

# **Information Guide for Equality Impact Assessments**

## **Volume 9 - Sexual Orientation**

December 2002

## **Introduction**

This guide aims to supply those tasked with undertaking equality impact assessments and subsequent monitoring with a clear indication of the availability of equality information in relation to sexual orientation.

The primary focus is on the availability of information on computerised systems in operation in the health and social service here. These are presented separately in terms of Hospital systems, Children, Personal Social Services and Mental Health, and Family Practitioner Services and Workforce systems.

The guide goes on to look at the availability of additional research material such as surveys and other relevant material that may be of use.

Finally the guide looks at available research material identified in Valerie Bunting's literature review that was commissioned by the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).

It is hoped that this document will expand over time as more sources of information are identified or become available, and as more research is commissioned.

It is also hoped that representatives of Section 75 groups will contribute with whatever research material they may have available in respect of their specific group.

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## CSA, Workforce - Information Available on Sexual Orientation

Section 75 Grouping	Sexual Orientation
What information is available?	<b>No information on sexual orientation available from any system.</b>
<p>What are we doing to improve it?</p> <p>When will the improved information be available?</p>	<p>Due to the sensitivity of this information it is unlikely that service users will be asked to supply details of their sexual orientation at the point of contact with the service. With this in mind the Equality Information Steering Group have decided not to attempt to put such information onto systems. In considering a phased approach to improving the availability of equality information, 'sexual orientation' is one of the data items that will be concentrated on in the third and final phase of work. It is likely that information to inform impact assessment will be provided through consultation with group representatives.</p> <p>Not known at this stage.</p>
What additional information is available? (e.g. research, surveys?)	No quantifiable analytical information is available.

## Other Relevant Information Available on Sexual Orientation

Other Available information	<p>'A Mighty Silence: a report on the needs of lesbians and bisexual women in Northern Ireland' – Marie Quiry, lesbian advocacy services initiative – March 2002.</p> <p>The Coalition on Sexual Orientation website is available at: <a href="http://www.coso.org.uk/index.php">http://www.coso.org.uk/index.php</a></p> <p>Research commissioned by Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission into access to health services for young lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people. Is part of project undertaken by the Joint Human Rights Forum (regrouping human rights institutions of the UK and Ireland) into a research on multiple identities. The research's objectives are multiple: to outline the social profile of young LGB, to outline implications of health service provision with regard to young LGB and to assess the validity of looking at equality/human rights strategies from a 'multiple identity' perspectives. AUGUST 2001 – Enhancing the Rights of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in Northern Ireland <a href="http://www.nihrc.org/Documents/Complete LGB doc.doc">http://www.nihrc.org/Documents/Complete LGB doc.doc</a></p>
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## References to Sexual Orientation identified in Literature Review (Valerie Bunting)

Summary of Issues	Reference
Equality of opportunity issues relating to transsexual people are dealt with, by law, within the “Men and Women Generally” category, and not within the “Sexual Orientation” Category. There appears to be some confusion concerning this.	Statutory Rule, 1999 No. 311: Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (Northern Ireland), 1999.
The Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSO) states that members of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual community (LGB) have been largely invisible in society due to prejudice, ignorance and misinformation. This has led to the marginalisation and social exclusion of LGB people.	Coalition on Sexual Orientation, 2000, “Response by the Coalition on Sexual Orientation”: <a href="http://www.gocities.com/co_so_ni/response_to_the_draft_equality_schemes.htm">http://www.gocities.com/co_so_ni/response_to_the_draft_equality_schemes.htm</a> .
Little evidence has been accumulated about sexual orientation and there is concern that this might be used as an excuse for excluding it from impact assessments.	Coalition on Sexual Orientation, 2000, “Response by the Coalition on Sexual Orientation” (as above)
There is concern that differential impact will be used to screen/scope out sexual orientation issues.	Coalition on Sexual Orientation, 2000, “Response by the Coalition on Sexual Orientation” (as above).
Inequality exists on the grounds of sexual orientation, driven by dominant negative social attitudes and an unwillingness to address the differing needs of LGB people. This impacts upon the emotional, mental and physical health of LGB people.	Coalition on Sexual Orientation, 2000, “Response by the Coalition on Sexual Orientation” (as above).
There is concern that the most sensitive issues such as sexual orientation are being placed at the end of the 5 year programme, rather than at the beginning.	Coalition on Sexual Orientation, 2000, “Response by the Coalition on Sexual Orientation” (as above).
CoSO state that there is very little research on sexual orientation in Northern Ireland.	Coalition on Sexual Orientation, 2000, “Response by the Coalition on Sexual Orientation” (as above).
Where LGB people have multiple identities, CoSO highlight their concern that the sexual orientation aspect of equality of opportunity may not be fully respected.	Coalition on Sexual Orientation, 2000, “Response by the

	Coalition on Sexual Orientation” (as above).
CoSO strongly oppose any charge being levied in respect of the documentation which public authorities are obliged to provide as part of the consultation process. This would have implications for equality of opportunity in relation to some individuals with low socio-economic status.	Coalition on Sexual Orientation, 2000, “Response by the Coalition on Sexual Orientation” (as above).
CoSO maintain that access to services is particular to specific sectors. LGB people have, until now, been largely invisible. As a result, their interests may not have been taken into account in access to services.	Coalition on Sexual Orientation, 2000, “Response by the Coalition on Sexual Orientation” (as above).
There is currently no data on the exact numbers of people living in the NHSSB area who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.	NHHSB, 1999-2002, “Promoting Sexual Health: A Strategy for the Northern Health & Social Services Board, 1999-2002.
The sexual health promotion needs of gay people are complex. Gay, lesbian and bisexual people living in rural areas may have particular sexual health promotion needs.	NHHSB, 1999-2002, “Promoting Sexual Health: A Strategy for the Northern Health & Social Services Board, 1999-2002.
Prostitution is stigmatised and those involved often face negative attitudes and hostility from others. As a result prostitutes may be reluctant to be open about their sexual behaviour. This may prevent them from obtaining the services they need.	NHHSB, 1999-2002, “Promoting Sexual Health: A Strategy for the Northern Health & Social Services Board, 1999-2002.
There is a dearth of information on prostitutes who reside or work within the NHSSB area. Prostitutes have not been targeted specifically with health promotion messages in the NHSSB area.	NHHSB, 1999-2002, “Promoting Sexual Health: A Strategy for the Northern Health & Social Services Board, 1999-2002.
Gay Men fear that if they disclose that they are gay, they will receive poorer treatment than if they don’t. They fear that they will be denied care, and they will be made to feel judged or unwelcome in the consultation.	The Gay Men’s Health Wiltshire and Swindon Website, 1998 “What are gay men’s concerns?” <a href="http://www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/gp/gay-men.htm">www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/gp/gay-men.htm</a> .
Gay men often feel vulnerable if they have to disclose their sexuality to the GP. This is especially true for Gay men in small communities who may suffer malicious or accidental disclosure resulting in discrimination from third parties.	The Gay Men’s Health Wiltshire and Swindon Website, 1998 “What are gay men’s concerns?” <a href="http://www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/gp/gay-men.htm">www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/gp/gay-men.htm</a> .
Health opportunities research has identified some problems	The Gay Men’s Health

<p>in the relations between gay men and their GP. Low visibility research shows that most gay men do not confide in their GPs about sexual health matters. As a result, the sexual health needs of Gay men may be underestimated.</p>	<p>Wiltshire and Swindon Website, 1998 "What are gay men's concerns?" <a href="http://www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/gp/gay-men.htm">www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/gp/gay-men.htm</a>.</p>
<p>Some GPs may have doubts about their role in health promotion.</p>	<p>The Gay Men's Health Wiltshire and Swindon Website, 1998 "What are gay men's concerns?" <a href="http://www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/gp/gay-men.htm">www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/gp/gay-men.htm</a>.</p>
<p>Whilst there is a wealth of specialised information and support available in relation to HIV AIDS, not everyone knows how to access this. Some people may not even know it exists. Alternatively, some patients may not know where to start to look because so much has been written.</p>	<p>The Gay Men's Health Wiltshire and Swindon Website, 1998 "One small step: information about working with gay and bisexual men" <a href="http://www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/gp/gay-men.htm">www.gmhp.demon.co.uk/guides/gp/gay-men.htm</a>.</p>
<p>A recent study by Glasgow Women's Library found that Lesbians and Gay men in Glasgow are being denied basic good health because of the pervasive homophobia that they face.</p>	<p>"Poverty and Social Exclusion of Lesbians and Gay Men in Glasgow", 2000, <a href="http://www.womens-library.org.uk/povertystudy.htm">http://www.womens-library.org.uk/povertystudy.htm</a>.</p>