



Guyana LGBTQIA+ Manifesto 2025

A. Eliminate Discriminatory Laws and Provide Legal Protections

1. Repeal sections 351 to 353 of the Criminal Law (Offences) Act Chapter 8:01, which criminalise same-sex intimacy between consenting, adult men in private, by **2026**.
2. Include sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression as protected categories from discrimination in the Prevention of Discrimination Act 1997 by the end of **2027**.
3. Develop and implement comprehensive legislation to eradicate all forms of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, in every sector, including discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, by the end of **2028**.
4. Include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected categories in the non-discrimination provision of the Guyana Constitution (Article 149) by **2029**.

Laws criminalising same-sex intimacy violate constitutionally protected rights, including rights to non-discrimination and equality, equality before the law and the right to privacy. A national poll conducted in 2022 shows that over 70% of Guyanese accept and tolerate sexual and gender minorities.¹ Having signed and ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and directly incorporated it into the Constitution of Guyana,² Guyana is also obligated to protect all people from discrimination and pass comprehensive legislation against direct and indirect discrimination, including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.³ Documented benefits of decriminalisation and non-discrimination protections include creation of human capital, improved levels of education, increased employment, productivity and output, and a more just society with fewer experiences of violence and greater capacity for redress in cases of violence.⁴

B. Incorporate Training on Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion in State Services

5. Implement mandatory, ongoing training on Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion for the uniformed services, social workers, healthcare workers and other state providers to eliminate discriminatory attitudes and unconscious bias in the provision of state services.

¹ *A Study of Perceptions and Attitudes towards LGBT Persons in Guyana*, (Sept. 2022) RMK Consulting Enterprise, 4.

² Fourth Schedule, Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Cap. 1:01

³ United Nations Human Rights Committee. (2024). Concluding Observations on the Third Periodic Report of Guyana. In *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (Report GE.24-06045; pp. 2–3), 4.

⁴ Crehan et al, *The Economic Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Caribbean*, Open For Business (2025), 31.



Awareness of diversity and bias has shown to enhance public servants' capacity to serve the citizenry and build trust in public institutions.⁵ Comprehensive training can foster greater cohesion and boost morale as public servants feel more valued and respected in an environment that promotes inclusivity and mutual understanding. SASOD Guyana can provide training expertise.

C. Promote Inclusion in Education

6. Develop and implement a clear policy to end all forms of violence and discrimination, especially bullying based on sexuality and gender, in the schools by the end of **2026**.
7. Train education officials, school administrators, teachers and social workers in schools as part of a comprehensive, anti-bullying programme that is inclusive of LGBTQIA+ issues.

For LGBTQIA+ students, schools could play a positive role in promoting adolescent health by eliminating bullying, discrimination and forms of abuse targeting them.⁶ Studies indicate that bullying in schools, including stigma-based bullying, can result in several negative long-term effects on mental health, and affect an individual's physical and socio-economic outcomes.⁷

D. Ensure Economic Opportunity for All

8. Provide employment and entrepreneurial training programmes for vulnerable groups, including LGBTQIA+ people, and make capital accessible to develop micro-enterprises and small businesses through start-up grants and low-interest lending schemes.

A recent study has estimated that socio-economic exclusion of LGBTQIA+ people costs the Anglophone Caribbean between USD 1.5 billion and USD 4.2 billion per year- between 2.1 and up to 5.7% of its collective GDP.⁸ Further, the same study showed that the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ persons has several positive impacts for businesses including attracting and retaining talent, innovation, employee motivation, individual productivity and accessing a market of LGBTQIA+ consumers.⁹ If nothing is done to promote an inclusive economy, the brain drain of LGBTQIA+

⁵ Driskell, L. I., MA. (2024) *The Perceived Benefits of Diversity Training and Governing Policy for Law Enforcement Agencies*, Walden University, 92.

⁶ Gegenfurtner, A., & Gebhardt, M. (2017). *Sexuality Education Including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Issues in Schools*, Educational Research Review, 22, 215–222.

⁷ Arseneault, L. (2018), Annual Research Review: *The Persistent and Pervasive Impact of Being Bullied in Childhood and Adolescence: Implications for Policy and Practice*. J Child Psychol Psychiatr, 59: 405-421.

⁸ Crehan, *The Economic Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Caribbean*, 8.

⁹ Crehan, *The Economic Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Caribbean*, 47-49.

people will continue to hamper Guyana's development. This will continue to restrict Guyana's competitive potential and will have negative effects for businesses and the whole economy.¹⁰

E. Quality Health Services for All

9. Provide free, quality mental health services which are LGBTQIA-friendly and accessible and invest resources to ensure that the skills and systems exist to deliver these services.

Guyana's estimated standardized suicide rate has ranked in the top ten globally and the highest within the Americas region since 2000.¹¹ In particular, homophobia(s) and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people has a detrimental effect on the mental health of these populations.¹² By implementing measures that provide accessible mental health services, this could greatly reduce Guyana's suicide rate and increase the attainable standard of health for all Guyanese.

F. Equitable Access to Social Protection

10. Provide emergency shelter for LGBTQIA+ youth who are fleeing violence.

Social protection—including access to safe and secure housing—is essential not only for reducing vulnerability and inequality, but also for enabling people to contribute meaningfully to the Guyanese communities in which they live and work. The Government of Guyana has various initiatives aimed at addressing the housing needs of citizens, including those in vulnerable situations. LGBTQIA+ persons face disproportionately high rates of housing insecurity due to unique challenges such as family rejection and lack of support systems.¹³ Expanding existing government schemes and initiatives to include, and provide tailored support for LGBTQIA+ youth in particular, can reduce the risk of violence, improve mental health, empower individuals to stabilize their lives, access education and employment opportunities and find permanent housing.¹⁴

¹⁰ Crehan, *The Economic Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Caribbean*, 31.

¹¹ Shaw, C., Stuart, J., Thomas, T., & Kölves, K. (2022). *Suicidal Behaviour and Ideation in Guyana: A Systematic Literature Review*. *The Lancet Regional Health - Americas*, Vol 11, 1.

¹² Coleman, H. *The Impact of Discrimination Against the LGBTQ Community*. West Chester University, Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 4, 4.

¹³ Romero, A. P., Goldberg, S. K., Vasquez, L. A., & University of California. (2020). *LGBT People and Housing Affordability, Discrimination, and Homelessness*, 16.

¹⁴ Kulkarni, S. J., & Notario, H. (2024). *Trapped in housing insecurity: Socioecological barriers to housing access experienced by intimate partner violence survivors from marginalized communities*. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 52, 439–458.