LGBTQ+ Rainbow Mark

Guidance to LGBTQ+ inclusion

What is the Rainbow Mark?

The Rainbow Mark is a visible sign displayed by participating organisations across the Channel Islands to indicate that they are LGBTQ+ friendly and are **committed to LGBTQ+ inclusion**, in line with several key principles outlined here.

It is a kitemark initiative which provides participating organisations with visible signage (e.g. a window sticker) that they can install to demonstrate their participation and their commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Participating organisations may include premises such as offices, public buildings, beauty salons, kiosks, cafes, bars, restaurants, gyms, libraries, supermarkets, night clubs. Essentially, this includes anywhere that people visit as customers or clients.

LGBTQ+
Rainbow
Mark

The Rainbow Mark aims to:

Offers introductory–level tools and guidance to organisations on LGBTQ+ identities to facilitate their ability to approach and support individuals on LGBTQ+ matters.

Participating organisations will be provided with a window sticker to demonstrate their commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion, in return for pledging to notify and work with Liberate to resolve any issues which may arise and help prevent it from happening again. For example, if an individual experiences homophobia or transphobia whilst accessing goods or services at an organisation.

The Rainbow Mark is an exciting collaborative initiative, created to support LGBTQ+ visibility and inclusion across the Channel Islands. There are further levels of certifications available for organisations including the 'Pride Certified' accreditation, and the LIberate 'DIFERA' programme which covers a much broader spectrum of diversity and inclusion outside of being LGBTQ+.

More information on these can be found at: liberate.gg

The Rainbow Mark aims to:

Promote a culture which is supportive of and welcoming towards the LGBTQ+ community.

Showcase organisations which possess a genuine wish to respect and recognise LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion.

Reduce minority stress and isolation for local LGBTQ+ individuals.

Encourage LGBTQ+ individuals to access services without the fear of exclusion or discrimination.

Offer organisations tools and guidance to better enable inclusion.

Increase visibility of the local LGBTQ+ community.

How was the Rainbow Mark developed?

The Rainbow Mark was developed following consultation with local organisations and with the local LGBTQ+ community to ensure that it is relevant and fit for purpose.

Liberate hosted LGBTQ+ Business Network sessions during which organisations were keen to understand how they can better support the local LGBTQ+ community, inform their staff of LGBTQ+ issues and identities in an easily digestible way, and achieve successful allyship.

The Rainbow Mark was devised and subsequently developed so that organisations can demonstrate that they are committed to offering a safe, inclusive space which is welcoming of any LGBTQ+ customers or clients
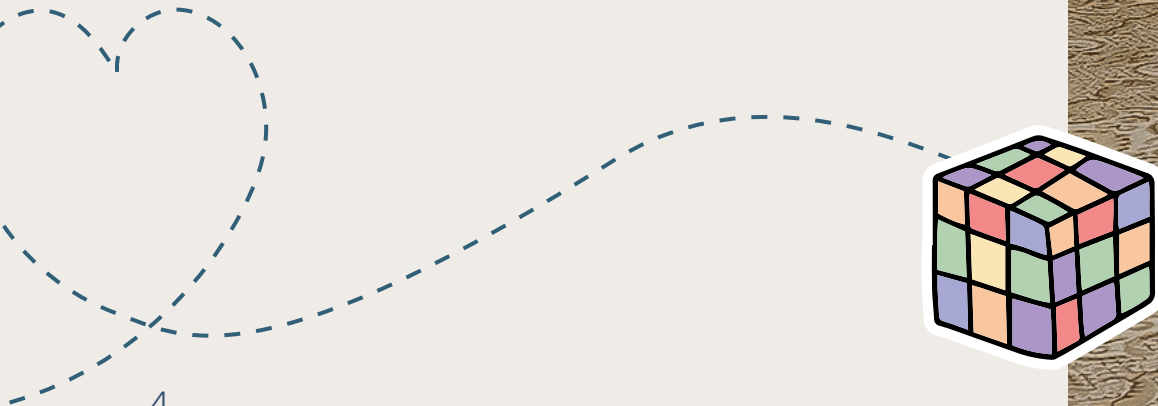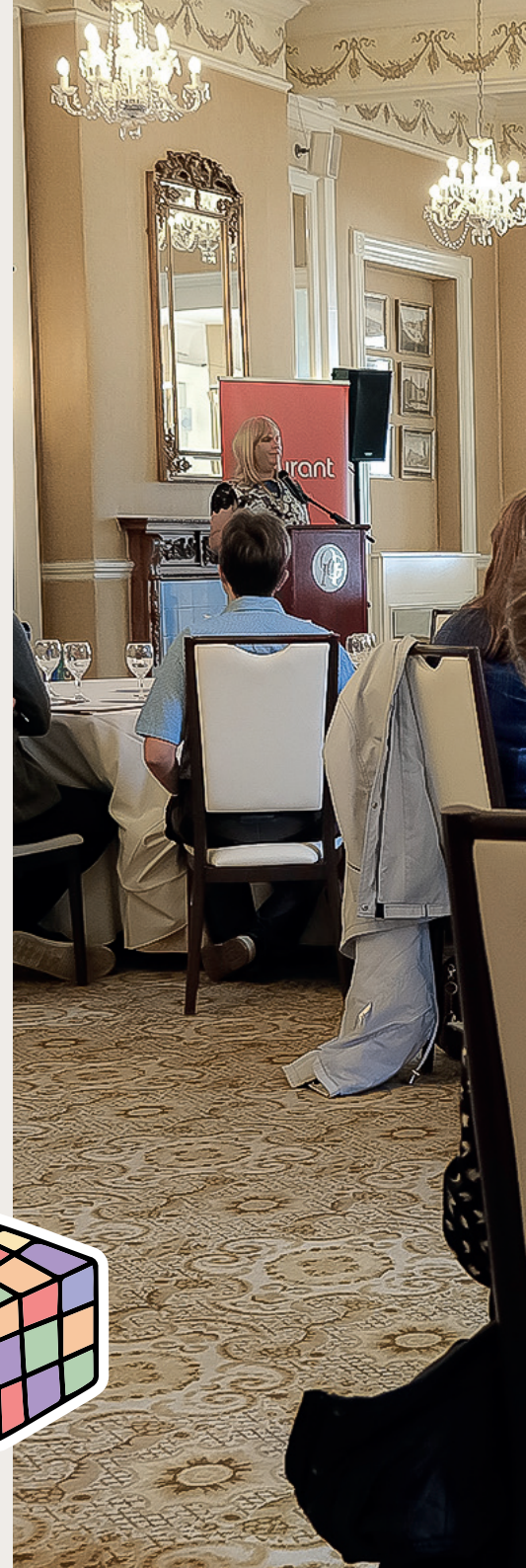
83%
of respondents said inclusive spaces were very important.*

Why is the Rainbow Mark needed?

Pledging your support is a powerful signal that your organisation will commit to LGBTQ+ inclusion and to the key principles outlined in this document. Further, making this commitment indicates that it is a safe space for everybody – not just the LGBTQ+ community – who may visit.

Inclusion is fundamental for ensuring that all customers, clients, and individuals feel respected and are comfortable attending a venue, knowing that they can be themselves and that they are safe and welcome. This provides reassurance to LGBTQ+ customers, clients, and individuals, and increases trust and confidence towards the venue or organisation.

When organisations publicly demonstrate their acceptance, it reflects the attitudes of that organisation. Being accepting of LGBTQ+ individuals improves visibility of and representation for the local LGBTQ+ community, while also helping to reduce stigma and fears of discrimination.

A relatively simple action of committing to inclusivity and displaying a window sticker can improve social attitudes generally, as this encourages people to be able to be themselves, removes shame, reduces discrimination, and bolsters acceptance. In turn, this helps to prevent isolation and encourages more LGBTQ+ people and allies to access services and engage in the community more frequently.

In terms of hosting an inclusive workspace, there are scores of studies which indicate that truly inclusive workplaces benefit all, leading to a happier, more productive, loyal, and creative workforce.

*Workplace Pride Foundation's 2021 report or the Scottish LGBTQ+ Partnership 2021 public survey.

Why should my organisation get involved?

Inclusivity benefits everybody in a community and is good for business, including those using your space and also your staff. Your organisation will be promoted as being LGBTQ+ inclusive when you join the programme as we offer to list all places that sign up on our website as a Rainbow Mark certified organisation. This will help LGBTQ+ people connect with ally organisations.

Signing up to Liberate's Rainbow Mark programme is free, all it requires is your commitment to being LGBTQ+ inclusive and working with us to address issues if they arise.

Further support is available if you have any questions about the Rainbow Mark or the commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion, and additional training can be arranged which suits the needs of your organisation.

While society is generally moving towards acceptance, should you receive any complaints for being committed to the Rainbow Mark scheme, please contact us and we can help you deal with these. There are, sadly, a minority of people in opposition to LGBTQ+ inclusion and it can be helpful to have a prepared and consistent response and know you are together in solidarity with other participating organisations.

Here are the main principles of the Rainbow Mark to support LGBTQ+ inclusion:

Being committed to providing a welcome, inclusive, and safe space for the LGBTQ+ community and maintaining best practice.

Pledging to address discriminatory behaviour and language.

Making sure that LGBTQ+ customers, clients, staff and individuals feel valued, protected, and free to be themselves while present at this organisation.

Agreeing to contact Liberate to request advice and best practice to address and resolve any issues of discrimination or intolerance toward LGBTQ+ individuals should they arise.

Being supportive of the LGBTQ+ community by using inclusive and respectful language, to ensure comfort for everybody.

How can my organisation get involved?

If upon receiving and reading this pack your organisation would like to sign up to the Rainbow Mark programme and commit to being more LGBTQ+ inclusive, then **please contact hello@liberate.gg** and we will add your listing to our Rainbow Mark directory and will add you to the website.

86%
would be more likely
to visit somewhere
if it had an LGBTQ+
mark in its window*

Rainbow Mark Principles and Examples

Read on for specific advice and practical examples for how you can implement each of the Rainbow Mark Principles.

Please note that these examples are suggestions for advice, and it is not mandatory to implement all of this guidance to participate in the Rainbow Mark programme.

PRINCIPLE ONE

We are committed to providing a welcome, inclusive, and safe space for the LGBTQ+ community and maintaining best practice

Here are some suggestions for how this principle can be achieved:

1. Use inclusive imagery
2. Show your LGBTQ+ inclusion
3. Ask LGBTQ+ groups
4. Keep up to date with best practice
5. Regular review

1. Use inclusive imagery

Using diverse and inclusive imagery can have a strong impact on whether an individual, customer or potential employee feels they are welcome within an organisation. Targeting female customers with highly airbrushed models, or using only hyper–muscular images of men to attract male customers, might alienate clientele by perpetuating unobtainable gender norms, and by not representing a diverse pool of people.

You may have noticed that media is often dominated by imagery which reinforces heterosexuality as a default or 'norm,' which is founded on heteronormativity, i.e. the assumption that everyone is cisgender (not trans) and heterosexual. It is best practice to avoid generalisations because everybody is unique.

While there is no one way to represent all LGBTQ+ people, presenting material with a range of identities and gender expressions celebrates humanity in all its variety. It helps to avoid tropes, negative associations, and stereotypes which anyone may hold. When selecting imagery, try to:

- Look beyond typically masculine or feminine qualities
- Be representative and include a variety of people with different racial characteristics
- Include people with a range of disabilities
- Represent diverse nationalities, ethnicities, and religions

Individuals with an intersectional identity (i.e. someone who is from multiple minority groups), may feel particularly overlooked and will rarely feel represented in the promotional images they see. To be inclusive of all identities helps to normalise the existence of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Examples of inclusive imagery

A restaurant might advertise a 'couples deal' for Valentines Day using images which only show men and women dining together as couples. While these images might represent some of the LGBTQ+ community, a subliminal message is sent to other couples who may feel alienated from the venue as a result.

2. Show your LGBTQ+ inclusion

Including visible signs of LGBTQ+ inclusion can instantly create a more welcoming environment.

To visibly demonstrate your acceptance, you might:

- Put up flags or posters inside and outside of your organisation
- Issue rainbow lanyards or badges to staff
- Offer gender–neutral or pronoun name badges (NB: these should be kept voluntary for many reasons, one being to avoid potentially 'outing' staff).
- Pin up LGBTQ+ leaflets/events/groups/services on your notice board or in your staff room
- Mark LGBTQ+ calendar dates to raise awareness and inclusion
- Include products from LGBTQ+ companies (e.g. queer newspapers or magazines)

3. Ask LGBTQ+ groups

Involving local groups is a really effective way to create an inclusive and welcoming environment. Liberate can provide resources, leaflets, training, advice, or help you look at other ways to improve LGBTQ+ inclusion. If possible, you could offer your space to host LGBTQ+ community events or nights, or have a mufti day or cake sale to raise funds and support LGBTQ+ charities or events.

4. Keep up to date with best practice

Keep up to date with best practice on LGBTQ+ inclusion, and the needs of the LGBTQ+ community, so that you can continue to make your organisation an inclusive and welcoming space as well as making sure your procedures are fit for purpose.

For example:

- Review training material to ensure they are representative
- Review your policies so that they are gender neutral and do not exclude people
- Check for new information and resources and ideas on how to improve inclusivity
- Speak to LGBTQ+ organisations or other participating organisations to share good practices and things that worked well

One thing to definitely avoid is putting an onus on individuals to discuss their own idenity (i.e. do not ask the only known gay customer or person in your organisation to educate the team on the entire LGBTQ+ community). It is not their responsibility to speak for everyone or to educate anybody. Instead, seek your own resources and lead the discussion from the top down and in a respectful and indiscriminate way.

5. Regular review

Make sure to regularly review how well your policies and practices are working to identify gaps or risks. For example:

- Issue staff surveys to gain feedback
- Host meetings or focus groups to discuss peoples experiences
- Ask for client and customer reviews on inclusivity and monitor demographics of staff, customers or service users (inline with GDPR guidelines and confidentiality) this will ultimately help benefit inclusivity

LGBTQ+ customers, clients, staff and individuals are valued, protected, and free to be themselves while present at this organisation

Here are some suggestions for how this principle can be achieved:

1. Have LGBTQ+ inclusive policies which are visible and accessible

2. Support Trans+ staff

3. Have inclusive family/parental leave policies

4. Ensure LGBTQ+ inclusive recruitment policies and processes

5. Provide staff training to improve awareness

6. Help to facilitate a staff LGBTQ+ network

1. Have LGBTQ+ inclusive policies which are visible and accessible

Inclusive employment policies are key indicators of LGBTQ+ inclusion, and act as a powerful means to enable positive change, and offer a structure for inclusion. They also act as a written reminder and assurance to LGBTQ+ staff that discrimination won't be tolerated.

Having inclusive policies is a great start, however they are only effective if they are acted upon appropriately when necessary. This means acting quickly to complaints and issues, and in a way that visibly demonstrates that discrimination is not accepted.

Some examples of particularly valuable and useful policies include:

- Anti–bullying policy
- Anti–harassment policy
- Complaints and grievances policy (specific to LGBTQ+ discrimination, detailing how incidents should be reported and how they will be handled)
- Dignity at Work policy
- Disclosure management policy (i.e. permission must be gained prior to making any disclosure towards someone's sexual orientation, gender identity, or other protected characteristic)
- Dress code/uniform policy (ensure this embraces gender diversity with careful consideration to avoid discrimination, gender stereotyping, or the imposition of inappropriate restrictions)
- Equal opportunities/fair treatment policy
- Family/parental leave policies which reflect blended, modern and diverse families

- Recruitment policies/procedures
- Transitioning at Work policy
- Anti–discrimination policy

Things to include in your policies are:

- Explicit mention of sexual orientation and gender identities
- Examples of behaviour or language which is not tolerated to avoid ambiguity (e.g. homophobia, lesbophobia, biphobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, etc.) which explicitly states that the list of examples is not exhaustive
- Gender neutral language

2. Support Trans+ staff

- Ensure you have policies in place to support Trans+ staff, including staff who transition while at work.
- Because every transition is unique, it is best to create a policy which is not restrictive and is led by the staff member's individual experience, and one which clearly establishes the actions you will take as an employer to ensure the safety of the employee and to ensure that they are respected and included at work.
- Make sure to ask the employee whether they wish for other colleagues to be informed, what support they might need (e.g. medical leave allowances), and if they will need any actions (e.g. to amend data records, ID card, email, username, etc.)

3. Have inclusive family/parental leave policies

LGBTQ+ families may not follow some assumptions that have been previously made in a parental/maternity leave policy. If your policy does not assume the sex, gender, or status of the parent or primary caregiver, then it can apply to more staff members, including single parents who are not LGBTQ+. It should include reference to adoption, fostering, shared parenting, or other means of parenting to ensure LGBTQ+ families are not disadvantaged.

4. Ensure LGBTQ+ inclusive recruitment policies and processes

In your recruitment process, at every stage you should be welcoming, be aware of unconscious bias, and actively encourage LGBTQ+ applicants. This can start from the initial job posting, with a sentence or two indicating your inclusive values.

Application processes which monitor sexual orientation and gender identity can help to identify if active bias exists in your recruitment procedures or in any areas of your organisation. Results from monitoring this can help you to address any areas which need improving. For example:

- A business includes its maternity leave policy in a job advert. In this case, the policy is heteronormative, it is not gender-inclusive, and does not represent same-sex parents. Because of this, a potential applicant may decide not to apply. By amending the policy to be applicable to all applicants, the widest possible pool of talent is available.

- All applicants recruited by one of your staff members appear to fit the same demographic, whereas in other areas of your business teams are more representative. It was reviewed and the employee was found to have unconscious bias, with several more experienced and capable candidates being over looked. Training and advice could be issued before continuing recruitment responsibilities.
- Another job application requests personal information, however the only options are 'Male,' 'Female,' or 'Prefer not to say,' and there is no separate question for gender identity. In this case, the applicant has information that they would willingly provide if there were sufficient options and/or an option to self-describe, such as being intersex or having a different gender identity.

5. Provide staff training and improve awareness

Other ways to demonstrate your commitment to inclusion and ultimately to create an welcoming culture, may include raising awareness of the following:

- Available training resources and how to access them
- Employment policies and how to locate them
- Anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies
- Reporting procedures for any incidents
- Feedback requests/surveying staff to ensure they have understood and are confident on the procedures/resources available
- Ensure any new employees are fully aware of your inclusive values
- Remind staff at regular intervals of your values and all of the above

These all indicate to your staff that you are open to listening to any problems which may arise, and that you develop your procedures and materials in collaboration with your staff. It is a continued, gradual process which requires staff at all levels to be understand matters of equality.

Staff training should be specific to the level of role and responsibilities, offering clear guidance of the behaviours and attitudes which are acceptable and encouraged.

6. Help to facilitate a staff LGBTQ+ network

If your organisation does not have an LGBTQ+ network, perhaps consider developing one (or joining the Liberate LGBTQ+ business network).

It could be used as an advisory group and a supportive space where staff can raise feedback, grievances, or complaints which can become positive driving forces for continued improvement.

Any network should have clear objectives and actions which can be fed back to HR and management.

Our support for the LGBTQ+ community will be visible, using inclusive and respectful language, to ensure comfort for everybody

Here are some suggestions for how this principle can be achieved:

1. Use language that is respectful and inclusive
2. Make the most of opportunities

1. Use language that is respectful and inclusive

Inclusive language is beneficial for many of the same reasons as inclusive imagery (see Principle 1). Because heteronormativity is ingrained in our language, interactions, and culture, several campaigns have taken place to 'usualise' or normalise language and to avoid assumptions.

It is important to recognise language that can exclude people and attempt to move to more neutral and inclusive phrasing.

Examples of Inclusive Language:

- Instead of starting a meeting by saying "Ladies and gentlemen," try saying: "Hi everyone," or 'Good morning folks."
- If you are unsure of somebody's pronouns, make it the norm for everyone to provide pronouns at the start of an encounter and to not use 'Mr, Miss, or Mrs' as a default for everybody. Make sure to give the option to not provide any pronoun, and to just go by names, so that nobody has to 'out' themselves despite best intentions to be inclusive.
- To avoid gender assumption, rather than saying: "Could somebody please help this lady?" or similar, try saying: "Could somebody please help this customer?"
- If you do not know someone's family background, instead of asking about their 'mum and dad,' try saying 'parents,' or 'folks,' 'caregivers,' or similar.
- If you are asking about somebody's relationship, try saying 'partner' instead of assuming their sexual orientation.
- Use neutral language in your staff communications, such as emails, your website, social media, surveys, forms, etc..

2. Make the most of opportunities

Opportunities to quickly encourage a more inclusive culture can be as simple as switching one word in your usual morning greeting. It might involve making it the norm for staff to pop their pronouns into email signatures, so long as it is consensual and not mandatory to avoid potentially outing anyone. Consider removing requirements to document gender, sex, and title fields in forms or databases if there is no specific need to include them.

This organisation will address discriminatory behaviour and language

Here are some suggestions for how this principle can be achieved:

1. Put up signage informing attendees of your inclusive values

2. Use complaints for good

3. Lead from the top down as a good role model

4. Take matters seriously and escalate as necessary

1. ## Put up signage informing attendees of your inclusive values

Signage is a visible indicator that you are inclusive and that discrimination is not tolerated. Our Rainbow Mark sticker is a brilliant example of showing your commitment to the wider local community.

2. ## Use complaints for good

Hate-motivated moments can still take place, despite best intentions. If an individual discloses to you that they have been discriminated against at work, by a customer/client, or within your organisation, you should take them seriously.

If you are present for the incident, then you should observe closely, ensure safety, and the harasser or aggressor should be asked to leave. If the issue is internal, it is best practice to have a policy with an explicit process for how it will be resolved. Issues should be resolved swiftly and without delay in response to any abuse or discrimination.

3. ## Lead from the top down as a good role model

If your management team understand how to recognise different types of discrimination, together with how to act and when to act in response to any incidents, then your staff are better set up to have the confidence to do the same. To achieve this, training sessions can be helpful.

4. Take matters seriously and escalate as necessary

Safety is absolutely paramount, no staff member should be made to feel discriminated against, uncomfortable, or at risk of harm.

Issues can often worsen quickly, and so it is important to have a clear process to follow that shows staff when to escalate issues, including when to contact managers, HR and if necessary, when to get help from the police.

Discrimination can be a crime and lead to severe consequences. All incidents which may be hate-motivated should be taken seriously and treated as a crime when necessary. Often the person subjected to a hate or discrimination will have experienced trauma. They will appreciate a robust and coordinated approach to make them as comfortable and feel as safe and protected as possible.

This organisation will contact Liberate to request advice and best practice to address and resolve any issues of discrimination or intolerance toward LGBTQ+ individuals should they arise

Here are some suggestions for how this principle can be achieved:

1. Seek to better understand the specific needs of LGBTQ+ individuals

2. How are Trans+ people specifically affected?

3. How are Bi+ people specifically affected?

1. Seek to better understand the specific needs of LGBTQ+ individuals

The letters LGBTQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Questioning, and the + just means 'and more'. LGBTQ+ people have different sexualities, gender identities or a biological sex to the majority of people, and LGBTQ+ people are all part of what is known as the LGBTQ+ community. Each letter represents lots of people who might be different in many ways but they share a commonality when it comes to their sexuality, gender identity or sex. Some people might even be in more than one of these groups.

For example, imagine a person who is disabled, black, bisexual, and a woman. She might face discrimination for being all these things at once or for any of them individually.

People in the LGBTQ+ community can have very different experiences. They might face discrimination in different ways depending on who they are. But one thing brings LGBTQ+ people together: they all want to be treated fairly and equally and don't want to be judged or treated badly because of who they are.

It's important to understand how different people in the LGBTQ+ community are affected differently by discrimination. That way, we can make sure everyone feels welcome and included.

2. How are Trans+ people specifically affected?

Even within the LGBTQ+ community, certain individuals are exluded by others. For example, a Trans+ woman might visit a lesbian bar and have a negative experience if the space is not truly LGBTQ+ friendly, despite purporting that it is. Examples of how to avoid similar issues may include:

- Making your organisation specifically Trans+ inclusive, then it will help to let any staff, customers or clients know that you will not tolerate Trans+ discrimination.
- Following this Rainbow Mark guidance is one way to be Trans+ inclusive.
- It is helpful to offer a gender inclusive toilet space where possible, to avoid the likelihood of verbal or physical assaults to Trans+ individuals when accessing the toilet, and to offer a dedicated space for non–binary people. By law in the Channel Islands, Trans+ men and women can use male and female toilets. Gender inclusive toilet facilities are helpful for parents and children too, as well as disabled people and their carers. If this is not possible, consider installing a poster which clearly states that the facilities are Trans+ inclusive. If your toilets have a sink inside them which lock individually, then these are great for offering privacy to everyone.
- Avoid using a Trans+ person's former name which was used before transitioning is known as 'deadnaming.' It can be incredibly distressing for Trans+ individuals to be deadnamed. ID policies can be worrying for Trans+ individuals, because often it is expensive or challenging for Trans+ people to update their identification documentation. If you are checking the ID of somebody who is Trans+, please be sensitive that they may no longer go by that name or title, or may no longer look the same as in the image or present as the same gender. In these cases, be respectful, polite, and use discretion.

3. How are Bi+ people specifically affected?

'Bi' is an umbrella term much like the term 'Trans,' meaning it represents a larger group of distinct identities, including polysexual, pansexual and omnisexual people. Bi+ people should be given the option to self–describe and for that to be respected.

Bi+ people have unique experiences of discrimination both outside and within the LGBTQ+ community. This is partly due to erasure, and stereotyping but it can lead to serious impacts for someones health and wellbeing. Erasure can be in the form of an assumption about a Bi+ person's sexuality which may be based on that person's most recent partner (i.e. if some were dating someone of the opposite gender they may be assumed to be straight despite the fact that that may not represent their sexuality). Some terms might accidentally appear exclusive of Bi+ people, such as the term 'gay marriage,' which may represent Bi+ people less than 'same–sex marriage.'

4. Definitions

- **Sexual Orientation:** A person's orientation in relation to the gender(s) to which they are emotionally, romantically and / or sexually attracted.
- **Gender Identity:** Refers to our internal sense of who we are, and how we see ourselves in regards to being a man, a woman, or somewhere in between these identities.
- **Gender Expression:** External characteristics and behaviours that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine, such as clothing, hairstyle, make-up, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions.
- **Lesbian:** A word describing a woman who is emotionally, romantically and / or sexually attracted to other women.
- **Gay:** A word describing a person who is emotionally, romantically and / or sexually attracted to members of the same sex / gender.
- **Bisexual / Bi:** An umbrella term describing a person emotionally, romantically and / or sexually attracted to more than one gender, though not necessarily in the same way or to the same degree.
- **Intersex:** A person may be born with a variation of physical sex characteristics, these can be chromosomal or hormonal makeup and/or secondary sex characteristics that are not typically binary male or female. There are many variations and all are congenital (from birth). Though all variations are congenital, they are not always discovered at birth and may be discovered at puberty, when exploring fertility, or for some, may not be discovered at all. We use 'intersex' as an umbrella term for people who are born with variations of sex characteristics. Intersex is not the same as gender identity (our sense of self) or sexual orientation (who we are attracted to) but is about the physical body we are born with.

- **Transgender / Trans+:** Equivalent inclusive umbrella terms for anyone whose gender identity or gender expression does not fully correspond with the sex they were assigned at birth. This includes trans men, trans women, non-binary people, gender-queer people and a-gender people.
- **Cisgender / cis:** A person who identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth. Cisgender (Cis) is the word for anyone who is not transgender.
- **Homophobic:** A discriminatory or prejudiced action related to someone's actual or perceived gay sexual orientation.
- **Lesbophobic:** A discriminatory or prejudiced action related to someone's actual or perceived lesbian sexual orientation.
- **Biphobic:** A discriminatory or prejudiced action related to someone's actual or perceived bisexual orientation.
- **Transphobic:** A discriminatory or prejudiced action related to someone's actual or perceived gender identity or gender expression.
- **Interphobic:** A discriminatory or prejudiced action related to someone's (or perception of someone) being intersex.
- **Minority stress:** The cumulative stress experienced by someone considered to be from a minority community or communities because of stigma, prejudice, the expectation of rejection, experiences of discrimination, pressure felt by some to 'conceal' their identities, or from feeling the need to conform.

If you need this document in larger print or another format, please contact us:

LGBTQ+
Rainbow Mark

Supported by

LIBERATE

NatWest International