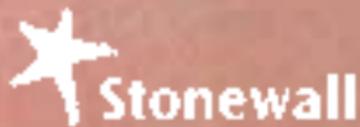


Discrimination
at work
It's so over

The law now means you
don't have to put up with
grief over your sexual
orientation. Not anymore.





Tell us about the old days

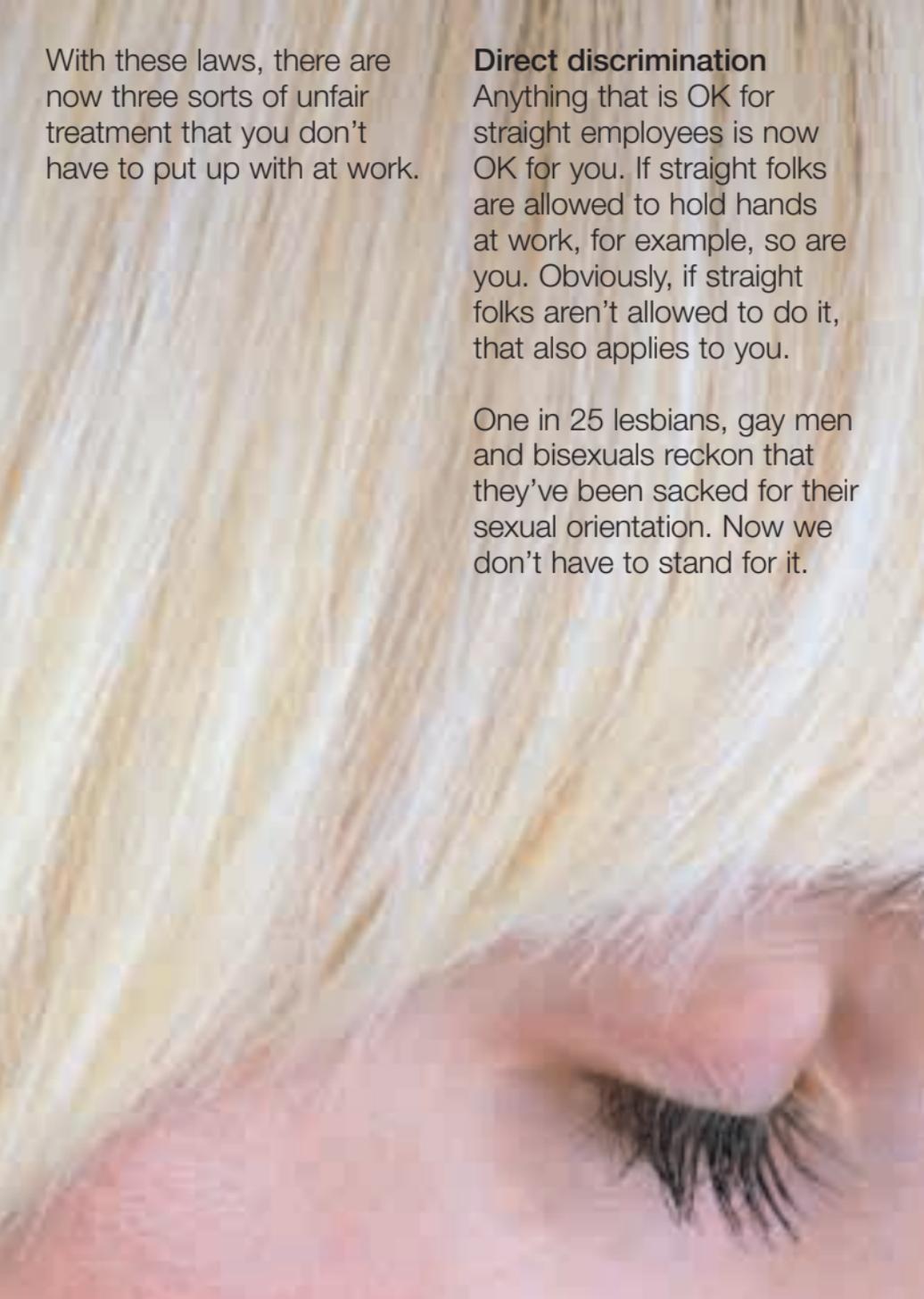
When Shirley's life as a teacher was made a misery by homophobic pupils, her headteacher told her she would just have to "grit her teeth".
It's now against the law.

When Peter found he wasn't really getting anywhere in his career as a health worker, he knew it was because he was gay. The clue? He was getting bullied by his manager.
It's now against the law.

When Lisa was refused a pass for her partner even though her contract promised free travel for her "spouse or dependants", it was because her partner was female.
It's now against the law.

The treatment that gay men, lesbians and bisexuals have had to swallow because of their sexual orientation – stuff like sacking, harassment, fewer perks, lack of promotion – is now over.
Finished. Against the law.

Just make sure that you use the law.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's face, focusing on the eye and nose. The person has blonde hair and is looking downwards. The background is a soft, out-of-focus texture of blonde hair.

With these laws, there are now three sorts of unfair treatment that you don't have to put up with at work.

Direct discrimination

Anything that is OK for straight employees is now OK for you. If straight folks are allowed to hold hands at work, for example, so are you. Obviously, if straight folks aren't allowed to do it, that also applies to you.

One in 25 lesbians, gay men and bisexuals reckon that they've been sacked for their sexual orientation. Now we don't have to stand for it.

Indirect discrimination

This means your employer can't hand out goodies – perks, you name it – to straight employees that you too can't benefit from. If straight people's partners are invited to a work do, your partner is also welcome. Automatically.

Harassment

Employers or colleagues who think they can make your life hell by generally creating an atmosphere no lesbian, gay man or bisexual would want to be in, have got another think coming.

Even if you're not out at work you don't have to stand for it any more.

One in five lesbians, gay men and bisexuals reckon they have been harassed because of their sexual orientation. Now they don't have to stand for it either.

Exceptions

Organised Religion

In a few rare cases, employers in an organised religion may still refuse to hire lesbians, gay men and bisexuals, if it's at odds with their religious convictions. But the courts have said that this will apply in a tiny number of cases, such as priests or imams. If you work in a faith school or for a religious charity you are protected. And you can't be treated less fairly if you're already in your job.

Benefits for married couples

In a few cases, pensions and some financial benefits for married (straight) partners won't automatically be available to gay partners. But good employers already provide these. However, gay couples who enter a civil partnership have to be treated the same as married couples, and will be able to get these pension rights.

Occupational Requirements

In theory, there may be some jobs where you have to be straight (or lesbian, gay or bisexual) to be able to do a job properly. At the moment, no one can quite think of any.



So, what are you going to do about it?

Can you talk to your harasser?

Could you explain why they are upsetting you?

If not, do you have a decent human resources or personnel manager? Would anything you say to them be confidential?

Find out.

Are you a member of a staff association or trade union?

They'll take your complaint very seriously, will know the legislation inside out and will do only what you want them to.

Is it easier to talk to a total stranger at your Citizens Advice Bureau or on a lesbian and gay helpline?

If the worst comes to the worst there is a tribunal with powers to give you cash from your employer as compensation for discrimination or harassment, and there's no limit depending on the seriousness of the case.

And before you panic, it is also unlawful for an employer to victimise you if you do decide to make a formal complaint.

That should get it into everyone's heads that discrimination is over. Forever.

ACAS

08457 474 747

Citizens Advice

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Community Legal Services

www.clsdirect.org.uk

0845 608 1122

TUC Know Your Rights Line

0870 600 4882

Citizens Advice Cymru

02920 376 750

Citizens Advice Scotland

www.cas.org.uk

0131 550 1000

email info@cas.org.uk

**Scottish Employment
Rights Network**

0131 556 3006

Stonewall

020 7881 9440

www.stonewall.org.uk

Minicom 020 7881 9996

Stonewall Scotland

0131 557 3679

Stonewall Cymru

02920 237 744 / 01248 370082

www.stonewallcymru.org.uk