Section 75 Group: Sexual Orientation

The table below attempts to summarise issues highlighted in some of the more recent literature relating to sexual orientation, published in the main since 2005. It is not the result of any systematic literature searches nor does it critically review any of the sources.

Highlighted in red are issues, solutions and the respective references added to Version 2 of this document (2013/14).

What is the Equality/ Inequality Issue?	Potential solutions where offered	Source of Evidence	Date
1. Employment			
 atmosphere and culture of discrimination, homophobia and heterosexism (language, jokes, comments, graffiti) not only through own experience but through examples of witnessing or overhearing general homophobia which reflects culture 	 zero tolerance policy regarding homophobic bullying and harassment; clear message to all staff on what constitutes inappropriate behaviour and to managers about their responsibilities use neutral language in 	Hansson, Ulf, Molly Hurley Depret and Barry Fitzpatrick: Equality Mainstreaming. Policy and Practice for LGB People. Institute for Conflict Research.	2007
 within the sector NHS seen as lagging behind other employers (eg. Met police) GLADD survey (2005) only 27% of LGB doctors/dentists had not 	 communication training (building capacity and confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour) conduct research on perceived 	Hunt, Ruth; Katherine Cowan and Brent Chamberlain: Being the gay one: Experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual people working	2007

•	experienced problems at work related to their sexual orientation Hansson et al. survey (2007) 1 in 2 have had neg. experience at work associated with their sexual orientation (20% verbal attack, 27% bullying or harassment)	•	conflicting freedoms equality & diversity statement and policy (to cross-reference anti-bullying and harassment) anti-bullying and harassment policy	in the health and social care sector. Stonewall British Medical Association (BMA): Sexual orientation in the workplace	2005
•	heterosexism and assumptions McDermott (2011): 40% in public sector had experienced neg. comments about LGB by colleagues making feel uncomfortable; 15.1% directed at			NHS Scotland: Fair for all – The Wider Challenge. Good LGBT Practice in the NHS. Stonewall.	2006
•	them; 21.6% banter making them feel uncomfortable – 31.3% not making them feel uncomfortable; also an issue in interactions with colleagues outside the workplace even if less so McDermott (2011): 1 in 4 made complaint about incident			BMA: A celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender doctors' contribution to the NHS: a collection of members' experiences. London	2009
•	Ellison (2009): 3 in 4 people feel it is acceptable for social surveys to ask questions about sexual orientation			McDermott: Through our eyes. Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and	2011

		Bisexual People in the Workplace. Belfast Ellison, Gavin and Briony Gunstone: Sexual Orientation explored: a study of identity attraction, behaviour and attitudes in 2009. Manchester: EHRC	2009
 lack of confidence in reporting & disciplinary procedures fear of victimisation and disadvantage reporting is seen as coming out lack of adequate response by senior managers if issues are raised source of problems most likely to be colleagues (54%), then managers (44%) and customers (13%) Hansson et al. survey (2007) not very likely to complain (only 42% had complained formally) about 	 confidential reporting process to protect individuals not out create support systems (through unions, associations, staff networks) communicate rights of LGB staff with payslips or information leaflets 	Hunt et al. BMA Hansson et al. McDermott	2007 2005 2007 2011

 homophobic experience in the workplace McDermott (2011): of those who made a complaint 1 in 3 no action taken; 66.1% unhappy with outcome McDermott (2011): 26.8% in public sector not comfortable approaching managers if bullied; 15.1% not confident they would be supported 				
lack of visibility of LGB people	•	NHS to acknowledge its LGB	Hunt et al.	2007
 doctors/dentists have all developed their own ways of negotiating the culture (includes not disclosing 		staff, create a safe environment (peer support, mentor system, highlighting successful careers,	ВМА	2005
sexual orientation due to fear of discrimination and barriers to		role models, display of positive posters, information leaflets	NHS Scotland	2006
career progression; choice of		targeted at LGB staff and	ВМА	2009
specialty in favour of those perceived as gay-friendly; leaving		identified contact person for LGB issues)	McDermott	2011
the sector) – GLADD survey (2005) only 1% of doctors/dentists were	•	create support systems (through unions, associations,		
out to their superiors		staff networks)		
 many not out to patients, in fear of false allegations of inappropriate care 	•	monitoring – collect data on LGB employees and their experiences		

- Hansson et al. survey (2007) 10% 'not at all out' in family, 12% in community, 13% in work ('partly out' 37%, 48%, 33%); bisexual people even less likely to be out
- McDermott (2011) almost 1 in 4 in the public sector not out to colleagues and service users; generally more likely to be out to colleagues than line managers and HR and service users; younger groups (under 45) more likely to be out
- McDermott (2011): 1 in 4 in public sector think it might have neg. impact on career progression
- McDermott (2011): small share of public sector LGB workers not aware of equal opps policy or think that LGB is not mentioned, about 14.1% - lower than other sectors; about 25% for bullying/grievance
- McDermott (2011): share 28% not aware of family friendly policy identifying support for same sex

- develop or review family friendly policies (as to flexible leave, same sex adoption leave, maternity/paternity leave) and partner/civil partner benefits
- management buy-in

 McDermott (2011): about 18% not comfortable approaching managers for adoption leave, 16% not confident about receiving support McDermott (2011): many 32% not aware of domestic violence policy identifying support for same sex people or think not mentioned McDermott (2011): 47.1% not comfortable approaching managers if victim of same sex domestic violence 		
negative impact on delivery of	Hunt et al.	2007
services		
due to time and energy taken to manage discrimination	BMA	2005
negative impacts on how		
individuals feel about themselves,		
morale, concentration		
2. Services		
reluctance to disclose sexual	Hansson et al.	2007
orientation to GPs and delays in		

seeking care due to fear of		NHS Scotland	2006
attitudes and discrimination			
 Hansson et al. survey (2007) only 1 in 2 out to GP 	 require GP practices and hospitals to develop and 	BMA	2005
 some indication that LGB people might be more willing to come out to a LGB GP GPs automatically linking an LGB patient to issues of HIV/Aids 	prominently display equality policies explicitly including sexual orientation • guidelines for GPs and hospitals about confidentiality and patient notes • display positive images of gay couples in appropriate settings • booklet for GPs how to sensitively and effectively communicate with LGB people • 5 Steps for GPs: Stay Informed about LGB health issues – Don't assume all patients are heterosexual (using open language) – Respond positively when patients disclose – Be aware and challenge anti-LGB bias – Demonstrate that your practice is inclusive of LGB people (language, LGB)	Allen	2008

	leaflets/posters, include LGB in general health info,)		
specific needs for mental health services			
(higher incidents of eating disorders and self-harm, higher alcohol consumption, drug use, smoking – often in response to experience of homophobia) (heightened risk of psychological distress related to experience of stigma, inequality and harassment =	 comprehensive health strategy for LGB people where appropriate, GPs can play positive role by screening LGB patients for mental health and suicide risk factors improve evidence base 	Hunt, Ruth and Adam Minsky: Reducing health inequalities for lesbian, gay and bisexual people: evidence of health care needs. Stonewall.	2006
 minority stress) LGB people more likely to smoke, esp. women (less likely to become pregnant and thus trigger for giving up; go to 	 public health campaign to target LGB people develop gay-friendly venues outside drinking establishments 	Allen, Odhran: Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Patients: The Issues for General Practice.	2008
pubs/clubs for longer); Rooney (2012): 44% LGB&T smoke vs. 24% in NI population • possibly higher alcohol consumption (see preventative public health messages, traditionally few safe spaces for LGB people to congregate	 train addiction service providers on LGB issues develop LGB affirming addiction services steering drugs for drugs and alcohol to include LGB representation 	Rooney, Eoin: All partied out? Substance use in Northern Ireland's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community. Belfast: The Rainbow Project.	2012

men (reverse in NI population), 57% drink to hazardous level vs. 24% adults in England • drug use significantly higher than amongst heterosexuals (lifestyle/part of scene, go to pubs/clubs for longer, reaction to homophobia); Rooney (2012):		
 3x as likely to have taken illegal drug (LGB&T 62% vs. NI population 22%); types of drugs mainly anti-depressants rather than stimulants substance abuse a factor in self-harming and thinking about and 		
 attempting suicide less likely to access support services some preventative public health messages only target 		

 smoking cessation messages focus mainly on pregnancy or attractiveness to the opposite sex 		Hunt et al.	2006
lower participation in cancer	comprehensive health strategy	Hunt et al.	2006
screening	for LGB people		
general lack of recognition of			
domestic violence amongst same-			
sex couples			
 within LGB community, by social policy makers and health care professionals, thus difficult to report incidences less likely to tell health care professionals if they feel uncomfortable to disclose sexual orientation also may not wish to nurture myth of LGB relationships being unstable 		Hunt et al.	2006
negative experiences of health		NHS Scotland	2006
services			
 due to staff attitudes, discrimination, heterosexism, lack 	 raise awareness of staff about need for neutral language 	BMA	2005
of confidentiality, lack of appropriate advice	booklet for GPs how to sensitively and effectively	Hansson et al.	2007

- lack of visibility
- Hansson et al. survey (2007) 17% felt having been treated unfairly due to their sexual orientation by health service
- mainly staff attitudes (rude/impolite) (25%) and forms of discrimination (25%), main issue seems heterosexism and being ignored
- lack of understanding and appropriate advice as well as confidentiality
- inconsistencies in recognising same-sex partners as next of kin

- communicate with LGB people
- challenge inappropriate language
- training (building capacity and confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour)
- require GP practices and hospitals to develop and prominently display equality policies explicitly including sexual orientation
- guidelines for GPs and hospitals about confidentiality and patient notes
- display positive images of gay couples in appropriate settings
- use service user journey to explore equality issues relating to a particular service
- building on existing partnerships to engage closely with local LGB groups to identify areas for change and support for raising complaints
- particular need for diverse

	 forms of engagement (including anonymous methods) service providers to find out about local support groups and services for signposting to LGB service users start monitoring in small service areas and expand to all services over time; analyse and use data to improve services publish monitoring results and demonstrate impact of monitoring on service improvement consider introducing champion (with specialist knowledge) 		
 reluctance to raise a complaint due to fear of being ignored because of sexual orientation, too trivial, nobody willing to help, nobody interested, fear of reprisal Hansson et al. survey (2007) only 14% had made official complaint about a public service 	 address LGB issues in induction training for newly appointed doctors mandatory training for staff participation in LGB awareness raising to be part of Continuing Professional Development 	Hansson et al. NHS Scotland	2007 2006

Hansson et al. interviews (2007) evidence from public authorities show that no S75 complaints have been received from LGB people; key also since training needs are often determined in response to a particular issue raised through a complaint			
concern that GPs are not covered		BMA	2005
by Section 75			
		Hunt et al.	2006
3. Cross cutting issues with			
other Section 75 Categories			
Age			
young people		Hunt et al.	2006
 specific issues include homophobic bullying at school, access to support networks, lack of positive 		Hansson, et al.	2007
role models		Allen	2008
 also even less likely to be out to GP for fear of disclosure to family; might be more likely to attend STI clinic 			
older people		Hunt et al.	2006
 concerns about provision of social 	 need for affirming 		

	care (more likely to live alone and without children; concerns about	environments to ensure older LGB people are comfortable to	Hansson, et al.	2007
•	access to appropriate care eg. when retirement homes are not equipped to support same sex partners) society assumes LGB people are young and active	 disclose their sexual orientation service providers need to recognise families of choice and involve in consultations about care specifically address sexual 	Musingarimi, Primrose: Older Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual People in the UK. A Policy Brief. London: ICL-UK.	2008
•	increase in incidence of HIV infections amongst older gaymen; health messages targeted mostly at younger gay men great variety in previous relationships, age and experience	 orientation in guidance / education / training / surveys / monitoring HIV infection programmes to target older gay men biographical / life-history 	Musingarimi, Primrose: Health issues affecting older gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the UK. A Policy Brief. London: ICL-UK.	2008
•	of coming out, and relationships with biological family some cohorts experienced severe oppression by institutions hence aversion to accessing services survey by Commission for Social Care Inspection (2008): 45% of LGB people using social services	 approaches befriending and support networks resource packs for professionals in care homes inclusive planning – roundtable annually with organisations strengthening advocacy 	Musingarimi, Primrose: Social care issues affecting older gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the UK. A Policy Brief. London: ICL-UK.	2008
•	claimed experience of discrimination greater fear of safety of home	 improving evidence base esp. around bisexuals 	Heaphy, Brian, Andrew Yip and Debbie	2003

being invaded if care provider is
homophobic – hence higher
satisfaction with Direct Payments
(greater choice and control) than
services

- in comparison to younger LGB people less experience of LGB community, may lead to greater difficulties in adjusting in later life
- network of friends usually within same age cohort hence may not be as effective in providing support as common experience of age-related problems (due to lack of children/grandchildren)
- older LGB people place particularly high value on friendships; fewer expectations that family will care for them if needed
- older LGB people may feel that organisations providing support to LGB people are less in tune with their particular needs
- older people even less likely to disclose their sexual orientation in

- further research into experiences, perceptions and desired care by LGB people in NI
- improve monitoring
- provide training for staff
- make information resources available to staff and develop tools to support staff
- explore with RQIA integration into inspection remit

Thompson: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Lives over 50. Nottingham Trent University, Dep of Social Sciences

Ward, Richard and Stephen Pugh and Elizabeth Price: Don't look back? Improving health and social care service delivery for older LGB users. Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Rainbow Project & Age NI: Making this home my home. Making nursing and residential more inclusive for older lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender people. Belfast: The

2010

2011

some situations	Rai	inbow Project & Age
 even less research on older 	NI.	
lesbian and bisexual women than		
older men; hardly any research in		
actual care settings - mostly		
anticipative (future support needs		
and preferences)		
 main themes of research on 		
experiences of older LGB:		
discrimination and anticipation of		
neg. treatment due to experience		
(stigma, discrimination, aversion		
therapies); invisibility and assumed		
heterosexuality (diversity		
addressed less so in training for		
older people services; general		
reluctance to raise issues of		
sexuality with older service users;		
very limited understanding by		
providers of sheltered and		
residential care and concerns re.		
training given to agency workers);		
specific health issues (mental		
health, increase in older adults		
infected with HIV accessing care		

and new diagnoses50+, older LGB delay uptake of support services due to fear, older LGB high level users are vulnerable, dementia care, end of life care and bereavement care, LGB carers)		
 estimate of 23,600 older LGB in NI (women 60+ men 65+) 		
 initial assessment of needs by 		
social worker and care home provider does not consider sexual		
orientation		
 sexual orientation not monitored by care home providers 		
rural care home providers in		
particular concerned about reaction of residents, families and staff		
 older LGB are twice hidden 		
(multiple identity)		
 staff not specifically equipped for addressing needs of LGB people 		
 lack of links between homes and 		
LGB community		
 staff lack knowledge of support in 		

the community			
Religion, faith, belief			
Gender			
lesbian women	 research on health needs and 	BMA	2005
 even less visible than gay males 	health care experiences of		
 less research on lesbian women 	lesbian women	Hunt et al.	2006
than gay men	 service monitoring 		
 debate around higher risk of breast cancer (due to smoking & poor diet; less likely to have children) specific health issues relating to fertility, pregnancy, sexual health, mental health; weight issues, eating disorders, relationships, smoking/drugs/alcohol abuse 	 include information specifically for lesbian service users to address misconceptions about 'immunity' in follow up letters develop health strategy for LGB people (eg. Australia, state of Victoria) make lesbian women and their 	Quiery, Marie: Invisible Women. A review of the impact of discrimination and social exclusion on lesbian and bisexual women's health in Northern Ireland. LASI.	2007
 generally unhappy with level of service received few voluntary/community based agencies dedicated to lesbian and 	families visible in health promotion campaignsincorporate specific needs into undergrad and postgrad	Fish, Julie: The UK Lesbians and Health Care Survey – A summary of findings.	2007
 bisexual women and mainstream ones do not cater for lesbian and bisexual women lack of dedicated counselling service for lesbian and bisexual 	 training further research on specific groups amongst lesbian and bisexual women establish dedicated resource 	Hughes, Clare and Amy Evans: Health needs of women who have sex with women. BMJ Vol.	2003

women	centre	327, 939-940.	
 access services less frequently 	GPs should encourage lesbian		
than other women; have less	and bisexual women to have	Allen	2008
frequent health checks; less likely	regular smear test and self-		
to participate in screening for	examine breast	Boehmer, Ulrike and	2007
cervical and breast cancer	 weight reduction interventions 	Deborah J. Bowen and	
 never attending cervical screening 	targeted at lesbian women	Greta R. Bauer:	
seems greater problem in UK than	- Control of the cont	Overweight and Obesity	
US (12% vs. 5-9%)		in Sexual-Minority	
 same with perception of risk of 		Women: Evidence from	
cervical cancer in comparison with		Population-Based Data.	
heterosexuals		American Journal of	
 less likely to be aware of higher 		Public Health June	
risk factors for breast cancer than		2007, Vol 97, No.6,	
heterosexuals		1134-1140.	
 lesbian women less likely to report 			
good experience of smear test			
compared to heterosexual women			
(46% vs. 74%)			
 lesbian women less likely to 			
examine their own breasts, avail of			
smear test and mammography			
9			
2-3 times more likely to attempt auticide: higher levels of self harm			
suicide; higher levels of self-harm			
 1 in 2 chance of mental illness at 			

 age of 16 in NI (Young Life and Times Survey 2005,2006) higher rate of long-term use of substances (tobacco, drugs, alcohol) service providers are often misinformed and underinformed about lesbian health issues; little or no specific training at undergrad and postgrad level in NI US lesbian women have higher prevalence of overweight and obesity than other females 			
 compared with women who have sex exclusively with men: more likely to have higher numbers of male partners and higher levels of unsafe sex; to have induced abortions; to have diagnoses of sexually transmitted infection 		Musingarimi	2008
Bisexual men and women • differ from lesbians and gay men in their identity, behaviour, attraction and experiences of disadvantage	studies should report findings for bisexual people separately from lesbians and gay men	Ellison et al.	2009

gay men	GPs to encourage sexually Also who have Cov with	Hunt et al.	2006
concerns about issues relating to mental health, sexual behaviour, safety, weight issues, eating disorders, lack of role models, and relationships, smoking/drug/alcohol abuse	 active Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) to be screened regularly for STIs GPs with a role to motivate patients to reduce risky sexual behaviours 	Weatherburn, Peter et al.: Multiple chances. Findings from the UK Gay Men's Sex Survey 2006. Sigma Research	2008
 gay men at greatest risk of HIV infection; higher risk from sexually transmitted diseases 		Allen	2008
 some young gay men don't feel secure about obtaining/using extra strong condoms (purchase might reveal sexual orientation) sometimes at higher risk (partly 			
because they don't respond to public health messages, if not targeted at them – testicular cancer), partly because of lifestyle & reaction to social issues (eg. smoking/drug/alcohol abuse – lung and liver cancer); also anal and prostrate cancer • living with diagnosed HIV more			
common among Black men rather			

than other ethnic groups, men with lower levels of former education,		
men who have sex with men only		
rather than bisexual men, men who		
have more sexual male partners		
 lower level of HIV testing of those 		
resident in NI than England		
Marital Status		
Dependants		
LGBT carers	McGlynn, Nick, Bakshi,	2010
 not being out can increase stress; 	Leela and Kath Browne:	
oldest and youngest carers least	Report on research	
likely to be out; motivation includes	about LGBT Carers.	
protecting those cared for, gaining	Count me in too – LGBT	
legitimacy and preventing bad	research information	
reactions	desk. Brighton	
 involvement in LGBT communities 		
may be an important determinant		
of support yet LGBT parents can		
be excluded from mainstream		
LGBT networks or in turn devalue		
non-parents		
familial responsibilities can lead to		
conflict with partners		
 dual stigma in cases where LGBT 		

people are caring for person with HIV/AIDS			
Disability			
people w/disabilities often considered to be asexual	need for clear policies and guidance and training for social	Hunt et al.	2006
 current practice in work with people with learning disabilities is more likely to restrict opportunities for sexual relationships rather than support 	care staff to offer appropriate support work with carers and parents about sexual rights	Department of Health: Disabled lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Briefing 13.	2007
 many disabled LGB people have not received relevant sex education lack of appropriate information about sexual health and lack of access to information about fertility issues may encounter difficulties in accessing mental health services people with a learning disability may be less likely to come out to family due to greater dependence and fear of rejection; hence more likely to be open to care professionals 	review and use wider range of images statutory sector to promote equality in tendered services, service providers in voluntary sector to be asked to assess equality impacts of their proposed services and collect monitoring data review provision of relationship and sexual education and extent to which needs of disabled	McClenahan, Simon: Multiple Identity; Multiple Exclusions and Human Rights: The Experiences of people with disabilities who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people living in Northern Ireland. Belfast: Disability Action and Rainbow Project.	2013

a smaller share of disabled LGB	children who are LGB &T are met	
people are out with their friends;		
even greater compartmentalising of		
social interactions		
 strong feeling of social isolation; 		
perception that commercial LGB&T		
scene concentrates on 'young and		
fit, not old and or disabled'; at		
times feeling of double rejection		
 experience of coming out differs 		
depending on time of onset of		
disability		
 difficulties in meeting other 		
disabled LGB people		
 lack of acceptance in mainstream 		
LGB scene		
 main barriers re integration in LGB 		
community are attitudes, lack of		
knowledge, poor accessibility of		
venues, lack of accessible		
information, lack of visibility and		
narrow range of diversity in		
images, body-beautiful culture		
 lack of consideration of disability 		
issues by LGB&T providers and of		

LGB&T issues of disability		
providers (voluntary sector)		
Ethnicity		
 very small body of research on needs of BME LGB people, mainly focused on sexual health needs of BME gay men compared with white gay men, African-Caribbean men twice as likely to be living with diagnosed HIV, South Asian men less likely BME domestic violence service mainly targeted at meeting needs of heterosexual women BME LGB people even more likely to be victim of homophobic violence than white LGB people BME LGB people less likely than white LGB people to have considered suicide, possibly due to cultural and religious taboos 	Department of Health: Lesbian, gay and bisexual people from black and minority ethnic communities. Briefing 12.	2007
Political Opinion		
Rurality		
 people in rural areas even less likely to be out to GP for fear of 	Hansson et al.	2007

disclosure to community		
 rural isolation may compound 	Allen	2008
minority stress and stress		
experienced by young LGB people		
4. Lack of information		
employment		
 needs and experiences of 		
 LGB people in non-medical 		
HSC and public safety		
professions (nurses, AHP,		
social care workers / social		
workers)		
HSC or Public Safety		
employees in NI		
bisexual people		
services		
 health needs and experiences of 		
LGB people		
w/dependents (outside		
HIV/AIDS care work)		
married/widowed/divorced		
political opinion		
religion		
 generally less research on social 		

	care matters		
•	generally less research on bisexual		

2010/11:

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