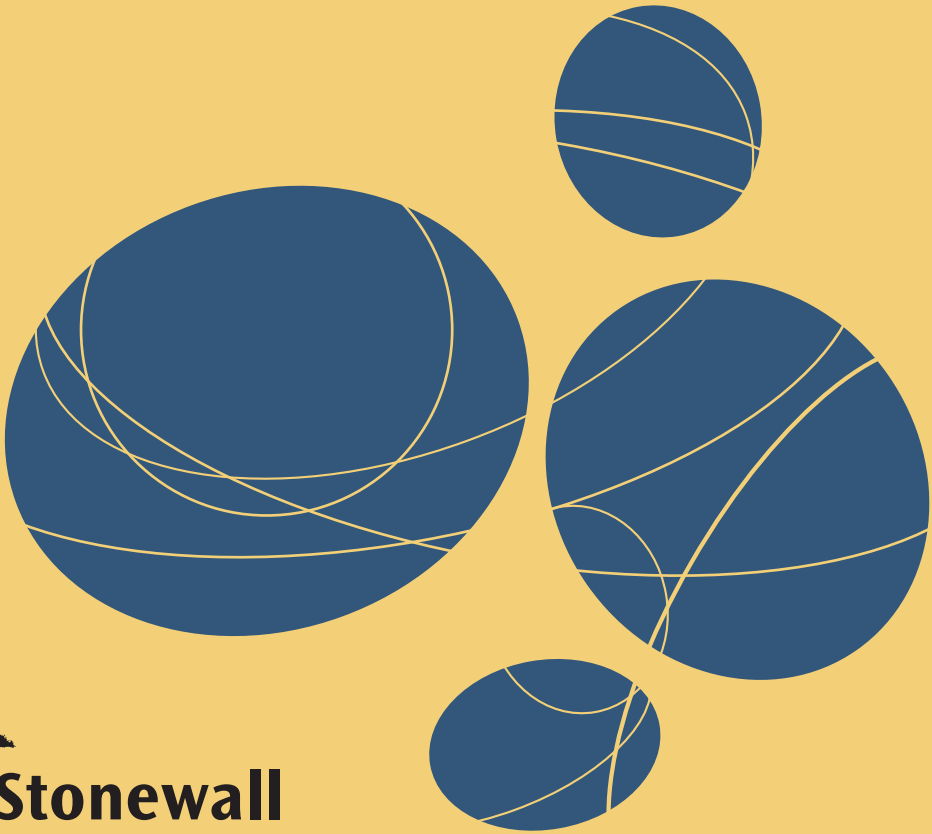
TRAINING

Educating staff about lesbian, gay and bisexual equality



Stonewall

WORKPLACE GUIDES

TRAINING

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FOREWORD

Britain's lesbian, gay and bisexual employees have been protected from homophobic discrimination and harassment in the workplace since 2003. But in the last five years 2.4 million people of working age still said they had witnessed verbal homophobic bullying at work.

While most people are not homophobic, many are simply unaware that 'flippant' remarks and office 'banter' may be preventing a colleague from being open about who they are. At the same time many have little understanding of the unique challenges of being lesbian, gay or bisexual in the workplace and may never have considered the added benefit of having openly lesbian, gay and bisexual colleagues within their workforce.

This guide showcases some of the best work being undertaken by organisations across the country to educate staff about the issues that may affect their lesbian, gay and bisexual colleagues. Their efforts demonstrate that training staff on sexual orientation equality plays a key role in transforming attitudes and creating workplaces that are welcoming for Britain's 1.7 million lesbian, gay and bisexual employees. This in turn enables every member of staff to perform at their very best.

RUTH HUNT Acting Chief Executive, Stonewall

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INTRODUCTION

In order to achieve a gay-friendly workplace it's vital that the importance of sexual orientation equality is clearly explained to staff at every level of an organisation. This is why many organisations provide comprehensive equality and diversity training – which covers lesbian, gay and bisexual equality – to all staff. This helps to ensure that all staff fully understand and adhere to the behaviours expected of them.

This guide is the thirteenth in a series of guides from Stonewall, Britain's leading lesbian, gay and bisexual equality organisation. It features practical case studies from a range of organisations – from the private, public and third sectors – that provide equality training in innovative and accessible ways. These best practice examples demonstrate how effective training can vastly improve workplaces for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees, as well as relations between employees from all sorts of different backgrounds.

An increasing number of organisations take steps to specifically address the training needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. This includes measuring the take-up of training amongst lesbian, gay and bisexual staff and offering targeted development opportunities to them, in order to address inequalities in the workplace. These initiatives are incredibly important and our workplace guide on Career Development features lots of good practice examples in this area.

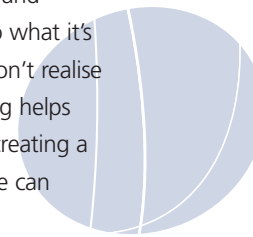
The focus of this guide, however, is on delivering training to *all* staff in order to promote a better understanding of lesbian, gay and bisexual issues throughout the workforce. We're grateful to all the organisations featured for sharing their experiences with us.

CHAPTER 1

THE BUSINESS CASE

Many organisations have been delivering training on equality and diversity for many years, particularly covering gender, race and disability. Since the introduction in 2003 of legal protections for lesbian, gay and bisexual people at work, an increasing number of employers have extended their existing training to include sexual orientation. Some provide stand-alone training on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues.

Equality and diversity training provides employees with guidance on how to act in accordance with the law as well as with the organisation's policies on discriminatory behaviour, bullying and harassment. Many people won't have given any thought to what it's like to be lesbian, gay or bisexual in their workplace and won't realise what behaviours others may find offensive. Effective training helps staff understand how everyone's behaviour contributes to creating a safe and comfortable working environment in which people can perform at their best.



The benefits

MAKE THE MOST OF A DIVERSE WORKFORCE Employers know that recruiting individuals from a variety of backgrounds leads to a creative and dynamic workforce. Equality and diversity training encourages an organisation's staff to respect one another's differences – including in relation to sexual orientation – which in turn helps to prevent conflict in the workplace.

INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY Homophobic bullying and harassment in the workplace has a profound negative impact on the well-being and performance of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees. Organisations that equip staff to treat their lesbian, gay and bisexual colleagues with dignity and respect enable lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to perform to the best of their ability.

RETAIN TALENTED STAFF No employer wants to have to take disciplinary action against an employee because of homophobia or biphobia in the workplace, if it can be avoided. Training staff about the organisation's equality and diversity policy and the behaviours expected of them helps to prevent staff being disciplined – or at worst dismissed – for acting in a way they didn't realise was causing offence.

IMPROVE SERVICES Frontline staff who understand the particular needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual customers and service users are better equipped to deliver services appropriately. Organisations that provide in-depth sexual orientation equality training to client-facing staff increase staff confidence in working with lesbian, gay and bisexual customers and service users and ultimately improve customer satisfaction.

COMPLY WITH THE LAW The Equality Act 2010 protects employees from discrimination and harassment at work because of their sexual orientation. Employers are legally responsible for the conduct of their employees; if an employee harasses or discriminates against a lesbian, gay or bisexual colleague their employer is liable. Training staff about acceptable behaviours at work is the best way of avoiding costly employment tribunals. For public bodies, sexual orientation equality training helps ensure compliance with the public sector equality duty.

CHAPTER 2

DESIGNING TRAINING

No organisation can afford to be complacent about its employees' attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Some members of staff may have little experience or understanding of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. This can lead to inappropriate behaviour which, even if unintentional, can create a hostile working environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual colleagues.

There is no universal training method that works for every organisation. Decisions about when and how to provide training on sexual orientation issues should always take into account the nature and size of the organisation. Training that is tailored to an organisation's workplace culture and designed with its staff, clients and service users in mind is far more likely to be effective with employees. While smaller employers may have fewer resources to dedicate to training, they should at the very least take steps to encourage employees to treat one another – including lesbian, gay and bisexual colleagues – with respect.

Assessing training needs

Before designing and implementing any training programme, it's important to consider what sort of training the workforce actually needs. This ensures that training is relevant to employees and as cost effective as possible. Training assessment doesn't have to be a lengthy or complex process; organisations may simply need to

consider what knowledge, skills and attitudes are required of employees so that they can fulfil the duties of their particular role effectively, and whether there are any gaps or weaknesses in particular areas of the business.

The best organisations are clear from the outset about what any training session is trying to achieve. This enables them to set measurable aims and learning outcomes which can then be referred to as part of the evaluation process once the training has been delivered to staff.

Addressing sexual orientation equality in training programmes

The most straightforward way of educating staff about lesbian, gay and bisexual equality is to include sexual orientation issues in general equality and diversity training. While this often only provides staff with a broad overview of the issues involved, this sends a clear message that an organisation places sexual orientation equality on an equal footing alongside other aspects of diversity such as gender, race and disability.

Many organisations that already have experience of delivering training on equality and diversity have found it relatively straightforward to make adjustments to explicitly include sexual orientation. The best equality and diversity training includes specific case studies relating to lesbian, gay and bisexual issues.

Aviva requires all employees to complete computer-based training on equality and diversity within the first three to four weeks of employment. This includes information about the Equality Act 2010 and all the protected characteristics covered by the Act. The training includes specific examples of homophobic behaviour and makes clear why this could be interpreted as harassment in the workplace.

Increasingly, employers are providing dedicated training sessions on sexual orientation equality, often in addition to comprehensive equality and diversity training. This allows employers to go into more depth about the particular issues affecting lesbian, gay and bisexual people and the reasons why promoting sexual orientation equality in the workplace is important.

IBM offers a training session specifically looking at the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans employees in the workplace. The training is targeted at managers and leaders but is available online for all staff to access. The session includes a list of questions often heard in the workplace, such as 'how was your weekend?' and 'how is your wife?', to highlight how commonplace it is for colleagues to ask one another about their personal lives. This helps staff understand the impact on a person's performance and productivity when they feel unable to be open about who they are.

Bristol City Council has developed a training pack called 'Out in the workplace' that looks specifically at how to make the workplace a safe and comfortable place for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. The training examines barriers to people being openly lesbian, gay or bisexual at work, what homophobic harassment looks like and how to report it and includes case studies to prompt group discussion. Training participants are encouraged to come up with practical steps to make their workplace more gay-friendly.

Some organisations find ways of 'mainstreaming' lesbian, gay and bisexual issues throughout other training programmes, where applicable. Incorporating these messages within the specific business context of an organisation provides employees with tangible examples of why promoting sexual orientation equality is relevant to their professional role.

Training methods

There are lots of different methods of delivering training on sexual orientation equality. It's important for organisations to use a training method that will meet the aims and learning outcomes identified in the initial training needs assessment.

Classroom-based training – which is delivered face-to-face to a small group of participants – is useful if trying to develop skills, for

example if frontline staff need to build confidence in working with lesbian, gay and bisexual service users. The best classroom-based training includes an interactive element to enable participants to put what they have learnt into practice, such as group work or role play exercises. This form of training is also useful if trying to change staff attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people, since it encourages staff to generate discussion. Some participants may have useful experiences to share with the group – either of being lesbian, gay or bisexual themselves, or of having lesbian, gay and bisexual friends, family, colleagues or clients.

Some organisations are able to deliver classroom-based training themselves, particularly if they have a dedicated training team. Training that can be delivered by staff members following an initial 'train the trainers' session presents an opportunity to develop expertise across the organisation. This also means that training can be delivered by someone who understands the particular workplace context and is known and trusted by participants. Some organisations commission external organisations to design and deliver training on their behalf. It can be useful to have an external trainer facilitate certain training sessions, since some participants may be more willing to ask basic questions or challenge the subject matter with someone from outside the organisation.

It's important that trainers encourage frank and open discussion – and allow people to express themselves, even if clumsily – while also holding boundaries to ensure the conversation remains respectful. Some employees may be sceptical and some may initially feel uncomfortable talking about sexual orientation; it is the job of the trainer to make clear that sexual orientation is a question of identity rather than behaviour and to emphasise why this is relevant to the workplace.

University College London runs an interactive one day training session for middle managers on diversity. The classroom-based training is run by an external provider and was devised with significant input from the university's equality and diversity lead. The session features actors who demonstrate how diverse people interact with one another and have different needs and styles in the workplace. This includes a scenario involving a lesbian character who is being sexually harassed by a colleague.

The **Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service** provides a mandatory two day course on valuing and managing difference for all new staff. At the start of the course all delegates are encouraged by the facilitator to enter an agreement to respect confidentiality, be respectful of one another's differences and allow people to make mistakes. This is to encourage a safe and comfortable learning environment, in recognition of the fact that sexual orientation can be a sensitive subject.

Where an initial training needs assessment identifies a more straightforward gap in knowledge and understanding, some organisations design or commission online training packages that employees can complete at their desk at a time that suits them. This is a cost-effective method for smaller employers or those with a limited training budget. This can also be useful for employers with multiple locations regionally or globally, since online training can be made available wherever it's needed. This form of training is best supplemented with a follow-up session that enables employees to discuss with other staff members what they have learnt from the training. This follow-up discussion doesn't need to be onerous or time-consuming and can be incorporated into existing structures such as team meetings.

Accenture offers an e-learning course about lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans equality in the workplace which is made available to all employees globally. The 30-minute training focuses on educating staff about how to create an inclusive workplace for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans employees. This includes explaining appropriate terminology and articulating Accenture's approach to supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff. It also provides information about resources available globally and locally to support Accenture's lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans employees and allies.

Involving lesbian, gay and bisexual staff in design

It's important to consult lesbian, gay and bisexual staff when designing sexual orientation training. A lesbian, gay and bisexual staff network is a good place to start, since network members are likely to have a good understanding of what might be needed in

their workplace and will be able to advise of gaps or inaccuracies in any proposed content. Lesbian, gay and bisexual staff should be involved in the initial design phase and be invited to provide regular feedback as the training is rolled out throughout the workforce.

Some organisations invite network members to deliver training sessions themselves, for instance at induction. This not only offers new recruits a first-hand account of what it's like to be lesbian, gay or bisexual in the organisation, but provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the network amongst new members of staff who may wish to join.

Bristol City Council's central training team consulted the council's lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff network to establish whether they felt any specific training needs were not being met. Following feedback from network members, the training team introduced a training plan for commissioning managers, to encourage those commissioning services to consider whether potential suppliers are equipped to support lesbian, gay and bisexual service users. The network identified that this was particularly important in the delivery of older people's services, since many suppliers simply assume that all older people are heterosexual.

Your Homes Newcastle's lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff network group is given a regular slot in induction training for new staff. The training outlines how all staff can contribute to creating a positive environment for their lesbian, gay and bisexual colleagues and directs staff to sources of further information and support.

Organisations should invite staff to evaluate any training they have participated in. This can give lesbian, gay and bisexual staff who are not out at work an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback.

Making training mandatory

The best way of making sure that all staff complete equality and diversity training is to make it mandatory for all staff. Some organisations include equality and diversity at induction and then require employees to undertake regular refresher courses. HR staff, or the training team if an organisation has one, should keep a record of who has completed training. This enables employers to follow up with staff who fail to comply with this requirement.

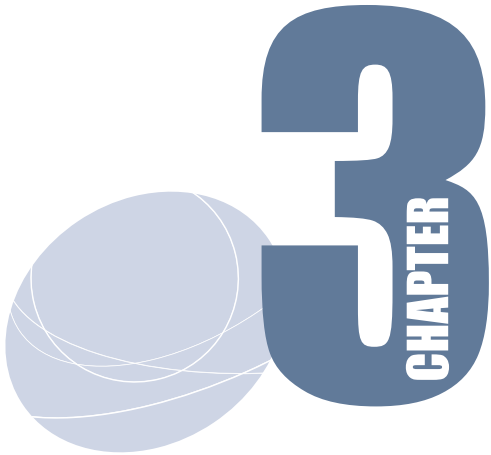
University College London requires all new starters to complete an online diversity training module within six weeks of joining the university. The training covers all the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, including sexual orientation, and includes a case study involving a gay member of staff. Staff are sent reminder emails to undertake the training and are not confirmed in post until the module has been completed.

Action planning

In order to make sure that employees put what they have learnt about sexual orientation into practice, the best organisations build formal action planning into training sessions. This involves encouraging participants to think about what they are going to do differently based on what they've learnt and to commit to one or more practical actions. This might include relatively small steps such as putting up posters in their office to indicate that they will not tolerate homophobic and biphobic language.

Bristol City Council issues a specific questionnaire to staff who have undertaken lesbian, gay and bisexual equality training. The form asks delegates to indicate ways in which they have improved their understanding and ways in which the training has changed their attitudes. The form asks delegates to complete the sentence '*Something positive I can do to promote equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual people is: '*.

BASIC TRAINING FOR ALL STAFF



Sexual orientation training should always be tailored to the specific needs of an organisation, so no two training programmes will look alike. However, there are some key areas that employers should cover. Every member of the workforce should receive this training so that they fully understand why sexual orientation is relevant to the workplace and how to treat lesbian, gay and bisexual colleagues with dignity and respect:

- Organisational policy and legislation
- Language, stereotypes and assumptions
- Challenging inappropriate behaviour

Organisational policy and legislation

Training should cover:

- The Equality Act 2010 and how it protects lesbian, gay and bisexual people at work
- The organisation's policy on discrimination because of sexual orientation
- The organisation's policy on homophobic and biphobic bullying and harassment
- The business benefits of promoting lesbian, gay and bisexual equality
- How to report instances of discrimination, bullying and harassment
- Where staff can go for further information and support

Training on sexual orientation equality should provide information about the laws that protect lesbian, gay and bisexual people at work, as well as the organisation's approach to the treatment of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. This makes clear to staff what sort of behaviour is expected of them, helping organisations put policies into practice and comply with the law. This also helps staff know what to do if they experience homophobia or biphobia in the workplace.

The best training explains why sexual orientation equality is relevant to the business and how the entire workforce can benefit from creating a welcoming environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.

Your Homes Newcastle provides all new starters with mandatory induction training, including an introductory session on equality and diversity. This covers all nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, including sexual orientation, and how these shape the housing association's Core Values. The training looks in particular at case law in relation to sexual orientation, including the case of a gay couple who were unlawfully turned away from a bed and breakfast.

Language, stereotypes and assumptions

Training should cover:

- The meanings of the terms lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual / straight
- The distinction between sexual orientation and gender identity
- Appropriate terminology when talking about lesbian, gay and bisexual people – including gay and straight as acceptable everyday language – and the impact of using pejorative or outdated terms
- The impact of perpetuating stereotypes about lesbian, gay and bisexual people
- The impact of making assumptions that everyone is heterosexual
- The experience of coming out as lesbian, gay and bisexual and implications for the workplace

It's important for organisations to be clear in training about what sexual orientation actually means, emphasising that it is about identity rather than behaviour, since this may be unclear to some employees. Training should examine some of the myths and stereotypes that exist about lesbian, gay and bisexual people and

the impact of homophobic and biphobic language.

The best sexual orientation training goes into some detail about the coming out experience for lesbian, gay and bisexual people people – explaining that heterosexual people disclose their sexual orientation all the time, often without questioning it, for instance whenever they mention their husband or wife. At the same time, asking a colleague about their husband or wife can inhibit them from acknowledging that they have a same-sex partner. Looking at these sorts of scenarios in training can help staff understand some of the distinct issues facing lesbian, gay and bisexual people people in the workplace and encourage them to consider the impact of their own behaviour.

Accenture provides online awareness training that looks in detail at some of the particular issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff. The training aims to dispel the myth that sexual orientation is a private matter and irrelevant to the workplace. This includes looking at scenarios in which it may be necessary for an employee to talk about their partner or living arrangements and the impact of colleagues assuming they are heterosexual.

Aviva's mandatory computer-based diversity training requires employees to explore various workplace scenarios and respond to multiple choice questions. The training includes specific case studies relating to sexual orientation and explores the impact of homophobic language, including the derogatory use of the word 'gay'.

Challenging inappropriate behaviour

Training should cover:

- How to identify homophobic and biphobic language and behaviour
- Ways of challenging inappropriate behaviour
- Challenging inappropriate behaviour in work-related social scenarios
- How to formally report homophobic and biphobic behaviour

Training should give all staff the tools to challenge homophobic and biphobic language and behaviour if they encounter it in the workplace. It should equip staff to determine when office jokes and 'banter' become inappropriate, by being explicit about the sorts of behaviour that are unacceptable and giving examples. This might, for instance, include being clear that 'outing' a colleague as gay without their consent amounts to homophobic harassment.

Over time this should help foster a working environment in which employees moderate their own behaviour as well as that of others in an informal way. Training should also encourage confidence in reporting through formal channels.

The **Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service**'s mandatory training course for staff features case studies, discussion points and DVD clips prompting views from participants relating to homophobia and being lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans. The trainer encourages participants to reflect on the impact of the behaviours demonstrated and challenges participants on how they would deal with the situations discussed. The trainer reinforces the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service's policies which relate to acceptable behaviour within the workplace, promoting the organisation's values of being professional and showing respect.

TARGETED TRAINING

As with all training, particular staff groups in an organisation have specific training needs. Equality and diversity training is no different; in addition to generic training for all staff, it's important to provide targeted training that is relevant to specific functions in the organisation. This helps specific staff groups get the most out of training. It also enables them to perform their professional role to the best of their ability in accordance with the values of the organisation.

STAFF GROUP	TRAINING REQUIRED
Managers	• Supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual staff • Role modelling good behaviour • Managing conflict • The business benefits of lesbian, gay and bisexual equality
Recruiters	• Organisational policy and legislation relating to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in recruitment • The organisational benefits of recruiting a diverse workforce
Frontline staff	• Organisational policy as it relates to clients and service users • Practical skills for working with lesbian, gay and bisexual customers and service users

Managers

Those with line management responsibilities play an important role in supporting their staff. It's important that line managers are able to provide information and advice to any lesbian, gay and bisexual team members, including how to get involved in the organisation's lesbian, gay and bisexual staff network and how employee benefits and entitlements such as parental leave apply to lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.

Some line managers may have little first-hand experience of supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual staff through sensitive issues such as coming out at work or experiencing homophobic or biphobic bullying. The best employers provide comprehensive training for new line managers that outlines how organisational policy applies to lesbian, gay and bisexual staff and the likely scenarios they may encounter in their role as a people manager.

The **National Assembly for Wales** delivers a training session for line managers about supporting and managing lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. The training looks at how the organisation's policies apply to lesbian, gay and bisexual staff, including a case study about a female member of staff taking parental leave when her same-sex partner has a baby. The session also highlights the particular issues to be aware of if a lesbian, gay or bisexual member of staff is experiencing domestic abuse.

Deloitte provides diversity training for managers with a specific session on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans issues. Attendees are required to consider a series of case studies and discuss with one another how to best handle the situation and what implications there might be for other team members. This includes a scenario involving a gay member of staff who seeks advice from his line manager on what approach he should take to telling clients he is gay. Another case study involves a staff member who is needed to work on a project in a country where it is illegal to be gay but doesn't want to go because of his sexual orientation.

Targeted training should enable line managers to manage conflict between team members and encourage a diverse team to work productively. Managers should not only be familiar with the organisation's formal grievance and disciplinary procedures but should know how to directly intervene in cases of homophobic and biphobic bullying and harassment targeted at individuals and tackle the general use of homophobic and biphobic language within teams.

Every line manager at **IBM** undergoes new manager orientation training which includes a specific component on managing and supporting diverse staff groups. The training includes a scenario about managing homophobic jokes in a team where the manager knows that one of the team members is gay but this is not known within the team more widely. This scenario encourages managers to consider how they would act in this situation. The training emphasises that managers should remind staff that inappropriate humour is not tolerated by IBM or in their team and should think through how they can create a positive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans employees.

Line managers play an important role in modelling good behaviour to junior members of staff. The best sexual orientation equality training encourages managers to set an example through their own behaviour. This should include challenging homophobic and biphobic language and behaviour and promoting the importance of lesbian, gay and bisexual equality whenever possible. In doing so line managers significantly contribute to creating a welcoming environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.

Your Homes Newcastle runs a workshop for managers across all levels of the organisation focusing on their role in creating a positive and inclusive working environment. The workshop includes facilitated discussion on valuing diversity, challenging inappropriate behaviour and language and looking at how managers' behaviour affects and influences others. The training session includes a scenario about a lesbian member of staff who is not out at work because her colleagues make inappropriate remarks about gay people. Training participants are encouraged to consider the impact of these comments going unchallenged by her manager.

Bristol City Council's 'Out in the workplace' training is a dedicated session about lesbian, gay and bisexual issues. The training initiative is designed so that, following a mandatory 'train the trainer' session, managers are responsible for delivering the session to their teams in team meetings. This requires line managers to set high standards of how to challenge homophobic language and behaviour.

Managers, including those at the very top of an organisation, play an important role in showing support for initiatives to promote lesbian, gay and bisexual equality. For this reason it's vital that senior managers have a thorough understanding of the values and expected behaviours of the organisation. Targeted training on sexual orientation should encourage senior management to act as positive role models by promoting those values throughout the workforce.

IBM runs a mandatory two day workshop on inclusive leadership for senior managers at the point of promotion. Participants explore critical issues related to workforce diversity through case studies, exercises, discussions, video scenarios and personal feedback. The course includes group discussions on the topic of lesbian, gay and bisexual issues, based on a case study involving an employee wanting to bring his same-sex partner to an important industry event.

Recruiters

The best employers provide training to those shortlisting and sitting on selection panels to make sure they fully understand equality and diversity implications in recruitment and know how to recruit fairly. Organisations that outsource recruitment responsibilities to external recruiters should make effective training on sexual orientation a requirement of the supplier contract. This gives lesbian, gay and bisexual candidates an equal opportunity in the recruitment process and helps organisations recruit a diverse workforce.

Training for those with recruitment responsibilities should outline why the organisation aspires to having a diverse workforce and how this relates to the organisation's diversity strategy. This should help recruiters understand the unique insights that lesbian, gay and bisexual staff can bring to the organisation, as well as the benefits of reflecting the diversity of its clients or service users.

Deloitte provides detailed training for all staff responsible for conducting interviews. This includes an hour long session on employment law and Deloitte's obligations as an employer, particularly in relation to the Equality Act 2010. This highlights the firm's legal duty not to discriminate against lesbian, gay and bisexual candidates in the recruitment process. It also includes practical examples of questions that might come up in interview, such as a candidate asking what support the firm offers to gay people.

Citizens Advice delivers sessions on effective selection and interviewing skills to recruiting managers before they sit on selection panels for the first time. The sessions cover organisational policy and equalities legislation, including specific reference to sexual orientation, as well as how the organisation ensures fairness, equality and diversity in the recruitment and selection process.

HR personnel

In some organisations grievances are handled not by managers but by dedicated HR staff. Those responsible for implementing grievance procedures should receive training so that they are equipped to support staff through complaints of homophobic and biphobic bullying and harassment. This should include knowing how to identify homophobic and biphobic harassment and developing a better understanding of the impact of homophobic and biphobic language and behaviour.

University College London requires all staff who sit on grievance panels to undertake training that covers equality and diversity considerations in the grievance process. The training addresses discrimination and harassment claims and includes a specific case study about harassment against a lesbian member of staff in order to generate discussion about how to identify instances of homophobia.

Frontline staff

Training should cover:

- Organisational policy and legislation relating to service delivery, including the Equality Act 2010
- Encouraging clients and service users to disclose that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual where appropriate
- Inequalities experienced by lesbian, gay and bisexual people
- Challenging homophobic and biphobic behaviour amongst service users, clients and customers

It's vital that those who deal face-to-face with clients, customers or service users are able to deliver a first-rate service to all, regardless of sexual orientation. The best employers provide frontline staff with comprehensive training that explains how organisational policy and legislation apply to the treatment of lesbian, gay and bisexual service users or clients.

In some sectors it may be beneficial for staff to know that a client is lesbian, gay or bisexual as this may affect the service they need. Training should equip staff to ask people about their sexual orientation sensitively and to provide appropriate support where necessary. The best training goes into some detail about the particular issues staff may encounter in the specific context of their role, such as relevant inequalities experienced by lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

The best employers also provide training on how to handle instances of homophobic and biphobic language and behaviour when dealing with clients, customers or service users. Providing clarity on this issue gives staff the confidence to challenge where appropriate.

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

Bristol City Council provides dedicated sexual orientation training to front of house staff at the Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery. The training encourages staff to recognise different families that might visit the museum. It also invites participants to identify items in the museum that are about or by lesbian, gay and bisexual people, with a view to highlighting these exhibits to visitors where appropriate.

All new line managers at **Accenture** receive training on challenging inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. The session addresses a number of issues including how to handle homophobic remarks from a client. The training emphasises that homophobic behaviour must never go unchallenged and that clients must understand that this sort of behaviour is unacceptable to the organisation.

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust provides mandatory equality, diversity and human rights training (which covers all the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010) and a one day course for professionals on sexual orientation. In addition, Oxleas has developed an e-learning module specifically covering sexual orientation equality. The module was funded by the London Deanery and NHS London, using materials from Oxleas and Stonewall. The training is aimed at health professionals and includes why monitoring sexual orientation is important, raising awareness of lesbian, gay and bisexual health inequalities, the particular health needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual patients and developing services as positive, welcoming environments for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

ADVANCED TRAINING

CHAPTER 5

For organisations that have been delivering training for some time, it's important to make sure that employees are kept up to date with lesbian, gay and bisexual issues. Not only will new joiners require training but existing staff will benefit from a reminder of why lesbian, gay and bisexual is important and relevant. The best employers continually look at ways of improving training by exploring the subject in more depth and encouraging staff to reflect more fully on their own attitudes and behaviour.

Diversity within the lesbian, gay and bisexual community

The best sexual orientation equality training recognises that lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not a homogenous group and covers in some detail the particular issues affecting lesbians and bisexual people. This might include, for instance, the specific challenges of being a gay woman in a male-dominated workplace or the assumptions that are often made about bisexual people. Some organisations achieve this by making sure that they include a diverse range of case studies in all training. Others offer training that specifically focuses on the issues experienced by certain groups.

IBM offers a training module called 'The 'L' in LGBT' outlining the challenges facing lesbians in the workplace. The session highlights how the experiences of lesbians differ to those of both heterosexual women and gay men, examining how barriers for women in the workplace specifically affect lesbians.

The **National Assembly for Wales** includes a section on bisexuality in its line manager training. This reminds managers that all employee benefits and staff policies apply equally to opposite-sex and same-sex partners and emphasises that they mustn't assume a member of staff is gay just because they have had a same-sex partner in the past.

Effective equality and diversity training should also emphasise that people have multiple identities – that lesbian, gay and bisexual people also have an ethnicity and might for instance be disabled or have a faith. This encourages staff not to make assumptions about a person's sexual orientation on the basis of other characteristics, or vice versa.

Bristol City Council delivers training to social workers in Adult Social Care on how to ask equality monitoring questions. This includes a number of case studies that focus on the particular needs and concerns of lesbian, gay and bisexual people with physical or learning disabilities, those with mental health problems and older lesbian, gay and bisexual people. The training encourages participants to question personal assumptions around sex and sexuality whilst balancing issues of privacy, safety and respect toward the individual receiving support.

Religion and sexual orientation

Conflict in the workplace between lesbian, gay and bisexual people and people of faith is rare. However, many employers are nervous about tackling homophobic and biphobic behaviour in the workplace when it is expressed as a religious belief.

The best employers tackle the problem head on by making clear in training – including line manager training – that religious belief

cannot be used to justify behaviour that contravenes the organisation's equality and diversity or bullying and harassment policies. Staff may be entitled to their own private views about lesbian, gay and bisexual people but they must treat all colleagues, clients and service users with dignity and respect. Training should emphasise that language or behaviour that discriminates against people of faith is prohibited in just the same way.

Morgan Stanley delivers actor based training on inclusion in the workplace to all employees. The training includes one scenario focusing on a South Asian Muslim individual who is gay, exploring issues relating to culture and religion as well as sexual orientation. The actors play out a scenario in which two colleagues assume that the main character disapproves of another colleague's 'gay lifestyle', because of his religion. The facilitator encourages participants to consider the complexities of managing multiple identities in the workplace as well as the dangers of stereotyping.

The **Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service** uses a DVD clip in its diversity training that explores whether it is ever appropriate for a member of staff to refuse to work with lesbian, gay and bisexual people because their faith forbids same-sex relationships. The training emphasises that, while everyone has a right to their religious beliefs and point of view, people don't have the right to impose that belief or point of view on others.

Line managers at **Bristol City Council** are responsible for delivering sexual orientation equality training to their teams. Managers are encouraged to explain in these sessions that much homophobic discrimination occurs through ignorance and a lack of understanding of the issues and barriers faced by lesbian, gay and bisexual people. The training materials encourage managers to generate discussion about the kind of behaviour that might go unchallenged, including using religion or belief as a basis to defend discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Unconscious bias

Even those with the best intentions can find themselves favouring people who look, sound or act like them – often without realising they're doing it. The best training encourages staff to critically reflect on their own biases and how these may influence their behaviour. This is a significant step towards encouraging staff to modify any behaviour that may discriminate against lesbian, gay and bisexual people. The best employers incorporate the subject of unconscious bias into recruitment training to make sure that biases aren't reflected in hiring decisions.

IBM's training for senior leaders on unconscious bias looks at the many factors that influence the way people think and make decisions. Prior to the course, leaders take online implicit association tests to identify their own biases. A specific example relating to sexual orientation is explored on the course, including the potential influence of a strict religious upbringing. During the training, leaders explore strategies to overcome bias in their leadership, making sure that bias is not used as an excuse for, or does not subconsciously lead to, discrimination.

Morgan Stanley brings in an external consultant to deliver unconscious bias training to all divisional leadership teams, examining the ways in which people demonstrate favouritism towards dominant groups, including in relation to sexual orientation. The course explores the theory of unconscious bias before providing practical steps that all leaders can take to reduce bias in their decision making. This covers formal situations such as hiring decisions and appraisals, as well as potential bias when allocating projects and providing informal feedback. Senior managers make sure the training is implemented in practice by regularly reminding employees of the potential for unconscious bias during decision-making meetings about internal promotion and recruitment.

Reverse mentoring

Employers are increasingly drawing on the experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to help educate other staff members about the issues affecting lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the workplace. Many employers offer reverse mentoring opportunities – whereby a junior lesbian, gay or bisexual employee mentors a senior member of staff – to help increase understanding of lesbian, gay and bisexual issues at senior management level. At the same time this provides lesbian, gay and bisexual junior staff with a valuable career development opportunity.

A number of **Accenture**'s Managing Directors have been reverse mentored by members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff network. This has provided senior leaders with an opportunity to ask questions they may not normally feel comfortable asking in public and has given them a more intimate insight into the challenges and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff at Accenture.

In 2011 **Aviva** introduced a reciprocal mentoring programme to gain a better understanding about gender differences and how women experience the organisation. Each member of the Board was paired with a more junior female employee for twelve months, with a female Board member being paired with a gay member of staff. This allowed the board to better understand the issues faced by women – and gay people – in their career and what can be done to make things easier. Following the success of the programme it was decided to include more lesbian, gay and bisexual mentors in the second wave of the programme.

Every member of **IBM**'s UK Executive Leadership team is offered a reverse mentor representing one of the various diversity strands, in order to increase their understanding of the challenges and concerns of those employees. Reverse mentors, including lesbian, gay and bisexual mentors, are offered on a rotational basis with a new mentor every six months so that senior leaders can learn from a diverse range of employees and integrate what they have learnt into their business areas.

CHAPTER 6

EVALUATING TRAINING

As with all forms of training, it's important to measure the outcome of sexual orientation equality training once it has been delivered to staff. The best organisations continually evaluate training to find out what staff think of it and whether it is effective in educating the workforce about lesbian, gay and bisexual equality.

Many organisations provide delegates with a pre-session survey to assess their knowledge and understanding of sexual orientation equality prior to the session, which can then be compared with a similar survey completed at the end of the session. This enables organisations to identify whether the training has increased participants' knowledge and understanding of the subject. Employers should ask questions that refer to the original learning aims and outcomes identified in the initial planning phase to determine whether the training has been successful in meeting these aims.

Many employers carry out further evaluation at a later date to measure whether the training has had any lasting impact on staff attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bisexual equality. This can be achieved by simply repeating the survey to participants six months after they have completed training. The best employers refer back to action plans drawn up by participants during training and assess whether they have taken the steps they committed to.

Many organisations also invite feedback shortly after training on the content, format and delivery of the session. This is a good opportunity to identify any issues that came up during the session that need addressing and ways in which the training might be improved. It's vital that organisations respond to any critical feedback from staff by making improvements to training, and communicating these changes to staff. The best organisations regularly reassess training needs and refresh course content in response to the findings of evaluation exercises so that it continues to be appropriate, up to date and relevant.

The **Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service**'s Learning and Development team evaluates all training in three stages. The first stage assessment asks employees to consider what they thought of the course in terms of design and delivery as well as the impact the course has had on their skills and knowledge. The later stages of evaluation require input from the employee's line manager and are designed to measure whether the learning has had a lasting impact and whether any follow up training is required.

Many organisations also use broader indicators to measure the impact of lesbian, gay and bisexual equality training. These might include the level of engagement amongst lesbian, gay and bisexual staff as identified by staff satisfaction surveys or the number of heterosexual staff participating in straight allies programmes. While it may not be possible to directly attribute progress in these areas to training programmes specifically, this is a good way of measuring the overall effectiveness of interventions to promote lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the workplace, of which training will be a significant factor.

University College London analyses its recruitment monitoring data to identify any homophobic bias in the recruitment process and uses this to measure the effectiveness of its fair recruitment training. Analysis of the data has found no bias against lesbian, gay and bisexual candidates. The university attributes this in part to the quality of the training staff receive, in particular since it employs staff from all over the world, many of whom come from countries where the rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not safeguarded.

TRAINING OVERVIEW

STAFF GROUP	OUTCOME	BASIC TRAINING	ADVANCED TRAINING
All staff	• Lesbian, gay and bisexual staff are treated with dignity and respect • All staff understand the business benefits of promoting lesbian, gay and bisexual equality • Reduction in grievances	• Organisational policy and legislation • Language, stereotypes and assumptions • Challenging homophobic and biphobic behaviour	• Particular issues affecting lesbians and bisexual people • Multiple identities • Unconscious bias
Managers	• Managers support lesbian, gay and bisexual team members • Managers effectively tackle conflict between staff members • Senior leaders act as positive role models promoting lesbian, gay and bisexual equality throughout the organisation	• Supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual staff • Role modelling good behaviour • Managing conflict • The business benefits of lesbian, gay and bisexual equality	• Managing conflict based on religion/ between characteristics • Reverse mentoring (for senior managers)
Recruiters	• Recruitment processes are fair • Lesbian, gay and bisexual people are well represented in the organisation	• Organisational policy and legislation relating to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in recruitment • The organisational benefits of recruiting a diverse workforce	• Unconscious bias in recruitment
Frontline staff	• Increase in customer satisfaction • Reduction in complaints • Staff feel confident supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual clients and service users	• Organisational policy as it relates to clients and service users • Practical skills for working with lesbian, gay and bisexual customers and service users	• Sector-specific inequalities experienced by lesbian, gay and bisexual people

TOP TEN TIPS

1 **BE EXPLICIT ABOUT LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL ISSUES** in generic diversity training. Some staff may only associate equality and diversity with race, gender and disability so it's important to make clear that sexual orientation is equally important.

2 **INVOLVE LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL STAFF IN TRAINING DESIGN** to make sure it is suitable. They may notice gaps or inaccuracies that you have missed.

3 **ASSESS THE TRAINING NEEDS OF YOUR ORGANISATION** and design your training on sexual orientation to meet those needs. This will ensure that the training you offer is useful and relevant to participants.

4 **MAKE BASIC TRAINING ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION MANDATORY FOR ALL STAFF** so that employees know to comply with organisational policy and the law and understand how to treat lesbian, gay and bisexual colleagues with dignity and respect.

5 **EXPLAIN WHY SEXUAL ORIENTATION IS RELEVANT TO THE WORKPLACE** highlighting the particular issues that affect lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. This will raise awareness of concerns they may not have thought of.

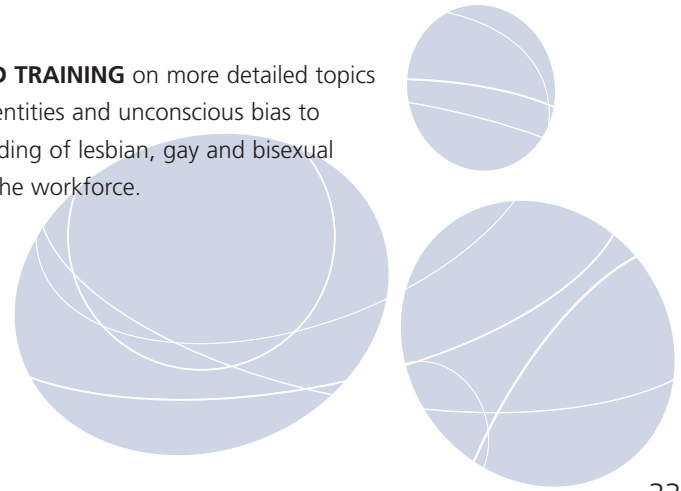
6 **PROVIDE TARGETED TRAINING** specific to employees' roles within the organisation, including managers, recruiters and HR staff. This will help staff recognise the relevance of lesbian, gay and bisexual equality to their particular roles.

7 **TRAIN FRONTLINE STAFF** so they have the confidence to respond to the specific needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual customers and service users. Make sure frontline staff understand the importance of treating lesbian, gay and bisexual customers and service users with dignity and respect.

8 **BUILD ACTION PLANNING INTO TRAINING** so that participants commit to concrete steps to improve the workplace for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff, customers and service users.

9 **EVALUATE TRAINING** against measurable learning aims and objectives so that you can determine whether the training has been successful. Continue to reassess training needs on sexual orientation in response to the findings of evaluation.

10 **OFFER ADVANCED TRAINING** on more detailed topics such as multiple identities and unconscious bias to enhance understanding of lesbian, gay and bisexual issues throughout the workforce.



Stonewall Diversity Champions programme

Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme is Britain's good practice forum through which major employers work with Stonewall and each other on sexual orientation issues to promote diversity in the workplace. www.stonewall.org.uk/dcs

Workplace Equality Index

The Workplace Equality Index is Stonewall's comprehensive annual benchmarking exercise that showcases Britain's top employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. www.stonewall.org.uk/wei

The Stonewall Leadership Programme

The Stonewall Leadership Programme provides a unique space to look at questions around sexual orientation and authenticity and how these can be used to develop an individual's leadership abilities. www.stonewall.org.uk/leadership

The Stonewall Role Model Programme

Stonewall's one day Role Model Programme is designed for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to help gain an understanding of how they can be effective role models in their workplaces. www.stonewall.org.uk/rolemodelprogramme

The Stonewall Global Diversity Champions programme

Stonewall's Global Diversity Champions programme is Stonewall's best practice employers' forum for global organisations. Organisations work with us to support their staff around the world. www.stonewall.org.uk/globaldc

Stonewall Workplace Guides are free to download from www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace

Also in this series of Workplace Guides:

Network Groups (2005)
Monitoring (2006)
Bullying
Career Development
Religion and Sexual Orientation
Bisexual people in the workplace
Marketing
Straight Allies
Procurement
Global Working
Using Monitoring Data
Maintaining Network Group Momentum

Thank you to all those who participated in this guide

TRAINING

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