

# Stonewall

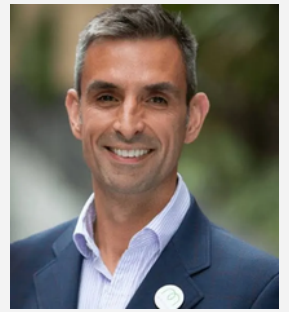
 **Proud  
Employers**

*We are*   
**Stonewall.**

## Proud Employers Accreditation

Some trends and lessons from 2025

# Foreword



Stonewall has been working hand in hand with organisations from the private, public and third sector on both LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace and wider societal equality for almost four decades.

In 2025 we launched a new workplace inclusion programme called Proud Employers – this included a new Proud Employers Accreditation Framework.

We all know that creating a culture of inclusion and belonging is not a ‘nice to have’, there is a strong business and moral imperative for it.

We also know that now more than ever when resources are scant, we must focus our attention on work that really delivers impact. Our staff are looking for genuine engagement, beyond surface level, they are looking for cultures where inclusion is truly embedded.

One of the most powerful parts of working with so many workplaces through the Proud Employers programme is that it creates a unique opportunity to share innovation and inspiration between organisations.

This report shares insights from some of the workplaces who chose to use the Proud Employers Accreditation to understand, develop and celebrate their LGBTQ+ inclusion work.

We hope that you find what follows useful in developing your own inclusion strategies. If you’d like to read the full report, use the accreditation yourself, or join the programme please get in touch, we would be pleased to partner with you.

*Sue Blake*



# Introduction



## About Stonewall

Stonewall is the UK's leading LGBTQ+ rights charity. We have over three decades of experience advocating for inclusion and over twenty years' experience supporting workplace inclusion.

Our vision is of a world where everyone, everywhere has equal rights. We will work until every person who is lesbian, gay, bi, trans or queer+ is living free from discrimination, prejudice and inequality; making our shared future safer, fairer and more prosperous. Working with business, the public sector, civil society and government we have secured landmark social and legislative change, including marriage equality, and together we have driven massive progress in LGBTQ+ inclusion within the workplace and society.

## About The Accreditation

The Stonewall Proud Employers Accreditation is a benchmarking and accreditation tool that supports employers to celebrate and progress LGBTQ+ inclusion in their workplaces. The accreditation is based on a proven good practice framework and assesses eight areas of employment policy and practice. Four levels of recognition are available (Accomplished, Champion, Leader and Trailblazer).

The information in this report is compiled from information shared with us during the 2025 accreditation process. We're excited to share this report, distilling rich data and learnings from employer submissions into insights we believe are vital in a world where belonging is both an economic and a human imperative.

This is an excerpt from the report, members of the Proud Employers programme have access to the full version, please [get in touch](#) with the team to learn more about joining the programme.

## About Proud Employers

Research shows that organisations with an inclusive culture are twice as likely to achieve better business outcomes<sup>[1]</sup> Despite this 39% of LGBTQ+ employees hide the fact they are LGBTQ+ at work.<sup>[2]</sup>

The Proud Employers programme supports workplaces to take meaningful action on inclusion. We support organisations to develop and deliver strategic interventions that have impact. Members can access practical and holistic guidance, opportunities to connect and share learning, and the chance to benchmark and celebrate their work. As we experience increasing political and social turbulence, this work is more vital than ever. We're proud to work with leading employers in the UK and across the globe to build workplaces that are safer, fairer and better for all.

<sup>[1]</sup> *The Business Case for Diversity and Inclusion, Talent Dynamics, 2025*

<sup>[2]</sup> *Stonewall, 2025*

# Lessons from 2025

**The accreditation looks at eight areas of workplace policy and practice and asks questions to explore the impact of an organisation's work.**

When we looked at weighted scores across all applications there were some clear areas of strength as well as opportunities for growth.

## 1. Network Groups: from socials to strategies

Across the section on network groups many organisations scored highly, demonstrating their ongoing central role in inclusion strategies.

**Celebration:** This year organisations demonstrated particular strength in the social and awareness-raising events they ran. We also saw organisations formalising opportunities for collaboration and shared learning between network groups.

**Opportunity:** Given the environment we are operating in it is clear that networks will play an increasingly crucial role in advising and influencing the policies, protocols and strategies of their organisations and that organisations should invest in the structures and development opportunities to enable them.

## 2. Leadership: navigating complexity

Organisations are routinely treating LGBTQ+ inclusion as a priority for their leadership team.

**Celebration:** This year many organisations had invested in a senior champion to provide strategic support for their LGBTQ+ inclusion work. We saw organisations empowering their leaders to send strong messages to their staff on the importance of inclusion at work.

**Opportunity:** As we navigate greater complexity around inclusion senior leaders will benefit from continuous and varied opportunities to deepen their learning on inclusion in order to reduce organisational risk and make a greater impact. Organisations also have the opportunity to invest in developing LGBTQ+ leadership capacity to strengthen their teams with some organisations now investing in sponsorship schemes.

# Lessons from 2025

## 3. Supply Chains: opportunities for influence

In this year's accreditation organisations scored the lowest on questions about supply chains. Working to educate suppliers on inclusion and including questions and criteria around inclusion in your tendering processes ensures you are working with organisations who you can be confident share your values.

**Celebration:** Many organisations took advantage of the opportunity to invite suppliers to join their own events and training sessions to help widen the influence and impact of their inclusion work.

**Opportunity:** Siloed working can create challenges here. There are huge opportunities to formalise ways of collaborating between those working on inclusion and those working on procurement in order to share knowledge. As trust and transparency continue to be valued highly by staff, clients, customers and service users embedding inclusion in contracting and selection processes can help to minimise risk and increase the impact of your work.

## The Stonewall LGBTQ+ Leadership Programme

The Stonewall LGBTQ+ leadership programme is a unique opportunity to invest in LGBTQ+ talent and drive inclusion throughout your organisation.

This unique programme provides LGBTQ+ leaders with six months of specialist development and support.

Participants will:

- Develop practical leadership skills
- Expand their network
- Grow their confidence to step up as leaders

Empower leaders in your workplace to [apply today](#).

**“I can honestly say it was one of the most energising, thought-provoking and joyfully memorable experiences of my career.”**

Ethaniel Kelly-Wilson, HR Operations and HR Technology Director

# Innovation Awards

Innovation Awards recognise employers who have designed and delivered innovative projects. We hope that sharing their work will inspire you when tackling challenges or maximising opportunities.

## EDI Champions

At Delta, we've created an EDI Champions programme rooted in grassroots action, peer support and practical allyship. With no LGBTQIA+ networks or big budgets, we focused on training, open comms, partnerships and visibility. This simple, people-led approach has transformed confidence, inclusion and LGBTQIA+ belonging across our workplace.



"We really loved the way that this programme empowers everyone to make a difference in the workplace."

Yeme, Stonewall

## In My Shoes

### StMungo's

In My Shoes is our annual reverse mentoring scheme, connecting senior leaders and Board members with more junior colleagues, who act as mentors, from diverse backgrounds across St Mungo's.

We particularly appreciated the considered way that St Mungo's navigated the power dynamics inherent within reverse mentoring schemes and ensured that psychological safety was at the heart of this work."

Chira, Stonewall

Through structured conversations over four months, the programme creates space for open dialogue about lived experience, with intersectionality at its core. It enables senior leaders to reflect on their leadership and better understand the barriers colleagues may face, while empowering colleagues to share their perspectives and influence change. The insights gained support delivery of our ED&I Strategy and help us build a more inclusive, equitable and psychologically safe organisation where everyone feels heard, valued and able to thrive.



## Loved and Wanted Campaign

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

'Loved & Wanted' launched at a time of growing polarisation across the country, when social cohesion was being tested. It was developed with communities as a positive, active expression of solidarity, centring the real voices and experiences of London's diverse communities. A key Pride activation enabled direct, visible and meaningful engagement with the LGBTQIA+ community, strengthened through content collaborations with LGBTQIA+ creators and artists. Its impact was seen and felt across the city, from Tube stations to schools, GP surgeries and community spaces, continuing to send a powerful message of love and support in challenging times.

"We loved the way the campaign centred the voices of LGBTQ+ Londoners and was holistically delivered enabling it to reach a wide range of audiences."

Charlotte, Stonewall

## Pride in a box



Helping Tesco bring Pride nationwide, Pride in a Box was devised from a store colleagues idea to ensure Pride activity was inclusive, visible and accessible across the UK estate. It recognised that engagement varies by role, location and working pattern, and that Pride should not be limited to flagship or office-based events.

Pride in a Box provided a practical, scalable solution, enabling colleagues across stores, offices, distribution and fulfilment centres to participate confidently and consistently. Each Pride event received branded t-shirts and Pride materials, removing the need for local sourcing and ensuring a shared look, feel and message.

The initiative supported every Tesco-attended Pride event nationwide, including the first Pride activations in distribution and fulfilment centres, helping create unity, belonging and visible allyship across a diverse workforce.

"We loved how this simple, joyful and innovative project was able to bring the power of pride to colleagues across Tesco."

Jake Laws, Stonewall.

# Senior Leadership



**GREATER  
MANCHESTER**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

**GMCA** GREATER  
MANCHESTER  
COMBINED  
AUTHORITY

Our leaders are visibly committed and structurally supported to lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, strengthening our inclusive workplace culture. Our Group CEO, Chief Fire Officer and Senior Sponsors of our staff networks model this leadership.

Staff voice is valued and shapes our approach, informing leadership development and governance. Inclusive Culture training grounded in equality legislation, and strong ethical principles is encouraged. Senior Leaders and Senior Sponsors champion underrepresented voices and actively shape our Culture and Inclusion Strategies. Clear zero-tolerance messaging on discrimination is reinforced by policy and visible advocacy.

Inclusive leadership is embedded in recruitment, appraisal and governance. We aim to turn lived experience into action, creating accountable, confident allies across our organisation. “Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service is outstanding at promoting, embedding and improving values and culture”. (HMICFRS report 2025-27)

Access to high quality learning and opportunities to engage with the network and the public ensures leaders can be strong, consistent and authentic champions.”

Phillippa, Stonewall



# Get Involved

## Join the Programme

Members of the Stonewall Proud Employers programme enjoy access to a wide range of benefits that help you to realise the benefits of LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace.

From expert-led webinars to access to exclusive research as well as a unique range of learning and networking events members are part of a powerful network of hundreds of leading organisations.

If you'd like to learn more about working with us please [reach out to the team](#) to explore how we can help power your work.

## Supporting Stonewall

Stonewall has been working for almost four decades to create a safer and more inclusive world for all LGBTQ+ people.

As a charity much of our work is supported by the generosity of individuals who believe in our vision of a world where everyone everywhere has equal rights.

Whether it's payroll giving, donning Rainbow Laces for a challenge event or kitting out your office with our merchandise there are many ways you can support us.

Find out more [on our website](#).



# Stonewall

Registered Charity No 1101255 (England and Wales) and SC039681 (Scotland)

Stonewall is proud to provide information, support and guidance on LGBTQ+ inclusion, working towards a world where everyone everywhere has equal rights. This does not constitute legal advice and is not intended to be a substitute for legal counsel on any subject matter.