Protecting lesbian, gay and bisexual people

A practical guide for police forces



Stonewall



In my lifetime I've been physically assaulted three times and hospitalised once on leaving gay venues. Police were not interested on the two occasions I reported the attacks.
Michael, 66 — London

From my own experience and those of my friends I suspect that less serious (non-violent) homophobic incidents are under-reported because victims feel like no action will be taken by the police if they do report it.
Denise, 26 — West Midlands

The front line police officers know nothing about any domestic violence agencies for gay men. It is very hard to talk to them about domestic violence and I was made to feel I was wasting their time. They didn't keep me updated, failed to deal with my complaint and didn't see that the arrest of my partner was important to me and that the delay in doing it added to my worry.
Tony, 33 — East Midlands

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by Alice Ashworth

Stonewall

Introduction

Thanks to recent changes in the law, 21st century Britain provides lesbian, gay and bisexual people with full legal equality. Regrettably, however, Stonewall research demonstrates that too many gay people still don't get an appropriate level of support from those responsible for enforcing those hard-won legal protections.

From dissatisfaction with the police response to homophobic hate crime to expectations of discrimination from the police, gay taxpayers still lack trust and confidence in those they pay to protect them from harm. Just ten years ago gay men were being routinely arrested and persecuted by the police and this lived experience remains in the memories of many gay people. At the same time homophobic hate crime and same-sex domestic abuse continue to be materially under-reported.

This guide offers lots of practical tips for police forces on how to best support lesbian, gay and bisexual victims of crime and how to engage meaningfully with gay people in their wider community as well as in the workplace itself. It features case studies from forces that are going the extra mile to deliver a first rate service. We're very grateful to them for sharing their experiences with us.



Ben Summerskill
Chief Executive

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01 The problem

Nobody wants to be a victim of crime. But if the worst does happen, it's important that victims feel confident they can turn to the police for help. There are all sorts of reasons why victims may feel uncomfortable talking to the police about an incident they've experienced. Being lesbian, gay or bisexual can create yet more barriers to coming forward.

Stonewall's ground-breaking research reveals that gay people experience alarming rates of homophobic hate crime and domestic abuse but sadly many don't feel confident reporting these to the police. Not all victims of homophobic abuse understand that what they have experienced may be a criminal offence or that the police can provide support. Some, in fact, expect to experience homophobia from the police.

While many forces around the country have been working hard to try and tackle these issues, some are yet to undertake targeted work with gay people in their force area. Too many forces think these issues are confined to urban areas, even though Stonewall's research clearly shows that homophobic hate crime and same-sex domestic abuse happen in rural areas too. As a result practice is patchy across the country and in particular there has been little reduction in the extent of homophobic hate crime over the last five years.

At the same time too many gay police officers and police staff report barriers to being themselves at work. This has a knock-on effect on policing. If officers are distracted by having to hide their sexual orientation while on duty, they will not be able to perform their operational role as effectively. This also makes them less likely to be seen as positive role models among the local gay community.

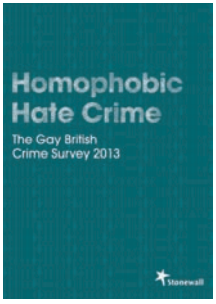
Homophobic hate crime

The police, Crown Prosecution Service and other criminal justice agencies have the following commonly agreed definitions of homophobic hate crimes and incidents:

A hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.

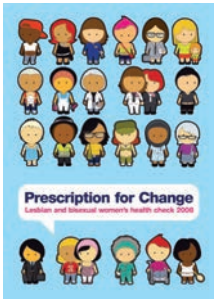
A hate incident is any non-crime incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.

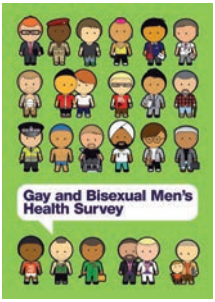
- **One in six** lesbian, gay and bisexual people have experienced a homophobic hate crime or incident in the last three years.
- **One in ten** victims experienced a physical assault as part of the incident.
- **More than three quarters** of victims did not report their experiences to the police. **More than two thirds** didn't report them to anyone.
- **Two in five** victims didn't report because they didn't believe that what they had experienced was serious enough to report.
- **Almost a third** of victims didn't report because they didn't believe the police could or would do anything.



Domestic abuse

- **One in four** lesbian and bisexual women have experienced domestic abuse in a relationship, the same proportion as in the general female population. **Two thirds** of those say the perpetrator was a woman, a **third** a man.
- **Half** of gay and bisexual men have experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse from a family member or partner since the age of 16, compared to one in six men in the general population. **More than one in three** have experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse in a relationship with a man.
- **Four in five** lesbian, gay and bisexual victims of domestic abuse have never reported these incidents to the police.
- Of those that did report, **more than half** were not happy with how the police dealt with the situation.

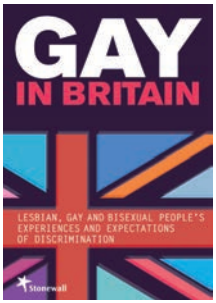






Expectations of discrimination

- **One in five** lesbian, gay and bisexual people expect to be treated worse than heterosexual people when reporting a crime if the police officer knew their sexual orientation.
- **A quarter** expect discrimination if reporting a homophobic hate crime to the police. **More than a third** of lesbian, gay and bisexual people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds expect discrimination in these circumstances.
- **Two in five** lesbian, gay and bisexual people expect to be treated worse than a heterosexual person by the police if they commit a crime or are suspected of committing a crime. This rises to **more than half** of gay people aged over 65.
- **Almost half** of lesbian, gay and bisexual people expect they would face barriers to becoming a Police Community Support Officer.



Experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual police officers and staff

- **One in six** lesbian, gay and bisexual police officers and staff do not feel confident reporting anti-gay bullying in their force.
- **One in five** say they do not think their straight colleagues are well informed about lesbian, gay and bisexual issues.
- **One in five** say there aren't *any* visible and open lesbian, gay and bisexual role models in their workplace.
- **One in seven** are not open about their sexual orientation with their manager or senior colleagues.

02 Tackling homophobic hate crime

Even though homophobic hate crime is unlawful, many victims don't understand their rights or don't realise the police can help them. Police forces need to take targeted action to tackle homophobic hate in their force area, encourage reporting and enable gay people to live without fear of abuse and violence. This chapter includes some practical ideas for effectively tackling homophobic hate crime.

Encouraging reporting

Far too few lesbian, gay and bisexual people report their experiences of homophobic hate to the police. This is why it's so important that forces encourage the reporting of homophobic hate crimes by addressing the reasons why they so often go unreported. Many forces have focused their efforts on encouraging victims to report via third parties, yet Stonewall research shows that victims are over five times more likely to report homophobic hate crimes to the police than to a third party reporting service. While these can be a useful short-term solution, it's important to find ways of improving victims' confidence to report directly to the police. Victims should be specifically encouraged to report non-criminal hate incidents too. Left unchallenged this low level behaviour can escalate into something far more serious.

- Publicise, including via social media, the importance of reporting homophobic hate crimes and incidents. Make clear that the force is committed to tackling homophobia in the community, however minor it may seem.
- Distribute materials about how to report hate crime and why it's important to do so through local gay community groups or venues, at community events such as Pride and through other public services, such as in GP surgeries, schools and libraries.

- Talk to local Neighbourhood Watch groups about homophobic hate crime to give them the confidence to approach any neighbours they suspect may be experiencing it. Encourage them to play an active role in supporting victims to report it.
- Provide alternative means of reporting hate crimes, including holding drop-in sessions with police officers at gay community venues.
- Liaise with local media to secure coverage about successful prosecutions and pull together case studies on your website so that gay people can easily find out what's going on in their local area.

Recording hate crime data

Gathering data about the extent of homophobic hate crimes is vital since this enables police forces to measure how well they are doing at responding to the problem and resolving cases. If the force has strong evidence that homophobic hate is a problem in the area, this should be a strategic priority of the Police and Crime Commissioner. It's important to record information about non-criminal homophobic incidents too so that, where the data identifies a problem, targeted action can be taken to prevent more serious attacks in the future.

- Make sure there's a system in place for recording the homophobic element of non-criminal hate incidents as well as crimes. Systems should be designed so that police officers and call handling staff can easily identify when a victim has been repeatedly targeted.
- Analyse the data to identify trends and patterns over time, including the outcomes of recorded cases. An increase in the number of recorded incidents is a positive indication that more people feel confident reporting their experiences of hate crime to the police.
- Take action to address any particular problems identified by the data, for instance working with schools in a particular catchment area if the data identifies a concentration of homophobic hate crimes and incidents committed by young people in that area.
- Publish the data to enable local lesbian, gay and bisexual people to hold the force to account on its commitment to tackling homophobia in the community. Being transparent about progress will help to improve trust and confidence in the police.

Training police officers and police staff

It's really important that police officers are fully equipped to investigate homophobic offences once they are reported. Some forces train Lesbian and Gay Liaison Officers (LAGLOs) or hate crime officers to act as a dedicated point of contact for victims of homophobic hate crimes. Even where this is the case, it's vital that *all* police officers are able to identify and handle a homophobic hate crime and that control room staff are able to deal with these sorts of calls appropriately.

- Make sure that *all* police officers and control room staff receive training about the nature and extent of homophobic hate crime as well as the barriers to reporting. Use performance reviews to monitor whether they have completed training and that they're putting what they've learnt into practice.
- Train police officers and control room staff to identify a homophobic hate crime or incident, including offences committed online, and how to record the homophobic element of the incident.
- Provide training on how to treat lesbian, gay and bisexual victims with respect and how best to encourage victims to tell the police they think an offence may have been motivated by homophobia. This should cover the importance of asking 'open' questions and not assuming all victims are heterosexual.
- Emphasise in training the importance of not outing a victim as gay to their friends or family without their permission, including indirectly such as by informing them that the incident was homophobic or that it took place at a gay venue.
- Train officers to signpost victims to appropriate support services, including services specifically designed for victims of homophobic hate crime, where available. Training must stress that victims should be regularly updated about the status of their case.

Working with schools and other organisations

Police forces have an important role to play in challenging homophobic attitudes in the wider community in order to reduce crime. By working with schools and other services in a local area, police forces can prevent homophobic offences from happening in the first place. Working with the council, other service providers and community organisations can also help to ensure that victims of homophobic hate crime are referred to the police where appropriate.

- Send police officers into schools to explain to young people why homophobic behaviour isn't acceptable and that homophobic hate crime is a criminal offence.
- Encourage young people to get involved in initiatives to challenge homophobia in their community.
- Work with local probation services to challenge the attitudes of those who have committed homophobic offences, to reduce reoffending.
- Develop partnerships with local authorities – above and beyond the formal relationship established through Community Safety Partnerships – to make sure that victims of homophobic hate crime are referred to the police from other agencies.
- Work with local sports clubs to challenge homophobia in sport and train stewards so they can identify homophobic hate crime and deal with perpetrators effectively.

Tackling homophobic hate crime in practice

Lancashire Police delivers a mandatory one day training package on hate crime to all officers up to the rank of Inspector as well as to frontline police staff. The training day equips police officers and staff to identify all forms of hate crimes and incidents, including those motivated by homophobia, and to identify their impact on individuals and communities.

This includes emphasising that lesbian, gay and bisexual victims may conceal their sexual orientation in order to avoid being a victim of hate crime. The training specifically covers how to complete a hate crime or incident report and stresses the importance of informing the Crown Prosecution Service of any aggravating factors that may need

to be taken into account when sentencing. It also highlights the significance of special measures for lesbian, gay and bisexual victims and witnesses, who may have concerns about being outed if they give evidence in court in a case involving a homophobic hate crime.

The force also delivers hate crime training to schools if a school requests this or where Youth Involvement Officers or PCSOs identify a particular need. The one hour training session covers all strands of hate crime and brings together different year groups to educate pupils about the impact of hate crime on victims.

Dyfed Powys Police has a specific objective in its strategic equality plan 2012-2016 to 'increase the confidence of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to report crimes to us'. The plan sets out how the force will achieve this, with a specific commitment to provide additional support to victims of homophobic hate crimes and incidents. The force piloted a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) process in one of its territorial areas, to allow hate crime cases to be referred from any one of a number of relevant partners, including social services, housing, adult safeguarding and mental health services. The aim of the process is to identify cases of repeat victimisation that might otherwise be classified as anti-social behaviour only. While it was initially introduced to tackle disability hate crime, it was later extended to include referrals relating to homophobic hate crime and a decision was made to roll it out across the force area.

The force amended the set of questions used by call handlers to assess risk so that they could identify targeted victims of hate incidents during the very first call to the police. Call handlers can then record the hate element of the incident on the system and one of the force's 85 trained Hate Crime Support Officers can be dispatched to the caller to complete a more thorough risk assessment. Cases can then be referred to the MARAC process if required.

03 Tackling domestic abuse

Rates of domestic abuse are worryingly high within the lesbian, gay and bisexual population, yet far too many of these crimes go unreported and satisfaction rates are low amongst those who do report. At the same time support services are too often geared solely towards heterosexual women. This chapter contains recommendations about how to tackle the problem.

Encouraging reporting

There are many reasons why victims of domestic abuse can be reluctant to report their abuser to the police. For those experiencing domestic abuse in a same-sex relationship or living under the threat of being outed as gay or bisexual, there can be additional barriers. Police forces have undertaken a lot of work in recent years to encourage victims of domestic abuse to come forward. There are simple steps they can take to encourage gay people to come forward too.

- Raise awareness within the gay community that the police understands that domestic abuse occurs within same-sex relationships and is committed to addressing it.
- Target specific messages at male victims of domestic violence and distribute these materials in gay venues, at gay community events such as Pride and in other public places such as fitness clubs, pub toilets and on public transport.
- Include images of both same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples in campaigns to encourage reporting of domestic abuse and encourage other public services to display these resources, such as in GP surgeries, libraries and job centres.
- Record and publish data on incidents of same-sex abuse to send a clear signal that the force takes it seriously and is willing to be held to account on its performance.

Collaborating with other services

Victims of domestic abuse often have complex needs and may require support from other services in the area, including health services, social services and housing associations. Where police are the first point of contact for victims, it's important that they're able to refer gay victims to services that will best meet their needs. They can also play an important role in collaborating with other services to improve the overall level of support provided to victims and to educate young people about same-sex domestic abuse.

- Coordinate with health services and other services in the area to make sure that lesbian, gay and bisexual victims of domestic abuse receive appropriate support in all their interactions with local services.
- Identify national and local support services for gay victims of domestic abuse and make sure victims are referred to them. If none exist in the force area, work with other local partners to help set one up.
- Work with Police and Crime Commissioners to make sure that local support services are equipped to support gay victims of domestic abuse.
- Have police officers visit lesbian, gay and bisexual tenants' associations and patient groups in the force area, and equivalent user groups for other public services, to find out what more the force can do locally to support victims of domestic abuse.
- Work with schools to address issues of consent and domestic abuse, including in same-sex relationships, as part of the PSHE curriculum.

Training staff

It's important that all police officers have the confidence to handle domestic abuse cases involving lesbian, gay and bisexual victims and that they ask the right questions. Where forces have Lesbian and Gay Liaison Officers (LAGLOs) it's important that they are trained on domestic abuse too, but all officers should be able to deal with these sorts of cases appropriately.

- Include content about the experiences of gay victims and the additional barriers to reporting in generic training on domestic abuse.
- Train officers how to ask 'open' questions when interviewing victims, such as "Can you tell me who hit you?" rather than "Did your husband hit you?", and to avoid making assumptions about the gender of the perpetrator.
- Make sure police officers are aware of any specific provision in the area for lesbian, gay and bisexual victims of domestic abuse so they can refer victims to appropriate support services.

Tackling domestic abuse in practice

Cheshire Constabulary works with partner agencies on a campaign called The Route to Safety encouraging male victims of domestic abuse to come forward and seek support. The campaign targets all male victims, with a particular emphasis on same-sex domestic abuse. It is advertised through posters and business cards that are distributed throughout the local area, including in GP surgeries. The campaign has led to an increase in referrals from male victims into the domestic abuse system, including those in same-sex relationships.



Leicestershire Constabulary has a specific action code in its crime reporting system to indicate when a domestic abuse case involves a same-sex relationship. By scrutinising the data, the force's domestic abuse unit identified that reporting of same-sex domestic abuse was very low. In response the force produced a series of posters and leaflets featuring men and women experiencing domestic abuse from a same-sex partner, with phone numbers of where to seek help. The posters were launched at an event in a local gay pub attended by representatives from local lesbian, gay and bisexual organisations and domestic abuse support services, as well as local media who ran a story about the event in the local paper. The month following the launch saw an increase in reporting of same-sex domestic abuse cases.

The force also scrutinised a random sample of phone calls and crime reports of same-sex domestic abuse cases to make sure that cases were being dealt with appropriately, including whether call handlers were using gender neutral language. This identified that cases were largely being handled well. Even so the force invited the local council's manager of domestic violence services to talk to officers about some of the issues affecting lesbian, gay and bisexual victims of domestic abuse. The force also produced a booklet on domestic violence for beat officers that featured a list of helplines to direct victims to further support, including Broken Rainbow, the national LGBT domestic violence helpline.



04 Engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual people

Engaging with local gay people is one way of improving confidence in the police. Even if police forces are doing lots of good work to make their service more gay-friendly, this will only improve trust in the force if local people know about it. Police officers should be visible in the local community as individuals who genuinely care about gay residents and build meaningful relationships with them. Asking gay people how well the force is meeting their needs is also an important way of measuring success. This chapter looks at some of the best ways of communicating effectively with gay people.

Being active within the local gay community

Local lesbian, gay and bisexual people need to believe that their police force, and individual police officers, are genuinely doing their bit to promote good relations. It's important that officers not only talk to the gay community but play an active role in it. In the same way that police officers are expected to perform small acts of kindness for the greater good of the wider community – such as helping the elderly cross the street or giving directions to tourists – they should do so for the gay community too. This shouldn't just be about crime prevention and safety or attending the local Pride event every year, but about doing small things to genuinely improve the lives of local gay people – and telling people about it when they do.

- Attend meetings with local gay community groups and youth groups and hold drop-in sessions on their premises to allow gay people to engage with the police in a less formal setting where they may feel more at ease.

- Support or sponsor gay community events and organisations. Working in partnership with other public services in the area or with neighbouring police forces is a good way of making these sorts of initiatives cost-effective.
- Encourage officers to fundraise for local gay community groups – or to nominate themselves as trustees – and support lesbian, gay and bisexual police officers to mentor gay young people in the force area.
- Build an online presence on social media specifically targeted at gay people and use this technology creatively to let people know what the force is doing to promote gay equality.
- Send officers to talk to the lesbian, gay and bisexual staff support networks of local employers and encourage them to raise awareness throughout the workforce about what the police is doing to support local gay people. This may reach those who aren't out at work.

Making public statements about equal treatment for gay people

It's important to remember that not all gay people will necessarily be actively involved with their local gay community. For those in rural areas there may not be a local Pride event or community support group. Including statements of support for gay equality in general communications is a good way of reaching these individuals. It's also a good way of letting heterosexual people know why gay equality is important.

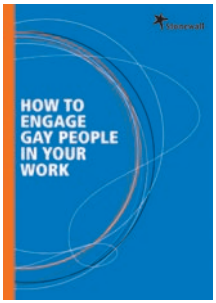
- Encourage senior officers to talk publicly about the importance of equality for gay people, for instance on the force's website, in blogs, local media and social media and on local radio stations.
- Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual police officers to act as visible role models by talking publicly about their experiences of being gay and working for the force, both in local media, through video sharing sites and blogs and by going into schools and workplaces.
- Include a statement in recruitment advertising for Police Community Support Officers, police staff and police officers that the force is committed to equality for gay people. If eligible, feature the Stonewall Diversity Champion or Stonewall Top 100 Employer logo.
- Put up posters in police stations making clear that the force is committed to delivering a first rate service to gay people. Encourage other public services such as GP surgeries and libraries to display these too.

- Use images of same-sex couples in general crime prevention campaigns and resources and make sure these are widely visible in public places, including on public transport.

Consulting lesbian, gay and bisexual people

Many gay people say they have never been asked what they think of services in their area but would welcome the opportunity to provide feedback. Consulting with gay people is an important way of tapping into their unique experiences of policing in the local area. It's also an opportunity to send a signal to gay people that a force is committed to addressing their concerns.

- Have a gay representative on the force's Independent Advisory Group and Youth Advisory Group, if the force has one. Advertising the opportunity widely, including in mainstream and social media, is a good way of signalling more widely that the force is interested in listening to gay people.
- Consult with local gay people to find out what they think of local policing, for instance via an online survey. Actively promote generic consultations through gay community groups, online forums and venues.
- Gather the views of gay young people in the force area by regularly sending police officers to talk to gay youth groups. If youth groups don't exist for gay young people in the force area, help set one up.
- Use Community Impact Statements to measure the impact of homophobic hate crimes on gay people in the local area.



See Stonewall's guide *How to engage gay people in your work* for more tips and recommendations

Engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual people in practice

Before agreeing its Strategic Equality Plan, **Gwent Police** consulted widely with people in the local community. This included running several focus groups with gay community groups, advertising an online survey through lesbian, gay and bisexual networks and leaving survey post boxes at gay community venues. The force's Independent Advisory Group, which has a number of gay members, was also consulted on the plan.

As a result ten per cent of participants in the consultation exercise identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual. This informed the Strategic Equality Plan, which contains a number of actions relating specifically to gay people. These include a commitment to deliver specific training on domestic abuse to the force's LGB&T Liaison Officers and a commitment to work with young gay people to increase awareness of issues around sexual exploitation and prostitution.

Devon and Cornwall Police has actively supported Cornwall Pride in Truro since its inception in 2008. In its first year the force used the event to ask lesbian, gay and bisexual people what their concerns were. This was followed up with specific engagement events in partnership with the community and other statutory agencies to agree a list of actions. As a result a youth group was founded for gay young people that now operates independently from the police. The force continues to be a sponsor of Cornwall Pride and regularly takes out a one-page advert in the event booklet, working with the organising committee throughout the year. The force actively works in partnership with Cornwall Council and Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service to continue the work started in 2008. Officers march in uniform in the parade and the community engagement has now developed, enabling the police to take reports of homophobic hate crimes and incidents from the community at the event.

The force also attends Exeter Pride and Plymouth Pride and sponsors the only gay football team in the south west, the Devon Lions. They are a Devon based gay football team that looks to challenge homophobia and stereotyping around sport. The team's kit features the Devon and Cornwall Police Emblem.

05 Creating a gay-friendly workplace

It's important that police forces make efforts internally to make their workplace a welcoming environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual police officers and police staff. Research shows that gay employees who are open about their sexual orientation at work perform better in their jobs. This has a positive effect on police work; police forces that get their own house in order are much better equipped to support gay people in the local community. At the same time gay officers who feel supported at work are more likely to step up as visible gay role models amongst the general public.

The Workplace Equality Index, Stonewall's annual benchmarking tool for employers, measures organisations' efforts to tackle discrimination against gay employees and create gay-friendly workplace cultures. Almost half of police forces in England and Wales entered the Index in 2013. This chapter includes lots of tips for police forces on how to become a gay-friendly employer, based on our findings from the 2013 Index.

Implementing gay-friendly policies and practices

All police forces should have workplace policies that take sexual orientation fully into account. This sends a clear signal to lesbian, gay and bisexual staff and officers that their force is committed to supporting them. Having the policy in place is not enough, however; it's vital that gay employees understand how the policy applies to them and that forces monitor how their policies work in practice.

Action:	Further ideas:
• Make sure the force's bullying and harassment policy is actively promoted to all staff. This will ensure all staff know that homophobic bullying will not be tolerated at work and know how to report a complaint. **More than two in five** forces aren't doing this.	• Collect data on the number of homophobia-related complaints, thoroughly analyse the data to identify problem areas and report findings back to staff.
• Be explicit in benefit policies about how they apply to gay staff and let people know about this. **More than a third** of forces fail to promote their policies as inclusive and **more than a third** fail to brief line managers about how policies apply to gay staff in practice.	• Identify further ways of raising awareness that gay officers and staff are eligible for benefits such as paternity and adoption leave, by profiling gay parents in internal communications for example.
• Monitor the sexual orientation of employees to identify whether lesbian, gay and bisexual people are well represented at different levels of the workforce. **Less than half** of forces break down their data to analyse the distribution of gay staff by rank.	• Take decisive action to address any under-representation of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in particular areas or at certain ranks and let all officers and staff know what you've done.

Supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual staff

Gay people who feel supported at work are more likely to be comfortable being open with colleagues and managers about being gay, enabling them to focus on police work rather than having to deal with the pressures of having to hide who they are. Engaging directly with gay staff is a good way of making them feel valued for who they are and more loyal to the force.

Action:	Further ideas:
• Support lesbian, gay and bisexual employees to join the local or national Gay Police Association and make sure their contributions are recognised in annual performance reviews. This signals to staff that this work is valued as contributing to the overall performance of the force. **More than two in five** forces are not currently doing this.	• Identify ways that the network can provide specific support to bisexual staff and officers. This could include encouraging visible bisexual role models, having a dedicated bisexual representative, making clear that opposite-sex partners are welcome at social events and raising awareness of issues specifically affecting bisexual people.
• Ask specific questions about sexual orientation in anonymous staff attitude surveys to identify any specific issues affecting gay police staff and officers, such as whether they feel confident being out to their line manager. **Almost two thirds** of forces aren't doing this.	• Analyse the findings that relate to sexual orientation and consult gay officers and staff to put together an action plan on how to address any issues identified by the survey. Report what you've done to all staff.
• Offer targeted development opportunities to lesbian, gay and bisexual police officers and police staff, including mentoring schemes or the Stonewall Leadership or Role Models Programme. **More than two in five** forces have no mentoring scheme in place.	• Invite officers and staff in more junior ranks to act as reverse mentors to senior officers and staff, to help senior managers better understand the day-to-day experiences of gay people in the force. This also provides a good development opportunity for mentors.

Training staff about lesbian, gay and bisexual equality

It's only worthwhile having gay-friendly policies in place if staff understand them. This is why it's vital to educate the workforce about the importance of gay equality and why it's relevant to their professional role. Good equality and diversity training equips police officers and police staff to treat gay colleagues and members of the public with dignity and respect. This helps avoid the risk of costly employment tribunals caused by discriminatory behaviour.

Action:	**Further ideas:**
• Train officers and staff about the issues affecting gay people, including how to identify and challenge homophobic bullying in the workplace. Provide advanced training to line managers so they can adequately support gay team members. **More than a third** of forces are not currently doing this.	• Provide training on unconscious bias to encourage staff, particularly those responsible for hiring decisions, to critically reflect on their behaviour. **Less than a third** of police forces are currently doing this.
• Make sure that training covers the distinct issues facing gay men, lesbians and bisexual people, as well as those affecting lesbian, gay and bisexual people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. **More than two in five** forces don't address this in their equality training.	• Provide training to line managers on any perceived tension between religion and sexual orientation so they feel confident managing potential conflict in their teams.
• Train police officers and call handling staff about lesbian, gay and bisexual issues that are relevant to their policing role, including homophobic hate crime and same-sex domestic abuse.	• Hold regular seminars about issues affecting local gay people and invite speakers from local community groups to come and talk to officers and staff about their work.

Promoting gay equality throughout the workforce

It's important to let police officers and police staff know about work the force is doing to support gay people, both in the workplace and among local residents. This sends a signal to lesbian, gay and bisexual employees that they are valued for who they are and reminds heterosexual employees why gay equality is important. Senior officers should support initiatives to promote gay equality, since this will encourage staff to take this work seriously.

Action:	**Further ideas:**
• Encourage gay officers, including senior officers, to act as visible role models by talking internally and publicly about their experiences of being gay and working for the force. **A third** of forces don't profile role models in internal communications.	• Identify more gay and bisexual male officers to step up as role models in the workforce and the local community, as well as lesbian, gay and bisexual officers from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. **More than two in five** forces fail to profile a diverse range of role models and gay male officers are commonly under-represented.
• Introduce a 'straight allies' programme so that heterosexual colleagues can get involved with initiatives to promote gay equality. This may also encourage gay officers and staff who aren't out at work to get involved with this work. **Only half** of forces are currently doing this.	• Encourage senior straight allies to talk about why sexual orientation equality is important to them, both in internal communications and in the wider community.

Action:

- Take steps to ensure that awareness-raising initiatives about gay equality reach officers and staff in all locations, including those in more remote police stations where gay staff may feel particularly isolated. **More than two in five** forces aren't doing this.

Further ideas:

- Make sure that contractors working on site also receive communications about gay equality and are invited to awareness raising events.

For more information on how to be a gay-friendly employer see Stonewall's series of guides for workplaces.



Creating a gay-friendly workforce in practice

Hampshire Constabulary has had a staff network to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff and officers since 2003. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Group has over 170 members and provides information and support to members on workplace issues. This includes a confidential mailing list to include those who aren't open about their sexual orientation at work, enabling them to access support without outing themselves to colleagues. The network holds a range of social events throughout the year, including events specifically aimed at bisexual staff and officers and an annual family picnic for those with children.

The group reviews all workplace and operational policies in order to identify any implications for gay people. This has included feeding into the force's review of its hate crime strategy, as well as amending the force's Maternity and Adoption policy to minimise staff being outed as gay whilst going through the adoption process. The group also provides support and training to the force's Lesbian and Gay Liaison Officers and promotes their work throughout the force.

In response to feedback from local lesbian, gay and bisexual community groups, **Sussex Police** held a one day conference to raise awareness amongst Police Supervisors and Police Staff Managers about how to create a more positive work environment for gay staff. The day featured personal testimonies from police officers talking about their experiences of being gay and working for the force and was opened and attended by the Chief Constable. The event was advertised to all police officers and police staff through the staff intranet by the force's Sexual Orientation Champion.

Delegates said the event gave them a deeper understanding of the issues affecting gay staff, including the positive impact of being open about their sexual orientation with colleagues. Many committed to share what they had learnt with colleagues and put this into practice within their teams.

06 The law

There are several laws that all police officers should be aware of. They provide legal protection from homophobic hatred and affect how lesbian, gay and bisexual people should be treated in their interactions with the police.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 gives courts the power to issue tougher sentences if offenders are found guilty of an offence motivated by homophobia. This is known as an 'aggravating factor'. Judges can only issue an enhanced sentence if there is sufficient evidence that the offence was motivated by hostility, or that the perpetrator demonstrated hostility, based on the victim's sexual orientation. This is why it's vital that police officers gather as much evidence as possible throughout an investigation to establish the homophobic element of an incident.

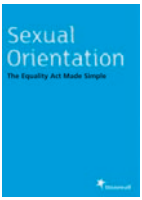
The Public Order Act 1986

The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 amended the Public Order Act 1986 to introduce the offence of incitement to homophobic hatred. This makes it unlawful to stir up hatred against gay people by using threatening or abusive words or behaviour – including through written or recorded materials. The offence is intended to cover extreme homophobic behaviour and materials rather than the careless use of homophobic language. For this reason the threshold for prosecution is very high and there has to date been only one conviction, following a case in Derby. It's important that police officers understand this distinction and are able to recognise unlawful behaviour when they come across it.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 says that police forces mustn't discriminate against gay people, whether as victims, witnesses or suspects. Police forces mustn't discriminate against their gay police officers or police staff either.

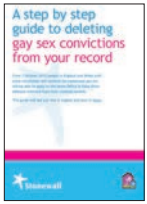
The Equality Act also requires police forces proactively to promote equality for gay people. This is known as the public sector equality duty. Forces have to regularly publish data to show how they're doing this; this might for instance include publishing the number of homophobic hate crimes and incidents recorded by the force or the proportion of lesbian, gay and bisexual victims satisfied with the service they received.



For more information about the Equality Act 2010 and for sample equality objectives for police forces, see Stonewall's guide *Sexual Orientation: the Equality Act made simple*

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 allows for some convictions and cautions for consensual gay sex to be removed from criminal records. Before the law was introduced, gross indecency and other historical offences for consensual gay sex continued to show up on the criminal records of thousands of gay men. This often put them off volunteering or applying for jobs that required a criminal record check. Police officers should be aware of the process for having historical offences removed from criminal records and be able to signpost individuals to the application process.



Stonewall has produced guidance for individuals to let them know who is eligible to have historical offences removed from their criminal record and how to apply.

The legacy of criminalisation

Until 1967, when sex between men was partially decriminalised, all sexual acts between men were illegal in Britain. Even after this change in the law, gay men continued to be victimised by the police and charged with other offences including 'gross indecency'. Gross indecency is no longer a criminal offence and some historical convictions can now be removed from criminal records (see above).

Even so, this historical legacy continues to affect the way some lesbian, gay and bisexual people who lived through this period view the police. This is why it's vital that police forces communicate very clearly that they are there to serve all members of the community – including gay people.

Top tips

Top tips for police officers

- Ask 'open' questions when dealing with victims of crime. Don't assume that all victims are heterosexual.
- Make sure you record the homophobic element of any crime or incident that you or the victim suspect may have been motivated by homophobia and ask relevant questions to encourage disclosure.
- Find out what support is offered to gay people by support services and community groups in the local area so you can signpost victims appropriately.
- Challenge homophobic language and behaviour whenever you encounter it on duty in the local community and in the workplace.

Top tips for investigating officers

- At the early stages of an investigation, make sure you gather enough evidence to prove that a crime was motivated by homophobic hostility.
- Regularly update victims of homophobic hate crime on the progress of their case and signpost lesbian, gay and bisexual victims of crime to appropriate support services in the area.
- Highlight the aggravating factors to the Crown Prosecution Service in homophobic hate crime cases so this can be addressed at sentencing.
- Work with your press office to secure media coverage of successful prosecutions of homophobic hate crime cases. This will encourage other victims to report in future.

Top tips for community engagement officers and PCSOs

- Build relationships with local gay community groups and the lesbian, gay and bisexual staff networks of local employers. Attend their meetings to find out about their needs and tell them what the force is doing to help.
- Talk to young people in schools and visit youth groups for gay young people to let young people know that homophobic hate crime is a criminal offence and that the police can provide support.
- Use social media creatively to let gay people know how to report homophobic hate crime and domestic violence and why it's important to do so, as well as what you're doing to support them.

- Be visible at gay community events and distribute information about hate crime, domestic violence and other crime prevention measures. Work with your press office to secure media coverage so that other people hear about this too.

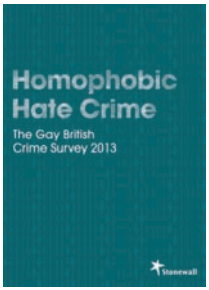
Top tips for senior police officers

- Endorse strategies to tackle homophobic hate crime and domestic abuse of lesbian, gay and bisexual people and work with your Police and Crime Commissioner so they understand why this work is important.
- Give interviews to local media and on local radio about what the force is doing to support gay victims of crime. Talk about why gay equality is important to you. If you are gay yourself, recognise that you are a role model in the local community and talk publicly about your experience of being gay and working for the force.
- Be a gay equality champion by supporting staff networks for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff and attending their events. Talk about this in internal and external communications so other people hear about this too.
- Meet with gay community groups and youth groups for gay young people in the force area to show that the force is committed to sexual orientation equality at the highest level.

Top tips for equality and diversity leads

- Include specific measurable targets about homophobic hate crime and same-sex domestic abuse in equality strategies and make sure these are endorsed and actioned at senior management level.
- Make sure there are systems in place to record homophobic hate crimes and incidents and instances of same-sex domestic abuse and make this data publicly available. This will help demonstrate that the force is complying with the public sector equality duty.
- Collaborate with the equality and diversity leads of other public services in the area to identify ways you can work together and encourage them to distribute resources setting out what the force is doing to support gay people.
- Join the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme and enter the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, as part of your work to support lesbian, gay and bisexual staff and officers.

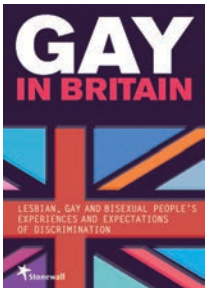
Resources



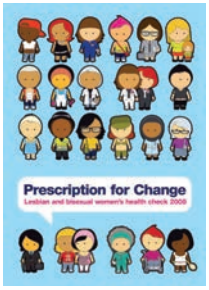
Homophobic Hate Crime: The Gay British Crime Survey 2013



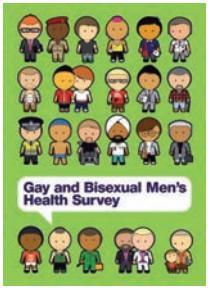
Blow the Whistle on Gay Hate



Gay in Britain



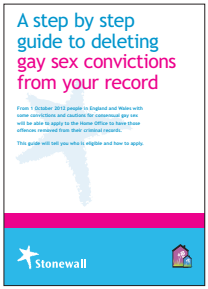
Prescription for Change: Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Health Check 2008



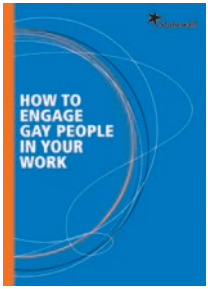
Gay and Bisexual Men's Health Survey



Domestic Abuse Health Briefing



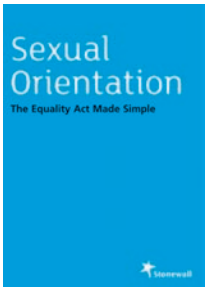
A Step By Step Guide to Deleting Gay Sex Convictions From Your Record



How to Engage Gay People in Your Work



Some People Are Gay. Get Over It! Posters



Sexual Orientation: The Equality Act Made Simple



Stonewall Top 100 Employers 2013



Stonewall Workplace Guides

For more information on Stonewall's work with the criminal justice system visit **stonewall.org.uk/hatecrime** or contact **crime@stonewall.org.uk**

Stonewall publications

All Stonewall publications referenced in this guide are available to download for free from **stonewall.org.uk/publications**

For free hard copies of any Stonewall publications or resources please visit **stonewall.org.uk/resources**

Stonewall Diversity Champions programme

Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme is Britain's good practice employers' forum on sexual orientation. With over 600 members who employ 5.5 million staff, our programme is the largest non-governmental intervention of its kind in the world. Major employers, including police forces and other criminal justice agencies, work with Stonewall and each other to make their workplaces the best they can be. For more information visit **stonewall.org.uk/dcs** or call **0207 593 1868.**

The Workplace Equality Index

The Stonewall Workplace Equality Index is Stonewall's comprehensive annual benchmarking exercise that showcases Britain's top employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. For more information visit **stonewall.org.uk/wei**

The Stonewall Authentic Role Model Programme

The one day Authentic Role Model Programme is designed for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to help gain an understanding of how they can be effective role models in their workplaces. For more information visit **stonewall.org.uk/authenticrolemodels**

Protecting lesbian, gay and bisexual people



My male friend had his jaw broken by a man outside a nightclub because he is gay.
Anne, 35 — South East

I have had problems with being harassed by an abusive ex-partner who has targeted me at work and home. I have made multiple complaints to the police but they have only warned him off and it has not stopped him still harassing me. I have felt very let down by the police.
Steve, 40 — Yorkshire and the Humber

Stonewall