



DERBY college

*Supporting you*  
***A Guide to  
Sexual Orientation  
Equality***

*HR | Learning & Development | Payroll | Equality & Diversity*

**Derby College wants to ensure that our values and beliefs align with the aspirations of our learners and team members as well as the wider community. This means providing an environment where differences between individuals are valued and respected.**

## **WHAT DOES SEXUAL ORIENTATION MEAN?**

Sexual orientation means the general attraction one feels towards people of one sex or another (or both). Most people are generally attracted to:

- people who are the same sex as them
- people who are the opposite sex to them, or people of both sexes.
- Same-sex attraction is called homosexuality. The Equality Human Rights Commission (EHRC) call men and women who are homosexual either 'gay' (for men) or 'lesbian' (for women).
- Opposite-sex attraction is called heterosexuality. The EHRC, describe people who are heterosexual as 'straight'.
- Both-sex attraction is called bisexuality. The EHRC use the word 'bisexual', or occasionally just 'bi', to describe people who are attracted to both sexes

It is as unlawful to discriminate against heterosexual people as it is to discriminate against lesbians, gay men and bisexual people.

## THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

Sex discrimination has been illegal for more than thirty years and the Equality Act 2010 has streamlined the provisions.

According to the EHRC it is unlawful because of sexual orientation to:

- discriminate directly against anyone – that is, to treat them less favourably than others because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, or because they associate with someone of a particular sexual orientation
- discriminate indirectly against anyone – that is, to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular sexual orientation unless it can be objectively justified
- subject someone to harassment
- victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation
- discriminate against someone, in certain circumstances, after the working relationship has ended.

## THE MARRIAGE (SAME SEX COUPLES) ACT 2013

In July 2013 other legislation was put in place to advance and safeguard equality in this area. This Act makes the marriage of same sex couples lawful in England and Wales; the first marriages of same sex couples took place on 29 March 2014. The Government believes that opening up marriage to all couples demonstrates society's respect for all individuals, regardless of their sexuality, making our society fairer and more inclusive for all its members. *Government Equalities Office (2014)*.

## SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

### CONFIDENTIALITY

- By their very nature, sexual matters are private and confidential. Although some people are comfortable talking about their partner, many people do not share such information with their managers, colleagues and fellow learners. They may find it very difficult to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment, or be fearful that by making a complaint they will be 'outed' in the workplace. We make strenuous efforts to ensure confidentiality of procedures and information management systems and reassure you that policies to ensure confidentiality are in place.
- 'Outing' is when, against their wishes, a person's sexual orientation is revealed by another person.
- 'Outing' someone without their clear permission is inappropriate and a breach of that person's privacy. It may constitute harassment and/or a breach of the Data Protection Act
- Lesbians, gay men and bisexual people are sometimes 'outed' for malicious reasons and consequently suffer harassment by colleagues, fellow learners or service users/customers. You should treat such a matter seriously.
- Personal information should be maintained in the strictest confidence. Managers should not forget that even basic information such as a partner's name is confidential, nor should they assume that it is common knowledge. Managers should remember that all such information is covered under the data Protection Act 1998.

All team members and learners are expected to challenge negative comments or jokes. This particularly applies to Managers who have responsibility for ensuring equality in the workplace.

Each February we celebrate LGBT Month-show your support by wearing purple.

## USEFUL WEBSITES AND POLICIES

Further information can be accessed from the following sources:

[www.ucu.org.uk](http://www.ucu.org.uk)

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

[www.equalities.gov.uk](http://www.equalities.gov.uk)

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

[www.ageconcern.co.uk](http://www.ageconcern.co.uk)

[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

[www.fflag.org.uk](http://www.fflag.org.uk)

[www.bgiok.org.uk](http://www.bgiok.org.uk)

### DERBY COLLEGE:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Sexual Orientation Policy

### FOR EMPLOYEES:

- Moodle
- Simply Health
- Westfield Health
- COPE Occupational Health Service please contact Human Resources
- [www.empowertoolkit.org.uk](http://www.empowertoolkit.org.uk)

### FOR LEARNERS:

- College Nurse
- College Counsellor
- Student Union
- Personal tutor/coach
- Learner Services
- Policies outlined above

For further information, or if you would like this leaflet in a different format or to make any comments about this leaflet please contact a Derby College Equality Officer or email: [equalityndiversity@derby-college.ac.uk](mailto:equalityndiversity@derby-college.ac.uk)  
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