

An **asexual** person is
a person who does
not experience sexual
attraction.

But what is it like to
be **asexual** in the
workplace?

In the **Civil Service LGBT+ Network**, we want everyone to feel included and valued for who they are. However, we know asexual civil servants feel less included than their gay and heterosexual peers.

Asexual civil servants

Want a greater sense of community, having felt excluded from both 'straight' and 'LGBT+' spaces.

As a result, we are

Running dedicated, social and supportive events and an online community space for bi, pan, asexual and queer civil servants.

Feel invisible as a result of a lack of recognition and role models in the workplace and wider society.

Raising the profile of asexual civil servants, and encouraging senior role models, departmental LGBT+ networks, and HR teams to monitor, recognise and support minority sexual identities.

Face negative stereotypes, assumptions, a lack of understanding about their identities, and intrusive questions.

Providing knowledge, information and support to individuals, networks and departments.

Are more likely to experience bullying, discrimination and harassment.

Investigating how training and guidance can be developed or improved within the wider Civil Service and also within LGBT+ spaces.

Can face multiple barriers to full participation in the workplace, due to other aspects of their lives and identities in interaction with their sexual orientation.

Working with other Civil Service diversity networks and organising joint initiatives.

Asexual (ace) means little or no sexual attraction.

Grey-asexual (greysexual) means rare sexual attraction, usually only for short periods.

Demisexual (demi) means sexual attraction after forming a strong emotional bond.

Each sexual orientation has a corresponding romantic orientation. For many people, these two align (asexual/aromantic). However, this is not always the case.

What can Allies do?

Allies avoid making assumptions about a person's sexual orientation or gender.

Allies make space so that the quiet/unnoticed/missing voices can be heard.

Allies consider their own behaviour; ask for feedback, reflect, adapt and learn how to behave in ways that invite people in, instead of pushing them away.

Allies challenge constructively when they see something going wrong – an inappropriate comment or an interaction that is failing to build relationships.

Allies follow the appropriate bullying and harassment procedure if they become aware of homophobic behaviour.

Allies take into account that every asexual experience is different and does not solely define a person.

Allies inform themselves and seek sources of information independently rather than assuming minority colleagues are there to inform them.

“As a heteroromantic asexual person, I am in a similar position in some ways to bisexuals in an opposite sex relationship in that most people would just assume we were straight.”

“The only real issue I have come across is getting asexuality recognised as a valid orientation in the same way as other sexual orientations. Some staff surveys offer ‘asexual’ as an option in the sexual orientation box but many do not.”

“The biggest difficulty as an asexual in the Civil Service is that no-one understands what it means and despite the requirements to take E-learning courses in equality and diversity, asexuality isn't listed once.”

“Being misunderstood is the greatest problem I face at work. In my personal life this has led to instances of unwanted sexual contact and condescending attitudes from medical professionals I visited when I developed anxiety and panic attacks as a result of unwanted sexual contact.”

“Occasionally my co-workers are genuinely curious about asexuality, but this leads them to ask increasingly personal questions about my private life that makes me feel uncomfortable.”

“The difficulty in being myself at work is that I'm backed into disclosing my sexuality to people who don't accept that it's real.”

Find out more

You can find out more about the Civil Service LGBT+ Network, the work we are doing to support bi+ civil servants, and information about our BiSpace events on our website, www.civilservice.lgbt.

“As a heteroromantic asexual, I sometimes feel pressured to identify as “heterosexual” even though I am not, as I don’t think that asexuality is considered a “valid” or “true” orientation by many people.”

“Identifying as asexual in work has always been uncomfortable. My sexuality seems to be a mystery to most of my colleagues, which drives them to ask me whether I find men or women attractive. It’s impossible to avoid the question, and when I answer that I am asexual most people seem to doubt that I’m telling the truth.”



BiSpace is an initiative run by bi+ civil servants, for bi+ civil servants.

(‘Bi+’ encompassing bi, pan, ace, queer)

It’s a chance to meet fellow bisexual, pansexual, queer and asexual civil servants in different parts of the country, particularly London, Bristol and Manchester.

Sign up to the mailing list at www.civilservice.lgbt/join-us to find out more.

Asexual Awareness Week

Asexual Awareness Week is held in late October every year. aims to educate about asexual, aromantic, demisexual, and grey-asexual experiences, and create materials for the asexual community and allies. Visit asexualawarenessweek.com to find out more.

The Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN)

hosts the world’s largest online asexual community and a large archive of resources on asexuality. AVEN strives to create open, honest discussion about asexuality among sexual and asexual people alike. Visit asexuality.org.

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