

The LGBTQ+ Manifesto for the 2020 General and Regional Elections

Constitutional and Law Reform

1. Include sexual orientation and gender identity as grounds for discrimination in the non-discrimination provision of the Guyana Constitution (Article 149) by 2025.
2. Repeal sections 351 to 353 of the *Criminal Law (Offences) Act* which criminalize same-sex intimacy between consenting, adult men in private, by the end of 2020.
3. Include sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression as grounds for discrimination in the *Prevention of Discrimination Act* (Section 4) by the end of 2020.

Guyana is party to international treaties that require the protection of basic human rights for everyone, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and other queer (LGBTQ+) people. Guyana's next government must engage in law reform efforts to bring Guyana's laws into compliance with its international obligations, and to ensure that the rights of every citizen are fully realized.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

4. Fully implement and apply existing laws regarding sexual and gender-based violence, ensuring there are adequate resources to provide services to all victims, including LGBTQ+ persons.
5. Ensure all police, probation officers, social workers, and child protection officers have been trained on gender, sexual diversity and human rights, so they are fully equipped to respond to instances of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as hate-motivated crimes.

Sexual and gender-based violence is a silent epidemic affecting LGBTQ+ Guyanese. Although the *Domestic Violence Act* is gender-neutral, persons in LGBTQ+ relationships are unlikely to seek out health, protective and judicial services provided by the state because of ignorance and insensitivities towards LGBTQ+ issues, and high levels of discrimination. There are also several reported cases of LGBTQ+ persons being attacked, verbally and physically, because of their gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. Transgender people are particularly targeted because of their visibility.

Education

6. Tackle bullying of LGBTQ+ youth. Teachers should be trained from the level of the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) on the issues students face and how to effectively address them.

7. Ensure that LGBTQ+ persons feel safe, supported and included in the education system across all settings in Guyana. Education, particularly educational institutions, are consistently rated by LGBTQ+ youth, as the place they experience the most discrimination in Guyana.
8. Introduce Comprehensive Sexuality Education all schools in Guyana to provide young people with the tools they need to make more informed decisions to either delay their sexual debut or prevent teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, if they choose to be sexually active. Comprehensive sexuality education would also inform students about diverse sexualities and genders, and reduce targeted bullying of LGBTQ+ students in Guyana's public schools.
9. The Ministry of Education must provide remedial and second-chance education programmes for disadvantaged youth, including LGBTQ+ persons, who did not complete secondary education.

Public Health

10. The Ministry of Public Health must make pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) available in the public healthcare system in all 10 administrative regions of Guyana for persons who are "substantial risk" of contracting HIV, according to the World Health Organization guidelines, by January 2021.
11. Allow persons who have been exposed to HIV to access post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), regardless of the circumstances of that exposure, by the end of 2020.
12. Support organizations led by key populations to provide targeted and specialized health services for their communities who fear and experience stigma and discrimination in public healthcare.
13. Provide quality, accessible and stigma-free mental health services for vulnerable groups, especially LGBTQ+ people who face greater burdens due to homophobia(s), to prevent suicide and achieve the highest attainable standard of health for all persons in Guyana.

Social Protection

14. The Government of Guyana must provide comprehensive and accessible entrepreneurial training programmes for vulnerable groups, including LGBTQ+ people, and make capital accessible to start up small businesses through grants and low-interest lending schemes.
15. The Government of Guyana must provide access to housing for LGBTQ+ people, especially children, who have been temporarily displaced or rendered homeless due to violence.