

Are homosexuals and heterosexuals equal in today's UK.

Throughout history, homosexual men have suffered tremendous amounts of discrimination, social exclusion and criminal injustice. In the UK, gay rights are a topic of debate, and have been quite heated, for quite some time now. The circumstances have become much better in recent years, but everyday people are still needed to rectify the problem. Although gay rights have come a long way, homosexual people and heterosexuals are still not equal.

Although the general public slowly has begun, to be more accepting towards same-sex couples, the battle isn't over. The percentage of people who think good of gay couples isn't 100%.

“As the latest edition of the British Social Attitudes survey shows, views have changed as well. Yes, there's been a tiny dip in the percentage of people in the UK who think it's OK to be gay (...)” [1]. This tells us that although it has gone in the right direction, the battle isn't over. And in this case, this percentage has even declined, telling us, that some people who were accepting, had become more hostile towards homosexuality.

One of the factors contributing to the fact, that homosexuals aren't equal, is in the history on the topic. Discrimination of gay people in the workplace, is one of the most recent legislation added to protect stop homosexuals from being discriminated.

“The Equality Act 2010 gave LGBT employees protections from discrimination, harassment and victimization at work. The legislation brought together existing legislation and added protections for trans workers, solidifying rights granted by the Gender Recognition Act.” [2].

Before 2010, when this law hadn't been introduced, discrimination, harassment and victimization could have been a reality for many undeserving people. Because this happened just 12 years ago, it would be safe to assume, that this haunts people to this day. This act first being introduced in 2010 reinforces, that that we aren't at the goal yet, but we still have way to go and a need for development.

One counter argument, could be that Sexual Offences Act, which partially legalized gay sex, was introduced in 1967, and therefore, homosexuality has been legal ever since.

“It took 10 years for the Government to implement the Wolfenden Report's recommendations in the Sexual Offences Act 1967. Backed by the Church of England and the House of Lords, the Sexual Offences Act partially legalised same-sex acts in the UK between men over the age of 21 conducted in private.” [3].

But this act only partially legalized same-sex acts and only in private, for people above the age of 21. Also the fact that it took 10 years to implement, shows that, the rate at which, people has been changing their mind throughout the 20th century, has been slow. This further enforces, that we are going through a process and are not at a place, where homosexual people and heterosexual people are equal.

In 1988, the Government under Margaret Thatcher introduced legislation prohibiting promotion of homosexuality.

[1]: Chris Bryant: I've seen British attitudes to gay people change. But the battle is not yet won (p. 1 l. 30-35)

[2]: A short history of LGBT rights in the UK: <https://www.bl.uk/lgbtq-histories/articles/a-short-history-of-lgbt-rights-in-the-uk> (sec. 16)

[3]: A short history of LGBT rights in the UK: <https://www.bl.uk/lgbtq-histories/articles/a-short-history-of-lgbt-rights-in-the-uk> (sec. 9)

[4]: A short history of LGBT rights in the UK: <https://www.bl.uk/lgbtq-histories/articles/a-short-history-of-lgbt-rights-in-the-uk> (sec. 13)

“The fight for sexual equality however, was far from over. Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, introduced by the Conservative Government under Margaret Thatcher, banned local authorities from ‘promoting homosexuality’ or ‘pretended family relationships’, and prohibited councils from funding educational materials and projects perceived to ‘promote homosexuality’. The legislation prevented the discussion of LGBT issues and stopped pupils getting the support they needed. Section 28 was repealed in 2003, and Prime Minister David Cameron apologised for the legislation in 2009.” [4].

This shows that the road to gay equality hasn’t been smooth all the way. Although some legislation had been put in place, to ease prohibition of homosexuals, this was a step in the wrong direction. This not only shows that the Conservative Government at the time, but also the general public, had a disinterest in gay rights. Section 28 was fortunately repealed in 2003 and apologized for by Prime Minister Davis Cameron in 2009. If gay people already had equality, the legislation would not have taken 15 years to repeal.

The fight for equal rights of homosexual males in the UK is an ongoing battle. Even though we’ve come a long way, we haven’t yet reached the goal. The British attitudes are slowly changing, but with setbacks along the way. The initiative of political officials of creating a better UK, through legislating is doing it’s job and paving a way brighter future. But the war isn’t over, political setbacks and public opinions are still a problem needing change for equality to become a reality.

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