

Everything you always
wanted to know about...

Sexual Orientation Monitoring

...but were afraid to ask

Lesbian

Bisexual

Straight

Gay



PHOTOGRAPH: SARAH QUINN

Lynne Featherstone, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Equalities, opening
The Lesbian & Gay Foundation's Community Resource Centre on March 14, 2011.

"The struggle for LGB&T equalities is about so much more than any policy
we can enshrine into the law...it's about opening hearts and minds, and
transforming behaviours."

Lynne Featherstone MP
Minister for Equalities

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Foreword

The NHS, like the rest of the public sector, is under enormous pressure to cut costs and achieve efficiencies, which is why resources such as this workbook are so timely. Applying effective monitoring which benefits both workforce and service users makes good business sense. Organisations can benefit internally by reducing staff turnover, cutting recruitment costs and reducing sickness absence; externally, by understanding local population needs and targeting services more effectively.

This guide forms part of a legacy of resources, other products and best practice initiatives which have grown out of our fruitful collaboration with stakeholder partners such as The Lesbian & Gay Foundation.

That legacy is particularly important given the fundamental structural change and considerable uncertainty for the NHS over the coming months. One of our main priorities in the Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Team at NHS North West has been to safeguard our regional achievements since 2008; and to ensure that our learning and best practice are embedded in the 'DNA' of the new health service.

While this project is a North West initiative, it can be used across the country to fill identified gaps, since it is applicable not only to the NHS but the wider public sector.

We hope you find this resource useful and that it will support you in setting up or improving your own approach to sexual orientation monitoring for staff, patients and service users.



Shahnaz Ali
Associate Director
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights
NHS North West

Over the last two decades, the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) community has seen legislative change which has led to greater acceptance.

However, there are still large gaps in the evidence about LGB people, our needs and experiences. Monitoring sexual orientation is a proven way to address that lack of evidence.

In fact, it is essential to understanding the needs and experiences of an organisation's staff and service users and to planning appropriate, targeted interventions and services.

This workbook aims to encourage public sector organisations to have the confidence to carry out sexual orientation monitoring. We look at how it can benefit your organisation, employees and service users.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual people count, so why aren't we counted?

The LGB community contributes over £40 billion a year to the budget for public services, so it is absolutely vital that those services – like education, housing, health

and policing – are designed to meet our needs, and LGB people feel confident in using them or working within them.

Our thanks go to the members of the expert consultative panel for their contribution and to Heather Williams for coordinating the project.

We thank NHS North West for their involvement in this guide; once again it highlights their excellent track record in pushing equality and diversity work forward.



Paul Martin OBE
Chief Executive
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Expert Consultative Panel



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Thanks to the public sector organisations from across North West England who participated in research into sexual orientation monitoring practice, on which this workbook has been based.

1. Executive summary

Many public bodies already carry out monitoring of protected characteristics such as the age, gender and race of their workers and service users. Monitoring is important because by law all public bodies must also think about how they treat people of different sexual orientations fairly and equally.

The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector Equality Duty which requires that all public sector organisations take into account the needs of people with protected characteristics when designing and delivering services. Monitoring for protected characteristics, including sexual orientation, is essential if organisations are to demonstrate that they are complying with the law.

Being lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) is now more accepted by society, though there are still large gaps in the evidence about LGB people, their needs and experiences. But your organisation can change that and this workbook aims to help you. Monitoring sexual orientation will help build this evidence base, and enable organisations to better understand their staff and service users and to provide for their different needs.

This workbook offers a step-by-step guide to the monitoring process, with

best practice examples and lessons to learn from. Although it has been written with significant input from the NHS, it is relevant to all public sector organisations.

Monitoring sexual orientation is part of a wider, overall approach to ensuring equality for all, and has clear benefits for both the organisation carrying out the monitoring, and for the individuals providing the data.

Benefits for the organisation

- It can highlight inequalities between different groups
- It is better able to identify issues that affect LGB people
- A better understanding of the potential barriers to services
- It is better able to provide appropriate and tailored services, and to improve existing services
- It is easier to monitor incidents of discrimination and prevent them from happening
- It is better able to measure performance and make changes and improvements to tackle problems
- Recognising diversity maximises an organisation's investment in its workforce

- Making the effort to understand staff leads to higher levels of staff satisfaction, higher productivity, and increased employee retention

Benefits for individual service users and staff

- Ensuring equality of access and opportunity at work.
- Ensuring equality of access to services.
- Improved services, more specific to your needs.
- Creating a culture of inclusivity and openness with the service provider.
- Building up this confidence will lead to increased openness and recording elsewhere.

Sexual orientation monitoring is important because it:

- helps protect many groups of people from being treated unfairly;
- helps to improve working practices;
- helps to ensure services are provided where they are needed.

All public bodies must ensure that they spend money carefully. It is important that they provide services where they are needed, and in a way that gives value for

money. Sexual orientation monitoring is a very good way to help them do this. For example, if a healthcare provider knows that lesbian and bisexual women are less likely to attend cancer screening tests than heterosexual women, then they can run a targeted awareness campaign to encourage women to go for screening.

Sexual orientation monitoring can seem difficult or even embarrassing for public sector bodies and their service users. Some of the reasons for this are:

- people are not sure what the purpose of collecting information about their sexual orientation is;
- people are not sure how their information will be used;
- employers are not sure how they can use the information they collect effectively.

We have carried out research across North West England to help understand these issues and bring together useful monitoring guidance in one place. This workbook will help to give public sector bodies and their service users confidence in the purpose and value of sexual orientation monitoring.

Sexual orientation monitoring is part of a process to ensure equality in your

organisation, rather than a goal in itself. Monitoring practice can be improved year on year. The diagram in the *Next Steps* section (page 45) of this workbook summarises each stage in the monitoring process and can be used for easy reference when planning and reviewing your monitoring practice.

Making it work for your organisation

- If at first response rates are low – don't be discouraged. It takes time to embed successful sexual orientation monitoring and build up a culture of openness.
- It is important to find the appropriate time to monitor sexual orientation and repeat it on several occasions – people may not disclose at first but may feel comfortable enough to do so later on. Sexual orientation is always a matter of self-identification and self-disclosure.
- To be successful, monitoring needs political will from those at the top of an organisation with the drive to make changes to operational systems if necessary.
- You will be collecting sensitive information so having a clear and comprehensive confidentiality policy is essential.

- Staff and service users have to understand why sexual orientation information is being collected, how it will be analysed, what the information will be used for and how it will be safeguarded.
- Sexual orientation shouldn't be treated as a special subject. This means asking it at the same time as questions about other protected characteristics, and asking it of the same people.
- Cross-analyse data on sexual orientation with data on other protected characteristics, and other attributes (such as department and role, location and service used). Compare your data with existing research on LGB needs and local population data.
- Use your data to improve outcomes for staff and service users – develop targets, plan interventions, and use it as evidence in commissioning services.

Monitoring is essential to understanding inequalities between different groups. It will also ensure that your organisation is doing what it can to address these and to promote equality for all its staff and service users. Using the suggestions as set out in this workbook and learning from the case studies will help to improve your organisation's monitoring process; and this will ultimately improve outcomes for all.

2. Introduction

This workbook has been written by NHS North West and The Lesbian & Gay Foundation. We wrote it with the support and advice of equality and diversity champions working across North West England.

The workbook makes use of case studies and examples from the work of the NHS. It also brings together wider public sector research.

We wrote the workbook for the NHS and other public sector bodies who:

- want to introduce sexual orientation monitoring but are unsure how to do it;
- may have been put off from monitoring sexual orientation because the reasons for doing it are not clear;
- already monitor sexual orientation but want to improve how they do it.

We believe that this guide is the first of its kind. Although the contributions have been largely from the NHS and the police, we think the guide is relevant to all public sector organisations.

Our aim is to offer a step-by-step guide to the process of sexual orientation monitoring, illustrated with best practice

examples and real-life case studies. It also highlights the risks you need to think about and minimise when starting to carry out sexual orientation monitoring.

This book is for you if you:

- want to introduce sexual orientation monitoring but aren't sure to how to go about it;
- have been put off from monitoring sexual orientation because you are not sure how useful it is, or it seems too difficult to do;
- already monitor sexual orientation but want to improve how you do it.

The purpose of sexual orientation monitoring is for an organisation to better understand the make up of its workforce and of its service users. The results can be used to improve working practices, eliminate discrimination, improve business outcomes, target services effectively and understand service user needs.

Current estimates of the LGB population in the UK range from 1.5%¹ to between 5-7%². Both of these are national estimates, and there is very little comparable data available about local LGB populations. Carrying out monitoring, and

Gender identity monitoring is highly complex, warranting further thought and investigation. The issue of monitoring is a dividing issue for the trans community; whilst some feel no qualms about disclosing their trans status or history, others feel that questions around gender identity are inappropriate and, ultimately, ineffective.

TREC advocates the use of monitoring with regards to surveying the attitudes of service providers rather than as a means of surveying gender identity per se, placing emphasis on quality of service in order to avoid personal disclosure.

Louis Bailey
Trans Resource and Empowerment Centre (TREC)

Any kind of monitoring needs to be approached sensitively. Although making an attempt is preferable to doing nothing because you feel it is 'too hard', it is even more important that your first attempt is approached in the right way. Insensitive monitoring could damage trust in you and in your organisation.

Adrian Barrowdale,
5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

¹ Office for National Statistics, 2010

² Department of Trade and Industry, 2004

sharing data where appropriate, will help build the evidence base, which in turn will help organisations to understand their staff and service users and to provide for their different needs.

Monitoring for sexual orientation will of course not be carried out in isolation, and the guidance given in this workbook could easily be used to support monitoring for other protected characteristics. However, it is important to recognise that for many people monitoring sexual orientation can seem like a difficult subject to approach, and difficult one to 'get right'. For this reason our workbook is primarily concerned with sexual orientation monitoring.

Being lesbian, gay or bisexual is now more accepted by society, but there is still a huge lack of evidence about LGB people, their needs and experiences. Monitoring sexual orientation is a proven way to address that lack of evidence.

If a healthcare provider knows, for example, that lesbian and bisexual women are less likely to attend cervical screening tests than heterosexual/straight women and also knows through their own monitoring that a high proportion of their service users are lesbian and bisexual women, then they can run a targeted awareness campaign to encourage women to go for screening.

The NHS Cancer Screening Programme is supporting such a campaign, recognising that there is a low level of cervical cancer awareness among lesbian and bisexual women and that screening is essential to saving lives.

Although not all staff or service users who identify as LGB will support sexual orientation monitoring (just as not all heterosexual/straight people will), it is supported by LGB organisations that campaign for and support the community, such as The Lesbian & Gay Foundation and Stonewall. Monitoring for gender identity is a separate issue (see *Useful Terms*, page 14) and there is not currently consensus from trans organisations on whether they support monitoring gender identity.

Finally, this workbook isn't trying to be prescriptive, but rather aims to guide you through the process of sexual orientation monitoring with some helpful tips and advice. Remember that monitoring is a process, and one that will improve with practice. It is something to think about and plan carefully, but also recognise that you may not always get the results you want first time.

Monitoring of sexual orientation is unlikely to occur in isolation from that of the other protected characteristics and is best always considered in that wider context. However, sexual orientation is often left off the monitoring process as being too intrusive or difficult to undertake. This guide will help you to overcome some of these potential difficulties.

Jon Atkin
Manchester City Council

These days we take it for granted that organisations will analyse the gender, age, race or ethnicity, and disability of staff and service users. We accept being asked because we understand how it can improve what the NHS does. The same goes for understanding who people love and live their lives with. Understanding that is pretty fundamental to understanding their lives and health.

Christine Burns MBE
NHS North West

For sexual orientation monitoring to improve, organisations at large must support it. Sexual orientation monitoring will not be undertaken appropriately if it is considered the remit of 'interested' parties or Equality and Diversity specialists as generally these are not the individuals involved in monitoring on a practical basis.

Jackie Bailey
Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

3. Useful terms

This section offers some useful terms and definitions to help you in sexual orientation monitoring and in equalities work more widely. They can help with phrasing a question about sexual orientation in an inclusive way and can be used to help make clear to staff and service users what sexual orientation monitoring is all about and why it is important for them.

Heteronormativity the marginalisation of non-heterosexual lifestyles and the view that heterosexuality is the normal sexual orientation.

Heterosexism attitudes, bias and discrimination solely in favour of heterosexual orientation and opposite-sex relationships.

Homophobia is the hatred or fear of people who are gay or lesbian. Similarly, **biphobia** is the hatred or fear of bisexuals.

Protected characteristics are those, for example ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability, that are protected from discrimination under the Equality Act (see *Policy Context*, page 17, for more detail).

They do not define an individual but are a useful method for safeguarding against discrimination.

Sexual orientation is a way of describing those you are emotionally and sexually attracted to. Asking someone their sexual orientation should be similar to asking someone if they are married or their age – it's a part of their identity that affects their life but doesn't define them, and you're certainly not asking about their sex life. The only reason sexual orientation seems different is the potential embarrassment, unfamiliarity or hostility towards LGB people that exists.

Very generally, the main categories of sexual orientation are:

- Bisexual: someone who is attracted to people of the same and/or opposite gender
- Gay: a man or a woman who is attracted to people of the same gender
- Heterosexual/straight: someone who is attracted to people of the opposite gender
- Lesbian: a woman who is attracted to other women

Women who are attracted to other women may identify as lesbian or as gay women. In some circumstances you may be dealing with men who have sex with men, or women who have sex with women, but do not identify themselves as gay or bisexual; this needs to be considered on a service-specific basis.

I am not a protected characteristic and there is no such thing as a 'protected group'. I am an individual in possession of a number of protected characteristics, including my age, my gender, my sexual orientation and my ethnicity.

Adrian Barrowdale
5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Whether to disclose or not is a personal decision, and people always have the right to keep that information private. The imperative is not on the individual to disclose but on the organisation to encourage that disclosure – through creating an inclusive atmosphere and through showing how sexual orientation monitoring has led to better outcomes.

Paul Martin OBE
The Lesbian & Gay Foundation

When ethnicity monitoring was first introduced, people had many questions about it, others were suspicious, some people were hostile and some refused to co-operate. But over time people got used to the idea of being asked about their ethnic origins, understood why they were being asked for this information and co-operated with the process. This is more than likely to be the case when sexual orientation monitoring is first introduced. So you should plan for this. You should provide information, answer questions and concerns and support people who are collecting monitoring information to do so.

David Codner
NHS Trafford

The four orientations listed above are by no means exclusive, and some people may identify themselves as queer (this can be anything outside of lesbian, gay, bisexual or straight) or asexual (not feeling sexually attracted to anyone). However, lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) and heterosexual/straight are the orientations most commonly identified and the most commonly asked in sexual orientation monitoring practice.

Homosexual is generally considered an overly clinical and old-fashioned term to use. Heterosexual doesn't have the same connotations but is usually given as heterosexual/straight as the two terms are synonymous for most people.

Sexual orientation is different from gender identity, which, simply put, is whether an individual feels comfortable in the gender they were assigned at birth. Therefore you shouldn't ask about gender identity (trans or transgender) and sexual orientation in the same question.

Trans is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from that they were assigned at birth, including – but not limited to – people who are transgender, transsexual, cross-dressers and transvestites.

Transphobia is the hatred or fear of trans people or people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from the identity they were assigned at birth.

Fact box: Health inequalities

- South Asian people are 50% more likely to die prematurely from coronary heart disease than the general population
Joshi et al., Journal of the American Medical Association, 2007
- People with learning disabilities who have diabetes have fewer measurements of their body mass index (BMI) than others with diabetes; people with learning disabilities who've suffered stroke have fewer blood pressure checks than others with stroke
NHS Wirral
- Men are more likely to exceed recommended limits for alcohol consumption and are more likely to take illicit drugs than women
www.drinkaware.co.uk
- Lesbian and gay young people are up to six times more likely than heterosexual young people to commit suicide.
Suicide Prevention Resource Center
- Muslim men and women have the highest rates of self-reported ill-health, at 13% of Muslim males and 16% of Muslim females
UK Office for National Statistics

4. Policy context

This section explains the policies for sexual orientation monitoring and shows how this monitoring fits within equality and diversity work.

The Equality Act 2010 states that all public sector organisations must meet the requirements of the new Equality Duty. This is to ensure that the needs of people with protected characteristics are taken into account when services are designed and delivered. There are nine protected characteristics:

- age*
- marriage and civil partnership*
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

* At present, age and marriage or civil partnership are only monitored in the employment field. The Government is currently examining whether these characteristics should also be monitored in the provision of goods and services.

The key requirements of the public sector Equality Duty are to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- tackle prejudice and promote understanding;
- advance equality of opportunity;
- remove or minimise disadvantages that are connected to a particular characteristic;
- take steps to meet the needs of people who share a protected characteristic, based on real life experience and evidence of need.

Monitoring protected characteristics, including sexual orientation, is essential so that organisations are able to prove that they are meeting the Equality Duty. It will also help organisations identify potential discrimination and disadvantage, monitor harassment and victimisation and evaluate steps to tackle these. Building an evidence base of service users, and making full use of comparable data, will allow organisations to design appropriate and specific services.

The Government Equalities Office and the Equality and Human Rights Commission websites contain useful information on the details of the Equality Act. Links to

both sites are included in the *Further Information* section on page 46 of this workbook.

Many organisations will have a commitment to equality of access and opportunity in their existing policies. Monitoring will ensure that these commitments are fulfilled.

Monitoring sexual orientation is still relatively recent: it began with the introduction of the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003. It took years for ethnicity monitoring to become embedded in organisational policy, so sexual orientation monitoring may also take time to become commonplace.

Sexual acts between men were decriminalised in England and Wales in 1967. Some people will remember the days when such acts were illegal, so it is important to bear that in mind if some people are unwilling to disclose their sexual orientation.

Equal rights for LGB people have come a long way in the last few decades, but inequality and homophobia still exist.

- One in five lesbian and gay people have experienced a homophobic hate crime or incident in the last three years.
Dick, S., Homophobic Hate Crime: the Gay British Crime Survey. Stonewall, 2008.

- One in three LGBT individuals report having experienced discrimination on the grounds of sexuality in the workplace.
Millivres Prowler and Out Now Consulting, 2007.

It's important to be aware that people may not want to disclose their sexual orientation, and you should respond sensitively to this. Low response rates might be something that your organisation cannot address alone, and it may take time to build up a culture of openness; but the individual, however, will retain the right to choose whether or not to disclose their sexual orientation.

Implementing monitoring is not the goal itself: it is only part of the process to ensure equality in your organisation. Information generated by monitoring must be used to drive changes and improve outcomes for LGB people. The *Fact Box* on page 16 highlights evidence about the health needs of people with particular characteristics that have only come to light through monitoring.

Providing the evidence for these inequalities allows us to design targeted service interventions for individual groups, and improve the quality of outcomes for them. Current policy supports sexual orientation monitoring, but it's difficult to imagine how equality of access and outcome for all can be achieved without monitoring protected characteristics as well.

Sexual orientation monitoring is not the aim – the aim is equality for all and monitoring is merely one of the tools we can use to provide the assurance that we are on the path to achieving this.

Adrian Barrowdale,
5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Even though homosexuality was 'decriminalised' in 1967, there was still an unequal age of consent and gay men were prevented from showing affection in public, not least by continuing stigma and discrimination, for many years afterwards. Indeed, an equal age of consent was not achieved until January 2001 and protection for LGB people in the provision of goods and services until 2007.

Jon Atkin
Manchester City Council

The NHS Constitution sets out what every citizen has the right to expect from the NHS. Not some citizens; all of them. We can't know whether we are meeting those obligations unless we understand who we are employing and treating and, just as importantly, who we aren't.

Christine Burns MBE
NHS North West

5. Why monitor?

Many public bodies already carry out monitoring of protected characteristics such as the age, gender and race of their workers and service users. Monitoring is important because by law all public bodies must also think about how they treat people of different sexual orientations fairly and equally.

Sexual orientation monitoring is important because it:

- helps protect many groups of people from being treated unfairly;
- helps to improve working practices;
- helps to ensure services are provided where they are needed.

All public bodies must ensure that they spend money carefully. It is important that they provide services where they are needed, and in a way that gives value for money. Sexual orientation monitoring is a very good way to help them do this.

Sexual orientation monitoring can seem difficult or even embarrassing for healthcare bodies and their service users. Some of the reasons for this are:

- people are not sure of the purpose of collecting information about their sexual orientation;

- people are not sure how their information will be used;
- employers are not sure how they can use the information they collect effectively.

We have carried out research across North West England to help understand these issues and bring together useful monitoring guidance in one place. This workbook will help to give healthcare bodies and their service users confidence in the purpose and value of sexual orientation monitoring.

Monitoring first and foremost is about understanding your organisation's workforce and service users. It's important to recognise that you are monitoring for equality as a whole and that the primary aim of monitoring is to better understand your organisation's staff and service users so that you can be a better employer and service provider.

Benefits of monitoring

Sexual orientation monitoring is not just a bureaucratic exercise, but has major benefits for organisations:

- Identifies inequalities between different groups

- Enhances ability to identify issues that affect LGB people
- Improves understanding of the potential barriers to services
- Supports the ability to provide appropriate and tailored services, and to improve existing services
- Supports the ability to monitor incidents of discrimination and prevent them from happening
- Helps to measure performance, improvement and change
- Improve processes to tackle problems
- Lack of accessibility for LGB people may not be obvious without investigation
- Sometimes people don't have a choice about where they access services, for a multitude of reasons

Benefits for the organisation

Recognising diversity maximises your organisation's investment in the workforce. Making the effort to collect good quality data, analyse it and take action in response leads to higher levels of staff satisfaction, higher productivity, and increased employee retention.

Benefits for the individual

Equally, sexual orientation monitoring has benefits for the individual, both as a member of staff and as a service user by

- ensuring equality of access and opportunity at work;
- ensuring equality of access to services;
- improving services, tailored to needs;
- creating a culture of inclusivity and openness with the service provider.

Business case

It's obvious that sexual orientation monitoring makes good business sense. Understanding the needs of your organisation's staff and service users leads to more targeted and more successful work, saving money in the long run.

Monitoring can cut down on staff turnover and reduce absenteeism, as well as enable you to attract and retain excellent staff from a diverse pool. You can also save money through early identification and intervention in discrimination cases. Investing in equality, and working to promote an open and inclusive organisation should be a core part of any well-run business.

Be up front about it

A word of caution – successful and accurate sexual orientation monitoring takes time to build up, so it's important to be realistic in your expectations. Stonewall research has found that it takes repeated monitoring exercises to build up people's confidence with monitoring and to generate more accurate responses

Some people seem to find sexual orientation monitoring an alien concept, and can easily misinterpret your reasons for monitoring; for example, a recent headline in the *Daily Mail* read:

RESIDENTS APPLYING FOR COUNCIL ALLOTMENTS ASKED: 'ARE YOU GAY?'³

Needless to say, it wasn't just sexual orientation that was asked, and it wasn't just allotment applicants who were asked, but all users of council services.

Be open and clear about why you are monitoring and don't feel embarrassed about monitoring sexual orientation.

How can monitoring help you?

Sexual orientation monitoring can help us to identify inequalities between people that are related to their sexual orientation, which might otherwise remain hidden. For example, monitoring has shown that LGB people are more likely to suffer discrimination and harassment at work and are less likely to report it when it occurs. What information could monitoring generate for your organisation, about its staff or service users? Recognising these inequalities and taking steps to tackle them is part of being a modern and inclusive organisation.

³ Daily Mail, October 21, 2010

No organisation wants to be unfair to any of its staff or service users. Without sexual orientation monitoring you can't be sure this is not the case.

David Codner
NHS Trafford

Case studies

“Proudly ticking the box”



A lesbian who is out at work in a heterosexual environment was surprised to find that she seemed to be the only person in her office who wasn't concerned about the presence of a sexual orientation question on a staff monitoring exercise. 'It would be a wonderful world if there really was no need for it to be there, but in the meantime I'll keep proudly ticking that box and reminding my colleagues why it needs to be there.'

“It made me feel important”



A gay man said he felt proud that sexual orientation was included alongside other equality strand questions in his GP survey. Knowing that sexual orientation was recognised as important by his GP made him feel important to the service providers. 'It makes you think that they have at least thought about issues for lesbians and gay people.'

6. What are we monitoring?

Although this workbook deals with the whole topic of sexual orientation monitoring, it's worth pointing out that monitoring your organisation's workforce and monitoring your service users are different exercises, and will have different needs and implications. You will need to take this into account when planning and implementing monitoring.

Monitoring appropriately

Throughout the employment cycle there are several opportunities to monitor, for example:



With service users, you could monitor at:



It's important to find the right time to monitor, and to monitor on several occasions, as someone may not disclose at first but may feel comfortable enough to do so later on. For example, an employee might not want to disclose at recruitment but will do when settled in to an organisation, or a service user might not disclose when registering for a service but later appreciate this could be useful information for service planning and provision.

Inevitably there are going to be instances where IT systems need to catch up and these things aren't necessarily under local control. We can't let that be a barrier though. Devising local paper based systems to monitor for sexual orientation, and showing the feasibility and benefits of having collected and analysed this information, is the best way of working round these barriers and showing why such systems need to be brought up to date.

Christine Burns MBE
NHS North West

Baseline figures that are compared across other protected characteristics, and across occupational levels, for example, are needed to challenge assumptions about equality. An organisation might be pleased with its proportionate representation of black and ethnic minority employees, but may find through further analysis that the majority work in facilities roles (such as domestic, catering and cleaning roles) and are under-represented in management.

Political will and drive

Of course, the way different organisations function will have different implications for monitoring practice. For example, some people have encountered technical problems such as having to use IT systems which haven't been set up to record the sexual orientation of service users.

For monitoring to be successful, it needs the political will of leaders and managers, and the drive to make changes to operational systems if necessary. This may take time, so be strategic and choose those areas where you can start to monitor sexual orientation and prove its benefits.

Monitoring isn't about just collecting demographics, but about monitoring the patients seen, or staff employed and comparing this across other protected characteristics, occupational levels, services used and so on. Monitoring in this way provides more scope for analysis, and is part of viewing monitoring as an approach to equality, rather than a one off exercise.

7. Who are we asking?

Simply put, you are monitoring everyone! Working towards equality is about monitoring for all protected characteristics, and sexual orientation shouldn't be treated as a special subject. This means asking it at the same time as questions about other protected characteristics, and asking it of the same people.

It is likely that various people in your organisation will be responsible for conducting monitoring, especially if yours is related to service provision, and not everyone will be clear at first on the process for monitoring. It's important to understand how someone asking a question on sexual orientation might make unconscious exclusions with service users, such as assuming that LGB people have to look a certain way, or assuming that some sections of the community either do not have a sexual orientation or will automatically identify as heterosexual/straight, such as older people, people with a particular faith or particular ethnic background, or disabled people.

Don't ignore sexual orientation

In some situations, asking a person's sexual orientation may seem difficult but that is not a reason to ignore the issue. Rather, it is an opportunity to sensitively address

the needs of your organisation and your service users. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published a report on monitoring the sexual orientation of young people (see *Further Information* on page 46), concluding that this potentially difficult area of monitoring can be carried out practically and ethically. Their final remarks can easily be applied to monitoring for any group:

It is critical to identify the important role of sexual orientation as a predictor of health, social and economic outcomes. The failure to account for sexual orientation effects may lead to inaccurate scientific and policy conclusions, for example about targeting health or education interventions.

Researching and monitoring adolescence and sexual orientation
Equality and Human Rights Commission

Self-definition, self-declaration

The guiding principles of sexual orientation monitoring are that sexual orientation is a matter of self-definition and self-declaration: assumptions shouldn't be made about an individual's sexual orientation or likelihood of disclosure; nor is it appropriate to ask their family or friends to disclose for them.

Sexual orientation monitoring is just that – it covers a range of sexual orientations. It is important that your LGB staff and service users do not feel targeted, or that the purpose is to find out 'who they are'. Instead, emphasise that everyone will be asked the same questions and the organisation is as interested in the number of heterosexual/straight staff or service users as they are in those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Adrian Barrowdale
5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

If you are responsible for data collection, remember that the information you're receiving is highly personal, and be honest about people's response to that. It's essential that you have a clear and comprehensive confidentiality policy that you stick to and communicate clearly to staff and service users who are being asked their sexual orientation. The *Useful Terms* section on page 14 sets out clear definitions of sexual orientation and has some advice on what language to use. Advice on working out when to monitor, and finding the appropriate time and

context to ask about sexual orientation, can be found under *Collection* on page 32.

Take time to tackle the issues

Sexual orientation isn't something to be embarrassed about, nor is monitoring for it. Some people will feel uncomfortable asking or being asked about their sexual orientation, so take the time to identify any issues and address them. Overcoming any objections is essential to implementing successful monitoring.

8. Preparation

Laying the groundwork is the key to successful monitoring. If your organisation already monitors sexual orientation, then it would be worthwhile to review and amend existing policies and practices. Creating or building on an existing culture of monitoring, and ensuring an environment of openness and tolerance is essential, but will take time. Organisational drive must be present and monitoring needs to be supported and implemented across the whole organisation.

Good infrastructure

If you are going to use IT systems, make sure they facilitate sexual orientation monitoring; some practitioners have been held back by computerised systems which generate default answers to fill in missing data, or systems which don't offer anywhere to record sexual orientation. Make sure that security and data protection measures are in place.

Understand why you're monitoring

Make sure that you and your staff understand what you are trying to achieve through sexual orientation monitoring and build your systems and processes around that. Monitoring works best when seen as part of a wider intelligence

strategy; you can use whatever data is available, including 'grey literature'⁴, to compare with your datasets and further understand the needs of LGB people.

Staff and service users have to understand why sexual orientation information is being collected, how it will be analysed, what the information will be used for and how it will be safeguarded; you may need to provide training to ensure understanding. Where staff are concerned, remember that they may be answering the question for themselves and asking it of service users; confidence needs to be built into both aspects. When promoting sexual orientation monitoring, focus on how it will benefit the individual:

- How will sexual orientation monitoring improve outcomes for service users?
- How does it relate to outcomes for staff?
- How will it improve organisational culture for employees?

It can help to have a model answer, or an at-a-glance summary of your organisation's policy on monitoring, ready to hand to explain why you are monitoring sexual orientation and to help staff answer any difficult questions they might have.

⁴ Grey literature refers to reports produced by voluntary and community sector organisations, government agencies and other groups that have not been distributed commercially. An example would be The Lesbian & Gay Foundation's *Proud to be Safer* evaluation of its condom and lube distribution scheme.

Case studies

“IT systems can support confidentiality”



Manchester City Council monitors staff and some service users. Sexual orientation is electronically recorded using a coding system to ensure that non-analyst staff are not able to read it, thus ensuring a high level of confidentiality. This is made clear to staff on monitoring forms and encourages disclosure through confidentiality.

“Good communication is essential”



Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service worked with The Lesbian & Gay Foundation to carry out a staff survey on attitudes towards sexual orientation. In response to feedback and issues highlighted by the survey a communication strategy was launched to inform and include all staff.

The results of the survey were made available to staff, articles explaining the reasoning behind sexual orientation monitoring were published on the intranet and staff magazine, and the organisation made a promise to improve diversity within the workforce. When baseline equality data monitoring was introduced the following year, the reaction from staff was more positive and the response rate to a question on sexual orientation was just over 99%.

Confidentiality

Your organisation's confidentiality policy needs to be easily accessible and well understood by everyone involved in the process. Confidence in confidentiality will ensure confidence in your organisation, and increase disclosure rates among both staff and service users.

Training

Identify training needs in your organisation, both for staff who will be working with service users, and general training to approach the process of monitoring if necessary. Training can be provided before you start monitoring, or if you seem to have low response rates or disclosure. Remember that monitoring is a process, and that your first monitoring exercise may identify many more areas to develop; learning through doing is invaluable.

Establish which individuals or teams in your organisation are responsible for data collection and make sure you have systems to monitor their collection. If you need to, provide training so that staff know why they are monitoring and are able to respond to challenges they might face.

Preparation leads to success

Taking the time to plan and prepare for sexual orientation monitoring will improve the results you get and ensure that monitoring is part of a drive to achieve equality, rather than mere compliance. Monitoring is a process, and any barriers that you meet can be overcome by targeted preparation.

Explaining the usefulness of sexual orientation monitoring in the context of individual staff roles and its potential impact on quality of care and service user outcomes can have a positive effect. This worked well with inpatient staff at Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust where there was an immediate and dramatic improvement in the quality of service user sexual orientation monitoring post-training sessions.

Jackie Bailey
Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

Case study

“Investing in staff training can improve results”



Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust's 2009 monitoring exercise across inpatient services (the *Count Me In* census) demonstrated a dramatic improvement in results for sexual orientation compared with the previous year:

2008: prefer not to say = 6.5%	not known = 26.8%
2009: prefer not to say = 0%	not known = 9.3%

A good deal of effort was put into staff learning and development in preparation for the 2009 census, with particular reference to increasing monitoring results, as a result of a national drive to improve recording rates in this area. The training stressed the importance of explaining why such information was being collected and highlighted relevant equalities legislation.

As a result of this work, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) approached the Trust's equality and diversity team to take part in their annual *Count Me In* training DVD, distributed to all participating mental health trusts as a best practice example (see *Further Information* on page 46).

9. Collection

Good preparation supports good collection, and if your organisation has taken the time to lay the groundwork you should see the benefit when it comes to collecting the data. It's important to develop trust with your staff and service users so that they have confidence in your collecting this information; tips on how to do this are given in the previous section, *Preparation* on page 28.

Opportunities to monitor

Monitoring for staff and for services users will have different implications, and it is worth acknowledging these in order to generate the best possible response rates.

With staff, there are several opportunities to monitor throughout the employment cycle:



Again, recognise any potential issues for staff who may be both collectors of information from service users and members of the workforce being monitored.

With service users, there are opportunities to monitor at:



Monitoring appropriately

Consider the different points of entry and access for your service users, the context in which they access the service, as well as the relationships members of staff will build up with them. When would it be most appropriate, and most useful, for you to monitor equalities information?

Some organisations have found the context of a customer research or satisfaction exercise to be a good time, but this would be far too late if knowing a service user's sexual orientation would help assess their needs.

Case study

“Monitoring must be planned strategically”

One year Greater Manchester Police ran a ‘Diversity Month’ to raise awareness of a range of equality and diversity issues. Given the focus of the month, it took the opportunity to launch a ‘Diversity Survey’ to improve the data it held on sexual orientation and religion or belief. Before the launch of the survey, members of the HR Branch worked closely with the organisation’s LGBT staff network to ensure the message was right and the LGBT staff network also endorsed the survey in e-mails to their members and on their own intranet pages.

A comprehensive FAQ document was published on a bespoke Diversity Survey intranet page; alongside this, staff were offered tailored workshops, to raise confidence in the declaration process and explain why sexual orientation monitoring was important.

The Diversity Survey had a response rate of around 20%. In contrast, the anonymous staff survey from the same year had a response rate of 64% indicating that 4% of the workforce identified as LGB. It is worth noting that, in that same year, monitoring had also taken place at the recruitment stage and as part of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. Greater Manchester Police also routinely encouraged staff participation in various other general surveys throughout the year.

On reflection, it appeared that staff may have experienced what the HR Branch have referred to as ‘survey fatigue’, meaning staff were reluctant to invest more time in completing the Diversity Survey. In addition, further consideration indicated that although the term ‘diversity survey’ was easily understood by those responsible for carrying out the monitoring exercise, it was not necessarily a term that was the workforce as a whole was familiar with. A request for staff to ‘update their personal details’ may have improved the response rate as staff who did not routinely access the intranet pages may not have understood what they were being asked to do.

For organisations which offer a variety of services there will be several points of contact and there might not be an obvious point at which to monitor; you also want to avoid duplication of data if it is collected in more than one place.

It is worth giving some thought to this and being strategic in your approach: while monitoring at several stages is important to build up your knowledge, not having enough space between monitoring exercises can lead to 'monitoring fatigue'.

Set it in context

Provide a context for monitoring – briefly explain why this information is being collected and how it will be used. List some relevant examples of how the data collected last time was used to shape organisational work and improve outcomes for staff and/or service users. This can be invaluable in getting the point across about why you are monitoring. If your organisation is just beginning to monitor, then use examples relevant to the sort of work you do, but if they can come from your own organisation itself, even better!

Fact box: How monitoring can improve outcomes

- A housing association experienced an increase in complaints from residents with a particular contractor. Cross referencing this with data they held on sexual orientation and subsequent engagement with tenants helped them to understand that homophobic incidents were occurring, and take steps to tackle this.
- The Department of Health advocates targeted health interventions for gay and bisexual men, such as free condom distribution and targeted outreach in popular venues. Sexual orientation monitoring is essential to identifying need for such cost-saving interventions, across lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.
- Data on the proportion of staff who identify as LGB can be used to set up an LGB staff network, a social and support mechanism for LGB staff.
- Data on protected characteristics and from staff satisfaction surveys can be used to identify incidents of bullying and harassment and support targeted work to address these.
- Organisations can publish details of where complaints were made and what action was taken to remedy them (but only once sufficiently anonymised).

Case study

“Be prepared to answer questions about the process”



NHS Trafford produced a guide for staff collecting monitoring data from patients, including how to answer questions service users had about monitoring, particularly: why is this information is being collected; how will the information be used; and who will be able to see my information? The guidance summarised arguments for sexual orientation monitoring and made clear that the process would be confidential and used to improve service user outcomes, for example:

- The PCT wants to make sure that everyone who wants to use the PALS and Complaints services is able to do so. For us to be sure that this is the case we need to collect some information on who is using this service.
- The PCT wants to make sure that no groups may be having problems using NHS services in Trafford because of personal characteristics such as gender, disability, age or race for example.
- The information provided will be used to create statistics so that we can get a better idea of who is using the PALS/Complaints service and other NHS services.
- The information provided will be kept confidential and only used for the reasons that have been given (above).

Sexual orientation questions should be asked alongside questions on other protected characteristics. Try to avoid making sexual orientation a special case; it is a protected characteristic like any other and treating it as such in your data collection will help reinforce the idea that it is a normal question to ask as part of the monitoring process.

Confidentiality

Encouraging people to understand sexual orientation monitoring includes recognising that they are under no obligation to disclose. You should aim to be accommodating, not prescriptive, so give people an informed choice about whether they answer monitoring questions or not.

Allow people to complete monitoring questions in private, confidentially (make sure your organisation's confidentiality policy is clear) and in their own time. In some situations staff may have to complete monitoring on a service user's behalf, but this should only ever be if the service user has specifically instructed. In such cases, make sure that the service user understands what they are being asked and that they are happy to disclose to that staff member. Sexual orientation is always a matter of self-identification and self-disclosure.

Asking the question

There are different perspectives on how to best phrase a question asking about someone's sexual orientation, and indeed in the process of writing this workbook much discussion was had about what to have as best practice. The following can be taken as a suggested example:

Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Bisexual

The question has been worded so as to encompass more fully sexual orientation, sexual attraction and sexual behaviour, and to reinforce the fact that sexual orientation is about identity rather than just who a person has sex with. The *Useful Terms* section on page 14 sets out some definitions of different sexual orientations, including those which have not been given as options here (queer, asexual, and so on).

Our example question does not give an 'other' option nor a 'prefer not to say option', for the reason that both of these tend to return very low amounts of data and the purpose of monitoring is to generate as complete and as useful a

Case study

“Aim to embed monitoring across the organisation”



Cheshire Constabulary had the highest proportion among organisations surveyed of current staff who identified as LGB at just over 15%. This figure came from a staff survey specifically on sexual orientation, in which all survey respondents answered the question on sexual orientation.

The organisation has been collecting data on sexual orientation since 2008. Sexual orientation is monitored at recruitment, in staff surveys and a specific sexual orientation survey.

This was introduced to capture staff who may have 'fallen through the gaps' in other surveys, and is repeated annually so that the data can be built up and compared year on year. The survey also captures opinion on sexual orientation, and found that the number of staff who agree that monitoring is useful is steadily increasing.

Managers receive training on sexual orientation monitoring and the annual survey is accompanied by an explanation of why monitoring is carried out, and that all staff, regardless of sexual orientation, are encouraged to respond.

10. Analysis

dataset as possible. Ultimately, if people do not want to disclose their sexual orientation they can always leave the question blank, and you can address the reasons for non-disclosure through other methods, such as staff training initiatives or feedback opportunities.

The four options given of heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual and gay are those which people are most likely to be familiar with, and are intended to simplify the question and answer.

You may wish to provide more specific options, such as:

- ☐ Heterosexual woman
- ☐ Heterosexual man
- ☐ Lesbian/gay woman
- ☐ Gay man
- ☐ Bisexual woman
- ☐ Bisexual man

Linking sexual orientation to gender in this way may help you to capture data on women who identify as gay (rather than lesbian) more easily, although you would also be able to get this information from cross-analysing gender with sexual orientation at the analysis stage. Be aware that individuals who do not identify their gender as either man or woman would not be able to answer the question on

sexual orientation as described above, and so you may need to include an 'other' category in this instance.

If you do decide to use an 'other' option or a 'prefer not to say' option, then offer it as an option for all questions about protected characteristics. Only offering them as options for the sexual orientation question will just reinforce the notion that sexual orientation is somehow embarrassing to talk about.

Recognise monitoring as a process

Lastly, whatever sort of response you get, continue monitoring sexual orientation. It will take time to embed, for people to become familiar with being asked, with the process for data collection, and to generate responses that accurately reflect your workforce and your service users.

It's worth repeating that preparation really is the key to successful monitoring: identifying in the planning stages what information you want to get will support worthwhile analysis of the data.

However, it's also worth repeating that monitoring is a process and so learning from one year's results can feed in to next year's monitoring preparation. Staff and service users who are being asked about their sexual orientation, or required to carry out monitoring, must be aware of what the data will be analysed for, who will have access to it, and where it will be published – for example, will top level data be published on the organisation's website, or will it just be analysed internally by relevant teams?

It's not just about counting!

Analysing your data is about much more than just counting your service users or staff: break it down to look at who is using your services and how; what is the makeup of your workforce across levels and grades; and what is the experience of both staff and service users? Monitoring will help you understand who you are not engaging with as well as who you are. Whatever you choose to do with your data, the analysis and the use of it must be relevant to your organisation and its aims. The frequency and type of analysis you conduct

depend on your organisation's needs – understanding why you are collecting this information at the start of the process will help to direct your analysis.

Suggestions for analysis

What follows are some suggestions for monitoring analysis; you won't be able to achieve all of these in the first years of monitoring, but they can be used as a guide to your process.

- Analyse data across all protected characteristics: identify where there are gaps, trends and differences. Use this to compare across equality groups. Recognise that individuals are not defined by the characteristics they are in possession of, and that people will identify across a range of characteristics also.
- Cross reference data on sexual orientation with other employee information such as occupation, pay grade, satisfaction, grievances, and even response rates to sexual orientation monitoring. Use this to understand the barriers LGB people might face, and develop action plans to improve outcomes.
- Cross-reference by department and by service. Are there differences in access and satisfaction levels, for example? Why might this be?

- Analyse service use to see who is using your organisation's services and how. Compare your data with data available on the area's wider population to discover potential differences, and target work to improve equality of access.
- Find a critical friend (for example, an LGB organisation) to review your data and feed into the analysis.

- The LGB community is often assumed to be an homogenous group, but it needs to be broken down into its component parts, and compared across other characteristics. There will be differences between the experiences of young bisexual women and older gay men, and between gay people from different ethnic backgrounds. These differences in experience and need should be used to improve service user outcomes.

- Comparing your data with other local datasets is a great way to make monitoring work for you. If you are planning to do this, you could design your collection methods in collaboration with a partner organisation or authority (for example, your local council) to make data sharing more efficient between you.
- Start to make year-on-year comparisons with the data you're collecting: what has changed in response and disclosure rates? If there are changes, what organisationally might be causing these? If data has remained fairly static, why is this? Look for gaps and develop targets to improve data quality.

- If you are going to publish data externally, make sure there is a context for it. Releasing data with no background to it or accompanying analysis to guide readers doesn't do justice to your monitoring process.
- Caution is needed if you are generating very small amounts of data.

If you are getting low numbers of people declaring their sexual orientation – and you may well, particularly if this is your first attempt – be sure that you set yourself a threshold for analysis and publication. Small numbers may make it very easy to identify individuals and it may also provided misleading information; for example, one person leaving from four is a 25% drop.

Adrian Barrowdale
5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Useful information

Analysing your monitoring data is really where the connections will start to fall into place, and the reasons for monitoring become apparent. Good preparation and collection methods will increase your likely rates of completion and disclosure, but if the returns you get are low you can address this by changing your methods next time.

Case study

“Compare your monitoring with other data”



Liverpool PCT monitors the sexual orientation of its service users and then uses available local and national data to compare against its own data, and to understand the significance of its own monitoring.

Evidence from relevant national research (such as the *UK Gay Men's Sex Survey*, and Stonewall's report on lesbian and bisexual women's health needs, *Prescription for Change*), NHS patient satisfaction surveys and local population data are used to assess what the organisation could be doing to reduce health inequalities. The PCT's initiative has been recognised in NHS North West's online **Equality Performance Improvement Toolkit**, where it scores highly in a range of indicators including evidence-based commissioning.

11. Use

Once you have collected and analysed your monitoring data it is best practice to use the information you have generated to make changes, enhance organisational environment, and improve outcomes for staff and service users. Monitoring is about more than just ticking the box – it should be conducted with a purpose and the data used effectively. As with the analysis, whatever uses you put the data to must be relevant to your organisation and its aims.

Suggestions for use

What follows are suggestions for some of the uses of monitoring data; not all of these will be achievable in the first years of monitoring implementation, but can be used as a guide to your process.

- Develop disaggregated targets from your analysis and use these to design targeted interventions.
- Use the data as evidence in commissioning and planning services for specific groups.
- Assess all proposed work programmes and interventions for their potential impact on equality. Use monitoring data as a basis, and engage with groups who might be affected by your organisation's decisions.

- If your analysis identifies training needs such as understanding monitoring, challenging discrimination or promoting equality, plan targeted training initiatives and leadership programmes to address these issues.
- Using what other data is available (including grey literature, local data and relevant national research) comparatively can help to contextualise your monitoring data. Understanding the issues for LGB people and recognising existing areas of need will inform actions to improve outcomes for your staff and service users.
- Share the headline data (where appropriate) with staff and service users to include them in the monitoring process and encourage them to feel ownership. Celebrating examples of 'you said, we did' will reinforce positive messages about monitoring and increase positive outcomes.
- Develop a virtuous circle – collecting anecdotes of service improvement will feed back into reasons monitoring works.
- Publish the results of monitoring alongside actions that you plan to take in response. Make it clear to people that monitoring is a process to lead to improved outcomes.

Case studies

“Use data to improve outcomes”

Salford University carries out sexual orientation monitoring of staff. When the question was first asked in an anonymous staff survey the organisation was pleased with the disclosure rate, as 6% of respondents identified as LGB. However, when questions relating to bullying and harassment were analysed by characteristic it showed that the number of LGB staff who had experienced bullying and harassment was proportionally higher than other groups.

When asked to expand on incidents or say whether they had reported them, LGB staff were also more likely to not provide an answer. The organisation recognised this was a problem and responded by commissioning research into LGB experiences of bullying and harassment, the report of which is expected soon.

“Target service improvements or specific services”

Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust launched its *Making Connections Not Assumptions* project in collaboration with other local authorities and Black and minority ethnic groups to address health inequalities for older south Asian women.

Monitoring data and existing evidence identified needs on mental health and well being, and engagement with groups of south Asian women found that they wanted to increase awareness of mental health issues in their community and to have access to emotional support.

Monitoring information supported the development of a targeted activity to respond to a specific need, and the Care Quality Commission has highlighted the project as an example of good practice.

12. Next steps

- The monitoring process can be used to gather evidence about how your organisation is an inclusive and diverse workplace and/or service provider. Working with an LGB staff group on changes to organisational policy on parental leave, for example, demonstrates LGB inclusivity that is supported by monitoring.
- Share your learning and any organisational improvements you have made as a result of sexual orientation monitoring with colleagues, with partner organisations, and your networks in the field. Sharing success stories across organisations will help embed monitoring as an essential process on the road towards equality.
- If your monitoring generates low figures, try to identify why this might be and launch initiatives to increase response and disclosure rates. Don't use small data

returns as a justification to disinvest in or close services, but try to get behind what the reasons for this might be.

- Track your progress with monitoring year on year. Recognise that sexual orientation monitoring is a long term process; introducing it may bring up other issues among the workforce or in service provision that need consideration.
- Remember that monitoring itself is not an end in itself, but an integral process in ensuring equality.

What it's all about...

This stage of the process is really what monitoring is all about – not monitoring just to comply, but monitoring to really understand your organisation's staff and service users and to target work to improve outcomes for them.

Setting the parameters

Why are we monitoring?

What are we monitoring?

Who are we asking?

Preparation

Ensure confidentiality and data security measures

Communicate with staff and service users: why are you monitoring and how does it relate to them?

Identify and meet training needs

Identify who is responsible for data collection

Data Collection

Set the wording of the sexual orientation question

Decide on when you will collect the data and how frequently

Plan your collection method, including how to communicate with staff and service users

Analysis

What do you need to find out?

Cross analyse against data on other protected characteristics and other attributes (such as role, location and so on)

Who is using your services and how?

Compare with wider population data

Compare with existing research on LGB needs and with local data

Track progress year on year, setting targets for data quality

Use this workbook to plan and carry out your monitoring process, making the most of the best practice and learning points included. The tips, testimonials and case studies should set out a clear objective for monitoring and provide you with material to face any challenges you receive on why you are monitoring sexual orientation.

Whether your organisation is just introducing sexual orientation monitoring or has been doing it for years, improving your organisation's approach to monitoring will really make a difference to outcomes for your staff and service users.

13. Further information

Care Quality Commission

Count Me In: The National Mental Health and Learning Disability Ethnicity Census:
www.countmeinonline.co.uk/dvd.php

Equality and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/

Equality and Human Rights Commission and the University of York

Researching and monitoring adolescence and sexual orientation: *Asking the right questions, at the right time.* EHRC, 2010

Government Equalities Office

www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx

The Lesbian & Gay Foundation

Community Resource Centre
Number 5
Richmond Street
Manchester M1 3HF
Email: info@lgf.org.uk
Telephone: 0845 3 30 30 30
www.lgf.org.uk

The Lesbian & Gay Foundation resource

Enough is Enough! Action against Homophobia
www.lgf.org.uk/assets/Uploads/PDFs/Resources/eie-hate-crime-guide.pdf

The Lesbian & Gay Foundation resource

Faithbook: a guide to faith and spirituality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people.
<http://www.lgf.org.uk/faithbook/>

NHS North West

3 Piccadilly Place
London Road
Manchester M1 3BN
www.help.northwest.nhs.uk

Stonewall Workplace Guides

Monitoring: how to monitor sexual orientation in the workplace.
Stonewall, 2006

Trans Resource and Empowerment Centre

Email: board@transcentre.org.uk
Telephone: 07513 880647
www.transcentre.org.uk

NHS North West

NHS North West recognises the fundamental importance of embracing the diversity of people from all groups in society, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation or responsibilities as a carer.

As leader of the region's health economy, we have both legal and moral responsibilities to ensure that the Board and all staff promote equality, fair treatment and social inclusion in everything we do. We support the elimination of unlawful discrimination by ensuring that the values underpinning equality, diversity and human rights are central to our policymaking, employment practices and community involvement.

We also have a lead role in monitoring and influencing the equality performance of NHS organisations in the region – a prerequisite for how they plan and provide high-quality

The Lesbian & Gay Foundation

The Lesbian & Gay Foundation (LGF) is a vibrant charity with a wide portfolio of well-established services and a rapidly developing range of new initiatives aimed at meeting the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. We provide support, information and advice on many health and social issues faced by LGB people, as well as tackling continued problems of discrimination and violence. We provide more direct services and resources for more lesbian, gay and bisexual people than any other charity of our kind in the UK.

The LGF has over a decade's experience in assessing and meeting the changing needs of LGB&T communities and doing this using a range of organisational and governance structures. The LGF is increasingly supporting the work of other LGB&T groups, and

healthcare services for all. Our ambition has been for the NHS to be recognised as a leader on equality and diversity in the workplace. We work to ensure we have a workforce that reflects the communities it serves, providing fair, accessible and culturally competent services.

Our equality and diversity strategy and associated work programmes go beyond statutory compliance. They provide a gateway into the many different aspects of promoting equality, valuing diversity and protecting human rights, all of which contribute to our overall vision and purpose.

As the NHS prepares to undergo structural change, we aim to ensure that we preserve all of our achievements in the area of equality and diversity. We are dedicated to embedding a competence-based equality and diversity ethos into the new and emerging NHS organisations, from the point of planning to the moment of implementation.

continues to have good working relationships with organisations which deliver complementary services and which commission or support the delivery of services to LGB&T people.



We are increasingly invited to provide consultancy, advice and assistance to public sector bodies on the needs and views of LGB communities.

In recent years we have developed a greater role in promoting awareness of the needs and experiences of LGB people and in campaigning for equality. We campaign for a fair and equal society where all lesbian, gay and bisexual people can achieve their full potential, and our mission is: 'Ending Homophobia, Empowering People'.

Everything you always wanted to know about...

Sexual Orientation Monitoring

...but were afraid to ask



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