Response

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) National Youth Council (NYC) represents the views of LGBT young people, aged 13-26, across Scotland. The NYC brings together young people from across Scotland to address the serious issues affecting all LGBT young people. The NYC welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Registration of Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriage.

In 2009 the LGBT NYC asked over 125 young people what issues they would like to see politicians working on, and marriage equality was one of the top three issues. Since then the NYC has been working on the Marriage Equality Too (or M.E.2) campaign which is part of a wider campaign in Scotland calling for marriage equality. Through the M.E.2 Campaign individuals were asked to take part in a photo petition showing their support for marriage equality in Scotland. Over 700 people have lent their images and voices to shout 'M.E.2' in support of marriage equality. These photos are included within our Marriage Equality (M.E.2) Yearbook (attached).

The NYC believe that any loving, committed couple should have access to equal partnership rights regardless of whether they are in same-sex or mixed-sex relationship. Scotland is being left behind when it comes to
equal partnership rights. The LGBT NYC is calling for the Scottish Government to:

- **Lift the ban on same-sex marriage and mixed-sex civil partnership (Q10, Q19)**

  We want the Scottish Government to legislate to open up marriage to same-sex couples, and open up Civil Partnership to mixed-sex couples.

- **Allow religious and humanist celebrants to legally solemnise same-sex marriage (Q11, Q14)**

  Amendments to the recent Equality Act saw the right for civil partnerships to happen on religious premises in England and Wales. We want to see this brought into effect in Scotland. We call upon the Scottish Government to enable approved religious and humanist celebrants – that wish to do so – to have the power to legally solemnise and celebrate same-sex marriage.

- **Put an end to the discrimination faced by transgender people and their partners (Q20)**

  We call upon the Scottish Government to end the current discrimination that exists against transgender people and their partners, whereby a person cannot currently remain married or in a civil partnership if they wish to seek gender recognition and alter their legally recognised gender under the terms of the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

An important part of the work of the NYC is involving and engaging young people in the decision making process to ensure their voices are heard and their views are represented on the issues that are important to them. This consultation has received the most interest from LGBT young people of any consultation the Scottish Government has ever taken forward. Giving LGBT young people the chance to have a say on decisions which affect them is about ensuring that they are recognised as equal members of their local communities and wider society. Their views are often overlooked or represented ineffectively without their direct involvement, this is why it is particularly important that they are supported to share their views on this important issue. The NYC believes that LGBT people will not be recognised as full and equal members of our society until equal partnership rights are a reality - regardless of whether they are in same-sex or mixed-sex relationship.

As part of this public consultation on the Registration of Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriage the NYC has been encouraging young people across Scotland to respond individually to the consultation. We have developed and ran workshops around partnership rights at nine LGBT youth groups across Scotland and our members have consulted in their schools, colleges, universities and with their peers on this issue. The Scottish Government will therefore be receiving a further 915 individual responses both directly from and recruited by LGBT young people in Scotland.