



**Understanding the experiences of lesbian,  
gay, bisexual and transgender survivors of  
hate crimes**





Stonewall Housing is the only specialist housing advice provider for LGBT people of all ages in the country and this gives us a unique perspective on the link between hate crime and housing and the level of under reporting and often inadequate reporting responses.

The Bridge project was commissioned by the EHRC to understand the experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people who are survivors of hate crime and to enhance reporting opportunities to LGBT communities and includes a training toolkit, a service blueprint and a desktop research review all of which are contained in this document.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is the independent advocate for equality and human rights in Britain. It aims to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations between people, and promote and protect human rights.

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# Course outline

The course will draw from the research and experiences of LGBT people when reporting hate crime and responses both from LGBT organisations and housing providers and is based in part on some real life experiences and the small but significant amount of research that exists.

Learning outcomes for this training include:

- Identifying what homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crimes are; and how they are experienced in a housing setting;
- Identifying the impacts of hate crime on diverse individuals, groups and society as a whole;
- Opportunities to safely report hate crime incidents and their impact on housing provision;
- Recognise potential barriers to reporting and accessing help with hate crime;
- Employ strategies to help LGBT people access safety services;
- Identify services and external and internal referral pathways that can help with reporting, advice, advocacy and support;
- Increased knowledge on sexual orientation and gender identity monitor.

The training will provide a series of exercises to help you to cement your knowledge as you progress through the course.

An evaluation form is contained in the packs.

Please fill this in as it allows us to review the delivery and content of our training and make necessary improvements.

# Hate crime definitions

## Definition of hate crime

The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry (1999), and the subsequent MacPherson Report were a significant landmark in the history of race in Britain, and how the public sector deals with issues of equality. They reframed the landscape in which definitions of incidents as well as crimes and the reporting of both became an expectation. As a result of the enquiry and report, a further form of discrimination was identified: institutional discrimination.

The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) distinguishes between a hate incident and a hate crime.

A hate incident is:

*"Any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate."*

Whilst a hate crime is defined specifically as:

*"Any hate incident, which constitutes a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate."*

NPCC defines a homophobic hate incident as:

*"Any incident which is perceived to be homophobic by the victim or any other person."*

NPCC defines a transphobic hate crime as:

*"Any incident which is perceived to be transphobic by the victim or any other person"*

You do not have to prove you are transgender to be a victim of transphobic hate crime. So for example someone who looks like a transgender person may also experience transphobia.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 requires a court also to consider whether the following circumstances were pertinent to the crime:

*(a) that, at the time of committing the offence, or immediately before or after doing so, the offender demonstrated towards the victim of the offence hostility based on:*

*(i) the sexual orientation (or presumed sexual orientation) of the victim, or  
(ii) a disability (or presumed disability) of the victim, or*

*(b) that the offence is motivated (wholly or partly)*

*(i) by hostility towards persons who are of a particular sexual orientation, or  
(ii) by hostility towards persons who have a disability or a particular disability*

This definition is similar to the definition of other forms of hate incident such as race hate incidents and religious hate incidents. Under these definitions a person does not have to be lesbian, gay or bisexual to be the victim of a homophobic hate incident, nor does the victim of a hate incident have to view it as homophobic for it to be considered a homophobic hate incident by the police.

Domestic violence can be considered a hate crime and some police forces have joint domestic violence and hate crime unit.

# Hate crime definitions

## **Domestic violence definition**

Domestic violence is defined by the Home Office as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and / or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

# LGBT glossary

*Sexual orientation and gender identity are often mistakenly used interchangeably. However, it is important to distinguish between the two as they have quite different meanings. In short:*

*Sexual orientation = who a person is attracted to;*

*Gender identity = how a person feels internally about gender e.g: more masculine or more feminine.*

Here are some definitions you may find helpful.

**Biphobia:** an irrational and unrealistic hatred, disapproval or fear of those who identify as bisexual. It can originate from lesbian and gay people as well as heterosexual people

**Bisexual:** the potential to be attracted — romantically and/or sexually — to people of more than one sex and/or gender, not necessarily at the same time, not necessarily in the same way, and not necessarily to the same degree.

**Cisgender:** broadly means people who are not transgender. It describes related types of gender identity where individuals' experiences of their own gender match the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Gay:** is a term that refers to a person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same sex. It is commonly used to refer to homosexual men. It also refers to a person's sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviours and membership in a community of others who share those attractions.

**Gender identity:** refers to a person's internal, deeply felt sense of being more female or more male. Because gender identity is internal and personally defined, it may not be visible to others. It does not necessarily relate to genitalia.

**Gender variance or gender nonconformity:** behaviour or gender expression by an individual that does not match masculine and feminine gender norms. People who exhibit gender variance may be called gender variant, gender non-conforming or gender diverse and may be transgendergender, or otherwise variant in their gender expression. The term gender-variant is deliberately broad

**Heterosexism :** a term that applies to negative attitudes, bias, and discrimination in favour of opposite-sex sexual orientation and relationships. It can include the presumption that everyone is heterosexual or that opposite-sex attractions and relationships are the norm and therefore superior.

# LGBT definitions

**Homophobia:** the irrational disapproval or fear of gay, lesbian, bisexual or any non-heterosexual people. Being prejudiced against someone because they are believed to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or non-heterosexual people.

**Intersex:** people who are born with chromosomal differences or ambiguous genitalia. Intersex infants are often assigned a gender and subjected to surgical procedures. Some intersex people develop gender identity issues.

**Lesbian:** a female who experiences emotional, romantic love or sexual attraction to other females. The term is also used to express sexual identity or sexual behavior regardless of sexual orientation, or as an adjective to characterize or associate nouns with female homosexuality or same-sex attraction.

**Non-binary :** is a catch-all category for gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine – identities which are thus outside of the gender binary and cisnormativity

**Sexual orientation:** is understood to refer to each person's capacity for profound emotional, affection and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender, the same gender or more than one gender. Common sexual orientations include gay, lesbian, heterosexual and bisexual.

**Transgender:** the state of one's gender identity or gender expression not matching one's assigned sex. Transgender is sometimes used interchangeably with gender-variant, but usually has a narrower meaning and somewhat different connotations, including a non-identification with the gender assigned at birth.

Several terms are used to describe transgender people:

- Male to Female (MTF);
- Female to Male (FTM);
- Transman and Transwoman (common terms used to describe FTM and MTF transgender people, respectively);
- Transsexual;
- Gender queer.

The list is growing and ours is not exhaustive. You may come across a number of variations of these terms used to describe transgender people.

**Transgender spectrum:** an inclusive umbrella term used to describe the diversity of gender identity and expression for all people who do not conform to common ideas of gender roles.

**Transition:** a transgender person will go through a process of 'transitioning' while they establish themselves in society as a member of another gender to their birth gender.

**Transphobia:** the unrealistic fear, disapproval or prejudice against someone who is believed to be transgender.

# Introduction

To introduce you to the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who have reported hate crime we have put together some questions. These questions have been designed to allow you to think about your current knowledge and perceptions of LGBT hate crime.

## Questions

*What do you think were the top FIVE needs LGBT people identified as a priority when they were reporting hate crime? (Finding Safe Spaces, 2014)*

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

*Is monitoring and recording of data on sexual/gender identity common practice?*

- Yes
- No

*What are some of the primary reasons given by housing providers for non-collection of data about gender identity and sexual orientation?*

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

*What level of responsibility do housing providers have to work to prevent and tackle LGBT hate crime and incidents?*

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

You can go through this individually or with the person next to you. The trainer will allocate an amount of time for you to answer the questions and then we will come back to discuss your answers.

# Needs / risk assessment

Stonewall Housing holds many years of data and biographical narrative about LGBT unsafe housing. As a partner in Galop's research *Filling in the Blanks* we identified that over 60% of hate crime incidents took place in or near the victim's home. However, only a quarter of these were reported to the police. The majority of those who do not report to the police identified as from Black, Minority, Ethnic and Refugee (BMER) LGBT communities.

Appropriate advice and support is very important to help those affected by homophobic hate crimes and incidents and in the bullet points below we have highlighted some of the things you should consider whilst thinking about need and risk for LGBT clients.

- Research shows that support was offered to only a minority of those reporting to the police and other professional organisations (*Filling in the Blanks, Galop*).
- The vast majority of lesbian, gay and bisexual victims are also unlikely to seek out support themselves. (*Stonewall Hate Crime Survey 2013*)
- LGBT people can experience hate crime connected to other protected characteristics as well as their sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The most common causes for homelessness amongst LGBT young people reported by housing providers were parental rejection, familial physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and familial aggression and violence (*Albert Kennedy Trust, 2015*).
- Organisations should all have their own reporting systems that are unique to them but these should all include an assessment of needs and risks.
- Risks may include whether incidents are singular or repeat incidents, and whether children or people at risk of harm are involved.
- Sometimes hate crime information may be disclosed in an informal context such as during a maintenance visit or a meeting with a housing officer about other matters.
- Research suggests that although organisations were taking informal calls and emails from people about hate crime they had no reporting systems and were not treating these informal reports as incidents of hate crime.
- As a consequence of incidents not being recorded (see above), LGBT people did not always receive follow up or have confidence in these organisations and were less likely to report hate crime to them. (*Filling in the Blanks, Galop*)

To help you think about what should be included please make a list at the back of this document. We have created a page called *What should be included in a needs/risk assessment*. Later when we look at case studies we will ask you to take a few minutes to think about what should be included on this document.

**Think about your own organisation and these questions:**

- i) What systems do you have to monitor/collect information/reports on hate crimes?  
Are they confidential? What triggers a formal report?
- ii) Do you keep records/ or draw data from these reports, for example basic statistical or demographic information to inform your future service? Is your data desensitized to protect from sharing personal data?
- iii) Is there anyone in the organisation who takes responsibility for dealing with and monitoring hate crime reporting?
- iv) Do you pass hate crime reports on to any other organisation/s?
- v) Do you distinguish between hate crime and hate incident reporting? If so in what way?
- vi) Do you distinguish between homophobic, biphobic and transgenderphobic incidents?
- vii) What do you do with all this information?

# Barriers to accessing services

Below are some of the barriers LGBT people can face when they try to access housing services designed to help them:

- invisibility within services;
- discomfort and lack of openness among workers about sexual orientation and / or transgender status;
- isolation from family and friends;
- harassment and isolation from other tenants or neighbours;
- internalised homo/bi/transgenderphobia people experience as a result of hate crime, targeted sexual violence and discrimination;
- fear of reprisals, and arrest, if engaged in sex work or begging in order to obtain money;
- immigration status;
- potential loss of support and access to social housing;
- historic distrust of institutions who, in the past, criminalised people on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, if not cisgendered;
- hostels and housing often not sensitive to LGBT people's needs – services are constructed in a heteronormative way;
- having to go 'back in the closet' or 'stealth' in order to get help.

Having an awareness of an individual's sexual orientation and gender identity will help to provide them with services that meets their needs, but this requires building trust and confidence.

Perhaps unwittingly, a hetro-normative culture in the provision of housing has pervaded your service delivery. Assumptions of hetrosexuality and cisgender as the norm require individual LGB and T people to draw attention to their own difference which can be uncomfortable for some and risky for others. Best practice is to assess your own provision and ensure you have an open and inclusive culture to prevent adverse impact on individuals.

# Asking and monitoring

*"I needed to be validated. It would reduce the number of things I would have to worry about - one less thing to omit from my history, hide or avoid when going through the narrative."*

(Female, White British, 26-30 years old,  
*Finding Safe Spaces*, Stonewall Housing 2014)

In order to identify gaps in service provision and ensuring providers are fulfilling their duty, it is important that we monitor sexual orientation and gender identity. Asking people about their sexual orientation and gender identity means we can be clear we are providing the best possible service.

We ask because lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who are experiencing hate crime may have needs associated with their gender identity and/or their sexual orientation.

People who identify as LGB or T may feel that the hate crime they have experienced is as a direct result of their sexual orientation/gender identity and asking this question may be central to dealing effectively with the hate incident report.

Asking questions has several positive impacts:

- Asking which pronoun (he, she, they) is preferred and use it;
- It shows the person being asked it is potentially in a safe space to talk about their sexual orientation or gender identity;

- It allows you, the worker, to understand if there are any needs associated with their sexual orientation or gender identity and means you can have a conversation about any local LGBT support services;
- It allows fair treatment and you can plan services to respond to that individual's needs;
- It allows you to understand how many LGBT people are using your service.

*"One service thought that sexuality wasn't an issue and suggested I could go back to home - (they) didn't understand that I would experience violence (if I went back home)."*

(Male, White British, 31-40 years old,  
*Finding Safe Spaces*, Stonewall Housing 2014)

It is important to note: someone may not disclose their true gender identity or sexual orientation to you when you first ask, however by explaining why you are asking (for example, to determine whether a hate crime has occurred) they will feel validated and may feel able to disclose later.

Being clear on the number of LGBT people using your service is helpful for developing and celebrating the service you offer. If, for example, after a year of asking people to define their sexual orientation or gender identity few do so, you can review your processes and staff training. Additionally, you can review your marketing and engagement work to make sure you are being inclusive with imagery and language.

# Asking and monitoring

If it transpires you are getting people responding positively, celebrate this. Put this on your advertising, make a noise about it. Good news travels fast within communities. If a service is inclusive and validating for LGBT people they will use it. LGBT people experiencing hate crime need safe spaces.

## Making assumptions

It is important you ask all clients the same questions for consistency. Sexual orientation and gender identity should never been assumed. You can't simply tell by someone's clothes, facial features or genitalia. No one can tell with 100 % certainty what someone's sexual orientation or gender identity is.

So, how do we find out?

We ask.

Monitoring questions should be included as part of your generic monitoring and the question should be asked in the same way you ask other monitoring questions i.e. religion and ethnicity.

## Questions that will help:

*Q - Please can you tell me how you define your sexual orientation?*

*Q - Please can you tell me how you define your gender?*

*Q - Is your gender identity the same as you were given at birth?*

Asking the questions in this way leaves it open for the person you are asking to give you the answer. You are not giving a box for someone to tick, you are leaving it open for people to define themselves rather than fit the criteria of someone else. The last question, if answered 'no', means someone identifies as transgender.

In asking these questions, the person you are asking may like to know:

*Why are you asking?*

You need to be very clear here, and confident. You're not asking because you have to. You're asking because you care and because doing your job to the best of your ability means you need to know you are providing the best possible support for service users.

We know there may be needs associated with an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity are experiencing hate crime.

We know these needs will be different for everyone, so we know we need to ask questions to receive answers to best know how to support someone.

It may be that the person you are talking to believes they are experiencing a hate incident or crime as a direct result of their sexual orientation or gender identity and once you have asked your initial questions about sexual orientation and gender identity it might be useful to ask:

# Asking and monitoring

**Q - Do you feel the hate crime you are experiencing is as a direct result of your sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, disability?**

*Why should I tell you?*

All answers to questions are a personal choice. Someone does not have to tell you if they do not want to - and that's ok. If someone is L, G, B or T and they feel it is dangerous to tell you (because of their life history), they might choose not to tell you. That's ok.

You can explain why you are asking, emphasising that sometimes there are particular needs associated with gender identity or sexual orientation. Staff may feel conflicted in their religious beliefs about asking these questions, and if they are this would need to be discussed with managers, mindful of the Equalities Act.

*What is this information going to be used for?*

Again, this goes back to the answer to the first question. If there are support needs associated with someone's sexual orientation or gender identity, unless you ask to define you will never know those needs and so how will you provide the appropriate support?

*Will me giving you this information affect the help I get?*

It will make sure the help they get is appropriate to their needs. You can talk about the work you do in your service as well as use your knowledge from this training to talk about other local LGBT services who may be able to help the individual.

*How will this information be stored? Who will you tell?*

This is a good time to talk about your organisation's confidentiality, complaints and safeguarding policies.

*"Yes (it is important to ask) - there's got to be other people struggling with their sexuality. Hostel and services should know where to refer people to. I know girls that find it so hard to talk about. Asking on a form - that's not going to help anyone."*

(Female, White British, 31-40 years old,  
*Finding Safe Spaces, Stonewall Housing 2014*)

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## **Important:**

It is very important monitoring does not become a paper exercise. LGBT people may have needs associated with their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Being able to meet those needs and offer that care starts with some important questions. From here, you and your client will be better equipped to meet their needs.

Your organisation should be aware of the Data Protection Act regulations on personal data, including keeping monitoring and personal information separate. It is worth noting that there is specific guidance in disclosing and holding information about someone's transgender status.

# Case studies

The following sections deal with a number of case studies involving incidents of hate crime that happen near or around the victim's home. We know from research that nearly 60% of incidents reported to LGBT organisations take place on or near the home, compared to one fifth taking place away from the home. (*Filling in the blanks*, Galop).

In Stonewall's *Homophobic Hate Crime Survey* (2013) they stated that one in six (17 per cent) lesbian, gay and bisexual people reported the perpetrator as being a neighbour or someone living in the local area.

Older gay people and disabled gay people are more likely to have been victimised by neighbours. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of people who are disabled and 30 per cent of people aged 55 or over said the perpetrator was a neighbour or lived in the local area.

These case studies (based on real testimonies gathered by our frontline workers) are a tool to encourage you to think about needs, risk and your response and those of your organisation and to look at referral and reporting pathways.

Please use the blank templates included in this toolkit. These blank templates are there for you to fill in and think about what a 'logging' document should look like and what it should / should not include.

We suggest you spend the first fifteen minutes of this exercise completing this and the needs/risk assessment document.

In groups or in pairs we would like you to examine these cases and decide on needs/risks and appropriate responses.

# Case studies

## Case study 1: Jasmine and Anna

*Jasmine attends a drop-in with two boys, aged 6 and 10. She lives in a housing association flat with her children and her new partner, Anna. Damien, the father of her children has been in prison for three years, but is due for release soon.*

*Damien's mother recently visited Jasmine to see her grandchildren and was horrified to see that Anna had moved in. Yesterday a brick was thrown through Jasmine's window with a note attached, threatening both Anna and Jasmine.*

What are the immediate and longer term risks for Jasmine and Anna, and the boys?

What advice would you give Jasmine and Anna?

What support could your organisation offer?

What other organisations might you involve?

What would be a successful outcome for your organisation and for Jasmine and her family?

# Case studies

## Case study 2: Syed

Syed is a 30 year old man who identifies as gay. He arrived in the UK ten years ago as a refugee from Somalia and was originally housed in with his family. His family begun to suspect he was gay, and to avoid confrontation, Syed moved to another borough, where he lived for 6 years, in an adapted housing association flat. He had sole tenancy of the flat and was not in rent arrears. He has no direct contact with his family.

Three years ago, his partner Alan moved in to the flat. Syed describes their relationship as tempestuous and tells you that Alan had been physically, sexually and emotionally abusive, and had made threats to kill.

Syed locked him out of the flat 6 months ago, forcing him to find new accommodation, but shortly after, they met up and their relationship resumed.

Since living in separate accommodation Alan's violent behaviour has escalated. Alan threatened Syed that if he reported him to the police, he will contact his family and inform them of his sexuality and new address.

A month ago, Alan attempted to burn down Syed's flat. This was the final straw and Syed gave up the flat without informing his housing association about the reasons.

What are the immediate and longer term needs /risks for Syed?

What advice / support would you offer Syed?

What could your organisation do to support Syed?

What other organisations would you involve?

What would be a successful outcome for your organisation, and for Syed?

# Case studies

## Case study 3: Tim

*Tim is a 18 year old gay man who has been street homeless and involved in sexual exploitation. He got a referral to a night hostel and disclosed to the hostel staff that he is HIV +ive.*

*Unofficially, it is suggested to him that due to his sexual orientation and his status, it is too risky for him to stay at the hostel, so he leaves and returns to the streets.*

What are the immediate and longer term needs /risks for Tim?

What advice would you give him?

What support could your organisation offer?

What other organisations might you involve?

What would be a successful outcome for your organisation and for Tim?

# Case studies

## Case study 4: Sarah

*Sarah is a 63 year old transgender woman with a history of strokes and has mobility issues. She has carers from external agencies who come in to her home and care for her. They assist her to go to the shop that is at the end of her road on a daily basis.*

*On the journey to the shop they pass an area where a group of young men sit. Over the space of a few weeks they have become increasingly abusive and threatening.*

*The shop staff also subject her to transgenderphobic abuse, by refusing to use the correct pronouns and making fun of the way she looks.*

What are the immediate and longer term risks/need for Sarah?

What advice would you give her?

How would your organisation support Sarah?

What other organisations might you involve?

What would be a successful outcome for your organisation and for Sarah?

# Case studies

## Case study 5: Hannan

*Hannan is a 35 year old man who identifies as gay. He lives alone on in a housing association flat.*

*Over the last few weeks he has been subjected to dog faeces being left on the ground directly outside his door and graffiti accusing him of being a paedophile outside his flat.*

*He has reported these repeat incidents to his neighbourhood officer on a number of occasions and was told to collect evidence. His neighbourhood officer has asked him to leave everything so he can see it and promised to come and see the evidence, but failed to turn up. So Hannan had no option but to clear up the evidence.*

*Hannan is feeling so intimidated he only goes out in daylight and his friends have stopped visiting for fear of being identified and targeted.*

What are the immediate and longer term risks/needs for Hannan?

What advice would you give him.?

What support would your organisation offer?

What other organisations might you involve?

What would be a successful outcome for your organisation and for Hannan?

# Case studies

## Case study 6: Roger

*Roger is a 73 year old man who identifies as gay. He lives in a flat in one of your sheltered accommodation units.*

*Recently a 78 year old Eastern European woman moved into the accommodation. She has been heard making homophobic remarks about, and to, Roger and to the people who come to visit him.*

What are the immediate and longer term risks/needs for Roger?

What advice would you give him?

How would your organisation support Roger?

Which other organisations might you involve?

What would be a successful outcome for your organisation and Roger?

# Creating safe spaces

*It is important that all people feel safe when using your service. Historically, services have been created in a heteronormative way that can prevent LGBT people from feeling included. As we have learnt so far, LGBT people who are victims of hate crime incidents will have had a range of experiences both positive and negative from providers before they come to use your service. Therefore, it is vital you build up a relationship of trust and with the service that has been designed to meet their needs and help them.*

There are some simple things that can help to create safe spaces:

- Staff trained about asking appropriate questions about sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Regular staff training.
- Robust policies and procedures, including equality and diversity policies, ASB policies.
- Signing up to Quality Marks.
- Know your LGBT networks.
- Making sure people accessing your online presence are safe.
- Appropriate inclusive images on your website/Facebook. Not framing your visual images in a heteronormative way.
- Have visible statements relating to LGBT people in all publicity.
- Put posters and leaflets about local services in public spaces such as tenants LGBT groups if you have them, or local LGBT social or support groups.
- Ensure staff have referral details for local and national LGBT services.
- If you have a library or common area, have LGBT literature on offer.
- Have a zero-tolerance approach to all harassment and hostility, clearly articulated in tenancy agreements.
- Where required, use an interpreter who has a good understanding of language and experiences of LGBT people.
- Have a third -party reporting mechanism in place for reporting all harassment, hostility and hate crime.
- Have a policy to remove any homo/bi/transgenderphobic graffiti as a priority (i.e. within 24 hours).
- Ensure staff are trained in responding to harassment, as well as legal requirements relating to their work.
- Make sure LGBT service user experience is visible in policies and procedures in the work you do.

# The 12 steps

We advise housing providers that there are 12 steps to being a successful and inclusive landlord. This exercise is designed to think about your own organisation, its policies and internal practices, and how they fit with the wider obligations of housing providers.

What do you think belongs under the headings? (we have added some suggestions). In pairs, think about what could make your organisation a sucessful LGBT organisation.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 <b>Compliance:</b> which laws and legislation apply?                                     | 7 <b>Policies:</b> are they inclusive? Who writes them?                                   |
| 2 <b>Leadership:</b> is it inclusive? Is it reflective of your workforce? Is it effective? | 8 <b>Partners:</b> why would you work with other agencies?                                |
| 3 <b>Internal campaign:</b> LGBT training – does it happen? Who gets trained?              | 9 <b>Promotion:</b> do you celebrate diversity? How?                                      |
| 4 <b>Data collection:</b> do you monitor sexual orientation / gender identity? How?        | 10 <b>Design services:</b> who designs your services?                                     |
| 5 <b>Build trust with LGBT staff and residents:</b> how? Who?                              | 11 <b>Shape support and care:</b> is it appropriate to your LGBT customers / staff?       |
| 6 <b>Understand the issues:</b> are the needs of LGBT customers different?                 | 12 <b>Share your story:</b> do you tell people when you get it right / wrong? Should you? |

# Referral and reporting pathways

*Many studies focus on the reasons for victims not coming forward to report incidents rather than obstacles to reporting created by inconsistent or poor services.*

For example, people may find it difficult to access police and third party reporting services because they are not publicised or difficult to contact. Similarly, lack of understanding or perceived prejudice towards LGBT people by the police may lead to incidents not being identified as homo/bi/ transgenderphobic.

In order to achieve a successful outcome both for your organisation and your client you will need to have a knowledge of the referral pathways that exist in your area.

Using one of the case studies it may be helpful to think of a referral pathway as a journey through the system for a client reporting a hate crime incident.

We have included questions as a way of mapping a referral pathway. However we understand that this process has no one fixed path.

Multi agency approaches undoubtedly create better holistic outcomes and whilst working out the referral pathway chart think about where you might include other agencies and mark them on your answers.

It might also be useful to look at where the process can be disrupted or fail so another way to use the referral pathway is to look at your answers and with a coloured pen put a line where you think the process could be disrupted or fail. For example if you think a poor response on disclosure would make a client withdraw from your service put a line by the relevant answer.

# Housing provider referral pathway

In groups choose one of the case studies and use these questions to think about your local or national referral pathways. Think about where the process could be disrupted and the effects of a negative response on engagement with your service.

- 1) Are you logging the call? Who is it from:
  - victim?
  - witness?
- 2) Do you need to take any immediate action?
  - Are they in immediate danger?
  - Do you need to call the emergency services?
  - Access emergency accommodation?
- 3) Have you assessed the risk and need?
  - How do you do this?
  - Do you know if it's a repeat offence?
- 4) Does the person calling identify the hate crime incident as related to theirs or someone else's LGBT identity?
- 5) Have you explained all their options? Do you know them?
- 6) Should it be reported to the police?
  - Who should report it?
- 7) Who do you make a referral to:
  - Internal? Do you need to refer them to internal department?
  - External? Do you need to refer to an LGBT hate crime organisation?
- 8) What would your organization do to support the person reporting?
- 9) How can you ensure the response is a multi agency one including all the relevant agencies?

# Risk assessment

What should be included in a needs/risk assessment?

What are the needs?

What are the risks?

How will the needs be met and the risks mitigated?

Which other organisations/support networks should apply?

When will this be reviewed?

# Logging document

What should be included in an incident report/ logging document.?

# LGBT organisations

## Galop

[www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

020 7704 2040

Galop can help if you experience homophobia, transgenderphobia or biphobia wherever it occurs, including at home, in public, at work, online or in cruising sites.

## Stonewall Housing

[www.stonewallhousing.org](http://www.stonewallhousing.org)

As well as providing housing support for LGBT people in their own homes, and support housing for young LGBT\* people, we research and lobby on LGBT housing rights. We also have a free, confidential advice line (020 7359 5767, open from 10–1pm and 2–5pm).

## Stop Hate UK

[www.stophateuk.org](http://www.stophateuk.org)

Stop Hate UK is one of the leading national organisations working to challenge all forms of Hate Crime and discrimination, based on any aspect of an individual's identity. Stop Hate UK provides independent, confidential and accessible reporting and support for victims, witnesses and third parties.

## True Vision

[www.true-vision.org.uk](http://www.true-vision.org.uk)

True Vision is a police-funded initiative aimed at improving the service the police provide to the LGBT community, and to send an important message to the wider British public.

## Birmingham LGBT centre

[www.blgbt.org](http://www.blgbt.org)

0121 643 0821

The Birmingham LGBT Centre is a hate crime reporting centre. We hope by offering this service it will encourage people who have suffered hate crime and in particular homophobic hate crime to have the confidence to report it, in a safe and friendly environment.

## LGBT Foundation

[www.lgbt.foundation](http://www.lgbt.foundation)

0345 3 30 30 30

LGF is a vibrant charity based in Manchester with a wide portfolio of well-established services and a rapidly developing range of new initiatives aimed at meeting the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. It is also developed its work with the transgender communities.

## No to Hate Crime

[www.17-24-30.com](http://www.17-24-30.com)

17-24-30 is a non-profit organisation run completely by volunteers, focused on remembering and marking the anniversaries of the London nail bomb attacks on Brixton, Brick Lane and Soho, and to unite people against all forms of hate crime.

**Please note that local LGBT organisations may be involved in supporting victims of hate crime.**

# Our research into LGBT people and hate crime incidents

There are many recent and updated government and small charity documents and policies written that address the need for specific LGBT hate crime awareness and protection. However, very little of it specifically addresses hate crime and housing and how hate crimes that happen in or near the home impact on victims.

At best, reference is made to such issues as damage to property and mail but little else. In some cases specific LGBT organisations are cited but there seems to be little knowledge amongst mainstream providers of the help and support available to LGBT people. Apart from a cursory reference to the issues and links to some referral agencies in the research there is no other relevant information in these documents.

Those references that do exist are related to LGB provision rather than transgender provision. It became very clear during our research that the small amount of studies that have studied transgender people suggest they are at a higher risk of being victims of a hate crime, although there was no reference to this in terms of housing.

The *Leicester Hate Crime report* (2014) encompassed a varied group of 204 subjects. It mentions 24% of respondents wanting or having to move home to escape violence. It suggests that 70-74% of people identifying as LGB or T avoided certain areas and/or stayed inside to feel safer, and over half reported most

incidents happening near their home. The report separates LGB experiences from transgender experiences and this highlights similar statistics but added instance of vulnerability in regards to locality.

Both the LGB and transgender respondents reported high instance of isolation due to fear of leaving the house or having to avoid whole areas in fear of abuse and harassment. Both groups also reported high levels of trepidation when faced with reporting crimes in large part due to distrust of statutory services.

## Our research

*Over and out: a report that examines housing and homelessness issues specific to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender gender asylum seekers* (sponsored by the Metropolitan Support Trust) highlights specific issues faced by LGBT asylum seekers. It also highlights the vulnerabilities of LGBT asylum seekers in regards to housing.

This is relevant to the work Stonewall Housing undertakes as the work we do around housing issues for asylum seekers, overlaps with the issues for the wider homeless LGBT population. This report, and its 2012 refresher highlights the need for diversity training amongst all agencies at both induction and continuing on into professional development. Training is a fundamental part of creating an organisation that is inclusive, safe and works towards creating the ideal environment for LGBT people using these services. Significantly this report highlights

# Our research

the need for further research into the links between housing and hate crime and that this research needs to include asylum seekers as there is a significant gap in this provision and information available both to LGBT asylum seekers and service providers.

The only hate crime and housing specific event we could find in our research took place in 2012 and was a conference event in Liverpool that brought together 160 staff from 13 registered social landlords in Merseyside. Jointly run by Riverside Housing and an organisation called Homotopia it remains the only conference of its type to take place. Liverpool Council in a survey to support the conference reported that three-quarters of hate crime victims in Liverpool in the previous nine months were social housing tenants.

## Conclusion

Whilst our research identified journal articles that highlight the specific problems LGBT people face, very few of them made reference to housing and the link between housing and hate crime. There are no articles that mention the need for specific training around LGBT housing except those authored by Stonewall Housing, and there is evidence of significant gaps in knowledge.

On reviewing the journal articles/data available it is our conclusion that there is a need for a more detailed cohesive research into the specific impact hate crimes has on LGBT peoples housing and how these impacts then inform other non-housing provision.

The fact that there is a lack of consistent referral information illustrates the need for information to be shared with external agencies so all provisions creating and editing such information can efficiently refer people to the most relevant places to them.

Significantly there is little mention of race and culture and how this interacts with housing needs in regard to hate crimes which undoubtedly points towards the need for future research. The needs of homeless LGBT people are also missing from any research and we know from our own work that LGBT people are victims of anti-social behaviour/hate crime because of their housing/homelessness situation. There is a need for improved awareness amongst LGBT organisations about the impact of housing/homelessness on LGBT people.

In regards to transgender victims of hate crime and links with housing, the Leicester Hate Crime project and Stonewall Housing's work are the only documents that reference this.

# Points of reference

Berneslai Hate Crime Strategy

Brighton & Hove, homophobic, biphobic or transgenderphobic motivated hate incidents

Cara Friend

Challenge Hate: A Homophobia Initiative

Empowering People to Tackle Crime,  
European Human Rights Commission

Filling in the blanks: LGBT hate crime in London,  
GALOP

Hate Crime: Impact, Causes and  
Consequences, Chakraborti, N. and Garland, J.,  
(2015) (Second edition), London: Sage

Hate crime and harassment, Ealing Council

Hate crime information, NIHE

Leeds hate crime strategy

Leicester Hate Crime Project

LGBT self help toolkit, Hertfordshire

Liverpool: hate crime and social housing  
conference

Report LGB and T hate crime, Stop Hate UK

Report It, True Vision

Selected publications about hate crimes,  
Dr Gregory Herek

Six Town Housing, tackling hate crime

Study details lives of LGBT youths engaged in  
survival sex

Viridian hate crimes policy

Wiltshire housing management policy

# Time for questions

*This is a space to fill in with any questions you have. You can ask questions as we go through the training. Additionally, we will have a dedicated time for questions at the end. You can also use the space below to add in other people's questions if you feel they might be relevant for you or your team.*

Your question:

Your question:

Answer:

Answer:

Your question:

Your question:

Answer:

Answer:

Notes:

Notes:

# Action plan

*What will you do to improve reporting?*

|                 | Short term goals | Long term goals | How this will be measured |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| You             |                  |                 |                           |
| My organisation |                  |                 |                           |
| My local area   |                  |                 |                           |

# The Bridge blueprint

*How to provide appropriate housing services to LGBT people who experience hate crime/incidents and/or hate aggravated domestic violence or abuse.*

We are aware there are many social and structural barriers in place which prevent LGBT victim/survivors of hate crime/incidents (HCI) and/or hate aggravated domestic abuse (HADVA) from accessing services and increasing their safety. This document addresses some of those barriers and offers practical solutions that will enable housing organisations to develop more inclusive practice. It will also service as a guide to better support LGBT services to support victim/survivors which adversely effect their housing situation.

The document is structured along a timeline, which follows a victim/survivors engagement with a housing service following an HCI or HADVA.

As part of your internal policy development, create a service blue print that is LGBT inclusive using the following headings.

## TIMELINE FOR CHANGE: PREPARATION

Before your service actively advertises that it can meet the needs of LGBT victim/survivors, it is important to put in place the infrastructure to ensure both staff and clients can feel supported.

Make your organisation LGBT ready.

### **Governance / cultural change**

Cultural change comes from the top. Your organisations commitment to change should be announced by your CEO or organisational lead, via a press release and/or internal briefing.

Embed changes into your strategic plan and organisational risk assessment and all updated policies and procedures.

Ensure that your board are up to speed with the Equality Act, including any legal duty to provide services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans organisations. If trustees on your board don't possess this expertise, it is good practice to arrange a training day.

### **Recruitment**

Create positive and inclusive recruitment policies and practices. Conservative estimates are between 5-10 % of the population are LGBT. Does your staff team or board reflect this number? Stonewall Champions will support your organisation to become an LGBT inclusive employer (see [www.stonewall.org](http://www.stonewall.org)).

# The Bridge blueprint

Advertising vacancies on Stonewall's Proud Employers website or LGBT websites or periodicals are cost effective and also act as a promotional tool for your organisation in the LGBT press. If funds are scarce, contact second-tier LGBT organisations like, for example, LGBT Consortium, LGBT Health Partnership, LGBT Domestic abuse forum. You might also use online professional forums, like LinkedIn. An LGBT staff group is also a cost effective way of spreading employment opportunities to the LGBT community.

If you are a large organisation, it might be appropriate to set up an LGBT staff subgroup or newsletter. This will help sustain a cultural change in your organisation which will be needed as you take further steps to develop inclusive practice.

## **Branding**

Your communications team should ensure all services are known to be LGBT inclusive. Using a rainbow flag and a transgender flag are good short cuts to reinforce this. This has been achieved successfully by Housing Providers Northwards housing based in Manchester who have placed rainbow stickers on the windows of their sheltered accommodation. If using images, make sure these reflect the full spectrum of people who use the service, including those in same sex relationships, queer families, and are reflective of LGBT identity.

Very few LGBT organisations have communications teams. If your organisation and budget is small, make sure you are linked in using social media. Twitter, FB, LinkedIn are great marketing tools and can be used to promote your hate crime/DV initiatives.

## **Language**

Familiarise yourself with LGBT terms and definitions. Language is fluid and reflects a diverse community and changes over the years and in different geographical locations. Ensure your policy writers are up to date.

Ensure language used in internal documents is reflective of your positive stance towards LGBT people.

Use the words lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender people in your outward facing literature and explain that transgender is an umbrella term reflecting a broad spectrum of gender identities.

If you regularly use interpreters, ensure the interpreter is familiar with transgendering for the LGBT communities. Where possible, use phone line interpreting services as some LGBT people from some ethnic groups may be concerned their personal details will be circulated to other people from the same ethnic group.

Similarly, if you are using signers / interpreters

# The Bridge blueprint

for deaf victim/survivors, check to see if they are familiar with signing for LGBT people, and make use of advocacy service for people with specific needs such as learning disabilities / mental health.

Always ask your client if they would prefer to use an interpreter they trust or may have used before.

Use a multi agency approach to ensure continuation of support.

For LGBT organisations, ensure your staff or volunteers are familiar with jargon used in civil and criminal proceedings, especially if clients are anticipating support through the court system.

## **Staff /volunteer training**

There is no substitute for good quality LGBT awareness staff /volunteer training. This should be delivered to all sections of your organisation including senior management as this shows cultural change within an organisation.

More specialist training should be delivered to those staff working directly with victim/survivors. Training is available from Stonewall Housing on this issue. See our toolkit for further details.

For LGBT organisations wishing to expand service provision to include third party reporting on hate crime, update your staff with fresh legal

training relating to hate crime and domestic abuse. This can be expensive for small or unfunded organisation. If this is the case, contact an LGBT friendly solicitor to see if they are able to deliver pro-bono training in-house, or attend free LGBT DAF events, advertised quarterly from their website.

Create a library of research, as well as further reading relating to LGBT people.

Ensure LGBT training relating to hate crime and domestic abuse is embedded in induction training so all new staff have the opportunity to learn.

## **Monitoring**

Many funders require organisations and services to collect detailed information about the service users they support. Balancing the requirements of funders with the priorities of front line staff can be a challenge as many staff/volunteers view monitoring as cumbersome and unnecessary paperwork. To ensure all staff and volunteers actively support gathering monitoring date, discuss a client-focused approach.

Staff and / or volunteers need to be aware it is impossible to fully understand a victim or survivor's needs, assess risk and support them at a point of crisis unless you know who they are. The reason for asking monitoring questions should always be explained to clients.

# The Bridge blueprint

How to ask: sexuality and gender identity are two different types of question. We recommend you ask for this information in separate questions and where possible, give options for people to define themselves on their own terms.

*What is your sexual orientation?*

*What is your gender?*

*Is your gender identity/expression the same as that assigned at birth?*

*What is your preferred pronoun? And give examples: She/He/They*

Asking questions about gender identity and sexuality is sometimes confusing for staff not familiar with LGBT communities. Some staff might feel that none of their clients are or have ever been LGBT. This is unlikely to be the case. Other staff might be reluctant to ask this type of question for fear of offending clients that do not identify as LGBT. Questions about sexuality and gender identity should be included in all documents where other monitoring questions are usually asked. Gender identity and sexuality questions should become just another part of the assessment, along with race, religion, disability and other protected characteristics

Embedding monitoring questions about sexual orientation and gender identity within your usual working practices gives staff/volunteers an opportunity to practice asking questions (often something staff feel uncomfortable about) and also for victim/survivors, it can act as a method of building trust.

If you find questions on sexuality and gender identity are frequently left blank on monitoring forms or are 100 % heterosexual/cisgender, this might be because staff are reluctant to ask this type of question or do not want to cause perceived offence. If this is the case, you may have a training issue that needs to be dealt with. We would be happy to discuss how we can deliver suitable training.

If your organisation monitors gender identity or sexual orientation successfully, use the information about the numbers of clients who need your service to help you provide an inclusive service and use this information to network with generic services who might become a good referral pathway, the next time a client presents after experiencing domestic abuse and/or hate crime.

Monitoring is also the best way to find out if you are reaching LGBT victim/survivors and to assess if your new strategy engaging with LGBT people is working.

## Events calendar

LGBT community events occur all over the UK. Make sure your organisation is represented. Celebrate and commemorate special dates. Here are some examples:

- February is LGBT history month;
- 17 May: International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transgenderphobia;
- 20 November: Transgender day of

# The Bridge blueprint

remembrance;

- 1 December: Red Ribbon day;
- Pride (these dates vary in different cities, but are usually held in the summer months).

## **Community partners**

### **or No about us without us.**

If you are an LGBT organisation, make your services known to generic or other specialist services. Developing good working relationships leads to partnerships and more financial support needed to sustain specialist work.

If you are a generic service or other specialist service, reach out to local groups rather than taking over their work. Partnerships work when there is mutual respect.

Working in partnership with other organisations or services is also useful for victim/survivors as a holistic approach to supporting clients usually means referrals or signposting to other services.

Setting up the parameters for information sharing and referral pathways should be negotiated and organised before making referrals for victim/survivors and not discussed when clients present to your service in crisis.

## **TIMELINE FOR CHANGE: WHEN A LGBT VICTIM / SURVIVOR FIRST PRESENTS**

### **On the phone or text:**

It takes courage to pick up the phone or text to tell someone you have been a victim of a crime. It takes even more courage to

divulge that the hate-crime/incident or hate aggravated domestic abuse was motivated by homophobia, biphobia or transgenderphobia.

Some callers will wait to see if staff mention confidentiality before divulging sexuality or gender identity. Remember, coming out is not a one off occurrence for LGBT people and will be something they are faced with doing on a regular basis as the assumption is that callers will be heterosexual or cisgender.

LGBT people are often experienced at talking without disclosing their personal lives or identities. Language used about partners may that do not contain pronouns can indicate that the caller maybe LGBT. For example, my partner and I did this, we were walking along the road when...

Ensure staff training includes supporting LGBT people on the phone. It might also be the caller cannot speak freely and will not in the first instance divulge the full narrative of abuse for fear of being over heard.

Assuming gender identity from the tone of a caller's voice is also not useful as even with hormone treatments, voice tone sometimes does not alter. Place a reminder about voice based assumptions above the phone stations.

### **In person**

When an LGBT victim / survivor attends your service they need to receive the same level of care and respect received by other

# The Bridge blueprint

victims /survivors.

## **Golden rules to place in the assessment:**

*Do not judge*

*Believe victim/survivors*

*Do not blame victim/survivors*

*Act on their expressed wishes, rather than  
your assumptions*

*Ensure that your actions are victim/survivor  
focused*

## **Environment**

Make sure your foyer surrounding is LGBT welcoming. A rainbow poster, leaflets and magazines are all helpful. Gender neutral toilets are ideal.

Having a confidential space away from the main reception for victim/survivors to talk with confidence is vital. Put up a poster informing clients that they have this option.

## **Risk assessment and needs assessments**

Most risk and needs assessment tools are based on heterosexual and cisgender models of relationships and behaviours. These need to be reviewed regularly to ensure the questions you ask are appropriate.

Stonewall Housing have risk and needs assessments that have been adapted to the specific needs of their clients. Each

# The Bridge blueprint

organisation needs to have an internal debate regarding the adoption, in full or part of these tools. This work takes time but the discussions can be fruitful and will give confidence to staff that the policies are in place to support their LGBT inclusive practice.

If a child lives with an LGBT victim/survivor experiencing HCI or domestic abuse associated with the home address, your own safeguarding protocols should be implemented and referrals made to relevant agencies. This is in the best interest of the child/ren who may be witnessing HCI or domestic abuse and who will be affected by it.

## Via social media or online

LGBT people of all ages make use of social media for example Gaydar, or Gaydar girls. For those who are not able to leave home, due to threats in or near their home, using the phone or social media to make contact might be the safest form of contact. However social media can be an avenue to online abuse and organisations such as Galop have forums for reporting hate crime abuse.

## Referral pathways

LGBT victim survivors may need a range of services. Refer to the referral pathways map.

## Home visits

LGBT people might not feel safe in their home, or might not feel able to leave their home for fear of violence. In addition, some LGBT people will have multipul perpetrators, for example, a neighbour, the neighbour's family, the

neighbour's community contacts or associations to gangs.

Review your lone-working policies and procedures to ensure staff and clients are able to meet confidentially.

## Review

Allow the changes you have made to bed into the organisation and arrange for your senior staff to review the effect of the changes.

## Consult with staff about the changes

Consult with victim/survivors about the service and ask for feedback for further changes

## Cultural changes follow up

Following the implementation of changes, a further press release or internal briefing should also be circulated, outlining the organisations learning, along with any new statistical information you have found and any anonymised case studies that demonstrate improved practice.

# The 12 steps

## to improve housing services for LGBT people

These are challenging times for housing providers but organisations should not ignore LGBT housing issues because these are just as challenging times for individuals and the community groups that serve them. The 12 steps that follow are aimed at housing professionals to suggest ways that will help organisations become the best service provider and the best employer of LGBT people.

Please note: The steps are not in any particular order and each step should not be considered alone (for example, to understand LGBT issues an organisation may benefit from engaging with other agencies).

### Strategic thinking

#### 1. Compliance:

Housing Providers need to consider compliance under the Equality Act (how they will aim to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations and where applicable the Public Sector Equality Duty) and also consider implications of Human Rights legislation. Organisations also need to comply with the consumer standards of the new Regulatory Framework which covers service, choice, complaints, involvement and understanding the diverse needs of tenants, with the Regulator warning they will get involved if there is evidence of 'serious detriment'.

Other strategies which may be relevant are the Government Equalities Office LGBT Action Plan and Transgender Action Plan. Agencies should also investigate local and national strategies on various topics that may affect LGBT people and strategies that cover wider areas such as London. Organisations can learn much from other organisations and the strategies they have developed.

#### 2. Leadership:

Organisations need to drive beyond compliance and this will require leadership from Boards and Management Teams. For some organisations this will be an evolution of their current thinking and approach, whereas for others they will need a revolution to dramatically change their approach to working with LGBT people, who may face harassment or ignorance where they live or work. Organisations will benefit from setting their own objectives and targets which can be monitored or scrutinised by boards, staff and residents. LGBT people should be represented on boards and resident panels. If an organisation is nervous or ignorant of LGBT issues then staff and clients are more likely to be too. Therefore the issues need to be regularly discussed at board, management, staff and resident meetings and through internal communication tools.

#### 3. Internal campaign:

All staff, board members, volunteers, resident representatives and contractors should undergo training about LGBT issues. This training could be part of a wider company awareness campaign which includes engagement with LGBT staff and clients and reviews of organisational policies. Guinness South commissioned Stonewall Housing to carry out such work: training was built around issues gathered from independent

# The 12 steps

focus groups with staff and clients; feedback from training and policy reviews framed a board report which identified the strengths and weaknesses that the organisation could address to improve their work with LGBT people.

## Information gathering

### 4. Data collection:

Many housing providers may not know how many LGBT people live and work in their organisation. The Office of National Statistics information from their voluntary household surveys may be 'experimental' at this stage, but other research and evidence does exist and quite often this is held by LGBT community organisations. Rather than being 'unnecessary' or 'intrusive' asking about sexual orientation and gender identity will show organisations who their staff and residents are.

Before gathering such information, organisations should explain the reasoning behind it, agree the questions to be asked and how they will be asked on paper and in person, guarantee confidentiality and train staff so no assumptions are made, no one feels uncomfortable about the question and everyone takes the matter seriously. Data collection should be more than a paper exercise: data should be analysed and used to improve services and standards. Organisations should not be put off by some people preferring not to answer initially, as many may be nervous coming out where they live and work.

### 5. Build trust with LGBT staff and residents:

As people become more confident in their organisation then they will become more open about their sexual orientation and gender identity and organisations will be able to ask if staff and residents feel safe to be 'out' where they live and work. Organisations should not wait for staff and residents to come out to them, rather they should be using various engagement tools to seek out LGBT people's views and monitor how many are or are not responding. Until staff and residents trust their provider/employer to tackle harassment and bullying, and to promote LGBT interests, then organisations could request LGBT organisations to run independent, confidential focus groups to ask their opinions. Confidence and trust will grow further as LGBT people see positive outcomes following from their engagement.

### 6. Understand the issues:

LGBT people share common housing issues with others but also have specific issues: 2/3 of people who contact Stonewall Housing for advice state that their housing problem is directly related to their sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBT people may also be affected by certain welfare reforms differently than others (e.g. LGBT people may face domestic abuse and harassment and limiting their affordable housing options may put them in further danger). Housing providers should be aware of LGBT issues: lesbians, gay men, bisexual people and transgender people may have very different needs and LGBT people

# The 12 steps

may also possess other protected characteristics which demand distinctive approaches.

Stonewall Housing has developed useful introductory guidance and has been involved in research with other organisations, such as National Aids Trust (housing and HIV), Refugee Support (LGBT asylum seekers' housing needs) and Galop (reporting of hate crime) and has supported other organisations, such as Chartered Institute of Housing and Housing Quality Network. Stonewall Housing has also developed innovative partnerships to consider key housing priorities for LGBT communities, such as LGBT Jigsaw for young LGBT people, the Older LGBT Housing Group and the LGBT Domestic Abuse Forum.

## Practical suggestions

### 7. Policies:

LGBT people need to be confident that organisations have robust policies which show no tolerance and no hierarchy of discrimination. Policies should not directly or indirectly discriminate against LGBT people, rather they should appreciate the specific needs of LGBT people and all be written to recognise the specific needs of LGBT people. Housing providers should consider following organisations such as Brighton and Hove Council that have developed LGBT-specific housing strategies and policies. Organisations should also invite LGBT staff, residents and community organisations to assist with Equality Impact Assessments of policies.

### 8. Partners:

Housing providers will benefit from developing close links with other agencies. They can gain an LGBT perspective to corporate strategy, improve individual support offers for their residents and support LGBT communities by building links with LGBT voluntary organisations. Service providers and commissioners can work together to ascertain level of need and plan services to meet LGBT housing needs in a more efficient manner since LGBT people may not exist in great numbers in particular localities and may need to move to new areas if they are fleeing from abuse or harassment.

Housing providers can link with other sectors, such as health and mental health services, to ensure that LGBT people can have all their needs addressed, since research clearly shows the correlation between poor, unsafe housing and poor health outcomes for LGBT people. Homes for Everyone is a consortium of Housing Associations in Liverpool. They have come together to support Liverpool Pride and signed up to 4 pledges to meet LGBT housing need.

### 9. Promotion:

Housing providers need to be seen to welcome LGBT people through their external publicity and internal communications. All promotional material should celebrate diversity and communications strategies should include plans to reach out to LGBT people through LGBT venues, groups and websites. Housing providers should also make plans to celebrate

# The 12 steps

LGBT cultural and historical events such as LGBT History Month, Pride, IDAHO and Transgender Day of Remembrance as well as individual events such as Gender Recognition Certificates and Civil Partnerships. Providers may also want to consider signing up to a recognised charter mark that is audited to show LGBT people that they are proud to welcome LGBT people and working to improve services for them.

## **Shaping services**

### *10. Design services:*

Housing providers and commissioners should engage LGBT people within the design of services and consider commissioning LGBT-specific services, in partnership with others if that is the most cost-efficient approach. Four London boroughs and London Councils, the umbrella group made up of all London boroughs, commissioned Stonewall Housing to offer support and advice services specifically to LGBT people. LGBT people access all housing services but some will prefer and benefit from services provided by and for their own communities and any public sector cuts should not prevent housing providers developing innovative solutions to meet their housing needs specifically.

### *11. Shape support and care:*

Care and support providers should recognise that LGBT people have similar experiences to others but also specific needs and risks (for example, younger people may lose family

support networks when they come out and older people may feel the need to go back into the closet for fear of a negative reaction from support and care staff if they find out their sexual orientation or gender identity). If care and support is to be truly personalised then agencies should recognise that sexual orientation and gender identity are key aspects to someone's identity. Rather than be ignored these issues should be core to any care or support package, so that positive outcomes can be achieved for individuals.

Organisations should also plan support groups for staff and residents, which may be virtual or physical groups, to allow them the opportunity to share experiences and support each other. Anchor Trust's LGBT tenant group has proved very successful in engaging with LGBT staff and tenants, providing them with support and guidance and allowing them to be a sounding board on LGBT issues.

### *12. Share your story:*

Housing providers should celebrate their successes and be honest about their mistakes so that LGBT people can benefit from improved services that recognise their needs and celebrate their diversity.

*Bob Green  
Chief Executive*

Originally published in The Guardian, 20-06-2012



[www.stonewallhousing.org](http://www.stonewallhousing.org)

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