

Tower Hamlets  
Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme  
2009-2012

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## Introduction

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The Council's vision and the vision of the Tower Hamlets Partnership is to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in Tower Hamlets. We want a thriving community in which people feel at ease with one another, benefiting from higher levels of achievement and increasing employment opportunities, where people experience a higher standard of living and good health and enjoy a safe and accessible environment together with a wide range of cultural, leisure and learning opportunities. Our inclusive vision is of a community that draws strengths from its differences. We want to eliminate any barriers that prevent people accessing the opportunities and life chances on offer. We want to engage with all our communities to celebrate their rich diversity and also to work through the tension that this diversity can sometimes bring.

This Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme outlines the Council's commitment to make sure that equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people is at the centre of its work when developing a policy or strategy, providing a service, or employing people. We recognise that society has negative attitudes, stereotypes and myths about LGB people, and that these attitudes and beliefs can lead to LGB being socially and economically disadvantaged, excluded and marginalised. We believe that LGB people have the right to equality and opportunity and make a significant and valuable contribution to the community at large. This scheme shows how the Council with its partners will ensure that it eliminates LGB discrimination and harassment and promotes equality for all regardless of their sexual orientation.

The Council recognises that LGB people choose a range of terms to describe themselves and their community. The Council has chosen to call this document the Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme, as it is the most widely accepted umbrella term used in lesbian, gay and bisexual politics.

Transgendered people may face similar negative social attitudes and injustices to LGB people, and the Council recognises and supports their rights too. However, it is important to underline that sexuality and gender identity are different and that each faces its own set of legal and social issues. Whilst this document serves transgendered people who may identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, the Gender Equality Scheme provides more specific information on how the Council will support transgendered people.

Within each of the Council's Equality Schemes we have identified three priority areas of inequality which require significant and sustained action across a number of Council services. These priority areas provide the Council with some high level direction about where attention and resources need to be targeted to make real progress.

In relation to sexual orientation inequality, these priorities are set out below and are explored further in this Equality Scheme. Linked to poverty all three sit at heart of inequality in Tower Hamlets. To make a dramatic shift against the

inequality of Tower Hamlets and make progress on the wide range of issues identified in each of Equality Schemes it is recommended that investment to address these core inter-connected areas will lead that change.

- Work with partners to tackle LGB discrimination in the workplace
- Challenge homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools. Almost two thirds of young LGB pupils have experienced direct bullying in schools.
- Reduce homophobic hate crime in the borough and promote understanding, awareness and respect for LGB people.

In addition, research undertaken for this scheme has highlighted the limited information that we hold regarding LGB people. Collecting more information will enable us to improve our knowledge of the specific needs of LGB people and provide them with appropriate services.

## **Sexual Orientation Equality Legislation**

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LGB people have benefited from many recent changes in the law. These changes have provided the local LGB population with a greater degree of legal protection and have helped to promote their well-being and sense of equality. A significant number of these changes have had a direct impact on the Council and its roles as service provider, community leader and employer. Some of the key requirements are as follows:

### **The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003**

These cover direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment in employment and vocational training on the grounds of sexual orientation. Employees who believe that they have been discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation are able to take their cases to employment tribunals. This applies to all aspects of employment and training, including recruitment, promotion, terms and conditions and dismissals.

### **The Civil Partnership Act 2004**

The growing recognition of same-sex couples in law has placed new requirements on the Council. The 2004 Act affects many different areas, including pension rights, Housing and Council Tax Benefits, social services provision, customer service information and birth and death registration.

### **The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007**

The developments above have been consolidated by the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007, which prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, in education and in the exercise of public functions, which covers almost any activity in which the Council is engaged. The Regulations make it unlawful to:

- Refuse to provide goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation
- Provide goods, facilities and services of a different *quality* on grounds of sexual orientation
- Provide goods, facilities and services in a different *manner* on grounds of sexual orientation
- Provide goods, facilities and services on different *terms* on grounds of sexual orientation

The Regulations also apply to pupil admissions and access to education services.

The Single Equality Bill is expected to replace the separate equality duties on public authorities covering race, disability and gender with a single equality duty, which will also extend to gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. This will place a legal obligation on local authorities to promote sexual orientation.

## **How we developed the Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme**

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To develop the Schemes a comprehensive baseline exercise was undertaken using a combination of research and input from staff across the Council. Key activities that were undertaken included: analysis of statistical information, analysis of local and national research; consultation with services and teams, and a review of existing Equalities Impact Assessments (EqIAs).

Due to significant gaps in local information about LGB people two specific pieces of research were commissioned into the needs of LGBT people in the borough, and the specific needs of older LGBT people to inform this Scheme. This research was overseen by a subgroup of the Tower Hamlets LGBT Community Forum. Additionally wider consultation was undertaken with residents through street surveys, an Internet survey and consultation with staff about their views and experiences of the Council as an LGB employer. The results of an anonymous Stonewall questionnaire to all staff also informed this Scheme.

Using the results of the research, feedback from our consultation and baseline exercises, a number of key themes for priority and overarching activity have been set.

## **The Corporate Framework for Diversity and Equality**

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### **Delivery framework**

Valuing diversity is one of four core values of Tower Hamlets Council. We promote diversity and equality in everything we do to improve the life for everything living, working and visiting Tower Hamlets. We build upon this by working with the Tower Hamlets Partnership to provide accessible and responsive services that enable everyone to take part in the social, cultural and economic wealth of the borough. Achieving this is central to delivering the Council's vision, is linked to the Strategic Plan priorities and objectives and forms a driving force within the Community Plan and key to creating a cohesive community.

### **Our aims and values**

As a service provider we will:

- Promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination in the planning and delivery of our services in terms of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, health and income status
- Promote good relations between communities and address negative stereotyping of any groups
- Ensure that all residents have equal opportunity to participate in the democratic process
- Tackle harassment relating to a person's age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, health and income status

As an employer we will:

- Develop, review and promote policies and practices that ensure equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination for our workforce in all areas of employment (including recruitment, retention, learning and development, promotion, grievance, disciplinary and retirement)
- Ensure that our workforce reflects the diverse nature of the borough

We will recognise our community leadership role and use this to work towards a cohesive community in which inequality is tackled and equality promoted.

Our commitment is supported by a number of legal duties that require us to promote equality and eliminate discrimination, including:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Employment Regulations on Religion and Faith 2004
- Employment Regulations on Sexual Orientation 2003
- Civil Partnership Act 2004

- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 Act
- Childrens Act (2004)

However under current legislation, the requirements to address inequality and discrimination and promote equality vary between equality 'strand'. For example, while under current legislation we are required to address discrimination against employees on the basis of all six equality strands, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and religion / belief, it is only in relation to race, gender and disability that this duty extends to the provision of services and the active promotion of equality. We believe however that we have a strong moral and social duty to recognise that discrimination takes place and inequality exists for individuals and groups belonging to all of the six equality strands. We are therefore committed to going beyond the requirements laid down in law to address all six equality strands and to do everything that we can to challenge prejudice and discrimination and promote better understanding and respect between all people.

To demonstrate our commitment to all six equality strands, the Council has gone beyond the legal requirement to produce Equality Schemes in relation to race, gender and disability and has published Schemes covering Religion/Belief, Age and Sexual Orientation equality. Each Scheme sets out what we know about the profile of our community in relation to the relevant strand and the nature of inequality experienced by people as a result of this element of their identity. The Schemes also contain a summary of the action which the Council and partners will undertake to address inequality and discrimination in relation to this equality strand.

#### How we will deliver our commitment

Tackling discrimination and promoting equality requires action at corporate, directorate, service, team and individual levels. At a corporate level the six Equality Schemes and the overall Diversity and Equality Action Plan identifies priority areas for work on equalities across the organisation. The Diversity and Equality Action Plan is agreed by Cabinet annually and monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee six-monthly, along with a summary of progress on each of the Schemes.

Below we describe the processes and procedures we have put in place to embed the delivery of our commitment to promote equality in relation to all six strands within everything that we do as a Council:

- Undertake **equality impact assessments** of both new and existing policies and services
- Ensure that all our **team plans** incorporate relevant diversity and equality objectives and targets
- Ensure all new staff participate in Council **equality induction training** processes
- Ensure that our policies are compliant with **equality legislation**
- **Involve communities, staff and stakeholders** in the design, review



- and scrutiny of our services and employment practices
- Increase the extent to which our **workforce reflects the local community**
  - Using our **procurement** powers to make sure that organisations providing services on our behalf work in line with this policy
  - **Monitor the equality profile** of people using and benefiting from our services to enable us to identify groups which are not accessing services
  - **Involve all sectors of our community** in the design, review and scrutiny of our service delivery and employment practices
  - **Provide information and access** to our services in accessible ways

## The Profile of Sexual Orientation in Tower Hamlets

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### Key Facts

- We have limited information regarding our LGB community
- It is likely that 10% of our population is LGB, indicating that there are potentially 23,900 LGB residents in our borough
- Our LGB community will reflect the diversity of our communities

It is difficult to estimate the size and profile of the LGB community in the borough as sexual orientation was not a specific category in the last Census. A national survey indicates that LGB people make up around 10% of the population in London and although the Census did not ask specific questions around sexual orientation, it did ask about those who were living in same sex couples.<sup>1</sup> This revealed that the borough has the fifth largest reported number of cohabiting same sex couples nationally, and the fourth largest in London. The thriving commercial night life also indicates that a significant number of LGB people living outside the area have a connection with the borough.

Tower Hamlets has a population of 239,000 residents. Over the next 10 to 15 years the borough is expected to see the largest and fastest population growth in London. Our rough 10% estimate indicates that there are potentially 23,900 LGB people living in Tower Hamlets.

We also know that LGB people are represented in all sections of our community in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, faith and disability. In line with our overall population it is likely that we have an ethnically diverse LGB population - just over half the population is white British, a third is Bangladeshi and the rest of the population is made up of a large number of much smaller but significant ethnic minority communities including African, Caribbean, Somali, Indian, and Chinese populations. Additionally, with almost 30% of the population being under the age of 19, there is a high likelihood that borough has a large proportion of young LGB people, as almost 30% of the population is under the age of 19. With 78% percent of residents in the last Census declaring that they have a religious belief many LGB people are likely to have a religious belief or have been brought up in a family with religious beliefs.

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<sup>1</sup> National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Life Style (NASSL), 2000

## Reasonable Adjustments

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This section provides guidance about factors to take into account when delivering a service, running an activity or event, providing funding or scheduling meetings to ensure that you promote equality and do not adversely affect any individual or group as a result of their sexual orientation. It is important to note that these are intended to highlight some of the most common barriers to promotion of sexual equality, it is not a comprehensive guide to providing an equitable service and it is important that we take a proactive approach to identifying individual needs rather than presuming what we know the best solution. The key principle here is to ensure that it is clear that efforts will be made to accommodate needs and preferences based on sexual orientation and encourage staff, service users or residents to discuss their needs where they feel there may be a barrier to their access or involvement in an activity.

- Don't make assumptions – You cannot immediately see someone's sexual orientation in the same way that you can a person's skin colour and because many LGB people are not comfortable in being 'out' in the community they may appear invisible as far as our statistics are concerned. Therefore it is easy to forget or assume that they are not using our services. In fact it is important to intelligently assume the opposite and ensure that services are LGB inclusive - we estimate that roughly 10% of London's population is LGB this means that a significant percentage of our service users are likely to be LGB whether we are aware of it or not.
- Ask the question – Without recording information about who is using our services we cannot possibly know whether we are providing services that are equally accessible to all. That is why, with the exception of young people under the age of 16, it is mandatory for all services to undertake equality monitoring across all six strands including sexual orientation. The more likely invisibility of LGB people provides an added importance to asking the question. We understand that some staff find it difficult to ask the sexual orientation monitoring question and users can sometimes be offended by being asked the question. Service users are more likely to feel comfortable about answering the question if they understand why it is being asked, that is why we have produced postcards that help staff to explain the reasons behind equality monitoring. A copy of the corporate equality monitoring guidelines and postcard can be found on the Council's Internet.
- It's not just about sex – Being LGB is about more than defining ones sex life. It shapes the way people have experienced life, their identity, attitudes and needs in all areas of their lives. It is common for people to assume that being LGB is just about defining ones sex life and therefore fail to recognise that LGB service needs and experiences might be different to others. It is important understand that being LGB influences many aspects of a persons life and that like everyone people have multiple identities that services need to understand.

## **The Story So Far**

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Although this is the Council's first sexual orientation equality scheme, the Council has a strong record of working with partners, the local community and staff to tackle sexual orientation inequality. This is recognised in our continuous improvement from 28<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> and now 7<sup>th</sup> place in the Stonewall Workplace Equality index 2009.

In 2003 a groundbreaking piece of research into the needs of LGBT communities in the borough led to the formation of the Tower Hamlets LGBT Community Forum. The Forum, which brings together a wide range of public and third sector organisations with the LGB community, represents a borough wide commitment this agenda. It provides a platform for local people to challenge services on issues that affect their lives; homophobia, health and education are just some of the important issues explored in 2008.

The lives and contribution of LGBT people are recognised and celebrated in one of the largest programme of activities for LGBT History Month in London. Each year the Council supports the forum to coordinate a programme of events ranging from history walks to film events. The highlight of 2007 was the production of 'Out in Time' an exhibition about LGBT history of the East End. In 2008 the Council funded the now thriving LGBT parent support group Rainbow Parents. In 2009, in light of a recent homophobic attack in the borough, a borough wide 'No Place for Homophobic Hate' campaign was championed on billboards and advertising stands across the borough.

For a number of years an annual schools conference has been held at the beginning of History Month to support schools to challenge homophobia and promote equality. 'No Outsiders', a project that and creates more inclusive primary school environments by providing books and other resources to help kids to learn about families with two mums and two dads is being funded by the Council in a number of schools in the borough.

The Council takes a zero tolerance approach to homophobic hate crime and works in partnership with local agencies including the Police LGBT and community organisations, taking an integrated and coordinated approach to tackling all forms of hate. To ensure effective support for victims of homophobic crime, a Victim Support Homophobic and Transphobic Crime Worker is commissioned to provide specialist support to victims of LGBT crime and same sex domestic violence.

The borough has a shared aim to build 'One Tower Hamlets': a place where people from different backgrounds work together to tackle inequalities and make the borough a better place. In a borough where faith plays an important role, the space for dialogue on issues of sexuality and faith has also been created to promote cohesion

The strength of this Scheme is the strong tradition and of commitment to equality that underpins it.

## **Sexual Orientation Equality Priorities 2009-12**

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The Tower Hamlets 2020 Community Plan vision is to *'improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the borough'*. The priorities of this Scheme have been aligned to the five Community Plan themes to ensure that LGB equality is at the centre our work to achieve this vision. Set out in this section are the key LGB equality priorities that have emerged from research and consultation with residents, Council staff and services together with analysis of national research and information.

## **ONE TOWER HAMLETS**

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### **Celebrate Diversity & Promote Cohesion**

Attitudes towards LGB people have changed significantly over the past decade. Research tells us that most people support the equal legal treatment of lesbians and gay men, and want to see anti-gay discrimination addressed.<sup>2</sup> We often hear that there is intolerance of gay people among faith communities but research tells us that the vast majority of religious people (83 per cent) believe that gay people should not be discriminated against and that people of faith are no more likely to be prejudiced than anyone else.

Laws have played an important role in combating anti-gay prejudice but as we know from our experience of challenging racism and other forms of prejudice and discrimination real change comes about when difference is not simply tolerated but when it is valued and respected. To achieve this it is important to raise the visibility of LGB communities and celebrate their contributions and achievements as these are often not seen or heard in the mainstream media.

#### **CASE STUDY: FAITH AND SEXUALITY DEBATE**

To mark International Day against Homophobia a lunchtime discussion and question time event was held on the subject of faith and sexual orientation.

The event was developed in liaison with the LGBT and Muslim staff forums. It was chaired by the Chair of Tower Hamlets LGBT Forum and the council invited a range of people from different faith and LGBT organisations to speak. The event was widely advertised across the council to draw in non-LGBT staff. It was a great success with more than 100 people on attendance and generated a constructive and positive debate.

#### **Objectives:**

- Recognise the contributions and celebrate the lives of LGB people in Tower Hamlets through communications, arts and events
- Develop knowledge and understanding and promote respect for different ways of life. Challenge prejudice and discrimination towards LGB people
- Ensure that LGB people are visible in our media and publications and portray realistic and positive images of lesbian and gay people
- Ensure that community cohesion projects build trust, understanding and positive relationships between LGB people and wider community in the borough

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<sup>2</sup> Living Together: British attitudes towards lesbian and gay people. (2007) Stonewall

## **Improve the involvement and participation of LGB people in decision making**

In our borough there are a wide range structures and process for consultation and involvement with local residents but it is difficult to know how well LGB people are represented in these processes. Most respondents in our local survey felt that the Council is doing a good job but were less likely to feel that the Council involves LGB people than the population as a whole in decision making.

A recent equality impact assessment of our consultation and participation arrangements identified that LGB issues are infrequently raised at consultation events. LGB people may find it more difficult to raise these issues at events. Therefore it is important that consultation and engagement processes are inclusive of, and actively engage LGB people to ensure that their needs do inform the design and delivery of services.

A large percentage of respondents also said that they were uninvolved in the local community but expressed an interest in volunteering, particularly within the LGB community.

### **CASE STUDY: TOWER HAMLETS LGBT COMMUNITY FORUM**

The Tower Hamlets LGBT Forum was established in October 2006 and works to engage the LGBT community in the borough, helping it to shape the services that local residents receive. Members of the LGBT Forum include Tower Hamlets Council, the PCT, police and local community and voluntary organisations. The LGBT Forum enables local residents to raise concerns and problems that they are experiencing in the borough and to work with partners to resolve these issues.

### **Objectives**

- Ensure that consultation and engagement processes are inclusive of, and actively engage, LGB people
- Improve the monitoring of LGB people participating in consultation and participation activities
- Strengthen the capacity of local councillors to engage the local LGB community and get them actively involved in their neighbourhoods and local decision making.
- Develop LGB specific volunteering opportunities for local LGB people

### **Support a stronger LGB community**

In Tower Hamlets there is a thriving gay social scene and many LGB people socialise in gay pubs and clubs in the borough. Apart from socialising in other neighbouring boroughs and Central London many (46%) say that they socialise on the Internet. When asked what kinds of places they would like to see for socialising locally there was a mix of responses that highlighted a demand for different types of environments for different sections of the

community. Responses included more venues for black gay men, gay community centres, non-gay pubs to be more accepting, baby friendly venues, women's bar/café and more social opportunities for LGB parents and carers.

We know that LGB people can be particularly at risk of experiencing loneliness and isolation. Within the community some groups of people such as LGB parents, older and younger LGB people and those from a BME background or those who have a faith may be particularly isolated. Older lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are 2.5 times as likely to live alone as heterosexual people. Our local study shows that many residents rely on other LGB people for friendship and support. The internet is a particular source of support for our LGB residents. We need to develop a stronger community support structure which responds to the needs of specific sections of the LGB community that may be particularly isolated.

### Objectives

- Continue to support Tower Hamlets LGBT Community Forum as a central community resource, developing it to better support different sections of the LGB community.
- Develop dialogue and better partnership working between existing LGB groups in the borough to strengthen their capacity.
- Ensure that the allocation of mainstream community grants are inclusive of LGB projects and initiatives and used to address gaps in LGB community support
- Improve the level appropriate LGB information and advice and support available to LGB people in Tower Hamlets. Ensure that appropriate information, advice and support is available for LGB people who may be particularly isolated such as older and young LGB people, those from a BME background or who have a faith, and LGB parents
- Provide information, advice and social support using the Internet



## ***A PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY***

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### **LGB Equality in the workplace**

For many LGB people, the recent changes in employment legislation which make it illegal to discriminate against LGB people at work has not changed the culture of working environments enough to enable them to be open about their sexuality and be themselves at work.

It is estimated that as many as one in five LGB people still feel unable to reveal their sexual orientation. Many people still suffer discrimination at work; The Gay British Crime survey conducted by Stonewall identified that one in ten respondents was a victim of an incident committed by a work colleague. 27% of respondents of our local study said that they had experienced harassment or discrimination at work because of their sexual orientation. Of these 62% had experienced homophobic jokes, 41% said that they had been ignored because of their sexuality, and 38% had experienced verbal abuse.

In Tower Hamlets we want LGB people to feel valued and comfortable about being out in the workplace. As one of the borough's largest employers the Council has worked with the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index to develop an inclusive LGB friendly environment and established good employment practice. As a result the Council is proud to have moved up from 28<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> place in the Index of top gay friendly employers over the past three years. More detailed information about our work to promote LGB equality as an employer is set out in the Employer section.

The Council will continue to strengthen its own LGB equality employment practices and in its leadership capacity will work with other employers to improve sexual orientation equality in the workplace across the borough.

#### **Objectives**

- Continue to develop an LGB friendly organisational culture
- Ensure that senior and political figures visibly communicate and champion sexual orientation equality to all staff across the organisation
- Promote good LGB employment practice amongst local partners and encourage them to join the Stonewall WEI
- In the procurement of services ensure suppliers and partner organisations have sexual orientation inclusive policies

## Education for All

Schools have a crucial role to play in tackling homophobia and promoting sexual orientation equality. Homophobia in schools negatively affects all children, the views, opinions and behaviours of all pupils formulated today are likely to be carried into adulthood. The experiences of young LGB people at school today are likely to impact the rest of their lives.

A Stonewall study into the experiences of young LGB people in Britain's schools provides a picture of what school might be like for many of our LGB young people. It found that almost two thirds of young LGB pupils have experienced direct bullying. 92% of those bullied have been verbally abused, 41% have been physically assaulted and almost all said that they were learning in an environment where homophobic language is commonplace. Bullying can also take the form of text or cyber bullying. The study found that the majority of young people felt that there was neither an adult at home nor school who they can talk to about being gay because they did not want anyone at home or school to know that they are gay.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils reported that half of teachers never respond to homophobic language when they witness it and three in five of all pupils never intervene when they hear homophobic language, but instead become bystanders.

The impact of homophobic bullying is that young LGB people do not feel safe in school, over a third said that they were unhappy and reported that they do not like going to school as a result. LGB young people find it hard to be accepted at school and feel unable to be themselves. Most find that it impacts on their school work and half of those who have experienced homophobic bullying have skipped school because of it.

In terms of the curriculum most LGB pupils say that they have never been taught about lesbian and gay people or seen lesbian and gay issues addressed in class. Over half do not like playing team sport. Most young people reported to have no access to any information at school about lesbian and gay issues.

Outside of school only 15 per cent of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people have attended a gay youth group. Young people who attend such groups are much more likely to feel that there is an adult at home they can talk to about being gay and 32 per cent more likely to feel there is an adult at school they can talk to.

Lesbian and gay pupils are more likely to feel positive about school if their school has explicitly stated that homophobic bullying is against the rules. In schools that have said homophobic bullying is wrong, gay young people are 60 per cent more likely not to have been bullied.

## CASE STUDY: NO OUTSIDERS PROJECT AND STEP OUT

Several schools are involved in the 'No Outsiders' project which aims to tackle homophobia in primary schools by exploring issues of sexual orientation through the use of age-appropriate resource packs which feature material that includes lesbian and gay people and same-sex parents.

Children's Services support Step Out, our youth group for LGBT young people. This group provides advice and support and a social space for our young people.

### Objectives

- Develop steps to prevent and respond to homophobic bullying in schools including explicit homophobic bullying policies
- Provide staff with training to help them respond to, and prevent, homophobic bullying and support LGB pupils
- Provide LGB pupils with the information and support that they need.
- Extend our current initiatives in schools to continue integrating sexual orientation into the curriculum in a positive and constructive way
- Celebrate progress so that all pupils, parents, governors and staff know and understand the progress that is being made and so that other schools can learn from best practice
- Encourage school engagement with LGB parents and encourage LGB parents to become school governors.
- Provide LGB inclusive youth provision

### **Capability to enjoy a comfortable standard of living, with independence and security**

Stonewall highlight homelessness and harassment as two significant issues affecting the LGB community. There is a lack of specific research into the housing experiences of LGB people.

However, we do know that young LGB people are at particular risk of experiencing homelessness and its associative problems as they may be thrown out from their family home or decide to leave home to escape homophobia. Sexuality can be a direct cause of homelessness for young LGB people, they can be thrown out of their home or decide to leave home to escape homophobia. Coming to terms with their sexuality and the withdrawal of love and support from family and friends can lead to emotional or mental health difficulties, such as low self-esteem, depression and self-harming behaviour. They may also begin to use alcohol or drugs to try to cope with or block out issues arising from being LGB and homeless. It is important to recognise the vulnerability of LGB young people to homelessness.

LGB people can be harassed and victimized in their own home by neighbours or people who live in their area. Recent Stonewall research found that nearly one in six victims experienced a homophobic hate incident perpetrated by one or more offenders who live in the local area. Harassment can include name-calling, graffiti, criminal damage and over time even seemingly small incidents can cause extreme distress and fear, with people often too frightened to leave their own home. Many LGB people find it difficult to report these kind of incidents as homophobic hate as it forces them to be open about their sexuality. Housing providers have an important role to play in supporting LGB people to live safely in their homes and neighbourhoods.

#### Objectives

- Ensure that housing providers engage with lesbian and gay residents
- Ensure that Anti Social Behaviour procedures are clear about how to deal with homophobia and enable LGB residents to report homophobia anonymously
- Ensure that housing allocations policies and succession policies are compliant with the law on sexual orientation
- Develop understanding of homelessness amongst LGB young people as a vulnerable group Ensure that spatial strategies take into account the needs of LGB people

## ***A SAFE & SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY***

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***“We want Tower Hamlets to be a place where LGB residents and visitors feel safe and confident in their homes and on the streets. Our services will ensure that LGB people are protected from risk of harm and are enabled to live a full and independent life.”***

Enabling LGB people to live safely without fear or prejudice has to be the basic foundation of our work to promote sexual orientation equality. A recent Stonewall study identified that one in five lesbian and gay people in Britain have been a victim of one or more homophobic hate crimes or incidents in the last three years<sup>3</sup>. Over a third did not report hate incidents to the police because they did not believe they could or would do anything about them. Black and minority ethnic (BAME) LGB people are more likely to have experienced physical assault and lesbians are more likely to be were insulted or harassed because of their sexual orientation than gay men. Nearly one in six victims experienced a homophobic hate incident perpetrated by one or more offenders who live in the local area and one in ten was a victim of an incident committed by a work colleague.

47% of respondents in our local study said that they had been the victim of a homophobic incident, 79% had experienced verbal abuse, 41% threatening behaviour and 21% have experienced physical violence. 63% did not report the incident to the police, of which 37% felt that the Police could not do anything about it, 37% did not think it was serious enough and 14% feared a homophobic reaction.

A zero tolerance approach towards homophobic hate crime is taken in our borough. The Council works in partnership with local agencies including the Police and community organisations through the Race and Hate Inter Agency Forum (RHIAF) to take a holistic approach which involves protecting and supporting victims, deterring perpetrators and preventing hate crime by raising awareness and challenging prejudice. The current ‘No Place for Hate’ campaign aims to increase reporting of hate crime and includes targeted work to support the LGB community.

### **Case Study – Victim Support Homophobic and Transphobic Crime Worker**

Adam Beresford is Tower Hamlets current Homophobic and Transphobic Crime Worker based at Victim Support. Adam’s role was commissioned by the Tower Hamlets Race and Hate Inter-Agency Forum in recognition that victims of homophobic crime need specialist support. Adam works with the Council’s Community Safety Team and Police LGBT liaison officer to provide one-to-one support to victims of LGBT crime and same sex domestic violence. He also undertakes community development and outreach work in the community.

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<sup>3</sup> Homophobic Hate Crime: The Gay British Crime Survey, Stonewall, 2008

## Objectives

We will continue to challenge homophobic hate crime by:

- Encouraging LGB people to report hate incidents and tailoring our work to engage lesbians, families of LGB people, BME and young LGB people
- Encourage heterosexuals to report homophobic hate crimes and incidents
- Educating and inform lesbian and gay people about homophobic hate incidents
- Strengthening recording mechanisms
- Tackling homophobic bullying in schools
- Providing support and information to victims of hate crime and incidents
- Working with employers to tackle hate crime
- Working with the wider community to raise awareness and challenge homophobic prejudice

## Supporting LGB Families

We want Tower Hamlets to be a place where LGB individuals and families are recognised, respected and supported.

Like most families, LGB families do not fit any single stereotype. They may:

- include children;
- these children may or may not live with their LGB parents;
- these children may or may not be the genetic children of LGB parents;
- may be living with their families who may or may not know about their sexuality;
- LGB people may have no contact with their birth families
- live alone, with a partner or with close friends

For these reasons recognising, respecting and supporting LGB families in all their varieties is important.

There are no national official figures detailing the number of LGBT parents, but some studies have estimated that approximately one in five LGBT people are parents, co-parents or have children.<sup>4</sup> 14% of respondents in our local study reported that they have children, 19% said that they plan to have children and 27%% said that they would be interested in fostering or adoption. 53% of respondents' children live with them.

Choosing to become parents is a much more difficult process for LGB people, not just because of the prejudice that exists around LGB parenting but also because of the processes of adoption, surrogacy and artificial insemination. Nine in ten LGB people expect to face barriers to becoming foster parents because they are lesbian or gay.

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<sup>4</sup> Beyond Barriers, Stonewall Scotland 2002

While many gay and lesbian people struggle with the decision of whether or not to be open about their sexuality, gay and lesbian parents must make this same decision while taking into account the possible repercussions for their children. LGB parents and their children are often subject to prejudice because of their sexual orientation and can be very isolated. 18% of respondents who are parents said that their children have had negative experiences as a result of their parent's sexuality. Three in ten think they would be treated worse than heterosexuals if they wanted to enrol their child into a primary school or secondary school.<sup>5</sup>

The changes in society's attitudes towards LGB people means that LGB people are increasingly likely to explore their sexuality at an earlier age, with the overwhelming majority we surveyed coming out aged 25 or younger. We recognise that this is the first generation of young people where it is much more likely for young LGB people to feel comfortable about coming out as and who are the first to navigate what it is like to be young and gay. 39% said that they came out between 16-19 years of age and 21% said that they came out between 12 -16 years of age. For young people, discovering and coming to terms with their sexuality is often a difficult and emotional time in their lives and they need extra support and acceptance to counteract feelings of alienation, exclusion, isolation and sometimes condemnation. If rejected by their families LGB young people are vulnerable to homelessness or being taken into care. Positive parental and family support of their sexuality is critical for young people. Families of LGB people can also be isolated and find it difficult to understand their child's or relative's sexuality, as such supporting family members to understand and support LGB people is important.

#### CASE STUDY: RAINBOW PARENTS

Rainbow Parents is a support and social group for lesbian and gay parents. Rainbow Parents was launched in 2008 as part of that year's LGBT History Month. The group has since gone from strength to strength and during 2009 LGBT History Month it co-ordinated a range of LGBT parenting workshops. The group also holds a weekly LGBT parents play session at the Eve Armsby Childrens Centre.

#### Objectives

- Ensure that fostering and adoption services are promoted to the LGB community and appropriate support is provided to LGB parents wishing to foster or adopt
- Support LGB Parents and make available appropriate information, advice and support for LGB people thinking about becoming parents
- Support LGB young people discovering or coming to terms with their sexuality
- Support parents and families of LGB people

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<sup>5</sup> Serves You Right

### **Equal access to health and social care**

LGB people have the same health and social care needs as heterosexual people but their access to services can be different. Local LGB people would like to see their needs more effectively considered in the design and delivery of health and social care services.

Many LGB people say that they do not feel comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation to doctors and health professionals for fear of receiving poorer treatment, prejudice and discrimination.<sup>6</sup> 19% of respondents from the local needs survey felt unable to tell GPs/ health services about their sexual identity and 10% said that they had faced homophobia in trying to access GPs or health centres.

Studies show that LGB people are more likely to suffer from poor mental health, psychological distress and are more likely to experience substance use disorders despite less than 50% visiting a GP or counsellor in relation to their health problems. 46% of respondents in the Tower Hamlets survey said that they had experienced depression, 7% had self harmed and 20% had experienced suicidal thoughts. Gay and bisexual men remain the group at the greatest risk of getting infected with HIV in the UK. They are also at higher risk from sexually transmitted diseases.

Unlike heterosexual adults many LGB adults and in particular older people do not necessarily expect to be cared for by members of their family or kin and may have greater need for social care. This is because LGB people are twice as likely to be single, 2.5 times more likely to live alone and 4.5 times as likely to have no children. Despite the greater demand many LGB older people are reluctant to access social care in fear of negative responses from institutions. These include fear of homophobic attitudes and behaviour of staff, a lack of awareness about the specific needs of LGB adults, hostility from other service users, being unable to maintain friendships with other gay adults or to maintain a relationship with a partner and general feelings of social isolation and not fitting in. Key to achieving appropriate services for LGB people is good practice that personalises support for them.

### **Objectives**

- Improve understanding of LGB specific health and social care needs, including those of older LGB people in Tower Hamlets and ensure they better inform the design and delivery of health and social services. This work should include attention in the following areas:
  - The needs of older LGB people
  - Mental health
  - HIV
  - Access and inclusiveness of primary care services

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<sup>6</sup> Serves You Right - Stonewall



- Recognise the barriers that older LGB people face in accessing social care services and provide sensitive and appropriate care to LGB adults and older people.
- Provide LGB awareness training to care staff.
- Ensure that current personalisation agenda is responsive to the needs of LGB people

## **Promoting LGB equality as an employer**

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The Council is committed to promoting LGB equality as an employer and is proud to rank 7<sup>th</sup> place in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index of top 100 gay friendly employers. We have strengthened our capacity to deliver on this commitment by bringing together the PCT and Council HR functions and have established a joint Workforce to Reflect the Community Strategy.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

The council aims to positively promote the council as an employer and attract and select the best people for jobs so as to build a quality workforce which reflects the community. All Council recruitment adverts carry the Stonewall logo and additional advertising is included in the gay press so communicate to all potential applicants that the Council is a gay friendly and encourage LGB people to apply. In order to ensure that all forms of discrimination are eradicated, monitoring on the basis of sexual orientation and analysis is undertaken in respect of recruitment activity as well as levels of retention across age ranges.

### **Progression and Career Development**

There council is committed to investing in and developing all employees and reviews the progression of employees within the organisation through the grade ranges monitor equality of opportunity. The Council provides a comprehensive range of leadership and management development programmes open to all staff leading to awards from the Institute of Leadership and Management. These programmes are aim to support managers and aspiring managers to gain qualifications whilst developing their potential to work in leadership and management posts.

### **Training and Development**

The ability to build on or acquire new skills within an employee's job is a key feature of the Council's learning and development programme and the Corporate Induction. A wide range of learning opportunities are provided and employees are supported in learning through their work as the Council believes that investment in employees shows through in the quality of work and a high level of staff engagement. Consequently, the uptake of learning and development events is recorded by sexual orientation to ensure that every employee has access to continuous professional development.

The Council's corporate learning and development programme includes a wide range of diversity and equality training, all of which cover all six equality strands including sexual orientation equality. The programme also includes specific training sexuality awareness designed to: increase awareness of issues facing staff and customers who are LGB; improve understanding of how to provide services that are responsive to the needs of LGB customers; and combat discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sexuality.

## **Working conditions and Working Environment**

The Council has policies and procedures in place to promote equality of opportunity and to address circumstances where an employee believes that they have been disadvantaged. All employee benefits offered by the Council such as pensions and paternity leave are accessible to all staff regardless of sexual orientation. Our Combating Harassment and Discrimination Procedure explicitly recognises anti-gay bullying and harassment and communicates zero-tolerance to this behaviour.

In order to ensure that managers and employees are aware of their responsibilities in working with diversity and progressing equalities in the workplace incorporating regulations relating to Sexual Orientation; regular learning opportunities are offered to employees. The Council's 2007 staff survey showed that 65% of LGB staff felt that Tower Hamlets had improved the way it provides equality of opportunity to the different equality groups.

Additionally, there is an LGBT Staff Forum which meets on a quarterly basis and is supported by Corporate Human Resources and the Diversity and Equalities Team. The purpose of the LGBT Staff Forum is to give LGBT employees a means of raising collective issues in relation to their employment and provide a means for the Council to consult on employment policies and practices to help ensure that the Council has the mechanisms in place to recruit and retain LGBT staff.

### **Objectives**

- Continue to train staff and managers to keep them up-to-date with employment legislation and terms and conditions as they apply to lesbian and gay staff and to improve their confidence to promote sexual orientation equality in the workplace and in the delivery of services.
- Continue to impact assess all new and existing policies to ensure they are inclusive and when reviewing policies, ensure the language used explicitly communicates equality, diversity and are inclusive of lesbian and gay staff.
- Continue to monitor, analyse and report on sexual orientation in staff attitude surveys and at all stages of the employment cycle from recruitment through to exit.
- Review bullying and harassment policies and promote them to all staff, ensuring they communicate a zero tolerance to homophobic bullying.
- Continue to support the Council's LGBT Staff Forum to provide LGB staff with a safe place to raise staff issues.
- Organise and promote LGB awareness raising events and activities for non-LGB staff to challenge prejudice and homophobia.
- Recognise and celebrate the contributions of LGB people through events during LGBT History Month and throughout the year.
- Ensure that the Council's counselling service provides LGB sensitive counselling offering LGB counsellors or LGB trained counsellors.

## **Delivering the Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme objectives, 2009-12**

Drawing on the findings outlined above, we have identified a number of key areas in which the Council along with its partners needs to take action to ensure that we promote equality for everyone living, working or visiting Tower Hamlets regardless of their sexual orientation. This action plan outlines what we will undertake over the next three years.

### **ONE TOWER HAMLETS ACTIONS**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
<b>Celebrate Diversity &amp; Promote Cohesion</b>	Recognise the contributions and celebrate the lives of LGB people in Tower Hamlets through communications, arts and events	Continue to use East End Life to recognise the contributions of LGB people in Tower Hamlets and promote understanding and respect for LGB people.	Head of Communications	Ongoing
	Develop knowledge and understanding and promote respect for different ways of life.	Continue to deliver a programme of arts and events that is inclusive of LGB people including specific annual events for LGBT History Month	Service Head Scrutiny and Equalities	
	Challenge prejudice and discrimination towards LGB people.	See actions under Safe and Supportive		
	Ensure that LGB people are visible in our media	Continue to ensure that image	Stakeholders	March

	and publications and portray realistic and positive images of lesbian and gay people.	banks are inclusive of LGB people and our publications and advertising portray realistic and positive images of LGB people. Use East End to promote positive images of LGB people in the borough	Engagement & Participation Manager  Head of Communications	2010
	Ensure that community cohesion projects build trust, understanding and positive relationships between LGB people and wider community in the borough.	Review community cohesion principles to embed One Tower Hamlets in service delivery and development: Learning from existing community cohesion initiatives assessed to develop proposals for ensuring that cohesion is evidenced and embedded into service planning and delivery	Service Head: Scrutiny and Equalities	Sept 2009
<b>Improve the involvement and participation of LGB people in decision making</b>	Ensure that consultation and engagement processes are inclusive of, and actively engage LGB people.	Develop the role of the LGBT Community Forum as a key network that links up LGB organisations and is connected to the Tower Hamlets Partnership.	Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities	Sept 2009
	Improve the monitoring of LGB people participating in consultation and participation activities	Improve monitoring of sexual orientation in THP activities	Head Participation & Engagement Team	March 2010

	<p>Strengthen the capacity of local councillors to engage the local LGB community and get them actively involved in their neighbourhoods and local decision making.</p>	<p>Establish an LGB Member Champion.</p> <p>Work with the LGBT Community Forum to establish better communication between LGB residents and councillors</p> <p>Deliver LGB awareness training for councillors</p>	<p>Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities</p>	<p>March 2010</p>
	<p>Develop volunteering opportunities for local LGB people</p>	<p>Work with the LGBT Community Forum and Tower Hamlets Partnership to develop a volunteering opportunities for LGBT residents</p>	<p>Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities</p>	<p>March 2010</p>
<p><b>Support a stronger LGB community</b></p>	<p>Continue to support Tower Hamlets LGBT Community Forum as a central community resource, developing it to better support different sections of the LGB community.</p> <p>Develop dialogue and better partnership working between existing LGB groups in the borough to strengthen their capacity.</p>	<p>Recruit LGBT Community Forum Engagement Worker to develop and coordinate the Forum</p> <p>Establish a comprehensive database of LGB organisations in the borough and involve them in the work of the LGBT Community Forum</p>	<p>Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities</p>	<p>March 2010</p>
	<p>Ensure that the allocation of mainstream community grants are inclusive of LGB projects and initiatives and used to address gaps in LGB</p>	<p>Monitor and report on the allocation of mainstream grants to LGB projects to CESC</p>	<p>Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities</p>	<p>March 2010</p>

	<p>community support</p> <p>Improve the level appropriate LGB information and advice and support available to LGB people in Tower Hamlets. Ensure that appropriate information, advice and support is available for LGB people who may be particularly isolated such as older and younger LGB people, those from a BME background or who have a faith, and LGB parents.</p> <p>Provide information, advice and social support using the Internet.</p>	<p>annually</p> <p>Develop the Tower Hamlets LGB Community Forum Website as a comprehensive hub of information for LGB communities.</p>	<p>Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities</p>	<p>March 2010</p>
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### **A PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY ACTIONS**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
<b>LGB Equality in the workplace</b>	<p>Continue to develop an LGB friendly organisational culture</p>	<p>Create the opportunity for dialogue around issues of sexual orientation - deliver a minimum of two council wide events</p> <p>Train managers to improve their confidence in promoting LGB equality in the workplace.</p> <p>Further enhance the Councils work in relation to the Stonewall</p>	<p>Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities</p>	<p>March 2010</p>

			Diversity Champions Programme			
	Ensure that senior and political figures visibly communicate and champion sexual orientation equality to all staff across the organisation	Establish Member champion for LGBT equality	Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities	March 2010		
	Promote good LGBT employment practice amongst local partners and encourage them to join the Stonewall WEI	Deliver a LGBT Equality Workplace Conference for local organisations	Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities	March 2010		
	In the procurement of services ensure suppliers and partner organisations have sexual orientation inclusive policies	Review procurement framework to ensure that our suppliers are required to demonstrate that they do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation	Corporate Procurement Team	March 2010		
<b>Education for All</b>	Develop steps to prevent and respond to homophobic bullying in schools including explicit homophobic bullying policies	<p>Awareness raising of the range of support available to parents and carers via revised information leaflet on how to tackle bullying and discrimination.</p> <p>100% action and monitoring of all reported cases of homophobic bullying.</p> <p>10% increase in reporting of discriminatory incidents in Schools including homophobic bullying.</p> <p>30 Schools to participate in one day workshops on bullying and discrimination and impact of pupils</p>	Behaviour Improvement Programme Manager/ Head of Equalities & Parental Engagement/ Stakeholder Engagement & Participation Manager/Development Manager for Schools Equalities Initiative	March 2011		



		<p>behaviour on others.</p> <p>Increased awareness of reporting homophobia via new website launched in April 2009.</p> <p>Provide support to school coordinators to use the new incidents reporting form as it includes homophobic bullying</p> <p>Develop a new information leaflet for young people to inform them of homophobic bullying policies and the availability of the bullying help line.</p>	<p>Behaviour Improvement Programme Manager</p>	
<p>Provide staff with training to help them respond to, and prevent, homophobic bullying and support LGB pupils.</p> <p>Provide LGB pupils with the information and support that they need.</p>	<p>Evaluation and possible roll out to further 8 Schools of pilot No Outsiders Project with aim of staff feeling confident in dealing with homophobic bullying.</p> <p>Monitor use of helpline and LGB calls.</p> <p>Ensure AMP website provides information about LGB services for young people</p> <p>Ensure new Family Information</p>	<p>Head of Equalities &amp; Parental Engagement Sue McCauley</p> <p>Behaviour Improvement Programme Manager Head of Youth &amp; Community Service</p>		

			Services includes LGB information	Stakeholders Engagement & Participation Mgr	
Extend our current initiatives in schools to continue integrating sexual orientation into the curriculum in a positive and constructive way	Evaluation and possible roll out to further 8 Schools of pilot No Outsiders Project with aim of staff feeling confident in dealing with homophobic bullying.	Head of Equalities & Parental Engagement			
Celebrate progress so that all pupils, parents, governors and staff know and understand the progress that is being made and so that other schools can learn from best practice.	Annual anti-bullying conference and LGBT History month celebrate successes	Behaviour Improvement Programme Manager			
Provide support to lesbian and gay school staff	Discuss the creation of a LGB staff group project to raise awareness for schools and union reps.	Head of Equalities & Parental Engagement Jacinta Gasson			
Encourage school engagement with LGB parents and encourage LGB parents to become school governors.	Publicise the Parent and Community governor partnership training for LGB parents interested in becoming governors.	Lisa Zychowicz			
Provide LGB inclusive youth provision	Further develop links with Step Forward LGBT Youth Group	Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities			March 2010

## A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE ACTIONS

Priority	Objectives	Actions	By whom	By when
To enjoy a comfortable standard of living, with independence and security	Ensure that housing providers engage with lesbian and gay residents.	Progress through the TH Housing Forum to promote clarity within all providers policies with regard to Homophobia	D&R Housing Strategy	Sept 2010
	Ensure that Anti Social Behaviour procedures are clear about how to deal with homophobia and enable LGB residents to report homophobia anonymously.			
	Ensure that housing allocations policies and succession policies are compliant with the law on sexual orientation	Include as part of Lettings Review to be completed 2009/10	Strategic Housing Manager	March 2010
	Develop understanding of homelessness amongst LGB young people as a vulnerable group	Work with homelessness services and housing providers to explore experiences of homelessness amongst young LGB people in Tower Hamlets	Service Head Scrutiny and Equalities	March 2010
	Ensure that spatial strategies take into account the needs of LGB people	Complete Town Centre Spatial Strategy and Night Time Economy Strategy and ensure the needs of the LGBT communities are considered	Strategic Planning	Sept 09

## A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Priority	Objectives	Actions	By whom	By when
<b>Capability to live in physical security</b>	Encourage LGB people to report hate incidents and tailoring our work to engage lesbians, families of LGB people, BME and young LGB people	<p><b>Race and Hate Interagency Forum (RHIAF) Action Plan sets out how the partnership will tackle Homophobia. Key actions for the HCPPT are as follows:</b></p> <p>Maintain and develop the Third Party Reporting Project to increase reporting of hate incidents and foster effective joint working amongst partner agencies involved where 100% of <b>Third Party Reports</b> monitored and actioned (baseline of 18).</p> <p>If funding confirmed commission specialist hate crime victim support services where 100% of hate incidents reported to Police are contacted and 50% engaged with service and outreach with</p>	LBTH CSS Hate Crime Policy & Partnership Team	March 2010
	Encourage heterosexuals to report homophobic hate crimes and incidents			
	Educate and inform lesbian and gay people about homophobic hate incidents			
	Strengthen recording mechanisms			
	Provide support and information to victims of hate crime and incidents			
	Work with employers to tackle hate crime			
	Work with the wider community to raise awareness and challenge homophobic prejudice			

		<p>LGBT communities, local businesses and families.</p> <p>If funding confirmed maintain and develop the No Place for Hate Champions Project where 3 targeted hate crime training, workshops and outreach activities delivered per Champion.</p> <p>Implement recommendations from <b>Hate Crime Victim's Needs Research Report</b> for increased satisfaction with services by victims of hate crime measured through satisfaction questionnaires.</p> <p>Continue to deliver awareness campaign promoting clear messages that Tower Hamlets is No Place for Hate including Homophobic Hate – 100% increase in sign up to NPFH Pledge (baseline of 50), 24 outreach activities (including LGBT communities and events) and Evaluation Report.</p>		
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	<p>Ensure that fostering and adoption services are promoted to the LGB community and appropriate support is provided to LGB parents wishing to foster or adopt.</p>	<p>To work with partners to ensure 100% of identified perpetrators of homophobic hate incidents reported to the Council are actioned.</p> <p>To work with partners to ensure 42% sanction detection rate for perpetrators of homophobic hate (This target is to be achieved by the Police).</p> <p>Hate Incidents Panel - Coordination of multi-agency panel which ensures a coordinated response to all homophobic hate incidents reported to Council.</p> <p>Work with partners in ensuring homophobic hate incidents are recorded effectively.</p>	<p>Stakeholders Engagement &amp; Participation Mgr, (CS)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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	<p>Support LGBT Parents and make available appropriate information, advice and support for LGBT people thinking about becoming parents.</p>	<p>The Stakeholder Engagement and Participation Team have close links with the Fostering and Adoption Service and will actively promote these services through the Family Information Service and Children's Centres</p>	<p>Service Manager, Family Support &amp; Protection Service Manager, Resources (CS)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Support LGBT young people discovering or coming to terms with their sexuality</p>	<p>Work with LGBT Community Forum and Step Forward LGBT Youth Group to ensure that information is available.</p>	<p>Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities</p>	<p>Sept 2010</p>
	<p>Support parents and families of LGBT people</p>	<p>Provide support to Rainbow Parents – LGBT Parent Support Group</p>	<p>Head of Equalities &amp; Parental Engagement</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

## A HEALTHY COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Priority	Objectives	Actions	By whom	By when
<b>Equal access to health and social care</b>	<p>Improve understanding of LGB specific health and social care needs, including those of older LGB people in Tower Hamlets and ensure they better inform the design and delivery of health and social services. This work should include attention in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The needs of older LGB people</li> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• HIV</li> <li>• Access and inclusiveness of primary care services</li> </ul>	<p>Working in partnership with PCT, refresh Joint Strategic Needs Analysis, including a specific focus on under-represented groups</p>	<p>Service Head Commissioning &amp; Strategy</p>	<p>July 2010</p>
	<p>Recognise the barriers that older LGB people face in accessing social care services and provide sensitive and appropriate care to LGB adults and older people.</p>	<p>Deliver a conference based on the findings of the Older LGB Needs Research Report and work with services to explore the issues raised.</p> <p>Support the work of Age Concern LGB Group.</p>	<p>Service Head Scrutiny &amp; Equalities</p> <p>Service Head Older People &amp; Homelessness</p>	<p>March 2010</p>
	<p>Provide LGB awareness training to care staff.</p>	<p>Develop safeguarding training and programme with learning and development.</p>		
	<p>Ensure that current personalisation agenda is</p>	<p>Promote and increase the use</p>	<p>Joint</p>	<p>March</p>



	<p>responsive to the needs of LGB people</p>	<p>of Direct Payment and personalisation to promote choice and control.</p>	<p>Commissioning Mgr Learning Disabilities</p>	<p>2010</p>
<p>Involve LGB people in health and social care services through to ensure that it is working for them.</p>	<p>Improve representation of LGB people on Local Involvement Network and develop links between the Network and the LGBT Community Forum</p>	<p>Head Participation &amp; Engagement Team</p>	<p>Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities</p>	<p>March 2010</p>

## PROMOTING AGE EQUALITY AS AN EMPLOYER ACTIONS

Priority	Objectives	Actions	By whom	By when
<p><b>Promote LGB equality as an employer</b></p>	<p>Continue to train staff and managers to keep them up-to-date with employment legislation and terms and conditions as they apply to lesbian and gay staff and to improve their confidence to promote sexual orientation equality in the workplace and in the delivery of services.</p>	<p>Include appropriate training content as part of the Council's Learning and Development Programme.</p> <p>Ensure new managers induction includes briefings on key HR policies and good practice</p>	<p>Joint Assistant Director Organisational Development, Workforce Strategy &amp; Equalities</p>	<p>On-going</p>
	<p>Continue to impact assess all new and existing policies to ensure they are inclusive and when reviewing policies, ensure the language used explicitly communicates equality, diversity and are inclusive of lesbian and gay staff.</p>	<p>Carry HR 3 year programme of Equality Impact Assessments.</p> <p>Consult with staff forum as and inform group of any findings and recommendations as appropriate</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Human Resources</p>	<p>On-going</p>
	<p>Continue to monitor, analyse and report on sexual orientation in staff attitude surveys and at all stages of the employment cycle from recruitment through to exit.</p>	<p>Include LGB data in annual Equality Schemes Employment Monitoring Report and analysis of findings and recommendations presented to CESG.</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Human Resources</p>	<p>On-going Annually</p>

		Undertake a comparison of responses from LGB staff in 2009 staff survey compared to 2007 and report to staff forum.	Joint Assistant Director Organisational Development, Strategy & Equalities	March 2010
	Review bullying and harassment policies and promote them to all staff, ensuring they communicate a zero tolerance to homophobic bullying.	Produce Fair Employment Policy, publicise its implementation and brief managers	Head of Corporate Human Resources	December 2009
	Continue to support the Council's LGBT Staff Forum to provide LGB staff with a safe place to raise staff issues.	Coordinate and support quarterly LGBT Staff Forum meetings	Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities	On-going
	Organise and promote LGB awareness raising events and activities for non-LGB staff to challenge prejudice and homophobia	Increase awareness of LGB issues by organising events for staff and including appropriate content in Managers Briefing and Pulling Together	Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities Head of Corporate Human Resources	On-going
	Recognise and celebrate the contributions of LGB people through events during LGBT History Month and throughout the year.	Plan schedule of events for LGBT History Month each year	Service Head, Scrutiny and Equalities Head of	On-going

	Ensure that the Council's counselling service provides LGB sensitive counselling offering LGB counsellors or LGB trained counsellors.	Provision to continue to be included in future Employee Assistance Programme contracts and trained counsellors Occupational Health refer employees to	Corporate Human Resources Joint Assistant Director Organisational Development, Workforce Strategy & Equalities	On-going