



LGBTI equality and the Independence referendum:

**Response to the Equality Network's questions from Colin Fox,
Co-spokesperson of the Scottish Socialist Party**

Equality Law

- 1. If there is a vote for independence, will your party support protecting equality in the written constitution of Scotland, including on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status?**

Yes. The Scottish Socialist Party is in favour of a written constitution that enshrines our country's social democratic and socialist values in law and we believe equality on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status is a right all human beings must be entitled to.

- 2. If there is a vote to remain in the UK, will your party support further devolution of equal opportunities powers, as is already the case in Northern Ireland, so that Scotland can protect the progress that has been made in recent years and deal with the deficiencies of current equality law, including:**

- That discrimination on grounds of gender identity and intersex status are not fully covered**
- That unlike sex, gender reassignment, race and disability, there is no protection from harassment in the provision of goods, facilities and services for the sexual orientation protected characteristic**
- That same-sex couples are not currently entitled to equal pension provisions under private sector pension schemes**

Would you support complete or partial devolution of equal opportunities powers?

We obviously hope there is a Yes vote on 18th September but if there was a No vote the SSP will continue to argue for more powers for Holyrood including further equal opportunities powers. We would support complete devolution of the equal opportunity powers you list here in this question.

- 3. In your view, would a vote for independence or a vote to remain in the UK be better for the future of equality law in Scotland, and why?**

A Yes vote is an endorsement of Scotland's social democratic and socialist values and a rejection of the neo-liberal, warmongering and therefore better for further necessary advances in equality law in Scotland.

Leadership and Resources

- 4. If there is a vote for independence, in what ways will your party ensure that Scotland commits adequate leadership and resources on efforts to secure LGBTI equality and human rights through public services (e.g. promoting equality in schools, tackling hate crime)?**

The Scottish Socialist Party is proud to have been at the forefront of progressive politics in Scotland over the past 16 years. With Independence we will push for an Equalities Minister for example with power to conduct a full human rights audit of all our public services and the private sector to see what improvements must be made and with the full authority to bring forward the changes necessary.

- 5. If there is a vote to remain in the UK, in what ways will your party ensure that Scotland commits adequate leadership and resources on efforts to secure LGBTI equality and human rights through public services?**

It will be much more difficult of course to affect change without Independence but the SSP will continue to press for the resources and action necessary to improve public service provision and private sector attitudes in so far as it affects LGBTI equality and human rights.

- 6. In your view, would a vote for independence or a vote to remain in the UK be better for the future of efforts to secure LGBTI equality and human rights through public services, and why?**

Independence would be better as it will transform Scotland from the UK backwater and propel us to be an international beacon of best practice on equality and human rights, and I believe we are ready to assume that responsibility.

Foreign Affairs and International Development

- 7. If there is a vote for independence, how will your party ensure that Scotland has a strong influence promoting LGBTI equality and human rights around the world, for instance through diplomatic efforts and the provision of aid?**

With Independence Scotland will join the international community of nations on a full and equal basis, ready to join other progressive, modern, democratic nations to assume the responsibilities to advance LGBTI equality and human rights worldwide.

- 8. If there is a vote to remain in the UK, how will your party ensure that Scotland is able to play its part in promoting LGBTI equality and human rights around the world?**

We will press for Scotland to work where we can, as much as we can, with all those LGBTI organisations around the world to raise awareness of the problems, highlight the actions needed to solve them and achieve those changes urgently.

9. In your view, would a vote for independence or a vote to remain in the UK better enable Scotland to promote LGBTI equality and human rights around the world, and why?

Only a vote for Independence will enable Scotland to play the full role I believe we need to, and want to, on LGBTI equality and human rights today.

Asylum

10. If there is a vote for independence, will your party ensure that Scotland welcomes LGBTI people seeking asylum from their home country because of a well-founded fear of persecution on grounds of their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status?

Yes, absolutely. The SSP wants to build a Scotland that is welcoming to those seeking refuge. We are dismayed by the negativity, hostility and suspicion towards refugees ascendant in Westminster politics today. Scotland has much to gain by welcoming refugees and those seeking to make their home here. It benefits our nation economically, socially and culturally.

11. If there is a vote to remain in the UK, will your party support the improvement of the UK's asylum processes so that LGBTI people with a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status, can find asylum in the UK?

Yes, of course.

12. In your view, would a vote for independence or a vote to remain in the UK be better for the future of asylum provision in Scotland, and why?

A Yes vote transforms the current bleak picture into one Scotland can be proud of and that will enhance our dreadful international reputation shared with the UK.

Summary

13. In your view, why should LGBTI people in Scotland vote for independence or vote to remain in the UK, both in terms of LGBTI equality and also more generally?

LGBTI people in Scotland can vote for Independence with pride and with confidence that our new nation is about to emerge and our social democratic and socialist values - of equality, peace and an end to exploitation - replace the neo-liberal hegemony at Westminster with its brutal exploitation, elitism, inequality and warmongering.