



# LGBT IN BRITAIN

## WORK REPORT

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## FOREWORD

**Increasingly, employers are waking up to the fact that, to succeed, they need their staff to feel confident to be themselves at work. From global corporations to local businesses, organisations have demonstrated real commitment to their LGBT staff, consumers and service users.**

But not every LGBT person feels supported by their employer. In fact many LGBT staff, and trans people in particular, still face anti-LGBT discrimination and even bullying at work. This report, part of Stonewall and YouGov's state of the nation LGBT in Britain series, highlights just how much more progress needs to be made before every LGBT person in Britain feels accepted for who they are at work.

Our findings reveal that many LGBT staff don't feel comfortable enough to disclose their identity at work, and often those who do are subject to discrimination and abuse, with incidents ranging from offensive language from customers to being outed at work without their consent.

If you're black, Asian or minority ethnic, trans or disabled, the likelihood of facing harassment and discrimination in the workplace is even greater. The figures are stark. Six times as many trans people report being physically attacked at work than LGB people who aren't trans. Nineteen per cent of black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT staff and 16 per cent of LGBT disabled staff report being denied jobs or promotions because of their identity, compared to 10 per cent for LGBT staff in general.

But no matter what the sector, no matter what the starting point, employers can take straightforward steps to change this situation. Leading employers in fields ranging from law firms to universities to public services have shown this is possible and – more than that – has a real impact on the lives and well-being of their employees. By allowing staff to be themselves in the workplace employers can create an inclusive, supportive workforce and get the best from everyone. Many have taken steps to reduce homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying by creating and enforcing clear policies. LGBT staff networks and visible LGBT role models and allies in leadership positions demonstrate that companies are championing a diverse workforce. Action to increase diversity in supply chains shows companies' willingness to use their influence to promote inclusion among their partners.

At Stonewall, we're proud to have supported many workplaces in building inclusive and accepting environments for their staff. Through our Diversity Champions programme, over 750 member organisations are working hard to achieve workplace equality.

We hope that many more will join us, to build on what they have achieved so far and bring forward the day when every LGBT employee is accepted without exception.

Ruth Hunt,  
Chief Executive

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## THE STUDY

Stonewall commissioned YouGov to carry out a survey asking more than 5,000 LGBT people across England, Scotland and Wales about their life in Britain today.

This report, part of a series based on the research, investigates the specific experiences of the 3,213 employed LGBT respondents and their experiences of discrimination in the workplace as well as the extent to which LGBT staff still feel they have to conceal who they are at work. It also looks at steps taken by employers to ensure a safe and equal work environment for LGBT staff, for example, implementation of equality policies, steps to make the workplace trans inclusive and visible commitment from senior management.

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# KEY FINDINGS

- **Almost one in five** LGBT staff (18 per cent) have been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues in the last year because they're LGBT.
- **One in eight** trans people (12 per cent) have been physically attacked by customers or colleagues in the last year because of being trans.
- **One in ten** black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT staff (10 per cent) have similarly been physically attacked because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, compared to **three per cent** of white LGBT staff.
- **Almost one in five** LGBT people (18 per cent) who were looking for work said they were discriminated against because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity while trying to get a job in the last year.
- **One in eight** black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT employees (12 per cent) have lost a job in the last year because of being LGBT, compared to **four per cent** of white LGBT staff.
- **Almost two in five** bi people (38 per cent) aren't out to anyone at work about their sexual orientation.
- **More than a third** of LGBT staff (35 per cent) have hidden or disguised that they are LGBT at work in the last year because they were afraid of discrimination.
- **One in eight** lesbian, gay and bi people (12 per cent) wouldn't feel confident reporting any homophobic or biphobic bullying to their employer. **One in five** trans people (21 per cent) wouldn't report transphobic bullying in the workplace.
- **Almost a third** of non-binary people (31 per cent) and **one in five** trans people (18 per cent) don't feel able to wear work attire representing their gender expression.



# DISCRIMINATION AT WORK

Despite some employers in the UK making progress towards inclusion in their workplaces, LGBT people still face discrimination, exclusion and barriers at work.

## ABUSE, HARASSMENT AND EXCLUSION

Many LGBT staff experience derogatory remarks from colleagues and customers, are actively excluded by their peers and some are denied a job or promotion because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

An alarming number of trans employees, and black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT employees are physically attacked by someone at work.

**One in eight** trans people (12 per cent) have been physically attacked by customers or colleagues in the last year because they are trans. **One in ten** black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT staff (10 per cent) have been physically attacked at work in the last year because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, compared to **three per cent** of white LGBT staff.

**Almost one in five** LGBT staff (18 per cent) have been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues in the last year because they are LGBT. This includes being the target of derogatory remarks, experiencing bullying and abuse, and being outed without consent. This rises to **a third** of trans people (33 per cent) and **one in four** LGBT disabled people (26 per cent).

*I retired early because of being outed in my workplace. My employer's attitude was appalling: I was told it was my own fault and to put up with the abuse I received.*  
Freddie, 59 (West Midlands)

*A colleague admitted to me, while not being aware that I am trans, that they don't believe being transgender is real and that if you're a girl, you're a girl and vice versa.*  
Ewen, 23 (Wales)

LGBT staff who have been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues because they are LGBT

in large towns and cities  
16%

in small/medium towns and cities  
22%

*A work colleague outed me as trans, referring to me as a crossdresser. I then noticed him telling everyone around him. It became very awkward.*  
 Evelyn, 52 (Yorkshire and the Humber)

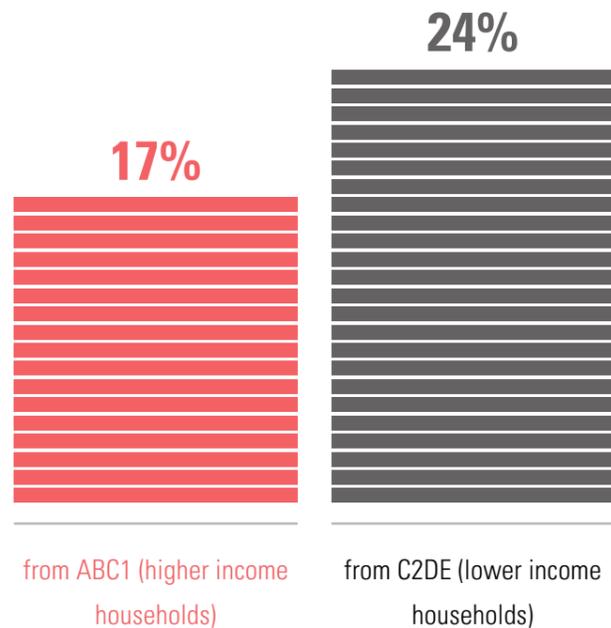
In my workplace, where there are 10 men and 4 women, it is very much a "boys club" that perpetuates lad culture. This includes derogatory terms for women in general but also specifically lesbians and most other members of the LGBTQ community. One gay man was repeatedly singled out, but any claim of discrimination was rebuked as "he just can't take banter".  
 Donna, 22 (Wales)

A work colleague approached someone in my office and told them that I was transgender. It was someone I didn't know and they didn't have my permission to tell anyone. My whole office ended up finding out.  
 Charlie, 24 (Yorkshire and the Humber)

I have recently been off work because of stress due to homophobic bullying by my managers. While my colleagues are great, the managers are terrible. An official complaint to HR found that homophobic attitudes extend there also and I have been faced with either quitting or returning. I return next week but I am feeling stressed and depressed, and at times suicidal.  
 Dewi, 36 (Wales)

**A third** of LGBT staff (32 per cent) witnessed negative comments or conduct directed towards another colleague perceived to be LGBT, within the last year.

LGBT staff who have been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues because they are LGBT



*I had a customer threatening violence and calling me a faggot repeatedly while at work. There were multiple times where people call me a fag under their breath too. Unfortunately, I encounter stuff like this a few times a year. It's just normal for me.*  
 Jax, 32 (Wales)

**More than one in six** LGBT staff (17 per cent) were excluded by colleagues in the last year for being LGBT, doubling to **a third** of trans employees (34 per cent). LGBT young people aged 18 to 24 were excluded, **28 per cent**, as were LGBT disabled people, **24 per cent**, and black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT staff, **22 per cent**.

My colleagues often go to the pub after work and I never seem to be invited along. I think some of them are embarrassed in case we meet their friends and they get a negative reaction.  
 Harry, 45 (Scotland)

My partner is a teacher in a Catholic school. We were discouraged from attending one of his colleagues' wedding due to us being a gay couple and it would be frowned upon by senior managers present. My partner is actively seeking alternative employment as his values are at odds with the decision makers in his workplace.  
 Alwyn, 52 (Wales)

LGBT staff are also at risk of abuse from customers, clients and service users: **one in six** LGBT staff (16 per cent) have been the target of negative comments or conduct from customers or clients at work in the last year because they are LGBT. This number increases for trans people: **more than a third** of trans people (35 per cent) experienced this in the last year, compared to **13 per cent** of LGB people who aren't trans.

LGBT young people (aged 18 to 24) and black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT staff are also more likely to have experienced negative comments or conduct from customers or clients, **28 per cent** and **27 per cent** respectively. LGBT staff in category C2DE (lower income households) are more likely to experience this than those in ABC1 (higher income households), **21 per cent** compared to **15 per cent**.

A customer called me a "gay cunt" because I asked her to leave the building because she was causing trouble for other customers.  
 Gareth, 34 (Wales)

I work in a shop that sells beauty products and I have been yelled at from outside the store, being called "gay or faggot". One guy walked past the store and laughed and called me gay. Nothing physical but it did make me feel unsafe.  
 Jacob, 22 (Scotland)

Although my employer is extremely positive about LGBT issues, the parents of the children I teach are not. I dare not to be out because parents would insist their children are removed from my classes in case I discussed LGBT issues. I moved to the other side of London when students in my previous school found out I was lesbian. The name-calling and hostility was too much.  
 Sanaa, 49 (London)

Some customers I visit insist on calling me sir, mate, him.  
 Grace, 63 (Yorkshire and the Humber)

**Almost one in six** trans respondents (15 per cent) are still not addressed with their correct name and pronouns at work

I am not allowed to have the title "Mx" at work. My manager laughed at me and said it was ridiculous to have a title that nobody can pronounce. I then suggested I was addressed as Mr but was told that I was a woman and that was ridiculous and there would be complaints. I also have a trans kid in one of my classes and was told I had to sit the class "boy girl boy girl". I told a different manager that I would not because not everybody is binary. He said it didn't matter at that age. They are 13 going on 14.  
 Remi, 36 (East of England).

## BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION

LGBT staff looking for work often face discrimination when applying for jobs.

**Almost one in five** LGBT people (18 per cent) who were looking for work said they were discriminated against because of their sexual orientation or gender identity while trying to get a job in the last year.

**More than a third** of LGBT people (35 per cent) looking for work are worried about being discriminated against or harassed at work due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

*I did not get a job. The feedback was, while I was an excellent candidate with an exemplary track record, 'I would be a better fit in another institution'. I read this as 'I am not one of the lads'.*

Kyan, 39 (Wales)

*There has been publicity recently about women not wearing the right shoes, make-up, dress at work. As a non-conventional woman, I wouldn't even contemplate applying for some jobs.*

Vanessa, 51 (East Midlands)

*Applying for jobs goes smoothly when they read my name and assume I'm cis, but during interviews things clearly change because I'm not cis-passing and my legal documents (passport, birth certificate, driving licence) are in my birth name due to not having the money to update them. The attitude of the employer always changes when they realise I'm trans.*

Henry, 24 (Yorkshire and the Humber)

*The last four job interviews I've had have all thought it to be okay to ask when I am having my gender reassignment surgery and how long I would be taking off work when I did so, before turning me down for the job applied for. My last phone interview said that my retail skills were not good enough to fill the position of customer assistant even though I have 10 years of retail management experience. This was a zero hour minimum wage position.*

Lynn, 41 (Wales)

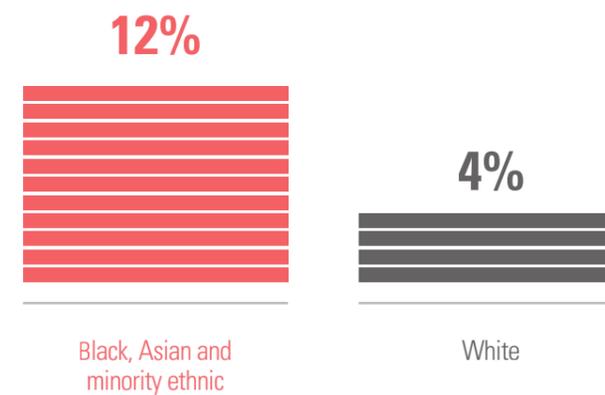
**One in ten** LGBT employees (10 per cent) say they didn't get a promotion they were up for at work in the past year because they're LGBT. This number rises to **24 per cent** of trans people, compared to **seven per cent** of LGB people who aren't trans. Black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT staff are also more likely to didn't get a promotion, as are LGBT disabled people, **19 per cent** and **16 per cent** respectively.

*I had to leave work due to the discrimination I was facing at my job. I'm a disabled, queer woman and I got bullied for all these aspects by other employees and my manager.*

*Aneira, 30 (Wales)*

**One in eight** black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT employees (12 per cent) have lost a job in the last year because of being LGBT, compared to **four per cent** of white LGBT staff. Similarly, **11 per cent** of trans employees and **nine per cent** of LGBT disabled people say they have lost a job in the last year because of being LGBT.

LGBT staff who have lost a job in the last year because of being LGBT



*I left university believing that in adult society, it was fine to be open about who you were. I went into my first job; a receptionist. Things went fine until one afternoon in the break room, one of the two practice managers asked if I had a girlfriend. I told her I didn't, I had a male partner. The response was "Oh." and the conversation stopped before moving onto other things. Within a month, I was having reports put in about me, but when I asked what I was doing wrong, they couldn't tell me anything specific I should improve on. At the end of my three month probationary period I was 'let go', escorted off the premises. It was humiliating and I knew exactly what the reason was, I was openly in a gay relationship.*

Jack, 31 (Yorkshire and the Humber)

# BEING OUT AT WORK

Many LGBT people still don't feel able to disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at work for fear of discrimination. Some have even been encouraged to hide their identity at work.

**Nearly one in five** lesbian, gay and bi people (18 per cent) are not open with anyone at work about their sexual orientation. **Almost two in five** bi people (38 per cent) aren't out to anyone at work about their sexual orientation. This includes **half** of bi men (49 per cent), followed by **a third** of bi women (34 per cent), compared to **seven per cent** of gay men and **four per cent** of lesbians.

**One in four** trans people (26 per cent) aren't open with anyone at work about being trans. This number increases to **almost two in five** non-binary people (37 per cent) who aren't out at work.

*I still feel pressure to keep quiet about my sexuality. I was working part-time over Christmas, and at least two colleagues made homophobic and transphobic remarks. I was too anxious and fearful of rejection to reprimand them or tell them that I was gay. I know from first-hand experience how much stress and anxiety are caused through discrimination, and even just due to the fear of discrimination.*  
Milo, 30 (Wales)

*I have not come out to anyone where I currently live or work. I would not feel comfortable or safe coming out to any of my colleagues and have felt reluctant to make friends where I live now in case they find out about my trans history.*  
Tom, 42 (East Midlands)

*I was out at university while a student and while working at the university. When I left and took a job, I felt I had landed in an episode of Life on Mars. I have not been 'out' in the workplace since, despite multiple employers. To friends from university this is incomprehensible. There appears to be a drop in support for people leaving university LGBT spaces and going into work. LGBT groups appear not to link to university/college groups (or even workplace groups) and there is certainly no transition support.*  
Greg, 39 (Scotland)

*At work, colleagues automatically assume my partner is a man. I use the term partner when I speak about specific events but people say things like 'he', 'husband' etc. Whilst I would not call this direct discrimination, it does make me feel uncomfortable.*  
Aurora, 59 (London)

**More than a third** of LGBT people (35 per cent) have hidden or disguised that they are LGBT at work in the last year because they were afraid of discrimination. This rises to **half** of trans people (51 per cent). It's also higher among younger workers aged 18 to 24 (58 per cent), LGBT disabled people (43 per cent), and black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT people (42 per cent).

*As a nurse, it saddens me that I would never "out" myself to patients and their families. Daily I am quizzed about my life in passing conversation; "Do you have children, are you married". I avoid such questions as best as possible and/or lie about my answers. I will not "out myself" daily to these strangers, but yet it is hard to put a lot of effort into my answers to not give away the fact that I live with another woman and that she gave birth to our children, and not me, as is assumed daily. This is hard and upsetting. I doubt this will ever change. I do not wish my sexuality to become a topic of conversation with patients and their families, nor do I wish it to affect the way they look at me and consider the care I provide.*  
Penelope, 41 (Scotland)

**One in eight** LGBT people (12 per cent) say that they were encouraged to hide or disguise that they are LGBT by a work colleague. This increases to **one in four** trans people (26 per cent). **One in five** LGBT disabled people (20 per cent) have been encouraged to hide in the last year, compared to **nine per cent** of non-disabled LGBT people. Black, Asian, minority ethnic LGBT people are also more likely to have experienced this (19 per cent).

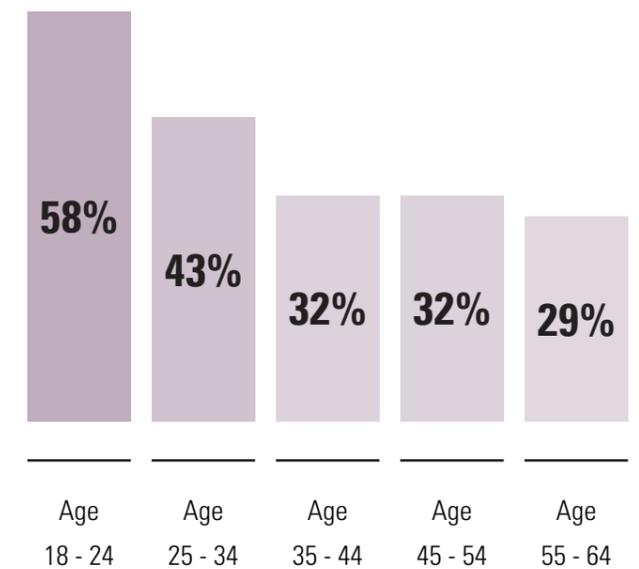
*From being fairly explicitly "out" at work, I found myself toning it down a little due to a good perception that it wasn't appreciated. One aspect of my anxiety comes from the feeling that being "out" is all very well, as long as I am prepared to sacrifice any serious career progression. Equally, in applying for a new job, I hid my gender/sexual identity entirely, presenting myself fully in my assigned birth gender, knowing I could easily jeopardise my job prospects if I didn't.*  
Quincy, 31 (East of England)

**One in seven** LGBT people (14 per cent) say they don't feel able to be themselves at work. This increases to **one in five** for LGBT disabled people (21 per cent), LGBT young people aged 18 to 24 (21 per cent) and trans people (19 per cent) who don't feel they can be themselves at work.

**One in eight** LGBT people (13 per cent) don't feel able to wear work attire representing their gender expression. This number rises to almost **a third** of non-binary people (31 per cent) and **one in five** trans people (18 per cent), compared to **11 per cent** of LGB people who aren't trans.

**Almost one in 10** trans people (nine per cent) don't feel able to use the toilet they feel comfortable with.

LGBT staff who have hidden or disguised that they're LGBT at work because they were afraid of discrimination



# BARRIERS TO AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

The best employers recognise the value in taking proactive steps to create inclusive workplace environments. But, all too often, LGBT employees still face barriers including little confidence in bullying reporting procedures, a lack of visible senior support for LGBT equality and inadequate policies.

Only **three in five** LGBT staff (61 per cent) agree that their workplace has equalities policies that protect lesbian, gay and bi people at work. The number decreases for LGBT staff living in a rural area to **54 per cent** compared to **62 per cent** of LGBT staff in urban areas.

**Fewer than half** of LGBT staff (46 per cent) agree that there are equalities policies in place to protect trans people at work.

*My employer is generally very supportive but doesn't have a specific LGBT discrimination section in their policies or procedures should discrimination occur. So, if discrimination or harassment does occur - and it does - then they don't effectively handle things and the LGBT person is blamed for causing problems and being over sensitive.*

Mollie, 51 (Yorkshire and the Humber)

**One in eight** lesbian, gay and bi people (12 per cent) wouldn't feel confident reporting homophobic or biphobic bullying to their employer. This number increases among younger lesbian, gay and bi people aged 18 to 24 to **22 per cent**. **One in five** trans people (21 per cent) wouldn't report transphobic bullying in the workplace.

**Fewer than half** of LGBT staff (44 per cent) say that senior managers in their workplace demonstrate visible commitment to lesbian, gay and bi equality. LGBT staff in category C2DE (low income households) are less likely to say that senior managers demonstrate commitment than LGBT staff in category ABC1 (higher income households): **37 per cent** compared to **46 per cent**.

**Fewer than three in ten** LGBT staff (28 per cent) say that senior managers in their workplace demonstrate visible commitment to trans equality.

*While serving a customer at work I corrected them on pronouns and they laughed in my face and asked me if I had a penis and told me I was wrong. My supervisor witnessed the whole thing and told me not to be so dramatic about it.*

Ross, 23 (Scotland)

Employers who take active steps towards establishing inclusive work policies, by showing visible commitment to LGBT equality and showcasing best practice equality policies, have a real impact on the lives of LGBT staff, boost work morale and create a work environment that people are proud to work in.

*I work as a police officer, which has in the past been dominated by straight men who balked at the very idea of LGBT people. Now however I am pleased to say that it is a safe haven for me and others to be out. All of my colleagues are accepting of LGBT people both in the job and in the wider community. In nine years in the job I have never seen or heard any of my colleagues say or do anything inappropriate to or about an LGBT person. I am very proud of my colleagues and to be part of an organisation that actively employs and looks after LGBT people.*

Aila, 38 (South East)

*I was a senior manager in my last job and was fully out and thanked by CEO and Board for being a positive role model. I formed a civil partnership and latterly got married - and was delighted my marriage date was back dated to my civil partnership.*

Owen, 59 (Scotland)

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Employers should:

### Develop clear policies

- Develop clear zero tolerance policies on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic discrimination and harassment, with clear sanctions for staff and customers.
- Actively communicate their equality policy to all staff and ensure that the route for reporting homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in the workplace is clear.

### Support staff through training

- Implement all-staff diversity and inclusion training, which explains what anti-LGBT discrimination or abuse might look like, why it is bad for business and how to challenge anti-LGBT attitudes among colleagues. Training should also provide staff with an understanding of multiple identities and inequality (for example, the dual discrimination that an LGBT, disabled staff member may face).
- Ensure that line managers have the appropriate training and support to confidently take a zero-tolerance approach to all homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse in the workplace.

### Improve trans inclusion

- Run awareness raising sessions for all employees on trans inclusion, along with guidance about using pronouns and facilities.
- Develop a policy to support trans employees who are transitioning, including information on confidentiality, dress codes and using facilities, with related guidance for line managers. Use Stonewall's resources for support, which are available at [www.stonewall.org.uk/supporting-trans-staff-workplace](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/supporting-trans-staff-workplace)

### Recruit and promote diverse candidates

- Include statements and examples of their commitment to LGBT staff, equality and inclusion on their website. When advertising job roles, make sure that a commitment to diversity and inclusion in their workplace is clearly communicated.
- Develop clear policies around recruitment and promotion, using Stonewall's workplace guides for support. Train their recruitment team to understand where discrimination against LGBT staff can occur in the recruitment process and how they can take steps to reduce bias.

### Monitor staff diversity

- Collect diversity data on their workforce across pay and grade to identify any areas of discrimination in career progression based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Monitoring must be worded and formatted correctly. For example, when asking about gender, employees should be able to describe their gender in their own words.
- Collect diversity data in their exit process and ensure employees leaving the organisation have the space to raise LGBT related issues. Staff involved in all diversity monitoring should have specific LGBT awareness training when collecting, analysing and reporting results.

### Support visible LGBT role models

- Encourage and support the formation of an LGBT network group, so that LGBT employees have visible role models and peers. In smaller organisations employers should assist LGBT staff in joining an external network.

## Individuals should:

### Work with businesses in their community

- Let local business owners know if they witness an anti-LGBT incident from staff or other customers so that they can tackle it. Make clear that they could risk losing customers if they don't.

### Encourage their employer to be LGBT inclusive

- Feedback to their employer if current policies are not LGBT inclusive.
- Report any discrimination, harassment or abuse of LGBT staff in their workplace (from either customers or other members of staff) to their employer.
- Work with others in their workplace to set up an LGBT network group if one does not already exist.
- Join or work with their workplace's trade union or staff consultative group and encourage them to provide feedback on LGBT inclusion to senior leaders.
- Encourage their employer to join Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme.

### Join Stonewall's campaigns

- Get involved in Stonewall's Come Out for LGBT campaign: [www.stonewall.org.uk/comeoutforlgbt](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/comeoutforlgbt)

# METHODOLOGY

Between February and April 2017, 5,375 LGBT people across England, Scotland and Wales completed an online questionnaire about their life in Britain today, which was administered by YouGov on behalf of Stonewall.

Participants were recruited through the YouGov panel and via an open recruitment that was circulated through a wide range of organisations, community groups and individuals.

## The sample

- The overall sample size of participants who are employed is 3,213. All findings are based on this sample size except one finding relating to currently unemployed LGBT people (sample size 223 LGBT respondents).
- 49 per cent of employed respondents are from England, 26 per cent are from Wales and 25 per cent are from Scotland.
- 53 per cent are male, 40 per cent are female and six per cent describe their gender in a different way.
- Different terms that respondents used to describe their gender identity include, 'non-binary', 'genderfluid' and 'genderqueer'. People who used a different term to describe their gender identity are referred to as 'non-binary people' throughout the report.
- 63 per cent are gay or lesbian, 28 per cent are bi, seven per cent use a different term to describe their sexual orientation and two per cent are straight.
- Different terms that respondents used to describe their sexual orientation include 'pansexual' and 'queer'.
- 11 per cent said they identify as trans and another three per cent said they are unsure of whether they're trans or are questioning their gender identity.
- 26 per cent are disabled.
- Six per cent are black, Asian or minority ethnic.

The figures have been weighted by region and age. All differences reported in the survey are statistically significant. All names in quotes have been changed for anonymity and ages have been assigned from within age bands.

# LGBT IN BRITAIN

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## WORK REPORT

*A customer, as they were leaving my counter, said, "He was a faggot, that's disgusting, I don't want to be served by him" loud enough to be heard by several people.*

*Maddox, 35 (Wales)*

*I have not come out to anyone where I currently live or work. I would not feel comfortable or safe coming out to any of my colleagues and have felt reluctant to make friends where I live now in case they find out about my trans history.*

*Tom, 42 (East Midlands)*

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