

Social and Cultural Attitudes towards LGBTQ+ in Britain from the 1950s

Information sheet 3: LGBTQ+ Protest & Activism (1950s–2020s)

The 1950s to the 1980s

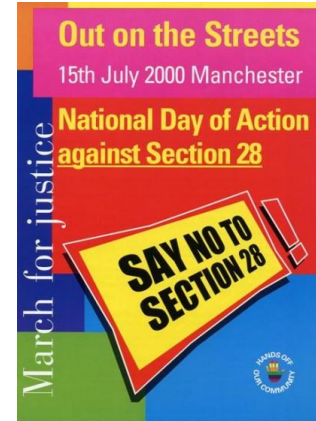
The **Homosexual Law Reform Society** (1958) was one of the first organisations in Britain to campaign for the decriminalisation of homosexuality.

The **Stonewall Riots** of 1969 in America inspired British activists to push for LGBTQ+ rights, leading to the formation of the **Gay Liberation Front (GLF)** in 1970. The GLF organised the **First London Pride March**, in 1972. This protest was a radical act of visibility, demanding equal rights and challenging police harassment. Around 2,000 people marched through London demanding equal rights. It marked the beginning of Pride as both a celebration and a political movement.



The **Terrence Higgins Trust** (1982) was founded to support people affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as to fight stigma and government inaction.

Section 28 (1988) a law banning the "promotion of homosexuality" in schools, sparked mass protests from LGBTQ+ activists and others. LGBTQ+ groups staged protests, including "kiss-ins" and marches, to fight Section 28.



The 1990s and 2000s

Repeal of Section 28 (2003) After years of protests, the law was finally overturned, marking a victory for LGBTQ+ education and visibility.

Civil Partnerships (2004) Protests and campaigns led to legal recognition of LGBTQ+ relationships, with full marriage equality achieved in 2013.

After years of argument and protest, the **Gender Recognition Act** (2004) allowed trans people to legally change their gender, though activists continued pushing for further reforms.

The 2010s onwards

Trans Rights Protests (2010s–2020s) Activists have fought against discrimination, calling for better healthcare and legal protections and equality for trans people.

After same-sex civil partnerships were recognised in 2004, the next battle was to gain equality for LGBTQ+ regarding marriage. The **Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act** was passed in 2013, becoming law in March 2014 in England and Wales, December 2014 in Scotland, but not until January 2020 in Northern Ireland. The first same-sex marriages took place on Saturday 29th March 2014. The UK was the 27th country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage, and the 16th in Europe.

LGBTQ+ groups continue to demand a full ban on conversion therapy. Conversion therapy is the pseudoscientific practice of attempting to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity to fit in with heterosexual and cisgender norms. The methods that have been used include brain surgery, surgical or chemical castration, electric shocks, nausea-inducing drugs, hypnosis and more. LGBTQ+ and others continue to fight against these harmful practices.