

The content on this timeline was adapted from resources by GLSEN, an American organisation dedicated to ensuring that all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students have access to a safe and affirming school environment<sup>1</sup>, and Stonewall, an international organisation with the mission “to stand for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people everywhere,” so that they can express themselves freely and without fear of discrimination<sup>2</sup>.

## 1. 2nd Century, 130

Antinous, a 19-year-old man who was the Roman Emperor Hadrian’s favourite lover, mysteriously dies in the Roman province of Egypt. After finding out about Antinous’s death, Hadrian created a cult that gave Antinous the status of a god and built several sculptures of him throughout the Roman Empire.

## 2. 1623

Francis Bacon, a noted gay man who coined the term “masculine love,” publishes “The Advancement of Learning—an argument for empirical research and against superstition.” This deductive system for empirical research earned him the title “the Father of Modern Science.”

## 3. 1749

Thomas Cannon writes what may be the earliest published defense of homosexuality in English, “Ancient and Modern Pederasty Investigated and Exemplify’d.”

## 4. 1895

The poet and playwright Oscar Wilde is charged with ‘gross indecency’ and sentenced to two years in prison when details emerge of his relationship with another man.

## 5. 1928

Author Radclyffe Hall publishes a semi-autobiographical novel about a lesbian relationship. The book is deemed illegal for violating the Obscene Publications Act of 1857 and is removed from circulation.

## 6. 1951

Roberta Cowell is the first known British trans woman to undergo reassignment surgery and have her birth certificate changed.

## 7. 1958

The Homosexual Law Reform Society is founded to campaign for the legalisation of same-sex relationships in the UK.

## 8. 1967

The Sexual Offences Act 1967 decriminalises sex between two men over 21 and ‘in private’. It did not extend to Scotland (decriminalised in 1980), Northern Ireland (decriminalised in 1982), Guernsey (decriminalised in 1983), Jersey (decriminalised in 1990) or the Isle of Man (decriminalised in 1994) or the Merchant Navy and the Armed Forces (decriminalised in 2000), where sex between two men remained illegal.

## 9. 1969

Police raid the Stonewall Inn in New York City in the early hours of June 28. This leads to four days of struggle between police and LGBTQ+ people. Transgender people, LGBTQ+ people of colour, and youth are a major part of these “riots” that mark the birth of the modern LGBTQ+ movement.

<sup>1</sup> [LGBTQ History Timeline Reference](#), GLSEN

<sup>2</sup> [Key dates for lesbian, gay, bi and trans equality](#), Stonewall, 26 July 2016

- 10. 1970**

The Gay Liberation Front formed in the UK and their first meeting is held in a room in the basement of the London School of Economics.
- 11. 1972**

The first Pride is held in London, attracting approximately 2,000 participants.  
Gay News, Britain's first gay newspaper is founded.
- 12. 1974**

The Labour MP Maureen Colquhoun comes out as the first lesbian MP.
- 13. 1975**

The Liberal Party (now the Liberal Democrats) becomes the first UK political party to support LGBTQ+ rights, passing a motion at their conference to support 'full equality for homosexuals', including equalising the age of consent.
- 14. 1980**

The first Black Gay and Lesbian Group is formed in the UK.
- 15. 1981**
  - A landmark court case finds that Northern Ireland's criminalisation of same-sex acts violates the European Convention on Human Rights.
  - First cases of 'Gay-Related Immune Deficiency' (GRID) are identified in the United Kingdom.
- 16. 1982**
  - GRID (Gay-Related Immunodeficiency Disorder) has its name changed to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome).
  - Terry Higgins dies of AIDS in St. Thomas' Hospital. His partner Rupert Whittaker, Martyn Butler and friends set up the Terry Higgins Trust (which became the Terrence Higgins Trust), the UK's first AIDS charity.
- 17. 1983**

The UK's first national lesbian and gay TV show, One in Five, is shown on Channel 4.
- 18. 1984**
  - The Labour MP Chris Smith becomes the first openly gay MP.
  - Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners campaign is launched in support of workers in the miners' strikes in 1984 and 1985.
- 19. 1985**
  - The first memorial to the Nazi's gay victims is unveiled at the Neuengamme concentration camp. The pink granite stone monument is inscribed with the words "Dedicated to the Homosexual victims of National Socialism."
  - The Black Lesbian and Gay Centre opens in Peckham.
- 20. 1986**

Mark Rees, a trans-man, brings a case to the European Court of Human Rights, stating that UK law prevented him from gaining legal status recognising him as male. The case was lost but the court noted the seriousness of the issues facing trans people.
- 21. 1988**
  - UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, introduces Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988. The Act states that a local authority "shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" or "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship".
  - To protest against Section 28, lesbian activists abseil into the House of Lords and storm the BBC News studio during the live broadcast of the Six O'Clock News.

- 22. 1989**  
Denmark becomes the first country in the world to give legal recognition to same-sex partnerships.
- 23. 1990**  
Justin Fashanu becomes the first professional footballer to come out as gay. He later dies by suicide.
- 24. 1991**  
Sir Ian McKellen meets UK Prime Minister John Major - the first time any sitting Prime Minister has met with LGBTQ+ activists.
- 25. 1992**  
The World Health Organisation declassifies same-sex attraction as a mental illness.
- 26. 1996**  
BBC Radio 4's, The Archers, the world longest running soap, introduces its first openly gay character, Sean Myerson.
- 27. 1998**  
Waheed Alli becomes the first openly gay member of the House of Lords and one of a few openly gay Muslims.
- 28. 1999**
  - The Admiral Duncan, a gay pub in Soho, is bombed by former British National Party member, David Copeland. The attack kills three people and wounds at least 70.
  - Trans Day of Remembrance is founded in the US, and then later in the UK and worldwide, to memorialise those who have been murdered as a result of transphobia and to bring attention to the continued violence endured by the trans community.
- 29. 2000**
  - The UK Government lifts the ban on lesbians, gay men and bi people serving in the armed forces.
  - Legislation is introduced to repeal Section 28 in England and Wales. The bill is defeated. Scotland abolishes Section 28. It remains in place in England and Wales.
- 30. 2001**  
The age of consent for same-sex relationships is lowered to 16 (having been lowered from 21 to 18 in 1994), making it the same as the age of consent for straight people.
- 31. 2002**  
Equal rights are granted to same-sex couples applying for adoption.
- 32. 2003**
  - Section 28 is repealed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, lifting the ban on local authorities from 'the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality'.
  - Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations becomes law in the UK, making it illegal to discriminate against lesbians, gay and bi people in the workplace.
- 33. 2004**
  - The Civil Partnership Act 2004 is passed, granting civil partnership in the United Kingdom. The Act gives same-sex couples the same rights and responsibilities as married straight couples in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.
  - The Gender Recognition Act 2004 is passed giving trans people full legal recognition in their appropriate gender. The Act allows trans people to acquire a new birth certificate, although gender options are still limited to 'male' or 'female'.

- 34. 2006**  
Activist and trade unionist Phyll Opoku Gyimah, aka Lady Phyll, founds and organises the first UK Black Pride.
- 35. 2009**  
Prime Minister David Cameron apologises on behalf of the Conservative Party for the introduction of Section 28.
- 36. 2010**
  - The Equality Act 2010 officially adds gender reassignment as a protected characteristic.
  - A new offence of 'incitement to homophobic hatred' comes into force in the UK.
- 37. 2011**  
Ruth Davidson is elected to lead the Scottish Conservatives. She is the first openly gay leader of a political party.
- 38. 2012**  
Explicit reference to homophobic bullying in schools is introduced into Ofsted's inspection framework in the UK.
- 39. 2013**
  - Alan Turing is given a posthumous royal pardon for his conviction of 'gross indecency' which resulted in his being chemically castrated and later dying by suicide.
  - Olympic diving champion Tom Daley comes out gay.
  - The first Trans Pride event takes place in Brighton.
- 40. 2014**  
Marriages between same-sex couples become legal in England, Wales and Scotland, but not in Jersey (legalised in 2016), the Isle of Man (2016) and Northern Ireland (2020).
- 41. 2015**  
The Royal Vauxhall Tavern becomes the first ever building in the UK to be given a special listing status based on its LGBTQ+ history.
- 42. 2019**
  - The fiftieth anniversary of the Stonewall uprising in the US is celebrated.
  - A new PSHE curriculum is introduced in England, requiring that lessons include acknowledgment of LGBTQ+ rights and protect the physical and mental wellbeing of LGBTQ+ children. The curriculum had not been updated since the year 2000 (before Section 28 was repealed).
- 43. 2020**  
Liberal Democrat MP Layla Moran comes out as pansexual, making her the first openly pansexual UK parliamentarian.
- 44. 2021**
  - The UK census includes questions on gender identity and sexual orientation for the first time, meaning that data can be gathered on the numbers of LGBTQ+ people across the country.
  - The Government announces plans to legislate to ban conversion therapy, as well as setting up a new fund to increase the support available for survivors.
  - Scotland becomes the first country in the world to require schools to embed LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching throughout the curriculum.