

**Supporting
Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual,
Transgender
and Intersex
Communities**

Code of Practice

Template for service providers, community
groups and sports clubs engaging
with young people

Why a Code of Practice?

As Ireland has become a more inclusive and welcoming place for LGBTI people, LGBTI communities have become more visible than ever before.

However, many LGBTI people still experience prejudice, discrimination and exclusion. These negative attitudes and behaviours are having a very harmful affect on young LGBTI people. LGBTI teens, aged 14—18 years, are four times more likely to experience severe/extremely severe stress, anxiety and depression than teens comprising the general population (Higgins et al., 2016).

Fortunately, there are some simple and practical actions open to service providers, community groups and sports clubs, that can help make things easier for LGBTI young people.

“It’s always easier when you know someone is LGBT-friendly because you don’t have to worry about the reaction. That would be the main thing that would make things easier.”

(Lesbian/gay female, 25 yrs, as cited in Higgins, A. 2016)

Adoption and Implementation

It is hoped that this template will provide service providers, community groups and sports clubs with a structure within which they can frame their support for LGBTI young people.

This template has been produced in consultation with LGBTI organisations and comprises a number of suggested actions designed to influence the internal workings of services / organisations as well as the way services / organisations might engage with young people. These actions are intended to be sensible, achievable and, above all, practical.

Service providers, community groups and sports clubs are invited to consider how well these actions fit their operational environments and to amend accordingly. Additional actions reflecting the operational environment of each service / organisation can be added where appropriate. Adoption of any Code should take place in line with existing policies and procedures.

Once adopted, services / organisations can support the Code of Practice through:

Publication – display the document in your service / community building / club house.

Introduction – formally introduce the Code to management, staff and volunteers.

Education – do not assume or expect that management, staff or volunteers will understand, appreciate or know how to apply the code simply by reading it. Actively support its integration.

On-going reinforcement – continue to revisit the purpose, importance and application of the Code.

Review – review the Code periodically.

Supporting LGBTI Communities: Code of Practice

Insert name of Service / Organisation

is committed to this Code of Practice because we care about young people and we want to be open and welcoming to all young people.

Internal Actions:



One person within our service / organisation will be given the specific responsibility for guiding and monitoring the implementation of this Code of Practice. Everyone involved in our service / organisation will be responsible for implementing it.



All management and staff will be encouraged to take LGBTI awareness raising training.



The service / organisation will not marginalise LGBTI young people by assuming everybody is heterosexual and / or that everybody's experiences of their gender correspond to the biological sex they were assigned at birth.



The service / organisation will be visibly LGBTI friendly. This might be achieved through the display of LGBTI friendly posters or symbols. The service / organisation will maintain and display up-to-date information on where LGBTI people can access specialised support (e.g. LGBTI Helplines, resource websites, etc.).



The service / organisation will not tolerate the use of language or behaviour which is deemed to be inappropriate and/or discriminatory. Such language or behaviour will be reported to the appropriate person and addressed in a timely manner.



The service / organisation will work toward a physical environment and an atmosphere that is fully inclusive for LGBTI young people.



Insert other actions here?

External Actions:



The service / organisation will champion the inclusion of LGBTI young people through the various relationships, networks and partnerships that it has with other services and organisations.



The service / organisation will actively support and participate in one international, national or local awareness raising event per annum (such as LGBT Pride Month or the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia).



Insert other actions here?

LGBTI

Lesbian is a term used to describe a woman who is sexually, emotionally and romantically attracted to other women.

Gay is a term traditionally used to describe a man who is sexually, emotionally and romantically attracted to other men. While the term 'lesbian' is typically used to describe women who are attracted to other women, many women with same-sex attractions self-identify as 'gay'.

Bisexual is a term used to describe someone who is sexually, emotionally and romantically attracted to both men and women.

Transgender is an umbrella term referring to people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from conventional expectations based on the gender they were assigned at birth. This can include people who self-identify as transsexual, transvestite, cross-dressers, drag performers, genderqueer, and gender variant. Transgender is commonly abbreviated to trans.

Intersex stands for the spectrum of variations of sex characteristics that occur within the human species. It is a term used to describe individuals who are born with sex characteristics (chromosomes, genitals, and/or hormonal structure) that do not belong strictly to male or female categories, or that belong to both at the same time. 'Intersex' also stands for the acceptance of the physical fact that sex is a spectrum and that people with variations of sex characteristics other than male or female do exist.

Definitions from

Higgins, A. et al. (2016) *The LGBTIreland Report: national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Ireland*. Dublin: GLEN and BeLonG To.

Visit www.lgbt.ie for info on LGBTI services

Helplines: OutWest: 094 937 2479
National: 1890 929 539

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