

Celebrating Men and Boys March is coming to Edinburgh in 2021

CAPITAL MARCH CELEBRATING MEN & BOYS MOVED TO 20TH MARCH 2021

Edinburgh's "colourful, inclusive, and positive" event celebrating Men & Boys – and highlighting the many inequalities they face in accessing services – has been moved from December to 20th March 2021.

The "Marching for Men & Boys 2021 event" which will include men, women, and young people from all over Edinburgh and the Lothians marching from Edinburgh Castle, down the Royal Mile to the Scottish Parliament, with speeches, music and merriment along the way, had hoped to stage its event before Christmas, but Covid-19 restrictions have caused a rethink, with a new Spring date now scheduled.

Led by a piper, and with participants carrying balloons and sweets, the exuberant event is part of a three month annual programme of marches organised by Split The Difference. This not for profit organisation founded by Welsh campaigner Sally-Anne Burris, aims to ensure that men and boys are as equally served as women and girls, by those who structure the governance within the UK and other countries throughout the world. Current areas of inequality experienced by the male

gender include family law, healthcare provision, legal representation, housing, and education, not to mention domestic abuse.

The march will take place within whatever current Government Covid-19 guidelines are in place at the time. The inaugural Marching for Men & Boys event held in London in March 2020 complied with all requirements in relation to social distancing, with stewards handing out face masks and hand sanitiser.

Split The Difference will request that those planning to attend the march be mindful of their own health, and if they show any signs or symptoms that they may have contracted the virus that they remain at home.

Now planning to organise a march in Scotland, Ireland and Wales over the next six months, before returning to London next September, Split The Difference is hoping that the UK wide programme will continue for the foreseeable future with regular marches, perhaps even turning into a Festival, that not only highlights the needs of men and boys, but identifies and celebrates the positive attributes they bring to society.

The Scottish date has been lent generous assistance by the organisation Gender Parity UK, who have agreed to co-host the Edinburgh event. It is expected to compete handsomely with the Split The Difference London march with numbers already moving into the hundreds.

Philipp Tanser, from Gender Parity UK, said: "Men's issues are often invisible and there is a lack of awareness, recognition and support in many areas. Only by publicly talking about men's mental health, suicide, homelessness, custody issues, male victims of abuse and other issues men face, can we create change."

Sally-Anne Burris, a qualified therapist and journalism student with thirty years experience working within high-risk,

frontline services, said: "We are delighted to announce this fresh date and that we are still planning to celebrate men and boys in Edinburgh. It's just not possible to stage the March before Christmas, so we hope that those wishing to take part can bear with us for a few more months. It will be worth it, as I think the Spring will see renewed impetus in all sorts of issues we care about as a nation – in politics, in a renewed fight for the economy, and in living our lives in a meaningful way."

"My thanks go to Philipp, and our many other supporters who have helped with the event rescheduling."

"Gender Parity UK's help has been invaluable in spreading awareness of our cause, and I'm now seeking a similar organisation to perhaps come forward to assist with our march in the Republic of Ireland which will also take place next year."

From Pontypridd in Wales, Sally-Anne has dedicated the last ten years of her life to campaigning for male rights, and has put thousands of pounds of her own money to the cause. Having been partly inspired by the loss of her only brother who was never able to find the right kind of support he desperately needed from a teenage boy into manhood, she wants to see the pendulum swing back into balance providing men and boys with equal rights.

"The nature of my work as a therapist over many years, which has included areas like homelessness, drug and alcohol, child protection and more, has led me to recognise the many inequalities men face, and I knew I had to fight their corner, the evidence would allow me to turn away from this need. We want equal rights for everyone, regardless of gender, class, or circumstance," she said.

"This March is for everyone, men, women and children, and its main purpose is to celebrate men and boys, and what they bring

to the world," she added. "Expect to see smiling faces, singing, and men and women walking together in unity. We'll end the march at the Parliament."

"On occasions I have been asked by people why as a woman I promote equality for men and boys," said Sally-Anne. "There seems to be an assumption by some women that we are required to only support the female agenda. "It is a human need to support each other and right now it is our men and boys who need an effort made to open pathways into supportive services."

Keen to stress that the intent of the marches were not in any way overtly political, or confrontational, Sally-Anne said that Split The Difference would like to be involved in the consultation process around hate crime.

"I hope to champion this cause ahead of the march next year. I'm hoping to carry out some podcasts and media interviews between now and then," she said.

Philipp Tanser added: "There are many organisations that, without funding, support men and boys. They do a wonderful job, despite their lack of government support, but we think it is time for the media to raise awareness of these male disadvantages and for the government to remedy them."

"We are extending an invitation to all these great organisations to join us on the march on the 20th March next year, to be visible, promote their services, and to send a signal out to men and boys that they are not alone in their struggles. We will have a wide range of speakers in front of Parliament after our march who will address topics such as Homelessness, Fatherhood, the Justice System and Domestic Abuse."

Philipp will also spend the time prior to the march promoting the event by handing out invitations, putting up posters and collecting money for the Male Domestic Abuse Organisation AMIS

(Abused Men In Scotland). www.abusedmeninscotland.org.

Sally-Anne concluded: “We are very passionate about making a real difference to any legislature, and all types of meaningful consultation are crucial to ensure men get a far better balance in many areas of the law.”

“We’re really looking forward to engaging with the Edinburgh populus on the day of the March. I believe it will give out a positive focus at this time.”

www.split-the-difference.com



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