

Companies are often quite scared to ask the obvious questions and do the simple things because they feel like they should have been doing it anyway.

Kathryn Townsend, Vice President, UK Retail and Business Bank, Barclays

# SEXUAL ORIENTATION EMPLOYER TOOLKIT

# Contents

# Introduction

## 1

**Who is this guide for?**

1

## 2

**Why is sexual orientation relevant to the workplace?**

2

## 3

**The law**

3

## 4

**Practical toolkit**



**Recruitment and promotion**  
**Bullying and harassment**  
**Terms, conditions and benefits**  
**Training**  
**Supporting gay staff**

**7 Career development**  
**8 Monitoring**  
**9 Influencing your suppliers**  
**10 Customers and service users**  
**11 Supporting the local community**

12  
13  
14  
15  
16

## 5

**Useful information**

17-18

In the decade since legislation was first introduced in Britain to outlaw discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual people in employment, Stonewall has worked with over 650 employers – employing between them over 5.5 million people – through the Diversity Champions programme and the annual Workplace Equality Index. The resulting transformation in the culture of many of Britain's workplaces is significant but there remains lots to do.

The very best employers recognise that to deliver value for money to taxpayers, investors, shareholders or donors they need to attract and retain the very best staff. Creating workplace environments where lesbian, gay and bisexual employees want to work and where they feel they can progress makes them more competitive in the market for talent.

Many employers are yet to begin creating workplaces that are inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. They often think it is complex and costly. The experiences of the hundreds of organisations we have worked with have demonstrated that this is simply not the case. Employers from the public, private and third sectors have developed a range of cost-effective practical interventions captured in this guide that have resulted in tangible improvements to the levels of satisfaction of their lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.



**Ruth Hunt**  
*Acting Chief Executive  
Stonewall*

# 1 Who is this guide for?

This guide introduces employers to the practical steps they can take to make their workplaces more inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. It outlines simple, cost effective and in most cases free things they can do to create a culture where all staff are able to be themselves and perform to the best of their ability.

The best employers recognise that in the competition for talent they must continue to drive themselves to capitalise on the strength of diversity. Stonewall works with over 650 employers – employing over 5.5 million people in Britain between them – helping them go beyond their legal responsibilities to create workplaces that help attract and retain the very best staff.

Stonewall's **Diversity Champions** programme and the **Global Diversity Champions** programme are best practice forums for lesbian, gay and bisexual workplace issues. With a ten-year track record, we bring together top employers from across Britain and the world to promote diversity in the workplace.

No matter what stage of the journey you're currently at, Stonewall and our partner organisations can help you make your workplace more inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

For further information visit [stonewall.org.uk/at\\_work](http://stonewall.org.uk/at_work)

Launched in 2005, Stonewall's **Workplace Equality Index** is Britain's definitive benchmark for employers to measure their progress in creating workplaces that are inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Free to enter, the Index has attracted close to 400 entries every year and is the basis upon which Stonewall compiles its annual list of Top 100 Employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. For further information visit [stonewall.org.uk/wei](http://stonewall.org.uk/wei)

## jargon buster

The jargon used to explain equality issues at work can make addressing them seem far more complicated than it actually is. Stonewall uses plain-English throughout this guide and below is a glossary of some terms you may be unfamiliar with.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION** This is about who someone is sexually and/or emotionally attracted to, whether to people of the same-sex (lesbian or gay), opposite sex (straight or heterosexual) or both (bisexual). Sexual orientation is primarily a term used in the laws which outlaw discrimination. Most people never refer to having a sexual orientation, they just say they're lesbian, gay, bisexual or straight.

**ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED SEXUAL ORIENTATION** The law protects people from discrimination both because of their actual sexual orientation and because of what someone thinks their sexual orientation is (their 'perceived sexual orientation'). For example, a straight man who is bullied because all his colleagues think he is gay is protected from that discrimination as much as if he was actually gay. Throughout this guide we use sexual orientation to mean both.

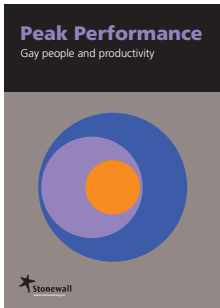
**SEXUALITY** Most people use sexuality and sexual orientation to describe the same thing. However sexual orientation is a term defined in law whereas sexuality is a more general concept that is not defined in law. As an employer it is best to use the term sexual orientation in any policies and documents.

**PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS** This phrase refers to the different groups protected by discrimination laws. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION** This is frequently used as a catch-all term for any work done to make workplaces or public services more welcoming to different groups and more representative of wider society.

**THE EQUALITY ACT 2010** This is the key piece of law in Britain relating to discrimination. It brought together into one law numerous pieces of legislation that covered discrimination against different groups. If you read references to laws such as the Equal Pay Act or the Race Relations Act, for example, these have now been replaced by the Equality Act 2010. More information on the Act can be found in Chapter 3.

# 2 Why is sexual orientation relevant to the workplace?



For more information on the benefits of creating an inclusive workforce see *Peak Performance – Gay people and productivity.*

Many lesbian, gay and bisexual people don't feel able to be open about their sexual orientation at work for fear of discrimination, bullying or harassment. Research has shown, however, that staff who can be open about their sexual orientation are more likely to enjoy going to work, feel able to be themselves, form honest relationships with colleagues, are more confident and, ultimately, more productive. Put simply, improving the working environment for gay staff makes good business sense.

Employers can take simple practical steps to create workplaces where staff feel that they can

be open about their sexual orientation, without fear of discrimination. This will make their lesbian, gay and bisexual employees, and other employees, feel more positive about the workplace and be more productive.

In April 2013, the Office of National Statistics estimated Britain's working population at 29 million, six per cent of whom are lesbian, gay or bisexual. The 1.7 million lesbian, gay and bisexual people currently employed in Britain are spread across every industry and sector. By creating workplaces where people can be themselves all employers, regardless of industry, can benefit.

## five benefits for employers

1

**RECRUIT AND RETAIN THE BEST STAFF** Improving the working environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff not only helps you attract and retain talented lesbian, gay and bisexual employees but is also seen as an important sign of how good the workplace is for other groups including women, parents and black and minority ethnic people.

**INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY** People perform better when they can be themselves. By creating an environment that is inclusive of everyone, employees will be more creative, loyal and productive.

2

3

**AVOID RISK** The law is clear that no employer, regardless of size, can discriminate at work on the grounds of sexual orientation. This includes failing to take action to prevent bullying and harassment of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. There have been a number of cases where employers have been given significant fines for failing to protect their lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.

**MAINTAIN YOUR REPUTATION** Not supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual equality can damage an organisation's hard-won reputation. Employment tribunals can have a negative impact on how customers, service users, potential employees and clients view your organisation, as well as being financially costly.

4

5

**GAIN BUSINESS** Whether individual customers or big corporate contractors, creating workplaces that are inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff is increasingly important to doing good business. Many major corporations require their suppliers to show that they don't discriminate against lesbian, gay and bisexual employees before entering into contracts with them, and individual customers increasingly want to spend their money with organisations that support sexual orientation equality.

# 3 The law

Since 2003 it has been unlawful for employers to discriminate against people because of their sexual orientation in all aspects of employment.

- This includes:*
- Recruitment
  - Promotion
  - Training
  - Terms and conditions
  - Pay and benefits
  - Dismissals

Bullying and harassment of staff because of their sexual orientation is also unlawful.

In 2010 the Equality Act brought together all anti-discrimination legislation in one place for the first time. It outlaws four types of behaviour in the workplace relating to sexual orientation:

Bullying and harassment of staff because of their sexual orientation is unlawful



**DIRECT DISCRIMINATION** is where one person is treated less favourably than another person is treated, has been treated or would be treated in a comparable situation because of their sexual orientation.



**INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION** is where a policy or practice is applied which indirectly disadvantages people of a particular sexual orientation, unless it can be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.



**HARASSMENT** is where an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive work environment is created for someone because of their sexual orientation.



**VICTIMISATION** is where a person is treated unfavourably because of their involvement in a case brought under the Equality Act, whether as a claimant, witness or otherwise.

Fighting a discrimination case at an employment tribunal is a no-win situation. It's time-consuming and costly for both the employer and the employee and uses up valuable resources. Even if the tribunal finds in the employer's favour, the case can damage the organisation's reputation among existing and prospective workers as well as customers and members of the public.

When protections first came into force, many employers implemented policies and practices that

met or went beyond their legal responsibilities.

This has helped them avoid potentially costly legal claims. There have, however, been a number of employment tribunals where employers have been found to have discriminated against lesbian, gay or bisexual staff, resulting in significant costs. For example, in 2006 an employment tribunal in Glasgow awarded Jonah Ditton a total of £120,000 for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation that he experienced whilst working as a media sales manager at CP Publishing Ltd.

# 3 The law

## positive action

The Equality Act outlaws positive discrimination, but allows positive action. Understandably, many employers and employees find the two concepts confusing.



**POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION** is when someone is appointed or promoted solely because, for example, they are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Positive discrimination is unlawful.



**POSITIVE ACTION** is where employers undertake work with particular groups to address under-representation of those groups in their workforce. This includes targeted recruitment, advertising and leadership programmes. Positive action is lawful.

Under the Equality Act, if employers are faced with two or more candidates for a job or promotion who are equally qualified in every way, they can lawfully appoint or promote a candidate because of their sexual orientation. This is not positive discrimination. The decision to promote or recruit an individual must be based on merit. If a lesbian, gay or bisexual candidate is

not of equal merit to the best candidate for the job then the best candidate should be appointed.

It is important to note that lesbian, gay and bisexual people should not be forced to disclose their sexual orientation, nor should information about their sexual orientation be shared with others without their consent.

## goods and services

Since 2007 it has also been unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in the public and private provision of goods, facilities and services. This covers any public or commercial service, whether provided free or for a charge. All aspects of goods and service provision are covered by the Act, including:

avoid potentially costly legal claims. The European Court of Human Rights has also ruled that it is legitimate for employers to require their staff to provide goods and services to lesbian, gay and bisexual people regardless of the personal views of those staff.



- 1 Providing a service
- 2 Terminating a service
- 3 The terms and conditions of a service

Since the protections came into force many businesses and public services have implemented policies and practices that meet and go beyond their legal responsibilities. This has helped them

There have been a small number of cases where businesses have been found to have discriminated against their lesbian, gay or bisexual customers, resulting in significant costs. For example, in 2011 the owners of the Chymorvah Private Hotel in Cornwall were found to have discriminated against civil partners Martyn Hall and Steve Preddy when they were refused a double room because they were 'unmarried'. The courts ruled that despite the policy being based on the genuine religious beliefs of the owners it was direct discrimination.



# 3 The law

## the public sector equality duty

The public sector equality duty, known as ‘the duty’, only applies to public bodies or organisations delivering public services on their behalf. It is designed to support and guide public bodies to address inequalities experienced by their staff and service users. This includes inequalities experienced by lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

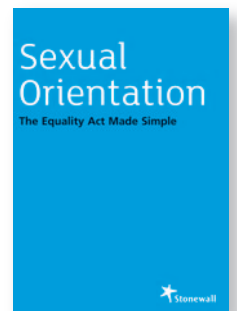
The duty covers all the work of a public body, including the services it contracts out to be delivered by others. There are two parts of the duty: the general duty and the specific duties. Put simply, the general duty sets out the goals that public bodies must aim for, whilst the specific duties are the practical things they must do to help them achieve those goals.

The general duty says that public bodies, in all of their functions, must consider:

- 1 Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- 2 Advancing equality of opportunity
- 3 Fostering good relations between different groups

The Government is clear that how public bodies achieve these three aims should be flexible and proportionate. They have, however, laid down in the specific duties things that public bodies must do as a minimum:

For more information on the law see *Sexual Orientation The Equality Act Made Simple*.



**1** Public bodies have to set and publish equality objectives, setting out how they intend to meet any of the aims of the general duty. This will enable people to clearly see what public bodies have committed to doing.



**2** Public bodies will need to publish data every annum showing how they are meeting these aims. This will enable people to hold them to account on whether they are addressing inequalities.

# PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

There are a number of simple, practical steps employers can take to make their workplaces and services inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. The best employers have learnt from experience that there are a number of key areas which, when they're addressed, can see significant improvements in the culture of their workplaces. These are outlined in the following sections:

- 1 **Recruitment and promotion**
- 2 **Bullying and harassment**
- 3 **Terms, conditions and benefits**
- 4 **Training**
- 5 **Supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual staff**
- 6 **Career development**
- 7 **Monitoring**
- 8 **Influencing your suppliers**
- 9 **Customers and service users**
- 10 **Supporting the local community**



Each section contains five top tips for employers, with good practice case studies from both private and public organisations that have already begun to address these issues. Not all of the tips need to be followed in every organisation, or all at once. Organisations at the start of their journey should create a progressively challenging action plan. There are plenty of ideas to help you get started.



# 4.1 Recruitment and promotion

In tough times it is important that organisations do all they can to recruit the best people for the job regardless of their sexual orientation or any other characteristic. Unfair recruitment practices can prevent employers attracting and recruiting from the widest possible talent pool.

Some employers still, often unwittingly, discriminate against lesbian, gay and bisexual people during the recruitment process. Examples of bad – and potentially unlawful – practices include:

- Asking inappropriate questions about an applicant's sexual orientation in an interview
- Not appointing or promoting someone because of flawed assumptions about what jobs lesbian, gay and bisexual people are good or bad at
- Not appointing or promoting people because lesbian, gay and bisexual staff 'will not fit in'
- Not appointing or promoting someone because other staff, clients, customers or service users might not like working with a lesbian, gay or bisexual person

Meanwhile, some lesbian, gay and bisexual people may not apply for jobs in organisations they, rightly or wrongly, do not believe are inclusive of them. Therefore, employers who want to recruit from the widest possible talent pool should take proactive steps to promote their workplaces as being inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.



## Case study #1

**The Cooperative group** train senior line managers involved in recruitment about sexual orientation equality and how to ensure the recruitment process is fair. The training informs line managers about the law and uses different case studies demonstrating what discrimination in recruitment might look like. Applicants are also monitored on application and appointment to identify whether a disproportionate number of heterosexual or LGB applicants are being appointed.

For more information about promoting your organisation as a gay-friendly employer visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_work](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work)



## Case study #2

With the support of **Leicestershire police**, the LGBT Network and some of the force's Straight Allies marched at Leicester's Pride festival. They also had a stall at the event to promote the support provided by the police and the organisation's status as an LGBT friendly employer to attract applicants from the community.

Some employers still, often unwittingly, discriminate against lesbian, gay and bisexual people during the recruitment process

## top tips

- 1** Understand whether your workforce and applicants reflect the wider community by monitoring the sexual orientation of staff and applicants.
- 2** Have a clear 'equality policy' stating that you will not discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in all aspects of employment.
- 3** Train staff involved in recruitment to inform them about the law and to challenge any assumptions or stereotypes they may have about lesbian, gay and bisexual people.
- 4** Make a statement in your recruitment advertising that you welcome applications from all sections of the community.
- 5** Target job advertising to different communities including advertising positions in the lesbian, gay and bisexual media or on [www.proudemployers.co.uk](http://www.proudemployers.co.uk)

## 4.2 Bullying and harassment

For more information on preventing and responding to homophobic bullying and harassment visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_work](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work)



*Gay in Britain*, a study conducted for Stonewall by YouGov, revealed that one in five – equivalent to approximately 323,000 – lesbian, gay and bisexual employees have, over the last five years, experienced verbal bullying from colleagues, clients or service users because of their sexual orientation. Almost a third of those who have experienced this bullying have been bullied by their manager. More than half have been bullied by people in their own team and a quarter by people junior to them.

Bullying and harassment of employees because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation is demotivating and unlawful. Bullying can include any behaviour that creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This can range from insensitive jokes or ‘banter’ to actual physical abuse. Employers are liable if they cannot demonstrate that they took effective action to prevent and address incidents of bullying or harassment. Examples of bullying and harassment include:

- Gossiping about someone’s sexual orientation or personal life
- ‘Outing’ someone as lesbian, gay or bisexual without their permission
- Asking intrusive personal questions
- Expressing offensive views about lesbian, gay or bisexual people

Some lesbian, gay and bisexual people are also worried that reporting bullying might ‘out’ them and lead to further bullying.

An organisation which tackles all forms of bullying and harassment is likely to benefit from improved productivity of staff through reduced sick leave, improved retention, motivation and loyalty.



### Case study #1

**Simmons & Simmons’** bullying and harassment policy clearly lays out what constitutes the act: *‘verbal conduct including but not limited to unwelcome advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity, offensive flirtations, lewd comments, threatening comments (including threats to out someone who has not openly disclosed their sexual orientation), inappropriate questioning or abusive language which denigrates or ridicules, insults (including offensive name calling) and offensive comments about dress, appearance, sexual orientation or physique, and the writing and/or sending of written materials, including emails, of an offensive nature.’*



### Case study #2

**Derbyshire County Council** encourages lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to report incidents of bullying and harassment in a number of ways. In addition to encouraging people to report incidents to their line manager, trade union or direct to human resources, the council encourages lesbian, gay and bisexual employees to report incidents to the lesbian, gay and bisexual staff network group or to the council’s in-house counselling service. The network group has a named contact available for people to report incidents to.

### top tips

- 1** Have a bullying policy that makes clear homophobic bullying will not be tolerated and provides examples of what it can include.
- 2** Advise managers on how to identify and tackle homophobic bullying at work.
- 3** Tell your staff that all forms of bullying, including homophobic bullying, will not be tolerated and how to report any incidents of bullying.
- 4** Provide several ways people can report bullying, including the opportunity to report anonymously, to encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people who may not be ‘out’ to report incidents.
- 5** Collect data on the number of incidents of homophobic bullying to identify any patterns, for example, in different divisions of your organisation.

## 4.3 Terms, conditions and benefits

It is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in all aspects of employment including pay, benefits and terms and conditions. Employers must make sure that lesbian, gay and bisexual people are able to access any benefits a heterosexual employee in a comparable situation can access.

Policies that cover pay and bonuses, pensions, parental leave, health insurance, travel concessions and relocation allowances for employees and their partners should be open to all. In particular employers should make sure that all their benefits are explicitly available to both opposite-sex and same-sex couples.

Not all lesbian, gay and bisexual people are aware of their legal entitlements, or the rules covering things like paternity leave. Employers should therefore proactively promote to all staff that benefits are open to all employees regardless of sexual orientation. Some may be reluctant to take advantage of benefits packages available to couples for fear of 'outing' themselves when applying for them. Employers should enable employees to request such benefits confidentially.



### Case study #1

**Lloyds Banking Group** has reviewed their benefits policies to ensure they are open to staff regardless of sexual orientation. There is explicit mention in policies such as parental leave and compassionate leave policies that references to partners and families includes same-sex partners and families.

For more information and case studies visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_work](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work)



### Case study #2

**Warwickshire County Council** has published *LGBT Staff – Your Rights and Benefits* for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff, and their managers. It explains to staff and managers how different types of leave apply to lesbian, gay and bisexual staff as well as the pension scheme. The guide has been distributed to all line managers, is available on the intranet and through the staff network group.

Employers must make sure that lesbian, gay and bisexual people are able to access any benefits a heterosexual employee in a comparable situation can access and enable employees to request such benefits confidentially

### top tips

- 1** Review all pay, benefit and leave policies and documents to make sure they apply equally to lesbian, gay and bisexual, and heterosexual staff. Amend the wording of policies so that they explicitly state they apply equally.
- 2** Actively promote that benefits are open to all staff regardless of sexual orientation. Train staff who advise employees and make decisions about benefits, including line managers, on their applicability to lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.
- 3** Require suppliers of benefits, such as private health providers, to provide them free from discrimination.
- 4** When promoting benefits, for example in induction materials, include examples of employees with same-sex partners to show that they are open to everyone.
- 5** Consider implementing a benefits programme where all staff can nominate any other person to share their benefits without stating their relationship to them. This allows lesbian, gay and bisexual people to nominate a partner without outing themselves.

# 4.4 Training

For more information on resources you can use to train your staff on the issues surrounding sexual orientation and the impact on both employees and the organisation visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_work](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work)

Staff may not understand the experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual people and may unwittingly behave unlawfully or inappropriately in the workplace. Even if it is unwitting, employers can be held liable for this behaviour if they haven't tried to address it.

It is important that staff are made aware that discrimination and homophobic bullying at work are unacceptable and the reasons why. Giving staff training about what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, using examples of homophobic language, makes clear the organisation's position on homophobic bullying.

Some staff should also receive more specific training relevant to their roles. Managers should receive training on how to identify and challenge homophobic bullying at work, how to fairly implement the organisation's policies, as well as how to support lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. Staff in customer facing roles should receive training on the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual service users or customers, for example, care home providers should receive training on the needs of older lesbian, gay and bisexual people.



### Case study #1

**Bristol City Council** has developed a booklet called *'Out in the workplace'* that showcased LGB people who work in the Council and wider public sector in Bristol. There is also a briefing session to accompany the resource for managers to hold with their team that looks specifically at how to make the workplace a safe and comfortable place for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. The training covers what homophobia and heterosexism looks like, how to report it and includes case studies to prompt group discussion.



### Case study #2

Every line manager at **IBM** undergoes new manager orientation training that includes a specific section on managing and supporting diverse staff groups. The training includes a scenario about managing homophobic jokes in a team where the manager knows that one of the team members is gay but this is not known within the team more widely. The session invites managers to think through how they would act in challenging situations; prompting them where necessary that they should remind staff that inappropriate humour is not tolerated by IBM and will not be tolerated in their team.

Giving staff training about what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behavior makes clear the organisation's position on homophobic bullying

## top tips

- 1** Start an on-going programme of training for all staff on the importance of treating lesbian, gay and bisexual people with respect and the organisation's policies on bullying and harassment.
- 2** Make sure all new staff are required to undertake this training within a set period.
- 3** Hold line managers accountable for their staff completing the training satisfactorily.
- 4** Deliver specific training to line managers to help them deliver the organisation's policies equally regardless of sexual orientation. Also provide them training on how to support lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.
- 5** Encourage your staff to stand up and tackle homophobic bullying or offensive behaviour when they witness it.

# 4.5 Supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual staff

Taking action to prevent discrimination is a positive first step. However, the very best employers engage directly with their lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to find out how best to make their workplaces inclusive of all sexual orientations.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual employee networks are a useful way to listen to staff and provide them support. Smaller employers may not have enough staff to establish a functioning network group but many industries are beginning to establish industry-wide networks of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees.

The relationship between lesbian, gay and bisexual staff and their line manager is key. If they feel unable to be 'out' to their manager it will have an impact on their performance, particularly if this prevents them from making a complaint about bullying, or accessing partner benefits. Line managers should therefore be trained on how to address incidents of bullying and how benefits apply to same-sex couples.

Straight people have a critical role to play in creating workplaces that are inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Their visible support of network groups and lesbian, gay and bisexual colleagues can have a transformative effect on the workplace culture. They play a crucial role, especially when in senior positions within an organisation, in demonstrating that equality for all is an issue the organisation is committed to.

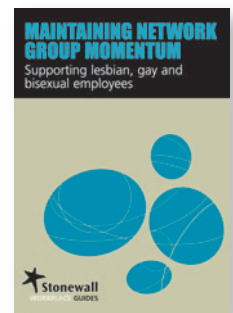
## Case study #1

The **Environment Agency** set up a network group after consulting with staff in 2005. The group provides lesbian, gay and bisexual staff networking opportunities and advice on career progression. The group also advises the organisation on the impact of policies and practices on gay people. As the agency has over 11,000 staff working across England and Wales, the network has regional leads to support staff, many of whom work in small offices across the country. The group tries to ensure staff can access information regardless of their location by communicating using posters in local offices, the intranet and through email. They have a dedicated committee member who engages field staff and other hard to reach staff.

## Case study #2

**Goldman Sachs** has supported the development of a Managing Director Ally (MD Ally) Programme that partners with the LGBT Network. The programme enables managing directors from each of the 13 divisions within EMEA to demonstrate that they, and the organisation, support LGBT employees. Allies do this through promoting and attending LGBT specific events, modelling inclusive behaviour and language and ensuring that training programmes are cascaded throughout their teams and divisions. Each Ally is also reverse mentored by a member of the LGBT Network to help senior staff understand the day-to-day experience of LGBT employees at the organisation.

For more information on setting up a network group and involving straight colleagues visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_work](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work)



## top tips

- 1 Before setting up a network group consult your lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to cultivate interest. Use your staff intranets, noticeboards or staff emails to promote the idea and provide an anonymous means by which staff can talk to you about it.
- 2 Get the senior leadership of your organisation to champion and promote the network. This will demonstrate that your organisation is committed to supporting and listening to lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.
- 3 Arrange for meetings to take place in discrete locations allowing staff who are not out at work to attend. Provide a means for staff in satellite offices to take part too. Members should agree the group's purpose, structure, attendance and how it will engage with the leadership of the organisation.
- 4 Engage with the network regularly and consult them on new and on-going equality initiatives. This will keep members involved and help employers identify practical ideas that will help improve the workplace culture.
- 5 Actively promote the group to all staff, especially new recruits.
- 6 Besides a staff network group for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees, you may also wish to consider setting up an Allies network for straight staff to show their support for their colleagues.
- 7 Provide managers with the training, support and resources that will enable them to lead diverse staff groups and challenge inappropriate behaviour.

# 4.6 Career development

For more information on the career development of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_work](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work)



Employers that do not encourage the career development of all of their staff cannot capitalise on the full potential of their employees. Lesbian, gay and bisexual employees can sometimes find it difficult to progress within organisations because they are not able to be themselves at work. It is important that organisations review existing talent or career development opportunities to ensure lesbian, gay and bisexual staff participate in these programmes.

Some lesbian, gay and bisexual people struggle with the prospect of coming out to a new team while others may feel daunted by the task of networking in order to secure a promotion. Some may feel that the organisation may discriminate against them in the application process, particularly if they do not see any openly lesbian, gay or bisexual people in senior positions within their organisation.

Employers can often replicate work they have already done to encourage the career development of women and black and minority ethnic staff to create an environment where lesbian, gay and bisexual staff are able to be themselves and have the confidence to seek promotions.



## Case study #1

### Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

monitors staff participation in training and leadership opportunities. This data is broken down by sexual orientation and is kept under review at board level. In addition the trust promotes training and leadership programmes, including Stonewall's Leadership Programme, through the lesbian, gay and bisexual employee network.



## Case study #2

### Accenture

offers a variety of learning opportunities designed to educate and retain individuals, promote inclusion and diversity in the workplace and prepare employees to collaborate successfully to deliver high performance for clients. In 2012, Accenture collaborated with Stonewall to host an in-house leadership programme for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employees to help improve the representation of LGBT people at senior levels within the organization. The course was designed to provide LGBT employees with the right tools and capabilities to act as role models for other LGBT staff at Accenture.

## top tips

- 1** Talk to your lesbian, gay and bisexual staff about the concerns they may have about career progression within your organisation. Encourage senior lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to be open about their sexual orientation and to act as role models for more junior staff.
- 2** Promote any existing leadership or training opportunities to lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. Make sure line managers highlight training opportunities to all staff and openly discuss with lesbian, gay and bisexual staff any concerns they may have about their career progression.
- 3** Monitor the sexual orientation of your staff across all grades to obtain reliable data on the representation of lesbian, gay and bisexual people throughout the organisation. In particular, monitor at exit and conduct exit interviews to identify whether a lack of career progression is making lesbian, gay and bisexual employees leave the organisation.
- 4** Consider sending high-potential lesbian, gay and bisexual staff on tailored leadership training, such as the Stonewall Leadership Programme, to give them the skills and confidence to progress.
- 5** Communicate with all staff why the organisation is addressing the career development of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees. Make sure that if you provide tailored programmes for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff that there are alternatives for other staff.



# 4.7 Monitor your workforce and customers

Monitoring sexual orientation enables employers to find out how many lesbian, gay and bisexual people work for them and how their experiences at work compare to that of their colleagues. Monitoring data can be used to identify levels of job satisfaction amongst lesbian, gay and bisexual staff, or whether there are barriers to reaching the most senior positions in the organisation. It also helps organisations better understand their clients and service users, helping them tailor their products and services to customers' needs.

Quite simply, sexual orientation monitoring entails asking employees, customers and service users the following question:

### What is your sexual orientation?

- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Heterosexual/straight
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Asking employees, customers or service users to declare their sexual orientation in a monitoring exercise is not the same as encouraging them to 'come out' to their colleagues or service providers. Monitoring is about collecting data, in some cases anonymously, in order to identify broad trends.

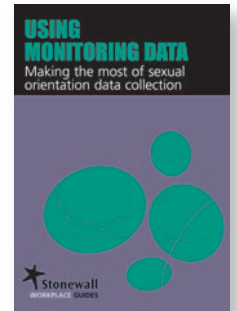
### Case study #1

**Barclays** analyses applicants' sexual orientation when they apply for roles. The system enables Barclays to track applicants through each of the recruitment stages – application, shortlist and job offer. Applicants have the option of ticking 'prefer not to say' but are encouraged to declare.

### Case study #2

**St Mungo's** analyses its staff monitoring data annually to determine the distribution of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff by grade. In response to findings that the Senior Management Team was not representative of the organisation as a whole, the charity introduced a mentoring programme to increase the diversity of senior management. The programme works with staff from minority groups, including lesbian, gay and bisexual staff, supporting them to develop the skills and confidence they need to move into senior management positions.

For more information on how to monitor sexual orientation visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_work](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work)



## top tips

**1** Before starting to monitor understand why you are doing it and what you want to find out. Talk to your lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to work out the best way to introduce sexual orientation monitoring and to allay any anxieties about its introduction.

**2** Explain why you are monitoring to the wider workforce and how privacy will be protected. Use Stonewall's *What's it got to do with you?* guide to explain monitoring to staff and customers.

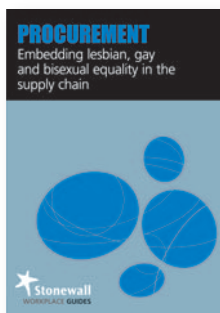
**3** Monitor sexual orientation at all stages of employment from application to exit. Monitor responses to any staff satisfaction surveys or reports of bullying and harassment to identify whether lesbian, gay and bisexual people are disproportionately dissatisfied or victims of bullying.

**4** Analyse the data and take action to address any issues highlighted. For example, if you identify that no lesbian, gay and bisexual people apply for positions, take action to promote job positions on [www.proudemployers.co.uk](http://www.proudemployers.co.uk)

**5** Tell staff what you have done as a result of collecting the data. Publish the findings so that people can see you are investigating the issues faced by lesbian, gay and bisexual people in your organisation. Make sure that no individuals can be identified from any data you publish.

# 4.8 Influencing your suppliers

For more information on how to encourage suppliers to improve their workplaces and services to lesbian, gay and bisexual people visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_work](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work)



Deciding how to spend money is of critical importance to every organisation and it's vital that the billions spent each year on goods and services are spent with the right suppliers.

There are many factors for an organisation to consider when choosing a supplier to deliver goods or services on its behalf. Equality might not be the first consideration that comes to mind, but the procurement process is an ideal opportunity to advance equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

For public bodies – and organisations delivering public services on their behalf – there is a legal imperative too. The Equality Act places a duty on them to promote equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual people in all of their work, including when working with suppliers.

Nudging suppliers towards promoting equality and diversity has already proved effective for race equality, which many organisations have been integrating into the procurement process for years. Encouraging suppliers to take similar action to promote equality for their lesbian, gay and bisexual staff and service users need not be complex or costly.

The procurement process is an ideal opportunity to advance equality for LGB people

## Case study #1

**Leeds City Council's** policy on equality in procurement clearly states that 'promoting equality and diversity through procurement is important and must be considered as an integral part of the contract'. The council has published specific guidance for officers on how to identify equality impacts at the tender scoping stage and how to monitor performance on equality and diversity for the duration of a contract.

## Case study #2

Through their engagement with their key on-site suppliers **Simmons & Simmons** established that their suppliers' diversity monitoring was often not to the standard that they would recommend. Whilst a number of their on-site suppliers were monitoring things like gender and ethnicity, very few were monitoring the sexual orientation of their staff partly because they were concerned about doing so. In response to this, the firm reached an agreement with these suppliers to monitor the sexual orientation of their employees. The firm has provided them with comprehensive advice on sexual orientation monitoring good practice, including a template monitoring form that suppliers are currently implementing.

## top tips

- 1** Make sure your contracts with suppliers require them, at minimum, to meet their obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- 2** Consider placing specific requirements on your suppliers to improve their workplaces for their lesbian, gay and bisexual staff and their services for lesbian, gay and bisexual customers. For example, encourage them to train all their staff on appropriate behaviour in the workplace.
- 3** Train your staff who handle contracts with suppliers to easily explain why sexual orientation equality is something your organisation is committed to. Train them specifically on how they can encourage suppliers and hold them to account on sexual orientation equality in their workplaces.
- 4** Hold your suppliers to account on improving their workplace and services for lesbian, gay and bisexual people. If they fail to improve, work out how you can support them. If they consistently fail to do so, or if they are found to actively discriminate against lesbian, gay and bisexual people, terminate their contract.

# 4.9 Customers and service users

Government actuaries estimate that six per cent of the population, 3.7 million people, are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people are, therefore, an important market for businesses and constitute a significant portion of the community being served by public bodies.

Many businesses and public services do not fully understand what products and services lesbian, gay and bisexual people need. This means that sometimes they're not always appropriate or are targeted or marketed ineffectively. Meanwhile, some lesbian, gay and bisexual people assume that certain providers or products are not open to them, meaning it is important that organisations promote the fact that their products and services are open to everyone.

For private bodies it is crucial that they understand the market, rather than developing their products and services on assumptions about the lifestyles of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. The law is also clear that they must deliver those products free from discrimination.

For public bodies it is important that lesbian, gay and bisexual people, who help fund those services, feel confident that they can use services that meet their specific needs, and that they'll be delivered in a sensitive and fair manner. In shaping services, public bodies should use the wide range of research analysing the specific needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.



## Case study #1

**Cardiff University** consults lesbian, gay and bisexual students and other stakeholders to help them better address their needs or concerns. This is done through a variety of ways including via a working group that involves a Head of School, the Chair of the University's LGBT+ staff network and the Chair of the University's LGBT+ student group and via representation of the University's LGBT+ Network on the Equality Committee that is Chaired by the Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor. The working group developed a survey for all students that aimed to identify if the experience of lesbian, gay and bisexual students were different from their peers. The findings of this informed the university's equality plan.

For more information on improving your goods and services to your customers and service users visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_work](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work)



## Case study #2

**Your Homes Newcastle** provides mandatory customer service training to all new starters, covering why good customer service is important and how to deliver it. The training highlights equality and diversity considerations when working with service users, addressing all the characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 including sexual orientation. The training explains that knowing the organisation's service users better helps staff tackle inequality in service provision and ultimately provide a better service.

## top tips

- 1** Whether you're a public or private organisation train your staff to make sure they are delivering services free from discrimination. Make sure, for example, that call centre staff understand that marriage is open to both same-sex and opposite-sex partners.
- 2** Send a clear message to customers and service users of the standards they can expect when using your service. Distribute Stonewall's plain English guide *What's It Got To Do With Me?* which explains how they can ensure they are receiving services that are delivered fairly.
- 3** Be clear with your service users or customers that you encourage them to provide feedback if they experience poor service or inappropriate behaviour because of their sexual orientation. Monitor your complaints so you can identify any specific problems experienced by lesbian, gay and bisexual customers.
- 4** Public bodies in particular should, when planning services, use clear research on what their lesbian, gay and bisexual service users need. Consider setting up a forum with other local public bodies to consult local lesbian, gay and bisexual people about their concerns and needs.
- 5** To promote your services as open to all use images of same-sex couples or families in your advertising alongside images of opposite-sex couples and families.

# 4.10 Support the local community

For more information on local lesbian, gay and bisexual community groups visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_work](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work)

Employers are increasingly aware that they need to demonstrate their commitment to sexual orientation equality to their staff, potential applicants and the wider community. An important way to do this is to engage with the local lesbian, gay and bisexual community and support work aimed at tackling homophobia in wider society.

Issues such as homophobic bullying in schools and hate crime concern lesbian, gay and bisexual people across Britain, including your lesbian, gay and bisexual employees. Many local organisations work entirely voluntarily to tackle these issues and require funds and support to function. Modest support can make a huge difference to these groups.

As an employer you should encourage your staff to demonstrate their commitment to sexual orientation equality. In particular, you could encourage your lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to act as role models to young people to show them that their sexual orientation does not have to be a barrier to their own ambition and success.



## Case study #1

**PwC** sponsors lesbian, gay and bisexual community events and supports its staff to engage in volunteering with equality organisations. In addition to supporting Stonewall and GLEE@PwC – the inclusive business network for gays, lesbians and everyone else – PwC participates in a range of activities to fundraise for lesbian, gay and bisexual community groups. The network has also engaged with schools to raise awareness of, and to help tackle, homophobic bullying.



## Case study #2

**Gentoo** has given financial and in-kind support to a number of different lesbian, gay and bisexual community organisations and initiatives. It has given financial support to Northern Pride, Sunderland Pride and the LGBT Federation. Gentoo was also one of the founders and sponsors of LGBT North East, a forum for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people.

You could encourage your lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to act as role models to young people to show them that sexual orientation need not be a barrier to their own ambition and success.

## top tips

**1** Demonstrate your support by attending local lesbian, gay and bisexual community events such as Prides. Promote the work you are doing in the local mainstream and lesbian, gay and bisexual press.

**2** If you have relationships with local schools, support them to tackle homophobic bullying. Consider funding them to join Stonewall's School Champions programme that can provide them with in-depth tailored support.

**3** Encourage senior lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to act as role models or mentors to their junior colleagues. This will help demonstrate to young people that their sexual orientation is no barrier to their success and helps promote your organisation as an inclusive workplace for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

**4** Fundraise for lesbian, gay and bisexual community organisations that otherwise may lack funding. Allow your staff to donate to equality charities through the payroll giving scheme.

**5** Provide support in-kind to local lesbian, gay and bisexual groups. For example, you can support them by providing work experience to members of a local lesbian, gay or bisexual youth group or offering meeting spaces for community groups.

# 5 Useful information

## Stonewall Diversity Champions Programmes

Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme and the Global Diversity Champions programme are best practice forums for lesbian, gay and bisexual workplace issues. With a ten-year track record, we bring together top employers from across Britain and the world to promote diversity in the workplace.

For more information visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/dcs](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/dcs) or contact us on [workplace@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:workplace@stonewall.org.uk) or **020 7593 1868**.

## Stonewall Workplace Conference

The annual Stonewall Workplace Conference is Britain's leading conference on sexual orientation equality and diversity in the workplace. Our growing Diversity Champions and Global Diversity Champions programmes offer advice and support to over 650 major organisations.

Email [workplace@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:workplace@stonewall.org.uk) or call us on **020 7593 1868** for further details.

## Workplace Equality Index

The Workplace Equality Index is Stonewall's free annual benchmarking exercise that showcases Britain's top employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.

For more information visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/wei](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/wei) or contact us on [workplace@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:workplace@stonewall.org.uk) or **020 7593 1868**.

## The Stonewall Leadership Programme

The Stonewall Leadership Programme provides a unique space for current and future leaders in your workplace to look at questions around sexual orientation, authenticity and how these can be used to develop an individual's leadership abilities.

For more information visit [www.stonewall.org.uk/leadership](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/leadership) or contact us on [workplace@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:workplace@stonewall.org.uk) or **020 7593 1868**.

# Stonewall Publications

All the publications and research referenced in this guide are free to download from [www.stonewall.org.uk/publications](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/publications). Hard copies can be ordered through [www.stonewall.org.uk/resources](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources) or by calling 08000 50 20 20.

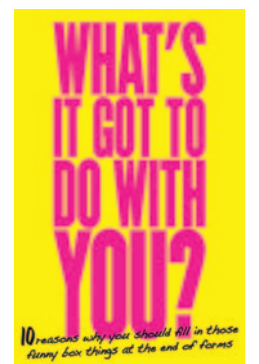
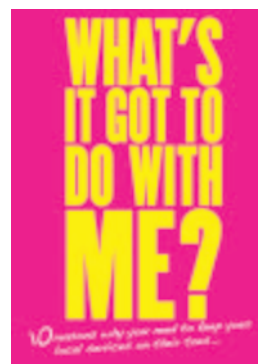
## WORKPLACE GUIDES



## POLICY GUIDES AND RESEARCH



## TOOLS FOR EMPLOYERS



## Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme

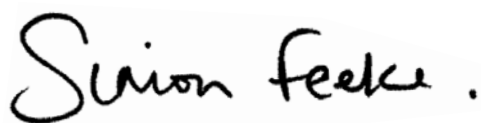
Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme is Britain's leading employers' forum on sexual orientation. We help businesses, charities and public services to develop inclusive workplace cultures. With over 640 members who employ over six million staff, our programme is the largest non-governmental intervention of its kind in the world.

Members receive a range of benefits, including a dedicated Client Account Manager in Stonewall's Workplace Team, an annual Workplace Equality Index benchmarking meeting and tailored advice to help enable you to tap into the full potential of your workforce.

Membership also entitles you to free and priority access to Stonewall seminars held in locations across Britain and discounted rates for our national conferences and leadership programmes. Our seminars highlight the latest good practice on topical issues and our national conferences provide an inspiring line-up of keynote speakers and masterclasses to develop the edge over competitors. They are also incredible networking opportunities where you can share ideas with over 600 employers across different sectors and regions.

Employers operating internationally also now have the opportunity to join Stonewall's Global Diversity Champions programme. Our growing network of top international employers benefit from Stonewall's expertise in supporting gay staff no matter which country they are based in. Members receive a range of additional benefits, including dedicated seminars and research on issues specific to international employers as well as an in-depth global benchmarking meeting to track progress.

At a time when every employer is trying to do more with less, no employer can choose to ignore their most critical resource – their workforce. To find out more about what the Diversity Champions programme offers or how Stonewall can help your organisation, please get in touch. Stonewall and our top-performing partners are here to help.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon Feake .". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**SEXUAL  
ORIENTATION  
EMPLOYER  
TOOLKIT**



**Stonewall**

Charity No 1101255