

THROUGH OUR EYES

Matthew McDermott

Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in the Workplace.

First Published March 2011

Published by The Rainbow Project
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The Rainbow Project is a registered charity
Number – XR17450



Department for
**Social
Development**
www.dsdni.gov.uk



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Foreword

My Department is committed to the progression of A Shared Future for Northern Ireland. My predecessor, Margaret Ritchie MLA, when she was Minister, ensured that the principles of A Shared Future became a consistent thread through all of the work of The Department for Social Development. I aim to continue that process and have sought to extend the meaning of those principles to acknowledge the breadth of diversities in our society. It is by recognising and celebrating diversity that we begin to truly strengthen good relations.



I commissioned The Rainbow Project to carry out this research as a part of that process. Our society is changing in Northern Ireland and my Department is committed to embracing those developments with all their challenges and working to achieve and deliver better outcomes for all the people of Northern Ireland.

An in depth quantitative study of the experiences and perceptions of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the workplace has never been carried out before in Northern Ireland, so this report represents a baseline from which we can build.

Not only does this research help paint a picture of what working life is like in NI for LGB people, it also provides some context and explanations of why that may be the case and recommends some measures that employers and government can take to ensure that full equality and diversity is delivered throughout NI.

As well as the social, emotional and other reasons for ensuring that equality and diversity is advanced in workplaces, there is also an economic case. There is evidence, some of which is referred to in this report, which shows that organisations that foster diversity do better in terms of productivity and growth, with higher staff retention rates. Businesses are facing increasing challenges in a competitive economy and workforces and customer bases are more diverse than ever.

In a time of economic stress it's clear that we need to find innovative ways to stimulate our economy, and reducing the number of days of productivity lost each year is one such way.

I am sure that this report will form the basis of more work in this field and significantly contribute to more focus from government in this area.

Alex Attwood MLA
Minister for Social Development

Foreword

This report presents the findings from focused research which scrutinized the experiences and perceptions of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people with respect to equality and diversity in the workplace in Northern Ireland.

It is the first report of its kind to be produced in Northern Ireland and will provide local government, as well as organisations and employers throughout Northern Ireland, with an accurate and detailed picture of how equality and diversity is practiced and understood across the region.

The research involved an in depth review of best practice across the UK and the Republic of Ireland as well as a comprehensive survey of the experiences of LGB people living and working in Northern Ireland. It produces a conclusive argument in favour of, and outlines the benefits to, having robust, inclusive and mainstreamed equality and diversity practices in our workplaces.

Equality and diversity should not be seen as ‘add ons’ by organisations but should be part of the strategic aim and business models of all organisations. To invest in these processes is to invest in the future of your business, company and workforce, resulting in enhanced productivity and lower staff turnover, which in turn enables companies and organisations to compete more effectively in a cutting edge and diverse global economy.

This report follows The Rainbow Project’s previous research into Hate Crime, ‘Through Our Eyes – Experiences and Perceptions of LGB People towards Homophobic Hate Crime and Policing in Northern Ireland’. The ‘Through Our Eyes’ brand is quickly becoming recognised as an unambiguously reliable and informative resource, in the collation of LGB&T data in Northern Ireland.

There are a number of recommendations, not just for government and companies, but also for the LGB&T sector in Northern Ireland. This report also represents the first phase of The Rainbow Project’s work in the field of LGB equality and diversity in employment; the Project will now be carrying out extensive work going forward to oversee and assist in the implementation of the recommendations. This is but one aspect of our ongoing work in the process of normalisation, and promotion of equality throughout Northern Ireland.

Vincent Creelan
Chairperson
The Rainbow Project



1. Introduction

This report presents quantitative data on the experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people of employment in Northern Ireland. It is the first piece of research of its kind in Northern Ireland which will inform government and employers of the experiences of LGB people in the workplace. This in turn should then enable government and employers to consider the measures they think appropriate to improve working life for all LGB people.

This report also presents a narrative; it outlines, in the research participants own words, what they experience in work and how they feel because of those experiences. Extracts, which appear throughout the entire report, are drawn from online entries and one to one interviews with participants. They help tell the story of what same sex attracted people face in work and what they feel they must accept as 'normal.'

A person's sexual orientation is only one aspect of who that person is. It should not define them. We all have a sexual orientation, whether that is gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual. People are as diverse and complex as individuals as they are in groups, and as such the experiences and views throughout this report are diverse. They do, however, share a common theme.

What seemed to be underlined throughout most of the interviews was the acknowledgment that there is a certain level of verbal abuse or negative comments about LGB people, either direct or indirect, that must be tolerated and accepted, for fear of being identified as the 'person who always complains.'

"You can either take offence to everything everyone says... every comment you can bring [them] up with management; but you're excluding yourself, because people [consider] that knit- picking and they are going to reject you socially and not be bothered [with you] further. Another extreme is ignoring everything that's said and then people know you are going to ignore it and they push it further and then you get comments that are too far. You know, there is a kind of middle ground between the two...."

Chris, Public Sector, Focus Group

"I think you have to pick your battles carefully and ignore the small stuff and just take on stuff that's really big".

Katrina, Public Sector, Focus Group

We hope that this report helps the reader consider these issues with more certainty and make decisions that are informed and in the best interests of LGB people and society generally.

The Rainbow Project would like to thank the Minister for Social Development, Alex Attwood MLA, for commissioning this report, David McKeown and Paul McGuigan from the Department's Voluntary and Community Unit and Claire Savage from the Department's Analytical Services Unit for their help and support throughout this process.

We would also like to thank the individuals and their respective organisations, for sitting on the Steering Committee of this project and providing advice and assistance throughout the process,

namely, The Department for Social Development, The Department for Employment and Learning, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Lesbian Advocacy Services Initiative, Unite the Union, UNISON and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

We would like to thank John McKervill and Sonya Kilpatrick from the Department of Finance and Personnel for the keen interest they showed in the project and their willingness to engage and assist in the entire process. Finally The Rainbow Project would like to thank all those people that took the time to fill out the survey, take part in focus groups and take part in one to one interviews.

“It’s very good to see a survey of this kind coming via my employer. The NICS rarely recognises its LGBT employees and it’s good to see involvement of this kind”.

Anonymous Participant

2. Methodology

"I would love to feel comfortable talking about my partner the way straight people talk about theirs. They don't even have to think about it."

Anonymous Participant

The Department for Social Development commissioned The Rainbow Project to undertake this research project in order to gather a better and more accurate picture of working life in Northern Ireland for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

This report represents a brief review of existing research, provides an analysis of relatively comparable work from the Republic of Ireland, as well as examining best practice guides and organisational reviews, drawn together from a number of different reports and position papers across both Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Finally, this report makes recommendations for employers, government and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGB&T) sector in Northern Ireland on measures that, if adopted, could improve the delivery of equality and diversity in places of employment in Northern Ireland.

A policy of anonymity was adhered to as far as possible throughout the research and this policy was adopted and agreed for a number of reasons. Firstly, there are particular sensibilities for people who are LGB in Northern Ireland, particularly those who have not come out. Secondly, legislation protecting LGB employees is relatively new and therefore companies and organisations showed some reluctance in taking part. In order to overcome this it was necessary to use (in any instance where references were attributed to individuals) first name and sector of employment only. A decision was taken to omit the names of any organisations that took part unless they permitted otherwise.

The research was supported by a steering group made up of representatives from The Rainbow Project, Lesbian Advocacy Services Initiative, Department for Social Development Analytical Services Unit, The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, The Department for Employment and Learning, UNITE the Union, UNISON and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU).

The multi-dimensional methodology for this research included;

- Online Self-Completion Questionnaires;
- Randomly selected focus groups;
- Randomly selected one to one interviews;
- Interviews with employers across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors; and
- A literature Review

Online Self-Completion Questionnaires

The self-completion questionnaire was designed by The Rainbow Project following discussion with members of the steering group and a review of relatively comparable surveys in the UK and Ireland.

The Survey Question Bank (SQB), co-ordinated by the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex, was also examined to assist in formatting the survey.

The questionnaire was piloted three separate times with three individuals involved in each pilot stage. The three individuals were never the same; therefore a total of nine people took part in the pilots. Changes were made after the first two pilots and following the third pilot the steering group took the view that the survey was effective.

This was a self completion questionnaire carried out on a voluntary basis. It was promoted by Q-Soft on 'Gaydar' and 'Gaydar Girls' which are gay and lesbian specific social networking sites covering Northern Ireland. The survey ran from 1st December 2010 to 16th February 2011.

In addition to this, the survey was also promoted by Corporate H.R. across the Northern Ireland Civil Service and a link to the survey featured on the intranet sites of all Northern Ireland government departments. A number of Health and Social Care Trusts as well as Education and Library Boards also promoted the survey.

Focus Groups

A focus group was held in February 2011 in Belfast and participants were randomly selected from people who had indicated they were willing to take part further. This selected group was then split into male and female groupings and participants, randomly selected from each grouping, were then asked to take part on a voluntary basis.

The focus of discussion for the focus group was based on the answers received to the online survey. Discussion centred on four main areas;

- cultures within workplaces regarding homophobia and experiences of participants relating to both good and bad practice;
- workplace policies and practices regarding LGB people and experiences of, and knowledge of, same;
- barriers to seeking support or making complaints to management; and
- a general discussion about participants overall experiences in the workplace.

The focus group was used as a tool to get a more in-depth perspective of LGB people's experiences around these issues.

One-to-one interviews

Eight one-to-one interviews were carried out with randomly selected individuals across the public, private and voluntary sector, from those who had undertaken the survey and indicated that they were willing to participate further.

The interviews focused on the experiences of these individuals in work; issues discussed were;

- being open about an individual's sexual orientation and whether this had an impact on the individual;
- exploring reasons why people had decided to disclose their sexual orientation in work or not disclose their sexual orientation, if that was the case;
- general issues around culture in their working environment; and

- exploring if it mattered to people whether they were able to disclose their sexual orientation in work or not.

Interviews with employers

Four interviews with employers with more than 40 employees were undertaken across the public, private and voluntary/community sector. There was a certain level of reluctance from organisations within the private sector to take part, but measures such as company anonymity were assured to increase the uptake. Interviews focused on;

- equality and diversity statements;
- training;
- monitoring of staff; and
- staff support mechanisms and structures for LGB staff.

These interviews were not recorded; however a comprehensive note was taken of the interview, the contents of which were agreed by the interviewee to confirm accuracy. It was agreed with employers that the information would not be referenced in the report but would rather be used to help inform the overall direction of the report.

Literature Review

A short literature review was carried out to contribute to setting some context to the report and assisting in identifying some best practice from other organisations and research to include in the recommendations. Research documents, best practice guides and data analysis papers were studied from the following sources;

Equality and Human Rights Commission, Great Britain
 The Equality Authority, Republic of Ireland
 The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
 The Northern Ireland Civil Service
 Stonewall, UK
 Gay and Lesbian Equality Network, Republic of Ireland
 Dignity at Work Partnership
 Irish Congress of Trade Unions
 European Trade Union Confederation
 Journal of Marketing Management
 Trade Union Congress
 Unite the Union

For a full list of papers see appendix I

3. Key Findings

In the Workplace

- More than 1 in 4 (26.9%) respondents from the private sector conceal their sexual orientation in the workplace
- Almost 1 in 4 (24.5%) respondents from the public sector conceal their sexual orientation in the workplace
- 33.9% of respondents aged 45-59 conceal their sexual orientation in the workplace
- More than 1 in 3 respondents (38.7%) working in the private sector don't know anyone else in their organisation who is LGB
- Almost 1 in 3 (31.7%) LGB people working in the private sector believe that their sexual orientation will have a negative impact on their chances of progressing in work
- More than 1 in 4 (26.3%) LGB people working in the public sector believe that their sexual orientation will have a negative impact on their chances of progressing in work
- More than 1 in 5 (21.4%) LGB people working in the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector believe that their sexual orientation will have a negative impact on their chances of progressing in work

Encounters in the Workplace

- 42.5% of respondents from the private sector, 40% from the public sector and 31% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector have heard negative comments about LGB people from a colleague or colleagues in the workplace
- 40.5% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector have been subjected to negative comments about their sexual orientation or heard negative comments about LGB people in general from a colleague or colleagues outside the workplace
- 19.9% of respondents from the private sector, 17.9% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector and 15.1% from the public sector have been subjected to negative comments about their sexual orientation from a colleague or colleagues in the workplace
- More than 1 in 4 (26.9%) respondents across all workplace sectors have had reason to make a complaint relating to their sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation
- 20.2% of respondents from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector, 19.4% from the private sector and 13.7% from the public sector have been subjected to negative comments about their sexual orientation from a colleague or colleagues outside the workplace
- Of those that made a complaint working in the public sector, 32.2% said no action was taken
- Of those that made a complaint working in the private sector, 31.1% said no action was taken
- 49.8% of respondents from the public sector, 43% from the private sector and
- Almost 3 in 4 people who made complaints (70.3%) across all workplace sectors were not happy with the outcome received regarding a complaint made

Workplace policies

- 36.5% of respondents from the private sector, 29.8% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector and 28.2% from the public sector said that the organisation they work for does not have an equal opportunities policy or that they are unsure if there is one
- 39.8% of respondents from the private sector, 38.1% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector and 32.2% from the public sector said that the organisation they work for doesn't have an anti-bullying procedure or policy or that they are unsure if there is one
- 32.7% of respondents across all workplace sectors would not, or do not know if they would, feel comfortable approaching management for support if they were the victim of homophobic bullying at work
- 38.2% of people from the private sector, 37.2% from the public sector and 27.3% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector would not feel comfortable, or do not know if they would feel comfortable, approaching their employer to avail of time off or seek support if they were to adopt a child or have a child through surrogacy
- Over half of people (57%) in the private sector would not feel comfortable approaching their employer for support if they were the victim of same sex domestic violence
- 47.1% of people from the public sector and 41.7% of people from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector would not feel comfortable approaching their employer for support if they were the victim of same sex domestic violence

4. The Business Case for Equality and Diversity in the Workplace

This chapter draws together a number of different research papers and workplace guides, which look at lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) workplace equality, from various sources across Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. It represents a very brief overview of the main issues highlighted throughout the literature, as well as outlining the benefits for an organisation when equality and diversity is comprehensively implemented.

For a more detailed overview of any of the areas covered in this chapter see Appendix I for further reading.

“Sometimes you feel sort of different.... I would really have to get to know a person first before I would say [that I am gay] just in case; you wouldn’t want to subject yourself to any type of discrimination or homophobia...”

Kirsty, Private Sector

The Business Case – Why Implement Equality and Diversity?

‘Working in an ‘LGB friendly environment’ has been shown to have a positive impact on LGB workers who are more likely to be ‘out’ at work. It fosters openness and confidence, improved work productivity and effectiveness as well as loyalty and pride in the organisation (Colgan et al, 2006; Guasp and Balfour, 2008). Conversely, perceptions of a homophobic working environment, experience of harassment and an inability to ‘come out’ were identified as a source of stress, exclusion and contributing reasons for leaving an employer (Colgan et al, 2006)¹.

Northern Ireland has made tremendous progress in the promotion of equality throughout most areas of our society, particularly since 1998. Enhanced cross-community relations, robust equality laws and dedicated equality and human rights institutions have ensured that human rights and equality are, and remain, on the agenda of political leaders in Northern Ireland.

However, it has generally been the case that particular strands of equality or ‘good relations’ have been promoted, such as sectarianism and racism, at the expense of other strands, such as sexual orientation and gender identity. The promotion of particular minority rights and the exclusion of others has undoubtedly had a negative impact on the promotion of LGB&T equality in Northern Ireland.

In a 2008 Equality Awareness Survey carried out by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland; 21% of people in NI held negative views towards LGB people and the Sexual Orientation Regulations were the least likely known of the equality laws by respondents (46%)². Negative attitudes towards

¹ *Integration in the workplace: emerging employment practice on age, sexual orientation and religion or belief*, Research report 36, Equality and Human Rights Commission; Autumn 2009

² *Research Update, Equality Awareness Survey 2008*, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland: June 2009

LGB people have increased since 2005 when 29% of respondents 'minded' having a close relative being in a relationship with someone who was LGB, this increased to 35% in 2008³.

There is no doubt that Northern Ireland is patently becoming a more diverse society and in order to utilise all the talents and benefits that diversity can bring; tolerance and respect must be promoted through protections under the law as well as structures to facilitate growth and innovation, particularly in a diverse and global economy.

Promoting equality and diversity in the workplace is one way an organisation can demonstrate their compliance with the law. However, evidence points to better results for organisations that view equality and diversity as intrinsic parts of their organisation, central to the ethos and culture of the organisation, rather than an 'add on' or 'something' required by law.

'There is a positive relationship between the adoption by organisations of equality policies and employee outcomes including commitment, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, work-life balance and reduced stress. There are positive employee performance outcomes with reductions in absenteeism, labour turnover, improved employee relations and innovation and creativity arising from the introduction of equality and diversity initiatives⁴.'

In addition to staff satisfaction levels and organisational productivity being higher within an organisational culture of equality and diversity, the ability of organisations to attract the best staff from domestic and international labour markets is enhanced by organisations with positive working environments. Organisations which are underlined by innovation, creativity and confidence and not undermined by cultures that accept bullying or harassment produce better results.

It is estimated that the UK lost £4.55 billion due to work-related stress in 2007 of which £682.5 million can be attributed to workplace bullying⁵. Moreover, it is estimated that, *'33.5million days were lost by UK organisations due to bullying related absenteeism, almost 200,000 employees would have left organisations and the equivalent of 100 million days productivity were lost as a result of bullying.'*⁶

It is clear that organisations which go over and above minimum requirements will see better results with the implementation of robust and comprehensive equality and diversity policies that are central to the functions of the organisation. Particularly when a comfortable and confident working environment is created, where all staff, including LGB staff can be themselves.

'it is becoming increasingly clear that companies may find competitive advantage through more effective approaches to managing employee involvement and participation, and diversity and equality in the workplace. Such issues should no longer be considered as issues to be managed only for the purposes of regulatory compliance, but as organisational factors that can impact significantly on productivity and innovation levels in the company⁷.'

³ Research Update, Equality Awareness Survey 2008, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland: June 2009

⁴ The Business Impact of Equality and Diversity; The International Evidence, National Centre for Partnership Performance, The Equality Authority: July 2007

⁵ The Costs of Workplace Bullying, Dignity at Work Partnership, Giga, S., University of Bradford, Hoel, H., University of Manchester, Lewis, D., University of Glamorgan: May 2008

⁶ Ibid

⁷ New Models of High Performance Work Systems; The Business Case for Strategic HRM, Partnership and Diversity and Equality Systems, National Centre for Partnership Performance; The Equality Authority: January 2008

5. Demographics of Respondents

Gender

Are you male or female?	Public	Private	Other	Total
Female	129	30	29	188
Male	353	156	55	564
Total	482	186	84	752

Table 5.1.1: Breakdown of respondents by gender and workplace sector

A total of 752 respondents completed the online survey. Of those 75% were male and 25% female. There was no target set in terms of how many participants we would have liked to fill out the survey, although there was an expectation that we would have maintained a fairly even percentage of male to female respondents. This did not happen. This is most likely due to the fact that there are more men as members of Gaydar than there are women who are members of Gaydar Girls, the gay social networking sites we used to host our survey.

We targeted various employers directly in the expectation that this would have raised the number of female respondents.

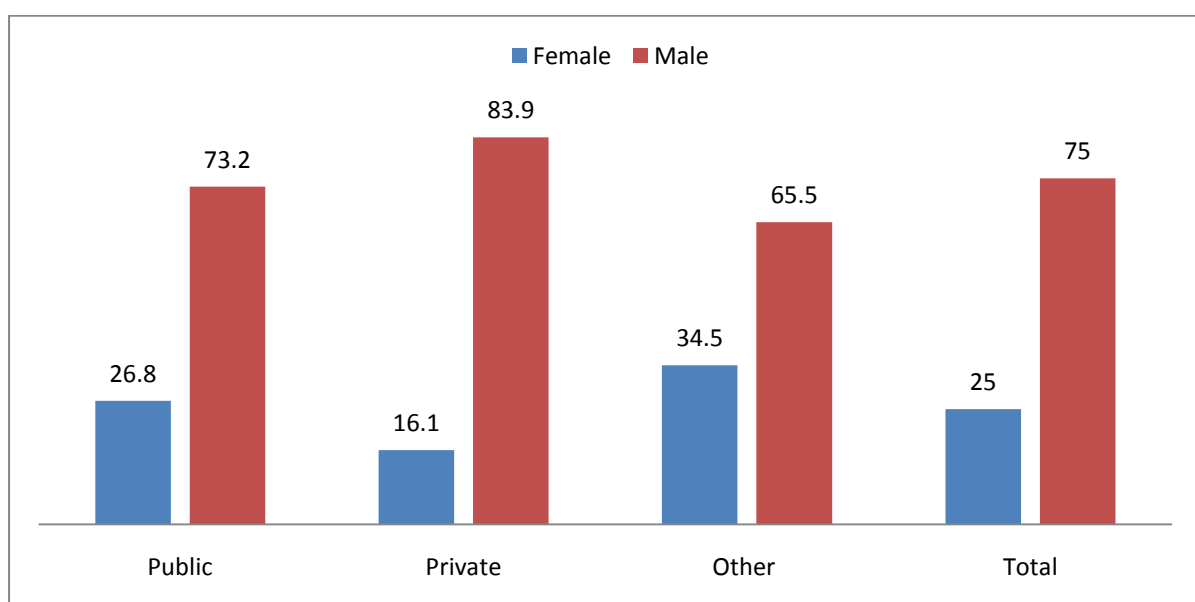


Chart 5.1: Breakdown of respondents by gender and workplace sector

Of those that responded to the survey, 482 (64.1%) respondents worked in the public sector, 186 (24.7%) in the private sector and 84 (11.2%) in the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector.

Sexual Orientation

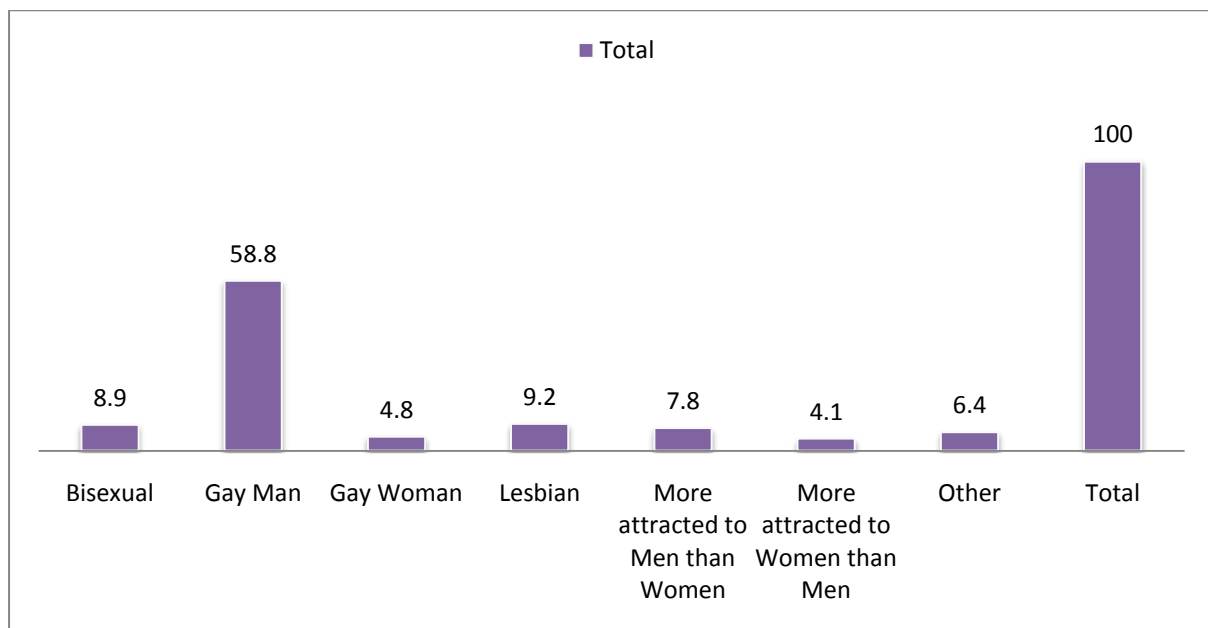


Chart 4.2: Percentage breakdown of sexual orientation

58.8% of respondents identified as gay men, with 14% identifying as either a gay woman or a lesbian. 8.9% identified as bisexual. Across the sectors, gay men represented highest in the private sector, with lesbians/gay women represented highest in the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors (See chart 4.3.).

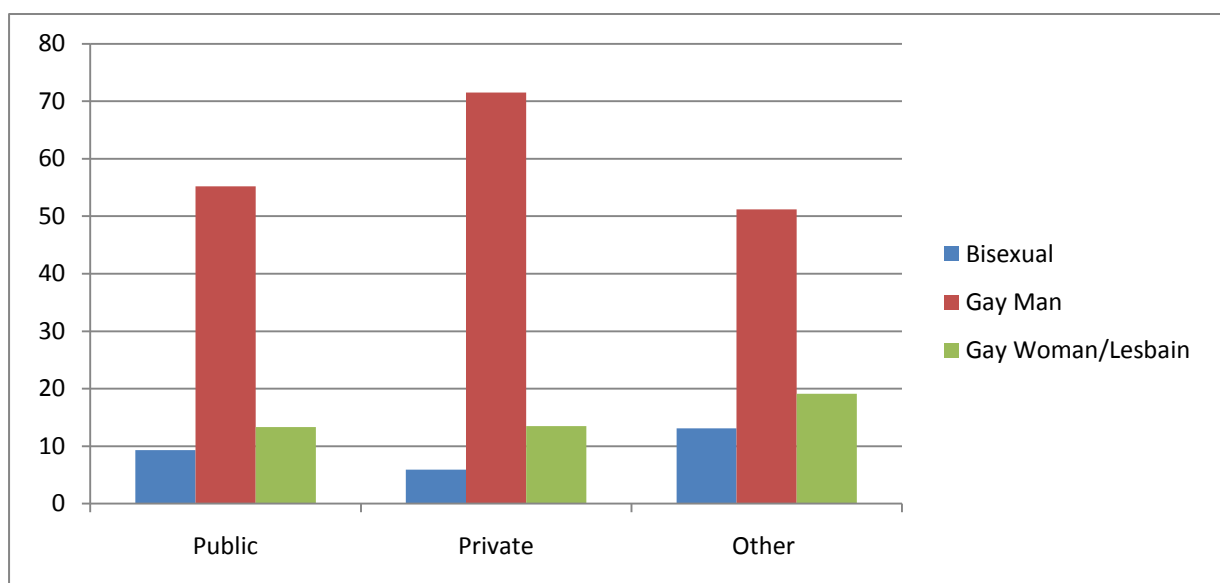


Chart 4.3: percentage breakdown of gay men, gay women and lesbians across workplace sectors.

Relationship Status

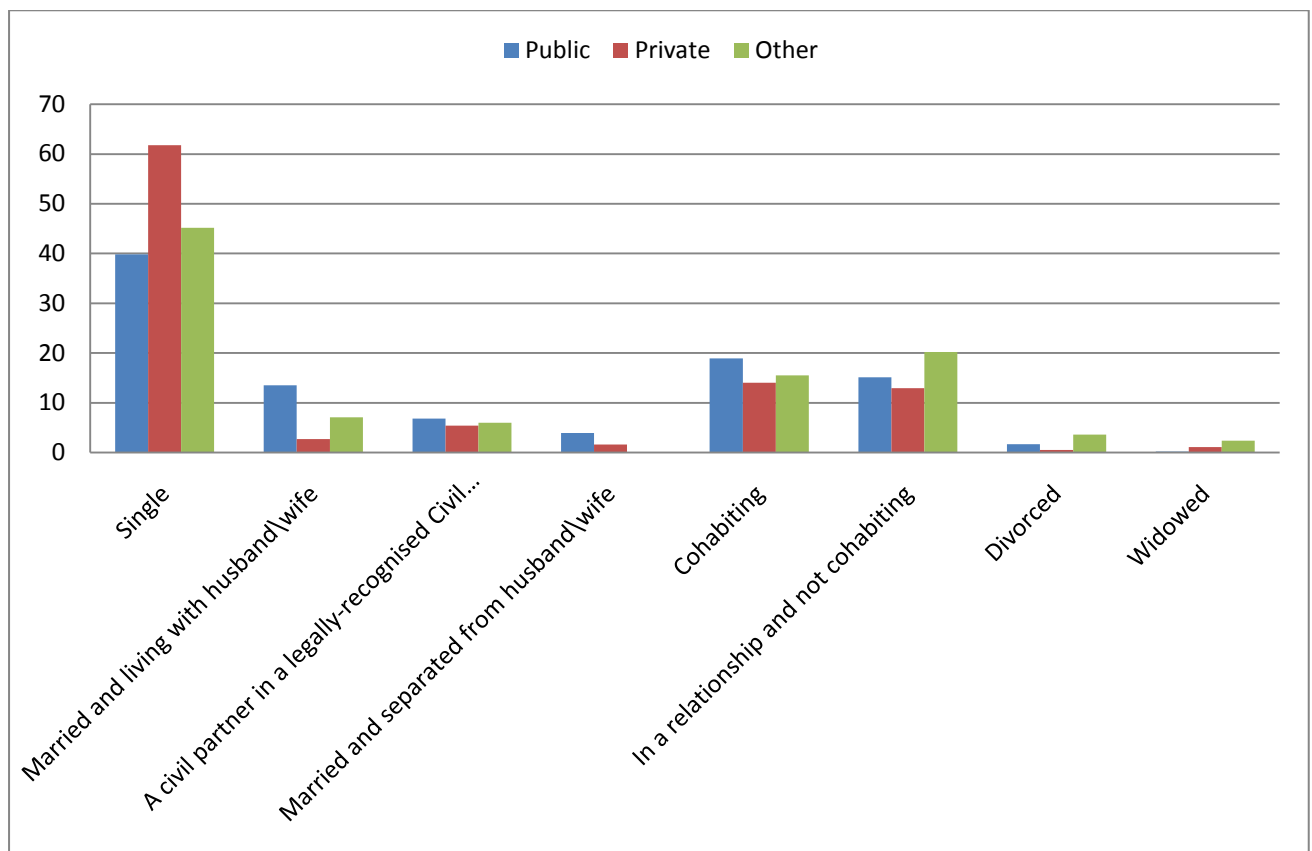


Chart 4.4: Percentage breakdown of relationship status across workplace sectors

The highest percentage of respondents who are single are from the private sector (61.8%), compared with 39.8% of the public sector responses indicating this and 45.2% of the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector. The total percentage of people in a legally recognised civil partnership is 6.4% and in a relationship and cohabiting or not is 32.5%.

“Regarding my sexuality, I’ve never had a problem...I’ve had to take some time off, [over] a period of time because my ex-partner was poorly...and there wasn’t a problem...they [management] were happy to give me that time off..”

James, Private Sector

Age

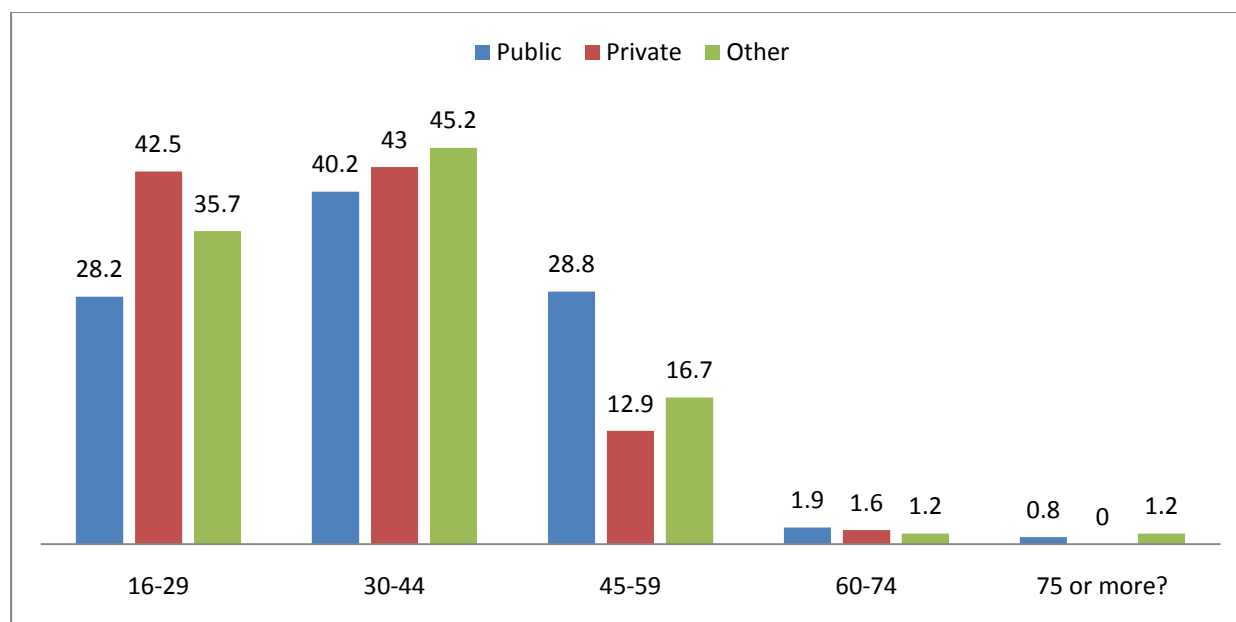


Chart 4.5: Percentage breakdown of age across workplace sectors

557 of the participants are under the age of 44 years old with 195 participants over that age. There were 5 participants who are 75 years old or more. An explanation for a younger response base might be due to the survey being based online, with younger people more likely to use the internet than older people.

Ethnicity

To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong...	Public	Private	Other	Total
Black-African	2	0	0	2
Black-Caribbean	1	0	0	1
Other Black	0	1	0	1
Bangladeshi	0	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0	1
Indian	0	1	0	1
Pakistani	0	0	0	0
Other Asian	1	3	0	4
Irish Traveller	6	1	2	9
White	461	173	77	711
Mixed Ethnic Group	1	5	3	9
None of these	9	2	2	13

Table 4.1.2: Breakdown of respondents by ethnic background and workplace sector

The vast majority of respondents stated their ethnicity as white. There is a low response rate from other ethnic backgrounds. Similarly, the same can be said for membership of many LGB groups

throughout Northern Ireland. The need to find new ways to effectively engage with LGB people from other ethnic backgrounds has been identified by these groups.

Religion

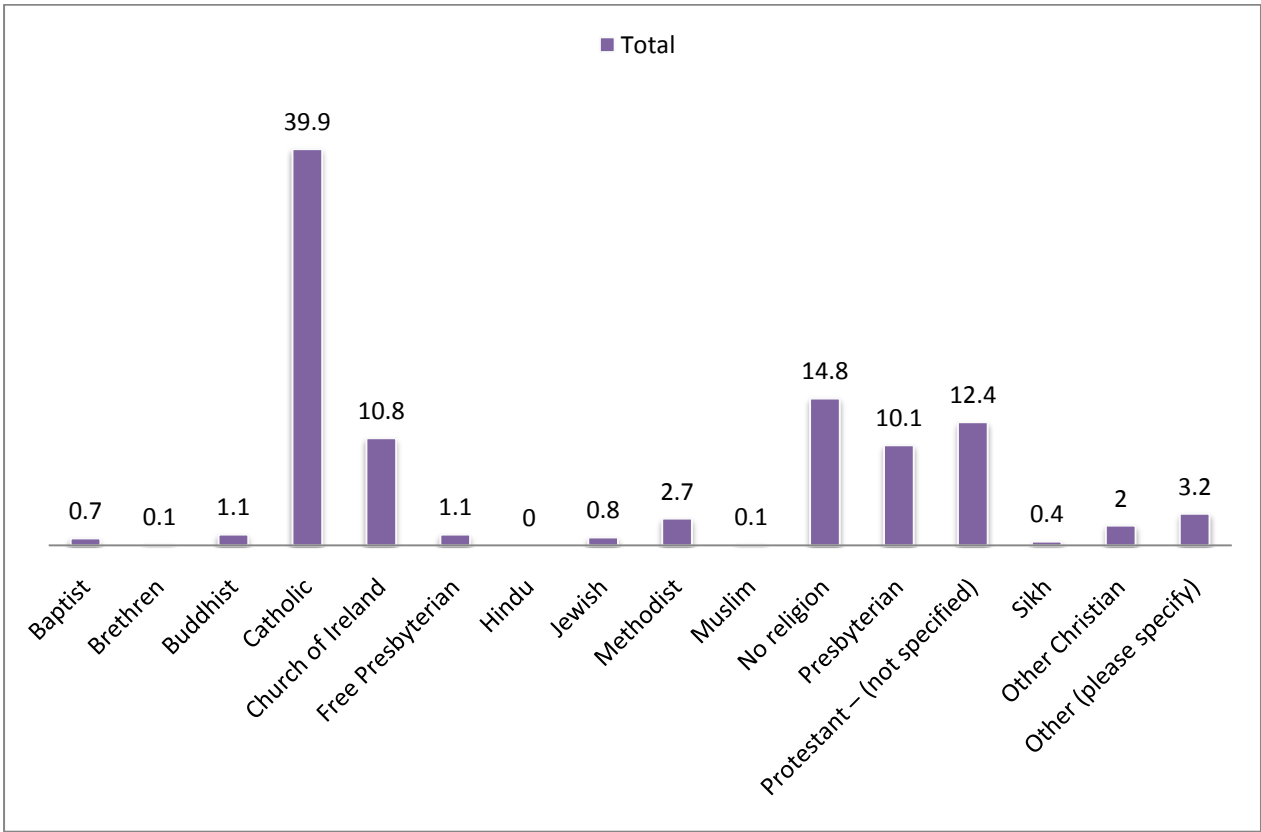


Chart 4.6: Percentage breakdown of religious background of respondents

37.9% of respondents indicated they are of a Protestant denomination⁸, 39.9% Catholic and 14.8% said they have no religion.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a disabled person as someone who has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities”. Do you consider that you meet this definition of disability?

Of the 752 respondents 102 (13.6%) considered themselves to have a disability, with 78 (10.4%) saying it was recognised by this definition and 24 (3.2%) not recognised by the definition.

⁸ Baptist, Brethren, Church of Ireland, Free Presbyterian, Methodist, Presbyterian, Protestant (not specified)

Please state the type of disability:	Public	Private	Other	Total
Learning Disability	2	4	2	8
Mental Health Disability	14	9	9	32
Physical Disability	37	6	8	51
Sensory Disability	9	2	0	11
Total	62	21	19	102

Table 4.1.3: Breakdown of type of disability across workplace sectors

Qualifications

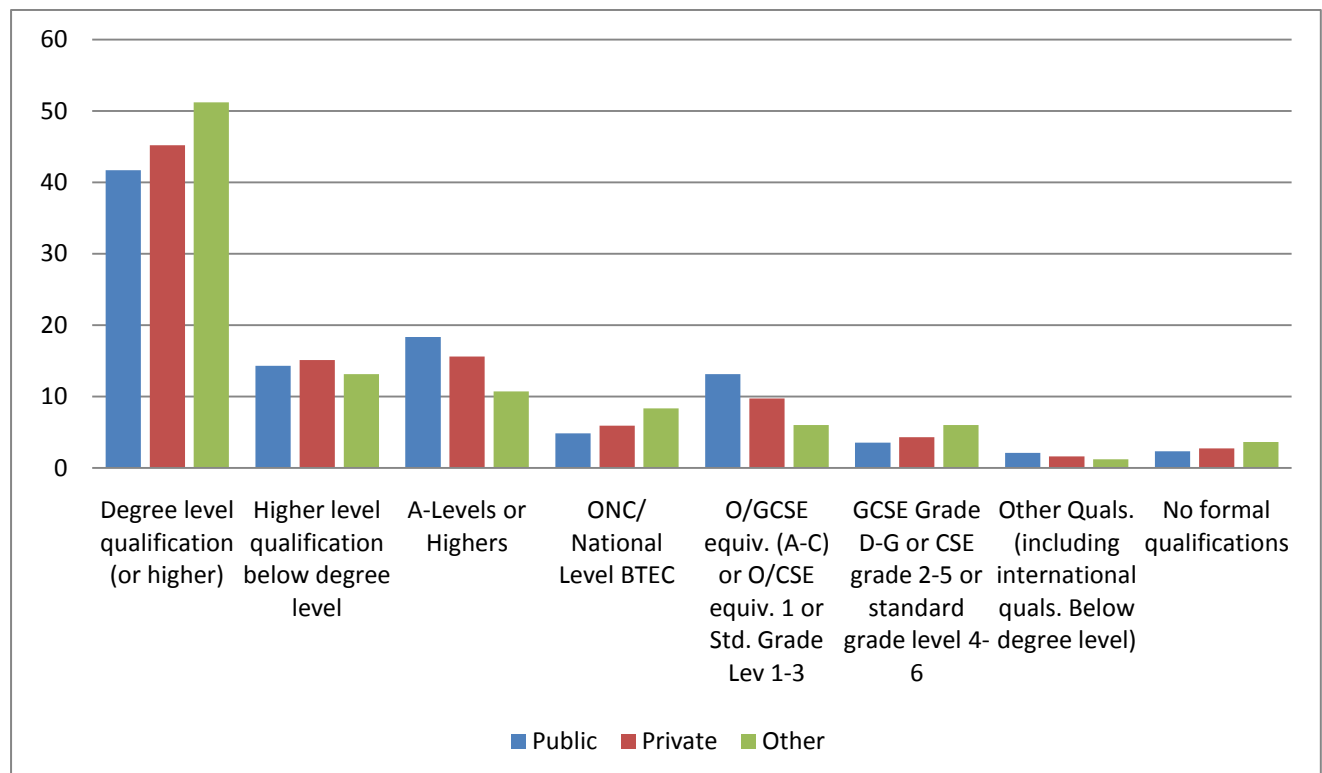


Chart 1.7: Percentage breakdown of qualification level across workplace sectors

The majority of respondents indicated they have a degree level or higher qualification, across all three sectors. 19 respondents had no formal qualifications.

"Generally my sexuality is a non issue in the work place. It is used by a select few in order to undermine me in front of others".

Anonymous Participant

Level of Earnings

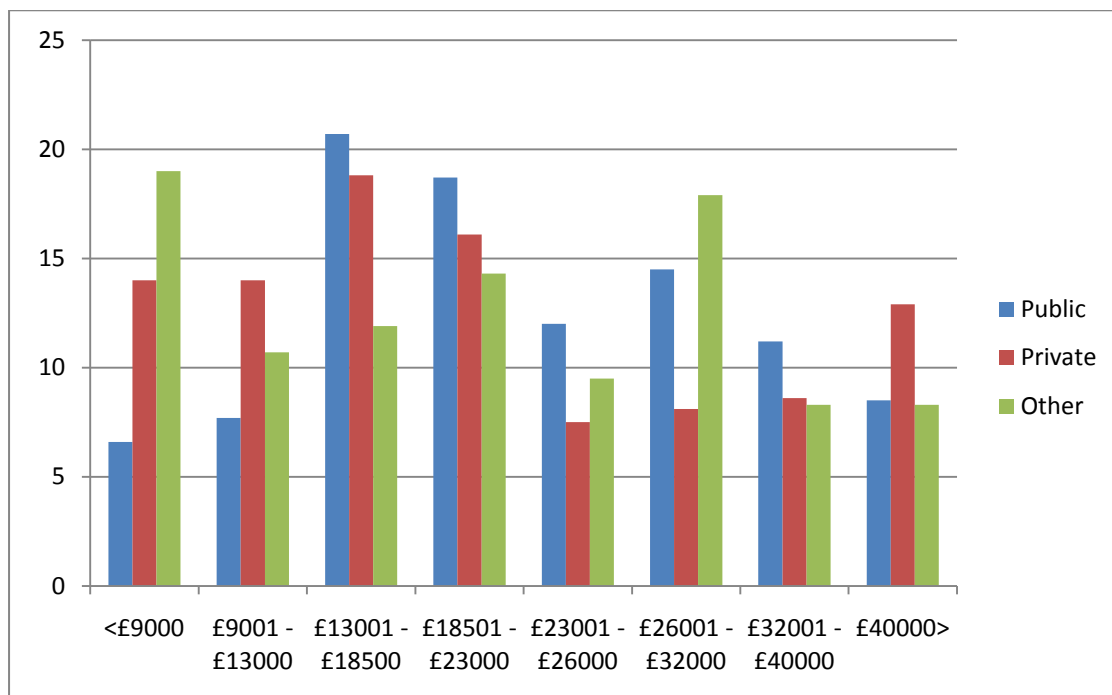
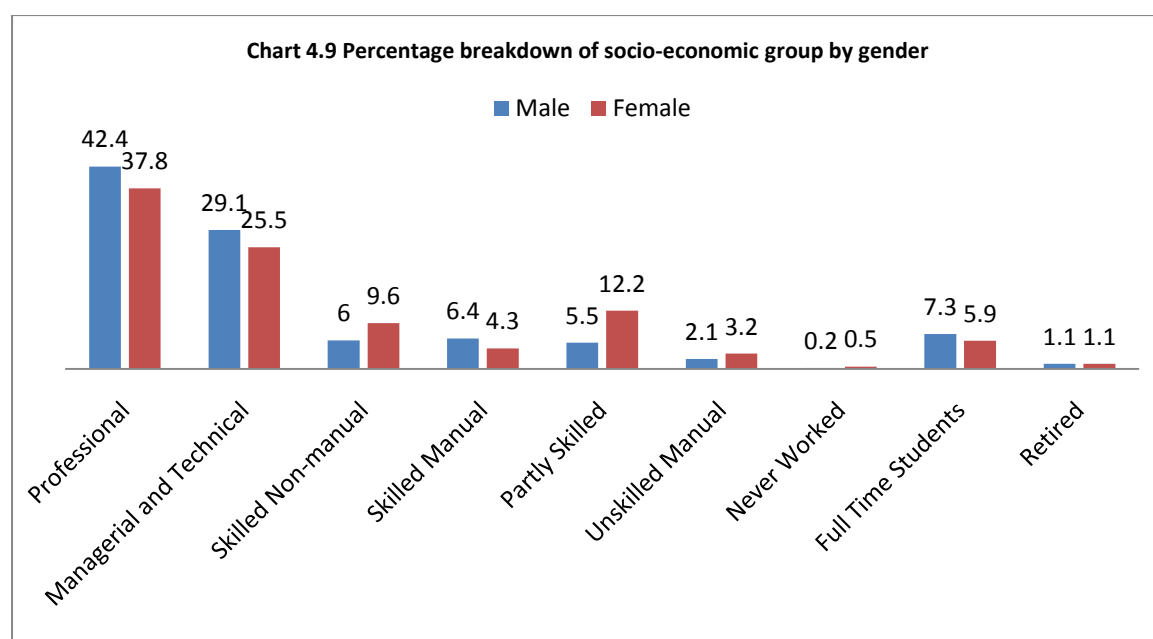


Chart4.8: Percentage breakdown of level of earnings across workplace sectors

The highest earnings over all, across all sectors, are between £18,500 and £26,000 with 36.9% of respondents indicating this. 149 (19.8%) people indicated that they earned over £32,000 per year. 22.3% of males who responded earned over £32,000 per year but only 12.2% of females who responded earned the same. Those in the private sector indicated they are more likely to earn more than £40,000 per year compared with the other sectors.

Socio-Economic Group



71.5% of males who responded identified themselves as either professional or managerial and technical compared with 63.3% of females who indicated the same. Females are more likely to be partly skilled with 12.2% identifying as such compared with only 5.5% of males.

Employment Status

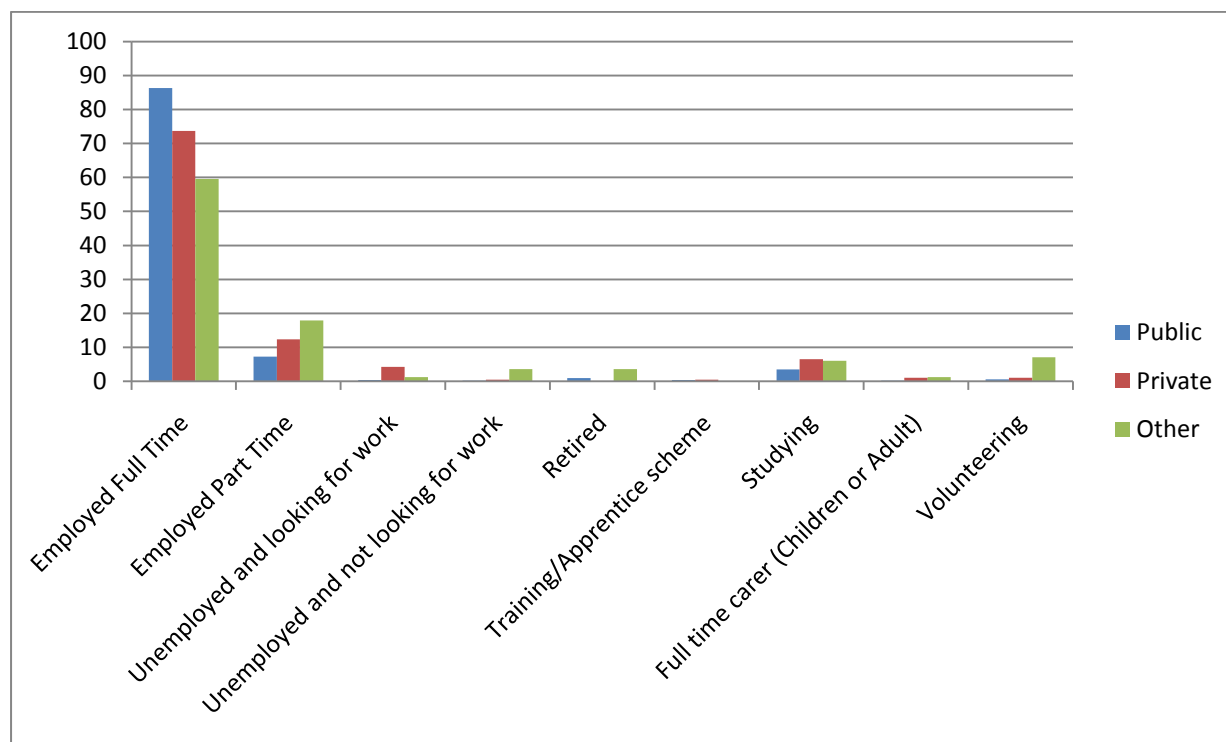


Chart 4.10: Percentage Breakdown of Employment Status across workplace sectors

The public sector has the highest number of full-time employed respondents with 86.3% indicating this, compared with 73.7% for the private sector and 59.5% for community, voluntary and nongovernmental. The highest level of part time employees is represented in the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector with 17.9% indicating this. This compares with 12.4% for the private sector and only 7.3% for the public sector respondents who work part time, among the respondents.

Are you currently...	Male	Female
Employed Full Time	81.2%	77.1%
Employed Part Time	8.2%	14.4%
Unemployed and looking for work	1.8%	0.5%
Unemployed and not looking for work	0.4%	1.6%
Retired	0.9%	1.6%
Training/Apprentice scheme	0.4%	0.5%
Studying	5.0%	3.2%
Full time carer (Children or Adult)	0.7%	0.0%
Volunteering	1.6%	1.1%
Total	100%	100%

Table 4.2.4: Percentage breakdown of employment status and gender

Females responded that they are more likely to be employed part-time (14.4%) compared with males (8.2%). Males responded that they are more likely to be employed full-time (81.2%) compared with females (77.1%).

6. In the Workplace

Key Findings

- More than 1 in 4 (26.9%) respondents from the private sector conceal their sexual orientation in the workplace
- Almost 1 in 4 (24.5%) respondents from the public sector conceal their sexual orientation in the workplace
- 33.9% of respondents aged 45-59 conceal their sexual orientation in the workplace
- More than 1 in 3 respondents (38.7%) working in the private sector don't know anyone else in their organisation who is LGB
- Almost 1 in 3 (31.7%) LGB people working in the private sector believe that their sexual orientation will have a negative impact on their chances of progressing in work
- More than 1 in 4 (26.3%) LGB people working in the public sector believe that their sexual orientation will have a negative impact on their chances of progressing in work
- More than 1 in 5 (21.4%) LGB people working in the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector believe that their sexual orientation will have a negative impact on their chances of progressing in work

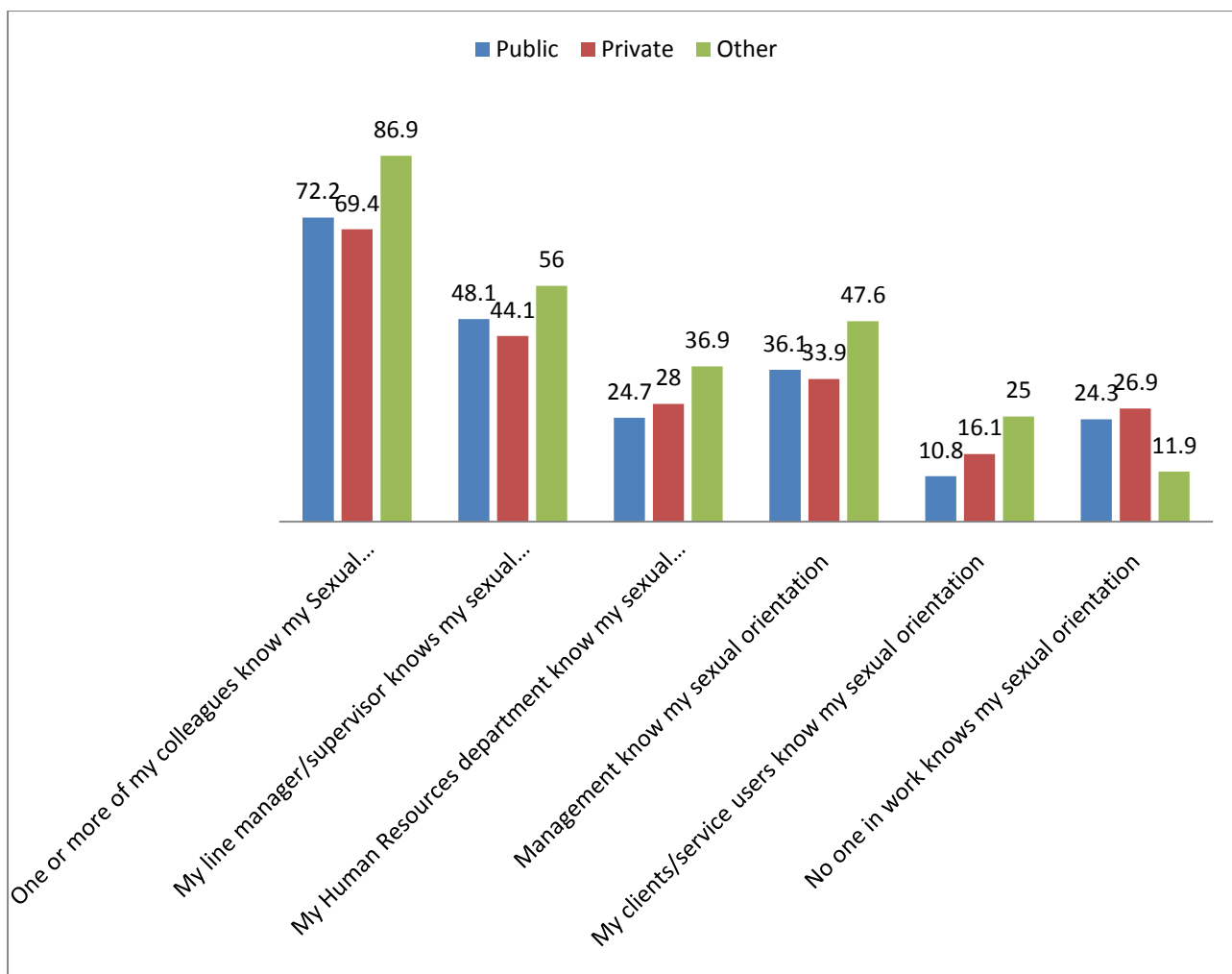


Chart: 6.1: Percentage breakdown of respondents and disclosure of sexual orientation across workplace sectors

Those that indicated they work in the community, voluntary or nongovernmental sectors are most likely to disclose their sexual orientation (86.9%) compared with the public sector (72.2%) and the private sector (69.4%).

“Coming to terms with being gay; that is the hardest thing ever to do... I find it infuriating that whenever I change my job, I have to come out yet again to my new work colleagues, simply because it is assumed I am straight!!!”

Anonymous Participant

Almost 1 in 4 people in the public sector conceal their sexual orientation from colleagues and clients/service users (24.3%) and more than 1 in 4 from the private sector conceal their sexual orientation from colleagues and clients/service users (26.9%).

Please circle all numbers that apply to you...	16-29	30-44	45-59	60-74	75 +
One or more of my colleagues know my Sexual Orientation	80.4%	74.0%	62.7%	69.2%	40.0%
My line manager/supervisor knows my sexual orientation	48.6%	50.0%	44.1%	53.8%	20.0%
My Human Resources department know my sexual orientation	21.6%	33.0%	22.0%	46.2%	20.0%
Management know my sexual orientation	36.7%	38.1%	33.9%	53.8%	20.0%
My clients/service users know my sexual orientation	12.7%	13.8%	13.0%	38.5%	20.0%
No one in work knows my sexual orientation	18.0%	21.2%	33.9%	30.8%	60.0%

Table: 6.1.1: Percentage breakdown of respondents and disclosure of sexual orientation across age ranges

"I wish I could come out"
Anonymous Participant

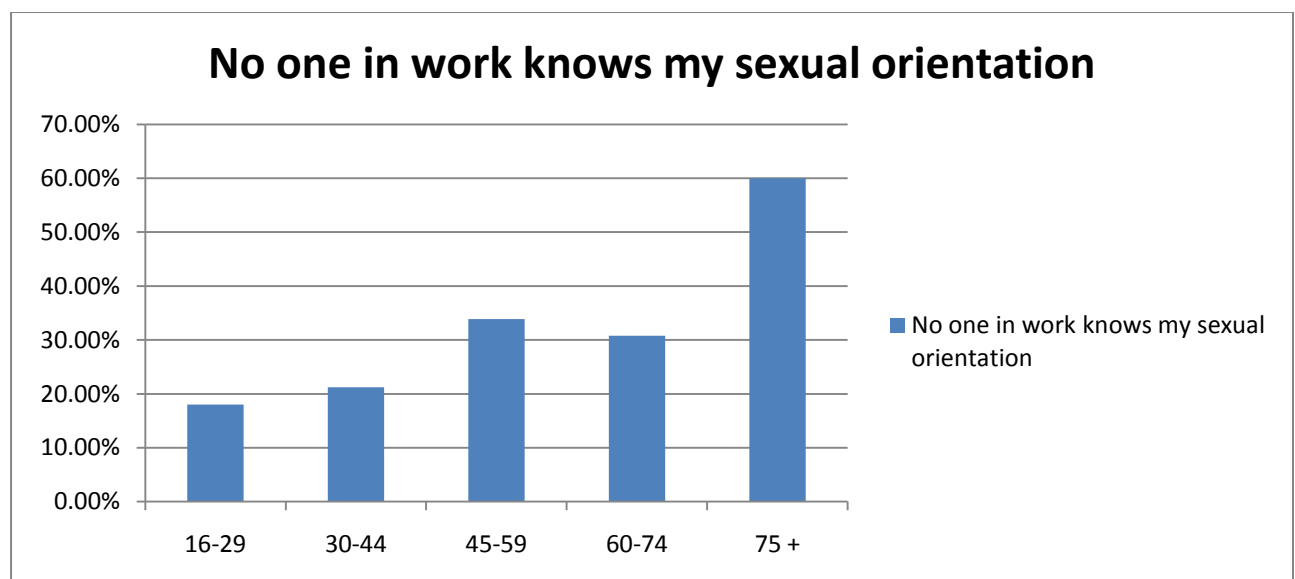


Chart: 6.2: Percentage breakdown of respondents and disclosure of sexual orientation across age ranges

Older participants are more likely to conceal their sexual orientation, with the percentage of those that conceal their sexual orientation to everyone in work increasing the older the survey participant taking part. Those under the age of 44 years old are more likely to be open about their sexual orientation in the workplace than those over 44 years old.

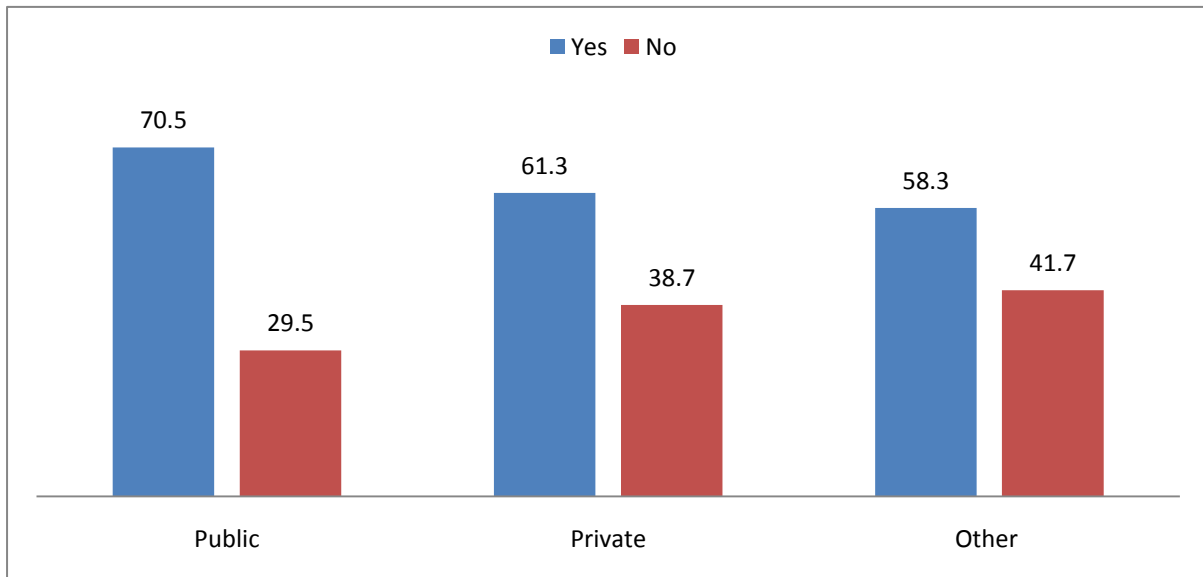


Chart: 6.3: Percentage breakdown of respondents who know a colleague who is LGB across workplace sectors

More than 1 in 3 people who responded from the private sector said they don't know anyone else in their organisation who is lesbian, gay or bisexual. This is lowest for those who responded from the public sector (29.5%) and highest in the community voluntary and nongovernmental sectors (41.7%).

Do you think that your sexual orientation would have an impact on your chances of progressing professionally at work?

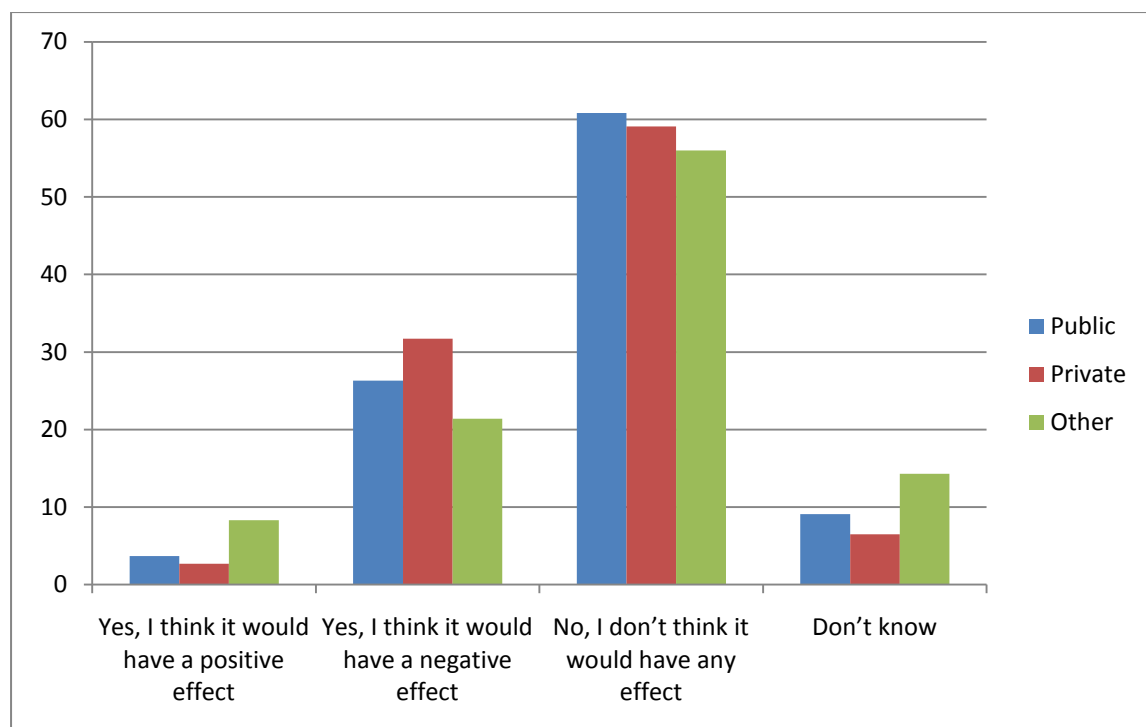


Chart6.4: Percentage breakdown of respondents who believe their sexual orientation will impact career progression across workplace sectors

The majority of people, across all workplace sectors believed their sexual orientation would have no impact on their chances of progressing professionally at work. (Public: 60.8%, Private: 59.1% and community, voluntary and nongovernmental: 56.0%).

However, over 1 in 3 people in the public sector either think their sexual orientation will have a negative impact on their chances of progressing professionally or do not know (35.4%). This is slightly higher for those respondents from the private sector (38.2%) and similar for the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors (35.7%).

The community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors have the highest percentage of respondents that say they do not know if their sexual orientation would have an impact on their chances of progressing professionally, with 14.3% indicating this, with only 6.5% of those from the private sector unsure and 9.1% of respondents from the public sector.

7. Encounters at work

Key Findings

- 42.5% of respondents from the private sector, 40% from the public sector and 31% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector have heard negative comments about LGB people from a colleague or colleagues in the workplace
- 19.9% of respondents from the private sector, 17.9% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector and 15.1% from the public sector have been subjected to negative comments about their sexual orientation from a colleague or colleagues in the workplace
- 20.2% of respondents from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector, 19.4% from the private sector and 13.7% from the public sector have been subjected to negative comments about their sexual orientation from a colleague or colleagues outside the workplace
- 49.8% of respondents from the public sector, 43% from the private sector and 40.5% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector have been subjected to negative comments about their sexual orientation or heard negative comments about LGB people in general from a colleague or colleagues outside the workplace
- More than 1 in 4 (26.9%) respondents across all workplace sectors have had reason to make a complaint relating to their sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation
- 32.2% said no action was taken of those working in the public sector who made a complaint
- Of those that made a complaint working in the private sector, 31.1% said no action was taken
- Almost 3 in 4 people who made complaints (70.3%) across all workplace sectors were not happy with the outcome received regarding a complaint made

"....He is a staunch Christian [and] he says that he 'loves me but hates my sin'... every time he sees me he goes on...in fact I sat for four hours one day listening to him...I was on standby and I just sat listening to him... if I was to go and complain, everybody would know it would be me, that's why I don't go and do it..."

Alan, Private Sector

Please indicate which if any of the issues identified below have happened to you in your CURRENT workplace?

	Public	Private	Other	Total
Negative comments have been directed at me by another employee about my sexual orientation which made me feel uncomfortable	15.1%	19.9%	17.9%	16.6%
Negative comments have been made about lesbian, gay or bisexual people by people I work with that made me feel uncomfortable	40%	42.5%	31%	39.6%
Negative comments have been directed at me by another employee about my sexual orientation which made others feel uncomfortable	8.7%	12.9%	6%	9.4%
Negative comments have been made about lesbian, gay or bisexual people by people I work with that made others feel uncomfortable	16%	21.5%	16.7%	17.4%
Negative comments have been directed at me by another employee about my sexual orientation in a light hearted manner which did make me feel uncomfortable	21.6%	21%	26.2%	21.9%
Negative comments have been made about lesbian, gay or bisexual people by people I work with in a light hearted manner which did not make me feel uncomfortable	31.3%	33.9%	28.6%	31.6%
None of the above	38%	30.1%	41.7%	36.4%

Table: 7.1.1: Percentage breakdown of experiences in the workplace across workplace sectors

Over 1 in 5 (21.9%) people who responded said that comments have been made about their sexual orientation in a 'light hearted' manner in the workplace that made them feel uncomfortable. This increases to more than 1 in 4 (26.2%) people among respondents from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors.

However, overall more respondents from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector indicated that they experienced negative comments about either their own sexual orientation or lesbian, gay and bisexual people generally in work least (41.7%) compared with the public sector (38%) and the private sector (30.1%).

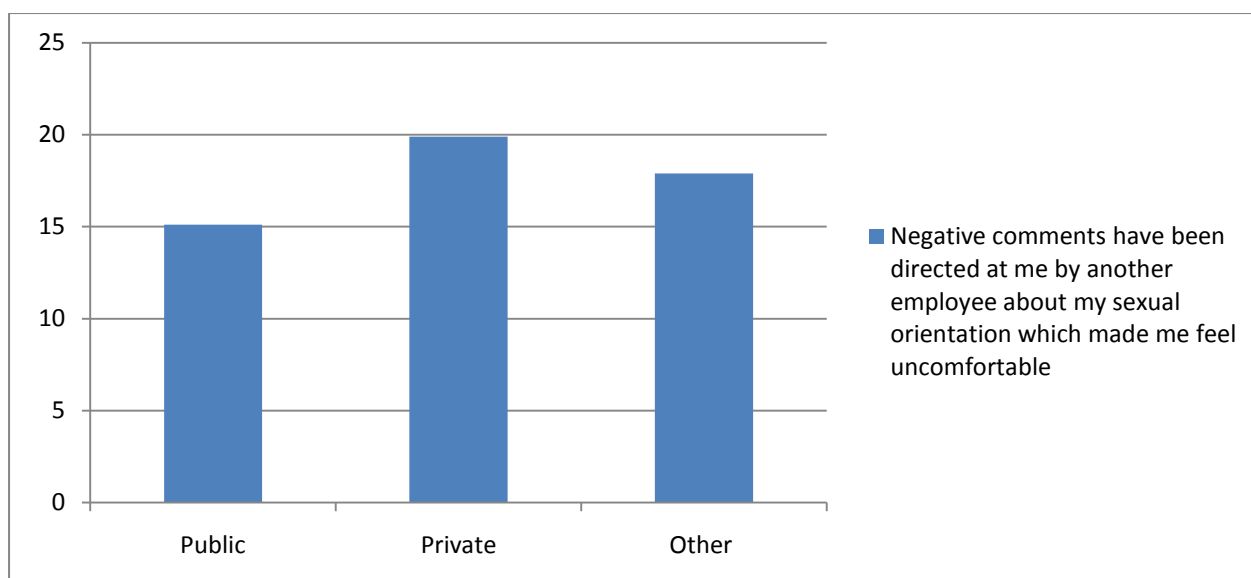


Chart: 7.1: Percentage breakdown of respondents experiencing negative comments about their sexual orientation in work across workplace sectors

Respondents from the private sector indicated most that negative comments about their sexual orientation have been directed towards them, with 19.9% of people saying this, compared with 17.9% of those working in the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors and 15.1% from the public sector.

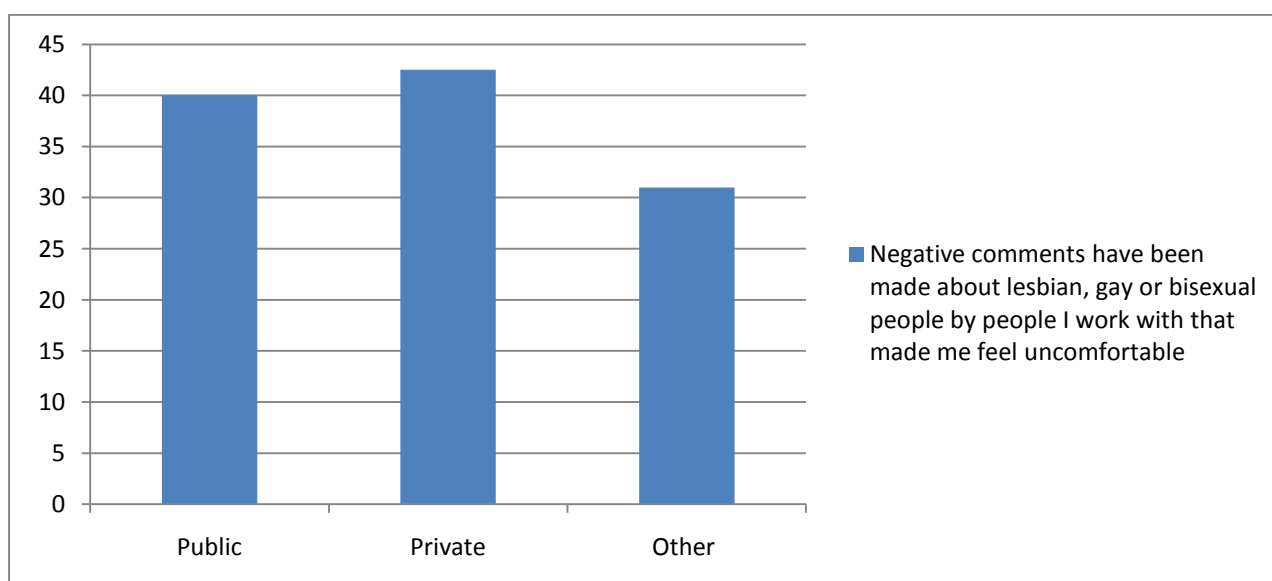


Chart: 7.2: Percentage breakdown of respondents hearing negative comments about LGB people generally in work across workplace sectors

Incidents of negative comments about lesbian, gay and bisexual people generally being made in the workplace which made respondents feel uncomfortable is reported highest from those in the private sector (42.5%), with those in the public sector reporting similar experiences (40%) and these incidents being lowest in the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors (31%). Across the various workplace sectors more than 1 in 3 people experience negative comments being made about LGB people generally, in the workplace (39.6%).

"I work within the Civil Service. Recently I have felt sick and somewhat angry (to the point I almost walked out of work) by some of the comments of my fellow workers. At a time I was considering coming out but am glad I did not. On one occasion recently two [of my] fellow workers were talking about a gay person who visits my work. One said to the other "there's a lot of them (gays) getting about." and the other said "bastards." On another occasion I was told to keep my back to the wall when dealing with a certain gay person. There has been other things said as well but I won't bore you with my issues. I guess if I was totally secure in my sexuality these things should not bother me much".

Anonymous Participant

Please indicate which if any of the issues identified below have happened to you OUTSIDE your workplace involving people you work with?

	Public	Private	Other	Total
Negative comments have been directed at me by another employee about my sexual orientation which made me feel uncomfortable	13.7%	19.4%	20.2%	15.8%
Negative comments have been made about lesbian, gay or bisexual people by people I work with that made me feel uncomfortable	26.6%	33.3%	27.4%	28.3%
Negative comments have been directed at me by another employee about my sexual orientation which made others feel uncomfortable	8.3%	12.4%	11.9%	9.7%
Negative comments have been made about lesbian, gay or bisexual people by people I work with that made others feel uncomfortable	15.4%	19.9%	15.5%	16.5%
Negative comments have been directed at me by another employee about my sexual orientation in a light hearted manner which did not make me feel uncomfortable	12.4%	19.9%	16.7%	14.8%
Negative comments have been made about lesbian, gay or bisexual people by people I work with in a light hearted manner which did not make me feel uncomfortable	23.4%	24.2%	26.2%	23.9%
None of the above	49.8%	43%	40.5%	47.1%

Table: 7.1.2: Percentage breakdown of experiences outside the workplace across workplace sectors

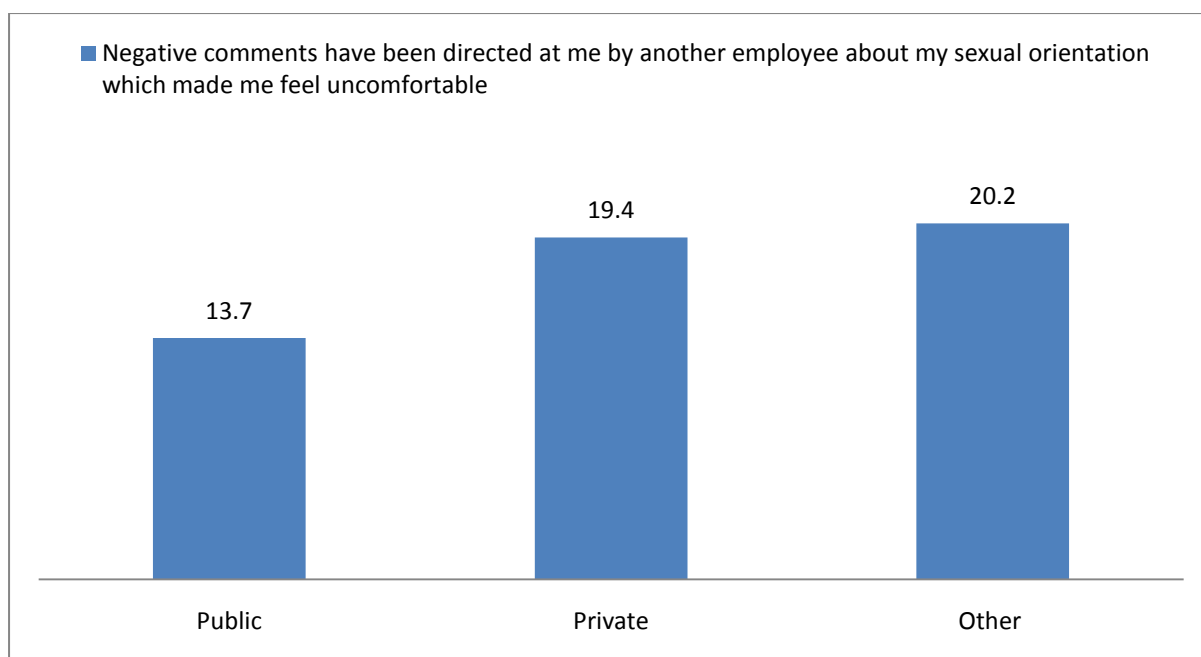


Chart7.3: Percentage breakdown of respondents experiencing negative comments about their sexual orientation outside work by another employee across workplace sectors

1 in 5 respondents from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector (20.2%) indicated that they have been subjected to negative comments about their sexual orientation by another employee outside of work. Respondents from the private sector (19.4%) indicated this was a similar issue and public sector respondents slightly less (13.7%).

Almost half the respondents from the public sector (49.8%) indicated that they have not experienced negative comments outside of the work place by another employee either about their own sexual orientation or lesbian, gay or bisexual people generally. 43% in the private sector and 40.5% of community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors indicated the same.

Have you ever had reason to make a complaint about another employee to management in your CURRENT or PREVIOUS employment regarding an incident or incidents in work relating to your sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation?

	Public	Private	Other *	Total
Yes	121	61	20	202
No	361	125	64	550
	482	186	84	752

Table: 7.1.3: Breakdown of respondents who had reason to make a complaint across workplace sectors

* Only 20 people are represented in the 'other' category of those that had reason to make complaint so are not reported on individually but do feature in total numbers.

More than 1 in 4 respondents (202) had reason to make a complaint in their current or previous employment regarding an incident or incidents that happened in work relating to their sexual orientation.

Who did you first approach with your complaint?	Public	Private	Total
Management	34.9%	41.3%	36.5%
Human resources	7.9%	11.1%	9%
Another employee	19.8%	17.5%	20.9%
Trade union representative	8.7%	3.2%	6.2%
Other (please specify)	28.6%	27%	27.5%

Table: Percentage breakdown of respondents of who respondents first approached when they made a complaint, across workplace sectors

41.3% of respondents who had reason to make a complaint from the private sector approached management with it. This reduces to 34.9% of public sector employees who did the same.

“Maybe I’m blessed because where I work there is no discrimination [regarding] sexual orientation at all, and [it] wouldn’t be tolerated”.

Anonymous Participant

How was your complaint dealt with?

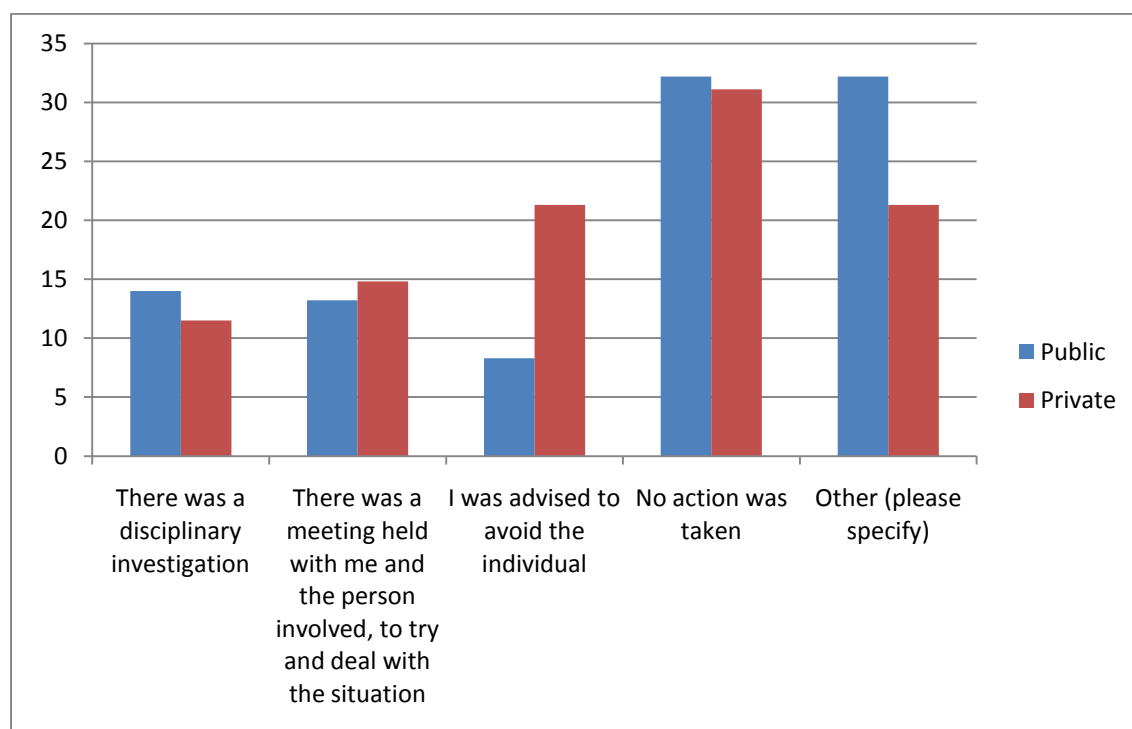


Chart: 7.4: Percentage breakdown of how complaints were dealt with across workplace sectors

The answer given most to this question across all three workplace sectors is that no action was taken. 32.2% of respondents in the public sector and 31.1% of respondents from the private sector indicating this.

Were you happy with the outcome you received?

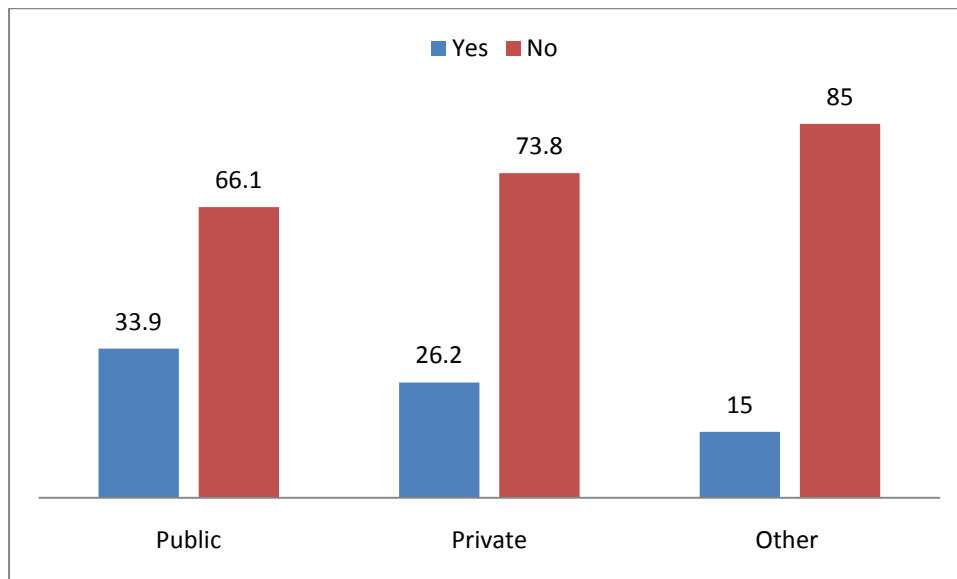


Chart 6.5: Percentage breakdown of how respondents felt about the outcome of complaint across workplace sectors

70.3% of respondents were unhappy with the outcome they received and 29.7% indicated that they were happy with the outcome received, reflected highest in those that responded from the public sector (33.9%).

8. Workplace Policies

Key Findings:

- 36.5% of respondents from the private sector, 29.8% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector and 28.2% from the public sector said that the organisation they work for does not have an equal opportunities policy or that they are unsure if there is one
- 39.8% of respondents from the private sector, 38.1% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector and 32.2% from the public sector said that the organisation they work for does not have an anti-bullying procedure or policy or that they are unsure if there is one
- 32.7% of respondents across all workplace sectors would not, or do not know if they would, feel comfortable approaching management for support if they were the victim of homophobic bullying at work
- 38.2% of people from the private sector, 37.2% from the public sector and 27.3% from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector would not feel comfortable, or do not know if they would feel comfortable, approaching their employer to avail of time off or seek support if they were to adopt a child or have a child through surrogacy
- Over half of people (57%) in the private sector would not feel comfortable approaching their employer for support if they were the victim of same sex domestic violence
- 47.1% of people from the public sector and 41.7% of people from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector would not feel comfortable approaching their employer for support if they were the victim of same sex domestic violence

Do your employers have work place policies which explicitly identify equal opportunities for people who are same sex attracted?

	Public	Private	Other	Total
Yes, there is an equal opportunities policy which explicitly identifies people who are same sex attracted	64.5%	44.6%	58.3%	58.9%
No, there is an equal opportunities policy which does not mention same sex attracted people	7.3%	18.8%	11.9%	10.6%
No, there is no equal opportunities policy that I am aware of	6.8%	17.7%	4.8%	9.3%
Don't know	21.4%	18.8%	25%	21.1%

Table: 8.1.1: Percentage breakdown of respondents who are aware of their organisations equal opportunities policy across workplace sector

Over half the respondents from the private sector (55.4%) said that their organisation either did not have an equal opportunities policy, had one but that it didn't mention same sex attracted people, or that they were unsure if there was one. 41.1% of the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors said the same and 34.6% of public sector respondents indicated this.

1 in 4 people (25%) from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors said they did not know if there was an equal opportunities policy or if it mentioned same sex attracted people. More than 1 in 5 people from the public sector said the same (21.4%).

Almost 1 in 5 people (17.7%) from the private sector said that there was no equal opportunities policy in their organisation, compared with 6.8% of public sector respondents and 4.8% of community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors.

Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

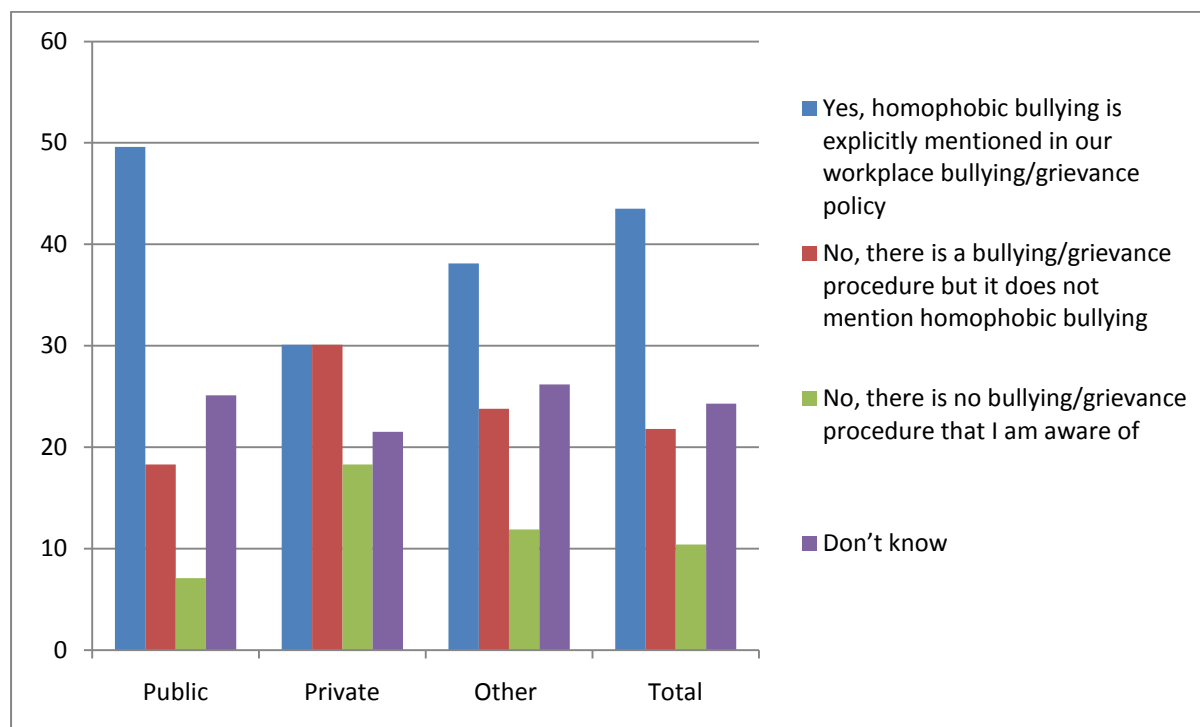


Chart: 8.1: Percentage breakdown of respondents who are aware of their organisations anti-bullying policy across workplace sector

Almost half of respondents from the public sector (49.6%) said that homophobic bullying is explicitly mentioned in their organisations anti-bullying policy. This is lowest for the private sector with less than 1 in 3 people stating this (30.1%).

Almost 1 in 3 respondents (32.2%) from the public sector said that their organisation either didn't have a bullying/grievance procedure or that they were unsure if they did have one that mentioned homophobic bullying. This is higher for those from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors (38.1%) and slightly higher again for respondents from the private sector (39.8%).

If you were a victim of homophobic bullying at work, would you approach your employer/manager for support or to make a complaint?	Public	Private	Other	Total
Yes, I would feel comfortable approaching my employer/manager and I am confident that I would receive support	52.3%	47.8%	57.1%	51.7%
Yes, I would feel comfortable approaching my employer/manager but I am not sure that I would receive support	15.1%	17.2%	14.3%	15.6%
No, I would not feel comfortable approaching my employer/manager	26.8%	31.2%	22.6%	27.4%
Don't know	5.8%	3.8%	6%	5.3%

Table 8.1.2: Percentage breakdown of how comfortable respondents would feel approaching employers if they were the victim of homophobic bullying in work, across workplace sectors

Respondents from the private sector indicated the greatest reluctance to approaching their employer for support or to make a complaint, or did not know if they would, if they were the victim of homophobic bullying in work (35%). A slightly lower percentage, but still almost 1 in 3 people from the public sector, also indicated this as the case (32.6%) compared with 28.6% for the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector.

“Generally NICS... is a good place to work. Diversity and equality training is mandatory for all staff. Most of my colleagues are supportive and know of my sexual orientation... However, I am unaware of any policy in place for same sex couples or if the same work/life balance principles that apply to straight couples, apply to gay couples living together.”

Anonymous Participant

Family Friendly Policies

Do your employers have work place policies which explicitly identifies maternity/paternity or family friendly policy which identifies support for same sex attracted people who wish to adopt or have children through surrogacy?

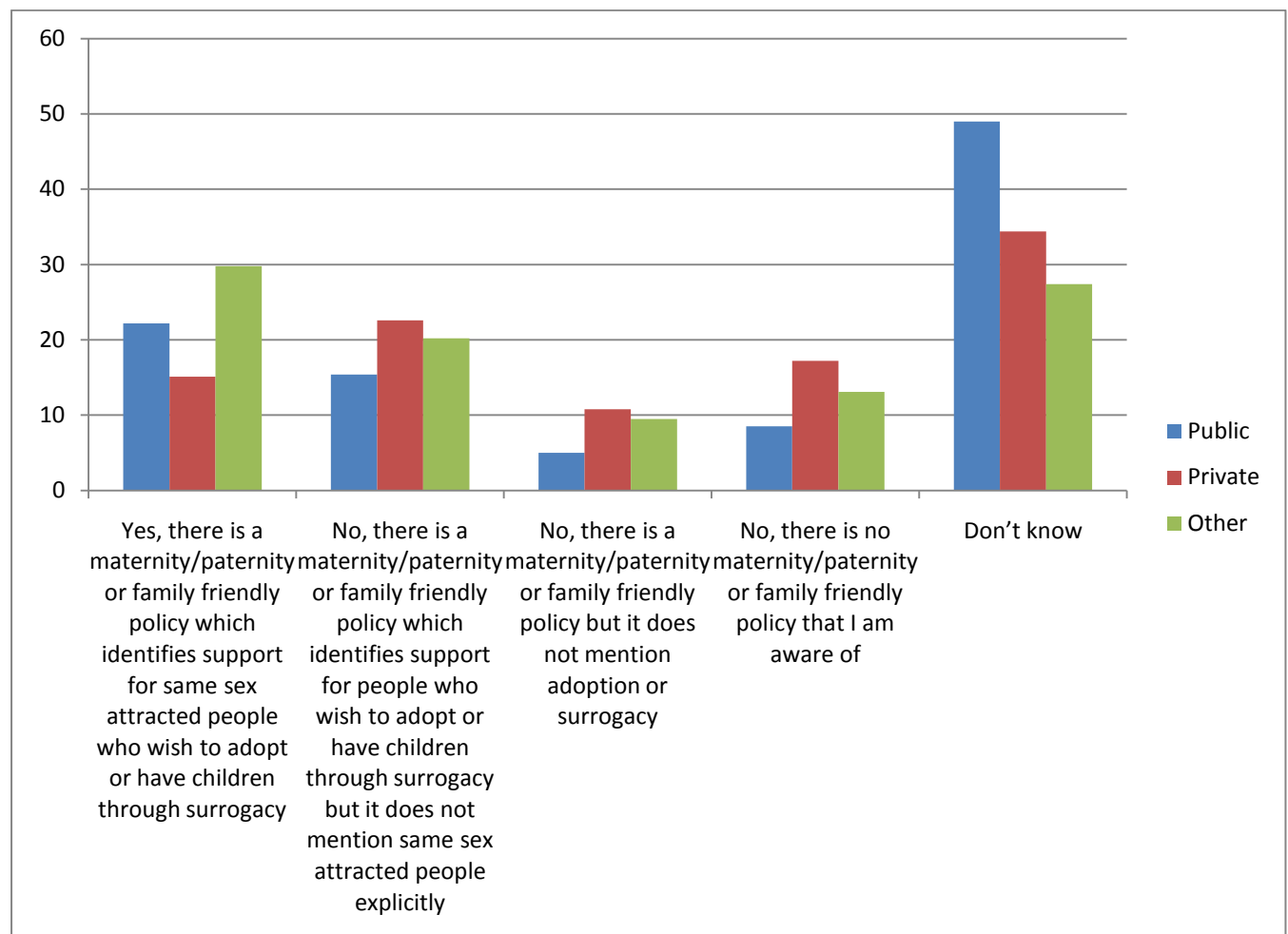


Chart: 8.2: Percentage breakdown of respondents who are aware of their organisations family friendly policy across workplace sector

Almost half of respondents from the public sector (49%) indicated that they were unaware if their organisation had same sex supportive family friendly policies in place regarding adoption or surrogacy. Of those who indicated that they had same sex family friendly policies in place the majority were from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector with almost 1 in 3 people saying this (29.8%).

Overall, 43% of respondents across all workplace sectors said that they did not know if their employer had same sex supportive family friendly policies in place regarding adoption or surrogacy.

If you were to adopt a child or have a child using a surrogate would you approach your employer/manager to request time off or to avail of support?

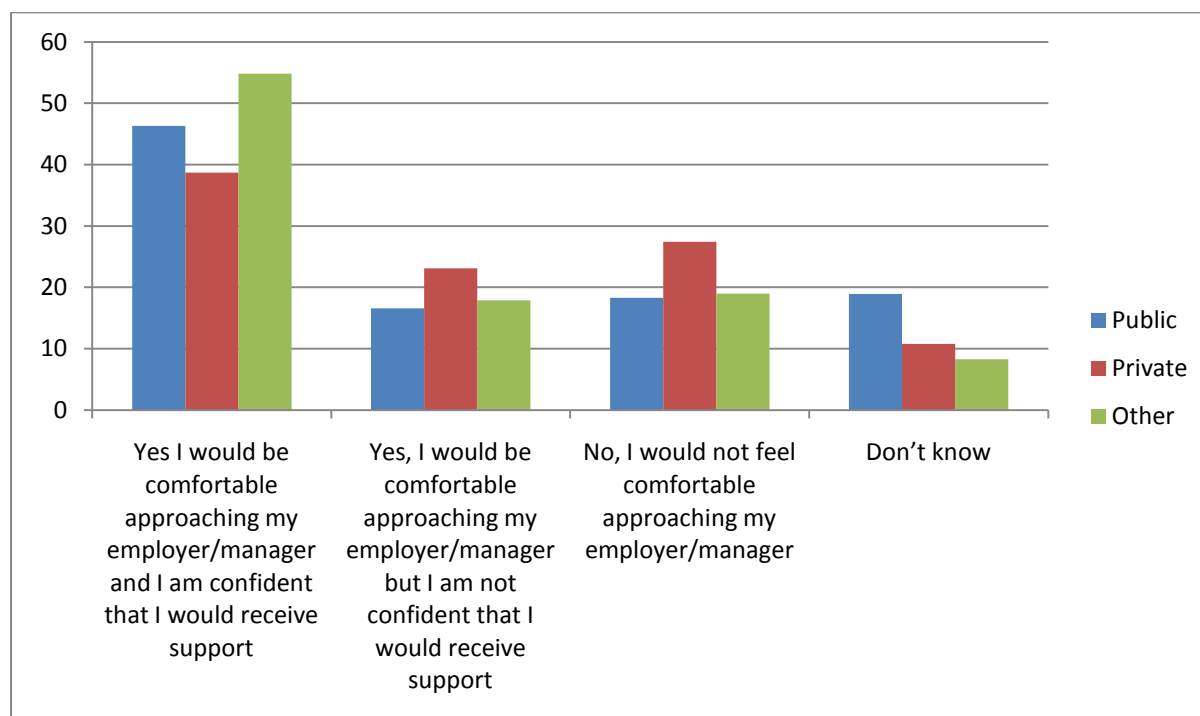


Chart 8.3: Percentage breakdown of how comfortable respondents would feel approaching employers to seek time off or support if they were to adopt a child or have a child through surrogacy, across workplace sectors

Respondents from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors indicated the greatest confidence in approaching their employer if they were considering adoption and believed they would receive support (54.8%). This was lowest among the private sector with 38.7% indicating they would and just under half for the public sector (46.3%).

Across the workplace sectors, respondents from the private sector indicated most that they would not feel comfortable approaching their employer for time off or support, or that they did not know if they would, if they were considering starting a family through adoption or surrogacy (38.2%). Those in the public sector indicated a similar reluctance with 37.2% indicating this with 27.3% of the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector respondents stating this.

Same Sex Domestic Violence Policy

Do your employers have a domestic violence policy which identifies support for people who are in same sex relationships?

	Public	Private	Other	Total
Yes, there is a domestic violence policy which identifies support for people who are in same sex relationships	15.6%	8.1%	17.9%	14%
No, there is a domestic violence policy but it does not explicitly mention people who are same sex attracted	12.9%	10.2%	11.9%	12.1%
No, there is no domestic violence policy that I am aware of	19.3%	45.2%	36.9%	27.7%
Don't know	52.3%	36.6%	33.3%	46.3%

Table 8.1.3: Percentage breakdown of respondents who are aware of their organisations domestic violence policy across workplace sector

Respondents from the private sector indicated most that their organisation does not have a domestic violence policy (45.2%) compared with 36.9% of respondents from community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors saying this and 19.3% of people from the public sector.

Over half of respondents from the public sector said that they did not know if their organisation had a domestic violence policy or if it mentioned support for same sex attracted people (52.3%).

14% of respondents across all the workplace sectors said that their organisation did have a domestic violence policy and that it identified support for people in a same sex relationship. Those in the private sector indicated this least (8.1%).

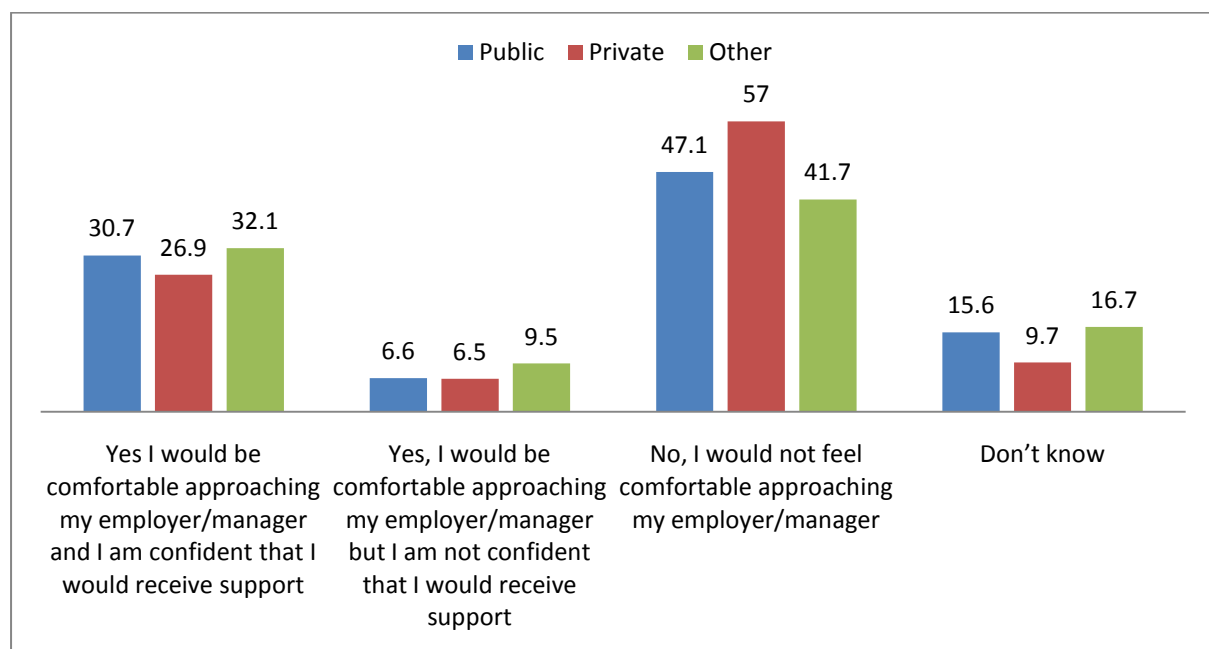


Chart 8.4: Percentage breakdown of how comfortable respondents would feel approaching employers if they were the victim of same sex domestic violence, across workplace sectors

Across all workplace sectors, almost 1 in 2 people (48.9%) said that they would not feel comfortable approaching their employer or manager if they were the victim of domestic violence from a same sex partner and needed support.

This was highest in the private sector with over half of respondents saying they would not feel comfortable (57%), with 47.1% in the public sector and 41.7% in the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sectors saying the same.

Almost 1 in 3 respondents (32.1%) from the community, voluntary and nongovernmental sector said that they would be confident approaching their employer if they were the victim of domestic violence from a same sex partner, compared with 30.7% of public sector respondents and 26.5% of respondents from the private sector.

“As I work with the public on a regular basis my employers have been more willing to stand up to a member of the public if they made homophobic remarks about me in work”

Anonymous Participant

9. Recommendations

Government and employers must take the lead in making workplaces more inclusive for all employees, including lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. Too many LGB people across all workplace sectors conceal their sexual orientation. Too many are hearing negative comments either about their own sexual orientation or LGB people generally and too many believe that their sexual orientation will have a negative impact on their chances of progressing at work.

Organisations that do not address these issues are failing their LGB staff and customers, as well as impacting on their ability to positively compete in an internationally diverse economy. Government must assist organisations in addressing these issues with better and practical support.

There is also a role for the LGB&T sector. The sector must provide organisations and government with advice and assistance in implementing LGB friendly policies; transforming workplace cultures to make them more inclusive and assist in making the everyday lives of LGB people easier and better.

Employers

Having robust equality and diversity policies and practices throughout an organisation is something employers should seek to achieve in order to bring greater benefits to the organisation as a whole, as well as to employees within the organisation.

Recommendation one

- Organisations, regardless of size or structure, should recognise the benefits of equality and diversity in the workplace and acknowledge the need to have it central to the functions and ethos of the organisation. How, and to what degree, initiatives are implemented within a particular organisation will depend, to a large extent, on the nature and size of the organisation itself.
- Employers should review, renew, or develop, robust equality and diversity policies and practices throughout their organisation. This should include an Equality and Diversity Statement, Policy and Action Plan, Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy, family friendly policies, network support groups and monitoring policy. (See appendix II for further detail)
- Organisations should review and renew how they communicate with staff, particularly around these issues.
- Organisations should review, renew or develop their equality and diversity training provision, content and duration ensuring a minimum level is in place, which includes compulsory equality and diversity training for all staff, with reference to sexual orientation.

"I worked as an electrician for 6 years around Ireland and I left the trade completely due to comments and people's behaviour around me when they know I was gay...I think the building trade has major issues with homophobia which need to be addressed... from management to the labourer on the sites... the whole industry stinks"!

Anonymous Participant

LGB&T Sector

There are some examples of good practice of LGB equality and diversity research and workplace guides; however these tend to have a Great Britain or Republic of Ireland context. There is very little Northern Ireland specific LGB equality and diversity research or workplace guides, including family friendly policies and anti-bullying and harassment policies.

Recommendation two

- The LGB&T sector, in partnership with Trade Unions, should develop detailed LGB equality and diversity workplace guides. These guides should include information and advice regarding; the establishment of LGB&T network support groups, anti homophobic bullying policy guides, guides on how to monitor the sexual orientation of staff and equality and diversity statement and policy guides.
- The LGB&T Sector should develop Sexual Orientation Awareness Training to be delivered to employers that includes best practice advice on why LGB equality should be implemented in the workplace and how it should be done; including roles and responsibilities of line managers, senior managers and staff.
- The LGB&T sector, supported by government, and in partnership with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, should design and develop an online advice and assistance “toolkit for employers” which gives advice and assistance on how to implement LGB equality in the workplace.
- The LGB&T sector, in partnership with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, should develop an Northern Ireland specific LGB&T Workplace Equality Index, similar to Stonewall UK’s model but relevant to the experiences and realities of workplaces in Northern Ireland.

Government

While good work has been done over the past number of years promoting general equality in the workplace, more needs to be done by employers, particularly around LGB equality. Government should assist in advancing those changes in the public sector and supporting them in the private sector, in the knowledge that providing such support to individual organisations has a positive impact on the growth of the economy and the cohesion of society. Government should assist businesses in facing the increasing challenges of operating in a competitive and diverse economy.

Recommendation three

- Government should establish an Equality Small Grants Scheme. This Scheme should seek to award small and medium sized enterprises with grants to enable them to obtain expert advice on developing and implementing equality and diversity policies and practices throughout their organisations.
- Government should financially assist the LGB&T sector in developing programmes and training packages for employers on how to implement LGB equality in their organisation.

Appendix I

Bullying; Preventing the bullying and harassment of gay employees, Stonewall Workplace Guides, Stonewall: 2007

Career Development; How to support your lesbian and gay employees, Stonewall Workplace Guides, Stonewall: 2007

Employment Equality and Diversity Plan 2008 to 2011, Northern Ireland Civil Service, Department of Finance and Personnel, September 2008

Extending Equality, Trade Union Actions to Organise and Promote Equal Rights, Respect and Dignity for Workers Regardless of their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, European Trade Union Confederation; July 2008

Integration in the workplace: emerging employment practice on age, sexual orientation and religion or belief, Research report 36, Equality and Human Rights Commission; Autumn 2009

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Rights in The Workplace: Congress Guidelines for Negotiators, Irish Congress of Trade Unions; December 2003

Lesbian Gay & Bisexual Diversity in the Workplace, Gay and Lesbian Equality Network; 2010

LGBT Equality in the Workplace, A TUC Guide for Union Negotiators on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans issues, Equality and Employment Rights Department Trades Union Congress; Spring 2006

Monitoring; How to monitor sexual orientation in the workplace, Stonewall Workplace Guides, Stonewall: 2006

Network Groups; Setting up networks for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees, Stonewall Workplace Guides, Stonewall: 2005

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Appendix II

This is a very brief overview of some of the issues which employers should consider if they are introducing equality and diversity programmes into their organisation.

Equality and Diversity Statement

In consultation with staff, employers should develop a robust equality and diversity statement. If an organisation already has an equality and diversity statement, consideration should be given to reviewing the statement to ensure it is comprehensive.

A good statement will include, in its detail, a commitment to equality and diversity. It will acknowledge everyone's right to a harmonious working environment and their right to equality of opportunity. A good statement will also state that diversity is valued within the organisation.

Further to this, a good statement will outline the benefits to equality and diversity for staff and the organisation, such as recruitment, retention and promotion of the best possible people. It will outline that it is the responsibility of all staff to promote equality and diversity and respect one another. Finally a good equality and diversity statement will outline that discrimination is unacceptable, include the grounds that discrimination is not acceptable on, including sexual orientation and gender identity and detail the consequences of engaging in discrimination.

Equality and Diversity Policy

Employers should view an equality and diversity policy as central to the functioning of the organisation. To ensure staff 'buy in' and understanding of the requirements of the policy, it should always be developed, updated, amended and enacted in full consultation with staff.

This policy should not be considered by anyone within the organisation as an 'add on'

but rather as a driving tool for the progression and advancement of both the staff and the organisation.

The policy should cross-reference any other relevant policies, such as the organisations anti-bullying and harassment policy as well as the equality and diversity statement. The policy should also be accompanied by an action plan, where appropriate, to ensure that any required actions are delivered, to allow staff to monitor progress and be involved.

The policy should outline why the organisation is promoting equality of opportunity, including the legal requirement to do so under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 if they are designated, outline what equality is and outline the measures they are taking to promote equality and diversity. These measures could include;

a) Equal Treatment

LGB people should be afforded the same workplace entitlements as their heterosexual counterparts, such as partner/civil partner benefits, flexible leave, same sex adoption leave or maternity/paternity leave and the like. There should be no barriers for LGB employees based on their sexual orientation.

b) Communication

Communication with staff should be as comprehensive as possible, particularly relating to equality and diversity issues. Whether this is by way of information or seeking view-points or feedback, channels of communication with staff should be robust and standardised.

Consulting with staff and keeping them informed of the reasons why things are happening throughout the organisation is important in gaining staff 'buy in' to organisational change. Methods such as notice boards, intranet, email, organisational magazines/e-zines etc. should be utilised for

this purpose and tailored to the requirements of the organisation.

c) Awareness Raising and Training

It should be compulsory for all staff to be trained in equality and diversity issues, including sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

‘Class room’ training tends to be more effective than online training; therefore online training should be used as a supplement to classroom training and not a substitute. There should be dedicated equality and diversity training with specific reference to sexual orientation, and other equality strands.

Consideration should also be given to seeking guidance and expertise on the development and delivery of equality training from outside organisations that have knowledge and the skills base to effectively contribute to the organisations training programme.

d) Bullying and Harassment

Workplace bullying and harassment, if left unchecked, will have huge negative impacts on an organisation’s staff and, by extension, outputs. Recruitment and retention will suffer as well as organisational image and reputation. A good practice organisational equality and diversity policy will cross-reference the organisations anti-bullying and harassment policy.

e) Monitoring

Organisations should monitor the makeup of all their staff, at each stage of their employment, from recruitment to retention and promotion to those leaving, as well as senior managers and various grades. This will help identify where there may be under-representation of particular staff. The sexual orientation of staff should also be monitored, but there are a number of measures that need to be in place before this can be done effectively. (See below)

Management ‘Buy-in’

For equality and diversity to work in an organisation it requires senior management buy in. The best models are those that demonstrate buy in from either senior management or chief executive level. Depending on the nature and size of the organisation, this individual should also represent issues relating to equality and diversity across and throughout the organisation.

For example, within the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland there are a number of agencies, each of which should have a senior manager/director who could represent equality and diversity across the entire Department and meet when required.

Moreover, individual equality strands should be represented at senior or line manager level, including sexual orientation. What extent this is carried out will also depend on the nature and size of the organisation. These representatives should come together as required, discuss equality and diversity issues, identify improvements of policy or implementation and seek solutions.

In order to fulfil this role, additional training will be required for line managers as well as the compulsory equality and diversity training.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment can cost an organisation heavily in terms of poor organisational outputs, damaged credibility, poor image, recruitment and retention problems, low staff morale, increased absenteeism and reduced productivity.

The benefits for employees and an organisation to having robust anti bullying and harassment policies which are effective, is the opposite; higher staff morale, better organisational image and the like. Motivation among staff can also be increased as the organisation demonstrates that it is fulfilling

its duty of care to staff with a strong and clear anti bullying and harassment policy.

The contents of a good anti-bullying and harassment policy will outline that bullying or harassment is unacceptable as well as states the grounds of protected characteristics, including sexual orientation. It will also outline what constitutes bullying and harassment, such as intrusive questioning of someone's sexual orientation, abusive language, unwelcome jokes and/or physical abuse and state that the organisation is committed to tackling it.

Further to this the policy should clearly outline what steps staff should take, should they believe they are, or a colleague is, the victim of bullying or harassment under the terms of the policy. The procedure for complaints, grievances, disciplinary procedures as well as support procedures (depending on the nature and size of the organisation this could include harassment officers), should be clearly outlined. Confidentiality must be adhered to and guaranteed under any anti-bullying and harassment policy to reassure LGB staff.

A good anti-bullying and harassment policy will also identify and deliver on measures that help improve reporting, particularly if reporting is low and staff absenteeism is high for example.

The entire policy will require detail which is developed and consistent with the particular nature and size of the organisation, and is as robust as possible. An anti-bullying and harassment policy will only be as effective as the organisation allows it to be; policies such as an equality and diversity policy, equality statement, staff monitoring, communication and anti-bullying and harassment policies should all be seen as complimentary to one another and not in isolation.

Monitoring

Employers are legally obliged to tackle LGB discrimination in the workplace following the

passage of the Employment Equality (SO) Regulations (NI) 2003 and monitoring the sexual orientation of staff is a good way of complying with this law.

When organisations monitor the sexual orientation of staff, they are demonstrating that they are serious about building an inclusive culture, which will in turn increase staff morale as staff understand that the employer is taking an interest in their well-being and progression.

However, monitoring staff sexual orientation should be seen as a part of a wider equality and diversity programme as it will not work well in isolation and will in that instance, most likely, produce low responses. The ground must be prepared with effective policies and practices in place to allow monitoring of sexual orientation to be effective.

When organisations are introducing monitoring of the sexual orientation of staff, as well as ensuring it is a measure of the wider equality and diversity agenda within the organisation, they should set clear aims and objectives in terms of what it is they seek to monitor and what they seek to achieve.

For example, an employer could monitor the sexual orientation of staff and monitor complaints, as well as staff absenteeism, sickness etc. and compare this against policies in place which will help determine if policies are adequate. This could then be followed up with independent staff satisfaction surveys.

Organisations should also ensure that the process is completely voluntary and no undue pressure or influence is put on staff to fill out surveys/questionnaires, particularly in regard to sexual orientation. There should be clear statements about both the confidentiality of those taking part in monitoring as well as an explanation of what the data is being used for. If a workplace culture is inclusive LGB staff will feel more comfortable taking part.

Sexual orientation should be included in the general monitoring form along with the other

groups that are being monitored. The Equality and Human Rights Commission in the UK suggest that response rate is higher when 'sexual orientation' comes before the question asking about 'religion.'

Organisations should also be able to show staff positive changes which have happened as a result of monitoring data. Consistent feedback helps employees feel that they are part of the process and valued for their input.

Staff Support Networks

Staff support networks, particularly for minority communities, are a source of support that organisations should give the flexibility for staff to establish and engage with. LGB staff support networks offer LGB staff the opportunity to meet and engage with other people who are same sex attracted.

Staff support networks can serve a number of different functions. Participants can build personal capacity, increase confidence, contribute to the progression of the organisation and increase awareness of particular issues throughout the organisation. Employers can use the network as a source of consultation also.

Employers should consider giving staff who are support network members time off to meet during working hours, provide support in terms of travel if necessary and provide a secretariat if required. LGB staff must consider the best method of running a staff support network, ensuring that the widest possible pool of employees is given access to relevant information and the ability to join the network. Consideration should be given to having an exclusive LGB membership or open to all staff, or a combination of both with some meetings 'closed' for example.

Further Reading

This appendix is a very brief overview of some of the issues relevant to robust equality and diversity policies. For further and more detailed reading on any of the issues outlined above, please see appendix I.

"Regarding the sexual orientation issue, I feel like the company I work for is operating the 'Don't ask, don't tell' policy, the one used to be in place in the US Army".

Anonymous Participant