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Why blood donation rules have finally been relaxed for gay and bisexual men

By Eamonn Ferguson

The Conversation (06.01.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3sjdzgm> - It can not be underestimated just how important blood is for effective healthcare provision. Of the numerous treatments people rely on for their wellbeing, blood is critical for as many as 22 different treatments, including surgery, child-birth, emergencies, end-of-life care, and treatments for various diseases.

To meet this need, 5,000 daily donations are needed from blood donors in the UK. The target is achieved through a small number of generous blood donors (approximately 3-4% of the eligible population donates blood at any one time).

But as well as retaining existing regular donors, there is an ongoing need to recruit new ones. Analysis suggests that there could be potential shortfalls in blood because of increasing demand from an ageing population and a reduction in the number of young donors.

Expanding the number of potential blood donors to groups who have historically been deferred – such as men who have sex with men (MSM) – will not only create a fairer and more inclusive blood donation system but also help to address demand.

The current position: who can give blood?

In an important move away from the current three-month deferral on MSM giving blood, new rules due to come into play this summer will allow MSM who have had the same partner for three months or more to give blood. MSM are currently deferred from donating blood unless they have abstained from sex for three months (down from 12 months in 2017).

While the UK transfusion services were the first in the world to move to a three-month deferral from 12 months, the rules have historically been perceived as unfair. People have argued that it is the behaviours that people engage in, irrespective of gender and sexuality, that should be the focus of decisions to defer potential donors.

Though the initial relaxation of rules, to a three-month deferral, was a big step forward, the Department of Health and Social Care requested yet more progress: a selection approach based on the sexual behaviour of donors (rather than the sex of their partner). As such, the FAIR (For the Assessment of Individual Risk) steering group was set up by the UKFORUM (which represents the four UK transfusion services).

With a focus on individuals' sexual behaviour, the group's aim was to assess risks to the safety of the blood supply. It was also tasked with identifying key questions to ask donors with the aim of making recommendations to the government about changing the rules on blood donation.

System based on behaviour, not sexuality

To provide evidence for a potential move to rules based on assessing sexual behaviour, the FAIR group looked at a combination of epidemiological and behavioural evidence. Epidemiologists advised on the objective risk of infection for different sexual behaviours while behavioural scientists provided advice on the perceived risk of different sexual behaviours, the frequency of those behaviours and how acceptable people might find each question on their sexual behaviour.

The epidemiology team was comprised of Dr Su Brailsford (chair of the FAIR Steering group), Katy Davison, Claire Reynolds and Joe Flannagan from NHS Blood and Transplant and Public Health England. Together, they considered evidence on the objective risk of blood-borne infection from different sexual behaviours, infection rates in the UK and the sexual behaviour of blood donors.

The behavioural science work was led by the team at the School of Psychology, University of Nottingham: myself, Dr Claire Lawrence (now at Lawrence PsychAdvisory), Dr Naomi Pierce and Erin Dawe-Lane (now at Kings College London).

We explored how often people reported engaging in a series of sexual behaviours, how accurately people felt they and others could recall their sexual behaviour, how acceptable it would be for people to be asked questions about sexual behaviour, and if asking about sexual behaviour could potentially deter donors.

We also looked at whether sexual behaviours are reported reliably in general, and perceptions of risk to patient safety when donors are selected based on sexual behaviour. These questions were considered among the non-donors, blood donors, MSM, donor staff and patients.

By gathering this data, we were able to identify a set of gender-neutral questions that were perceived as acceptable to ask, unlikely to deter donors, and were associated with both a higher objective and subjective risk of infection.

These questions about sexual behaviour will be asked of every person volunteering to give blood when the new rules come into force in the summer of 2021. Participants in the research also considered the proposed changes to be fair, thought they were needed and were a potential way to encourage more new donors. They were considered unlikely to increase risk to patients.

Evidence and recommendations for a new approach were presented to the government's Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) for evaluation on October 2020. They were subsequently accepted by the Department of Health and Social Care in December 2020.

UK transfusion services are world-leading in being the first to take an approach based on the sexual behaviour of all donors. Other countries including the US, Canada and New Zealand are also considering a similar shift in their rules.

Relaxing the rules is a major step forward towards creating a fair blood donor system for all and we are very proud of this achievement and our involvement in it. The power of the FAIR project to provide evidence to support this landmark change lay in part in combining epidemiology, behavioural science and engaging wider stakeholder groups. Other countries that wish to support similar change may also now adopt such an approach.

UK court rules against trans clinic over treatment for children

The judge ruled that it was 'highly unlikely' that a child of 13 or under would be capable of giving consent for puberty blocking drugs.

By Rachel Savage and Hugo Greenhalgh

Thomson Reuters Foundation (01.12.2020) - <https://tmsnrt.rs/37xPadk> - Children aged under 16 will need court approval in England and Wales to access puberty blockers after a landmark ruling on Tuesday amid a global debate about the age at which a child can choose to transition gender.

Three High Court judges said it was "highly unlikely" that a child of 13 or under was "competent to give consent" to puberty blockers, and it was "doubtful" that 14- and 15-year olds could "weigh the long-term risks and consequences".

Following the ruling, the National Health Service (NHS) England updated its guidelines to state that a court order must be sought for any new referral for such medication.

But the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, which runs England's only youth gender identity clinic, vowed to appeal, setting the stage for a Supreme Court showdown.

Keira Bell, 23, brought the action against the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust after regretting taking puberty blockers at the age of 16 that she feared may have damaged her ability to have children.

Bell, who "detransitioned" in her early 20s and now lives as a woman, had argued for puberty blockers to only be prescribed for under-18s with a court order.

The judges said 16 and 17-year-olds were presumed to be able to consent to medical treatment, but doctors may want to seek court orders before prescribing them puberty blockers due to the "experimental" nature of the treatment.

Bell welcomed the decision.

"I'm delighted at the judgment of the court today, a judgment that will protect vulnerable people. I wish it had been made for me before I embarked on the devastating experiment of puberty blockers," she told reporters outside the court.

Lawsuits

Bell's lawyer, Paul Conrathe, said the decision "opens the floodgates for expensive clinical negligence claims" and called on the government to launch a public inquiry.

NHS England, which commissions the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust's services, immediately updated its guidelines.

"The Tavistock have immediately suspended new referrals for puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones for the under 16s, which in future will only be permitted where a court specifically authorises it," an NHS England spokesperson said by email.

The Tavistock had argued it would be an intrusion on a young person's autonomy to restrict access to the drugs and said the outcome was "likely to cause anxiety for patients and their families".

A spokeswoman confirmed the Trust was in talks with lawyers

Previously in Britain under a 1985 court ruling, children under the age of 16 could consent to medical treatment if they were deemed to understand and fully appreciate the implications, in what is known as the Gillick competence test.

Jolyon Maugham, a lawyer and director of the Good Law Project, a legal nonprofit that has worked on trans rights cases, said the new ruling could push families into taking children abroad for treatment.

"The practical effect of the judgment will be that puberty blockers will very rarely be prescribed to those under 16," Maugham said on Twitter.

The mother of a trans 14-year-old, who has filed legal action over waiting times at the Tavistock gender clinic, described it as a "pretty devastating day".

"There's so much evidence that people don't understand what it means to be trans ... It's not a choice," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, asking not to be named to protect her child's identity.

The ruling comes as rising numbers of adolescents globally seek to change gender, dividing those who fear doctors are too hasty in prescribing puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones and those worried about access to medication they deem life-saving.

The Tavistock has released figures showing a nearly 30-fold rise in child referrals to the clinic in the past decade, to about 2,560 last year.

Courts and lawmakers from Canada and the United States to Mexico and Brazil are weighing parental rights and the age at which someone can make medical decisions.

Trans rights campaigners have voiced concerns that the inability to access treatment will harm adolescents with gender dysphoria.

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health, a global body of doctors specialised in treating trans people, says puberty blockers may prevent the negative mental impact of gender dysphoria in puberty.

It described them as "fully reversible" but acknowledged concerns about possible impacts on bone development and height.

UK's top court rejects trans man's bid to be named child's father

Trans man Freddy McConnell's bid to be named the father rather than the mother on his child's birth certificate was rejected by Britain's Supreme Court.

By Rachel Savage

Thomson Reuters Foundation (16.11.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3nuPuQv> - A British transgender man's bid to be named the father rather than the mother on his child's birth certificate has been rejected by the country's highest court, in a case that has highlighted evolving conceptions of gender.

Freddy McConnell transitioned aged 22 and official documents, such as his passport and health records, have been changed to show his sex as male.

Britain's Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal against a ruling by a lower court that said existing law balanced trans rights with the view "that every child should have a mother and should be able to discover who their mother was".

The challenge did not "raise an arguable point of law", it said on its website on Monday.

McConnell and his lawyers did not reply to requests for comment.

McConnell, a journalist, stopped taking testosterone in 2016 and became pregnant through fertility treatment using donor sperm.

His journey to parenthood was shown in a documentary, "Seahorse", and he is currently sharing his efforts to become pregnant again via IVF on Instagram.

"This could've been a really pivotal moment for trans parents such as Freddy," said Cara English of trans advocacy group Gendered Intelligence.

"We hope that in the near future the loophole that forces men such as Freddy to be incorrectly referred to as "mothers" can be legally righted."

In April McConnell told the Thomson Reuters Foundation he had accepted his legal fight would be "a long road" and that appealing to the European Court of Human Rights was a possibility.

"I don't really think it's about the fact that I gave birth," he said. "Ultimately, it's about the fact that trans people have never been taken into account."

BBC 'no bias' rules prevent staff joining LGBT pride marches

Director general Tim Davie introduces new social media guidelines and ban on 'controversial' gatherings.

By Jim Waterson

The Guardian (29.10.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3jStzk9> - BBC journalists have been told that new rules on impartiality mean they may no longer be able to go on LGBT pride marches, even in a personal capacity, in case their presence is taken as a sign of political bias.

The BBC's director general, Tim Davie, introduced the rules on Thursday. They are designed to shore up the public perception of BBC impartiality, following long-running criticism pushed by rightwing media outlets about alleged biases of corporation staff.

In addition to strict new social media guidelines, Davie introduced a ban on the broadcaster's news reporters taking part in "public demonstrations or gatherings about controversial issues" even when not marching under an identifiable BBC banner.

The guidelines state that "judgment is required as to what issues are 'controversial' with regard to marches or demonstrations, though it should be assumed that most marches are contentious to some degree or other".

Journalists in BBC newsrooms across the UK told the Guardian that managers had informed them that while pride marches were not specifically mentioned by the guidelines, journalists would be stopped from attending due to the new rules.

BBC sources did not dispute this, but said interpretation of the rules would be at the discretion of local managers. They emphasised that there was no explicit ban on pride marches in the rules. BBC employees not working in the news or current affairs divisions would still be able to take part in public marches and protests.

One BBC journalist said their manager had been told that growing media and political opposition to trans rights in the UK meant public LGBT pride events were now more likely to count as controversial events, meaning they would not be able to attend even in a personal capacity.

Managers also held up Black Lives Matter marches as an example of protests that would be banned for news staff, even in their spare time.

BBC Northern Ireland pulled its employees from taking part in Belfast Pride last year, after politicians raised concerns that it breached impartiality rules by implicitly endorsing same-sex marriage. The same year, however, the BBC's entertainment arm spent a substantial sum to launch RuPaul's Drag Race UK with a float at Manchester Pride.

The introduction of the impartiality guidelines has also caught out Fran Unsworth, the BBC's director of news. She contacted staff on Thursday to introduce the strict social media rules, which explicitly warn reporters that liking posts on Twitter and other social media platforms could be seen as a sign of "revealed bias".

Unfortunately, staff quickly noticed that Unsworth's own rarely used personal Twitter account had most recently liked a 2019 tweet by a Liberal Democrat activist criticising the prime minister's performance in a Question Time debate. The tweet said: "Boris has just

offended everyone, male or female, in this room. I've never seen a more appalling performance by a UK prime minister. Absolutely dreadful."

A BBC spokesperson said Unsworth had now deleted all of her "likes". They said it highlighted the issues that the new impartiality guidelines were intended to address. "This just shows how vigilant we all need to be. This was a classic case of fat finger syndrome. She didn't even realise she'd 'liked' it."

LGBT+ advocates dismayed as UK gov't scraps key transgender rights reform

Britain's government has dropped plans to let transgender people change gender legally without a medical diagnosis, after two years of heated debate.

By Rachel Savage

Thomson Reuters Foundation (22.09.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3iburiQ> - Transgender people will not be allowed to legally change gender without a medical diagnosis, the British government said on Tuesday, scrapping a proposed reform that sparked furious debate between LGBT+ and women's rights campaigners.

The government launched a consultation two years ago on overhauling the 2004 Gender Recognition Act (GRA) to allow "self-ID" in England and Wales - a reform opponents said could allow predatory men access to women-only spaces such as toilets.

While the "self-ID" proposal was scrapped, the cost for trans people to change birth certificates will be cut from 140 pounds (\$180) to a "nominal amount" and the process will be moved online.

Trans rights advocates expressed disappointment at Tuesday's announcement on the outcome of the consultation.

"It's a shocking failure in leadership," Nancy Kelley, the chief executive of Stonewall, Britain's largest LGBT+ advocacy group, said in an emailed statement.

"While these moves will make the current process less costly and bureaucratic, they don't go anywhere near far enough toward meaningfully reforming the Act to make it easier for all trans people to go about their daily life."

Countries including Ireland, Portugal, Norway and Argentina have "self-ID", allowing trans people to legally change gender via a legal declaration and without doctors' involvement.

Almost two thirds of the 102,818 respondents to the British consultation said they backed removing the requirement for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, a government report showed.

More than three quarters said they supported scrapping the need for trans people to show they had lived in their gender for a specific time period - currently two years.

But women's rights activists who had opposed the introduction of "self-ID", welcomed the news.

"It's really good news and it acknowledges a fair balance between trans people and women's rights," Nicola Williams of Fair Play for Women, which campaigned against the reform, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

She said the group's priorities would now be looking at how to ensure "privacy, safety and fairness" when it came to trans people accessing women-only areas such as hospital wards, prisons and changing rooms.

In the United States, women's rights groups said in 2016 that 200 municipalities that allowed trans people to use rape crisis facilities and domestic violence shelters saw no rise in sexual violence or public safety issues as a result.

Some British trans rights campaigners expressed relief that the sometimes-toxic debate over the issue may now cool down.

Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling weighed into the issue earlier this year, saying she did not support "self-ID" as it would be "offering cover to predators", a view she said was informed by her experience of domestic violence.

"Hopefully it means that so much negative attention that has been sent our way as communities can be quietened," said Cara English of advocacy group Gendered Intelligence.

She said that their focus would now be "things that affect us in a much more material way", including healthcare and hate crime.

Disney, Google, Microsoft back trans rights amid fierce British debate

Trans rights have become a contentious issue in Britain as the government decides whether to ease the rules on legally changing gender.

By Rachel Savage

Thomson Reuters Foundation (14.09.2020) - <https://tmsnrt.rs/2E0YZpq> - Dozens of organisations including Disney, Google and Microsoft weighed into a fierce debate over transgender rights in Britain on Monday, writing to Prime Minister Boris Johnson to ask him to support making it easier for people to legally change gender.

Trans rights have become a contentious issue since the government launched a consultation into reforming the Gender Recognition Act in 2018, with opponents saying easing the rules could potentially let predatory men into women-only spaces.

Multinational companies were joined by universities and trans advocacy groups in the open letter to Johnson, which drew 83 signatories. Dozens more, including BP and Unilever, pledged support for trans rights in an online statement.

"We wanted to get this public statement out that says no matter what you're reading from certain sources, that's not reality," said Bobbi Pickard, a BP project manager who came out as trans in 2018 and who spearheaded the open letter initiative.

"Being trans is something that's a naturally occurring form of human development," she said. "We all want our employees to flourish in their careers and their lives and trans people should be allowed to do that as well."

Britain's government has repeatedly delayed its response to the trans law consultation, and in June local media reported that it was set to scrap plans to let trans people change their gender on birth certificates without a medical diagnosis.

A spokesman for the government's Equalities Office said in an email that officials were working through the results of the consultation and "will be responding shortly".

Countries including Ireland, Norway and Argentina allow trans people to change their legal gender without a medical diagnosis, known as "self-ID".

Prominent figures including "Harry Potter" author J.K. Rowling have expressed concern that "self-ID" could allow men into women-only spaces such as toilets and changing rooms, endangering women and girls.

Monday's letter, which was initially sent privately in July with fewer signatories, pledged support for trans staff and urged the government to support the consultation's findings.

"We all strive to be trans-inclusive organisations and believe that a diverse workforce, including trans employees, offers greater business success," it said.

"Failing to honour the government's commitment to implement the consultation findings, and even increasing restrictions on trans people's ability to live authentically, benefits no one," the letter added.

Robbie de Santos of Stonewall UK, an LGBT+ advocacy group that helped coordinate the campaign, said numerous companies had got in touch to say they wanted to show the British government that there was support for trans rights.

"Actually that support is not being heard in the mix of the often very toxic social media environment," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Avanti West Coast to launch UK's first Pride train entirely staffed by an LGBTQ+ crew

ITV News (25.08.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2YYKCcK> - Avanti West Coast is launching the UK's first fully wrapped Pride train entirely staffed by an LGBTQ+ crew for its first official service.

After Covid-19 forced the cancellation of Pride events across the country, which Avanti West Coast had planned to support, the intercity rail operator has completely wrapped one of its iconic Pendolinos with the progressive Pride flag.

The train operator has adopted the most recent iteration of the Pride flag which sees the addition of the colours black, brown, light blue, pink and white to bring people of colour, transgender people and those living with or who have been lost to HIV/AIDS to the forefront highlighting Avanti West Coast's progressive commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Billed as the biggest Pride flag the UK has seen on the side of a train, the 11-carriage, 265 metre-long train will be waved off by Avanti West Coast staff and members of the LGBTQ+ community at Euston and will be welcomed in at Manchester Piccadilly station on Tuesday 25 August.

Discussing how Pride means more for the diversity and inclusion of people up and down the West Coast Main Line, Avanti West Coast Executive Director – Commercial, Sarah Copley said: “I’m delighted to be launching our new Avanti West Coast Pride Train which represents everyone in the LGBTQ+ community. It is a symbol of our commitment to diversity and inclusion as it travels up and down the West Coast Main Line. We Live Proud 365 days a year, not just today.”

She continued: “I am so proud to be a part of a business where our people represent the communities we serve.

We are always listening to our people and customers to ensure our diversity and inclusion strategy is relevant. Our new train livery is a powerful example of keeping the conversation going”.

Plans to drop gender recognition reforms would see UK plummet in LGBT equality rankings

Government is set to scrap plans to allow people to change their legal gender by self-identifying as male or female.

Amnesty International (14.06.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2A763Pw> - Responding to reports that the UK Government plans to drop key reforms to the Gender Recognition Act, Chiara Capraro, Amnesty International’s Women’s Rights Programme Director, said:

“The UK has always prided itself on being a champion of LGBT equality – if it’s serious about this, it will update the Gender Recognition Act to ensure trans people can enjoy their rights, free from discrimination.

“Reports that the Government intends to scrap plans to bring gender recognition laws in line with human rights standards are extremely worrying.

“More than two years ago, the Government rightly set out a plan to reform the out-of-date Gender Recognition Act - a U-turn on this would send a chilling message that the UK is a hostile place for trans people.

“Perpetuating wrong stereotypes of trans women as a danger to other women is dehumanising and wrong, and risks further inciting hate crimes against trans people.

“The UK is already slipping further and further down the European rankings for LGBT equality - falling from 3rd to 9th place over the past three years. The proposed move would no doubt see the UK plummet even further.

“The UK has always prided itself on being a champion of LGBT equality – if it’s serious about this, it will update the Gender Recognition Act to ensure trans people can enjoy their rights, free from discrimination.”

UK moves to ban trans youth from getting gender affirming health care

A minister said she wants to protect transgender youth from "irreversible decisions" by forcing them to undergo puberty as the wrong gender.

By Alex Bollinger

LGBTQ Nation (23.04.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3f18jrh> - The U.K.'s Minister for Women and Equalities Liz Truss has announced a multi-pronged attack on transgender rights that could ban gender affirming health care for transgender youth.

Truss, a member of the Conservative Party, announced in a meeting with the Women and Equalities Select Committee that she would be putting forth amendments for the Gender Recognition Act, the 2004 law that allows transgender people to correct their legal gender.

She said that there would be three areas of focus for the proposed amendments. One of them was a call for an end to gender affirming care for transgender people under the age of 18 to protect them "from decisions that they could make, that are irreversible in the future."

"I believe strongly that adults should have the freedom to lead their lives as they see fit," said Truss, "but I think it's very important that while people are still developing their decision-making capabilities that we protect them from making those irreversible decisions."

This affects puberty blockers and access to hormones, because gender confirmation surgery already isn't provided for people under 18 by the U.K.'s National Health Service.

Puberty blockers delay certain irreversible changes to transgender people's bodies so that they can either better understand what they want to do or avoid dysphoric feelings that come with going through puberty and developing secondary sex characteristics that don't align with one's gender identity.

They have been shown to lower the lifelong risk of suicidal thoughts among transgender people who wanted them as teens. But in order for them to be effective, they have to be taken before the onset of puberty. That is, well before the age of 18.

Laura Russell of the LGBTQ organization Stonewall said that they're "concerned" with the minister's comments.

"We'd welcome an opportunity to discuss this with the Minister, as it's crucial all young people who are questioning their gender identity are able to access high-quality, timely support," she said. "Every trans young person should be given the care they need, in an informed and supportive manner, so they're able to lead a happy, healthy life."

Mermaids, a transgender youth organization, was more direct.

"It would be an extraordinary move for the Minister for Women and Equalities to support the introduction of a new form of inequality into British medical practice," said a spokesperson for the organization.

A U.K. transgender man who was only identified as "Alex" told iNews that starting hormones at age 16 saved his life.

"It really reduces the dysphoria and live my life. I've got a friend who hasn't [got hormones], and sometimes he won't even speak because of how high his voice is. He can't deal with that."

If he didn't have access to testosterone, he said, "I would probably be suicidal. I would be in a pretty bad place."

One of Truss's other areas of focus for Truss was "the protection of single-sex spaces," which she called "extremely important."

Anti-transgender activists in the U.K. often say that transgender women are "biological males" and usually use the expression "single-sex spaces" to refer to areas where cisgender women, transgender men, and non-binary people who were assigned female at birth are allowed to enter, to the exclusion of transgender women.

Last, Truss said that the amendments would maintain "the proper checks and balances in the system" when it comes to "transgender adults" but didn't elaborate further.

She didn't specify a timeline for the amendments other than that a review would happen this summer.

Half of LGBT+ women are outed at work

By Jamie Wareham

Forbes (20.04.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2RRI6kO> - Half of LGBT+ women are being outed at work, a new survey reveals.

Women are going back in the closet when they get their first job, feeling unable to report issues to HR and struggling in "male-dominated and heteronormative environments."

Released ahead of Lesbian Visibility Week, the new research by DIVA Magazine and Kantar looked at the experiences of LGBT+ women's work life, financial stability, well-being, relationships and their overall feelings of safety.

The survey shows that LGBT+ women are fed up of male-dominated LGBT+ spaces and campaigns, feel most safe at home due to the violence and uncertainty they face out in the world and are facing disproportionate problems at work.

Unsurprisingly the women surveyed, who already face a higher number of barriers in the workplace, feel they are a 'minority within a minority' because of their queer identity.

Although three in four respondents are open about their sexual orientation to most of their work colleagues, the youngest age group (16-24) are far less likely to be out at work.

Only one in three of those under the age of 24 feel able to be out at work, which Kantar concludes that with LGBT+ people coming out younger than ever, that many are 'going back into the closet' when they get their first job.

It's currently estimated in the graduate LGBT+ community, that six in ten, regardless of their gender identity, go back in the closet when they get their first job.

In a worrying statistic, the most common homophobic experience LGBT+ women face in the workplace is being outed. Half of the respondents saying they have been through this discriminatory ordeal.

The research, which also looked at trans women's experiences found that one in four transgender people feel that they have faced barriers in their current workplace due to their gender identity.

Research reveals discrimination LGBT+ women face for Lesbian Visibility Week

"The DIVA research highlights the challenges that LGBTQI women face; feeling invisible and unsupported in key areas of their lives," Linda Riley, Publisher of DIVA magazine, says.

The research is being launched as part of a week of events, extending the Lesbian Visibility Day on 26 April each year, into an extended celebration of queer and trans women's experiences.

Claire Harvey, MBE, GB Paralympian, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant and DIVA Development Week Lead, believes with the current COVID-19 pandemic, now more than ever it is vital that there is a focus on women's lives:

"We use the word community all too often, but what does it actually mean? For me, it means a sense of belonging, visibility and value.

"LGBTQI women are a diverse, talented and often unheard group – so now, more than ever, it's important that we build up our community and help those who are most isolated feel connected."
