

Lesbian couple denied tenancy for being gay

Monday 13 May, 2013

Kira Izzard and Laura Cull have been together for over 4 years and were due to take tenancy of a new flat on the Isle of Man next door to their three year old nephew. The estate agent called breaking the news that the landlord couldn't have them moving into his flat because they are a same sex couple.

The couple who are due to enter into a civil partnership this year were told the landlord was perfectly entitled to refuse the tenancy due to their sexual orientation as there is not Manx law provisions which protect LGBT people against discrimination in accessing services or products on the Isle of Man. Talking of the call she received, Laura said:

"I was really upset and teary as we had our hearts set on that particular house. It is right next door to my sister and we could have literally watched my 3 year old nephew grow up. It then settled in that the reason we couldn't rent the house was because of the fact we are a same sex couple and my sadness turned to a complete numbness as it never occurred to me that this would even be a factor in this day and age and it felt like a personal attack.

After speaking with a lovely lady and gentleman at Citizens Advice I was informed that on the Isle of Man as a gay person I do not have the same equal rights as everyone else. I was so shocked to hear this and felt sick as I didn't know where to go or what to do as I didn't have a legal leg to stand on. After speaking with my partner Kira we thought that the only thing we could do was to share our story with as many people as possible and try and raise awareness that on this beautiful island that we call home we can still be treated this way."

The Manx Parliament brought the Human Rights Act into effect on the Island in 2006 when the UK Government threatened to impose legislation themselves. The Human Rights Act only guarantees that the state or an organ of the state will afford basic human rights and does not set out how private persons or business should behave.

Rob McDowall, the Chair of the LGBT Network wrote to all 24 Manx politicians (Members of the House of Keys) and has received 4 positive replies so far:

Hon. Phil Gawne MHK "I am shocked to note that our legislation allows such things to happen here and will do what I can to work with colleagues to ensure that such discrimination can not take place in the future." Phil also advised the Network that he has made representations to the clerk of parliament to ensure all avenues can be explored at the earliest opportunity.

Hon. Kate Beecroft MHK "Thank you very much for highlighting the discrepancy in our laws. I find the situation that you have brought to our attention is appalling. Liberal Vannin believes in equality for everyone regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation and will support any changes in legislation that will help to achieve this."

Hon. Mrs Brenda Cannell MHK "Thank you for highlighting this important issue. I am shocked to say the least that such things are apparently allowed in such situations. I feel sure that Government will now turn its attention to addressing this outrageous situation and will, with all due speed consider the required legislation to prevent this type of situation from happening again. Thank you again for raising it with us. I will do all that I can to have the situation addressed."

Kira and Laura have launched a petition online which has gathered over 700 signatures thus far. The petition can be accessed [here](#)

"The law needs to change. LGBTQ people need to be afforded the protection at law to ensure discrimination isn't an inevitable part of every LGBTQ person's life if they choose to, or find themselves living on the Isle of Man. It is the duty of every person to challenge discrimination in all its forms and we support any move to bring adequate protections in law for LGBTQ people on the Isle of Man." Rob McDowall, Chair of the LGBT Network

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