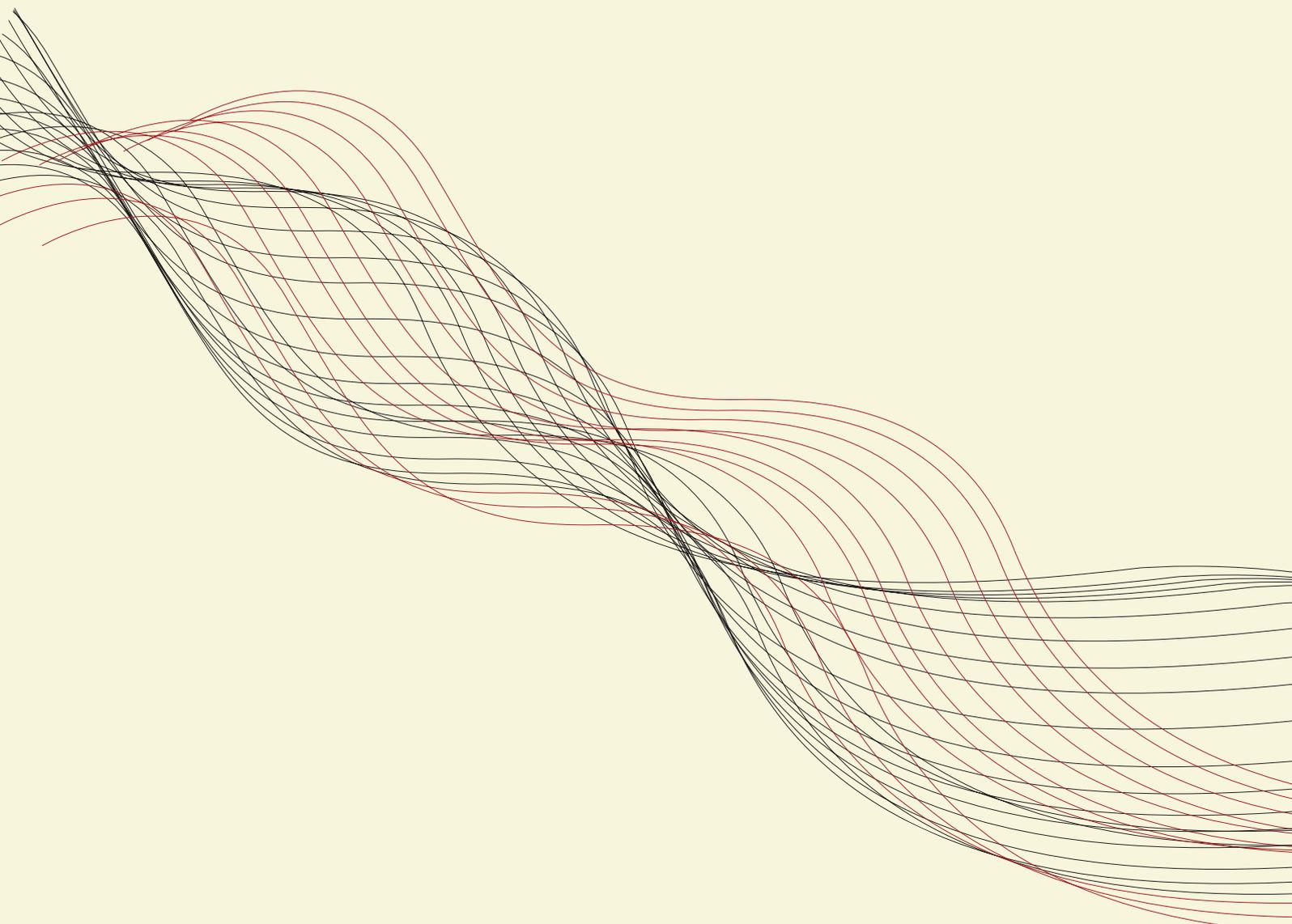


# sexuality – the new agenda

a guide for local authorities on engaging  
with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities

revised April 2007



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## Foreword

The first edition of "Sexuality – the new agenda" was written in 2003, as a sequel to "Supporting Inclusive Communities", published by the Employers' Organisation and the Local Government Association in 2001. It was produced in response to requests from local authorities to provide practical support and case study examples on how to engage with their lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

In 2007, the need for such advice is greater than ever. As the first edition of "Sexuality – the new agenda" was going to press, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 were about to come into force. This second edition is no less timely. As it was being produced, Regulations to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education and in the exercise of other public functions, were in the final stages of consideration.

The introduction of the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 will provide a fresh impetus for local authorities to review policy and practice in relation to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality. In common with other organisations, local authorities will now have a duty to prevent discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual service users. Local authorities however, are especially well placed to respond to this challenge because of their ability to involve and consult lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the community.

"Sexuality – the new agenda" emphasises the need for a corporate approach to promoting equality. Once seen as a fringe issue of little relevance to the core business of local authorities, sexuality has been brought centre stage by recent legislative developments. Lesbian, gay and bisexual equality is coming of age and can no longer be seen as an optional extra. Many successful initiatives have been undertaken by local authorities throughout England and Wales. There is growing evidence that lesbian, gay and bisexual equality is being successfully embedded in policy development, service delivery and community engagement.

Feedback from the first edition of "Sexuality – the new agenda" has confirmed that it has been an invaluable tool to local authorities. This second edition provides updated advice on legislative developments and a range of new case study examples. We hope it will help local authorities build on the good work that has already been done.

Jane Wren  
Head of Diversity  
DIALOG April 2007

[DIALOG Homepage](#)

## **Introduction**

This guide was originally produced by the Local Government Employers' Organisation (EO) and Local Government Association (LGA), in collaboration with Stonewall, UNISON and the Association of London Government (ALG). This second edition has been produced by the DIALOG Team at the Improvement and Development Agency.

### ***What is the aim of the guide?***

The guide aims to provide local authorities with information and advice on engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) communities. It is a sequel to *Supporting Inclusive Communities*, published by the LGA and the EO in 2001. The guide does not aim to deal with transsexual/transgender communities, for whom there are separate legal arrangements<sup>1</sup>. However, it is recognised that some local authorities have chosen to adopt policies that are inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans<sup>2</sup> (LGBT) communities and that some voluntary groups have adopted a similar approach. Some of the examples of local authority experiences therefore refer to such policies and groups.

### ***Who is the guide for?***

The target audience includes councillors, managers, strategic policy officers, employees and trade union representatives. It is particularly aimed at those who are involved in equalities, social inclusion and community engagement. The guide aims to be especially informative for local authorities that have not previously engaged with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

### ***What is in the guide?***

The guide is based on the experiences of local authorities in England and Wales<sup>3</sup>. It provides 'how to' guidance, documents existing good practice, explores new ideas and suggests useful resources.

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<sup>1</sup> Sex Discrimination (Gender Re-assignment) regulations 1999/Gender Recognition Act 2004

<sup>2</sup> Press for Change, the leading campaign organisation for transsexual and transgender people in the UK uses the all embracing term 'trans'

<sup>3</sup> In Scotland, the Scottish Executive has produced guidance for local authorities. See *Improving Policy and Practice for LGBT people: Guidance for Local Authorities* (Scottish Executive, 2006) and *Sexual Orientation Research Phase 3 – A Stock take of Local Authority Policy and Practice* (Scottish Executive, 2006)

## 1. Getting started

**This chapter sets out the broad legal and policy context and highlights the challenges that face local authorities in engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. It is aimed particularly at those authorities with little or no experience in this area. The experiences documented illustrate various ways of assessing needs and getting started within the workforce and in the community. The checklist for action provides examples of the steps authorities can take to ensure a planned and informed approach.**

### Context

Social inclusion and community engagement are at the heart of the modernising agenda for local authorities. Recognising lesbian, gay and bisexual people as equal citizens represents an exciting part of that agenda. Until recently, the absence of legislation incorporating the rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people and protecting them from discrimination has meant that responding to their needs in employment and service delivery has been sporadic. The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, the Civil Partnership Act 2004 and the growing recognition of same sex couples in law placed new requirements on local authorities. These developments have been consolidated by the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007, which prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, in education and in the exercise of public functions. Organisations that do not respond to these changes could leave themselves exposed to judicial review or other challenges.

This is a new era for local authorities, characterised by modernisation and reform, a shift to a citizen focused approach and a renewed impetus to challenge institutionalised discrimination. The wider context is one of new rights for citizens and new duties for public bodies, which place equality and diversity centre stage. Local authorities have a responsibility to engage with marginalised and hard to reach communities in relation to Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), Best Value and community strategies. The success of localism, the devolution of power to communities, the creation of new asset owning neighbourhood structures, the personalisation of services, the emphasis on greater choice and user empowerment - all rely on effective engagement. Against that new vision for localities, the need to ensure that such engagement is inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities has never been stronger.

The introduction of increasingly progressive national legislation and European directives is founded on the premise that all lesbian, gay and bisexual people should share the same fundamental human rights as everyone else. The new employment regulations are a product of that assertion. In this new era equalities are integral to the core business of councils as reflected in the new public duties to conduct equality impact assessments. Lesbian, gay and bisexual

people and communities should be equal partners in this new rights-based environment.

This work involves many challenges. There is still discrimination to confront and resistance to overcome. However, more and more local authorities are beginning to address these issues, through a variety of innovative measures. This guide aims to help local authorities to build effective relationships with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. It recognises the constraints under which authorities operate, but it also provides fresh impetus provided by legislation to start or improve work in this area. Research by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) prior to the publication of the first edition of this guide confirmed the need for local authorities to extend their equalities remit to sexual orientation.

*“Further work is needed to explore what kind of practical assistance councils – differentiated by type and demography – need to allow them to assess needs, integrate equality and diversity into mainstream service delivery, and to monitor and measure impact. Smaller councils, in particular, may need to work with others to access equality and diversity advice. Such practical assistance must address the whole range of equality and diversity issues, including ‘newer’ aspects such as age and sexual orientation.”*

**Recommendations to strengthen practice, Develop a more strategic approach and build best practice, Research Summary, Equality and Diversity in Local Government, ODPM, 2003**

## Challenges

### ***Lack of visibility of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities***

In many places, there are no obvious lesbian, gay and bisexual ‘communities’. This may be because in these areas lesbian, gay and bisexual people are geographically dispersed and do not have contact with others through social networks or commercial venues. However, it may also be that because of social or personal pressures they are not able to openly express their sexuality or fear hostility if they do. While some people may be content with this, for others it can be difficult and isolating.

*“One of the biggest challenges is that here there is no LGBT ‘community’ as such, but many different ‘communities’ spread out over a large area. Many LGBT people in the South West live in intense isolation, and are very often married and not ‘out’. Therefore, it’s easy for them to become invisible.”*

**Michael Halls, Intercom Trust LGBT Support Forum, Exeter**

*“Geographic communities are easily identified but communities based for example, on religion, race, disability and sexuality are less easy to define. Communities should have the right to define themselves. A bottom-up approach to promoting social inclusion means that we must help community based groups and support agencies to develop means by which communities can identify their own needs and be involved in the process of making sure they are met.”*

**Promoting Equality and Inclusion consultation document, Manchester City Council**

*“A ‘community of interest’ is defined as a group of people connected by a common interest or characteristic rather than a geographical location. There exists in Wales just such a community, numbering as many as 200,000 and scattered all over Wales for whom properly funded service provision is virtually non-existent in many areas. That significant minority is made up of Wales’ lesbian, gay and bisexual [LGB] people who form up to 7% of the population and suffer daily prejudice, isolation and harassment through no fault of their own.”*

**Count us in! A Stonewall Cymru Assessment Report 2004<sup>4</sup>**

The most visible members of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities may be those who are involved in political campaigns and community organisations. However, many lesbian, gay and bisexual people do prefer not to engage in such activities, whilst others are not able to.

The word ‘communities’ can also be misleading. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not a homogenous group and many may feel uncomfortable with the term. Even in towns and cities with gay ‘villages’ or ‘scenes’, such places do not attract everyone. Research in Brighton and Hove<sup>5</sup> found that almost 33% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people rarely or never access the ‘scene’.

It is easy to make assumptions about lesbian, gay and bisexual people’s lifestyles, wealth and priorities. In reality, far from the clichéd image of the young, white, well off and childless gay man, there is an entire spectrum of lesbian, gay and bisexual identities and experiences.

In fact many lesbian, gay and bisexual people remain ‘minorities within a minority’ and, as such, invisible and marginalised. These can include those who are disabled, parents, young, old, poor, asylum seekers, or from black and ethnic minority communities. These people may experience multiple discrimination, including from within their own communities.

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<sup>4</sup> Count Us In, Stonewall Cymru, 2004

<sup>5</sup> Count Me In, The Associates, 2001

For example, research<sup>6</sup> shows that many lesbian, gay and bisexual Muslims feel torn between their religion and their sexuality and the sense that the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities fail to provide them with a safe space for exploring their identity. Many of these 'hidden' lesbian, gay and bisexual people may have the greatest needs, in terms of support and services. They may also be in a position to make invaluable input into the development of effective policies and strategies.

### ***Cultural and political inertia***

In recent years there has been an improvement in attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people and a growing acknowledgement of their needs by public service providers. However, many feel that lesbian, gay and bisexual issues still remain the 'poor relation' of other equalities issues, such as gender and race. This situation was compounded by the existence of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, which was repealed in September 2003.

Within local authorities, lesbian, gay and bisexual equality risks being sidelined because it is seen as unrelated to local political priorities and an optional extra in the face of more 'deprived' communities. This leads to a vicious circle in which lack of understanding, combined with homophobia, exacerbates the problems faced by lesbian, gay and bisexual people by denying them equal access to public services. Yet the need to consult and include lesbian, gay and bisexual communities is inextricably linked to the increasing reliance on community engagement by all public sector bodies.

### ***External hostility and challenge***

Despite an increasingly supportive environment, lesbian, gay and bisexual issues still seem to have the potential to evoke a high level of hostility. Fear of negative headlines in the local press can sometimes freeze a local authority into inaction. Lesbian, gay and bisexual issues can become highly political, especially at times of crisis or political tension.

In practice, anxiety about a possible negative response is often far worse than the reality. Although a well planned approach is prudent, authorities should not be immobilised by fears of a backlash, either within their own institutions or in the community. Authorities that fail to deliver required services to all sections of the community will fail to meet the challenges of comprehensive community engagement.

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<sup>6</sup> A Minority Within A Minority: British Non-Heterosexual Muslims, Andrew Yip, 2003

## Experiences

### *Assessing the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities*

In 2000, **Brighton and Hove City Council**, in partnership with **East Sussex Health Authority, Brighton and Hove Primary Care Trust** and **Regeneration Partnership**, funded Count Me In, an assessment of the local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. The project involved an extensive questionnaire that was distributed via lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender media, groups and venues and filled in by 1,145 respondents. The results informed the development of a Community Strategy for 2001-2006 which focuses on nine 'portfolios' of action, namely: health; safety; community; housing; life long learning; culture; economic development; equity; and family. In turn, this was the catalyst for the development of Spectrum, an LGBT community forum for Brighton and Hove.

In 2002, **Leicester LGB Centre** was awarded funding as part of the Equality and Diversity Group 'Excluded Groups Capacity Building Programme' of the Leicester Partnership Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The centre will carry out a project that aims to create a partnership between lesbian, gay and bisexual people, statutory, voluntary and private organisations and the people of Leicester. Within a multi-cultural context, particular emphasis will be placed on the needs of marginalised members of the lesbian, gay and bisexual community. The project will involve a survey of lesbian, gay and bisexual people's experiences of living and using services in Leicester. The results will assist the development of a community strategy by identifying related priorities for statutory and voluntary providers. A mapping exercise of statutory organisations and voluntary groups offering lesbian, gay and bisexual services will also be conducted, with the aim of persuading key agencies to implement the Community Strategy. In addition, the project intends to establish community projects targeting people in the most deprived wards in the city.

In 2003, **Sheffield City Council's** Corporate Equality Coordinating Group requested that the LGBT Officer Group carry out an audit of initiatives around LGBT issues to set a baseline for future work on employment and service delivery. The intention of the Audit was to gather as much information as possible to map LGBT work throughout the authority and to share and learn from existing good practice. The results of the audit showed a substantial amount of work on LGBT issues but also revealed that provision for LGBT service users and employees is not consistent across the authority. It was also clear that the Council is poor at celebrating and learning from good practice in this field.

Following the report of the audit findings, CECG agreed that the LGBT Officer Group would work to enable the Council to:

- Produce guidance for managers on dealing with issues around discrimination against LGBT employees
- Design, deliver and evaluate LGBT awareness training for members/managers and staff in line with other equality training
- Encourage and develop a safe and positive work environment to ensure that LGBT staff feel valued
- Seek to improve the monitoring of LGBT complaints of harassment and discrimination in employment and service delivery
- Move towards a profile of the workforce which reflects the population as a whole
- Increase the numbers of LGBT staff responding to the employee survey and feeling positive about the Council as an employer
- Audit service delivery and HR activity and measure impact
- Support the work of Sheffield LGBT Multi-Agency Partnership and the development of a consultation network in Sheffield
- Promote registration of same sex partnerships in Sheffield

In 2004 **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council** published research into the needs of LGBT people living, working or visiting Rotherham. The research was conducted over a three month period from October to December 2003. The study involved a variety of exercises including a review of other research involving LGBT people conducted in the Borough, identifying LGBT services currently on offer, summary of activities in other Local Authorities, questionnaire survey with LGBT people and a focus group. The work was commissioned by Rotherham MBC and steered by a sub-group from the Rotherham LGBT Inter-Agency Group.

In 2005 the **London Borough of Lambeth** commissioned Sigma Research to investigate the social care needs and service use of Lambeth LGBT residents as well as their experiences of stigma, discrimination and victimisation. The research also aimed to assess the Borough's equality policy and practices in relation to those needs; investigate mechanisms for LGBT community consultation and examine the experiences of the Council's LGBT workforce.

### ***Working through a local forum***

**Devon County Council** has built its relationship with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities largely via collaborating with the Intercom Trust, an LGBT support forum based in Exeter. The two organisations have liaised on a number of different initiatives, including developing an action group against homophobic bullying in schools and introducing civil ceremonies for same sex couples. Intercom is a member of the authority's Equalities Reference Group – a group of voluntary sector organisations working with minority communities that both perform a scrutiny role and take policies forward. It is paid a fee for participating

in this group and signs a service level agreement that outlines what both it and the authority will provide. By working with Intercom, the council knows that it can link with groups and individuals, including via the forum's e-mail list. This is particularly vital for working in a largely rural area, where many people are not 'out' and where the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities are both geographically and socially disparate.

### ***Using the workforce as a starting point***

In an anonymous survey of 23,000 employees, **Nottinghamshire County Council** included optional questions about sexual orientation. This helped the authority to start to build a picture of the make-up of both its own staff and the broader lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

For **Staffordshire County Council**, setting up an LGBT employees group provided a first step to identifying and building relations with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in the area. Although the group is initially focusing on providing support to its members, it is intended that, over time, it will function as a 'knowledge base' to provide strategic input into, for example, the council's corporate plans and provision of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-related services.

### ***Raising public awareness about homophobia***

In 2003, **Croydon Council** launched a publicity campaign to raise awareness about homophobia. This involved a press release to local and national press, combined with information being widely disseminated using poster, leaflets and an LGBT directory. It also involved the signing of an LGBT joint policy statement and the launch of an anti-homophobia website that among other features enables people to record incidents of hate crime. To launch the campaign, the Mayor of Croydon put the final poster, calling on local people to speak out against homophobia, onto the side of one of the borough's trams.

As part of its commitment to countering discrimination and harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-people who live, work and/or socialise within the borough, the council has also developed a website ([www.croydonaha.co.uk](http://www.croydonaha.co.uk)). The site aims to help anyone experiencing abuse or violence on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity and provides an opportunity to report incidents to the police either formally or in confidence. The site also provides links to local and national LGBT groups that can provide support or information to people experiencing homophobia.

## ***Drawing on the experience of other local authorities***

In 2004 **Barking and Dagenham Council's** Social Cohesion Sub-Group received a report following a study visit to Brighton and Hove Council by members of the Barking & Dagenham LGBT Forum & Network. The visit was jointly funded by the Council, Barking & Dagenham Police and the Community Empowerment Network. The visit enabled the delegation to assess, first hand, the infrastructure and services provided in another major local authority, with a large LGBT community and a reputation for providing high quality services to that community. It also provided a background against which the Forum could clarify the service needs and aspirations of the of the LGBT community in Barking & Dagenham.

### **Checklist for action**

#### ***Do your homework before you start***

**Establish a baseline against which to measure progress.** Equality proof all policies and practices to test their impact on lesbian, gay and bisexual equality. Include questions on sexuality in workforce attitude surveys and service user satisfaction surveys (for further guidance see section six).

**Build your knowledge about the national context.** Subscribe to Stonewall's e-bulletin, a free newsletter that provides updates about relevant legislation, policy development and campaigns. Check briefings on lesbian, gay and bisexual equality produced by other organisations including government departments, service providers, campaign groups and trade unions.

**Learn about your local lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.** Use existing research, talk to lesbian, gay and bisexual switchboards in neighbouring districts and contact the Consortium of LGB Voluntary and Community Organisations to find out if there are groups in your area.

**Assess what might work for your authority.** Learn from comparable councils about their experiences of working with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities and draw on your own experiences of engaging with other marginalised or hard to reach groups (such as disabled people).

**Develop a peer support relationship.** Work closely with another authority that has experience of dealing with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities, particularly an adjacent authority if lesbian, gay and bisexual people work or socialise there.

## ***Build a relationship of trust with lesbian, gay and bisexual people and their communities***

**Advertise the fact that you want to build relations.** Ensure that all relevant groups or businesses in the area know about your authority's interest and commitment. Make sure your partners on the local strategic partnership are informed. You might also sponsor a local pride event and have a presence there, get articles in the local lesbian, gay and bisexual and mainstream media and put adverts on lesbian, gay and bisexual websites.

**Recognise that there may be scepticism.** There may be those who have experienced discrimination in the past and are sceptical about collaboration; those who are suffering from 'consultation fatigue' and are unconvinced that their input will be taken seriously or those who are unaware that authorities are now obliged because of the CPA process and community strategies to consult with marginalised groups.

**Be open and responsive.** Have clear terms of reference for meetings and consultations and be open about what lesbian, gay and bisexual people could get out of working with you. Following consultation exercises, explain to participants what you intend to do and what you are unable to do and why.

**Be honest about the benefits of involvement.** Do not make false promises to lesbian, gay and bisexual communities about funding or influence on decision-making that cannot be fulfilled.

**Respect confidentiality and provide a safe environment.** Hold meetings on a first-names basis, so that people do not have to reveal their full identities. Provide opportunities for anonymous communication, such as ads on local radio or a discussion forum on the council's website.

**Be flexible about logistics.** Hold meetings in the evening (as many LGB groups are run by volunteers who work during the day) and in friendly locations, such as a community centre or a room at an appropriate gay venue.

**Work through existing infrastructure.** Make the nearest LGB forum or switchboard your first port of call. Attend the meetings of local LGB groups (but seek permission beforehand and let participants know who you are and why you're there).

**Provide 'in roads'.** Produce guidelines or organise training sessions about how your authority functions and how decision making works. Invite lesbian, gay and bisexual representatives to sit on relevant bodies, such as equalities reference groups, service specific focus groups or the local strategic partnership.

*"The machinations of the City Council seem very complicated and knowing the appropriate person / department to contact is very difficult".*

**Comment by an LGBT community member in Birmingham**

**Build joint ownership.** Ask a representative of the local LGB forum (if one exists) to chair consultation meetings and do not use divisive terms such as 'us' and 'we' unless all parties have agreed to do so.

**Seek active partnership.** Invite those with relevant professional experience to facilitate sexuality awareness training for staff, especially frontline staff. This may be on a voluntary or paid basis.

**Avoid being victim focused.** Consult lesbian, gay and bisexual people on positive issues, such as extending service provision, as well as negative ones, such as hate crime.

**Use appropriate language.** At the outset of consultation meetings, ask lesbian, gay and bisexual people how they would like to be addressed. Avoid using inaccurate or offensive terminology.

**Don't make stereotypical assumptions.** Lesbian, gay and bisexual people will have as much to contribute to in relation to regeneration for example, as they do on sexual health or homophobic crime.

**Recognise the challenge of 'representatives'.** Ask the lesbian, gay and bisexual people that you are working with to clarify whether they are sharing personal opinions or whether they can consult with a wider constituency. Use high profile and dynamic individuals both as a resource in their own right and as gate-keepers to wider lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

### ***Get your authority's own house in order***

**Provide training.** Develop expertise on training related to lesbian, gay and bisexual issues. Provide bespoke sexuality training for those who will act as liaison points (e.g. equalities officers) and spokespeople (e.g. senior managers). Incorporate sexuality awareness into training for all staff e.g. induction, recruitment and selection, harassment and customer care training.

**Have your key arguments well grounded and rehearsed.** Promote lesbian, gay and bisexual equality as a social issue rather than just a personal one. Emphasise that improving relations with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities will help the council to be an 'employer of choice' for qualified and talented people and fulfil its obligations to provide services to all sections of the community.

**Build cross party support.** Ensure sustainability by seeking the support of opposition groups so that initiatives are developed with political consensus. Try to ensure continuity so that should there be a change of administration, the

issue does not become a political 'football' with damaging consequences for equalities work.

**Foster a supportive environment for staff.** Set up or support an LGB employees group or work through trade union groups. Lesbian, gay and bisexual employees can act as a useful bridge to local residents, though this should not be automatically expected of them.

**Have clear roles and lines of communication.** Identify a contact person whose name can be given to LGB groups. Ensure that they are aware, competent and accessible.

**Use all available forms of communication.** Address fears that may be present by using council newsletters, websites and seminars to encourage discussions about lesbian, gay and bisexual issues. Ensure you include and invite any private companies and voluntary agencies that run your outsourced services.

**Ensure buy-in and support from the top.** Ask the executive to endorse policy statements. Consider appointing a 'champion' from the executive/cabinet. Where specific communication or consultation initiatives are being launched, arrange for the leader or the chief executive to issue a press release. Provide briefings to councillors, and their political groups.

**Work in partnership with trade unions.** Consult and involve trade unions and their lesbian and gay groups in drafting, introducing and promoting new policies and practices. The local government trade unions have built up considerable expertise in this area of equality over many years.

## 2. Corporate planning

**This chapter emphasises the importance of a corporate approach to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality. It examines the use of 'corporate levers' including the Equality Standard, Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Best Value. It examines the legislative requirements and the business case. The experiences documented illustrate various ways of mainstreaming policy development and using 'corporate levers' in practice. The checklist for action provides examples of the steps authorities can take to mainstream commitment and ensure a corporate approach.**

### **Making a corporate commitment**

Corporate leadership is vital to ensure that work on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues is 'mainstreamed' into everything the authority does as an employer and service provider. Lesbian, gay and bisexual issues are 'cross-cutting' issues and inclusion in a corporate framework can strengthen and legitimise the authority's commitment to addressing those issues. But mainstreaming should avoid the trap of bland generalisations. Without a specific focus, there is a danger that the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people will become subsumed under broader categories.

Whilst some of the ways in which lesbian, gay and bisexual people encounter discrimination are shared with other groups, others are not. A corporate equalities framework must acknowledge both 'sameness' and 'difference'. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not a homogenous group: they may also experience discrimination as women, black and ethnic minority people, disabled people, older or younger people or because they are members of religious communities. A corporate framework enables multiple disadvantages to be addressed. It can also ensure that the problem of 'visibility' for lesbian, gay and bisexual people is addressed through the authority's commitment.

The diversity agenda is not about treating everybody the same way, but about:

- recognising and valuing difference; and
- recognising and accounting for inequality and disadvantage

### **Directions in Diversity, Audit Commission, 2002**

There is no doubt that local authority policy and practice on lesbian, gay and bisexual equality has improved in recent years. There is now a clear need to consolidate and build upon the work that has already been done to ensure that diversity in relation to sexual orientation is firmly embedded in policy development, service delivery and community engagement. Ensuring that this happens is a corporate responsibility which requires long term vision. Of course,

this will require engagement and consultation with lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and residents. But it can not be left to them to take the initiative. There is now a clear legal framework which places a duty on local authorities to act at a corporate level.

## **Working with partners**

Partnership working has been at the heart of the modernisation of local government both as a tool of community engagement and as a method of service delivery. The establishment of local strategic partnerships and the duty to develop community strategies offer new opportunities to bring community organisations into corporate planning processes, including those in lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. Partnership with trade unions also offers the opportunity to harness experience and expertise.

## **Corporate levers**

The modernisation agenda offers a variety of 'corporate levers' for change that can be used to mainstream the authority's commitment to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality. Amongst these are the Equality Standard, the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) framework and Best Value.

The **Equality Standard for local government** in England is a mechanism through which local authorities can mainstream equalities in employment and service delivery<sup>7</sup>. It has five levels:

- Commitment;
- Assessment;
- Target setting;
- Monitoring;
- Reviewing outcomes.

Its aim is to provide a framework for a comprehensive and systematic approach to equalities. The original standard covered race, gender and disability and is in the process of being extended to incorporate sexual orientation. It is widely used in local government, although some authorities have developed local models. A number of authorities have already extended the standard to include sexuality.

The Audit Commission has developed tailored frameworks for **Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)** single tier councils, county councils and district councils in England. In 2005 following widespread consultation the Commission reviewed the CPA framework for single tier councils and county councils. The new framework included a greater emphasis on diversity leadership. However, when reviewing assessments in 2005/06, the Commission

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<sup>7</sup> The Equality Standard, The Improvement and Development Agency

acknowledged that the needs of LGBT communities had not featured prominently.

Addressing the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities has also not featured prominently in our assessments to date. Where this was reported, councils had explicit ambitions to deliver equal opportunities for these communities and had sought to improve engagement through establishing consultative forums. But in others there was no regular dialogue between the council and lesbian and gay residents and limited information, for example, of gay or lesbian hate crime, against which to measure progress.

### **Learning from the CPA in 2005/06 Findings from assessments**

The duty of **Best Value** was introduced in the Local Government Act 1999. Best Value provides a means by which local authorities can continually improve services and ensure that they are responsive to the needs of all citizens. The Best Value process has implications for both community engagement and service delivery, which will be addressed in further sections of this guide. In order to meet Best Value requirements, each local authority was until recently required to conduct corporate reviews of the performance of all its services and activities every five years. This requirement has been removed, but authorities are still required to conduct reviews and are asked to prioritise the services to be reviewed. Reviews include benchmarking against national indicators and the achievements of other authorities, as well as internal own corporate objectives and standards<sup>8</sup>. The Equality Standard is a national performance indicator for all authorities - BVPI 2(a).

### **Legislative requirements**

The European Union Framework Directive 2000/78/EC establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and vocational training. The UK has enacted the Directive by means of the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003<sup>9</sup>, which came into force in December 2003. The Employers' Organisation produced a full and comprehensive guide to the successful implementation of the Regulations which is available from the DIALOG team now part of the Improvement and Development Agency. The Regulations and other legislative developments make it necessary for all local authorities to develop and implement policies concerning equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees. There is a legal obligation on employers not to discriminate: the possibility of legal challenge provides an added impetus to ensure that paper policies are implemented in practice. Because of the interface between local authority staff and service users, the Regulations made it necessary to consider the implications for lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the

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<sup>8</sup> No Quality Without Equality, Employers' Organisation, 2001

<sup>9</sup> Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations, ODPM, 2003

community. A diverse workforce is better equipped to deliver services to diverse communities. Now the introduction of the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 will make doing so a statutory duty.

The Equality Act 2006 also established the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. The Commission will replace the existing three equality commissions dealing with gender, race and disability and will cover six strands of equality including sexual orientation. Commissioners have been appointed and it is to start work in October 2007.

## **Taking responsibility**

**Executive members** The cabinet model of local government provides for a corporate and strategic approach to the delivery of local services. In addition to the community role which they share with all councillors, executive councillors (cabinet members), in particular the leader or elected mayor, have a central role to play in providing leadership and determining and monitoring corporate policies and strategies. The size and structure of executives varies. But it is likely that one executive member will have responsibility for championing equalities matters, perhaps under the portfolio of 'equality and diversity' or 'equalities and social inclusion'. Such members have a particular responsibility for leading on the development and implementation of equality policies for lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Those with other portfolios, whether they are service based (e.g. 'housing' or 'social services') or cross-cutting (e.g. Best Value), also have a responsibility to ensure that equalities issues including lesbian, gay and bisexual issues are integrated into corporate policy and service delivery strategies.

**Non-executive members** Non-executive members have a range of responsibilities in relation to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality. Through their scrutiny role they can hold the executive to account in relation to corporate policies and strategies. They can also enhance their role as community representatives by taking steps to engage with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. In the 'Local: Vision' debate originally started by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and now continued by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the role of ward councillor is seen as pivotal in promoting inclusion and community cohesion. That remit extends no less to the LGB community than it does to other communities.

**Employees** All employees are responsible for implementing policies on a day to day basis. The development and implementation of lesbian, gay and bisexual equality policies has often been marginalised and depended on the goodwill of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees even where it has not been part of their formal roles or where it has been against the prevailing organisational culture. Corporate implementation requires a systematic approach with named officers and properly allocated roles and responsibilities at every level, including the chief executive and senior managers. How this is done will depend on the size and type of authority, but a strong corporate culture will ensure that commitment is mainstreamed into line management and departmental structures. Training and

support should be provided for all employees with systems in place to ensure that the insights of employees and councillors who have experienced discrimination can be shared to benefit the whole organisation. Employees who cannot work with all sections of the community cannot properly fulfil their role as public servants.

**Trade unions and other employee representatives** Trade union and other employee representatives have an important role to play in corporate policy formulation and implementation. Informed representatives can bring the experience of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and service users into the process, providing insight into the way discrimination operates and the measures needed to challenge it. A number of unions have developed policies to negotiate changes in discriminatory working practices and have led the campaign for lesbian, gay and bisexual equality over many years. Local authorities that work closely with unions and employee representatives are more likely to be successful in implementing policies and in challenging homophobia in the workforce.

## **Cultural and organisational change**

Successful policy implementation on lesbian, gay and bisexual equality involves challenging assumptions and stereotypes and accepting difference. It requires more than tolerance and tinkering. Local authorities can play a vital role in encouraging a culture of openness about sexuality by ensuring that lesbian, gay and bisexual people have a safe and supportive environment to work in. Such a culture can be extended to service delivery by ensuring that systems do not make assumptions about the sexuality of users, though of course, maintaining confidentiality is paramount.

Particular care should be taken to ensure that cultural and organisational change reaches every part of the organisation. Though there may be no immediately obvious implications for lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the provision of a particular service, this does not mean that the potential for discrimination or prejudice should not be considered. In practice there will usually be some service provision implications and there will always be employment implications. For example, residents' sexuality does not seem obviously related to the delivery of refuse collection and street cleaning services, but the provision of these services to lesbian, gay and bisexual business establishments might well be. And the sexuality of a resident applying for planning permission is unlikely to be materially relevant to the application, but if the planning officer to whom it is allocated is homophobic and this goes unchallenged, discrimination may result.

## **The business case**

Research demonstrates that there is a strong link between diversity policies and improved performance<sup>10</sup>. There is a strong business case for lesbian, gay and

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<sup>10</sup> The Business of Diversity, Schneider Ross, 2002

bisexual equality. By adopting corporate lesbian, gay and bisexual equalities policies, local authorities can make themselves more attractive to lesbian, gay and bisexual job seekers, thus widening the pool of potential recruits. Discrimination in the workplace is inefficient because it damages the performance of individual employees and creates tensions, which detract from delivering effective services. This is even more important in the context of the changing statutory framework: a failure to adhere to legislative requirements can result in wasting resources on dealing with discrimination claims. By taking a positive and proactive approach to the employment of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff, local authorities can also improve service delivery to lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

*There is an essential link between workforce diversity and equal service delivery. A representative workforce will understand the needs of diverse customers and provide more credibility, and improve public confidence in the service.*

**Key interviewee, Directions in Diversity, Audit Commission, 2002**

## **Developing a media strategy**

Previous experience of local authorities taking proactive steps to tackle discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual people demonstrates that a hostile local media can play havoc with policy implementation and cause policy attrition and rapid retreat. This is particularly so where children are involved, for example in education and social services, where entrenched and deeply offensive stereotyping can fester unchallenged if nurtured by a homophobic press.

Developing a long term corporate media strategy to accompany policy development and implementation is therefore vital. Such a strategy should involve proactive news management. This means being positive and open about policy initiatives, whilst at the same time being well prepared to deal with adverse coverage. A sympathetic media cannot be relied upon, but avoiding the problem and reacting hastily after the event can be very damaging, not least to LGB employees and citizens.

Local authorities should avoid over sensitivity about lesbian, gay and bisexual equality initiatives. This compounds invisibility and suggests to a potentially hostile media that the authority has something to hide. Local newspapers and media outlets have lesbian, gay and bisexual readers too. It should be in their interests not to discriminate or sensationalise. Ultimately authorities abdicate their public duties where they allow the media to dictate or derail legitimate equality agendas.

## Experiences

### *Promoting an integrated and comprehensive equalities policy*

**Southampton City Council's** Equal Opportunities Policy includes sexual orientation and a commitment to a programme of action for lesbians and gay men. The policy focuses on the council's role as a supplier and organiser of services, a partner and enabler, an influencer and representative and an employer.

**St Helens Council** has a comprehensive equality policy that works towards achieving the implementation of the core value of equality agreed by the council in its corporate plan. The policy includes a detailed statement on sexuality equality. The statement recognises that the council's procedures and practices should not assume that everyone is or should be heterosexual, that lesbians, gay men and bisexuals experience discrimination, that everyone has the right to define their own sexual identity and that, lesbian, gay and bisexual communities have different needs. It includes a number of corporate commitments to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in relation to policy development, employment and service delivery.

**Newcastle City Council's** Equality Policy includes a specific section on lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people covering measures to meet their needs, a commitment to work with community groups and recognition that they may face other forms of discrimination and disadvantage.

**Cumbria County Council** is developing a comprehensive equality and diversity policy and toolkit that includes a policy on equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The draft policy acknowledges relevant statutory duties such as the Human Rights Act 1998 and commits the council to ensuring that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are given equal and unprejudiced treatment in policies and procedures, services and benefits, decision making, community safety, learning and development, a safe working environment and a range of other areas.

**Newport City Council's** Equal Opportunities Policy recognises that heterosexism is contrary to the Human Rights Act 1998 and commits the council to create a positive working environment for lesbian and gay employees and training employees to ensure that lesbians and gay men in the city are not discriminated against in service provision.

**Denbighshire County Council** has an integrated equalities policy that includes a policy statement for lesbian, gay and bisexual people covering a safe working environment, conditions of service, training and the use of positive images and language.

In February 2002, **Devon County Council** approved a Policy on Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans People. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the policy, which will be monitored at regular intervals and reviewed annually with reports to the Corporate Management Board, Elected Members and UNISON. The policy outlines the legislative context to the Council's work, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999. It then states that, in order to achieve its objective of carrying out its duties in a way that gives LGBT people equal and unprejudiced treatment, the Council will implement a series of commitments.

*"We shall use all methods to ensure that all:*

- *Staff experience fairness and equity of treatment in the workplace.*
- *Customers receive fair and equal access to Council services.*
- *Staff and customers are treated with dignity and respect."*

*"It is the Council's policy that everyone should be treated fairly and without discrimination in relation to their human rights regardless of sex, race, colour, age, disability, sexuality, language, HIV status, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status."*

*"The Council will not tolerate processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination, including harassment, victimisation and bullying through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping. We will demonstrate this commitment from top management and through the Council."*

### **Islington Council Dignity for All: Promoting Equality and Valuing Diversity**

#### ***Corporate policy and planning for lesbian, gay and bisexual equality***

In Building Awareness and Understanding for Organisational Change, a report developed by the Gender Equality Team of its Equalities Division, **Birmingham City Council** aims to both clarify the issues affecting the LGBT community, in order to achieve an organisational shift in understanding, and provide the

rationale for a Corporate LGBT Strategy. The report is framed around four strands: leadership and commitment; community development; service delivery and customer care; and employment and training. It outlines how the LGBT Strategy will be developed by a Corporate Strategy Working Group to ensure that the relevant issues are addressed by the authority and the outcomes are monitored and evaluated in line with the requirements of the Equality Standard.

**Hampshire County Council's** Corporate Equalities Action Plan 2002-2005 included specific objectives concerning the development of a policy framework on discrimination and improved communication with lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to improve the working environment.

**Harlow District Council's** Corporate Social Inclusion Strategy sets out how the council will benchmark its policies, practices and performance in all matters relating to social inclusion. The strategy outlines the implementation of a framework based on a model developed by the Local Authority Social Exclusion Network (LASE)<sup>11</sup> whereby the corporate agency is benchmarked against nine key links, one of which is equalities, which in turn includes lesbians and gay men.

**South Gloucestershire County Council's** Equalities Action Plan includes specific objectives relating to sexuality. The Leadership and Commitment section includes an objective 'to tackle and challenge discrimination on the basis of sexuality' by using commissioned research to review policy and practice in the light of lesbian, gay and bisexual forum members' experiences. The Consultation and Community Development and Scrutiny section includes a series of objectives to be pursued in conjunction with the forum: 'to further develop mechanisms for consulting the LGB community'; 'to establish a minimum standard of engagement between lesbian, gay and bisexual people and the council'; 'to enable LGB people to access appropriate advice and services'; 'to recognise and support the needs of LGB people in South Gloucestershire' and 'to make information more accessible to LGB people via IT routes'.

As part of a comprehensive process of consultation which contributed to the development of its Equalities and Diversity Plan for 2005-2008, **Barking and Dagenham Council** drew upon a survey of local LGBT people conducted in 2002/03. The survey report "Breaking the Silence" made a wide ranging series of recommendations spanning various service areas.

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<sup>11</sup> How Local Authorities Can Make a Difference: Benchmarking Best Practice, Geddes and Newman for the LASE network, Report no 10, 2002

## ***Having a Corporate Equalities Working Group and equalities 'champions'***

**Bristol City Council's** work with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities is supported by the authority's Corporate Equalities Working Group. This involves representatives of departments and employees groups and meets on a monthly basis. It is used to disseminate information about equalities, raise awareness about key issues and roll-out draft policies. These representatives progress the work in their own departments. In turn, individual departments develop equalities action plans that outline how they will progress the corporate and departmental equalities objectives. These help to mainstream equalities by, as much as possible, embedding the issues in departmental activities. To complement the Group, the council also has a system of equalities 'champions' - whereby each chief officer is given an equalities brief. For example, the director of environment, transport and leisure is responsible for taking lesbian, gay and bisexual issues forward to the chief officers' group.

In addition to including an equalities portfolio within the executive **Manchester City Council** has two named non-executive councillors with responsibility for championing lesbian and gay issues.

## ***Using corporate levers – Best Value***

**Manchester City Council** uses Best Value and the 'four Cs' (challenge, compare, consult and compete) as the foundation for its equalities work. Its Best Value team includes officers whose specific remit is to work with lesbians and gay men. With political support coming from the top leadership down, lesbian, gay and bisexual issues are seen as integral to the authority's everyday work and part of its corporate shift towards a customer-focused approach.

**Waltham Forest Council's** policy on equal opportunity in service delivery states that:

*"in order to demonstrate Best Value, Directorates must be able to provide evidence that the needs of all communities are being addressed. It is also necessary to show improvements in equality of opportunity through increased involvement of local communities, the services they are receiving and an increase in local satisfaction. This can only be achieved by services auditing existing practice, and consideration of equality issues throughout service planning and fundamental performance reviews utilising the Corporate Equality Standard and Toolkit. This must also be achieved by ensuring equality objectives, targets, performance indicators and key actions to deliver the objectives are used as an*

*essential mechanism of managerial accountability in a culture of positive action and performance management”.*

### ***Using corporate levers– Equality Standard***

**Nottinghamshire County Council, Bristol City Council, Devon County Council, Barnet Council and Tower Hamlets Council** are among those local authorities that have expanded the Equality Standard to incorporate issues relating to sexual orientation. Devon County Council invited local voluntary organisations to do an audit of the authority in relation to the Equality Standard.

### ***Using corporate levers – Scrutiny***

**Bristol City Council** has co-opted a wide range of community representatives on to its Sustainable Development and Social Justice Commission, including representatives of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Forum.

A key aspect of **Kirklees Metropolitan Council’s** equalities structure that has worked successfully is direct access for the equalities partnership and four equalities networks including one for lesbian, gay and bisexual people to the council’s overview and scrutiny process.

As part of its Overview and Scrutiny function, **Lewisham Council** has a Social Inclusion Select Committee which looks at equalities and discrimination issues, equality of opportunity, participation of disadvantaged and under-represented sections of the community in the democratic process, and consultation and involvement. The committee receives reports from lead equalities members, including the lead member for lesbian and gay issues.

### ***Developing a media strategy***

During the 2003 Council Elections, attention was drawn to the fact that **Devon County Council** was offering civil ceremonies for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans couples. Despite some negative press coverage about ‘gay weddings’, the incident actually turned to the authority’s advantage. This was because it gave it an opportunity to be proactive and correct misinformation by putting things in the context of a corporate equalities policy that supports a broad range of marginalised communities, including lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

The public relations department of **Nottinghamshire County Council** holds regular meetings with the local media to which they sometimes invite their equalities colleagues. Through these sessions, the authority has built more positive relations with journalists and increased their understanding about controversial issues, including those relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities. Although a very gradual process, the media has, over time, become more understanding and less inclined to publish 'sensationalist' stories.

At **Leicester City Council**, the Leicester Mercury has participated in the Local Strategic Partnership and the council has had positive reporting around community cohesion issues.

### *Promoting the business case*

In a statement of support for the City's lesbian and gay village, **Manchester City Council** acknowledges that the role of the area is not just as an essential social space, but "a unique and vibrant part of the city centre, attracting visitors, spending power and jobs." It also recognises how the council's visible and supportive profile in relation to the village sends a powerful message against homophobia. In addition, the statement includes information about the varied ways in which the council has supported the village, such as offering grants to businesses to make their premises accessible for disabled people.

In 2003 **Liverpool City Council** engaged in an information gathering exercise on the influence of the 'pink pound' in tourism and how to encourage awareness of lesbian and gay lifestyles within the authority.

## **Checklist for action**

### *Mainstream your commitment*

**Integrate your commitment.** Incorporate lesbian, gay and bisexual equality into equality action plans, communication strategies, service plans, Best Value reviews and the work of local strategic partnerships and crime reduction partnerships.

**Disperse responsibility for associated work.** Ensure that responsibility for lesbian, gay and bisexual equalities does not lie with a few committed individuals.

**Develop 'core competencies'.** Ensure training for all employees addresses the skills and knowledge needed to implement lesbian and gay equality. Make training work-related in order that staff understand how equality is relevant to their job.

**Combine mainstreaming with tangible projects.** Where possible, combine your corporate commitment to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality with specific ambitions, goals, targets and initiatives.

**Avoid creating a hierarchy.** Ensure that your corporate planning on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues learns from and complements existing plans for the more established equality strands related to gender, race and disability. Do not create a hierarchy whereby some equality issues are seen as more important than others.

### ***Understand your authority's formal obligations***

**Comply with legal and policy requirements.** Show how engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities is linked to your authority's obligations under Best Value, community well being, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007. Emphasise how the law increasingly recognises same sex relationships update, for example in adoption or housing tenure and that your authority needs to take this on board.

**Situate work within the context of 'rights'.** Make links between supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual people and the universal human rights of all citizens, as well as indisputable imperatives, such as anti-bullying in schools, sensitive care for older people and the provision of greater community safety.

**Use the law as a starting point that can be extended.** Extend your existing equality action plan developed to comply with the requirements of the Equalities Standard to include lesbian, gay and bisexual equality.

### ***Work steadily and transparently.***

**Mainstream at a realistic pace.** Lay firm foundations, in the form of robust corporate policies, especially if you are working in a hostile environment.

**Work incrementally.** Start with small concrete gains within your existing equalities framework and move on to developing a lesbian, gay and bisexual specific strategy.

**Take a long term approach.** Recognise that cultural change can be a slow process. Sustainable change is founded on working towards the attainment of long term goals, not by 'quick wins'.

**Develop a consistent approach.** Ensure all departments address lesbian, gay and bisexual equality issues in their policies and plans. Individual departments should not be able to opt out of engagement with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

### ***Develop a business case approach***

**Create a diverse workforce.** Introduce recruitment and training initiatives to encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people to join the authority's workforce e.g. place a generic advertisement in the LGB media inviting and welcoming readers to apply for your vacancies.

**Promote inclusive services.** Take specific initiatives to promote a lesbian, gay and bisexual friendly image in order to demonstrate that the authority takes an inclusive approach to service delivery.

**Value lesbian, gay and bisexual businesses.** Promote lesbian, gay and bisexual businesses as beneficial to the development and growth of a lively, lucrative and attractive, local economy. Such businesses can also be supported through regeneration initiatives and through procurement.

**Develop working relationships.** Build links with LGB organisations. Sponsor events and other initiatives to promote lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the community.

### ***Develop a media strategy.***

**Liaise with local media.** Communicate on a regular basis to share understanding and dispel myths about the allocation of resources. Involve the media in partnership working such as Local Strategic Partnerships.

**Get community leaders on your side.** Identify supportive leaders from the local community and ask them to speak to their constituents and to act as spokespeople in the media.

**Make practical preparations.** Have holding statements ready for staff, councillors, the press and the public, using a professional approach and factual information to explain your rationale for engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Ensure you have examples from other authorities and organisations of where working with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities has been successful and beneficial. Keep a list of relevant legislation.

### 3. Service delivery and customer care

**This chapter explains the service delivery context in relation to engagement with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities, including the introduction of the Regulations prohibiting discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, services, facilities, education and the exercise of public functions. The experiences documented illustrate various ways of providing quality services to of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. The checklist for action is in two parts. The first includes generic issues in relation to the four C's of Best Value, challenge, compare, consult and compete. The second examines the specific issues relating to areas of service delivery and the steps that authorities can take to address them.**

#### **The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 and discrimination in the provision of goods, services and facilities**

Part 3 of the Equality Act 2006 enabled the Government to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, in education and in the exercise of public functions. The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into effect on 30th April 2007.

A consultation paper published by the Government in March 2006 described the approach proposed for these regulations. They are intended to bring protection from sexual orientation discrimination into line with existing legislation that prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, sex and for reasons related to disability. This consultation paper sought views on specific points about the range of activities that should be covered by the Regulations, and on whether any exceptions should be made to ensure that the protection provided is effective and appropriately targeted.

It is now becoming usual for anti-discrimination legislation to apply to the exercise of public functions, meaning the activities carried out by public bodies that are not otherwise caught by general goods, facilities and services provisions. In line with this, the exercise of public functions is included in the Regulations, so that it will be unlawful for a public authority exercising a function to do anything that constitutes discrimination. In practice, this means that the scope of the prohibition on anti-discrimination will extend to most activities in the public sector, including the work of local authorities. The prohibition will apply to anyone exercising a public function, including where the function is being undertaken by a private or voluntary body on a public authority's behalf.

The Regulations will make it unlawful to:

- refuse to provide goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation

- provide goods, facilities and services of a different *quality* on grounds of sexual orientation
- provide goods, facilities and services in a different *manner* on grounds of sexual orientation
- provide goods, facilities and services on different *terms* on grounds of sexual orientation

For local education authorities the Regulations will apply to pupil admissions, access to education services and exclusions.

However, the Regulations will not make it unlawful to meet people's needs in relation to 'education, training or welfare' to people on grounds of their sexual orientation, or provide 'ancillary benefits' in relation to those needs. The majority of responses to the consultation exercise by unions' professional associations and local authorities were in favour of allowing separate services to continue where this meets a specific and justified need. So local authorities will be able to provide specific services for lesbian, gay and bisexual people where they have identifiable needs for example because of low-take up of mainstream services or because they have needs which result from discrimination and disadvantage. An example might be example targeted youth services for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people at risk of discrimination and bullying.

Guidance on the Regulations is available from the Department for Communities and Local Government and Stonewall. Further advice on the Regulations will be available from the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights when it becomes operational in October 2007.

## **Public service reform and citizen centred services**

Of central importance to both the earlier modernisation agenda and to the more recent 'Local: Vision' proposals is the shift to user empowerment and 'citizen-centred' services. A citizen-centred focus represents a move away from a 'one-size fits all' approach to service delivery, to more responsive services that are tailored to the varied needs of users, i.e. the 'personalisation' of services. This new approach must incorporate the needs of diverse communities. Public service reform presents a challenge and an opportunity for local authorities to engage with those 'communities of interest' who have traditionally been marginalised and discriminated against, including lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

Local authorities will be more successful in responding to diverse needs if acceptance of diverse sexualities is integrated into service design and delivery. This may mean that the sexuality of service users is actively acknowledged as a relevant factor in the provision of services for example in tackling hate crime, However, in most instances an acceptance of diverse sexualities should be seamless, for example where providing care services to one partner in a same sex couple. Seamless provision however should not be confused with rendering difference invisible. Excluding sections of the community from plans related to

effective service delivery is in direct conflict with the aims of social inclusion and community cohesion.

## **Best Value and Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)**

Best Value and Comprehensive Performance Assessment are not merely tools for managing and measuring performance. They are levers for change, designed to enable continual review of the delivery of services which in turn can enhance performance. Both processes offer opportunities for local authorities to engage with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. These include the development of service performance indicators, the implementation of cross-cutting reviews, setting targets for improvement and strategies for self-assessment and a duty to consult under Best Value.

## **Lesbian, gay and bisexual people as service users**

Lesbian, gay and bisexual people have the right to equal access to high quality public services. However, discrimination can be institutionalised through ignorance about the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people and through the lack of skills amongst managers and frontline service providers. Discrimination may be direct or indirect by making the assumption that all service users are heterosexual.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual communities represent a diverse cross-section of society. When considering lesbian, gay and bisexual people as service users, authorities should not make invalid assumptions, for example, that they do not experience poverty or that they don't have children. It is also vital to be aware of the multiple discrimination faced by lesbian, gay and bisexual people who are disabled or from black and ethnic minorities, which, in turn, affects their ability to access services, even when they are available. Individuals are complex and multi-layered as is discrimination.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual service users have a vast range of needs that local authorities should aim to meet. In many cases, these can be addressed within well-planned 'mainstream' services that make efforts to ensure that their work is lesbian, gay and bisexual friendly, non-discriminatory and accessible. However, in other cases, such as sexual health services, community safety initiatives or sheltered housing, authorities need to provide 'tailor made' services. In practice, each of these involves different issues and challenges.

Local authorities should ensure that service environments are safe spaces in which lesbian, gay and bisexual service users feel able to disclose their sexuality if they need to, without fear of verbal or physical intimidation. Reports of verbal or physical assaults should be recorded and appropriate action taken. It should not be assumed however that all lesbian, gay and bisexual people want to be 'out' and the need for confidentiality should be considered and respected.

## **Quality planning for lesbian, gay and bisexual service users**

Quality planning for service delivery means understanding the priorities and needs of those to whom services are being provided and monitoring to ensure that those priorities and needs are being met. Local authorities need to ensure that a commitment to fairness and providing non-discriminatory services in line with the forthcoming Regulations is built into the way services are designed and delivered. In some service areas, the implications of providing a quality service to lesbian, gay and bisexual service users will be similar to those for all service users. In other cases however, understanding that lesbian, gay and bisexual people have specific priorities and needs will be crucial to maintaining and enhancing high standards of service delivery.

Research in Birmingham<sup>12</sup> found that, although 50% of mainstream statutory and voluntary organisations were aware of lesbian, gay and bisexual social groups, only 15% provided referrals to them.

No one public authority can address the needs of the lesbian, gay and bisexual community by itself. Local authorities need to work in partnership with other sectors, particularly lesbian, gay and bisexual voluntary and community groups. This involves statutory and voluntary bodies getting to know both what each other does and how the other works and then building effective referral systems between them, so that lesbian, gay and bisexual clients can receive as comprehensive a range of support as possible.

## **The Civil Partnership Act**

The Civil Partnership Act became law in December 2005. Its purpose is to enable same-sex couples to obtain legal recognition of their relationship by forming a civil partnership. Between December 2005 and September 2006 there were 14,084 partnerships in England and 537 in Wales. The new service to same-sex couples is delivered by local authorities.

Staff responsible for civil partnerships can be the same staff who are employed for marriage duties. There are a small number of local authorities where there are staff refusal issues, which is a complex area. Not all staff who undertake civil ceremonies are council employees, and therefore cannot be directed to carry out civil partnerships. Similarly, not all authorities offer civil partnerships but this is likely to be addressed by forthcoming legislation.

This is a historic piece of legislation and will affect many different areas of local government, including pension rights, housing and council tax benefits, social

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<sup>12</sup> Access and Inclusion: Mapping Birmingham's LGB Communities, Birmingham LGB Forum, Gudrun Limbrick, 2001

services provision, customer service information, and birth and death registration. It is recommended that all local authority information websites and leaflets are up to date and correct.

## **LACORS/LGA Civil Partnership Factsheet**

### **Procurement and contracting**

Lesbian, gay and bisexual equalities must be considered not only within the authority itself, but also within the organisations from which it buys goods and services. In the eyes of the public, contractors and sub-contractors are 'representatives' of the authority. It is vital that outsourced services are delivered in a way that meets the council's obligations to all its citizens.

Where services are being provided under contract by companies or agencies at one remove from the authority itself, appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that commitment to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality is incorporated into contracting processes and procedures, including tendering and monitoring. Design, delivery and review of services by contractors should take into account the authority's equality policy statement and commitment to meeting the needs of a diverse community.

While this can be challenging, particularly at the level of sub-contractors, an increasing number of authorities are finding practical ways to include clauses about equalities within their contracts and monitoring systems with external service providers. Commitment to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality should also be considered when conducting Best Value reviews of contracting and commissioning.

### **Experiences**

#### ***Having an equal opportunities policy for overall service provision***

**Islington Council's** leaflet Dignity for All: Promoting Equality and Valuing Diversity – which is endorsed by the Chief Executive - outlines the authority's commitment to treating service users fairly, regardless of their sexuality, race, disability, etc. It states that the Council will:

- *“Ensure that customers are treated fairly and equally.*
- *Identify training needs of staff at the Council, to prevent a lack of skill being a barrier from equality in service provision.*
- *Not use discriminatory practices in providing services.*
- *Take appropriate action against any customer who harasses or acts in a discriminatory way towards other customers or members of staff.”*

**Manchester City Council's** equal opportunities policy for service provision aims to ensure that all residents receive the services they need in a way that suits them and is fair. The policy draws links between equality and quality, with goals of:

- *“Ending racism, sexism and other forms of unfair treatment throughout the Council.*
- *To involve people who are often left out in making decisions and reviewing progress.*
- *To promote equality of opportunities through high quality services.*
- *To fulfil the City Council's duties under national and international laws and agreements.”*

The policy includes a statement of principles for each equalities area, including separate ones for lesbians and gay men, as well as a statement of core values.

The policy outlines that the process of agreeing Service Plans by each department and assessing progress needs to ensure:

- *“That the strategy is led by services, with each one developing its own action plans.*
- *That equality is part of all service planning and not an ‘add on’.*
- *That managers take responsibility for equal opportunities.*
- *That Chief Officers are answerable for the results their department achieves.*
- *That there are regular reports on progress to Council Committees.*
- *That the Chief Executive's department helps departments achieve the targets they set.*
- *That equality is seen as a necessary part of a quality service.*
- *That this strategy fits in with other work the Council is doing.”*

The policy also emphasises that chief officers should ensure that all training delivered by or for the council, particularly for those in direct contact with the public, is in line with equal opportunities.

### ***Planning for service delivery and quality***

**Birmingham City Council's** strategy document Building Awareness and Understanding for Organisational Change highlights key issues affecting the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities, including in relation to service delivery. For example, under one objective of Service Delivery and Customer Care (“to develop service responses that address inequalities for LGBT people”) it outlines how the council will take action in relation to housing, fostering and adoption, community safety and the needs of older people. It also outlines that it will

incorporate lesbian, gay and bisexual issues into the corporate strategy on domestic violence; and develop proposals for a civil commitment scheme.

### ***Including equalities in contracts with service providers***

As part of its efforts to reach Level 2 against Best Value Performance Indicator BV2<sup>13</sup>, **Nottinghamshire County Council** insists that all contracts with external service providers address compliance not only with national legislation, but the council's own equalities policy. This helps to ensure that all five areas of the authority's equalities work, namely race, gender, age, disability and sexual orientation, are covered.

During selection, potential service providers are asked about their policies and practices, such as whether a case for unlawful discrimination has been found against them in the last three years. Once selected, the following standard clause, developed by the Council's Legal Services Department, is included in all contracts:

*"Throughout the duration of this Agreement, the Contractor shall, and, in addition, shall ensure that its Sub Contractors shall:*

*Discharge their obligations under this Agreement and [supply the Works and perform Services] in accordance with their responsibilities under the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976 (Amended 2000) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Codes of Practice issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission [and the CRE] and shall in addition discharge its obligations under this Agreement and provide the services in a manner consistent with County Council policies on Equal Opportunities"*

**Devon County Council's** Policy on Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans People outlines that, in order to achieve its objective of carrying out its duties in a way that gives lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people equal and unprejudiced treatment, the council will:

*"Ensure that consultants, contractors, suppliers and partners [including those in the not-for-profit sector] are made aware of this policy and the expectation that their own policies will include as a minimum:*

- *A commitment to equal opportunities.*
- *The name or position of the person responsible for the effective implementation of the policy."*

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<sup>13</sup> In January 1999 the Council adopted the CRE Equality Standard, to comply with Best Value Corporate Health Indicator BV2. This required that an equality audit of all services and practices be carried out and the Level achieved be submitted to the Audit Commission.

**Manchester City Council's** Housing Department insists that housing contractors work in partnership with local communities and the voluntary sector to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination. This includes developing links with LGB groups and consulting with the lesbian, gay and bisexual community, for example through focus groups, anonymous questionnaires and meetings with the LGB forum.

### ***Using feedback to improve services***

**Islington Council's** leaflet Dignity for All: Promoting Equality and Valuing Diversity outlines its commitment to treating all of its service users fairly, regardless of their sexuality, race, disability, etc. It states that the authority will consult local people about the development of services, monitor how effectively services meet the needs of the Borough's diverse population and use the information to develop future policies and services. It also outlines that, for any of its services, the authority will consider comments, criticisms or suggestions from service users and will:

- *“Provide clear information about where, and to whom, customers should complain.*
- *Listen to complaints and comments and act upon them.*
- *Use complaints to improve awareness of equalities.*
- *Ensure that any complaint of harassment from a customer about another customer or member of staff is investigated and resolved promptly and fairly.*
- *Monitor all complaints to check whether there are any underlying equalities issues.*
- *Implement changes that the complaint and investigation show to be appropriate.”*

**Somerset County Council's** website explains that the authority promises to provide services of equal quality regardless of sexual orientation. Anyone who feels their needs are not being met or who have experienced discrimination in relation to service delivery is urged to use the Your Views page of the website or contact the local LGB support network.

## ***Addressing lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the delivery of key services***

### **Education**

**Birmingham City Council** held a seminar for 150 people working in formal and informal education, with the aim of looking at the issues affecting the achievement of young LGBT people. The seminar was chaired by the Chief Executive and involved the Head of Equalities, as well as the Policy Director of Stonewall. Workshops were held on a variety of themes, including: anti-bullying policies and practices; the provision of LGBT youth work; support for LGBT education providers; faith and diversity; gender identity and trans issues; and developing an LGBT-friendly curriculum.

**Croydon Council** has funded and developed a programme of 'Challenging Homophobia' training in Upper Primary and Secondary Schools. This involves sessions being delivered to governors, teachers, youth workers and school staff.

**Gloucestershire County Council** has produced a pack which contains 17 useful information cards addressing various aspects of sexuality. The pack provides general information about homosexuality, homophobia and heterosexism. It also stresses the problem of homophobic bullying and its adverse effect on lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils. The authors of the pack provide guidance on how the issue of sexual diversity can be addressed in many areas of the curriculum and suggest a useful list of available resources in this area.

### **Social services and health**

**Bristol City Council's** Social Services and Health Department issued Guidelines on Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Equality. They are to be used by relevant managers and practitioners and cover all areas of work with adults and children, including services for looked after young people, foster children and adults with learning difficulties. The guidelines are underpinned by the Council's Integrated Equalities Policy and endorsed by the Executive Member and Director for Social Services and Health. They are set out in a clear question and answer format, such as:

*"Question 19: Is there any barrier to working with people with HIV or who are lesbian or gay?"*

*Answer 19: No. Some lesbians and gay men have a need for social services for adults, including services for older people, disabled people and people with learning difficulties. Sensitivity needs to be shown towards lesbians and gay families and relationships. Lesbians and gay men who are disabled people or black people or people with learning difficulties are entitled to services which*

*respect their differing needs. Section 28 and Section 2A do not prevent the delivery of equal services."*

The guidelines also include: a summary of relevant legislation; a glossary of terms; case studies; questions for team leaders to ask themselves (such as: How, as a team, can we challenge heterosexism?); and a list of sources of further information.

**South Gloucestershire Council's** social services department has a managing diversity policy which includes a specific objective to enhance the quality of service to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and create a positive working environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender colleagues.

Representatives of **Leeds City Council**, including the Women's Officer, participate in a Lesbian Health Working Group run by the local voluntary sector. Among other activities, the Group has developed a Lesbian Health Training Pack that is part-funded by the Council and targets health professionals. It has also developed an accompanying training programme and is producing positive images of disabled lesbians to be used in posters for display in health outlets, such as doctors' surgeries and A & E departments.

As part of its Best Value Review of Social Services Day Care Services for older people and people with physical disabilities in 2002, **Gloucestershire County Council** identified that some gay and lesbian people felt their needs were not met by current services. This emerged after including local LGB organisations in the voluntary sector consultation workshop.

## **Fostering and adoption**

**Manchester City Council** Welcomes Lesbian and Gay Carers' is a leaflet produced by the children and families division of the authority's social services department. It answers key questions for those interested in becoming foster or adoption carers, such as whether there are many openly lesbian and gay carers, what kind of children are placed with lesbian and gay carers, whether people need to have child care experience and how you can apply.

**Brighton and Hove City Council** also actively recruits lesbian, gay and bisexual foster and adoptive carers, including by advertising in the local gay press and having a stall at the local Pride event. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people are assessed against exactly the same criteria as other applicants, with the emphasis placed on people's caring abilities and the needs of the child, rather than sexual orientation. Alongside its usual package of support – which includes training, payment and regular contact with a Support Worker - the service offers a

support group where lesbian, gay and bisexual carers can share their experiences and concerns.

**Tower Hamlets Council** ran a major fostering and adoption campaign in 2002. Adverts were placed on local radio, in local newspapers, posters on billboards and leaflets were distributed with the message that 'whether you are young or older, black or white, male or female, a couple or single, gay or straight, in or out of work, you can foster or adopt'.

*"It doesn't matter who you're adopted by – married couple, gay couple or single parent as in my case – all that matters is that you are in a stable, supportive home".*

Becky, aged 14, Comments from children and adopters, **Cumbria County Council**

## **Community safety**

**Devon and Cornwall Liaison Group** facilitates collaboration between the police and the lesbian, gay and bisexual community. It offers a seat to every LGBT organisation in the two counties, and involves 11 organisations, two independent members, two student LGBT representatives and three senior police officials, including the Deputy Chief Constable. The group meets for about four hours once a month and is funded by the police, but run and owned by the LGBT sector. Participation is voluntary, although expenses can be paid for travel and childcare.

The group works on strategic issues at all levels, but not local tactics or individual cases. For example, at police headquarters, it deals with developing trust and mutual respect, issues arising from problems about policing, the structure of liaison between the police and LGBT sector and the content and implementation of relevant policies. An example of the latter was a policy on public sex that was drafted by the gay men on the Group, strengthened with human rights legislation by the police and then agreed by both parties. Meanwhile, at District level, the member organisations deal with areas such as training on equal opportunities and LGBT awareness for response officers on the ground, as well as developing projects to increase the reporting of homophobic crime and ensure systems of support for victims.

Both the police and the LGBT community have had to 'learn each other's language' and find effective ways of working together. This has included developing ethical and practical systems to maintain confidentiality, such as persuading the police that the Liaison Group members' privacy must be protected - which means that they have no access to address lists and that all meetings are held on a first-names-only basis.

**Croydon Council** works with the local Police, Primary Care Trust, Lesbian and Gay Forum and other agencies to combat homophobic crime. The groups have formed the Croydon Anti-Homophobia Local Strategic Partnership that is responsible for implementing an action plan. Alongside other organisations, such as schools, the agencies have signed up to the Croydon Anti-Homophobia Policy Statement:

*“Homophobic/transphobic violence and abuse can cover a wide range of actions including taunts, damage to property and serious physical assaults. These are all hate crimes and will not be tolerated. LGBT people also experience many forms of discrimination in their daily lives from institutional discrimination to prejudice and bigotry.*

*We are committed to working together to combat all forms of abuse or discrimination against LGBT people. We want Croydon to be a safe place where LGBT people can visit, work, study, live and play.*

*We recognise that LGBT people as African, African/Caribbean, Asian or other ethnic origin, as disabled people, young and older people and economically disadvantaged people, experience further discrimination because of their sexuality or gender identity.*

*In particular we will:*

- *Adopt a victim centred approach, which will mean that victims are believed, are treated sensitively and any action taken is with their consent.*
- *Work in partnership with LGBT people, and organisations which represent them, to develop responsive services.*
- *Work to develop a positive environment within each organisation, which respects and supports LGBT employees and service users.*
- *Develop, and encourage implementation of, policies, strategies and practices to:*
  - *Support LGBT people in their learning, social and work environments;*
  - *Challenge negative and stereotypical attitudes to sexual orientation and gender identity; and*
  - *Ensure that policies on bullying, and other harassment, address issues of homophobia and transphobia.*
- *Work to eliminate discrimination and abuse against LGBT people in all spheres of influence.*
- *Develop policies, practices and procedures that reflect and respect the lifestyles of LGBT people.”*

In particular, the Council works closely with the Police Community Safety Unit to provide an appropriate response to the victims of homophobic and transphobic hate crime. This includes ensuring that reports can be made anonymously and support is provided by trained Lesbian and Gay Officers. In addition, a self-reporting form has been available at LGBT venues, libraries and the website of Croydon One-Stop - a support service for victims of homophobia, domestic

violence and racial harassment that includes a full-time Anti-Homophobia Link Worker funded by the Council.

In 2003 **Tower Hamlets Council** introduced new phone lines to help victims of crime in the borough, including a specific number for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The setting up of the service was co-ordinated by the Tower Hamlets Partnership, made up of local police, the council, the probation service and other organisations.

**Wychavon District Council** and **Worcestershire County Council** are part of the Wychavon Community Safety Partnership including police, health service and probation service representatives. The partnership's audit revealed that members of the lesbian and gay community together with ethnic minorities felt vulnerable in local communities. The partnership includes an action group on race and homophobic hate crime that includes community representatives.

The **Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's** community Safety Strategy 2002- 2005 contains a specific section on homophobic crime. The section refers to a survey of homophobia in the Borough commissioned by the gay and Lesbian Police and Community Consultative Group and outlines aims and objectives for tackling homophobic crime.

In 2001 **Southampton City Council's** Social Cohesion Team commissioned the Southampton Gay Community Health Service (GCHS) to undertake a study of lesbian, gay and bisexual people's experiences of homophobic crime and harassment in the city<sup>14</sup>. The report produced included recommendations for the council, the police, commercial venues and other organisations.

**Northampton Borough Council** facilitates the Northamptonshire Inter Agency Group (NIAG) which provides a sensitive and confidential service to enable lesbian, gay and bisexual people to report and deal with incidents of homophobia. NIAG works in partnership the Northamptonshire LGB Alliance, Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Victim Support and Northamptonshire Police.

## Housing

**Preston City Council** has adopted a comprehensive policy on access to housing for lesbians and gay men. The authority is committed to providing equality in service delivery plans and to eradicating homophobia and discrimination. All clauses in tenancy agreements, including in relation to succession, extend

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<sup>14</sup> Hidden Targets, GCHS/Southampton City Council, 2001

equivalent rights to lesbian and gay partners as heterosexuals and a procedure has been developed for tackling homophobic incidents and harassment. The council has publicised the policy widely, including through a leaflet distributed to local lesbian and gay groups and venues. The council's housing and direct services department has been awarded a Charter Mark by Navajo, the Lancashire based health strategy project which operates a lesbian and gay friendly services assurance charter scheme<sup>15</sup>. The Charter Mark has also been awarded to **Blackpool Borough Council's** housing department.

**Camden Council's** 'Information for Lesbians and Gay Men in Camden' provides information for those thinking of applying for council housing, who have been accepted for council housing or are already council tenants. It outlines the authority's commitment to equal treatment and confidentiality for lesbian and gay clients and recognises specific housing needs, such as for young people forced to leave home due to prejudice about their sexuality. The publication provides information about general issues - such as how to apply for housing - as well as those of particular relevance to lesbian and gay clients. For example, it outlines the policy that 'partner' can relate to someone who is married, unmarried, lesbian or gay and that co-habitees, including same sex couples, should be accorded the same succession rights as married couples.

**Manchester City Council** has addressed harassment of housing clients by specifying that contractors must use the authority's Neighbour Nuisance and Harassment Procedure - which makes specific reference to lesbians and gay men. The Council also insists that contractors operate within its terms of agreement - which make clear that a tenant must not cause nuisance or harassment to other tenants or allow them to be caused by any member of their household. In addition, its Housing Management Specification states that contractors must ensure the confidentiality of all information about clients, including in relation to the sexuality of a victim of harassment. The Council has also launched an innovative housing and homelessness advice surgery for LGBT people in partnership with the Lesbian and Gay Foundation. The advice service is provided within the gay village to provide a safe space for LGBT people to discuss their housing issues with a dedicated support worker.

**Leicester City Council's** housing department has produced a Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Equality Policy for both employees and housing service users. The policy includes a range of aims, provision for monitoring and a rationale for its development.

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<sup>15</sup> Navajo, named after gay friendly North American tribe, is the development of a holistic health strategy for lesbians and gay men in north West Lancashire. It began in November 1998 when community focus groups, agency focus groups and interviews with key organisations were carried out.

## Culture and leisure

**Birmingham City Council** has taken a number of actions in relation to its library services. These include treating lesbian, gay and bisexual people as a priority group within the Annual Library Plan and, depending on local needs and circumstances, either having designated areas in local libraries or integrating lesbian, gay and bisexual books into different sections. They also include: publicising 'Proud to Read' book lists; providing information on lesbian, gay and bisexual health, legal and support services; publicising local and national lesbian, gay and bisexual links on the council's website; and having a Libraries Department stall at the City's LGB Pride event.

**Westminster City Council's** website refers to a list of contemporary lesbian and gay writing currently available in the borough's libraries. Several libraries have separate lesbian and gay sections, including material not available elsewhere.

The library service at **North Yorkshire County Council** has been strengthened by participation nationally in the 'Branching Out' reader development programme. Amongst specific achievements highlighted by the council is a 'radical approach' to the widening of fiction stock into areas such as lesbian and gay novels.

In 2003 **York City Council** sponsored the Libertas Lesbian Arts Festival which included a lesbian film festival, lesbian theatre, creative writing workshops, concerts, lesbian opera, poetry and lesbian book festival. The council provided assistance with venues, administration, equipment and advice.

In 2003 **Lewisham Council** awarded Short and Girlie productions, a theatre group for lesbian, bisexual and transgendered women, and a one-off grant to develop workshops for children with gay, bisexual or transgendered parents.

### *Services for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people*

**Leeds City Council** supports a variety of initiatives for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people. These include providing funding for a Youth Pride event, supporting theatre projects, piloting anti-homophobia work in schools, supporting a telephone help-line and holding weekly support groups that are facilitated by council youth workers.

**Devon County Council** supports an Exeter-based group that provides a safe space for discussion and mutual support among young people who think that they might be lesbian or gay. The group was the idea of the Council's youth workers who provide facilitation and administrative support.

**Hampshire County Council's** strategic development plan for the youth service in 2002-2003 allocated 50% of resources to work with young people at risk of 'multiple disadvantage' including young people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual.

**West Sussex County Council's** Youth Cabinet includes provision for its members to have specific portfolios to represent the views of young people who may not traditionally have a voice including young lesbians and gay men.

In 2005 **Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council's** Equality and Diversity Scrutiny Panel conducted a review of the services and support available to LGBT young people living in Sandwell. The review resulted in a series of informed recommendations to consolidate and develop service provision.

## **Checklist for action**

This section is in two parts. The first is a generic checklist. This is followed by service specific checklists.

### ***Challenge existing assumptions***

**Find out what is already known.** What do you know about lesbian, gay and bisexual people's views on services? Do you know whether there are differences in take up or levels of satisfaction?

**Acknowledge needs in mainstream provision.** Ensure that the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people are recognised and integrated into the delivery of mainstream services.

**Acknowledge specific needs.** Ensure that, where necessary, services are provided to meet the specific needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. However, avoid portraying these services as 'special', as this risks them being seen as add-ons and, therefore, vulnerable to budget cuts.

**Protect confidentiality.** Ensure that services do not force lesbian, gay and bisexual people to 'out' themselves; are confidential and are emotionally and physically accessible and safe.

**Provide training and information.** On the new Regulations to ensure that service provision is inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual people

### ***Compare with those providing similar services***

**Talk to other local authorities.** They may have experiences of equality proofing their services for lesbian, gay and bisexual users.

**Talk to other service providers.** They may have specialist knowledge of the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual service users.

**Use inspections and scrutiny.** Assess service provision against benchmarks and identify improvement measures.

### ***Consult with lesbian, gay and bisexual service users and non-users***

**Involve lesbian, gay and bisexual representatives.** Use the knowledge of representatives to inform consultation and planning and monitoring services that affect their communities.

**Conduct 'service walk throughs'.** Work with lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and community representatives to check out how services are being provided discuss what issues are arising and identify changes to be made.

**Encourage active citizenship.** Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people with relevant experience to apply for key voluntary positions within your services, such as members of adoption panels or arms length management organisations.

### ***Consider the effect of competition on lesbian, gay and bisexual service users***

**Equality proof contracts.** Where possible include a clause in all contracts that commits contractors and sub-contractors to equalities issues, including in relation to lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Contractors own service delivery policies should reflect the need to service a diverse customer base and to reach out to non-users.

**Ensure competence.** Contractors and sub-contractors should demonstrate that they provide training to build their knowledge and improve practice in relation to equalities.

**Monitor contracts.** Monitor the work of contractors and sub-contractors to ensure that they consult with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities and respond to their needs.

<b>Education</b>	
<b>The issues</b>	<b>Checklist for action</b>
<p>A survey of 300 secondary schools found 82% of teachers are aware of verbal incidents, and 26% aware of physical incidents of homophobic bullying. Only 6% of schools had anti-bullying policies specifically designed to combat homophobic bullying<sup>16</sup>.</p> <p>The consequences of a culture of homophobia in schools can be devastating, including poor academic achievement, low self-esteem, self-harm and suicide. Recent research showed that 72% of young lesbians and gay men had played truant or faked illness to avoid homophobic bullying at school, 40% had attempted suicide on at least one occasion and 36% of those persistently absent reported multiple episodes of self harm<sup>17</sup>.</p> <p>Discrimination also affects lesbian, gay and bisexual people working in education, including teachers.</p> <p>OFSTED includes the personal development of pupils as a marker of quality education and states that schools should challenge homophobic attitudes.</p>	<p>Provide schools with guidelines on homophobic bullying policies<sup>18</sup>.</p> <p>Give sexuality training to everyone, not just teachers delivering sex education, but head teachers and others involved in schools.</p> <p>Ensure teachers are aware of local LGB groups and can refer students.</p> <p>Ensure a safe environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff, for example by an LGB forum and taking prompt action if discrimination occurs.</p> <p>Include sexuality in the monitoring of education services.</p> <p>Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people to become active in education, for example as school governors.</p> <p>Ensure relevant staff are familiar with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Children Act 1989:</b> states that the needs of young lesbians and gay men must be approached sympathetically.</li> <li>• <b>Education Act 1996:</b> requires authorities, governors and head teachers to ensure pupils get balanced views on controversial issues.</li> <li>• <b>Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Circular 10/99, DfES:</b> sets out head teachers' legal responsibilities to prevent all types of bullying.</li> <li>• <b>Sex and Relationships</b></li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> Playing it Safe, University of London ,1997

<sup>17</sup> Social Inclusion, Absenteeism and Minority Youth, Rivers, 2000

<sup>18</sup> Safe for All Citizenship 21/Stonewall, 2001

	<p><b>Education (SRE) Guidance 2000, DfES:</b> covers how sexuality and relationships teaching should address sexual orientation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence, DfES, 2000:</b> recommends how schools can address homophobic bullying.</li><li>• <b>National Healthy School Standard:</b> gives a framework for promoting physical and emotional health, including among marginalised pupils.</li><li>• <b>Charter for Action, DfES, 2003:</b> advice on various forms of bullying including homophobic bullying.</li></ul>
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<b>Housing</b>	
<b>The issues</b>	<b>Checklist for action</b>
<p>Lesbian, gay and bisexual housing needs often remain poorly understood by authorities.</p> <p>Lesbian, gay and bisexual people have the right to enjoy their home in peace and security, but many receive threats, have their property attacked or are verbally or physically abused. Those in hostels and other temporary accommodation are particularly vulnerable.</p> <p>People from lesbian, gay and bisexual communities who present as homeless may not be comfortable using mainstream homeless services. Consultation in Sheffield revealed that this was a particular issue for young people<sup>19</sup>.</p> <p>A disproportionate number of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people are homeless or in housing difficulty, often due to their parents' hostile reactions to them 'coming out'. Some have specific needs, for example for lesbian, gay or bisexual foster carers or a LGB hostel.</p> <p>Older lesbian, gay and bisexual people face discrimination in nursing homes where it is difficult for them to be open about their sexuality.</p> <p>Disabled lesbian, gay and bisexual people can be disadvantaged due to lack of housing that is both physically and socially suitable.</p> <p>Other groups of lesbian, gay and bisexual people experience isolation, for example if they live on an estate or in a rural area with few other lesbian, gay and bisexual</p>	<p>Respond to specific lesbian, gay and bisexual housing needs, such as: direct access hostels, supported housing for people leaving care; and nursing homes for older people.</p> <p>Liaise with <b>Stonewall Housing Association</b> to learn about the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.</p> <p>Facilitate LGB housing forums, for example among residents on an estate.</p> <p>Have a positive environment in homeless persons units, advice centres.</p> <p>Develop a 'consumer guide' for lesbian, gay and bisexual housing clients.</p> <p>Remove landlords who harass lesbian, gay and bisexual tenants from your temporary accommodation list.</p> <p>Include sexuality in the monitoring of housing services.</p> <p>Be flexible about the 'local connection' criteria for homelessness as people might move to an area for the security of a lesbian, gay and bisexual community.</p> <p>Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people to become active, for example as members of tenants associations.</p> <p>Ensure that the housing department and all contractors have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lesbian, gay and bisexual equality policy for staff.</li> <li>• A policy that recognises same-sex</li> </ul>

<sup>19</sup> Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008, Sheffield City Council

people.

**The Housing Corporation Performance Review System (1994):** states that discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation must be tackled by housing associations in a positive equal opportunities policy.

partnerships and succession rights.

- A policy statement against homophobic harassment of tenants.
- A harassment clause in all tenancy agreements, with set procedures for dealing with homophobic abuse.
- Strategies for inputting into community safety partnerships.
- Confidential ways for lesbian, gay and bisexual people to report harassment and a victim-centred approach to investigations.

Ensure relevant staff are familiar with relevant court decisions e.g. **Mendoza vs. Ghaidan (2002)**: the Court of Appeal stated that a same sex partner must be given the same rights as an unmarried heterosexual partner living together as husband and wife.

<b>Fostering and adoption</b>	
<b>The issues</b>	<b>Checklist for action</b>
<p>Lesbian, gay and bisexual people, as couples and individuals, can now legally foster and adopt children.</p> <p>Research<sup>20</sup> shows that lesbian, gay and bisexual people make just as good parents as heterosexuals and their sexual orientation does not affect their children's sexuality or level of achievement.</p> <p>While some agencies still discriminate, many now see that lesbian, gay and bisexual people can ensure the best interests of the child by offering safe and loving homes.</p> <p>It is good practice for agencies to recruit carers who can meet the diverse needs of children, considering issues such as their religion, disability or sexual orientation.</p> <p>Guidance on the Children Act acknowledges that the needs of young lesbians, gay men and bisexuals being fostered should also be acknowledged: <i>"The needs and concerns of gay young men and women must also be recognised and approached sympathetically."</i><sup>21</sup></p>	<p>Proactively welcome potential lesbian, gay and bisexual foster and adoptive carers, for example by advertising in the local gay press.</p> <p>Ensure that selection focuses on the adults' caring abilities and the child's needs, rather than the applicants' sexuality. Do not subject lesbian, gay and bisexual people to different or additional procedures.</p> <p>Provide sexuality training to all those involved, including placement officers and adoption panels.</p> <p>If possible, provide specific support, such as a social network, for lesbian, gay and bisexual carers.</p> <p>Take prompt action to address homophobia. Be prepared to discipline staff or de-register carers.</p> <p>Liaise with the <b>Albert Kennedy Trust</b> - a charity providing lesbian, gay and bisexual foster carers for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people rejected by their families or experiencing difficulties in care – and include them on your list of leaving care and fostering agencies. They predominantly work in London, Manchester and Brighton, but have a national database of approved lesbian, gay and bisexual foster carers.</p> <p>Contact the <b>Positive Parenting Campaign</b>, a Manchester based group that works to counter discrimination and promote opportunities for lesbians and gay men to contribute to childcare as</p>

<sup>20</sup> Cited in Egan, Beth and Lee, Sarah (2003), Get Involved, Citizenship 21, Stonewall.

<sup>21</sup> The Children Act 1989, Guidance and regulations, Vol. 3, Family Placements, 1991

	<p>foster carers and adopters.</p> <p>Include sexuality in the monitoring of fostering and adoption services.</p> <p>Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people with relevant experience to become active in the fostering and adoption field, for example as members of adoption panels.</p>
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<b>Disabled lesbian, gay and bisexual people</b>	
<b>The issues</b>	<b>Checklist for action</b>
<p>Disabled lesbian, gay and bisexual people often face double discrimination, for example because mainstream council services fail to recognise their sexuality whilst lesbian, gay and bisexual services fail to recognise their disabilities and are inaccessible.</p> <p>Disabled lesbian, gay and bisexual people face discrimination in respect of safety and bullying, choosing how to live in the way that they want (Independent Living), transport and the use of buildings<sup>22</sup>.</p> <p>Disabled people often feel excluded from consultation exercises carried out by public services<sup>23</sup>.</p> <p>The rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people with learning difficulties are often not respected, for example with presumptions they are not, or do not want to be, sexually active.</p>	<p>Collaborate with disabled people's organisations such as the <b>British Council of Disabled People</b> and <b>REGARD</b>, the national organisation of disabled lesbians and gay men in order to access lesbian, gay and bisexual people and benefit from their expertise.</p> <p>Make information for lesbian, gay and bisexual communities accessible to disabled people, for example by producing directories in large print or on audio tape.</p> <p>Enable lesbian, gay and bisexual people with learning difficulties to access information to make decisions about their own lives.</p> <p>Ensure that consultation meetings between your authority and the lesbian, gay and bisexual community are in accessible venues.</p> <p>Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people to become active in the disability field, for example as advocates for lesbian, gay and bisexual people with learning difficulties.</p> <p>Ensure that staff are aware of relevant legislation including the <b>Disability Discrimination Act 1995</b>: The Act confirms the rights of disabled people, covers progressive conditions and applies from the moment of a noticeable effect on 'normal' activities.</p> <p>Produce a 'consumer guide' for disabled lesbian, gay and bisexual people, covering areas such as health and social care and housing.</p>

<sup>22</sup> Inclusion not Ignorance, GLAD, 2002

<sup>23</sup> Getting it Right – including disabled people in communication and consultation, LARIA, 2003

	<p>Facilitate networks for disabled lesbian, gay and bisexual people.</p> <p>Collaborate with providers of mainstream services for disabled people to raise awareness about issues affecting lesbian, gay and bisexual people.</p> <p>Include sexuality in the monitoring of services for disabled people.</p>
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<b>Young lesbian, gay and bisexual people</b>	
<b>The issues</b>	<b>Checklist for action</b>
<p>Young lesbian, gay and bisexual people can face pressures at home, school and in the community.</p> <p>Research<sup>24</sup> found that 48% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people under 18 had experienced violence and 90% verbal abuse due to their sexuality.</p> <p>Homophobia often increases young people's vulnerability to mental health problems.</p> <p>Research has shown that sexuality can play a complex role in the creation of youth homelessness<sup>25</sup>.</p> <p>Young lesbian, gay and bisexual people often only have the gay 'scene' in which to socialise.</p> <p>Young lesbian, gay and bisexual people in care often lack access to appropriate sex and relationship education. Care leavers who are lesbian, gay or bisexual may face additional discrimination because of their sexuality.</p> <p>Misunderstandings about Section 28 have often prevented the provision of services.</p> <p>Many young people don't 'come out' to mainstream service providers for fear of discrimination.</p>	<p>Develop procedures to ensure your services do not force young people to 'out' themselves.</p> <p>Include the <b>Albert Kennedy Trust</b> on your list of fostering agencies and use their national database of approved lesbian, gay and bisexual foster carers.</p> <p>Ensure frontline staff, such as social workers, are trained in discussing sexuality with young people and can recognise indicators of their sexual orientation.</p> <p>Include sexuality in the monitoring of services for young people.</p> <p>Where possible, make referrals to lesbian, gay and bisexual-friendly services as soon as possible – so that young lesbian, gay and bisexual people get a full and appropriate assessment before receiving a service.</p> <p>Have rigorous policies and procedures to protect lesbian, gay and bisexual staff working with young people.</p> <p>Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people to become active in the youth field, for example as co-ordinators of youth facilities and projects.</p> <p>Ensure relevant staff are familiar with the <b>Children Act 1989</b> which states that the needs of different young people must be recognised and approached sympathetically and that social services have a duty to engage with young lesbian, gay and bisexual people in their care.</p>

<sup>24</sup> Queer bashing, Stonewall, 1996

<sup>25</sup> Hidden in Plain Sight, National Centre for Social Research, 2004

<b>Health and social care</b>	
<b>The issues</b>	<b>Checklist for action</b>
<p>The needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people are often ignored in policy development in relation to inequalities in health and social care.</p> <p>Many health issues particularly affect lesbian, gay and bisexual people. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research in South and West Devon<sup>26</sup> found that 80% of lesbian or bisexual women had been affected by their own or someone else's drug or alcohol use.</li> <li>• The HIV epidemic in the UK has two very distinct aspects. In 2004 three quarters of those who acquired HIV in the UK were men who have sex with men, but the majority of people actually diagnosed with HIV in 2004 (59%) had been infected through heterosexual sex, acquiring the infection abroad.</li> <li>• Many lesbian, gay and bisexual people experience mental health problems. For example, research in Southampton and South West Hampshire<sup>27</sup> found that 25% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people had attempted suicide.</li> </ul> <p>Research<sup>28</sup> shows that many services, particularly those for mental health, feel unsafe or hostile to lesbian, gay and bisexual people.</p> <p>Research in Bristol<sup>29</sup> found that only 50% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people were 'out' to their GP.</p> <p>Specific sexual health services are often targeted at gay men in relation to HIV/AIDS, but absent for lesbians.</p>	<p>Liaise with health trusts regarding the production of health promotion materials that are non-judgemental and validate lesbian, gay and bisexual relationships.</p> <p>Collaborate with other services to address the specific needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people, for example in relation to drugs and alcohol.</p> <p>Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people to become active in the health and social care field, for example on the boards of Primary Care Trusts.</p> <p>Brief relevant staff using <b>Good Practice Guidelines in Working with Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals in Mental Health Services</b>, produced by PACE<sup>30</sup>.</p> <p>Ensure relevant staff are familiar with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Health Act 1999:</b> outlines the medical profession's duty to consult on developing, managing and evaluating its services and for NHS and authorities' services to be 'joined-up'. Also outlines the obligation to ensure that lesbian, gay and bisexual equality is tackled.</li> <li>• <b>NHS Action Plan 2000:</b> sets out the principle of equal access to and equity of treatment within health services.</li> <li>• Nursing and Midwifery Council's Code of Conduct: says people are personally accountable for "promoting and protecting the interests and dignity of patients and clients, irrespective of gender, age, race, ability, sexuality, economic status, lifestyle, culture and religious or political beliefs."</li> </ul>

<sup>26</sup> Straight Talking, South and West Devon Health Authority, Avril Butler et al, 2000

<b>Older people</b>	
<b>The issues</b>	<b>Checklist for action</b>
<p>There is little understanding about the needs of older lesbian, gay and bisexual people and an acute lack of relevant services.</p> <p>Local authorities may be unaware of the different social care needs of older lesbian, gay and bisexual people<sup>31</sup>.</p> <p>Older lesbian, gay and bisexual people can experience intense isolation, especially if they live in rural areas or close to a youth-dominated gay 'scene'.</p> <p>Older lesbians are one of the poorest groups in society<sup>32</sup>.</p> <p>Most pensions do not provide benefits for same sex partners after their partner has died.</p> <p>Older lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not always consulted about end of life decisions about their partner, for example in the provision of social services or housing.</p> <p>Older lesbian, gay and bisexual people can be the victims of both 'queer bashing' and elder abuse.</p> <p>Research<sup>33</sup> shows that 25% of older lesbian, gay and bisexual are involved in providing care for someone else.</p>	<p>Provide services that enable older lesbian, gay and bisexual people, like anyone else, to age with dignity.</p> <p>Ensure staff working with older people, including those assessing their care needs, receive training in sexuality.</p> <p>Produce a 'consumer guide' for older lesbian, gay and bisexual people, covering areas such as health care and housing.</p> <p>Facilitate social groups for older lesbian, gay and bisexual people, for example in sheltered housing schemes.</p> <p>Collaborate with providers of mainstream services for older people (e.g. Age Concern) to raise awareness about issues affecting lesbian, gay and bisexual people.</p> <p>Include sexuality in the monitoring of services for older people.</p> <p>Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people to become active in services for older people, for example as a 'buddy' to a lesbian, gay or bisexual person in a nursing home.</p> <p>Encourage the inclusion of older lesbian, gay and bisexual people, through local forums.</p>

<sup>27</sup> Cited in Egan, Beth and Lee, Sarah (2003), Get Involved, Citizenship 21, Stonewall.

<sup>28</sup> Diagnosis: Homophobic, PACE, 2001

<sup>29</sup> Second Best Value, Bristol LGB Forum. Tamsin Wilton and Carly Hall, 1999

<sup>30</sup> PACE is an organisation which responds to the emotional, mental and physical health needs of lesbians and gay men in the greater London area.

<sup>33</sup> Social Care Needs of Older Gay Men and Lesbians on Merseyside, Sefton Pensioners Advice Centre/Merseyside Lesbian and Gay Community Forum, 2003

<sup>34</sup> As We Grow Older, Polari Housing Association: London, Ruth Hubbard and John Rossington, 1995

<p>Research<sup>34</sup> shows that 83% of older lesbians and gay men want specific accommodation for older lesbian, gay and bisexual people and 75% want specific community care services.</p> <p>Southampton City Council' s Best Value pilot project scoping paper, 'A better life for older people' noted that older lesbian and gay people may experience psychological problems, loneliness, problems with access to social housing, safety problems especially regarding public transport and problems with access to health advice and treatment<sup>35</sup>.</p>	<p>Support and facilitate groups to self-organise through campaigning and partnership work to provide housing/accommodation specifically for older lesbian, gay and bisexual people.</p>
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<sup>35</sup> As We Grow Older, Polari Housing Association: London. Ruth Hubbard and John Rossington, 1995

<sup>36</sup> Southampton City Council, Best Value Pilot Project, 2001

<b>Community Safety</b>	
<b>The issues</b>	<b>Checklist for action</b>
<p>Many lesbian, gay and bisexual people feel unsafe in their own homes and communities. Research<sup>36</sup> found that 41% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Nottingham had been the victim of homophobic harassment and 49% were frightened to go to certain places.</p> <p>Decades of institutional and personal discrimination have left some lesbian, gay and bisexual people with little faith in the police and criminal justice system.</p> <p>However, a more open relationship is beginning to emerge, especially due to the development of LGB/police liaison forums.</p> <p>Same sex domestic violence remains a largely 'hidden' issue in lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.</p>	<p>Ensure confidentiality is prioritised in all safety work with lesbian, gay and bisexual people.</p> <p>Be a point of contact between the police and lesbian, gay and bisexual community, for example by catalysing an LGB Safety Group.</p> <p>Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people to become active in the field of safety and justice, for example by becoming independent members of Police Authorities.</p> <p>Include sexuality in the monitoring of police and safety services.</p> <p>Ensure relevant staff are familiar with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Policing Charter:</b> provides a framework for community policing, including setting up LGB/police liaison groups, providing training on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues to staff at all levels and ensuring homophobic hate crimes are effectively investigated and monitored.</li> <li>• <b>Crime and Disorder Act 1998:</b> outlines the duty of authorities and the police to create crime and disorder reduction partnerships for their area, including lesbian, gay and bisexual representatives.</li> <li>• <b>Crown Prosecution Service Homophobia Statement 2002:</b> gives guidance about homophobic crime and guarantees a level of service from the CPS and Criminal Justice Service.</li> </ul>

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<sup>36</sup> Survey by Gay and Bisexual Men's Health Project cited in Nottingham Community Safety and Youth Justice Partnership, (2001), An Audit of Crime and Disorder in Nottingham, Nottinghamshire Police and City of Nottingham.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Sexual Offences Act 2003</b> which represented the first major overhaul of sexual offences legislation for a century.</li></ul>
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<b>Culture and leisure</b>	
<b>The issues</b>	<b>Checklist for action</b>
<p>The administration of local arts, sport and leisure services can make an enormous difference to lesbian, gay and bisexual people. If organised inclusively, it can help to break down prejudice by educating others about the reality of lesbian, gay and bisexual life.</p> <p>Gay 'villages' or 'scenes' can be a vital part of a lesbian, gay and bisexual community, providing many social and economic opportunities.</p> <p>Information is particularly vital for lesbian, gay and bisexual people, especially those who are exploring their sexuality or living in an unsupportive environment.</p>	<p>Where possible, provide core funding and practical support to LGB community groups.</p> <p>Ensure that lesbian, gay and bisexual people can provide input into bodies that control LGB venues, such as licensing committees.</p> <p>Ensure that family tickets and passes for leisure and arts venues recognise lesbian, gay and bisexual partners and families.</p> <p>Support arts projects, such as drama, that enable lesbian, gay and bisexual people to express themselves and others to build their understanding.</p> <p>Include a variety of lesbian, gay and bisexual titles, plus information about LGB groups, in main and community libraries. Ensure that borrowing services are confidential.</p> <p>Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people to become active in the field of culture and leisure, for example by joining the users' group of a library.</p> <p>Include sexuality in the monitoring of the take up of culture and leisure services.</p> <p>Ensure relevant staff are familiar with guidance from the <b>Department for Culture, Media and Sport</b> which states that cultural strategies must both provide high quality services and address social exclusion. So, strategies and services should be developed in consultation with marginalised groups, including lesbian, gay and bisexual people.</p>

## 4 Community development and involvement

**This chapter focuses on practical ways of engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. It describes the tools that are available to do this including Best Value, Community Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships. The experiences documented provide examples of the ways in which authorities have consulted and sponsored lesbian, gay and bisexual community groups. The checklist for action provides examples of the steps authorities can take to involve and support such groups.**

### Tools for community engagement

Local authorities now have a wide variety of tools and processes available to facilitate their engagement with lesbian, gay and bisexual and other marginalised communities. These include Best Value, Community Strategies, Compacts, Local Strategic Partnerships and Neighbourhood Renewal. They present an unprecedented opportunity for local authorities to reach out to and build relations with 'communities of interest' and to incorporate their needs into corporate plans and strategies.

**Best Value** requires that a comprehensive approach is taken to consultation covering all sections of the community including hard to reach groups: Audit Commission guidance advises that such groups are likely to include lesbians and gay men.

Often the voices that particularly need to be heard are the very ones that are most likely to be unrepresented. For example, depending on the objectives of the consultation in question, particular efforts may be necessary in order to hear from specific age groups, rural populations, disabled people, ethnic groups, gay and lesbian people and disadvantaged or homeless people.

### **Connecting with users and citizens - User Focus, Audit Commission, 2003**

The requirement to produce a **community strategy** is a central strand of the modernisation agenda and a statutory duty for all principal authorities. The aim is for local authorities, with their partners, to develop comprehensive strategies for promoting well-being in the community as a whole. Government guidance stresses the need for particular measures to involve 'marginalised communities'<sup>37</sup>. LGA guidance emphasises that the process of community planning should involve an outward focus, full consultation and involvement and close partnership working<sup>38</sup>. Local authorities therefore need to consider how lesbian, gay and bisexual communities can be engaged in the community

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<sup>37</sup> Preparing Community Strategies, DETR, 2000

<sup>38</sup> Preparing Community Strategies: issues for local authorities, LGA, 2000

planning process and how their priorities can be acknowledged and incorporated.

**Local Strategic Partnerships** (LSPs) are a key mechanism for promoting community well-being, developing community strategies and determining Local Area Agreements. Community participation is central to the partnership process<sup>39</sup>. The 2002/03 accreditation guidance listed 'inclusive' as one of the criteria and identifies the need for LSPs in conjunction with Community Empowerment Networks to 'engage those traditionally excluded and alienated from local decision making processes including lesbian and gay people'<sup>40</sup>. However, from spring 2004 LSPs in the 88 most deprived areas have not been required to undergo accreditation. Instead, they need to have a performance management framework.

**Local Area Agreements** (LAAs) are three year agreements, based on local Sustainable Community Strategies, that set out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central Government, represented by the Government Office (GO), and a local area, represented by the local authority and other key partners through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). The primary objective of an LAA is to deliver genuinely sustainable communities through better outcomes for local people. It's also about decisions affecting local areas being made by local people, not Whitehall. LAAs also have the secondary objectives of: improving Central and Local Government relations; enhancing efficiency strengthening partnership working; and offering a framework within which local authorities can enhance their community leadership role. LAAs are structured around four blocks (or policy fields): children and young people, safer and stronger communities, healthier communities and older people, and economic development and enterprise. Equality and diversity issues, including sexual orientation, are important cross-cutting issues and as such should be reflected in LAA outcomes, targets and indicators. It is also important for consultation on LAAs to reach out into the LGB community.

## **Engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities**

To engage successfully with lesbian, gay and bisexual people, it is vital for local authorities to acknowledge the capacity of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. Capacity building is an on-going process of investing resources, including time, enthusiasm and, where possible, funding. Lesbian, gay and bisexual communities often have a rich history of activism producing many talented campaigners committed to working for equality. However, as a sector, LGB groups can be relatively insecure and unstable largely due to a lack of funding, exclusion from the mainstream, institutional discrimination and a lack of capacity building. For example, research in Birmingham<sup>41</sup> found that, despite

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<sup>39</sup> Local Strategic Partnerships consultation document, 2000

<sup>40</sup> Accreditation 2002/03, Guidance for Local Strategic Partnerships, ODPM, 2002

<sup>41</sup> Access and Inclusion: Mapping Birmingham's LGB Communities, Birmingham LGB Forum, Gudrun Limbrick, 2001

each group providing services for 5–15,000 people per year, 87% of LGB groups were entirely voluntary, 81% had less than 5 volunteers and 45% had an annual income of under £500. It also found that there was a particular lack of groups responding to the needs of marginalised lesbian, gay and bisexual people, including Asian women and older Asian men.

Local authorities therefore need to consider ways in which they can work with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. What social, practical and financial support can be provided to help the sector develop, engage with the authority and play a full role in the community?

There is no one blueprint for engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. It can be challenging and frustrating. However, it can also result in considerable benefits, for lesbian, gay and bisexual communities, the authority and the wider community. It is important to identify the methods, attitudes and resources that will ensure success and sustainability.

It is important to respect and build upon whatever lesbian, gay and bisexual infrastructure already exists and enabling their participation in community networks. In particular, this includes working with the growing number of LGB forums and bodies that have a two-way role in terms of:

- Providing a means for the local LGB sector to have strength in numbers by bringing groups and community members together and enabling them to have more impact than they would have on their own.
- Providing a means for local services, such as education or social services departments, to have a contact point through which to consult a broad range of local groups and individuals, for example about what their needs are and how services could be improved.

It is also particularly important to recognise the diversity of the LGB sector. Just as there is no one 'type' of lesbian, gay or bisexual person, there is no one 'type' of LGB group. Each has its own strengths and needs.

## **Funding**

The issue of funding is often complex and sensitive. The LGB sector may feel marginalised and may have experienced difficulty in accessing financial support from local authorities and other funding bodies. However, local authorities may be the main or only source of funding for existing groups, especially to cover core costs, such as salaries, office rent and administration. In practice, providing funding can create complex dynamics between authorities and groups, particularly in relation to ownership and independence.

In practice, there is no need for an 'either / or' scenario. LGB groups can both receive funding from their local authority *and* make an independent contribution to decision making. Clear lines of communication and terms of reference should

enable an LGB group to remain free to comment on the policies and practices of their authority without the risk of having funding removed.

## **Taking responsibility**

**Council leadership and senior managers.** Leading councillors and senior managers have a vital role to play in developing relations with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. This role is twofold, convincing lesbian, gay and bisexual people that the authority's interest is genuine and comes 'from the top', and convincing the outside world (including the local press and the public) that lesbian, gay and bisexual communities matter and are valid recipients of the authority's support.

They can have both practical and symbolic roles. Practically, they can be a driving force behind corporate plans and policies that recognise and support lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. Symbolically, they can provide a supportive figurehead, sponsoring and appearing at lesbian, gay and bisexual events, such as Pride.

**Non-executive members.** Non-executive members also have a role to play in developing and maintaining relationships with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. This can be done by involving LGB groups in area and ward based forums and partnerships and encourage local community organisations to engage with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. They can also demonstrate the council's commitment to engagement by taking steps to reach lesbian, gay and bisexual constituents and enabling them to voice their concerns and grievances when and where they wish to.

## **Experiences**

### ***Tools for engagement***

**Bristol City Council** has developed Compacts with 'communities of interest', as well as geographic communities. For the lesbian, gay and bisexual community, this involved a process whereby, over the course of a year, three people from the Bristol LGB Forum collaborated with the council's head of community development to draft a text and consult with over 250 people.

The Compact set out the relationship between the authority and the LGB voluntary sector, including what each side was committing to in terms of quality, consultation and accountability. Its most important role was to act as a catalyst for action. For example, it contributed to funding being made available for a development worker for the LGB Forum and paved the way for the production of a policy document for the council's social services department about lesbian, gay and bisexual related issues in service provision. Some of the lessons learned

from the process were that it is vital to consult as many people as possible and to have practical outcomes designed into the process from the start. It was also learned that, as well as getting support from the highest level in the council, it is vital to provide practical training, including to social services staff, in order to challenge homophobia in the authority's every day work practices.

In 2003 **Manchester City Council** launched a consultation exercise through the Local Strategic Partnership on equality and social inclusion. A consultation paper was circulated to partnerships in the LSP and residents, tenants and community and voluntary groups in order to ensure input from 'excluded communities'. The consultation exercise sought views on defining social inclusion and equality, equality and inclusion objectives, self defined communities, thematic partnerships, community planning and service improvements.

**Wellingborough District Council's** Local Strategic Partnership has an equalities group that was set up to ensure that equal opportunities issues are integrated into the delivery of the council's community plan. The group takes a 'spot check' approach to examine issues such as harassment and hate crime. The group provides a mechanism for advocates of client groups in the community to have access to strategic decision makers. A key aspect of its approach has been long term planning and joined up thinking. For example, by tackling attitudes in schools, it hopes to prevent hate crime in the future.

In order to complement its Citizen Panel project, **Lewisham Council** has established a lesbian and gay panel to enable the council to find out the views of local lesbians and gay men. The panel consists of a group of Lewisham residents and voluntary sector representatives who meet regularly with the council to discuss and represent issues that concern the lesbian, bisexual and gay community to the council.

### ***Developing and using community forums***

In 2001, **Kirklees Metropolitan Council** adopted a new equalities structure including an overarching equalities partnership and four equalities networks for women, black and ethnic minority people, disabled people and lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Previously the council had advisory committees on gender, race and disability but no specific provision on sexuality. The lesbian, gay and bisexual equality network was therefore established as an integral part of the new structure and its development facilitated by a dedicated internal secondment.

In 2003 **Liverpool City Council** gave its backing to a re-launch of the Merseyside Lesbian & Gay Community Forum. The group promotes consultation

and dialogue between the lesbian and gay community, and the council who have a key role in supporting and advancing the group's activities. The group, which has drawn up an action plan for 2003/04, will hold regular meetings to which all gay men and lesbians who live; work and play in Liverpool are welcome to attend. The re-launch took place in the wake of recommendations of a public review of equal opportunities by councillors and residents which found that the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people were not being recognised.

### ***Celebrating diversity***

In 2001, **Brighton and Hove City Council** supported a 'Celebrating Diversity' campaign to value difference and challenge discrimination with the involvement of community groups, schools, individuals, local agencies, businesses and Councillors.

Some of the results of the campaign included: a debate at the Town Hall on 'Have they stopped laughing at us and started to laugh with us?' with Graham Norton and Sandi Toksvig; and Fact Packs about five key themes - ageism, discrimination against disabled people, homophobia, sexism and racism. In addition, the Community Chest was awarded to a variety of projects and events to help celebrate the City's diversity.

In 2003, **Birmingham City Council** hosted the national conference of Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (FFLAG). This involved providing a wide range of political and practical support, including getting the endorsement of the cabinet member for equalities and human resources, providing a venue, helping with logistics and designing the booking form. It also involved having welcome messages for delegates on city centre notice boards and articles in the council's own newsletter.

### ***Sponsoring the development of resources***

**Croydon Council** funded and developed a directory of local and national LGBT organisations. It published 5,000 copies and distributed them to all voluntary sector organisations, the Police, Croydon Health and other agencies in the borough, as well as to national contacts via seminars and conferences. In addition, it posted an electronic version of the directory on the Croydon Anti-Homophobia Action website ([www.croydonaha.co.uk](http://www.croydonaha.co.uk)).

**Bristol City Council**, Bristol LGB Forum and the Terrence Higgins Trust have collaborated to develop a guide to gay life in Bristol. The resource, which is

funded by the authority, includes a map and contacts details for both lesbian, gay and bisexual friendly venues and services in the city.

**Northamptonshire County Council** has developed 22 thematic partnerships through which it invests in the voluntary and community sectors, one of which is sexuality equality. In 2003/04, project funding was agreed for Northamptonshire LGB Alliance to produce the first Northamptonshire LGB Oral History Archive, which will be made available thorough libraries in the county. The project will also promote the Alliance and its services and enable the LGB community to present their experiences to the public in order to educate and eliminate prejudice and homophobia.

In 2001 **Luton Borough Council** included lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered (LGBT) issues as a theme in its Voluntary Sector Grants Awards. In this context the newly formed Luton LGBT Steering Group applied for funding and received a small grant of £5,000. The group includes members of the LGBT community who live and/or work in Luton, and people who provide services for LGBT people in the town.

### ***Corporate consultation strategies***

**Sunderland City Council's** Corporate Community Consultation Framework includes an objective to involve all sections of the community including hard to reach groups such as lesbians and gay men. The framework includes a number of action points to deliver this objective including staff advisors for each hard to reach group, advice on consulting such groups and equalities issues, the inclusion of such groups in relevant databases and the provision of specialist training on consultation with such groups.

**Redditch Borough Council** targets specific groups which are 'traditionally hard to reach' to engage their views and concerns including through the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Forum.

### ***Embedding equality and diversity in partnership working***

The **Swindon Local Area Agreement** incorporates an equality and diversity policy statement, including sexual orientation, to complement Swindon Borough Council's existing equality policies. The statement includes a commitment to a series of equality objectives. All partners within the LAA have made a

commitment to renew and align their equality and diversity intentions into a single deliverable equalities policy by April 2009

In **Leicester**, the drafting of the Local Area Agreement included a paper by the Equalities and Diversity Partnership and the Equality and Diversity Support Service which described how equality and diversity would be embedded vertically and horizontally into the LAA.

### ***Consulting lesbian, gay and bisexual communities***

To gather the perspectives of local lesbians about community safety, **Leeds City Council** sponsored a one day Community Safety Seminar for the West Yorkshire area. The event was co-ordinated by an independent group of lesbians who used their networks to attract over 30 participants. The seminar highlighted the women's priorities, which, where possible, were then fed into relevant local initiatives. For example, concerns about harassment at taxi ranks near to gay bars were incorporated into the LGBT Policing Initiative, while concerns about same sex domestic violence were incorporated into the Inter-Agency Steering Group on Domestic Violence.

**Bristol City Council** invited local LGB groups to provide feedback on a draft Community Strategy<sup>42</sup>. This gave the lesbian, gay and bisexual community an opportunity to voice their opinions and priorities in relation to life in the City and the authority's services. It highlighted key areas of concern, such as housing (e.g. the need for a hostel for young people leaving care), transport (e.g. the need for sexuality awareness training for all bus and taxi drivers) and education (e.g. the need for schools to develop policies on homophobic bullying). Lesbian, gay and bisexual people also expressed a wish for an LGB community centre, a partnerships register and a directory of LGB services.

At **Bradford City Council**, it became clear that, for the authority's equalities and regeneration work to succeed, it was necessary to shift away from focusing on geographical communities and towards 'communities of interest'. Several groups, including Bradford LGB Network, worked together to change how Neighbourhood Renewal defined 'community' and raised awareness about the importance of safety to successful engagement.

The result was that lesbian, gay and bisexual and other marginalised communities were integrated into the Neighbourhood Renewal process, with

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<sup>42</sup> Second Best Value, Bristol LGB Forum, Tamsin Wilton and Carly Hall, 1999

targets set that took into account their needs, including capacity building. This was backed up by regeneration funding that was given to a commissioning panel made up of people from community organisations and district councillors, with a remit to distribute the funds district-wide and among 'communities of interest'. With the funding, the LGB network started to develop a resource base for lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

Bradford has now developed a cycle of annual consultation and action planning with 'communities of interest' that focuses on key services (e.g. health, housing and community safety) and parallels the work being done with geographical communities. This means that all communities in the city have a direct say in how regeneration money is spent and, in the longer term, will be able to influence how services for their community are designed.

In 2006 **Liverpool City Council's** Community Safety Team commissioned Stormbreak to consult with LGBT people who lived, worked or socialised in the city to assess perceptions of safety, explore perceptions of the police and other agencies, identify barriers to reporting homophobic crime, advise how to provide a safer reporting framework and identify gaps in service provision and the means to overcome them.

*Communities need to be consulted and listened to, and the most effective initiatives are often those where communities are actively involved in their design and delivery. Often, this applies as much to 'communities of interest' – like black and minority ethnic groups, faith communities, older/younger people, disabled people or bisexual, lesbian and gay communities – as it does to geographical communities.*

## **Neighbourhood Renewal and involvement of communities of interest, ODPM**

### **Checklist for action**

#### ***Be creative about consultation***

**Review community development strategies.** Take steps to ensure that lesbian, gay and bisexual communities are included and identify opportunities for investment and capacity building.

**Use a variety of methods.** For example, you may consider working with organisations such as Age Concern to reach older lesbian, gay and bisexual people or MIND to reach lesbian, gay and bisexual people with mental health problems. Informal networks such as friendship and support networks may provide valuable in-roads.

**Use word of mouth.** For example, use the 'snowballing' technique of asking each lesbian, gay or bisexual person or representative you contact to pass information on to others in order to raise awareness and build a network of contacts.

**Recognise diversity.** Make proactive efforts to include marginalised lesbian, gay and bisexual people, such as those who are disabled or from black and ethnic minority communities.

**Consider using the Compact model.** Draw up an agreement between the council and the LGB sector that outlines what each side will commit to in terms of consultation, collaboration and quality of service provision. Use this as an opportunity to consult broadly with the lesbian, gay and bisexual community about your authority and to assess the capacity needs of the LGB voluntary sector.

### ***Be prepared to invest in community development***

**Consider offering seed funding.** Join other public and private sector agencies to fund a needs assessment of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities or a consultation process to identify priorities and next steps.

**Consider capacity building.** If the LGB sector is non-existent or underdeveloped in your area consider how grant funding can be used to support the creation of help lines and support groups. Check whether the provision of local authority premises and meeting rooms might be helpful.

**Provide information and advice.** Produce fact sheets about community strategy forums, community empowerment networks, crime reduction partnerships, local strategic partnerships, and any other local community wide forums, so that lesbian, gay and bisexual citizens can learn about what these forums do and how they can contribute.

**Provide access to practical support.** For example, assist LGB groups in finding a safe venue where they can run a help-line, give them advice about fundraising or put them in touch with organisations that run training courses for management committees.

**Support inter-sectoral networking.** For example, encourage LGB voluntary sector groups to get to know and be able to make referrals to black and ethnic minority groups, and vice versa. Also, provide different equalities sectors with the opportunity to hear each others' concerns and work together, for example through a local strategic partnership sub committee.

**Develop formal contracts.** Draw up a written agreement outlining what you expect from the LGB group (e.g. in terms of outputs and monitoring). The agreement should clarify that, even if it receives funding from your authority, it

can remain independent and has the right to comment on strategies and services.

### ***Be strategic about involving lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.***

**Integrate lesbian, gay and bisexual community engagement into the heart of your corporate planning** rather than treating it as an add-on or 'special' area. For example, include relevant issues in your organisation-wide equalities plan, your business plan and the individual action plans for each service.

**Target consultation.** Identify who within the LGB sector you will consult with, why, when and how and be transparent about how you made your decision.

**Work within a realistic timeframe.** For example, give both your own employees and the LGB sector adequate notice about your intentions to involve the lesbian, gay and bisexual community, so that they can incorporate the activities into their work plans.

**Don't see involvement as an end in itself.** Instead, recognise that there is a constant need for your authority to keep taking stock of its work, re-checking its information and strengthening its relationships.

**Invite representatives to meetings.** These might include meetings in relation to Community Strategies, Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements, and Neighbourhood Renewal.

### ***Be prepared to consider financial support to LGB groups***

**Consider providing medium / long-term core funding.** Even if a LGB forum is run by volunteers, consider a grant to cover its basic infrastructure (e.g. office space, venue hire, outreach) and expenses (e.g. travel to meetings), so that it can function effectively and participate fully in consultation processes.

**Consider providing project funding.** For example, give grants for assessments of the needs of younger or older lesbian, gay and bisexual people or for community arts projects to raise awareness about homophobia.

**Consider paying for knowledge and participation.** If everyone else involved in a consultation is being paid a fee or at least their expenses, in order to participate, this should also apply to lesbian, gay and bisexual representatives.

## 5. Local authority employees

**This chapter addresses the responsibilities of local authorities as employers of lesbian, gay and bisexual people and discrimination at work. The experiences documented include ways of addressing discrimination in employment in partnership with external organisations, trade unions and lesbian, gay and bisexual employee groups. The checklist for action provides examples of the steps authorities can take to ensure dignity and respect at work and ensure equality in conditions of service.**

### Discrimination at work

Research has demonstrated that workplaces can be sites of hostility and prejudice for lesbian, gay and bisexual people<sup>43</sup>. Discrimination against lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in employment can manifest itself in a variety of ways including insulting behaviour, physical attacks, threats and other forms of harassment.<sup>44</sup>

Research by the Trades Union Congress (TUC)<sup>45</sup> showed that 44% of lesbian and gay trade unionists, most of whom were public sector workers, had suffered discrimination because of their sexuality. A survey of UNISON's lesbian and gay members in 2003 found that 52% had experienced discrimination because of their sexuality. Only 5% felt positive about the way their employer had dealt with the incident.<sup>46</sup>

No matter how strong your corporate planning or policies for service provision are, your authority will only have limited success in lesbian, gay and bisexual issues if you do not provide a safe, supportive and respectful environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees.

Public service employers should lead by example in demonstrating a commitment to equal opportunities. The workforce should reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. Like service users, public service workers have the right to be treated with dignity and respect irrespective of gender, race, sexual orientation, disability or age. In a service where harassment of staff goes unchallenged, service users will probably also face harassment. A service which reserves its career opportunities for just certain of its staff is not likely to treat the diversity of users with the respect and service that is their right.

### **Fairness at work, UNISON Equality and Inclusion, A public services agenda for lesbians and gay men, 2001**

<sup>43</sup> Less Equal Than Others, Stonewall, 1993

<sup>44</sup> Discrimination against gay men and lesbians. A study of the nature and extent of discrimination against homosexual men and women in Britain today, SCPR, 1995

<sup>45</sup> Trades Union Congress, 1999

<sup>46</sup> Research conducted for UNISON by LAGER, Lesbian and Gay Employment Rights, 2003

New research conducted by the Comparative Organisation and Equality Research Centre at London Metropolitan University between 2004 and 2006 demonstrates that working in a 'gay friendly' environment has a positive impact on the job satisfaction of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) workers and can lead to greater confidence, improved productivity, and increased loyalty and pride in the employing organisation.

In contrast, working in a homophobic environment can cause LGB workers to feel stressed, excluded and ostracized and may result in self-censorship, problems with concentration and ultimately a desire to leave. The research focused on the experiences of LGB people at work within sixteen 'good practice' employers following the introduction of the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations in 2003, including four local authorities. The two-year European Social Funded (ESF) research project was based on in-depth interviews with more than 150 lesbian, gay and bisexual workers plus human resource and line managers, trade union representatives and LGBT group chairs.

Key findings from the research included:

- Coming out at work can enable lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) workers to feel confident at work; have a happier work experience; foster openness and interaction and improve productivity.
- Equal opportunities policies; same sex benefits; positive employer and trade union signals; the existence of LGB(T) groups, the presence of LGB colleagues and LGB senior managers can help LGB people come out.
- LGB people may be prevented from coming out by fears about career progression; lack of visible senior LGB staff; temporary employment status; previous negative experiences of discrimination and harassment; desiring privacy; 'macho' or religious attitudes/behaviours of co-workers.
- The extent to which homophobia is accepted or challenged within the workplace is a key indicator of inclusion for LGB workers. Concerns were expressed about the enforcement of policy within organisations and the way in which organisations relied on LGB people to come forward and 'whistle blow' before tackling problems.
- Discrimination and harassment can play a part in LGB workers' decisions to avoid promotion or stay within certain parts of organisations. A homophobic or unsafe environment and an inability to come out at work can result in LGB people leaving organisations.

The study underlines the heterogeneity of LGB workers in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability, age, occupation, and desire to be out at work. Organisations need to develop policies, procedures and structures which recognise this if they wish to be inclusive and representative.

The introduction of the Employment Equality (SO) Regulations 2003 has had a positive impact on the willingness of LGB to raise a grievance about discrimination at work.

A copy of the research report is available at [www.workinglives.org](http://www.workinglives.org).

## **The statutory framework**

In December 2003, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 came into force in the UK. The regulations are a requirement of European Union Council Directive 2000/78/EC. Guidance on the regulations is available from the DIALOG team at the Improvement and Development Agency. UNISON, like other unions, has prepared negotiating advice and training materials. Guidance is also available from ACAS and Stonewall has produced Employers' Guidelines and an Employee's Briefing.

The regulations represent a major legislative change that all employers, including local authorities, will be required to comply with. They cover direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment in employment and vocational training, on the grounds of sexual orientation. Employees who believe that they have been discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation are able to take discrimination cases to employment tribunals.

In order to comply with the new legislative provisions, local authorities need to undertake a comprehensive review of their policies and practices relating to employment and equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Since December 2003 a number of cases have been upheld under the Regulations. These include:

- A gay office manager who claimed constructive dismissal on the grounds of sexual orientation. He won £35,000 at an employment tribunal, at which he said that his sales manager continually referred to his sexuality and once phoned him saying: "Just a queer word - err, I mean just a quick word," and that he was taunted as a "queen" for ordering a cocktail. The Stratford tribunal found that Whitfield had been victimised because of his sexual orientation and had suffered sustained abuse at a waste disposal company.
- A gay man who resigned from his job after finding out that he had been the subject of a homophobic remark from a colleague. In his claim for unfair dismissal and harassment, he told an employment tribunal that his dignity had been violated. The tribunal held that the term used was "exceptionally offensive" and awarded the claimant nearly £10,000 in compensation. Experts say this case is a landmark ruling that in effect prohibits the use of homophobic language in the workplace, and has

important implications for all employers because the offending comment was not made directly to the victim.

- A UK designer who was dismissed for using a company computer to send explicit e-mails to her lesbian lover won her claim for unfair dismissal. An employment tribunal had heard that she was fired because she had let her standard of work slip because of her "excessive" email use, which the company said constituted gross misconduct. The woman claimed that she was unfairly dismissed. The tribunal awarded her £26,245 for unfair dismissal and said that the firm had "grossly overstated" the problem and that they should have warned her instead of sacking her.
- A gay man who was repeatedly referred to as "gay boy" by his manager had his claim for unfair and constructive dismissal upheld. The tribunal commented that "it is hard to envisage conduct more likely to shatter the trust and confidence of an employee in his employer," and the council had "signally failed in their duty to an employee who has been bullied and harassed, contrary to their own express policies." The employer and the harasser were both found by the tribunal to have breached the Sexual Orientation Regulations. Having explicit and comprehensive equality policy statements and policies provide little defence for employers if they fail to act on those policies.

In 2006, Acas carried out a programme of research aimed at providing a detailed understanding of the nature of employment tribunal claims brought under the Regulations. The research included an analysis of 470 cases brought and concluded between February 2004 and August 2006. Key findings were:

- Three in ten claims had a secondary jurisdiction, most commonly unfair dismissal and sex discrimination.
- Most claimants were lesbian or gay, very few were heterosexual.
- 21% or 98 of the 470 cases were within the public sector, a third of which were in local authorities.
- Allegations made by claimants most commonly related to bullying and harassment, including physical and particularly verbal abuse, which were in some cases long term and part of an alleged 'culture' of homophobia.
- Allegations of unfair treatment included subjecting people to extra scrutiny, treating them more harshly, excluding them from perks or benefits and denying them extra shifts.
- Those describing the impacts of alleged bullying and harassment referred to depression and anxiety.
- The main theme of employer responses to allegations was denial of bullying and harassment with limited use of the Acas helpline.

- Of the 470 cases, 52% were settled, 27% were withdrawn, 15% went to a full hearing and 7% had another outcome.
- The average settlement award was £2748; in 35% of cases it was more than £5000 and in 15% more than £10000.

## **Dignity and respect at work**

If lesbian, gay and bisexual people choose to be open about their sexuality, they risk discrimination in recruitment, training and promotion. Alternatively they are often forced to be silent about their sexuality which can cause stress and ultimately sickness and absence from work. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people should be free to say as much or as little as they like about their sexuality and to express their sexual identities in ways that are comfortable to them.

To enable lesbian, gay and bisexual employees to have dignity and respect at work, local authorities have a responsibility to ensure that homophobia and heterosexism are eradicated from workplaces. Lesbian, gay and bisexual employees should be able to be open about their sexuality without fear of hostility, ridicule and stereotyping from colleagues and managers. The provisions on harassment in the employment regulations refer to the violation of dignity and the creation of an offensive environment.

## **Taking responsibility**

**Senior managers.** Senior managers have a key leadership role in ensuring that workplaces that they are responsible for managing are free from discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual employees. Research has shown that well intended corporate employment equality policies can be obstructed at local management level, particularly where offices and other workplaces are small, dispersed and often remote from the main town hall or civic centre. Senior managers, therefore, have a responsibility to take proactive steps to ensure that policies are fully implemented and adhered to by all local or line managers they oversee.

**Trade unions.** Trade unions representing local authority workers have been working for many years on lesbian, gay and bisexual equality and have a variety of structures to enable the participation of lesbian, gay and bisexual members in policy development and bargaining. Consulting unions and involving them in the drafting, implementation and monitoring of new policies and procedures is essential. Engaging with unions is therefore a vital mechanism for tackling discrimination in the workplace. This is especially the case where authorities are dealing with lesbian, gay and bisexual issues for the first time.

## Experiences

### *Working with external organisations*

**Swindon Borough Council** is working in partnership with Embrace and Gay Men's Health (Wiltshire and Swindon) a local initiative set up to help combat social exclusion and discrimination in the work place.

**Brighton and Hove Council** and **Manchester City Council** have both organised LGBT Jobs Fairs. These events involved partnership with public and private sector employers and provided advice and information on jobs, careers, training and other employment matters.

**Nottinghamshire County Council, Birmingham City Council** and other local authorities are members of 'Diversity Champions' – a Stonewall scheme that brings together employers at the cutting edge of delivering diversity in business and public service and focuses on the new challenges and opportunities that affect them.

**Stonewall's** 'Diversity Champions' scheme brings together major organisations to develop and implement good diversity practice in the workplace and adds value to policy implementation.

'Diversity Champions' provides the opportunity for members to work with Stonewall and other organisations at the cutting edge of delivering diversity, to focus on the new challenges and opportunities for employers in addressing all diversity - including sexual orientation - in the workplace.

- An opportunity to help your organisation secure its place as a leader in its commitment to best practice in diversity.
- A way to ensure that your organisation's policy and practical responses to implementation of the new legislation outlawing discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation are as effective as possible. (The European Equality Framework Directive became effective on 2 December 2003)
- A means of clearly indicating your organisation's commitment to diversity.
- A source of advice and information, to help you to get the most business benefit from diversity – whether in recruitment, retention, staff motivation, customer and market awareness or corporate reputation.
- Supported by and made up of high-profile corporations and public sector organisations.
- Led by Stonewall, a recognised and trusted name with acknowledged expertise in the diversity field.

## ***Supporting LGB employees and trade union groups***

For **Staffordshire County Council**, setting up an LGBT employees group involved a number of stages, including getting the support of the Policy Advisory Group and the Chief Executive's Management Team, as well as advertising on the Council's intranet and in the Equalities and Social Services Departments' newsletters. Terms of reference were drawn up to outline how the group will initially focus on providing support to members, but, over time, may also function as an LGBT 'knowledge base', including providing strategic input into issues relating to LGBT service users. The group held its inaugural meeting - which was attended by about 20 people - at the beginning of 2003 and has been asked to nominate someone to sit on the Leader's Advisory Body, so as to provide a means of on-going communication with the Council's Executive.

**Bristol City Council's** Social Services and Health Department runs a support group for LGBT employees and has issued 'Guidelines on Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Equality' (2002). These cover work relating to adults and children and are to be used by Social Services managers and practitioners.

**Leicester City Council** has an LGBT staff group. The authority allows staff two hours of work time in which to attend, as well as providing a budget to cover lunch, publicity and the costs of guest speakers who come to talk about issues such as pension rights. A core of about five people also give additional time to do the business of the group, such as attending meetings of the personnel and equalities teams. The group often focuses on training and development issues, including putting pressure on different departments to have mandatory training on sexuality for senior managers and Councillors.

**Nottinghamshire County Council** has developed a set of guidelines based on over 20 years of having self-managed staff groups, including for Black and ethnic minority, disabled and LGBT employees. The guidelines include information about relevant policies, such as that each employee can spend up to 3 hours a month on activities relating to each group and that the Council will provide a budget of up to £1,500 for each group per year as well as basic administrative costs.

**Manchester City Council** has issued guidelines specifically for its lesbian and gay employees group. These provide an outline of all information relating to the group, including its role, work programme and budget.

In order to progress work on LGBT issues effectively **Sheffield City Council's** Corporate Equality Co-ordinating Group (CECG) established an LGBT Officer Group to work on employment and service delivery issues for LGBT people. The Group has representatives from every directorate as well as the Trades Union and will not function as a support group for LGBT officers but aims to:

- Address issues around disadvantage and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and transgender
- Raise the profile of the Council as a positive service provider and employer for LGBT people
- Develop consultation and support facilities for LGBT workers and service users
- Pursue the aims of the Local Government Equality Standard and the Council's Equality policy statement with regard to LGBT issues

*"Too many gay and lesbian people feel excluded and isolated in the workplace. We want to make sure that those individuals have a genuine opportunity to have their opinions heard and help us get services right for lesbian and gay employees".*

**Cllr. Pat Karney, Lead Member on Gay Issues, Manchester City Council**

### ***Non- discriminatory and anti harassment policies***

**Wolverhampton City Council**, in consultation with trade union representatives, has drawn up a programme of work to make sure the council complies with the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003. This includes revising the equal opportunities statement; updating procedures, guidance and all relevant policies; briefings for managers and team leaders; articles in internal bulletins; and information on the back of employee pay slips. The council is also considering going beyond the requirement of the Regulations, and extending the principles to service delivery responsibilities as well as employment.

**Greenwich Council** has a detailed code of practice on discrimination and workplace bullying which states its zero tolerance of discrimination and the seriousness with which it will treat any allegations. It sets out clear examples of what it means by discrimination against lesbians and gay men, including 'offensive jokes; ridiculing or name calling, comments or actions that are hostile to lesbians and gay men, or which stereotype them; display or circulation of offensive written or visual material; verbal abuse, threats or derogatory comments about people who are, or are assumed to be, lesbian or gay; intrusive questioning about a person's partnership or domestic circumstances; the

systematic exclusion of lesbians or gay men from workplace activities; the “outing” of a person by deliberately revealing their sexuality.’

At the request of the UNISON Lesbian and Gay Group, **Rushmoor Borough Council** amended all references to ‘spouse’ in its employment policies to ‘partner’, so unmarried opposite sex and same sex partnerships receive the same recognition and rights as married couples.

**Leeds City Council’s** birth and domestic leave policy states that women can choose which person they want to take leave when they give birth. This means that, for example, a lesbian employee is entitled to parental leave if her partner had a child in addition to maternity support leave, which is part of a national agreement. The council’s sexual harassment policy also acknowledges that lesbians and gay men can experience sexual harassment.

**Chesterfield Borough Council** has anti-harassment and bullying policy and a statement on the council’s equality policies and behaviour at work. The statement specifically includes reference to treating lesbian and gay colleagues with respect.

### ***Corporate policy and planning for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff***

**Devon County Council** has developed a ‘Policy on Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans People’. Among other measures, it outlines that, to achieve its objective of giving LGBT people equal and unprejudiced treatment, the Council will:

- *“Encourage a culture of openness about sexual orientation and ensure that LGBT employees have a safe and supportive environment in which to work.*
- *Ensure service users are aware that they do not have the right to refuse service from LGBT staff.*
- *Ensure that recruitment and selection is carried out in accordance with organisational standards and best practice.*
- *Manage staff fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination in terms of attitude, work allocations, promotion or other conditions of employment.”*

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the policy is effectively implemented and that regular reports are provided to the Corporate Management Board, Elected Members and UNISON.

**Bristol City Council's** Integrated Equalities Policy applies to all internal departments, as well as external organisations providing services to the authority. It outlines the Council's commitment to:

- *“Work towards enabling lesbian, gay, bisexual employees at all levels in the workforce to feel safe in being open about their sexual identity.*
- *Take positive action in conditions of service to take account of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual employees, including recognition of their needs as partners, as having partners and as parents/carers.*
- *Make provisions for anti-homophobia and heterosexism awareness training in existing training courses. Where necessary, make additional provision for such training in order to address issues, including the impact of heterosexism on the organisation, policy and activities of the Council, its employees and others acting on its behalf.”*

**Hampshire County Council's** Corporate Equalities Employment Policy states:

*The County Council recognise that lesbian, gay and bisexual people experience very different forms of oppression. A person's sexuality is not a matter which the County Council will take into account in determining suitability for recruitment, promotion, training or transfer for any post and will not be grounds for dismissal from any County Council job.*

*Harassment, whether physical or verbal, of lesbian, gay or bisexual people and their children by members of the public or colleagues will not be tolerated. The County Council is committed to maintaining grievance, disciplinary and other codes of practice to deal effectively with any incident that may occur. Information and training to increase awareness and support for the policy relating to lesbian, gay and bisexual employees is an essential aspect of its development.*

**Islington Council**, in its policy summary 'Dignity for All: Promoting Equality and Valuing Diversity', outlines its commitment to treating everyone fairly, regardless of their sexuality, sex, race, disability, etc. It states that, in relation to employees, the Council will:

- *“Target recruitment to strengthen under represented groups through campaigns, advertising and analysis of recruitment processes and policy.*
- *Make reasonable adjustments and provide necessary equipment and facilities for members of staff with disabilities.*
- *Ensure procedures and practices are fair so that the Council workforce can better reflect the community it serves.*
- *Run training and development schemes to underpin positive action initiatives, awareness of human rights and to educate staff about equalities issues.*
- *Consult with representative groups to gauge the working practices of the Council, test out strategies and receive feedback on policies and initiatives.*

- *Support staff through clear policies and procedures on complaints (including harassment, victimisation and bullying), proactive training, local harassment advisors and trained mediators.*
- *Ensure monitoring arrangements are sufficiently accurate to direct future policy development and target management action."*

It also states that managers will:

- *"Ensure the working environment is free of discrimination, including harassment, victimisation and bullying.*
- *Make it clear to staff that discrimination is unacceptable and will be treated as a serious matter and a disciplinary offence.*
- *Deal promptly and thoroughly with any complaints of discrimination including harassment, victimisation and bullying.*
- *Ensure fairness and equity of treatment in all employment practices.*
- *Work towards fair representation within the Council and individual departments, e.g. for minority ethnic staff, women and staff with disabilities, etc.*
- *Assess the performance and potential of any individual on merit, and without regard to stereotypes and assumptions.*
- *Ensure that policies and strategies are communicated to staff and provide management and staff with monitoring information related to equalities."*

**Birmingham City Council**, in the document 'Building Awareness and Understanding for Organisational Change', produced by its Equalities Division, outlines its intentions to create a supportive environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and service users alike. This includes stating that:

*"We need to learn from our diverse workforce and we do this by listening to them.*

*In striving to be an employer that celebrates diversity and promotes equality, it is important to consider how to become an employer of choice for LGBT people and build a workforce that is reflective of the community it serves.*

*There are hugely complex issues of visibility and confidentiality which clearly highlight that, as an organisation and as an employer, we have not yet fostered an environment that is understanding and non-threatening in respect of sexual orientation and transsexualism.*

*It is important to provide a safe arena for employees to discuss issues about their organisation and employment practices, as is true for black and ethnic minority, women, disabled employees and people within those groups who face multiple oppression."*

The document also outlines specific actions that the council will take.

## Checklist for action

### ***Develop and implement employment equality and anti-discrimination policies***

**Protect employees from harassment.** Tackle workplace discrimination by colleagues, managers and service users, by developing policies on homophobic harassment that guarantee confidentiality. Be prepared to discipline employees who harass, discriminate against or victimise other employees on grounds of their sexuality.

**Consider targeted recruitment advertising.** Advertise job vacancies in the lesbian, gay and bisexual press, and ensure that recruitment and selection procedures, including application forms and interview processes do not discriminate on grounds of sexuality. Or place a generic advertisement in the LGB media that invites and welcomes applications from within the LGB community and explains where people can get more information.

**Equality proof conditions of employment.** Ensure that lesbian, gay and bisexual employees are not disadvantaged in the provision of workplace benefits, relocation agreements, leave and childcare provisions by ensuring that they explicitly recognise lesbian, gay and bisexual relationships and families.

### ***Work from a basis of respect, confidentiality and inclusion.***

**Enable anonymity and confidentiality.** Avoid forcing people to 'out' themselves. Facilitate an anonymous lesbian, gay and bisexual discussion forum on the council's intranet. Enable a lesbian, gay and bisexual staff group to meet in a safe space. Ensure that entitlement to family friendly benefits is not dependent on people being out at work.

**Be inclusive.** Try to reach and involve a broad range of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees. For example, hold meetings at times of day that are convenient for community-based frontline staff who might, for example, find it difficult to leave their post at lunchtimes. Make sure that the language used is inclusive and appropriate.

**Promote LGB employee groups.** An LGB group should be seen as vital for your authority's image as an 'employer of choice'. It will attract staff who want to work in a supportive environment and to not have to hide aspects of their lives, including their sexual orientation.

**Work in partnership with LGB groups.** Go to LGB groups to consult and seek their input, rather than expecting representatives to come to you. Involve lesbian and gay employees and trade union groups in drawing up equality policies and practices and evaluating their implementation.

***Provide practical and financial support for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees groups.***

**Provide time off.** Enable attendance at employee and trade union groups. This will ensure equality of access across different departments.

**Provide employee support.** Incorporate the co-ordination and administration of the LGB group into somebody's job description, rather than expecting a committed group member to do this work in addition to their day job. Of course, in some cases groups may prefer to remain completely autonomous and only request that time off be agreed to attend meetings they administrate themselves.

**Provide a budget.** Cover the basic functions of the LGB group, such as hiring a venue, provide guest speakers expenses, producing a newsletter or having social events.

## 6. Monitoring and evaluation

**This chapter discusses the importance of evaluating lesbian, gay and bisexual equality initiatives. It emphasises the need for an outcome focused approach and examines the implications of monitoring performance in relation to sexuality. The experiences provided illustrate various approaches to collecting data on service delivery and employment. The checklist for action provides examples of the steps authorities can take to ensure a systematic, sensitive and informed approach.**

### An outcome focus

As with all other areas of local authority work, it is vital to know how effective your efforts to engage lesbian, gay and bisexual communities are and what type and level of impact you are achieving. This is necessary both to explain your efforts to the wider community and to demonstrate to lesbian, gay and bisexual people that your efforts related to engagement are making a real difference.

While it is important for corporate plans to be strong, it is even more important that they are put into practice and lead to tangible benefits for lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. Monitoring and evaluation will enable you to measure the efficacy of policies. The key is to ensure that policy implementation is outcome focused.

### Diversity monitoring

Monitoring the sexual orientation of employees and service users remains an issue about which there are a range of views. Both Stonewall and the TUC have produced relevant and useful guidance on monitoring which may provide a good starting point for local authorities thinking of introducing monitoring. Prejudice on the part of heterosexual people and concerns about confidentiality on the part of lesbian, gay and bisexual people mean that local authorities need to be cautious about undertaking monitoring. These factors will have an impact on the value of monitoring, because the data collected is unlikely to be representative or statistically useful.

Authorities therefore need to consider why they are asking employees or survey respondents to identify their sexual orientation. What are you going to do with the results? Are you going to use the results to set specific targets? How reliable will the results be? What can they tell you that will inform policy development or improve service delivery? Does monitoring place the spotlight on lesbian, gay and bisexual people or on the organisation? These are questions that require careful consideration if the data produced is to yield useful information.

Lewisham Council is committed to combating the discrimination faced by lesbians and gay men. We want to ensure equality of opportunity for lesbians and gay men across services and employment. The extent of discrimination against lesbians and gay men cannot be measured because the level of prejudice experienced by lesbians and gay men prevents many from "coming out". Direct consultation and monitoring will enable the Council to recognise the needs of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people and it may be appropriate to deliver some services separately. We will respect the rights of individuals to be open about their sexual orientation.

## **Lewisham Council Equal Opportunities Policy Statement**

### **Collecting and using data**

A distinction needs to be made between quantitative and qualitative data. You will need to assess what the data will tell you about the experiences of individuals as against the characteristics of the population at large. So far as the workforce is concerned, monitoring recruitment and promotion trends may be of limited value if people choose not to respond because they consider it an intrusion of privacy, or because they fear it will damage their career prospects.

However, anonymous staff surveys and exit interviews may provide valuable information about the experiences of employees. Workforce surveys can be used to measure the attitude of all employees to policy implementation. Similarly, where monitoring service users is concerned, data is unlikely to produce reliable information about numbers of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the community. But it can produce information about the needs and experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual service users. Research with local LGB groups can be used to measure the attitudes of lesbian, gay and bisexual service users.

### **Developing performance indicators**

The complexity of monitoring sexuality creates challenges when considering how performance in relation to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality policies can be measured. However, the fact that it may be difficult to measure the characteristics of the workforce or of residents in terms of sexual orientation does not mean that performance indicators cannot be developed.

Performance in relation to the implementation of employment policies can be measured by establishing systems to equality proof conditions of service. Performance in relation to service delivery can be measured in relation to service plans and training. Other performance indicators might focus on the use of inclusive and non-discriminatory language, confidentiality policies and practices and support for employee or union lesbian, gay and bisexual groups.

The corporate levers described in earlier sections of this guide can also be used to measure performance in relation to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality policies.

For example, the Equality Standard is a tool to measure performance in relation to equality and the Standard now incorporates sexuality. Sexuality should be acknowledged and integrated in the conduct of Best Value reviews. The scrutiny process can be used to investigate the efficacy of policy, the experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and residents and highlight gaps in service provision and areas for improvement.

## **Experiences**

### ***Monitoring service provision***

**Tower Hamlets Council's** 2003-04 Equalities Action Plan included an objective to establish corporate guidelines for diversity monitoring and a corporate policy to assess the adequacy of service information and diversity monitoring systems. Key activities include ensuring that diversity monitoring includes all six strands of equality including sexuality and developing equality performance indicators and targets including in the area of sexuality.

In its equal opportunities policy for service provision, **Manchester City Council** states that monitoring and review will be undertaken at two levels:

- Corporate - through the annual service plan and evaluation process.
- Departmental - through the annual planning and evaluation process.

It also states that Chief Officers will be expected to report regularly to their Service Committees and the Equal Opportunities and Community Consultation Sub-Committee on their Departments' progress and to report annually on the totality of their activities and specific objectives.

### ***Employee surveys***

In 2002, **Sheffield City Council** included a request for information as to whether employees considered themselves to be lesbian or gay in its corporate employee survey for the first time. The survey revealed that those who declared themselves to be lesbian or gay were generally less positive than other employees and this was particularly the case in terms of manager effectiveness, staff morale and communication groups. However, this seemed not to relate to feelings that they were discriminated against because of their sexuality. The council's LGBT officers group is to work with corporate policy to analyse the data from LGBT employees.

In 2002 the **London Borough of Waltham Forest** commissioned the Industrial Society (now the Work Foundation) to conduct a staff opinion survey on a range of issues including job satisfaction, management style, communications and training and development. The classification section of the survey questionnaire included a question about the sexuality of respondents. The council gave guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity. It assured employees that no-one from the council would be given access to the completed forms and that information about individual responses or responses of small groups would not be given to managers.

In 2005 **Rutland County Council** conducted a staff survey to explore discrimination on grounds of gender and sexuality.

In 2004 **Tower Hamlets Council** included a question about the sexuality of respondents in its staff survey which enabled it to assess the responses of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff in relation to a range of issues including job satisfaction.

### ***Evaluating equality initiatives***

In 2003 **Kirklees Metropolitan Council** carried out an evaluation of its equalities structures. The evaluation was carried out by the council's corporate development research team. A detailed questionnaire was circulated to all equality network members seeking their views on the operation of the networks and their effectiveness.

### ***Using corporate levers - Equality Standard***

The 2001-2002 Annual Report for **Bristol City Council's** Equalities and Social Inclusion Team states how the authority will evaluate its equalities work – including in relation to lesbian, gay and bisexual people as part of its commitment to meeting Level One of the Equality Standard by a target date. This is in order to give all stakeholders a measure of what the council has achieved and to allow comparisons with other authorities.

## *Using corporate levers - Scrutiny*

**Bristol City Council** also supported a Scrutiny Commission subcommittee to review its equalities forums and produce recommendations. This process aimed to achieve a better working relationship between the Council and the forums and, in particular, to help the latter to have more involvement in decision-making.

## *Using corporate levers – Best Value*

As part of its work to reach Level 2 of the Equality Standard, **Nottinghamshire County Council** has put a monitoring, evaluation and consultation strategy in place, whereby all departments are required to look at 'continual improvement in equality, through Best Value, business planning, project management etc.'

### **Checklist for action**

**Liaise with LGB groups.** Identify what helps lesbian, gay and bisexual people feel comfortable about monitoring. Involve representatives of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities at all relevant stages of monitoring and evaluation work, from setting criteria to analysing and disseminating results.

**Ensure an outcome focus.** Develop performance indicators to measure policy implementation and development.

**Use monitoring systems.** Ensure that sexuality is included in existing monitoring systems where appropriate. Integrate targets on sexuality into equalities action plans and service delivery strategies.

**Use corporate levers.** The Equality Standard, Best Value and Comprehensive Performance Assessment can all be used to assess performance in relation to lesbian, gay and bisexual equality.

**Commission research and evaluation.** Use research and evaluation to collect information that will inform decision making and effective policy implementation. Take advice from or commission those with experience of carrying out research with lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

**Include sexuality in surveys.** Ask questions that will help you to identify the experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in accessing and using services.

**Provide publicity material.** When collecting data on sexuality explain why questions are being asked, why sexuality is being monitored and how the data will be used.

**Provide training.** Equip employees who are required to hand out monitoring forms to service users with information so that they are able to respond to general queries or adverse reactions.

**Respect the position of respondents.** Clearly state that all questions are optional, that you can give an absolute guarantee that information will be treated as confidential and ensure that appropriate and respectful language is used.

**Be transparent.** Consult with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities about what work relating to lesbian, gay and bisexual people you need to evaluate, what criteria you will use, what processes you will adopt and what you will do with the information you gain.

## Appendix 1      Legislation

### Adoption

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 enables unmarried couples, including lesbian, gay and bisexual couples to adopt jointly. It is for adoption agencies, and ultimately the courts, to decide whether an individual couple is suitable to adopt. In order to be approved as adoptive parents, a couple need to prove that they have a stable and lasting relationship and that they can provide a loving family environment for a child.

Further information and guidance is available on the Department of Health's website, [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk), on the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering website, [www.baaf.org.uk](http://www.baaf.org.uk) and on the Stonewall website, [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk).

### Best Value

The Local Government Act 1999 imposes a duty on local authorities to:

*"...make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness."* [Section 3(1)]

This general duty is underpinned by a duty to consult local domestic and business rate taxpayers, service users and:

*"...representatives of persons appearing to the authority to have an interest in any area within which the authority carries out functions."* [Section 3(2) (d)]

Best Value proposes an approach to continuous improvement based on the need to ensure that modern public services are responsive to the needs of citizens, not the convenience of service providers. Therefore, the need for authorities to reach all sections of the community when conducting the Best Value review process is crucial. The statutory guidance on implementing Best Value is quite clear about authorities' responsibilities in this respect if they are to discharge the duty of Best Value. Authorities are reminded to:

*"...engage with users and potential users of services. A customer focus to Reviews is essential. It is important that authorities seek out the views of all potential users, especially those who have traditionally been under-represented. Those that fail to engage local people fully from the outset – including hard-to-reach groups – will carry little conviction when it comes to explaining decisions on service targets and selected providers, and invariably overlook real opportunities to bring about lasting change."* [DETR Circular, 10/99, 14 December 1999, para 17]

The salience of equity issues is also clearly emphasised:

*“...address equity considerations. Reviews should consider the way in which services impact on all sections of the community, including minority groups, and set targets to redress disparities in the provision of services to those that are socially, economically or geographically disadvantaged. Issues of social exclusion and isolation will be important ones for many authorities, and a service cannot be effective under Best Value unless it addresses equity considerations. Reviews should explicitly consider whether the authority complies with the relevant legislation.”* [DETR Circular, 10/99, 14 December 1999, para 17]

Local authorities are required to publish a Best Value performance plan, updated annually, as “the principle means by which an authority is held to account for the efficiency and effectiveness of its services, and its plans for the future.” Circular 10/99 states that BVPI’s must include:

*“...a consultation statement. A brief statement should be included explaining how the authority has complied with its duty to consult under Sections 3 and 5 of the 1999 Act. This could usefully comment on the forms and types of consultation carried out over the previous year, the numbers or types of groups, bodies and individuals involved and an analysis of the results. The statement could refer to previous consultations that have informed the performance plan, include contact details for those who wish to make representations, and provide information on how or where local people can remain involved or provide feedback. Any changes planned over the coming year to secure improved results from consultation should be highlighted.”* [DETR Circular, 10/99, 14 December 1999, para 45]

Further information and guidance is available on the Department of Communities and Local Government’s website, [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk) and on the Local Government Association website, [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk).

## **Community Strategies**

The Local Government Act 2000 imposes a duty on local authorities to prepare a “community strategy” for:

*“...promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area...”* [Section 4(1)]

This is underpinned by a duty for the authority, when preparing or modifying the strategy, to:

*“...consult and seek the participation of such persons as they consider appropriate.”* [Section 4(3) (a)]

Further information and guidance is available on the Department for Communities and Local Government's website, [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk) and the Local Government Association website, [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk).

## **Children**

The Children Act 1989 regulates the practices and procedures when courts and local authorities intervene in the lives of children and their families with a view to safeguarding and promoting children's well-being. The Act imposes a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who are looked after by Councils. In relation to sexuality and looked-after young people, the government has issued guidance on the implementation of the Act. This states that:

*"... those responsible for the sexual education of young people will need to bear in mind the particular needs of different young people... The needs and concerns of gay young men and women must also be recognised and approached sympathetically.*

*"Some young people may need considerable counselling before they do come to accept themselves... gay young men and women may require very sympathetic carers to enable them to accept their sexuality and to develop their own self esteem."* [The Children Act 1989, Guidance and Regulations, Vol.3, paras 9.50 and 9.53]

Authorities have been required to prepare mandatory children's services plans for their areas since 1996, and the Quality Protects programme requires involvement of service users in this planning process. Quality Protects emphasises the importance of listening to children when planning provision and support for them.

The framework introduced by the Act therefore places authorities under an obligation to recognise the existence of young lesbians and gay men in their care and to provide support that is sensitive and appropriate to their needs. Coming as it did only a year after the passage of Section 28, the framing of the Children Act suggests that social services departments, far from being inhibited by the Section, actually have a duty to engage with young lesbians and gay men in their care.

Further information and guidance is available on the Department of Health's website, [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk).

## **Civil Partnership**

The Civil Partnership Bill became law in November 2004 and came into effect on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2005. Civil partnership is a new legal relationship for lesbian and gay couples, aged 16 and over. It enables same-sex couples to gain legal

recognition for their relationship. It is not 'marriage' in the religious sense of the word, but gives lesbian and gay couples the same legal benefits and responsibilities as heterosexual married couples, just like a registry office wedding. Further information is available from the Stonewall website, [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

## **Crime**

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced a duty for authorities, working with the police, to create crime and disorder reduction partnerships and strategies for their areas. The Act includes statutory consultation requirements as part of the strategic process. It is now well understood that lesbians and gay men suffer above-average levels of crime victimisation. The need to ensure adequate consultation on crime with 'hard to reach' groups, such as lesbians and gay men, is also well understood.

The statutory guidance on the Crime and Disorder Act suggested that the home secretary would use his powers under the Act to require the police and local authorities to invite the full participation of lesbian and gay groups in the work of the new partnerships. The guidance advised that:

*"Seeking the involvement of the gay and lesbian community must be an active process not a passive one. This community is not always visible, and may for historical reasons not find it easy to engage in a dialogue with some of the groups involved in the partnerships... You must develop creative and flexible ways to break down any barriers which may exist locally, and to encourage full and active engagement in the work by local gay and lesbian people."* [Guidance on Statutory Crime and Disorder Partnerships, Crime and Disorder Act 1998, para 2.44, Home Office, July 1998]

The Crime and Disorder Strategies (Prescribed Descriptions) Order 1998 (SI 1998 No. 2452) requires the responsible authorities for crime and disorder partnerships to invite the participation of at least one group representing the interests of lesbians and gay men (para 3(2) (m) VI).

Further information and guidance is available on the Home Office's website, [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk).

The Sexual Offences Act 2003, which comes into force in May 2004, will provide the most radical overhaul of sexual offences legislation for 50 years.

The introduction of the new Act follows lengthy consultation which recognised that the laws on sexual offences were in need of modernisation. They did not reflect today's society and attitudes or provide effective protection against today's crimes. The Act focuses upon the protection of children and the most vulnerable, providing clear, coherent and an effective set of laws that will increase protection.

The Act is relevant to gay and bisexual men because it will involve the deletion of the offences of gross indecency and buggery from the statutes.

Further information and guidance is available on the Home Office's crime reduction website, [www.crimereduction.gov.uk](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk) and on the Stonewall website, [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk).

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 which received Royal Assent in November 2003, will for the first time recognise hate crime against lesbian, gay and bisexual people in UK law. The Act extends the current statutory duty on sentencers to increase sentences for offences aggravated by the victim's race and religion, so that it also includes offences aggravated by hostility towards the victim because of their sexual orientation or disability.

Further information and guidance is available on the Home Office website, [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk), and the Stonewall website, [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk).

## **Employment**

In December 2003, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 came into force in the UK. The regulations are a requirement of European Union Council Directive 2000/78/EC. The regulations cover direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment in employment and vocational training on the grounds of sexual orientation. Employees who believe that they have been discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation will be able to take discrimination cases to employment tribunals.

Further information and guidance is available on the Department of Trade and Industry website, [www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk), and the Stonewall website, [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk).

## **Goods, Facilities and Services**

In April 2007, the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force in the UK. The Regulations contain measures prohibiting discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises and the exercise of public functions. They provide protection from sexual orientation discrimination that is on a par with the protection already provided on grounds of race and sex; as well as new measures prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. The Regulations do not deal with employment<sup>1</sup> nor do they make specific provision to cover harassment. Guidance is available from the Department for Communities and Local Government [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk).

## Health

New powers to enable better 'joined-up' service delivery between health and local authorities came into force from 1 April 2000. The Health Act 1999 introduced pooled funding, lead commissioning and integrated provision so that the focus of attention will be how responsive agencies are to the needs of the service users rather than worrying about organisational boundaries.

The Act also established statutory Health Improvement Plans for every health authority area with a duty on the local authority to co-operate in the preparation of the plan. The health needs of lesbians and gay men, as for other minority and vulnerable communities, need to be taken into account in this planning process.

Further information and guidance is available on the Department of Health's website, [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk).

## Human Rights

The Human Rights Act 1998 formally came into force in October 2000. It incorporated the European Convention of Human Rights into UK law, thereby allowing individuals to petition the domestic courts in defence of their Convention rights, rather than having to take their claim to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg.

Further information and guidance is available on the Department of Constitutional Affairs website, [www.dca.gov.uk](http://www.dca.gov.uk).

The Equality Act 2006 established the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR). The CEHR is a single equality commission and is the first statutory body to protect Britain's lesbian, gay and bisexual population. The CEHR will promote an inclusive agenda, underlining the importance of equality for all in society as well as working to combat discrimination affecting specific groups. It will promote equal opportunities for all and tackle barriers to social and economic participation. The CEHR will cover the six strands of equality - age, disability, race, religion & belief, gender and sexual orientation, as well as human rights. Commissioners have now been appointed and the CEHR will be starting work in October 2007.

Further information is available from [www.cehr.org.uk](http://www.cehr.org.uk).

## **Appendix 2      Local Government Organisations**

### **London Councils**

London Councils,  
59 1/2 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0AL  
020 7934 9999  
[www.londoncouncils.gov.uk](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk)

Improvement Development Agency,  
Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG  
020 7296 6600  
[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

Local Government Association,  
Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ  
020 7664 3000  
[www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)

### **Lesbian and Gay Organisations**

Albert Kennedy Trust (Working with homeless lesbian and gay young people),  
Unit 305a Hatton Square, 16/16a Baldwins Gardens, London, EC1N 7RJ,  
020 7831 6562  
[www.akt.org.uk](http://www.akt.org.uk)

Consortium of Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Voluntary & Community Organisations,  
J111 Tower Bridge Business Complex, 100 Clements Road, London, SE16 4DG  
020 7422 8611  
[www.lgbconsortium.org.uk](http://www.lgbconsortium.org.uk)

Stonewall,  
46 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0EB  
020 7881 9440  
[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

Pink Parents,  
The D'Arcy Lainey Foundation, PO Box 417, Oldham, OL2 7WT  
08701 273274  
[www.pinkparents.org.uk](http://www.pinkparents.org.uk)

Polari (Housing for older lesbians and gay men),  
5h Floor Central House, 14 Upper Woburn Place, London, WC1H 0AE  
020 7255 4480  
[policy@polari.org](mailto:policy@polari.org)

Positive Parenting Campaign,  
C/o LGF Box 102, Unity House, 15, Pritchard Street, Manchester, M1 7DA,  
[postiveparenting@hotmail.com](mailto:postiveparenting@hotmail.com)

Regard - The national organisation of disabled lesbians and gay men,  
Unit 2J, Leroy House, Islington, London, N1 3QP  
020 7688 4111,  
[www.regard.dircon.co.uk](http://www.regard.dircon.co.uk)

Stonewall Housing,  
2a Leroy Business Centre, 436 Essex Road, London N1 3QP  
020 7359 6242  
[www.stonewallhousing.org](http://www.stonewallhousing.org)

Terence Higgins Trust,  
314-320 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8DP  
020 7812 1600  
[www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)

UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group,  
PO Box 51524, London, SE1 7ZW  
020 7922 7811  
[www.uklgig.org.uk](http://www.uklgig.org.uk)

## **Trade Unions**

Trades Union Congress (TUC)  
Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LS  
0207 636 4030,  
[www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)

GMB  
National Office, 22/24 Worple Road, London, SW19 4DD  
020 8947 3131,  
[www.gmb.org.uk](http://www.gmb.org.uk)

Transport and General Workers Union  
Transport House, 128 Theobalds Road, Holborn, London WC1X 8TN  
020 7611 2500  
[www.tgwu.org.uk](http://www.tgwu.org.uk)

UNISON  
1 Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9AJ  
0845 355 0845,  
[www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk)

## **Publications and resources**

### ***Best Value***

Building Equality into Best Value: A guide for Best Value Review Teams (Employers' Organisation/Improvement and Development Agency, 2003)

Modernising Local Government - Improving Local Services through Best Value (LGA response to DETR consultation paper, December, 2001)

No Quality without Equality (Employers' Organisation, 2001)

Department of Environment, Transport and Regions, circular 10/99, preparing for Best Value, 14 December 1999

### ***Children and parenting***

Lesbian and Gay Fostering and Adoption: Extraordinary yet Ordinary (S. Hicks and J. McDermott, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998)

### ***Community groups***

#### **Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual**

Get Involved, A guide to active citizenship for LGBT people (Citizenship 21/ Stonewall, 2002)

### ***Community Strategies***

Power to Promote or Improve Economic, Social or Environmental Well-being (DETR, Draft guidance, December 2000)

Preparing Community Strategies, statutory guidance (DETR, December 2000)

Preparing Community Strategies: issues for local authorities (LGA, 2000)

### ***Crime***

Without prejudice: A guide for community safety partnerships on responding to the needs of lesbians, gays and bisexuals (NACRO, 2002)

Policy for Prosecuting Cases with a Homophobic Element (Crown Prosecution Service)

Breaking the Chain of Hate. A National Survey Examining Levels of Homophobic Crime and Community Confidence towards the Police Service (National Advisory Group, 1999)

Queer Bashing (Stonewall, 1996)

## ***Employment***

Lesbian, gay and bisexual workers: Equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, Comparative Organisation and Equality Research Centre (London Metropolitan University, 2006)

Employee's Briefing: Discrimination at work – It's so over! (Stonewall)

Sexual Orientation Employer's Handbook (Stonewall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)

Sexual orientation and the workplace: a guide for employers and employees (ACAS, 2003)

Negotiating Equality for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Workers (UNISON, 2003)

Lesbian and gay workers' rights - an LRD guide (Labour Research Department, 2003)

Less Equal than Others: A survey of lesbians and gay men at work (Stonewall, 1993)

## ***Education***

Inclusive Schools: ending the exclusion of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth, Yorkshire (MESMAC, 2001)

Safe for All: A best practice guide to prevent homophobic bullying in secondary schools (Citizenship 21/Stonewall, 2001)

Sex and Relationships Education, Department for Education and Employment (Circular 0116/2000, Department for Education, July 2000)

Don't Suffer In Silence (Department for Education and Skills, 2000)

Social Inclusion: Pupil Support. (Circular 10/99, Department for Education and Employment, 1999)

Playing it Safe: Responses of Secondary School Teachers to Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Pupils, Bullying, HIV and AIDS Education and Section 28 (University of London, 1997)

Talking about Homosexuality in Secondary Schools (AVERT, 1997)

Young People, Schools and Sexuality issues, (Gloucestershire County Education Council)

### ***Health***

Mental health and social wellbeing of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals in England and Wales, (MIND, 2003)

From The Inside Out, Gay Community Health Service Southampton, 2002  
Diagnosis: Homophobic (PACE, 2001)

### ***Housing***

From outside to inside: How housing services can meet the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people (Stonewall Cymru and Triangle Wales, 2006)

Hidden in Plain Sight: Homelessness amongst Lesbian and Gay Youth (National Centre for Social Research, 2001)

Equality in housing: guidance for tackling discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation (National Housing Federation, 1999)

As We Grow Older. A Study of the Housing and Support Needs of Older Lesbians and Gay Men (Polari Housing Association, 1995)

Tackling discrimination against lesbians and gay men: A good practice guide for housing associations and voluntary organizations (National Housing Federation, 1994)

### ***Human rights***

Human rights at work: the implications of the human rights act for local authorities as employers (Employers' Organisation, October 2000)

Acting on rights – a guide to the Human Rights Act 1998 (LGA, May 1999)

### ***Older lesbians and gay men***

Planning for later life as a lesbian, gay man, bisexual or transgendered person (Age Concern England, December 2005)

Social Care Needs of Older Gay Men and Lesbians on Merseyside (Sefton Pensioners Advocacy Centre and Merseyside Lesbian and Gay Community Forum, 2003)

Planning for later life as a lesbian, gay man, bisexual or transgendered person (Information sheet) (Age Concern England, 2003)

Opening doors ... to the needs of older lesbians, gay men and bisexuals (Report) (Age Concern England, 2002)

Issues facing older lesbians, gay men and bisexuals (Age Concern, 2002)

Opening Doors: Working with older lesbians and gay men (Resource Pack) (Age Concern, 2001)

### ***Black and ethnic minority lesbians and gay men***

A Minority within a Minority: British Non-Heterosexual Muslims (A. Yip, 2003)

Community Pride- Not Prejudice. Making Diversity Work in Bradford (Bradford Vision, 2001)

The Low Down: Black Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexual People Talk About Their Experience and Needs (GALOP, 2001)

### ***Disabled lesbians and gay men***

Access to the Capital (Mayor of London & RNID, 2003)

Inclusion not Ignorance: Disabled Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Conference (Report) (GLAD, October 2002)

## ***Young lesbians and gay men***

Information and Guidance on Engaging Young Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People (Connexions, 2003)

Making Visible the Invisible - The Experience and Needs of Sandwell's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Young People (2002)

Pride and Prejudice (Save the Children, 1999)

Telling it like it is... Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Speak Out on Homophobic Violence (GALOP, 1998)



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