

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small rainbow flag on a wooden stick. The person is wearing a rainbow-colored wristband. The background is a blurred crowd of people at what appears to be a pride event, with many people wearing white hats and some holding up phones. The overall atmosphere is vibrant and celebratory.

How to be **LGBT** Friendly

30 Practical Ways to
Create a Welcoming
Environment for
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual
and Transgender People



There are approximately 57,500 people in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). Add to these family members, friends and children of LGBT people and it becomes clear that LGBT issues impact on a large segment of society.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people come from diverse backgrounds with very different life experiences and expectations. There are LGBT people in all of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland's cultures, communities and geographical areas. But we are united by one thing - organisations and individuals often discriminate against us, ignore our needs and aspirations or even deny our existence.

We live in a society which generally assumes that everyone is heterosexual and has a fixed gender identity. This can make some LGBT people feel excluded, isolated or unwelcome. Prism, the LGBT Forum for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, has produced this booklet to help organisations that want to be welcoming to LGBT people. The recommendations in this guide are not a plea for 'special' treatment, they are simply guidelines for creating an environment which is safe and open to everyone.

Prism would like to thank the Big Lottery Fund for their financial support and Bradford Equity Partnership, on whose original concept this booklet is based.



Language

- 01** Listen to how people describe their own identity, gender, partners and relationships and reflect their choice of language.
- 02** Avoid making assumptions about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity: use gender-neutral terms such as partner(s).
- 03** Many languages use terms to describe LGBT people which may be derogatory. If you are translating material, be aware of the cultural context of the terms you are using.
- 04** A cautionary note: some LGBT people may have reclaimed derogatory words such as 'dyke', 'fag', 'queer' or 'tranny' to describe themselves but it isn't appropriate for your organisation to use these words to describe people. As a general rule people should avoid using the label 'homosexual' as it is still viewed negatively. Most people are happy with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender but if in doubt - ask!





Policies

- 05** Display a visible non-discrimination statement, for example: 'our organisation provides equality of services and care to everyone, regardless of people's age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.' Make sure your staff know what this means!
- 06** Make sure that your organisation's equality and diversity policy and statement are on display and publicised.
- 07** Display clear statements on zero tolerance for racist or homophobic language.
- 08** Monitor the sexual orientation of all staff and service users, in line with confidentiality and data protection protocols and with an opt-out option for those who prefer not to disclose this information. This enables you to identify gaps in service provision and staffing balance. Any form used needs to state clearly what the information will be used for. Without this monitoring LGBT people's exclusion will continue to be ignored.
- 09** Ensure confidentiality to all staff and service users, unless they personally choose to be 'out' themselves. Confidentiality can be a matter of personal safety rather than purely about privacy.



- 10** Explore ways of creatively integrating LGBT issues into your work rather than separating them out or having them as an add on.
- 11** Be careful in areas where you have gender segregation as a policy and ensure that you have included the needs of transgender people.
- 12** LGBT people come from all sectors of the community. Good access principles still apply - ensure that you provide appropriate access in terms of all equality issues.





Staff

- 13** Provide training for all staff - paid and unpaid - on LGBT issues. This gives out a clear message that discrimination against LGBT people is not acceptable and improves people's understanding of the discrimination that LGBT people may face. (You can get help with training from Leicester LGB Centre. If your organisation has Equality Officers they may also be able to help.)
- 14** Encourage all staff and volunteers to challenge negative comments and 'jokes' about LGBT people and/or LGBT issues, and ensure that people know this is their responsibility. This particularly applies to managers who have responsibilities for ensuring equality in the workplace and for services provided under statutory employment regulations and is a legislative duty.
- 15** Encourage staff members to report incidents of homophobic abuse, whether they occur within or outside the workplace. Take any reports of homophobic behaviour within the workplace seriously, and act on them promptly. Have information about reporting hate incidents to the Police or to a third party reporting centre readily available.
- 16** Information about staff members' sexual orientation and gender identity should be considered strictly confidential and should be treated as such by HR departments.



- 17** Support role models: for example LGBT staff who are 'out'. Staff should be encouraged to attend organisational LGBT networks/support groups in paid time. Display posters which publicise such groups and/or which feature positive images of, or statements about, LGBT people.
- 18** If your organisation has frontline staff it's vitally important that, as the first point of contact, they treat everyone with equal respect, regardless of their identity.
- 19** Many organisations require people to sign in on arrival for health and safety reasons. People attending an LGBT event should be able to protect their identity by using first names only or by anonymising the nature of the meeting.
- 20** Advertise your vacancies and services in the LGBT press and through local LGBT groups.
- 21** Keep up-to-date information about local LGBT groups and organisations and other relevant resources. This will assist with staff awareness, referrals and networking.





Involvement

- 22** When publicising events and consultations, remember that many LGBT people do not go to gay venues. Publicise events and services in mainstream venues and publications as well as in specialist arenas.
- 23** If you are using community groups to assist you in consultation or involvement work, support them by either providing administrative support or paying for their work.
- 24** Consider using a neutral venue for meetings, or a place where LGBT people feel safe to be open such as an LGBT Centre.
- 25** When working with LGBT people, it is important to remember that they are least likely to be 'out' in the place they live because of the possibility of harassment and compromising personal safety. This may particularly be an issue in neighbourhood work.
- 26** Whilst there is commonality between lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, some issues will be specific to individual communities.



Information & Visibility

- 27** Having LGBT information on display creates a welcoming atmosphere. This could include LGBT posters showing people from the diverse community in which we live.
- 28** Use images of LGBT people in a wide range of your publicity materials, not just in documents which are specifically aimed at the LGBT community. This sends out a clear message that you recognise the positive contribution that LGBT people can make to our society and that your entire organisation is welcoming to LGBT people.
- 29** Ensure that posters and information are clearly visible and that they remain on display.
- 30** Support LGBT communities by advertising your organisation in LGBT publications, sponsoring LGBT events or working in partnership with LGBT organisations.





Useful Contacts

Local Organisations

Leicester LGBT Centre

Leicester LGBT Centre is one of the longest established centres in the country. Situated in Leicester city centre, it is the only major organisation in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland focussing solely on improving the lives of local LGBT people. The Centre runs a telephone helpline and the Q15 Drop-In, an informal, welcoming café space which operates several lunchtimes a week. We host various social and support groups and runs a vibrant youth service both in the city and in Leicestershire. We also offer volunteering opportunities, LGBT-friendly counselling and an LGBT resource library.

The Centre's website, www.llgbc.com, is regularly updated and is a good source of information about local resources and events. The Centre also has an extensive mailing list and sends out regular e-bulletins keeping people up-to-date with what's going on locally.

Leicester LGBT Centre provides expert training, consultancy and advice on a range of LGBT issues. We have a well-equipped training/meeting room which can also be hired by outside organisations. Please contact us for more details.

**Leicester LGBT Centre, 15 Wellington St, Leicester, LE1 6HH
0116 2547412 • info@llgbc.com • www.llgbc.com**



Prism

Prism is the LGBT Forum for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We are a group of people who live or work in Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland and who want to work together and with Leicester LGBT Centre to improve the services offered to LGBT people locally. We highlight issues of concern to the local LGBT community and work with other local organisations to develop best practice in service provision.

Prism can be contacted through Leicester LGBT Centre (contact details on page 10) or by emailing prism@lgbcc.com.

Leicester Parents Support Group

The Leicester Parents Support Group is made up of parents of gay sons and lesbian daughters. Our group exists to help families and their lesbian and gay offspring to understand, love and offer support where needed.

www.leicesterparents.org.uk

Contact through Leicester LGB Centre:
0116 2547412





Trade Sexual Health

Trade is a sexual health charity based in Leicester for anyone living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Trade provides free and confidential advice and support to anyone who identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, man who has sex with men (MSM) or woman who has sex with women (WSW). We provide safer sex packs for men and women and can offer one-to-one emotional and practical support. Visit our website at www.tradesexualhealth.com for more information.

Trade, 15 Wellington Street, Leicester, LE1 6HH
0116 254 1747 • info@tradesexualhealth.com
www.tradesexualhealth.com

Leicester LGBT Helpline

Leicester LGBT Helpline is staffed by trained volunteers and provides support, advice and information to LGBT people and people who are questioning their sexuality in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Open Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7.30pm to 10.00pm – an answerphone is available outside these times. You can also email for information.

0116 255 0667 • helpline@llgbc.com

Hate Crime Reporting

Homophobic and transphobic hate crime is serious and should be reported. Incidents can be reported directly to Leicestershire Constabulary by calling **0116 222 2222** (in an emergency dial **999**).

If you want to report a hate crime or incident in confidence, you can do so in the following ways:

- Through Leicester LGBT Centre.
- Through Trade Sexual Health.
- Through Leicestershire's Hate Incident Monitoring Project on **0116 305 8263** or online at www.leics.gov.uk/repothate.

The LGBT Community Safety Forum is a space for honest debate and discussion on policing the LGBT community. It brings together representatives from Leicestershire Constabulary, Leicestershire Police Authority and the Crown Prosecution Service with members of the local LGBT community. If you are interested in joining the Community Safety Forum, contact the Leicestershire Constabulary Community Safety Bureau on 0116 248 4978 and ask to speak with the Hate Crime Officer.



National Organisations



Stonewall

Stonewall is the UK's largest campaigning and lobbying group on LGB issues.

0800 502 020 • www.stonewall.org.uk

FFLAG

Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (FFLAG) is a national voluntary organisation supporting the parents and families of LGB people.

0845 652 0311 • www.fflag.org.uk

Broken Rainbow

Broken Rainbow offers support to LGBT victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

0845 260 4460 • www.broken-rainbow.org.uk



UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group

The UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group (UKLGIG) provides advice on immigration and seeking asylum for LGB people.

020 7922 7811 • www.uklgig.org.uk

Bi Community News

Bi Community News is the hub of the UK's bisexual community.

www.bicommunitynews.co.uk

The Gender Trust

The Gender Trust is the UK's largest charity for people with gender identity issues.

0845 231 0505 • www.gendertrust.org.uk





Want to Know More?

Comprehensive information and links to a wide range of local and national organisations and groups can be found at www.llgbc.com.

A large print version of this document is available. This can be downloaded from www.llgbc.com or call **0116 254 7412** to request a copy.

This guide is produced by **Prism**, the LGBT Forum for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

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