

**Make your services**

# welcoming and accessible

**to lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people**

Information about your service should represent lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people, for example in the language and pictures you use.

Don't make assumptions about the people using your services based on stereotypes

Making your services welcoming and accessible to lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people can improve their experience of services and improve their recovery.

"I worry about coming out to service providers as I am concerned that I will receive a lesser service once they know I am gay. Will they treat me differently, will they have a negative reaction or will they just not get it and I will have to spend an already stressful situation explaining to someone who I am and why that is important to the way they provide me with that service?"

**Consider your own**

# attitudes & behaviour

Homophobic attitudes are all around us in the media and we have all absorbed them to some extent. We can explore and **consider our own attitudes** by learning more:  
[www.equality.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.equality.scot.nhs.uk)

**Everyone has a sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is a combination of emotional, romantic, sexual or affectionate attraction to another person.**

**In other words, it's about who you are attracted to, fall in love with and want to live your life with.**

**It is the responsibility of all NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde staff to ensure that everyone who uses the health service or works for us is treated fairly.**

**By law, public organisations must promote equality and remove discrimination in the delivery of all their functions.**

**This guide will tell you how to ensure you are not discriminating on the grounds of sexual orientation.**

# Tackling homophobia!

# What is homophobia?

Homophobia is an **irrational fear** of, **aversion** to, or **discrimination** against people who are lesbian, gay or bi-sexual and towards homosexuality.

Homophobia is no different to racism or sexism and has **no place in NHSGQC**.

# Don't make assumptions

## Ask your patients about their sexual orientation

If we don't ask patients about their sexual orientation as part of our equality monitoring we won't understand their use of services or how we could improve them. This information will help ensure that services reflect everyone's experiences and meet their needs.

Most people won't mind being asked, however it's important that we make it clear why we are asking. For example, you could say,

" We want to make sure that we are providing services that don't discriminate, so would it be OK to ask you your sexual orientation?" or, "The NHS gathers information about patients

to ensure that services are meeting everyone's needs and don't discriminate. This includes asking people about their sexual orientation – is it OK to ask yours?

"If you have a 'joining the practice' appointment, the nurse asks you lots of things, including sexual health things, but they don't establish your sexuality first, so you are always the one who has to mention it, there's no natural point at which they establish things."

For tips on how to explain why the NHS collects this kind of information, see What's it got to do With You? [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

# Support your colleagues who are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual

Lesbian, gay and bi-sexual employees can experience bullying and harassment and may find it difficult to report the problem.

The majority of people believe that workplaces should be gay-friendly.

Play your part in supporting colleagues who are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual to make gay-friendly workplaces a reality.

## Straight Allies

How they help create gay-friendly workplaces [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

## Bullying

preventing the Bullying and Harassment of Gay Employees [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

# Address homophobic behaviour

If you overhear or witness homophobia from a colleague or a patient in your workplace you should always take action.

The law says that you do not have to be lesbian, gay or bi-sexual to make a claim for discrimination. For instance, two members of staff are overheard making derogatory comments about gay men. This is unwanted behaviour on the part of the person who hears the conversation. A straight / heterosexual person hearing the conversation could take a case under the Equality Act 2010.

Homophobic hate crime is any criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated by an offender's hatred of someone because of their sexual orientation.

If you believe you have been a victim, or witness to hate crime, there are several ways you can report this to the police. See the Strathclyde Police website: [www.strathclyde.police.uk](http://www.strathclyde.police.uk)