STEP 4
COMMUNICATING AN INCLUSIVE SERVICE

Service Delivery Toolkit
How to build an LGBT-inclusive service
SENDING THE MESSAGE THAT YOU’RE COMMITTED TO LGBT INCLUSION WILL HELP SERVICE USERS FEEL CONFIDENT AND COMFORTABLE ACCESSING YOUR SERVICE.

LGBT people can be hesitant accessing services, for different reasons. For example, they may have negative perceptions of certain sectors. Actively communicating your commitment to inclusion will encourage LGBT people to access your service without fear of discrimination and will reassure them that their needs will be considered. It will also enable them to be open about their gender identity and sexual orientation with your staff, if they wish.

Communications should be aimed at reaching all service users, as well as LGBT people who don’t yet access your service.

WHAT TO SAY

MAKE CLEAR STATEMENTS ON YOUR COMMITMENT TO LGBT INCLUSION
Talk about your values, reach out to all service users and celebrate the diversity of the communities you work with.

SPEAK ABOUT THE WORK YOU’VE DONE
If you’ve trained your frontline staff on LGBT inclusion or you’ve held a public consultation, tell your service users. For messages of support to be meaningful, they must be matched with improvements to your service.

FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATIONS
Tell service users what you’ve done after hearing about LGBT experiences. This will keep LGBT service users engaged and will encourage greater participation in the future.

EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF MONITORING
Take the opportunity to tell your service users why you ask about their gender identity and sexual orientation. You should explain what the questions mean, why they are important and how the results will be used.

TALK ABOUT YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE USERS
Service users should be clear about how they are expected to treat your staff and each other. For example, they should be reminded of your zero-tolerance approach to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and harassment. They should also be made aware of reporting procedures for these incidents.
**KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN COMMUNICATING**

**DEFINE TERMINOLOGY**
Service users may not be familiar with different LGBT terms, so it’s important to correctly explain their meanings in your communications.

**ENGAGE STAFF AT ALL LEVELS**
For your message to be taken seriously, it must be supported by staff across the organisation. Where possible, feature both senior and frontline staff in your communications.

**EMBED MESSAGES ACROSS YOUR COMMUNICATIONS**
Regularly feature messages in wide communications to all service users, such as newsletters. This makes it clear that LGBT inclusion is not a one-off activity. Instead it will be seen as part of the culture of your organisation.

**MAKE COMMUNICATIONS ACCESSIBLE**
To do this, they should be available in a number of different formats. For example, translated versions in multiple languages for service users whose first language isn’t English. Or providing subtitles with videos to ensure accessibility for people with hearing loss.

**REGULARLY REVIEW YOUR COMMUNICATIONS**
Measure and compare the success of initiatives using different metrics. This will ensure that you are consistent and effective in your communications.

**USING THE LGBT ACRONYM**
The LGBT community is extremely diverse and it’s important you acknowledge this in your communications. Make sure you focus on issues relating to separate identities within the LGBT acronym. When using the acronym, do not refer solely to sexual orientation and ensure that you feature specific content on gender identity.
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METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

There are many different ways to communicate an LGBT-inclusive service. To reach as many people as possible, you should use as many communication methods as possible.

Below are some ideas – use them to create a communications action plan for the year ahead. While creating your action plan, consider:

- Priority messages and calls to action
- Timeframes for delivery
- Suitability for your type of service
- Involvement of different staff teams

- Service User Policy – formally setting out procedures and staff responsibilities for meeting the needs of LGBT service users, including processes for any LGBT-specific parts of your service.

- Statement of Inclusion – displaying it in your buildings, letter footers and on email signatures.

- Articles in Service User Newsletters – featuring LGBT-specific parts of your service, local community organisations and events.

- Posters and Leaflets – explaining the importance of monitoring, inviting service users to consultations and signposting them to specific services.

- Social Media and Videos – focusing on LGBT campaigns and events such as the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT).

- Dedicated LGBT webpage – easy to find on your website and containing information about LGBT-specific parts of your service.

- Brochures, Prospectuses and Induction Packs – including information on internal groups (such as LGBT student societies) and LGBT-specific parts of your service.

- Frontline Staff Visibility – displaying symbols and messages of inclusion, for example on ID cards, lanyards and badges.

- Local Events and Local Press – directly engaging with the public, promoting your work on inclusion and reassuring LGBT service users that their needs will be catered for.

- LGBT Events

It’s helpful to identify, and shape some of your communications around, different LGBT events throughout the year. If you’re a Diversity Champion, contact your account manager or email memberships@stonewall.org.uk for Stonewall’s annual LGBT events calendar, which will assist with this.
PUBLICISE YOUR WORK AS A DIVERSITY CHAMPION

One way to communicate your commitment to LGBT inclusion is to tell service users about your role as a Stonewall Diversity Champion.

Use the text below as a template, adapt it with your chosen message and display it in your buildings. This will help demonstrate your commitment to LGBT equality in all areas of your organisation.

Make sure you include the Stonewall Diversity Champion logo. You can request this from your account manager, or by contacting memberships@stonewall.org.uk.

[INSERT NAME] IS A STONEWALL DIVERSITY CHAMPION.

We’re committed to ensuring our service is fully LGBT inclusive.

If you have any feedback, get in touch on [insert contact methods].

If you’re not yet a Diversity Champion, discover more about the programme by visiting: www.stonewall.org.uk/dc
De Montfort University recognises the importance of communicating LGBT inclusion not only to its staff, but also to its students. This extensive work reaches both current and prospective students, as well as the wider community.

Many of these communications take place during #DMUPride. This is a series of events, open lectures, films and theatre celebrating LGBT History Month. The university encourages student sports teams to wear rainbow-coloured laces and Pride t-shirts to show their support. #DMUPride has also had a global reach, with students volunteering at New York Pride and the university hosting eight visiting LGBT students from Russia. De Montfort University creates this programme of activities in close partnership with students and local organisations.

This activity is sustained throughout the academic year, with consistent messages of support for the LGBT community via social media, plasma screens, student portals and internal emails. Messaging centres around significant days like Transgender Day of Remembrance and IDAHOBIT, with rainbow flags flying on campus for #DMUPride and other events.

The visible commitment of De Montfort University’s Vice-Chancellor, Dominic Shellard, is key to its success in this area. Dominic is active on social media, regularly interacts with students and is present at LGBT events throughout the year. This not only demonstrates the commitment of senior management to students, but is also crucial for getting staff on board across the university.

De Montfort University is now developing new ways to empower its staff and students to tackle discrimination and drive LGBT inclusion. In recognition of the positive impact they can have on each other and their communities, staff and students are encouraged to sign Stonewall’s #NoBystanders pledge. This is a commitment to call out and report hateful language whenever they hear it. Equality and diversity training has been introduced for students, particularly aimed at those working in the local community. This will soon be extended to all student society leaders.
Victim Support provides support for people affected by crime, through services tailored to their different needs. Built into the charity’s strategy is the central objective of engaging all communities in their work. To achieve this, Victim Support uses different communication methods to ensure LGBT people feel comfortable and confident accessing their services.

This commitment to LGBT inclusion is made visible as far and wide as possible. Promotional materials with messages of inclusion are distributed at events for the general public, as well as at LGBT community events. Materials include banners, posters, staff business cards and t-shirts. To make sure they reach people across multiple platforms, Victim Support has also featured in LGBT magazines and on the LGBT History Month website. Resources on hate crime are tailored with specific messages about support for victims of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime.

Victim Support’s service delivery teams and volunteers distribute these materials in their communities, often with the help of local LGBT organisations. Teams are equipped with LGBT-inclusive training and resources. They work with a wide range of other organisations, including housing associations, criminal justice agencies and young people’s projects. These partnerships help maximise the reach of Victim Support’s work and ensure the highest possible number of LGBT people know about their services.

Together with this work, Victim Support runs LGBT-specific projects and services. An example of this is the Rainbow Bridge project, a domestic abuse service for LGBT people in Wales. Victim Support Cymru understood that specific forms of abuse can occur in LGBT relationships and that the issue is greatly under-recognised. To address this, Rainbow Bridge has introduced a 24/7 phone line and specialised support. They also deliver two-hour awareness-raising sessions and host online tutorials for service users. The project has been promoted in a number of ways: advertising at LGBT events, features on BBC and Made in Cardiff news and a stall at the National Museum of Wales for LGBT History Month. These activities have been key to making the service accessible to LGBT people in Wales.
This is the fourth step in the Service Delivery Toolkit. For the other steps in this series, visit:
www.stonewall.org.uk/servicedelivery

DIVERSITY CHAMPIONS PROGRAMME
Diversity Champions is Britain’s leading programme for ensuring all LGBT people are accepted without exception in the workplace. Join today and receive expert guidance on how to create an equal environment for LGBT staff and service users. We’ll review your policies, give you access to networking with over 700 organisations, and support you every step of the way.

For more information, visit: www.stonewall.org.uk/dc

STONEWALL WORKPLACE CONFERENCES
Held annually in Cardiff, Edinburgh, Manchester and London, Stonewall workplace conferences are Britain’s leading events on LGBT workplace inclusion. Experts bring our guides to life and help you adapt them for your organisation. Sessions cover a range of topics including service delivery, working with limited resources and supporting trans staff and service users.

For more information, visit: www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace-conferences

FURTHER RESOURCES
Stonewall produces a range of best-practice guides and research to help you create inclusive and accepting environments for your staff and service users.

For the full range of resources, visit: www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace-resources

Stonewall Scotland: A guide for public authorities on meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty - DOWNLOAD

Trans workplace series: Getting it right with your trans service users and customers - DOWNLOAD