

## LGBT+ history, from Gen X to now

Welcome to the world of coachGraham. I hope you will find it a friendly and supportive place!

This brief history of LGBT+ rights and laws during my lifetime helps me to understand the shifts in culture and the resulting pressures I have felt as a gay man. I hope that you find it useful too. If you notice anything important is missing, please let me know at [mycoachgraham@gmail.com](mailto:mycoachgraham@gmail.com).

If you would like to discuss your life and career – whether in the light of this, or more generally – please get in touch. I have a focus on working with gay men, particularly in science and engineering professions, helping them to reach peak performance. I know that I can change your life for the better!

Best wishes,

Graham

year	age	event	comment
1967		Homosexuality is decriminalised in England & Wales (partial—only for men over 21, and Scotland & Northern Ireland remain criminalised).	Interesting that this was before the Stonewall Riots, 1969.
1973		The American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders).	
1976	0	Graham is born in Scotland.	
1980	4	Homosexuality is decriminalised in Scotland (13 years after England & Wales).	
1982	6	Homosexuality is decriminalised in Northern Ireland (following a European Court ruling).	
1987	11	<b>“Don’t Die of Ignorance”</b> campaign with grim TV adverts about tombstones, following first AIDS cases in 1981. Spreading awareness but also reinforcing stigma. AIDS regarded as ‘gay cancer’.	I haven’t yet realised I’m gay, but this conditions me to be terrified about it, when I finally do.
1988	12	Section 28 is introduced in the UK, prohibiting the "promotion" of homosexuality and describing same-sex relationships as a "pretended family relationship."	I was clearly aware of this happening. Just on the cusp of becoming aware of my own sexuality, it made school an unsafe place to explore identity.
1994	18	The age of consent for sex between men is reduced from 21 to 18 in the UK (still unequal to 16 for heterosexuals).	I suddenly came of age. While a relief, it was a bit of a shock. I’ve recently started at university.
1996	20	Treatment for AIDS, turning HIV from a death sentence into a manageable condition. Death rates plummet.	But the stigma is still huge. At this point we (or at least, I) don’t know that treatment reduces transmission.
2000	24	The UK government equalises the age of consent for same-sex and opposite-sex couples at 16. Section 28 is repealed in Scotland.	At last!
2002	26		I meet the man who is now my husband.
2003	27	Section 28 is repealed in England & Wales.	It has been in place more than half my life. Those words about "pretended family relationship" resurface in media coverage. They feel sour in the light of my new relationship.

<b>2004</b>	28	The UK introduces the Civil Partnership Act, allowing same-sex couples legal recognition.	Excitement that we might be able to formalise our relationship. It's almost too good to believe.
<b>2010</b>	34	The UK Equality Act protects LGBTQ+ people from discrimination in workplaces and public services.	
<b>2012</b>	36	PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) becomes available in the US and privately, significantly reducing the risk of HIV transmission. NHS adopts 2020.	Suddenly I can feel safer having sex, with protection that's in my control. It's a great relief. It's also now clear that U=U – someone with HIV, who is in treatment, cannot pass it on.
<b>2014</b>	38	Same-sex marriage becomes legal in Scotland and England & Wales (Northern Ireland follows in 2020).	This is a huge relief. But we still can't get married in a church, even though we both sing in the choir.
<b>2016</b>	40	Following the Brexit referendum, reports of hate crimes—including anti-LGBTQ+ attacks—spike across the UK.	This is the first significant step backwards since Section 28 (1988).
<b>2022</b>	26	London Pride changes from a <i>march</i> to a <i>parade</i> . This is intended to reflect a mood of celebration rather than protest. Media comment that it requires lower police presence, and that the organisers have to pay!	The event has always been huge, but this year it feels very corporate. There is something wrong about a lorry float with rainbow-washed logo from an international law firm. I feel dirty after attending.
<b>2023</b>	47	Rising anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric: UK and US culture wars escalate over trans rights, education, and corporate Pride campaigns.	I feel for my trans siblings. I become acutely aware (really for the first time) of the privilege I hold as a gay man – I'm more or less accepted now.
<b>2024</b>	48	LGBTQ+ issues are a battleground in the US elections, with conservative pushback against trans rights and queer visibility.	The threat is real. We need to get back on the streets.
<b>2025</b>	49	UK Supreme Court rules that trans people should be treated according to their birth sex under the Equality Act. JK Rowling (author of <i>Harry Potter</i> ) funds huge campaigns against trans women.	It feels like they are coming for us. Since the message of the Harry Potter franchise is kindness and treating people as individuals, with respect, this feels like a very strong betrayal.