

# LGBTQIA+ Position Paper

Updated May 2025

The Iona Community



# LGBTQIA+ Position Paper



## Our Common Concern

The Iona Community affirms the inherent goodness of people of all sexualities and genders and their loving relationships. We deplore homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia and the consequent social injustice. The LGBTQIA+ Common Concern Network exists to enable us to encourage, inform, discuss and affirm LGBTQIA+ identities.

As an ecumenical movement working for justice and peace, our Members, Associates and Friends enjoy diversity of theological belief in many issues of life and faith. We are committed to ways of working which shape how we celebrate and honour difference and diversity.

## Our Commitment

**We remain intensely concerned about the ongoing impact that homophobic and transphobic behaviours and cultures have on LGBTQIA+ people and on those who love them.** These include detrimental effects on health and wellbeing, familial relationships, social connections, and access to faith communities, leading to deep suffering and in some cases tragic loss of life through violence and suicide.

**We believe that justice and peace must be for all, not only for some.** LGBTQIA+ identities are often used as 'wedge issues' in political debates. A clear example of this is the treatment of trans identities in the 2024 UK political manifestos and in USA politics. Every locality has LGBTQIA+ members. However, not every place has safe enough community spaces or services for LGBTQIA+ people. There is a particular lack of services in rural areas.

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*Two in five trans people (41%) have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity.*

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**We believe that LGBTQIA+ people should never be excluded from or harmed within faith spaces.** Stonewall reports that only three in ten LGBT\* people of faith (29 per cent) take part at least once a month in a collective activity connected with their faith. This lack of inclusion has inspired the creation of LGBTQIA+ specific ecclesial movements such as the [Open Table Network](#), information groups such as [One Body One Faith](#), campaigning groups such as [The European Forum of LGBTI+ Christian Groups](#), [Believe Out Loud](#), and [House of Rainbow](#).

**We believe that LGBTQIA+ people have the right to a productive and safe work/life balance.** We LGBTQIA+ people are affected by economic injustice, particularly in relation to employment instability, with almost one in five LGBT people reporting that they have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. They are also the target of capitalism through marketing to the 'pink pound'.

Many in the Iona Community membership and staff team are LGBTQIA+. While we are an inclusive workplace, we are aware that sometimes LGBTQIA+ people experience difficulties in social and workplace settings.

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*One in four trans people (26%) aren't open with anyone at work about being trans. This number increases to about two in five non-binary people (37%) who aren't out at work.*

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LGBTQIA+ people sometimes avoid travel and leisure activities due to fear of discrimination and/or abuse. As a global Community, we also know that fear of discrimination and abuse is heightened in contexts where criminalisation of LGBTQIA+ people is the norm. We must act as a refuge and an instigator of protest and change.

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*A quarter of the world's population believes that being LGBT\* should be a crime.*

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**We celebrate all diversity.** Our consistent concern for social justice, when applied to people who are LGBTQIA+, includes trans people. We do not support a divide between people based on sexuality, sex or gender identity. We affirm the human rights of all human beings. The validity of trans identities or trans people's access to human rights is not up for debate. We support the right of people to change how they identify. We do not support so-called conversion therapy.

We know that there are genuine concerns about the safety and equality of all people, particularly of trans people and of women, and seek opportunities to discuss these and to work together for justice.

We acknowledge the debates between some feminist and trans perspectives that are a part of contemporary culture wars, and know that these are not representative of all women or all trans people.

## **How will we learn, pray and act about and for LGBTQIA+ people?**

**We long for a just and peaceful world in which LGBTQIA+ people can flourish. We will:**

- Assert the full humanity of all LGBTQIA+ people.
- Support LGBTQIA+ people to tell their stories.
- Campaign in support of the human rights of LGBTQIA+ people.
- Actively support our LGBTQIA+ community when they experience homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

**We believe that it is in partnership with others that social justice and peace can be achieved by and for LGBTQIA+ people. We will:**

- Work to build relationships with organisations that support LGBTQIA+ people.
- Support Members, Associate Members and Friends who are campaigning on issues of social justice related to LGBTQIA+ identities.

**We know that LGBTQIA+ people are a vital part of our collective spiritual practice and must be able to participate equitably in it. We will:**

- Ensure that our spiritual practice is inclusive and expansive.
- Develop best practice in LGBTQIA+-inclusive liturgy writing in partnership with people and groups with similar aims.

**We seek to offer inclusive and affirming support, challenge and inspiration to our LGBTQIA+ community. We will:**

- Continue to monitor and evaluate our diversity policies to ensure they are fit for purpose.
- Create and signpost to resources for pastoral care, dialogue and learning within our Community and at our islands centres around LGBTQIA+ identities.

**We commit to critiquing policies and practices that affect LGBTQIA+ people economically. We will:**

- Avoid investing in, or purchasing from, organisations that campaign explicitly against the human rights of LGBTQIA+ people.
- Maintain a working environment that offer a robust challenge to homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.

## Really useful resources

- For more about human rights in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity visit the [European Court of Human Rights](#) and the [Council of Europe](#) websites
- [The Inclusive Church Statement – Inclusive Church \(inclusive-church.org\)](#)
- To explore our reading list please visit our [book list](#)
- For LGBTQIA+-related liturgies and prayers please visit [Iona Books](#)

## Statistics

The statistics in this paper can be found at [Stonewall's website](#).

\*Some stats refer to LGBT rather than LGBTQIA+ - these come from the 2018 LGBT in Britain report which uses that shorter acronym. Our preference is to use LGBTQIA+ for maximum inclusion.

## Contact us

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Iona Community

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The Iona Community is an ecumenical Christian movement seeking new ways of living the gospel in today's world through working for peace and social justice rebuilding community and in the renewal of worship. Company No: SC096243 Charity No: SC003794