



FFLAG

Supporting families and our
LGBT+ loved ones with pride

NEWSLETTER

May 2022

Get involved in FFLAG's latest campaign



We said in our last Newsletter that we are returning to campaigning. The decision of the Government to remove trans people from the proposed legislation on Conversion Therapy and the action you can take is explained by Sarah Furley (she/her), one of our trustees.

As I write this at home in Cornwall, Spring is definitely flourishing: birdsong is increasing, bluebells are coming into bloom, thoughts are turning to Pride month and requests are coming in thick and fast for FFLAG to speak at corporate Pride events.

However, all is not rosy. The recent government decision to proceed with the ban on conversion 'therapy' for LGB people only, but to exclude trans people from protection, is so shocking it's indescribable.

Denying someone the freedom to be themselves and forcing them to conform to an imposed identity is not therapy. Gently helping someone to explore and discover who they are, is – and this isn't threatened by a ban on conversion 'therapy' practices. That's what we want for all our children: the freedom to explore the wonderful richness and diversity of who they can be. And we want them to flourish in a world that affords the same rights, respect and protection to all our children; all of them safe from the threat of coercion.

Fortunately, this view is shared, by the general public and by professionals in medicine and in counselling. A YouGov poll reveals that there are equal levels of support from the public for the ban to cover Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual people **and** Trans people. Professionals working with young people exploring their gender identity are not confused nor worried that the ban will conflict with their work and the British Medical Association has called for the ban on 'conversion therapy' to extend to every member of the LGBTQ+ community.



Sarah enjoying beautiful Cornwall

It is a view also shared by the majority of LGBT+ organisations. That is why over 100 of them, including FFLAG, have decided to take no part in the Government's "Safe to Be Me" conference. In recent years the UK had had a great record on rights for the LGBT+ community and the conference was intended to showcase that to the world. Latterly there has been a

series of failures to keep promises to improve trans rights. Now we have the embarrassment of a Government trying to turn us against each other and we will have no part in that.

For us this is not just a discussion about fairness and justice – it's personal. So, what can we do to compel the government to respect the evidence and make sure that all our children are protected?

- If you haven't done so already, please sign the [petition](#) calling for the government to make good its promise to ban conversion therapy for the whole LGBT+ community. You can find it at <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/613556>
- Write to your MP asking them to support a total ban. It's good to write your own letter including your personal experiences and feelings, but TransActual have a good [template](#) which you can adapt. <https://www.transactual.org.uk/template-letter-mp>
- Talk to anyone within your sphere of influence, whether that's at work, with friends, on social media: wherever your voice can be heard, please speak up for our trans family members.
- Be visible at your local Pride or demonstration; march and show your support.

I know that the FFLAG family will stand together to campaign for our children. In the words of our fantastic patron, Michael Cashman 'Together. Only Together.'

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What's in the newsletter?

News from FFLAG:

[Chair's report](#)

[FFLAG at Teachers' Conference](#)

[Jenny Broughton MBE](#) : our retiring President

[Emma Fletcher-Jones](#) : our Volunteering Project Manager

[FFLAG joins Flasn network](#)

[FFLAG at Pride's across the UK](#)

[Ways to support FFLAG](#)

News from our local groups:

[Free2Be](#)

[FFLAG Cheltenham](#)

[Families Together, London](#)

[FFLAG South Wales](#)

[FFLAG Bristol](#)



An update from Hugh Fell (he/him), the Chair of FFLAG

This year, Spring seems much more of a turning point than usual, particularly for FFLAG. Elsewhere in this newsletter you can read about our engagement of Emma Fletcher-Jones to set up a volunteering programme that meets all the regulatory and compliance requirements that are essential for the development of our frontline support services. We also anticipate recruiting more volunteers to help us with the “back-room” work that charities like ours need to do: admin, fundraising, IT, statistics, liaison with other charities, social media and so on. We are very grateful to the trustees of The Chris Graham-Bell Charitable Trust who have fully funded the cost of engaging Emma for the six-month project and, once the programme has been signed off and implemented, the cost of a part-time Volunteer Coordinator for three years.

A key driver for the volunteer programme is the need to recruit a diverse team of parents willing to share their experience and insight with others via our much-delayed online support platform. There have been many bumps in the road for this IT project but I now expect it to be completed in May.

Our front-page article by Sarah Furley describes the key focus for our charity: the defence of families with trans and non binary children from both political and media attacks and to campaign for fair treatment for all LGBT+ individuals. FFLAG was set up by local parents' groups specifically to campaign for equality and the trustees have renewed our commitment to this goal. FFLAG's presence at the NASUWT conference over the Easter weekend and our partnership work with FASTN, described in other articles, reflects this commitment to equality in schools and workplaces. Undoubtedly, however, our greatest campaigning challenge will be in Parliament, a battlefield our older trustees remember well.

Later this year we shall be present at many Pride events around the country where local parent support groups are present. If you are able to join us at Pride in London on 2nd July we are delighted that this year we have obtained the biggest allocation of wristbands any community group can request. For security reasons you must have a wristband to be in the march so please email us as soon as possible if you would like to be part of our marching group.

Our former Chair of Trustees, Sue Allen, reflects on the vital and incomparable contribution made to FFLAG's work by Jenny Broughton who is stepping down as our President. During lockdown I digitised all the FFLAG newsletters dating back to the date of our foundation and saw reflected in those pages all the public and administrative work that Jenny did. I salute her dedication, drive and insight, especially into how to campaign effectively.

Finally, please read the poem contained in the news we received from the parents at Free2b, written by a member of their associated youth group. The mirror they describe in the poem is also a remarkable window into their life. I hope that FFLAG will always be here to campaign for them for as long as we are needed.



Our President, Jenny Broughton MBE, (she/her) is stepping down after many years of being a key driving force in the organisation. We asked Sue Allen (she/her), a former Chair of FFLAG, to remind us a little bit about Jenny.

I first met Jenny Broughton, President of FFLAG, in 1997. She had been invited to talk at the inaugural parents' support group meeting of FFLAG Bristol. She was inspirational. She was one of the founder members of FFLAG back in 1993. She had also set up the first parents' support line in the West Country. As you can imagine, she had a lot of experience. We quickly became colleagues and friends.

Jenny became FFLAG's National Co-ordinator in 1999. She marched FFLAG well and truly into the 21st Century by being involved with the achievement of charitable status. During her six-year term as Co-ordinator, Jenny's passion for the cause continued with her representing FFLAG at World, European and National Prides and events, campaigning for and supporting parents and with a multitude of involvement in between. In 2000 Jenny was one of the founders of EuroFLAG (European Families of Lesbians and Gay Men)

In 2013, during the 20th year anniversary conference, FFLAG marked the occasion by introducing Jenny as its new President. She remained a trustee until 2018. During her time as President, in 2015, Jenny was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours list – for services to the LGBT community.

Jenny feels it is now time to stand down as President. The whole FFLAG family and beyond owe her a huge debt of gratitude and we all wish her well, but I am sure that this will not mean the end of Jenny's involvement with all things FFLAG.



Jenny with the other FFLAG trustees on stepping down from the Board in 2018



It is a long time since FFLAG engaged someone to do work for us. But we have recently signed a contract with Emma Fletcher-Jones and we asked her to tell us a little about herself and what she is doing

Hello everyone! Emma Fletcher-Jones here, beyond excited to introduce myself as the new Volunteering Project Manager for FFLAG!

You may remember from our December Newsletter that FFLAG was in the process of recruiting somebody experienced to develop and implement a volunteer project to recruit parent volunteers, ready to offer support via an online platform. Here I am! I joined the team in March and I have 'hit the ground running' with developing our existing volunteer policies to create a robust Volunteer Project ready to meet new parent volunteers. At the same time I will be looking at FFLAG's other services where volunteers would be welcomed with open arms, such as our Telephone Helpline.

About me! I am coming to FFLAG with 25 years' experience as a volunteer across different organisations, I am a qualified Psychotherapist, but most importantly I bring with me 15+ years as a Volunteer Project Manager.

We have a new email and phone number linked directly to me, so if you are a parent who would be interested in volunteering, or would like to gather some information on the upcoming volunteer roles, please see the details below and drop me a line!

E: Volunteering@fflag.org.uk

M: 07743 555989

Keep an eye out on our website and social media as I will be appearing often to share updates, and ask our supporters to help me spread the word!

Also about me: my preferred pronouns are she/hers. I am a proud mummy to 2 young children and I live in beautiful Lancashire. I love to travel and I adore cooking, almost as much as I adore eating!

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Free2B Alliance is a South London based community organisation supporting LGBTQ+ young people and their parents. The parents' group is affiliated to FFLAG and Lucie Brooke (she/her), one of the directors, gave us an update on their work.

Free2B are delighted to launch our fabulous new e-shop! With huge thanks to [2020Media](#) for getting us up and running.

We currently have three beautiful designs you can choose from. The wonderful rainbow frog design was created by one of our talented young people, originally developed as part of a fun art activity during an online lockdown youth club!

From mugs to hoodies we're sure you'll find something you'll love at www.free2b.lgbt/shop

Our parent group is now online fortnightly and in-person quarterly. Recent topic discussions have included names, surgery options, hormones and positive trans role models. And we were delighted to welcome the wonderful Freiya Benson who spoke about her book "The Anxiety Book for Trans People."

Below is an amazing poem written by one of our young people and shared as part of their mentoring programme

She Built a Home For Them

There's this mirror that I like to stare at for hours
And whatever I imagine it appears.
My eyes would approach the glass
With a threatened smile,
My lungs trying not to collapse
Like a tower of distorted rose coloured glasses,
A facade so beautifully crafted that upon its creation
It was given the wrong name.

I look into that mirror and only when
The bars of the prison my eyes visualised start to fade away
Do I then truly see the person
Who is trying to come out,
Attempting to grow so safe in complacency
That they refused to question what it meant
To be anything other than
The body they are currently trapped in.

The discomfort it feels with these piles of flesh that hide who I am
Is making it so much easier to play the part
Of the one that isn't quite me.
It's understandable to feel complicit when I speak
Because it seems I am fooling everyone.
Misleading,
Deceiving,
Making it so incredibly easy to see someone who just isn't nor has ever been there.

I once thought there's comfort in a name,
Especially when the name is curated in such a way
Where no one's the wiser.
A costume so embellished and yet the brain still gets swept away
By the splendours of dissociation because surely,
This body belongs to this character
That was so painstakingly moulded
By the roles and rehearsals presented to it.

And yet it has never crossed my mind to actually stop and think that maybe
There are certain characteristics that have a home in man
The others strictly belonging to a woman.
But the rough draft of the character that was built for me pleaded to remain in between.
So when that name was crossed out and replaced with another,
I cut my hair short
Hid my chest using a baggy hoodie
And finally let out the breath I was holding in for so long.

Now the mirror still lies
But I continue to look past this body,
Past the hair and the chest and the shortness of breath.
How I want the glass to shatter right now
So the waves of blue can adorn me.
How I want the people who have scorned me
To say I didn't delve from the scriptwriter's plan,
It just took them awhile to see I was neither a man nor a woman.

I know this will never happen.
That even as the curtain falls,
They will only see the girl that actually doesn't want to be there
And maybe I will take this to the grave with me.
So for now I'll just stay put and hope that one day
I'll hear someone say to me
'Welcome home, my child.
Your performance as her, it's finally over.'

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FFLAG Cheltenham is one of FFLAG's newest affiliated groups but always incredibly active. Jules Tayler (she/her) sent us this update of what has been happening since our last newsletter.

One of the good things to come out of the horrible pandemic has been online Zoom meetings. It provides another way of accessing FFLAG information and peer support. The Bristol monthly zoom is testimony to this, as people are attending from all over the country – and Cheltenham FFLAG has been there too. Big thank you to Bruce and Sue for organizing this



Since the last newsletter FFLAG Cheltenham has been going to the LGBT+ Partnership Rainbow Cuppa monthly meet ups in Cheltenham. It is so wonderful to engage with real people from the rainbow community. These also provide a great opportunity to get FFLAG support and information out there. A backpack of FFLAG booklets always seem to be gratefully received - they even get taken to other Rainbow Cuppas throughout Gloucestershire courtesy of a FFLAG ally!

In November FFLAG Cheltenham was invited by the LGBT+ Partnership to attend the Trans Day of Remembrance memorial event at the Bayshill Unitarian Church, Cheltenham. A thank you to the steady trickle of people who came in remembrance, in solidarity and with love. We should never forget that the cost of transphobic politicians and clickbait journalism is measured in lives.



One of the key things FFLAG exists for is to support and befriend parents. This year we have been meeting up with a parent in need of support. A big "thank you" to Sarah Furley, a trustee of FFLAG nationally, for her reassurance which has been invaluable.

FFLAG Cheltenham continues to be an active member of the LGBT+ Partnership. Their events are always a great opportunity for networking too. Once again we were asked to meet up with

Infobuzz Gloucester and they were very keen to have more of our booklets for their office and waiting areas.

We were approached by GDASS (Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service) GP team wondering whether FFLAG would like to do an article for their monthly newsletter, sent to all health and well-being contacts in Gloucestershire. For the month of February, they were focusing on an LGBT+ theme. This was a golden opportunity for us at FFLAG to actually reach out to the people that matter. It was far too important for us to take on alone, so Sarah was put upon once again. I can only hope that the health care professionals in Gloucestershire have taken the time to read the article and think twice when a patient attends their surgery/clinic. Huge thanks to Sarah for her time and expertise.

With summer coming I am sure we will finally have the chance to attend some Pride events and I look forward to seeing you at one of those.

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Families Together London is a support group for the parents, families and friends of LGBT+ people. Jackie Briggs (she/her), a member of the Steering Committee, provided us with an update

The last few months for FTL have seen a return to meeting in person at Battersea. Now that COVID restrictions have eased our members are feeling more confident about coming along to our Saturday meetings in person rather than seeing each other on Zoom. This change is a slow process and not going to happen quickly. After two years of being apart it will take time to gain confidence but we have made a start.

The Zoom meetings have shown over the last couple of years how much this form of technology has enabled us to reach people who wouldn't otherwise be able to access us. We have welcomed new members from abroad on Zoom and we don't feel we have lost any of the intimacy from meeting in person by using this form of social media which we thought would be lost when we went into lockdown.

We are keeping our Zoom meetings going. In addition, David is running the FTL-T group. This is a group specifically for parents with Trans children. Consequently, we can offer three meetings a month plus David runs a specific WhatsApp group for FTL-T.

Our Steering Committee is made up of eight people and each one of us brings a certain expertise to the party. I have been involved in a number of podcast interviews, these are uploaded to the News and Events section of our website. The website can be found at <https://www.familiestogetherlondon.com/> It really is worth the effort because we definitely do get people coming to us via this method of promoting our work.

After a two year break we are planning to do Pride in London this year. It is being held on Saturday 2nd July. We are hoping for another wonderful day.

At last we were able to meet again face to face and what a good start! Our new location in a roomy pub on the northern outskirts of Cardiff proved very popular and convenient for the whole area. The regulars were joined by four new parents who had contacted us online during lockdown. It was a great pleasure to meet up at last.

Three parents of trans young people had certainly been inspired to come to a FFLAG meeting after recently joining FFLAG Bristol's ZOOM meeting to hear Bobbi Pickard speak.

All four newcomers expressed their appreciation of the safe space FFLAG offers and intend to join us next time

We elected officers for a FFLAG Wales committee and discussed plans for forthcoming PRIDES in Abergavenny and Cardiff.

In our September 2020 newsletter we reported how FFLAG South Wales had had a wonderful evening with the local ice hockey team the Cardiff Devils. With sporting fixtures now back on the Devils did it again.

Thank you Ian and Trish for representing FFLAG South Wales at the Cardiff Devils PRIDE game on Saturday 26th February – we beat Manchester Storm 7 -1.



Noah Bear Nyle
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A great time today with saffron and everyone at the LGBT History Month event in Merthyr.

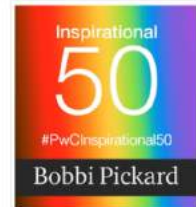


Noah (he/him) a longstanding volunteer with the FFLAG group in South Wales was a guest speaker at Merthyr Council's LGBT History Month event on 23rd February. The event was arranged by Saffron Conin who is in the picture with Noah.

Noah says, "It was great to gather and celebrate LGBT history and the vibrancy of the LGBTQIA+ community. The Youth Council's participation was a highlight. I was honoured to be asked to speak at this event"

Ymlaen â ni FFLAG / On we go FFLAG!

There have been times in the past when we wondered if we were still needed and although we enjoyed meeting together, new parents were few and far between and we thought perhaps things wouldn't continue. How things have changed! We've been incredibly helped by Bobbi Pickard (she happens to be transgender and one of the world's leading trans role models) and you can read more about her work here www.bobbipickard.com



On her website it says “the approach Bobbi takes is one of complete openness and honesty in all her training, discussions, articles and videos. This is especially true about her personal story.....” At FFLAG Bristol, we can attest to the truth of this as she has come along to some of our in-person meetings and also on some of our Zooms and has shared some of her story with us. Every time it has been of immense help to parents who are trying to come to terms with understanding that their child is LGBT+. She is so compassionate and very happy to answer any questions.

As a result of going on Zoom and being able to meet up again after Covid, things seem to have opened up and more parents are getting in touch and we realise how needed we are and it's a privilege to be able to get alongside people on their journeys.

The wonderful team of enthusiastic young people at LUSH in Cribbs Causeway, Bristol, held another charity pot weekend for FFLAG Bristol on the 12th and 13th of February, the month in which FFLAG Bristol celebrated 25 years of supporting parents with LGBT+ loved ones.



There was a joyful atmosphere in store, particularly when someone bought one of the charity pots and rung the bell to great applause!

The team at LUSH have all been such faithful, committed and zealous sponsors of us in our support for families and friends of LGBT+ people. Although ours was the final charity pot weekend that they were able to hold just before the first Covid 19 lockdown, ours was the first one that they held after restrictions began to ease.

Fully in keeping with the ethos of LUSH, (which is to support small local charities without wanting any advertisement of their sacrifice on our behalf), the team welcomed us to come back for a third year so that they could raise more money for us. They are brilliant at helping us raise awareness of FFLAG.

We had some interesting chats with people, including teachers and youth workers who took some of our booklets to give out in their groups. Also, it gave us the opportunity to meet in the flesh some parents who we had previously met only on Zoom and to catch up with some old FFLAG friends we hadn't seen since before lockdown. It was especially moving when one man thanked us for our work and said he wished he had known about us when he'd come out to his family.



We're delighted to let you know that £323.47 was raised and we have already used some of the money to buy books that will be helpful to parents and their trans youngsters. We will make these available for them to borrow and return. These will be vital resources to the increasing number of parents of trans youngsters who are joining our face-to-face meetings in Little Stoke which is in north Bristol.

A huge and heartfelt "Thankyou" to LUSH and to the particular team at Cribbs Causeway for just being the amazing people they are.





FFLAG is always on the lookout for opportunities to talk to key influencers. Sarah Furley (she/her) sent this report from the team who spent Easter at a conference for school teachers.

FFLAG volunteers have just returned from a weekend in Birmingham, at the NASUWT (The Teacher's Union) conference. It was a different kind of Easter - no chocolate eggs nor family Sunday lunches – but a great opportunity to meet and talk to teachers from all over the country and overseas.

Bruce and Janet (FFLAG Bristol) made it all possible by putting together the pack of resources and materials to decorate the stand; Hilary and Colin (FFLAG South Wales) were responsible for transporting this and setting up the stand for Friday, the first day of the conference exhibition. Jules (FFLAG Cheltenham) and I joined at the weekend. We were also joined on Saturday by new volunteer, Vicky, who is local to Birmingham and who gave us some great insight into some of the communities living there.

Jules proved particularly adept at intercepting delegates who might otherwise have ambled past the stands, asking them whether their school was 'lovely and inclusive' and persuading all of them to take a set of our booklets.

It was heartening that many of the teachers responded to that question with a firm 'Yes!' and were delighted to take our booklets and posters for their LGBT+ and Allies lunchtime groups. And those who said 'Not *really...*' were nevertheless working towards it and were also really pleased to take our resources to help their school on that journey.



Over the three days we spoke to over 200 teaching staff and gave out over eight hundred booklets, as well as posters and pens. Our rainbow lanyards were particularly popular and we were happy to see lots of them appearing on the conference stage. We made some key connections with teachers wanting to enter into partnership working with FFLAG across their academies and we had some personal conversations too, with teachers who approached us quietly, as parents seeking support.

So, we fulfilled many parts of FFLAG's mission: to educate and advocate for a world free from ignorance and prejudice about sexuality and gender identity and to work with other organisations to achieve our vision, but also to offer direct individual peer support to parents who need it.

It was wonderful to be back together in person and the effort was definitely worthwhile. The only question now is - who would like to join us in Glasgow in 2023?



Fastn is a charity committed to helping society form, value and aim for family relationships which are healthy and dependable. FFLAG joined their network and Hannah Partis, who is the Education Programme Development Co-ordinator for Fastn, wrote this for us.

We were delighted to welcome FFLAG to [Fastn's](#) network last year, as we celebrated the re-launch of [The Principles of Excellence in Relationships Education](#). Fastn works to ensure everyone in the UK can benefit from healthy dependable relationships and that families, in whatever form they take, thrive.

Harvard Research has shown that our early experiences influence our future physical and mental health, academic achievement, work, happiness and life outcomes. Our research also shows that over two-thirds of young people consider fulfilling and lasting relationships at least as important to their future as their future work plans.

We learn our values, expectations, understanding of all relationships, and relationships skills both consciously and unconsciously from the relationships we experience and that are role-modelled around us. That's why Fastn works with partners across sectors to support schools and young people's organisations to embed healthy, dependable relationships throughout their settings. The Principles support schools, teachers and educational leaders to put relationships at the heart of everything they do, in order to improve the wellbeing of their school communities.



With the right support in place, meaningful relationships education is an opportunity for all children and young people to develop the skills they need to have healthy relationships throughout their lives. Healthy relationships learning is key to creating an inclusive environment for young people, where they can learn self-awareness, to understand and empathise with one another and value diversity. With this in mind, The Principles can play a role in supporting FFLAG's work with families with LGBT+ loved ones.

Together with Parentkind, Fastn developed this resource to support parents when [talking to your child about healthy dependable relationships](#), which you may find helpful.

Beyond education, Fastn is influencing employer groups so that employers recognise their impact on families and respond to the reality of families that are by default, complex, diverse and often dynamic. We are delighted that FFLAG fed into the design of the first 'Best for All Families' Award which Fastn created with Working Families this year. This award aims to recognise employers who understand that one size does not fit all, and we aim to work with the winners and partners like FFLAG to share case studies and guidance to make the workplace more genuinely family-friendly. Watch this space for more details!

FFLAG at Pride '22

These are the Pride events that we know FFLAG or other parents' groups will be at in the coming months. If you would like to know more please drop a note to info@fflag.org.uk

| LOCATION | DATE |
|----------------|--|
| Abergavenny | 16 th July |
| Bristol | 9 th July |
| Bromsgrove | TBA |
| Cardiff | 27 th & 28 th August |
| London | 2 nd July |
| Redditch | TBA |
| Worcestershire | 28 th May |



Ian McKellen marching with FFLAG at the last London Pride in 2019

Can you help FFLAG?

FFLAG is a tiny charity run primarily volunteers.
If you can, please help to secure our future by supporting us financially.

| | |
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"Supporting Families and our LGBT+ loved ones with Pride"

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