out'.²⁶

High profile LGB MPs like Angela Eagle and Chris Bryant do a lot to speak to the LGBT community, but the more Labour's out politicians share their stories, the more likely LGBT people are to decide to get involved. This is especially important for trans people, and, while there are no openly trans MPs, pioneers like former parliamentary candidate Emily Brothers, Cllr Anwen Muston and Cllr Osh Gantly should be supported by the party centrally to share their stories.

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- 11 For example see the description of the events surrounding David Cairns' resignation outlined here <http://www.davidcairnsfoundation.org/Eulogy.html>
- 12 <http://www.compassonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Feminism-FINAL.pdf>
- 13 https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/training_guide.pdf
- 14 Contribution to the roundtable from senior lgbt labour party member
- 15 <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/blog/imposter-syndrome>
- 16 http://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/Gay_in_Britain__2013_.pdf
- 17 <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/media/lgbt-facts-and-figures>
- 18 Roundtable participant
- 19 <http://labourlist.org/2016/07/eagle-backs-probe-into-clp-insults/>
- 20 <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/angela-eagle-suffers-treacherous-lesbian-abuse-as-police-probe-death-threat-a3295601.html>
- 21 Survey respondent
- 22 Refounding Labour

- ²³ This information was supplied by the Labour Party, and is reliant on local parties logging details of their officers on party website membersnet
- ²⁴ Roundtable participant
- ²⁵ Katherine Runswick-Cole, Rebecca Lawthom & Dan Goodley (2016) The trouble with 'hard working families', *Community, Work & Family*, 19:2, 257-260, DOI: 10.1080/13668803.2016.1134153
- ²⁶ Roundtable participant

