Welcome to Stonewall’s Healthcare Equality Index 2015, our third guide to England’s best healthcare organisations for lesbian, gay and bisexual patients, families and carers.

Stonewall’s research demonstrates that there are many lesbian, gay and bisexual people who continue to face poor health outcomes as well as expecting poorer treatment from health services. The organisations that have taken part are sending a powerful signal of commitment to equality in healthcare.

This year we have seen a range of organisations take part from across the health sector including providers, commissioners and charities. The Index provides evidence of how these organisations are improving the health and expectations of lesbian, gay and bisexual people across England.

Congratulations to everyone included in the Healthcare Equality Index. Together, they are helping to tackle health inequalities and deliver a high quality health service for everyone.

Ruth Hunt Chief Executive
Stonewall’s Top Healthcare Organisations

Stonewall’s Top Ten healthcare organisations in England are committed to improving the health of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. These healthcare organisations recognise the importance of promoting equality and have taken active steps to improve their services for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

1. St Andrew’s Healthcare
2. Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
3. Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust
4. County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
5. Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust
7. Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust
8. Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust
9 = Barts Health NHS Trust
9 = NHS North, East and West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group

Stonewall’s Patient Feedback Survey

As part of the Healthcare Equality Index, Stonewall sought feedback directly from participating organisations’ own lesbian, gay and bisexual patients. The results of this feedback provide an insight into the experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual people accessing healthcare services.

- **38 per cent** of respondents said they felt the healthcare organisation they used was lesbian, gay and bisexual friendly
- **63 per cent** of respondents felt they were treated with dignity and respect all the time
- **53 per cent** of respondents felt comfortable telling healthcare professionals their sexual orientation all of the time
- **68 per cent** of respondents would recommend services to friends or family if they needed similar care or treatment
The Stonewall Healthcare Equality Index is a tool for health organisations to benchmark and track their progress on equality for their lesbian, gay and bisexual patients and communities. This is the third year of the Healthcare Equality Index, allowing health organisations to assess their progress in meeting the health and wellbeing needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Entrants could submit to the Index as a commissioner or as a provider of healthcare services. Each has equal scoring so that we can rank both types of organisation alongside each other.

The Healthcare Equality Index is free for any health organisation in England to enter. Many entrants are members of Stonewall’s Diversity Champions Programme and have recognised how workplace equality impacts on service delivery. The two go hand in hand.

Submissions to the Healthcare Equality Index are assessed against a number of criteria:

- **Patient policy and practice**
  Strong and robust policies are necessary to underpin an effective approach to delivering accessible healthcare services

- **Staff training**
  Training is a valuable tool in raising awareness of lesbian, gay and bisexual health needs

- **Engagement and communication**
  Engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual people and communities helps organisations comply with the law and understand local needs

- **Data collection**
  Without information on how many lesbian, gay and bisexual people use healthcare services, it’s difficult to know how and what to improve

- **Improving the health of lesbian, gay and bisexual patients**
  Healthcare organisations need to make sure that their services are designed from the outset with lesbian, gay and bisexual people in mind

- **The workplace**
  People are key to the performance of the healthcare service and getting it right for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff makes it easier to get right for patients

39 healthcare organisations entered the Index, including acute trusts, ambulance trusts, clinical commissioning groups, community services, mental health trusts, social enterprise organisations, and independent sector providers. These organisations provide services for patients across all regions of England.
What a good healthcare organisation looks like

**Staff members understand the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual patients**
Eight of the Top Ten provide training to staff on the health needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Of the Top Ten, seven have training which includes the diversity within the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

**Clear sexual orientation equality messages** Nine of the Top Ten have clear non-discrimination messages on posters or leaflets that explicitly reference sexual orientation, which are displayed in patient waiting areas or through their outreach work.

**Patient’s sexual orientation data is used to inform services** Six out of the Top Ten monitor patient’s sexual orientation on patient’s records. 90 per cent collect this data through patient feedback forms or surveys. Seven of the leading healthcare organisations use the data on patient’s sexual orientation to develop actions to improve their services.

**Providing lesbian, gay and bisexual people with tailored services** 90 per cent of the leading healthcare organisations have dedicated services for lesbian, gay or bisexual people, up from 80 per cent last year.

**Working in partnership** Seven of the Top Ten healthcare organisations work with a range of partners in the public, private and third sectors, such as local authorities, the police and charities, to improve the health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

**Lesbian, gay and bisexual patients influence services** 70 per cent of the Top Ten have a formal lesbian, gay and bisexual patient group or patient representation within a staff group which have advised their organisations on service delivery.

**Diversity Champions leading the way** 70 per cent of the top performing healthcare organisations work with Stonewall through the Diversity Champions programme. This demonstrates their commitment to workplace equality as an important way to deliver equality in services.

**Making sure lesbian, gay and bisexual people are treated fairly** Half of the best healthcare organisations explicitly address sexual orientation in their complaints policy or procedure.
**Case Studies**

**St Andrew’s Healthcare** is a charity providing specialist services including mental healthcare, autism support, learning disability services and brain injury rehabilitation at sites across the UK. It is the highest performing organisation in the Healthcare Equality Index 2015 and embeds sexual orientation equality across its services.

When the charity received feedback that patients in medium-secure care felt cut off from the LGBT community making it difficult for them to recover, St Andrew’s responded by increasing the supply and improving the access to LGBT-themed literature in the patient libraries. The way these materials are accessed was made more private so that patients could comfortably search for and use the materials.

To make sure the library books, magazines and DVDs were appropriate, the charity worked with local LGBT groups to get a list of LGBT literature with a mix of serious, factual and fun resources. This partnership also enables staff to signpost patients to join these local groups when they’re away from secure care at St Andrew’s.

**Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust** ensures that its commitment to sexual orientation equality is communicated to patients across all of its services and in the wider community. Communications have included equality and diversity newsletters and Stonewall posters in waiting areas, as well as plasma screen messages in hospitals showing support for Stonewall’s NoBystanders anti-bullying campaign.

The Trust is also involved in the local lesbian, gay and bisexual community as an active member of the local LGBT Choir, which performs at events and raises money for charity. Over 20 members of staff from the Trust also took part in the local Pride for which promotional materials with the pride logo were purposely designed for the event.

The Trust used its presence at Pride to promote services like Care Homes, Shared Lives and Carers, as well as services for youth and people with learning disabilities. This was done to meet the diverse needs within the LGBT community and to find out what the Trust could do better to meet their health needs. This consultation with the community has led to a review of current staff equality and diversity training, as well as training delivered to frontline staff in partnership with a local LGB training provider. A report on this consultation is published online.

**Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust** provides a range of community services for adults and children. The Trust is committed to meeting the needs of its patients and collects equality data of patients and Trust members to help inform services.

Patients are asked to disclose their sexual orientation at their initial assessment and the Trust’s data system flags any records that don’t have this information so that clinical staff are prompted to gather it at a later appointment.

As well as monitoring sexual orientation in other areas such as complaints, membership and patient satisfaction, the Trust communicates to its service users and staff why they are gathering this personal information. Stonewall’s ‘What’s It Got To Do With You’ booklets are available on the staff intranet and in health centres. The importance of equality monitoring is also discussed in staff induction training.

The Trust shares monitoring data with staff teams to inform specific services and help benchmark the teams through ‘Involvement Standards’, which are awarded in gold, silver or bronze. The Musculoskeletal (MSK) service noticed that they had a low patient response rate when asked about their sexual orientation. In response to this posters promoting a commitment to sexual orientation equality were put up in individual MSK treatment rooms to encourage patients to disclose.

**Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust** employs over 5,500 staff and provides a comprehensive range of specialist services to 750,000 people each year within a total catchment population of over two million people in Merseyside, Cheshire, North Wales, the Isle of Man and beyond. The Trust understands the importance of training all staff to value sexual orientation equality at work and for patients and service users.

Understanding the different demands on their staff’s time, the Trust has different types of equality and diversity training available. The Trust has mandatory equality and diversity training for all staff plus a mandatory online e-learning module on sexual orientation equality, as well as more detailed training for Managers and Equality and Human Rights Practitioners. They also offer a half day training session for staff on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans cultural awareness.

As well as holding a ‘Say Something About Bullying’ staff event with a session focusing on homophobic and transphobic bullying that was delivered by a partner LGBT service, the Trust works with local universities to ensure that health inequalities for lesbian, gay and bisexual patients are included in the curriculum for nurse and medic training.
Recommendations Improvements to healthcare

1 Put policies in place Healthcare organisations should make sure that their policies make clear to lesbian, gay and bisexual patients that they can expect the same level of service, regardless of their sexual orientation and regardless of who treats them. Health and social care staff should be supported in tackling homophobia and biphobia towards patients whether from staff or other patients.

2 Provide training to staff Healthcare organisations should provide training to staff that goes beyond legislation and policies and addresses caring for lesbian, gay and bisexual patients and their families. Training should be targeted to relevant teams – for instance looking at the sexual orientation of patients with learning disabilities or meeting the needs of older lesbian, gay and bisexual patients.

3 Communicate what you are doing Many lesbian, gay and bisexual people still expect to be treated worse than heterosexual people when accessing treatment at a hospital, from a GP, from care home staff or a paid carer in their home. This might prevent them from being open with health and social care staff meaning they might not get the best personalised care. Health organisations can break down these expectations by communicating that they are LGB friendly.

4 Tackle health inequalities Compared to the general population, lesbian, gay and bisexual people have higher rates of poor mental health and wellbeing as well as alcohol and drug consumption. Lesbians are also more likely to have never had a cervical smear test, while gay and bisexual men are more likely to experience domestic violence. There are moral, legal and financial reasons why health organisations should be seeking to reduce these inequalities.

5 Improve monitoring Unless health organisations know who their patients are they cannot know if they are addressing health inequalities or combating poor patient experience. This should be the case for sexual orientation in the same way as gender and ethnicity. Organisations should take steps to include sexual orientation on monitoring forms and communicate why they are asking patients these questions.

Findings are taken from Stonewall’s health research Prescription for Change (2008), Gay and Bisexual Men’s Health Survey (2012) and Gay in Britain (2013).
Work with Stonewall
Stonewall’s Diversity Champions Programme

The Diversity Champions programme is Britain’s good practice employers’ forum on sexual orientation equality and gender identity. Work with Stonewall and our members and make your workplace the best that it can be. For everyone.

Our members know that people perform better when they can be themselves. Being a member of the Diversity Champions programme gives your organisation one-to-one advice from Stonewall’s Workplace team and networking with hundreds of employers.

Each Diversity Champion receives:

• An allocated client account manager
• Free access to Stonewall’s seminars held across the UK
• Regular updates and free copies of the latest research and best practice guides
• Networking opportunities with over 730 other employers, including 79 health sector organisations
• Benchmarking and assessment for submissions to the Workplace Equality Index

To find out more and sign up to the programme please visit www.stonewall.org.uk/dcs

For further information on Stonewall’s workplace initiatives, including the Workplace Equality Index of the top 100 employers in the UK for LGBT people, the recruitment guide Starting Out and the Stonewall Leadership programme, go to www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace