



For further information about sexual orientation, visit
www.nhsemployers.org/equality or www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace

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A large, vibrant rainbow graphic composed of several curved, overlapping bands of color: yellow, light green, green, cyan, blue, dark blue, purple, magenta, red, and pink. The bands curve from the top left towards the bottom right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Working with lesbian, gay
or bisexual people

A ten point action plan



A part of the NHS Confederation
working on behalf of the 

The NHS is the largest employer in Europe, employing approximately 1.3 million people. It is estimated that six per cent of the UK population is lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). It is therefore likely that 156,000 employees working for the NHS are lesbian, gay or bisexual.

NHS Employers and Stonewall have put together a ten point action plan. By carrying out these actions NHS organisations will not only meet their legal duties, but also ensure that lesbian, gay or bisexual people can work in an environment which is free from discrimination and harassment.

A ten point action plan

1 Understand the law

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 make it unlawful to discriminate at work on grounds of sexual orientation. The regulations apply to all aspects of employment, including training, recruitment, promotion and dismissal.

2 Develop policies and practices

NHS organisations should develop policies that comply with the law. Employers risk legal claims from staff who have been treated less favourably because of their sexual orientation. Policies should consider and address the concerns of LGB staff.

3 Communicate the changes

It is important that the laws are explained and understood by all staff and line managers. All members of staff should know what they must do in order to comply with the regulations.

4 Make a business case for diversity

Any policies relating to diversity should be clearly linked to business outcomes. If staff feel respected and able to be themselves, this will mean better care for patients. Having a gay-inclusive service improves patient outcomes, as well as improving recruitment and retention of staff.



5 Set up a lesbian, gay and bisexual network group

Setting up a network group demonstrates an employer's commitment. It will also enable two-way feedback and give the organisation a valuable mechanism for consulting LGB employees about its employment practices and customer service.

6 Gain the support of senior staff

Having senior level buy-in sends out a clear message that LGB staff are an important and supported sector of the workforce. This can best be achieved by demonstrating the benefits to the organisation in terms of staff morale and retention.

7 Tackle harassment and bullying

If LGB employees or any employee experiences harassment and bullying in the workplace, they need to know that they can complain and that their complaints will be taken seriously. NHS organisations should make all staff feel confident about reporting bullying and harassment.

8 Manage performance fairly

NHS organisations should ensure that everyone in the organisation makes decisions based only on merit and competence. Gay people are sometimes passed over for promotion, disciplined unfairly or even dismissed because of their sexual orientation.

9 Build a culture of respect

Up to two thirds of lesbians and gay men may conceal their sexuality from colleagues. This means they may not feel able to be themselves, and may not perform as well in the workplace. Employers should take steps to make gay people feel safe and able to be themselves.

10 Monitor and evaluate policies and practices

Monitoring on the basis of sexual orientation can help you examine the experiences of LGB staff and measure the impact of the organisation's equality and diversity initiatives.

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