



9<sup>th</sup> December, 2015

Mr Ned Sharratt  
Assistant Clerk  
Public Petitions Committee  
Room T3.40  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Sharratt,

**Consideration of Petition PE1573 (Statutory teaching of LGBTI+ issues)**

Thank you for your request for views on the above petition from Scouts Scotland, particularly in relation to how our policies support young LGBTI+ members and what training packages we provide to adult volunteers and staff.

The Scout Association, of which Scouts Scotland is a part, has had an Equal Opportunities Policy in place since the mid-1990's. This policy states that: ***no young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of:***

- ***Class or socio-economic status;***
- ***ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race;***
- ***gender (including gender reassignment);***
- ***marital or civil partnership status;***
- ***sexual orientation;***
- ***disability (including mental or physical ability);***
- ***political belief;***
- ***pregnancy;***
- ***religion or belief (including the absence of belief)***

Equally, the policy states that: ***no person volunteering their services should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of:***

- ***age;***
- ***class or socio-economic status;***
- ***ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race;***
- ***gender (including gender reassignment);***
- ***marital or civil partnership status;***
- ***sexual orientation;***
- ***disability (including mental or physical ability);***
- ***political belief;***
- ***pregnancy;***
- ***religion or belief (including the absence of belief)***

**THE SCOTTISH COUNCIL THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION**

Fordell Firs Hillend Dunfermline Fife KY11 7HQ Tel 01383 419073 Fax 01383 414892 email [shq@scouts-scotland.org.uk](mailto:shq@scouts-scotland.org.uk) [www.scouts-scotland.org.uk](http://www.scouts-scotland.org.uk)

Patron HM The Queen Founder Robert Baden-Powell OM Chief Commissioner of Scotland Graham Haddock MD FRCS(Paed)

Incorporated by Royal Charter 1912.Scottish Charity No. SC 017511

This key policy, in all its aspects, is rigorously explored during both our adult appointment process and our adult member training programme.

Our adult training programme is regularly reviewed and updated. The adult training module entitled **Scouting for All** has recently been updated to ensure that adults explore and discuss a wide range of issues that face our young members and challenge some of the prejudices that adults may encounter whilst working with our members and other adults.

We have also recently updated our adult training modules on **Supporting Young People** to assist adult volunteers working with young people to understand and meet the needs of our youth members. This module includes an exploration of the characteristics of young people, helps adults to recognise the external influences on them and encourages the creation of a supportive environment for young people where adults can respond to any issues that affect our youth members.

Our **Anti-Bullying** training provides practical advice, training and support for adult leaders dealing with homophobia as well as other types of bullying.

The (UK) national Fellowship of Lesbian and Gay Scouts (FLAGS) has been in existence for many years. It was developed to offer LGBTI adults a safe space to discuss LGBTI issues internally and look at how we are perceived externally as welcoming to the LGBTI community. Its objectives include:

- Be a support function for all current members of the Scout Association
- Lead the representation of Scouting at Pride events across the UK
- Be subject matter experts to the UK Scout HQ and National teams on issues around sexuality
- Offer education, advice and support to all members of The Scout Association - both adults and young people

Scouts Scotland attendance at Pride events in Scotland has raised awareness of Scouting as an inclusive organisation and recently resulted in our nomination for an award in the **Equality Initiative of the Year** category at the first Scottish LGBTI Awards in September 2015.

We are currently working with one Scout District in Glasgow to pilot a values based training event for Leaders to help ensure that Scouting supports and responds positively to LGBTI young people. We hope this programme will then be rolled out across the District to Explorer Scouts (14-18 year old youth members) as part of a series of 'Life Issues' Programmes.

Finally, we are in the process of appointing a volunteer to work with the Scouts Scotland Inclusive Scouting Team to look at how we can work alongside external partners to provide further advice, training and support for LGBTI members. As an organisation we welcome any initiative that provides support, counselling and ultimately acceptance for all young people growing up in a diverse and inclusive country.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Haddock  
Chief Commissioner of Scotland

#### THE SCOTTISH COUNCIL THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION

Fordell Firs Hillend Dunfermline Fife KY11 7HQ Tel 01383 419073 Fax 01383 414892 email [shq@scouts-scotland.org.uk](mailto:shq@scouts-scotland.org.uk) [www.scouts-scotland.org.uk](http://www.scouts-scotland.org.uk)

Patron HM The Queen Founder Robert Baden-Powell OM Chief Commissioner of Scotland Graham Haddock MD FRCS(Paed)

Incorporated by Royal Charter 1912. Scottish Charity No. SC 017511