

TO: Assembly
FROM: Sam Johnson-Audini
RE: Support the fight for marriage equality in Northern Ireland
DATE: 31 January 2019

Assembly notes:

- That in the most recent vote, 51% of Northern Irish MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly) voted for marriage equality, but the DUP (Democratic Unionist Party) was able to veto it by invoking a petition of concern.¹
- That 70% of the Northern Irish public are in support of marriage equality.²
- That Northern Ireland is the only place in the UK where same-sex marriage is still illegal.
- That reduced LGBT+ rights in Northern Ireland has led to a mental health crisis in the community that is particularly severe, with 35% of LGBT+ individuals self-harming compared to 13% in rest of UK, 57% drinking to hazardous levels compared to 24% in England, and 25% attempting suicide.³

Assembly believes:

- That marriage is a fundamental human right that everyone, regardless of their identity, should have access to.
- That it is our duty as a students' union to fight for marriage equality and LGBT+ rights in Northern Ireland, not only on behalf of our LGBT+ and Northern Irish student populations, but also as a fundamental human right.

Assembly resolves:

- To mandate the Welfare & Liberation Officer to support the Love Equality Coalition campaign for equal marriage in Northern Ireland by running a fundraiser during LGBT+ History Month.
- To support the Love Equality Coalition further by publishing a statement of support as a students' union, and running an online awareness-raising campaign about marriage equality in Northern Ireland.

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-politics-34692546>

² <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/survey-shows-70-support-for-samesex-marriages-in-northern-ireland-34842125.html>

³ <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/mental-health-northern-ireland-fundamental-facts>