

UK announces new support for Commonwealth LGBT rights campaigners

- £2.7 million funding will support civil society organisations working to amend discriminatory laws and practices
- PM confirms funding for Birmingham Pride House at the upcoming Commonwealth Games
- UK has committed £11m to the protection of LGBT rights as Commonwealth chair-in-office

The UK is announcing further funding today [Friday] to support grassroots human rights defenders and advance equality and freedom across the Commonwealth.

Despite welcome progress in recent years, many LGBT people in Commonwealth countries continue to face discrimination and criminalisation.

The £2.7 million package announced by the Prime Minister at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting today will continue work with partners, including The Commonwealth Equality Network and Kaleidoscope Trust, to encourage the reform of outdated laws and policies that fail to protect all individuals from violence and discrimination.

The Prime Minister will also confirm funding for the Pride programme at next month's Commonwealth Games in the UK, with the project being backed by over £40,000 from Government and £50,000 from the Commonwealth Sport Foundation. Delivered by Pride House Birmingham, the programme will include a Pride House presence at the three main athlete village sites for the first time ever at a Commonwealth Games.

Since taking over as Chair-In-Office 2018, the UK has invested over £11 million in the promotion and protection of LGBT rights across the Commonwealth.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The Commonwealth is a voluntary grouping of independent and equal nations, but as a collective it has long been a powerful force for good. The values that our members hold dear, from human rights to equality, should apply to everyone in society.

I am immensely proud of the UK's record on LGBT rights – the freedom to love who you want is a core British value and a vital component of any democracy. I hope world will see these values in action at next month's Commonwealth Games.

The majority of the new funding (£2.5m) announced today will go to civil

society organisations and human rights defenders working to amend and repeal discriminatory laws and policies, and to safeguard progress in equalities.

A further funding allocation will support a secure data storage system for LGBT refugees from Afghanistan, and fund the UK's continued work alongside the global Equal Rights Coalition as co-chairs.

The UK plays a leading role in promoting LGBT rights around the world. Last year, the Prime Minister appointed Lord Herbert as the UK's Special Envoy on LGBT rights, bringing together the Government's domestic work and global leadership on the issue.