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International News

compiled by Q-Notes staff

Therapists still treating gays as ill

LONDON — The United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) and Pink Therapy are both deeply concerned about the results of research by Professor Michael King of University College Hospital, published on March 26.

The research found that 17 percent of psychotherapists and counselors have been willing to help gay and lesbian clients eliminate their homosexuality.

"Homosexuality is not an illness and therefore is not curable," said Tom Warnecke, vice chair of UKCP.

"These alarming figures confirm our view that more training opportunities are needed to ensure that psychotherapists and counselors can respond appropriately to people who are distressed about some aspect of their sexuality.

"We have invited Pink Therapy to hold a joint conference with UKCP on this subject in London on May 15 and 16, which will explore the mental health difficulties and distress experienced by sexual minorities and propose ways to address the issues that sexual minority clients bring to therapy."

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Pink Therapy is the UK's largest independent therapy organization specializing in working with gender and sexual minority clients.

Its director, Dominic Davies, commented: "I can understand how therapists faced with a distressed client who is deeply unhappy about their sexuality will want to help them, but attempts to eliminate same-sex desire are futile.

"Even 'Ex-Gay' evangelical activists admit to still having homosexual desires," he pointed out.

"As the failure of sexual abstinence programmes for teenagers in the USA has shown, it is difficult to prevent the expression of natural sexual responses — and it's impossible to make someone heterosexual if they are not

"The data presented by Professor King clearly demonstrates a training need for therapists to update their knowledge in this area,"

Davies added

"Most therapy training programmes pay scant attention to sexual diversity — if it's covered at all. This is perhaps how we've got into this situation with therapists thinking they can cure homosexual feelings."

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King will open the May conference by presenting the full data from his study of therapists' attitudes towards sexual minority clients and will review other research into mental health issues for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Other presentations and workshops will update therapists on the latest developments in working with gender and sexual minority clients.

— by Andy Harley . UKGayNews.org.uk

Nepal welcomes gay tourists

KATMANDU, Nepal — Several new websites have begun to promote LGBT tourism to the small Asian nation of Nepal, traditionally known for its not-so-gay-friendly culture.

According to *The Katmandu Post* and Asian News Network, travel websites utopia-

asia.com and www.nepalvisit2011.com have come to the forefront of the gay tourism market in the nation.

Despite the culture's rare discussion of sexuality and its perceived anti-gay attitudes, some say that Nepal offers a perfect getaway. Some gay visitors have even chosen the nation as their most romantic trip.

"It is something that foreign guests are always treated in a good manner," Jyoti Adhikari, president of Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal, told *The Post*. His association is an umbrella organization of more than 700 travel agencies in the country.

He added, "Compared to other Western countries, foreign gays and lesbians are not discriminated against here."

Adhikari said there had been no reports of discrimination. "Some restaurants and hotels in Kathmandu offer good treatment to these couples."

Sunil Babu Pant, president of the Nepalese gay advocacy group Blue Diamond Society, said that while tourists aren't being discriminated against, citizens are. He says that tourism from foreign LGBTs will increase the employment opportunities of Nepalese residents.

- by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

Progress on Euro anti-discrimination

GIBRALTAR — Equality Rights Group chairman Felix Alvarez, of the tiny British territory of Gibrlatar, is welcoming news that members of the European Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee have formally backed plans for a directive on multiple discriminations.

"Over the years, legislation on separate discriminations has been introduced and the EU and individual member states have been in the process for some time of bringing anti-discrimination measures together in a more coherent way," Alvarez said.

"This, of course, is ironic for us, since it is happening against a backdrop in Gibraltar where we hardly have any anti-discrimination law at all, and what there is, is woefully inadequate.

"Of particular importance," said Alvarez, "is the fact that under the new Directive, governments will not be able to discriminate on housing against people whether disabled, gay, or across a range of categories.

"Government should take note," he said.
"It is just three months since the
Gibraltar courts ordered the Housing
Committee to re-consider their discriminatory treatment of a lesbian couple regarding
a joint tenancy, a decision they subsequently refused to change.

"The case went to appeal, at huge expense to the Gibraltar taxpayer. And it is likely to proceed further and further until exhausting the judicial process at Strasbourg.

"This indecent use of taxpayers' money to simply delay the inevitable, only serves to emphasise the entrenchment of a Gibraltar government increasingly at odds with modern trends in social law.

"If we are to believe that government is serious about cutting down costs on litigation, this kind of spending is not only disproportionate, it is also extravagant. At the end of the day, we are talking about treating all citizens in a fair and equal way," Mr Alvarez concluded.

— by Andy Harley . UKGayNews.org.uk