



# Career development for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Civil Servants

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A research project from **YouGov** on behalf of the  
**Civil Service Rainbow Alliance (CSRA)**

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The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Civil Service Rainbow Alliance, a:gender or the Government.

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# Foreword

**In recent years the Civil Service has made great efforts to become a more Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGB&T) friendly employer. Most organisations in the Civil Service now have anti-discrimination policies; procedures in place to tackle homophobia and transphobia; and support the work of LGB&T network groups.**

As an employer of around half a million people, we can estimate, based on national averages, that there may be between ten and twenty thousand LGB&T working hard to deliver top quality public services to citizens. It is therefore important that these employees are able to access the same levels of support that are available to their heterosexual colleagues.

However there remains little evidence about the career development experiences of LGB&T staff in wider society, let alone within the Civil Service. Therefore this unique research focuses on developing this evidence base; on understanding what barriers exist for LGB&T employees as they seek to progress their careers; and on understanding what the Civil Service needs to do to make a positive impact on the careers of its LGB&T staff.

The independent research was conducted by Yougov with a wide range of LGB&T civil servants from across all grades, all parts of the United Kingdom, and both with people who openly identify as being either LGB or T in the workplace and those who do not. We also consulted HR professionals.

Whilst the research found that most staff felt that the Civil Service had an external reputation as being LGB&T friendly, and that the internal workplace culture mostly supported this reputation, the headline message from the research is clear; barriers to career progression for LGB&T staff do exist.

Fifty-nine per cent felt under pressure to conform in order to progress their career. A quarter believed that their sexual orientation or gender identity had been a barrier to career progression. Only 16 per cent of staff felt able to complain when they encountered discrimination or harassment. The picture was also more challenging for staff working outside of metropolitan cities and overseas.

So now that we understand that these barriers exist, the Civil Service must work with its representative LGB&T groups, to deliver the recommendations in this report.

The current economic climate may mean that resources are constrained; however we owe it to our staff, to our colleagues, to work collaboratively together to tackle these barriers career development barriers encountered by LGB&T staff.

Finally, I would like to thank Yougov for conducting this research and the Government Equalities Office for providing funding.

**Oliver Entwistle**  
**Chair of the Civil Service**  
**Rainbow Alliance**

# Executive summary

**This report presents the findings of a unique study on career development for LGB&T civil servants. Career progression, discrimination and development opportunities were explored in depth with survey responses from over 800 staff and contributions from 30 focus group participants.**

Although the Civil Service as a whole exhibits many strong practices and policies, a number of LGB&T staff reported that they have experienced barriers to career progress that they believe are related to their perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity.

Driving through consistent practice across the Service, reinforcing equality messages with line managers and building upon examples of best practice programmes are just some of the ways in which the Civil Service can continue to be an employer of choice for LGB&T staff.

## About this project

This research was commissioned by the Civil Service Rainbow Alliance, through funding from the Government Equalities Office, with the cooperation and support of a:gender to explore Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGB&T) career development. This report is not a Civil Service report, nor a statement of Government policy. Instead it is a report commissioned by a corporate staff network to improve the evidence base on LGB&T career development and drive further progress on LGB&T equality. The study began in April 2010 and delivered a programme of research activities including a survey of civil servants, focus groups, an online forum and a review of existing data and literature on the subject of career progression for LGB&T civil servants.

Between May and June, over 800 LGB&T civil servants responded to the survey and more than 30 participated in four focus groups in locations across the UK. Many also contributed in greater depth to an online forum and a number of human resources and diversity professionals were interviewed.

## Aims and objectives

The research sought to answer a number of questions about LGB&T career development in the Civil Service:

- What are the needs of LGB&T members of staff who wish to progress their career within the UK Civil Service?
- What (if any) are the barriers to career progression of LGB&T civil servants?
- Do existing career developmental opportunities adequately meet the needs of LGB&T members of staff?
- Does the use of existing talent pools (such as the Fast Stream) adequately meet the needs of LGB&T members of staff?

## Key findings

- 1 Between 20 and 30 per cent of those surveyed, believe that the Civil Service's reputation as an LGB&T friendly employer was a factor in their decision to seek a job in the Civil Service.**
  - Many believed that the Civil Service's approach towards sexual orientation and gender identity equality has changed rapidly over the past few decades, making the Civil Service a more LGB&T friendly place to work. Negative experiences tended to be focused on experiences with line managers and/or variations based on certain offices or localities.

- Belief in the LGB&T friendliness of the service was particularly strong for those who had joined most recently.
  - More LGB people were 'out' to their work colleagues than to their line managers, but despite this 87 per cent were either fully or partially 'out' to their manager. Those joining recently were particularly likely to be 'out' and to have been so from the start of their employment.
- 2 Two thirds of LGB staff consider that their organisation respects individuals differences and seventy eight per cent consider that their workplace culture is inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.**
- Sixty seven per cent of LGB civil servants reported that their organisation respects individual differences in the Civil Service People Survey 2010.
  - Analysis from the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index from January 2011 identifies that 78% of Government employees consider that their workplace culture is inclusive of LGB people. This is 5 per cent higher than the average score from all participants in the Workplace Equality Index.
  - As a result, ninety two per cent of LGB respondents interviewed are open about their sexual orientation to some extent with colleagues.
- 3 Half of LGB and 40 per cent of Trans civil servants were satisfied with how their career had developed over time.**
- Both LGB and Trans civil servants reported being more positive about their opportunities to develop a career in the Service than the overall staff benchmark formed with the Civil Service Engagement Survey 2009.
  - Lesbian civil servants were more satisfied than Gay men or Trans colleagues.
  - However satisfaction about career development opportunities declines with age and length of service.
- 4 Fifty nine per cent felt pressure to conform in order to progress and around half felt that it was difficult to be themselves at work.**
- Fifty nine per cent of those surveyed believe that you have to conform in order to progress your career. For some the pressure to conform (to fit in with the prevailing workplace culture and other colleagues) had an effect on self-confidence, assertiveness and engagement with colleagues and managers – all aspects that are vital for progression.
  - A third felt that they had missed out on networking opportunities because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and others mentioned difficulties in socialising with colleagues and earning informal influence with more senior staff.
  - Many felt that career progression measures were often undermined by the power of individual managers or interviewers when going for promotion or job opportunities. Some spoke about 'old boys' networks,' others that your face had to fit to progress and sometimes being LGB&T meant that it did not.
  - Across all aspects of career progression, LGB civil servants were more positive than their Trans colleagues.
  - Around 90 per cent felt that they had the same opportunities as other colleagues for helpful career development activities such as training, studying or coaching.

- 5 A quarter of LGB and a third of Trans civil servants believed that there were barriers to career progression due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.**
- Common barriers to career progression included: attitudes and prejudices of line managers and interviewers; self-esteem and confidence; assumptions about aspirations; and the lack of informal common ground affecting relationships with colleagues often at a socialising, contact making level.
  - Although younger civil servants were significantly less likely to have experienced barriers, still 1 in 10 of those under the age of 30 felt that they had.
  - For nearly three-quarters of those experiencing barriers, the most recent occurrence had been in the last five years.
- 6 Forty per cent of Trans and around 20% of LGB civil servants believed that others had made assumptions about their career aspirations and abilities to progress because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.**
- Around half had felt some awkwardness with colleagues aware of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This was particularly of concern when moving out of their normal working environment such as training courses or working with different teams.
- Being the subject of overt harassment or bullying was relatively common for LGB&T staff during the course of their Civil Service career. Half of Gay men, Lesbians and Trans respondents had experienced this, most often from colleagues or managers, but for many from customers or service users as well.
  - This was not a historic issue either with over a quarter of Trans and around 15 per cent of LGB civil servants having been subject to harassment or bullying in the last year.
- 7 Nineteen per cent of LGB civil servants have personally experienced discrimination at work, with thirty one per cent directly attributing this discrimination to their sexual orientation.**
- In the Civil Service People Survey 2010, nineteen per cent of LGB civil servants identified that they have been discriminated at work. This was significantly higher than the twelve per cent of heterosexual staff who identified that they experienced discrimination.
  - Of these, the largest percentage (thirty one per cent) identified that this discrimination was due to their sexual orientation. Whilst twenty eight per cent identifying that this discrimination was a result of their grade, pay band or responsibility level.



**8 Despite over a quarter feeling they had been treated unfairly when it came to their career development, only 16 per cent had ever complained.**

- Less than half felt that they could complain about career disadvantages experienced without it having a negative impact on their working life. The figure is lower for Trans civil servants.
- The experiences of complaint handling suggested a high degree of inconsistency across the Civil Service. There is often a dependency on individual line managers for the implementation of discrimination and harassment policies.

**9 Around two-thirds had participated in LGB&T staff development or diversity activities, including Staff Networks.**

- 59 per cent of LGB and 64 per cent of Trans civil servants who had participated in these activities, found them to be beneficial to their careers.
- For many, it was felt that involvement in a Network, particularly in a coordinating role, allowed individuals to gain experience, develop new skills and operate at a higher level than their 'day job' would otherwise enable them to do.
- However few LGB&T staff felt that their managers viewed Network activities to be beneficial to career development.

**10 Two thirds of LGB Civil Servants felt that heterosexual colleagues did not understand LGB issues. While Trans staff identified that Departments did not have clear policies to support those undergoing gender reassignment**

- Only thirty three per cent of Government participants in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2011 considered that their heterosexual colleagues understood LGB issues.
- Trans staff described a number of ways that inconsistent policies had impacted on their career development including being denied promotion opportunities having taken extended leave for gender reassignment surgery and some people being sacked for "excessive sick leave."

**11 LGB&T staff working outside metropolitan cities or on overseas placements are more likely to encounter barriers because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.**

- There was concern about the lack of support offered to LGB&T staff in some working environments, such as call centres, security departments, as well as in offices in more isolated or provincial towns.
- There is a very specific issue of support for LGB&T staff on overseas placements – where staff may only have the opportunity to apply to countries where homosexuality is legal.

## Recommendations

The findings and conclusions of this research present a number of challenges and opportunities for the Civil Service as an employer, as well as the constituent Departments and staff support networks within the Civil Service.

To ensure the key findings of this report are taken forwards, Yougov has developed fourteen recommendations for the Civil Service to take forward, which we hope will improve the career development of LGB&T civil servants.

CSRA will be looking to implement these recommendations with the support of the Government Equalities Office, DWP, other Government Departments, a:gender and the Trade Unions.

- 1 There is a low level of understanding of issues facing LGB&T staff in the Civil Service. This is particularly true of gender identity and gender reassignment. This should be addressed through the development of consistent policies, in consultation with CSRA and a:gender, the use of diversity awareness training, and a positive working culture of openness and accountability. (Key finding 10)
- 2 Departments should ensure policies to address discrimination are widely disseminated and understood internally and, importantly, externally – particularly when working with outsourcing partners, consultants and contractors in the private sector. (Key finding 7)

- 3 Training for line managers and Human Resources should include LGB&T awareness training, with a specific focus on addressing and responding to complaints of homophobia and transphobia, as well as how to provide support to staff undergoing, or planning to undergo, gender reassignment. (Key findings 7 and 8)

- 4 Department's should recognise that low self-esteem as a result of discrimination (in and out of work) can impact severely on an employee's career development, and ensure that training on confidence and assertiveness is available to, inclusive of, and appropriate for all staff, particularly minority groups across all protected characteristics. (Key findings 4 and 8)

- 5 Training for line managers should recognise the contribution of diversity networks for the good relations of the Civil Service in general and the personal development of participants as individuals. (Key finding 9)

- 6 Appraisals of those with line management responsibility should include achievements and actions taken to strengthen or ensure equality. (Key finding 7 and 9)

- 7 Staff involvement in diversity networks should be monitored at appraisal and achievements and experience from participation in diversity networks should be considered evidence of an employee's skills. (Key finding 9)

# 1 Introduction

## Background

In April 2010 the Civil Service Rainbow Alliance (CSRA), with the support of a:gender, commissioned YouGov to conduct a comprehensive review of career development for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGB&T) Civil Servants. The research aimed to examine whether or not existing career development opportunities in the UK Civil Service adequately meet the needs of LGB&T staff. It was intended to determine what (if any) barriers to career progression exist and to recommend solutions.

Given the current lack of research evidence about LGB&T civil servants, including their career development experiences, and the recent passing into law of the Equality Act 2010 which strengthens protection for LGB&T people, this research is also designed to improve the Civil Services' understanding of workplace issues affecting its LGB&T staff.

The research project team at YouGov was presented by the CSRA/a:gender steering group with a set of four aims, each answering a specific series of questions:

- What are the needs of LGB&T members of staff who wish to progress their career within the UK Civil Service?
- What (if any) are the barriers to career progression of LGB&T civil servants?
- Do existing career development opportunities adequately meet the needs of LGB&T members of staff?
- Does the use of existing talent pools (such as the Fast Stream) adequately meet the needs of LGB&T members of staff?

## Methodology

The research project had a number of interconnected elements as follows:

- A literature and data review;
- A quantitative online survey of LGB&T civil servants;
- An online discussion forum;

- Four LGB focus groups;
- Two trans focus groups;
- Four in-depth interviews with Human Resources and Diversity staff;
- Civil Service People Survey 2011; and
- Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2011.

The review of literature and data sources included LGB&T public sector and Civil Service sources of research and information relating to career development and diversity from private and public sectors. This process assisted the design of a survey questionnaire which was run firstly with LGB&T Civil Service members of the YouGov panel, gathering 65 responses in the first week of May 2010.

The survey was then made live for dissemination through Staff Networks and other publicity channels such as the LGB&T media, LGB&T online community message boards and the Stonewall Diversity Champions e-bulletin. The number of communication channels used ensured responses from a wide range of Civil Service departments, executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies.

Without a fixed list of LGB&T civil servants to contact or any population statistics it was not possible to ensure the sample is representative by organisation or to calculate a response rate. We were also unable to have a control group. For a full breakdown of responses by organisation, please refer to table 19 in Appendix A.

The survey remained open from Monday May 10th until Friday June 18th. In total there were 838 LGB&T responses with a breakdown by sexual orientation and whether Trans or not in Table 1. Gay men formed the majority of responses (63 per cent), but with 98 Bisexual and 173 Lesbian civil servants there was sizeable participation from others. There were 77 Trans respondents (9 per cent of the total sample). Twenty-five of the 77 Trans participants identified as bisexual and 17 identified as heterosexual.

- 8 Yougov encourages all Civil Service Departments to be bold in the gathering of sexual orientation data, continue to monitor and use the information to identify inconsistencies such as in the application of policy. However, for gender identity, the small number of Trans people in each department would negate the benefits of individual monitoring and alternatives such as the a:gender Trans Inequality Index should be used to monitor and benchmark departmental progress instead. (Key findings 1 and 10)
- 9 Yougov would encourage all Civil Service Departments to introduce mentoring programmes for LGB&T staff, in consultation with their LGB&T staff networks. (Key finding 5)
- 10 The Civil Service as a whole should more visibly recognise the significant value in terms of being a role model that just one or two senior LGB&T civil servants provide to a department. The Civil Service could also usefully provide those that are willing to volunteer, with the platform to share their experiences with others. (Key finding 6)
- 11 The Civil Service as a whole should more proactively promote the benefits of Diversity networks for Departments as well as individual members of staff. A clear and consistent message shared across Departments would be particularly helpful. (Key finding 9)
- 12 Departments should continue using benchmarking tools such as the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and the a:gender Trans Equality Index to drive continuous organisational improvement. (Key finding 6)
- 13 Departments should consider how they can improve support to LGB&T staff working in the regions or overseas. (Key finding 11)
- 14 Departments should work with their LGB&T staff networks to take forward these recommendations, and report their progress to CSRA annually.

## 2 The UK Civil Service: an LGB&T friendly employer?

**Table 1: Sexual orientation of survey respondents by Trans and non-Trans**

	All respondents		Non-trans respondents		Trans respondents	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Bisexual	98	12	73	10	25	32
Gay man	529	63	519	68	10	13
Lesbian <sup>1</sup>	173	21	166	22	7	9
Heterosexual/straight	17	2	0	0	17	22
Other	21	3	3	<1	18	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>838</b>		<b>761</b>		<b>77</b>	

Within the Trans group of 77 respondents; 28 identified as men, 37 as women and 12 as an 'other gender.' 'Other' gender was described, for example, as mixed, dual or inter-sexed.

**Table 2: Trans by sexual orientation and gender role**

	Identify as			Total
	male	female	other gender	
Bisexual	12	10	3	25
Gay/lesbian	10	7	1	18
Heterosexual/straight	5	11	1	17
Other	1	9	7	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>77</b>

In parallel to the survey a number of focus groups were held in conjunction with CSRA and a:gender. Group discussions were facilitated in Cardiff, Leeds, Sheffield and London and civil servants took part from a wide range of departments and agencies (see Annex A for details). Four in-depth interviews were carried out with Human Resources and Diversity professionals from The Foreign & Commonwealth Office, the Home Office and The Land Registry.

<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire option was 'gay/lesbian.' For the purposes of analysis in this report it was then split by gender into 'gay man' and 'lesbian.'

**Prior research, focussed on sexual orientation, has found that working in an environment which is perceived as being LGB friendly has a positive impact on LGB staff – fostering openness and confidence, improving productivity and effectiveness as well as a sense of loyalty and pride in the organisation<sup>2</sup>.** This shows that being an LGB friendly organisation not only benefits LGB staff, but also allows the organisation to benefit from a greater level of motivation and ability from within their staff.

Although a direct comparison with past research does not exist, the 2009 Trans Research review<sup>3</sup> from the Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) suggests that Trans respondents are much more likely to work in the public sector (42 per cent of those post-transition do so), but does not suggest why, although perception of the friendliness of the sector could be seen as a fair assumption.

This research therefore sought first to develop an evidence base on whether the UK Civil Service is perceived as being, and is actually, an LGB&T friendly employer.

### LGB&T friendliness as a reason for joining the Civil Service

Figure 1 shows that one quarter (26 per cent) of the LGB civil servants who responded to the survey were influenced in joining the Civil Service to some extent due to their belief that it was an LGB&T friendly

employer. Two thirds, however, were not influenced by this at all. The proportion influenced by this is highest amongst Gay men (29 per cent) and lowest within Bisexuals (21 per cent).

Although two thirds (66 per cent) of Trans respondents stated they were not influenced by this upon joining<sup>4</sup>, they were slightly more likely to be influenced by the perceived friendliness of the Civil Service than their non-trans LGB colleagues, with 29 per cent having been in some way influenced by this factor when joining.

Some Trans focus group participants suggested they had sought jobs in the Civil Service prior to transition, as they assumed they would find more support during gender reassignment in the public sector than they would in the private sector. Assumptions were based either on previous negative experience within the private sector, or on prior knowledge of an organisation's policy on gender reassignment.

There is a significant trend towards LGB&T employees joining the Civil Service due to their perception of it being an LGB&T friendly employer when the data is split by the length of time respondents have been in the Civil Service. Forty-one per cent of those who joined in the last five years did so to some extent because they saw it as a friendly employer. This drops to 27 per cent of those who have served six to 15 years and 16 per cent of those serving over 15 years.

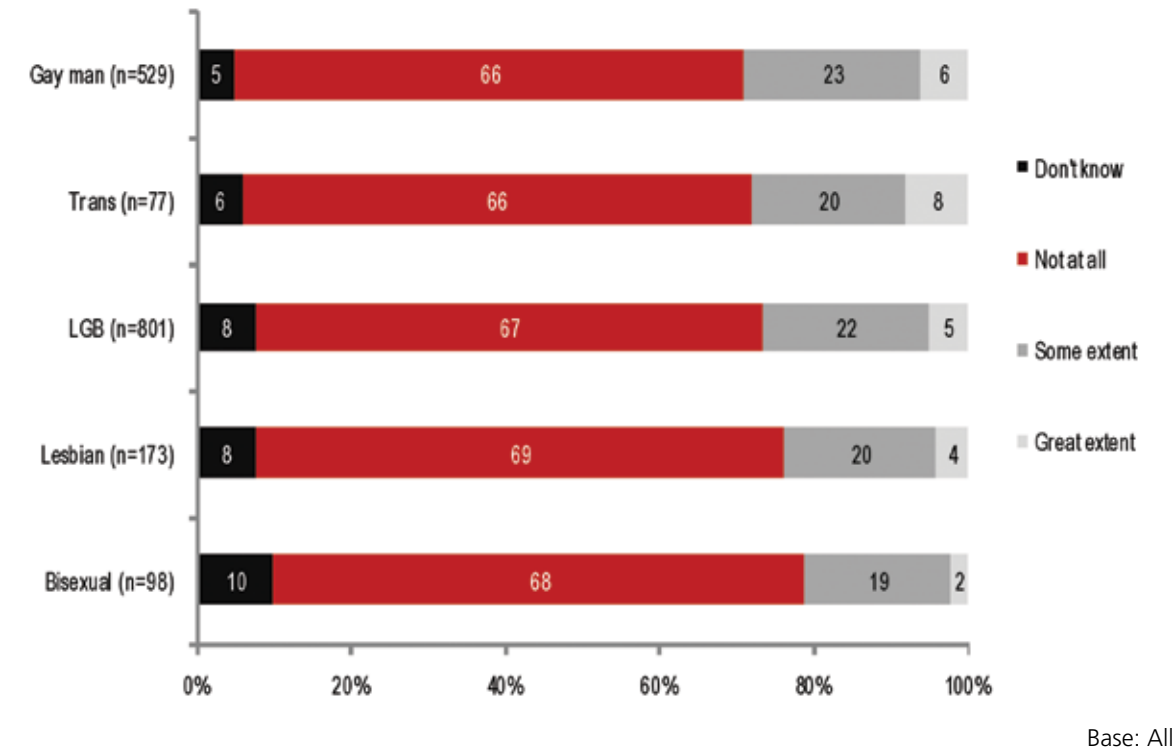
<sup>2</sup> Sue Bond et al (2009) Integration in the workplace: emerging employment practise on age, sexual orientation and religion or belief, EHRC

<sup>3</sup> Mitchell and Howarth (2000), Trans Research Review, EHRC

<sup>4</sup> Those surveyed may have joined the Civil Service prior to transition beginning and it may not have been a consideration at the time.



**Figure 1: Thinking back to when you first joined the Civil Service, to what extent do you think that you joined because you believed that it is an LGB&T friendly employer?**



### Having joined, is the Civil Service as LGB&T friendly as it seemed?

Asked to draw upon the knowledge gathered over their own time in the Civil Service, 79 per cent of LGB respondents to our survey agreed that they now see the Civil Service as an LGB&T friendly place to work in. This sentiment is strongest amongst Gay men, where four fifths (80 per cent) agree with the statement and weakest amongst Bisexuals where agreement drops to a still high proportion of 73 per cent.

Whilst in the Civil Service People Survey 2010, two thirds (67 per cent) of LGB staff were of the view that their organisation respects individual's differences.

These findings, from two surveys of Civil Servants, are supported by the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2011 which found that 78 per cent of LGB staff feel that the Civil Service is inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. This was 5 per cent higher than the average score amongst all participants in the Index.

<sup>5</sup> Cabinet Office (2000), Civil Service Diversity Survey.

This reinforces the Civil Service Diversity Survey<sup>5</sup> in which 71 per cent of all civil servants agreed that they felt their organisation to be an equal opportunities employer. However it is worth noting that comments made in this survey alluded to a feeling that diversity and equality issues were often driven purely by legal considerations rather than an acknowledgement of the benefits to staff or the organisation.

The perception of the friendliness of the Civil Service changes with the extent a person is 'out' at work. Those who are fully 'out' to their manager are much more likely to perceive the Civil Service as a friendly employer – 82 per cent having done so. This falls to 72 per cent of those partially 'out' to their manager and 57 per cent of those who are not 'out' at all. Perceived employer friendliness also rises with grade. Seventy-nine per cent of those under SEO/HEO/Middle Manager level agree that the Civil Service is a friendly employer, compared to 82 per cent of those working above this level.

Although perception of the Civil Service as an LGB&T friendly employer before joining was higher amongst Trans respondents, they are less likely to agree that it is a friendly employer having worked there than their LGB colleagues. Only 57 per cent agreed with the statement with 16 per cent actively disagreeing with it. This was double the proportion of LGB respondents that disagreed with the statement.

### How has the Civil Service changed over time?

Exploring this question in more detail in the focus groups, participants generally felt that the Civil Service approach to sexual orientation and gender identity equality had changed radically over the past three decades. This was attributed to wider social change, legislative change and also, in part, to the development and subsequent activities of Networks. They, it was felt, had made the issues visible and more openly discussed within the workplace.

However, there were also concerns expressed by focus group participants that while policies and practices may have evolved through legal imperative, the level of LGB&T friendliness within respective departments, agencies and teams was inconsistent, and depended on the attitudes of individuals and line managers. For example in the Civil Service People Survey 2010, two thirds of LGB Civil Servants felt that heterosexual colleagues did not understand LGB issues.

Whilst in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2011, 35 per cent of staff did not feel supported by their line manager as an LGB member of staff and 33 per cent did not feel supported as an LGB person by senior management. Although the Civil Service did perform slightly better than the average score of all participants in the index on these two measures (4 per cent and 8 per cent respectively).

## Still some way to go on gender reassignment

There were also concerns specifically in regard to gender reassignment, which many organisations across the Civil Service are ill prepared to support Trans civil servants during their transition. While some may have a policy on gender reassignment, many are not equipped to understand in practice the unique issues for Trans staff, as opposed to LGB staff (often considered, wrongly, as one homogenous group). This is a burden for Trans civil servants who wish to transition but are unsupported, or who find themselves supporting their HR team through the process.

“Some of the smaller departments just aren’t exposed to it (gender identity) so are less equipped to deal with it. Unless someone transitions, it doesn’t necessarily come up as an issue, although it should do as it’s a protected characteristic.”

“When I transitioned, and at a time when I needed support, I had to spend the next few months helping HR to write their policy. That still happens. People have to put in a lot of hard work to make sure it goes smoothly for them, and they shouldn’t have to do that.”

“I was the first Trans person they’d come across, so consequently I led it. The policy was there, but they’d never had to use it.”

(Trans focus group participants)

Others reported delaying their transition, or leaving their job in order to transition, for fear of an adverse reaction. However, some individuals reported a positive experience, where they were supported, their issues understood, their privacy respected and where their managers and teams continued to include them and treat them with dignity and respect. They considered themselves lucky, rather than experiencing standard practice.

“I went to my work colleagues, not a problem. There’s been nothing detrimental said. I’m included. The first thing that happened, I was invited on a girls’ night out. And I get the full support of my colleagues around me, but also my managers right up to the top. But I am the exception to the rule.”

(Trans focus group participant)

## To what extent are LGB Civil Servants ‘out’ at work?

The extent to which LGB employees are ‘out’ about their sexual orientation at work is often used as a proxy indicator for how LGB friendly an organisation is. For example, Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index asks LGB staff whether they are open about their sexual orientation at home, with their line manager, with work colleagues and at work generally. We have repeated this methodology for the purposes of this research.

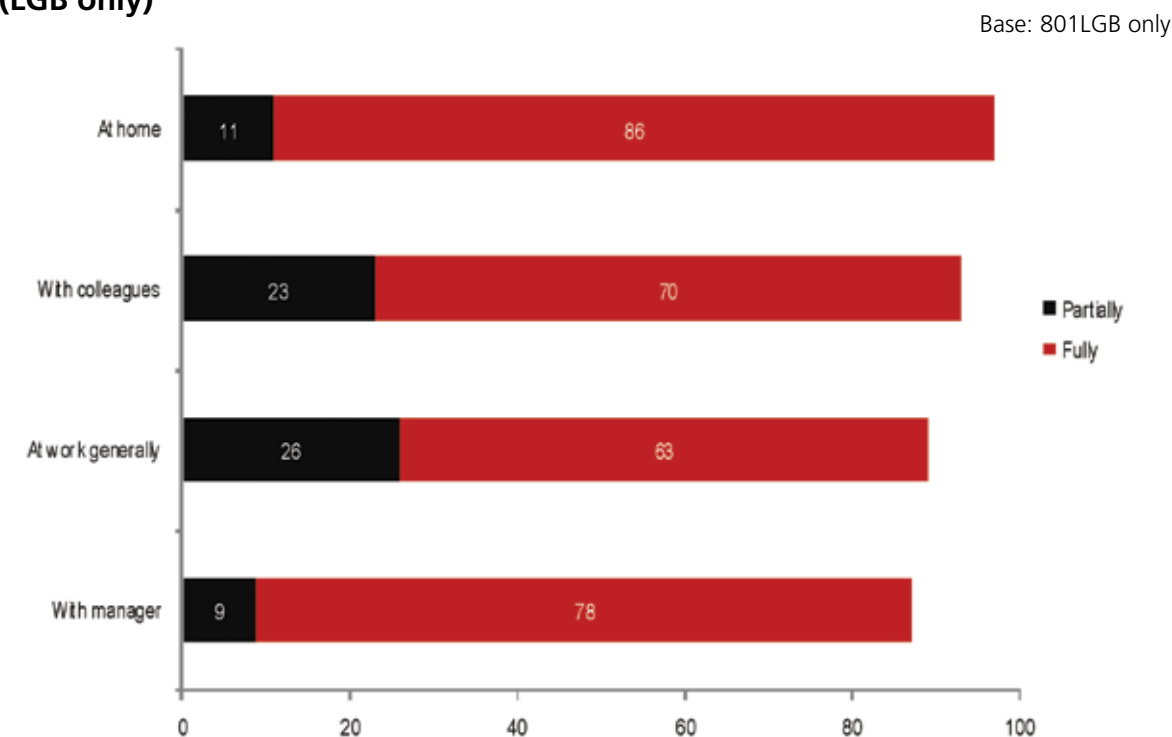
Figure 2 over the page shows that 96 per cent of LGB respondents interviewed are ‘out’, to some extent, at home. Ninety-two per cent are ‘out’ to their colleagues to some extent and 88 per cent are ‘out’ generally at work – 63 per cent describing themselves as fully ‘out’. This compares favourably to a 2006 study of 16 ‘good practice’ employers across all sectors, where 58 per cent of respondents stated they were ‘out’ at work<sup>6</sup>.

A particularly significant figure with regards to career development is the proportion of staff that are ‘out’ to their manager at work. Almost four fifths (78 per cent) are fully ‘out’ to their managers and a further nine per cent are partially ‘out’.

These findings were supported by evidence from the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2011 which identified that eighty per cent of Government employees were open about their sexual orientation with colleagues, sixty nine per cent were open to their manager, 28 per cent open with customers/service users and clients, and only 11 per cent not open to anyone.

<sup>6</sup> Colgan, F., Creegan, C., McKearney, A. and Wright, T. (2006) Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Workers: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace. London: London Metropolitan University: Comparative Organisation and Equality Research Centre.

**Figure 2: Are you open about your sexual orientation in the following places? (LGB only)**



When comparing the proportion of Lesbians, Gay men and Bisexuals who are 'out' to their manager, there is an obvious difference between Gay and Lesbian civil servants and their Bisexual colleagues. Ninety-two per cent of Gay men and 91 per cent of Lesbians are in some way open about their sexual orientation to their managers compared to only 58 per cent of Bisexuals. This may reflect Bisexuality being less accepted or understood in society and often with a less obvious identity, compared to Gay and Lesbian sexual orientation.

There is also a large increase in the proportion of Bisexuals who consider themselves as partially 'out' to their manager compared to their Gay and Lesbian colleagues. These issues were picked up in the online discussion forum, where Bisexual participants described the attitudes they face and the way they feel about being 'out' at work.

"There can be issues where people don't understand bisexuality or make negative assumptions about it. Occasionally bisexuals are thought of as confused, greedy or indecisive and if one's colleagues take that attitude that would be detrimental to one's career."

## Why are they not 'out' at work?

Those who are not fully 'out' about their sexual orientation at work were asked to share their thoughts about why this was. The word cloud in highlights common themes in the statements made, particularly highlighting concerns around the perceptions of colleagues, managers and feelings of discomfort.

"As a bisexual civil servant I don't feel that I've experienced discrimination, but I suspect that most colleagues never join the dots, as I don't set out to publicise the fact... One reason not to make an identity issue about it is that you tend to get more questions than if you are straight, gay or lesbian, just because it's something most colleagues are less familiar with."

"Bisexual invisibility is a pretty standard problem."

(Online forum participants)

**Figure 3: Reasons for not being fully 'out' about sexual orientation in the workplace**



Source: wordle.net

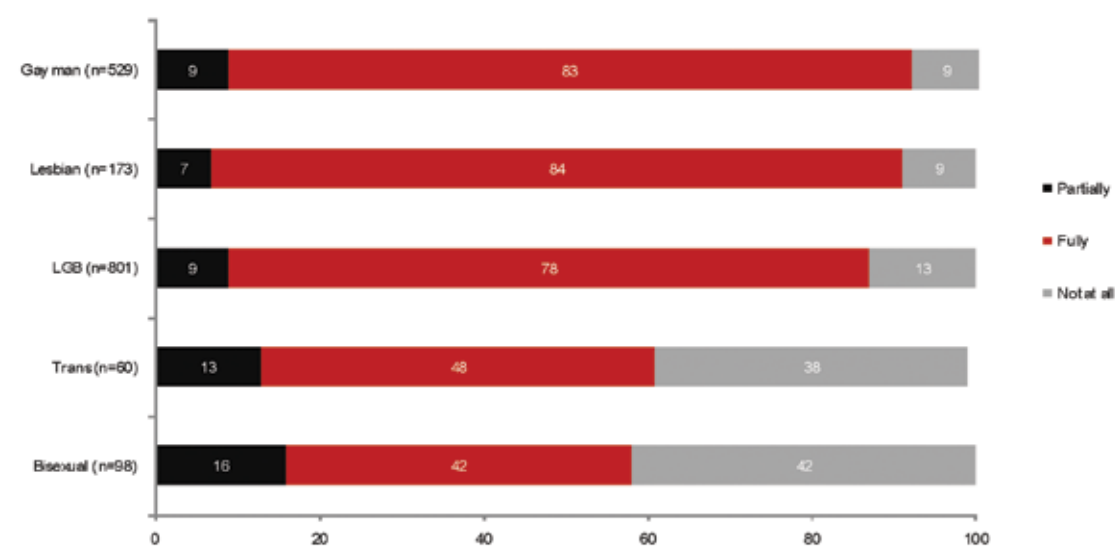


Being ‘out’ to the manager at work

As time in the Civil Service increases, so does the proportion of civil servants who are completely ‘out’ to their managers at work. This rises from 72 per cent of those who have been in the Civil Service for less

than five years, to 80 per cent for those who have been serving for over 15 years. There is also a high proportion of those serving less than five years who are partially ‘out’ (14 per cent) compared to those serving over 15 years (eight per cent).

Figure 4: Open about sexual orientation to managers



Base: all, excluding those identifying as heterosexual



LGB focus group participants were mainly ‘out’ about their sexual orientation at work, although this had not always been the case for longer-standing members of staff. Those with several decades’ service in the Civil Service were less likely to have been ‘out’ as LGB when they commenced their employment.

“(In the 1970s) it was something I would have to keep hidden. I formed that view quite quickly... There were no equal opportunities policies and when people talked about Gay issues it was always couched in negativity and hostility. I’d only been in the office for about a year and a guy was discovered to be Gay and it was made so unpleasant for him he had to move to another office. You listen to that and you think ‘if that’s how they’re treating him, what are they going to do to me?’ It reinforced the need to keep it quiet.”

(LGB focus group participant)

Younger Civil Servants expectations of being ‘out’

Many of those who had joined the Civil Service within recent years said they were happy to be ‘out’ about their sexual orientation from the start of their employment, suggesting visibility of other LGB colleagues, knowledge of a Network and access to the organisation’s equality policy had facilitated their decision to be ‘out’. Others suggested that LGB people, particularly those from younger age groups, now expect to be able to be ‘out’ at work and will select potential employers on the basis of their track record on LGB&T equality and inclusion – something they felt the Civil Service should be aware of in an increasingly competitive job market.

There were varying views on whether or not someone would be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity on an application form. Those with Network duties suggested that the experience they had gained from the Network would be valuable in applying for new jobs. However, some felt that wider perceptions of Networks and of those who need to spend time coordinating them may count against them. This is discussed in more detail later on.

The Trans experience of being ‘out’

The story is understandably very different for Trans respondents who, after undergoing transition, may see themselves simply as being male or female and may not want others to know about their change of gender. Those who are ‘out’ about their transition may be so through choice. However, they may also be ‘out’ because they are visibly Trans, or because they have been outed by colleagues, either inadvertently or deliberately. Forty two per cent (32 of 77) are open about their change of gender at work and for 20 of them, this was their choice. A further five stated that it was partially their choice to be open about their change of gender, but for seven it was not.



	n
Open at work	32
Not open at work	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>
Open by your choice (fully)	20
Open by your choice (partially)	5
Not open by choice	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

When asked what had influenced being open about gender identity at work, colleagues, other people and openness featured prominently in the responses. Some had positive expectations whilst many others referred to the reality of becoming open due to transition.

"I was 'out' from the start purely to head off gossip and secrets."

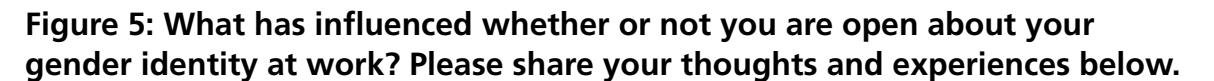
"When you go through the transition you kind of have to be 'out', and once you transition, particularly if you move on to pastures new, you don't want to be 'out'. Or you might want to be. Some people find it hard passing and want to be 'out'. Others went through the transition in order to leave their Trans history behind."

(Trans focus group participants)

"I chose the career I am now in, within the Civil Service, just over two years ago, precisely because of CS diversity policies. It will therefore be an ideal place for me to transition in service."

"You are forced out by the decision to undergo gender reassignment and some people will always remember unless you change jobs. I'd rather people just knew me as a woman."

(Trans online survey participants)



Source: wordle.net

## Where within the Civil Service is it more or less LGBT friendly?

The focus groups explored participants' perceptions of where in the Civil Service it is more or less LGB&T friendly. Generally, it was suggested that one organisation, particularly larger ones in multiple locations, was likely to have many different working environments, each with their own workplace cultures, reliant on line managers to set an inclusive, or excluding, tone.

Attitudes towards LGBT&T inclusion, and the visibility of LGBT&T staff, were therefore variable. It was perceived that head offices, corporate services and organisations based in cosmopolitan urban settings were more LGBT&T friendly, and likely to have more openly LGBT&T employees. While some people had based their views on perceptions or anecdotal evidence, this appeared to influence their career choices.

"I can't say for sure, but in (my organisation) I'd anticipate that there may be more issues with potential discrimination in more rural offices and more problems than I'd get working in the middle of Cardiff."

(LGB focus group participant)

"I'm in a corporate services area, but I'd think twice before going into operational because of the culture. It's very macho."

(Trans focus group participant)

## 3 Taking the pulse: satisfaction with current career progress

**In this section, the research moves on from understanding whether the Civil Service is an LGB&T friendly employer, to consider how satisfied LGB&T staff are with the current state of their own career progression within the Civil Service.**

### Current satisfaction about career progress

Asked how satisfied they were with the way their career has developed over time (Figure 6), almost half of the LGB civil servants surveyed were satisfied (although only 11 per cent described themselves as very satisfied, with a further 38 per cent describing themselves as being fairly satisfied). A further quarter of those interviewed (25 per cent) felt neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Whilst 27 per cent described themselves as being dissatisfied with the way their career had developed over time, only 4 per cent described themselves as very dissatisfied and 23 per cent as fairly dissatisfied. These findings were replicated in the Civil Service People Survey 2010 where only 26 per cent of LGB staff feel there are opportunities to develop their career in their organisation. However the figures were equally low for heterosexual colleagues, with 27 per cent of heterosexual staff feeling they had adequate career development opportunities.

The level of satisfaction with career development changes with the degree to which an LGB civil servant is 'out' about their sexual orientation at work. For example, almost half (49 per cent) of those who are completely 'out' to their manager are satisfied with their career. This changes to 46 per cent of those who are partially 'out' and 44 per cent of those who are not 'out' to their manager at all.

Generally, the shorter amount of time an LGB&T civil servant has spent in service, the more positive they are. For example, 59 per cent of those who have been serving less than five years believe there are opportunities for their career to develop in their organisation compared to just under half (48 per cent) of those serving over 15 years. This, again, is true when looking at statements about progression. Two fifths (41 per cent) of those serving less than five years believe their organisation promotes the best people for the job and 25 per cent that you do not have to conform in order to progress, compared to 30 and 22 per cent respectively of the others.

Areas which were singled out as being less LGB&T friendly included the more provincial towns but also high pressure, high staff turnover environments like call centres and more 'macho' culture fields such as security, policing, customs and ports. It was suggested that areas where discrimination against LGB&T staff occurred were also likely to harbour racist and sexist cultures. Staff based in Departments that work overseas also highlighted particular difficulties for LGB&T staff on overseas postings. In some countries homosexuality is still illegal, this means that LGB staff do not apply for career opportunities in such countries or are forced to hide their sexual orientation. In other countries being LGB or T still carries a stigma within society, which also acts as a barrier to working overseas.

### Benchmarking performance

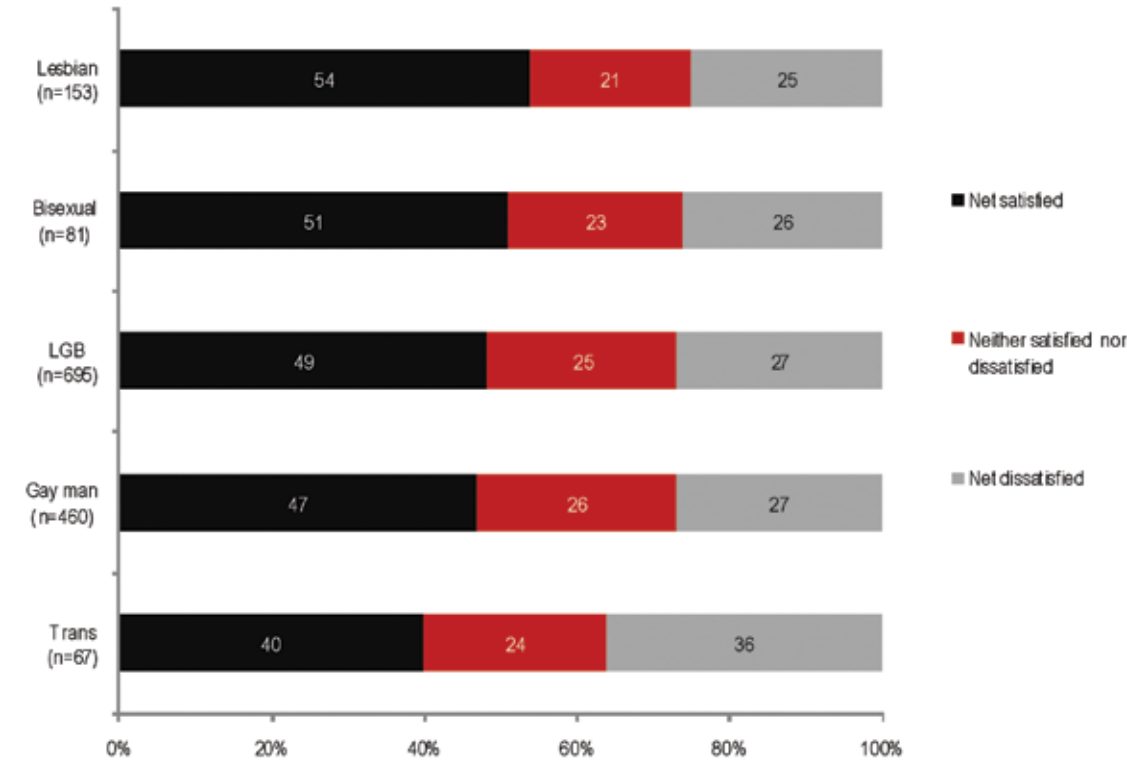
The Stonewall Workplace Index 2011<sup>7</sup>, which covers the period from October 2009 to September 2010, and exists to benchmark performance on sexual orientation equality, identifies that central Government has the third highest sector score of all employers. In addition, across the Civil Service, the Home Office was the top performing organisation from all the entries, with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs at 8th, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at 16th, and the Environment Agency coming in the top 20 organisations at 18th.

In parallel, the a:gender index<sup>8</sup>, which benchmarks performance on support for Trans staff, identified the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Defence as the top performing organisations on Transgender equality. In particular it identified that these three Departments showed a high level of commitment to all Trans staff, not just those going through gender reassignment.

<sup>7</sup> Stonewall, (2011) Workplace Equality Index 2011

<sup>8</sup> a:gender, (2009) Trans Equality Index Report

Figure 6: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how your career has developed over time?



Base: All

The picture does not alter too much when comparing Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual respondents. The most positive about their career development of the group were Lesbians, where 54 per cent stated they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their career had developed. This was followed by Bisexual respondents (51 per cent) and lastly Gay respondents (47 per cent).

### Satisfaction with career progression: the Trans perspective

Trans respondents had a slightly more negative view of their career development. 40 per cent described themselves as being very or fairly satisfied with their career development to date, with only two per cent overall stating themselves to be very satisfied. Over one third (36 per cent) were dissatisfied with their career development. Other research in these areas confirms this dissatisfaction in career development felt by Trans respondents. For example, in 2007 a:gender reported that Trans employees are consistently found to be working below their level of capability<sup>9</sup>. Unfortunately, data on this issue was not made available from the Civil Service People Survey 2010 due to small sample sizes.

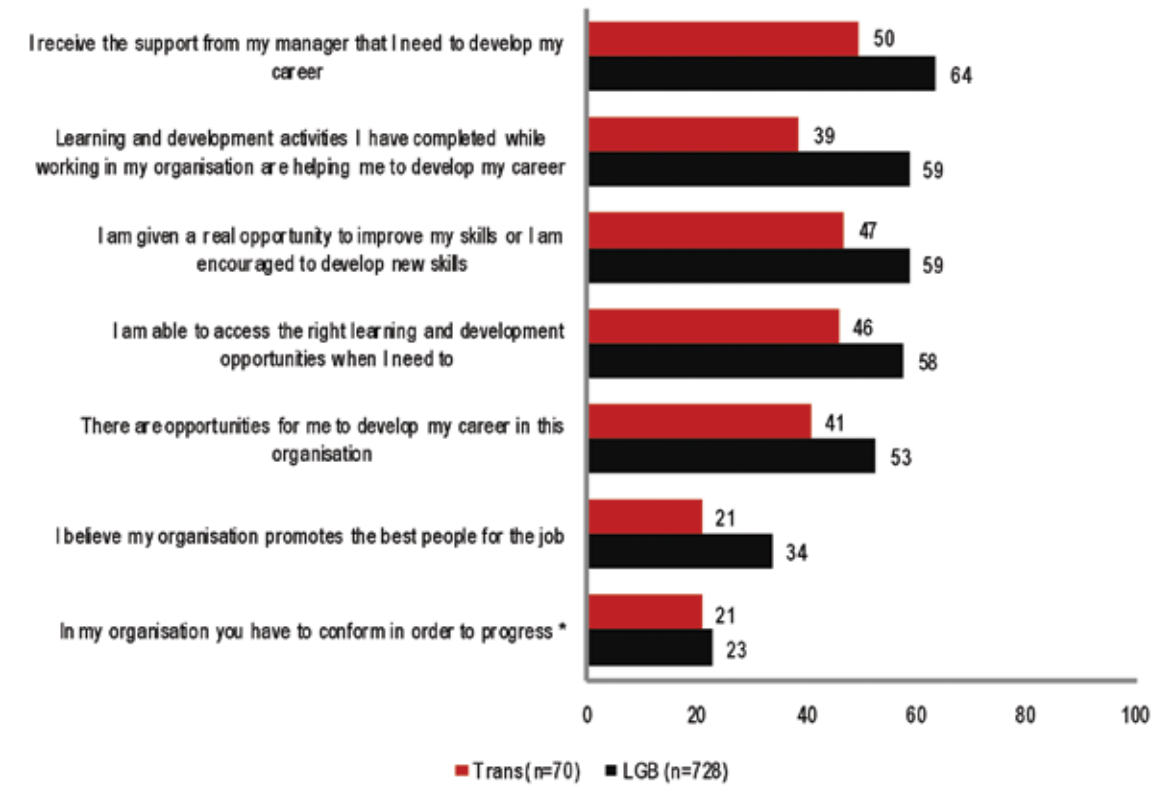
### Career development opportunities

Respondents were then asked the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements relating to their own career development. As can be seen from the darker bars in Figure 7, reaction was mixed as to LGB respondents' view of their current career development. In the statements that relate to their own personal development, the majority are positive. However when looking at progression through the wider organisation, respondents were more negative with three fifths (59 per cent) feeling that employees need to conform in order to progress within their organisation. This compares to 44 per cent of all Civil Servants within the Civil Service Diversity survey<sup>10</sup> who felt they had to 'fit the mould' socially in order to get on within their organisation. Only one third (34 per cent) of LGB respondents agree that their organisation promotes the best people for the job.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Mitchell, Charlie Howarth (2007) Trans Research Review, EHRC

<sup>10</sup> Cabinet Office (2000), Civil Service Diversity Survey.

Figure 7: Extent to which LGB and Trans respondents agreed with statements about career progression



Base: All  
Note: \* indicates reversed scale for negative statement

Trans respondents (shown as the lighter bars in Figure 7) agreed less about their opportunities for career development within their organisations and were more critical of the organisations themselves than their LGB colleagues. Only 21 per cent of Trans respondents believed their organisation promoted the right people for the job, for example, and under half agreed to any positive statements about their own career development opportunities.

Both Trans and LGB civil servants were more positive about their opportunities to develop a career in their organisations than the overall figure of 38 per cent from the Civil Service's own staff engagement survey<sup>11</sup>. This was also true of LGB respondents agreeing with statements about their ability to access the right learning and development opportunities when needed (60 per cent overall in the Civil Service Engagement Survey, Trans respondents falling below this average at 46 per cent).

<sup>11</sup> Cabinet Office, (2009) Civil Service Engagement Survey

By Grade

Positivity also increased with the grade of civil servant (Table 4). Over three quarters (78 per cent) of those above Grade 6 or 7, for example, felt that learning and development activities they had completed whilst working in their organisation had helped them to develop their career. This compares to just 56 per cent of those civil servants below this level. Of those at the lowest band (AA-AO/Administrator), just 42 per cent agreed with the statement.

Table 4: Learning and development activities I have completed while working in my organisation are helping me to develop my career (by Civil Service grade)

	Per cent				
	AA-AO/ Administrator	EO/Junior Manager	HEO/SEO/ Middle Manager	Grade 7/ Grade 6/ Senior Manager	Senior Civil Service/ Director
	(n=140)	(n=165)	(n=232)	(n=124)	(n=19)
Strongly agree	9	15	18	21	37
Tend to agree	33	36	50	57	47
Neither agree nor disagree	26	26	18	14	5
Tend to disagree	21	18	12	6	11
Strongly disagree	11	5	2	3	-
	Base: all				



Current recruitment and promotion processes

A number of online discussion forum participants and focus group participants suggested that career development initiatives may be rendered meaningless when the recruitment and promotion process is fundamentally flawed, allowing bias and potentially prejudice to influence who is recruited or selected for promotion. It was argued that this works against anyone who is obviously L, G, B or T, either because they are ‘out’ or because they can be easily identified as such from their appearance, whose face may be deemed ‘not to fit’ by a member of the shortlisting or interview panel.

“Support in training, mentoring is fine but counts for nothing if a known LGB or Trans person or visibly Trans person is interviewed by a panel with a bigot on... LGB and Trans people may be at high risk of being treated less favourably so it is crucial due process can be seen to be fair and transparent.”

(Online forum participant)

Conversely, it was suggested by one of the HR professionals who was interviewed that steps can be taken to ensure all decisions are made by more than one person, and that where HR is not directly involved in the process, they do ask for all paperwork relating to the final decision, and can carry out spot checks to ensure recruitment policy is being applied fairly and consistently.

Variations between L, G, B & T on perceptions of current learning and development opportunities

Table 5 shows agreement with the statements broken down by Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual respondents. Lesbian respondents tended to be more critical of the opportunities and support for their personal learning and development than their Gay and Bisexual colleagues and also the least likely to believe that their organisation always promotes the best person for the job (33 per cent). This comes despite Lesbian civil servants being more generally positive about their career progress, suggesting that learning and development opportunities have not been a key determinant of their overall viewpoint. Lesbians were the least likely to agree that in their organisation one has to conform in order to progress (52 per cent), whereas over three fifths of Gay respondents agreed with this statement (62 per cent).

Bisexual respondents were mixed in their level of support of the statements about their personal opportunities. Whilst they were the most likely to agree that there are opportunities for them to develop their career in their organisation (56 per cent) and that they are given real opportunities to improve their skills (61 per cent), they are also the least likely to agree that the learning and development activities they have completed while working in their organisations have helped them to develop their career (54 per cent).

In addition to the benchmarks provided by the Civil Service Engagement Survey<sup>12</sup>, a breakdown of some of the measures shows that, for example, 50 per cent of heterosexual staff agreed that learning and development opportunities they completed were helping their career. The Civil Service Engagement Survey also found that half of Gay and Lesbian respondents and 49 per cent of Bisexuals agreed, figures lower than were found in this study.

Table 5: Agreement with statements concerning career development opportunities

	Per cent			
	Lesbian (n=160)	Gay men (n=483)	Bisexual (n=84)	Trans (n=70)
I believe my organisation promotes the best people for the job	33	34	35	21
In my organisation you have to conform in order to progress	52	62	54	60
I receive the support from my manager that I need to develop my career	60	65	62	50
I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need to	54	60	55	46
Learning and development activities I have completed while working in my organisation are helping me to develop my career	55	61	54	39
I am given real opportunity to improve my skills or I am encouraged to develop new skills	53	60	61	47
There are opportunities for me to develop my career in this organisation	49	54	56	41
	Base: all			

<sup>12</sup> Cabinet Office, (2009) Civil Service Engagement Survey

## 4 Barriers to career development

Trans civil servants were consistently less likely to agree that they had career development access and opportunities, when compared to LGB colleagues. This was particularly pronounced for activities that might have helped in the development of their career and the belief that their organisation promotes the best people for the job.

### Conforming to progress

Online discussion forum members expressed a range of views as to whether or not they felt their career aspirations were taken seriously by their organisation. This issue of conforming or being seen to fit in, in order to progress, was a particular concern for some.

"It's not directly related to being LGBT, but those who get groomed for advancement seem almost invariably to be those who conform to the "norm" – there's a subconscious agenda there..."

"I agree. It seems to be (for whatever reason) that LGBT staff can subconsciously be seen by some individuals as lacking in credibility, and this subtly affects opportunities to network. As usual, if the 'face fits' you can 'network effectively' and development opportunities tend to go to those who are effective in building a supportive network of people who can help with their careers."

"I also agree. I always think people who conform to the norm are the ones who are put forward for promotions."

(Online forum participants)

For others, the ability to benefit from career development opportunities appears also to depend on fitting in, because being visibly different or known to be difficult is felt to hamper access. This may be a factor in some LGB civil servants avoiding coming out. Some Trans staff may similarly avoid being open about their change of gender or gender identity for the same reason, although others will retain their privacy by choice.

"I am okay now, but then, people don't know I have a Trans past. Initially, people treated me with kid gloves, like I was too sensitive to do anything new."

"You often see adverts encouraging applications for ethnic minorities, disabled or women – but I have never seen one encouraging applications from LGBT people. Otherwise, I think my career is taken seriously and my line managers are supportive – but I'm not 'out' at work!"

(Online forum participants)

These issues are explored in more detail in the next section.

**In this chapter, we examine the barriers to career development that may exist for LGB&T staff in the Civil Service, ranging from person centred barriers such as low self esteem, to external barriers such as discrimination.**

### Whether LGB&T staff face barriers to career development in the Civil Service?

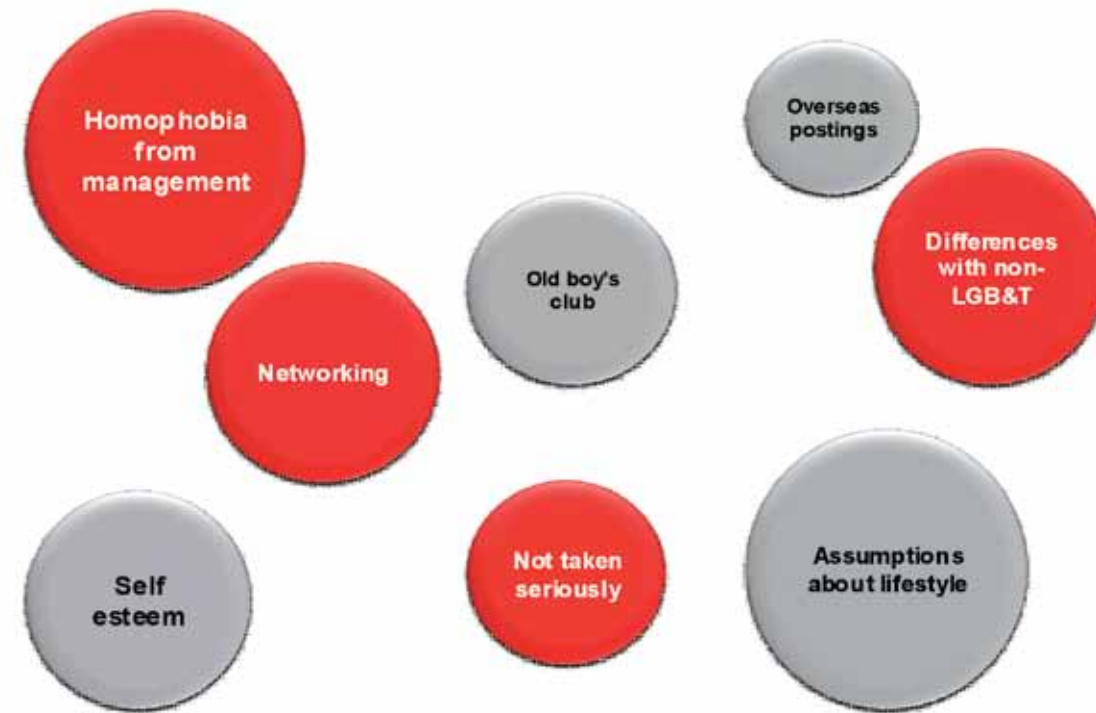
Asked whether there have been, or are, any barriers to the development of the careers of LGB staff due to their sexual orientation, just under one quarter (23 per cent) stated there were.

These barriers varied between respondents, but some of the main themes are listed (and depicted in Figure 8) below:

- Homophobia is a commonly cited barrier, with much coming from management and some from religious conviction.
- Stereotypes or assumptions being made about a person or their lifestyle due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Differences existing between themselves and their non-LGB&T colleagues, sharing no common ground with management, feelings of awkwardness.
- Self-esteem issues relating to having been 'in the closet,' not having begun transition or having been bullied previously due to sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Specific issue with overseas placements – rights not being the same for civil partners as they are for heterosexual spouses and only having the opportunity to apply to countries where homophobia is illegal, and
- Being perceived to be less committed to the job if involved in a Network.

Figure 8: What sorts of barriers have you experienced specifically because of your sexual orientation?



Focus group participants and discussion forum members described the same themes. Generally 'not fitting in' was considered to be a key barrier to career progression. Also, discrimination from line managers and interview panels was considered to be a barrier, but one which it was felt could be hard to pin down or prove if not explicit. The impact of not being able to be 'out' and of subsequent low self esteem was also seen as something which could prohibit career progression, as was the lack of visible senior role models.

"The social barrier is probably worse than barriers to promotion. It's having to bite your tongue all the time. When you're not 'out' you can never just say what you want. Like what you did at the weekend. It's difficult to discuss your out of work relationship activities. It's as though you are in suspended animation while you are at work. As most people present as heterosexual, and as most higher grade role models at work seem hetero, I think I internalise ideas that I am not adequate, that I am different, and so not the type to get to the top."

(Online discussion forum participant)

### Self-esteem

It was also suggested by an HR representative that a major barrier to LGB&T career progression is individuals' reluctance to apply for promotions and other opportunities, for fear that they will be rejected or discriminated against. This links to the self-esteem issue and, it was suggested, indicates that work needs to be undertaken to increase people's confidence in their own potential. Those who had experienced barriers were asked when they most recently felt these. Nearly three quarters of those who had felt that there were barriers to their career development, had done so in the past five years (72 per cent), although 14 per cent reported that these were more than ten years ago and another eight per cent didn't know.

The amount of time spent in the Civil Service increases the likelihood to have experienced barriers to career development with only 19 per cent of those who have served less than five years having felt any barriers compared to 32 per cent of those who in the Civil Service for over 15 years. This may either be because exposure to these barriers increases with time, or the barriers that may have existed in the Civil Service before have been broken to some extent in recent years.

### Trans experiences of barriers due to gender identity

One third of Trans respondents have felt barriers to their career development specifically due to their gender identity. Examples given of barriers felt include difficulties transitioning at work, feeling that they do not fit in or are not accepted by their colleagues and comments made about the issue by others around them. Eighteen of 22 Trans respondents who experienced barriers due to their gender identity had done so in the past five years, with 12 having these experiences in the past 12 months.

Trans focus group participants described further barriers, including:

- Negative attitudes towards the need to take time off to transition were a significant barrier;
- Some roles' requirement that you state your previous names, where not strictly necessary, is potentially indirect discrimination;
- The culture of certain teams, where discrimination and transphobic language are not challenged, limits some Trans people's willingness to move around within the Civil Service; and
- Not feeling part of a team and therefore unable to assert oneself and take opportunities for advancement.

“You tend to back off, you tend not to push yourself forward because you know that it’s likely that they’re not wishing to associate with you.”

“The fact that we’ve all transitioned or we’re in the process means we carry baggage, we’ve gone through trauma. And this obviously can affect your career progression before you even come ‘out’, because you’re carrying this secret life. Having to hide who you are can result in very low self-esteem.”

(Trans focus group participants)

Overall, it was felt that barriers to career progression were apparent long before a job or promotion is advertised, as the development opportunities required to access them are often not accessible to Trans people. This could mean, for example, a manager preventing someone from attending training, or an individual lacking the confidence to engage with other colleagues or teams. Attending Network meetings may be one way to build an individual’s confidence, but if that individual is not ‘out’ to their manager, or if their manager will not allow them the time or the budget to attend Network meetings, then they cannot access that opportunity.

## Whether discrimination in the Civil Service causes disadvantage in LGB&T staff development

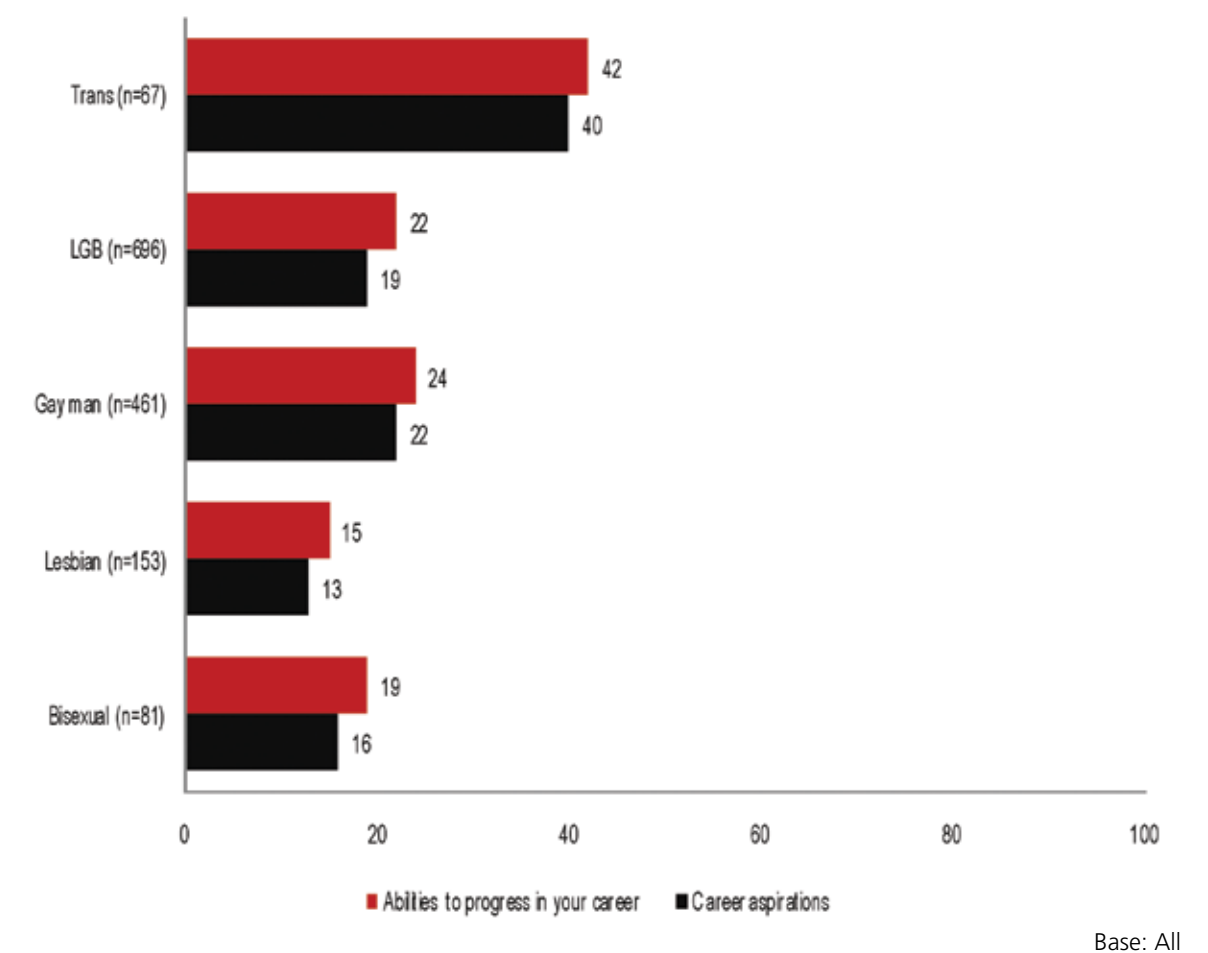
### Are negative assumptions made of LGB&T staff?

As can be seen from the earlier findings, not all disadvantages felt by LGB&T civil servants are as a result of outright homophobia or transphobia, but many feel there are barriers due to differences in the culture or perceptions of their non-LGB&T colleagues. Asked the extent to which they agreed that negative assumptions are made about their career aspirations due to their sexual orientation, only 19 per cent of LGB respondents agreed, shown in Figure 9. A further 32 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed and almost half (49 per cent) disagreed.

Gay men are the most likely to feel that others tend to make negative assumptions about their career aspirations because of their sexual orientation (22 per cent), with Lesbians being the least likely to assume as much (13 per cent).

Negative assumptions about civil servants’ abilities increase with the time a civil servant has spent serving, with only 17 per cent of those who have served less than five years feeling that negative assumptions have been made about their abilities compared with one quarter (26 per cent) of those serving over 15 years.

Figure 9: To what extent do you believe that negative assumptions have been made about your career aspirations and abilities to progress because of your sexual orientation or gender identity?



A slightly higher proportion (22 per cent) of LGB civil servants believe negative assumptions have been made about their ability to progress within their career because of their sexual orientation. Again this is highest amongst Gay men (24 per cent) and lowest amongst their Lesbian colleagues (15 per cent).

Trans respondents are more likely to believe that negative assumptions have been made about their career aspirations due to their gender identity than their LGB colleagues due to their sexual orientation (40 per cent agreeing so), and in their ability to progress within their career (42 per cent).

Everyday perceptions of awkwardness between LGB&T members of staff and those they work with can add to perceptions of adverse career development due to employees’ sexual orientation or gender identity.



## The changing nature of discrimination

Focus group participants had varying experience of direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Participants from both the LGB and the Trans groups all suggested that the nature of discrimination has changed to become less obvious, as people who still have negative attitudes towards LGB&T people have become more aware of the law. This means it can be much harder to prove when someone feels they have been treated unfairly, and can make the process of making a complaint more challenging.

Participants in the online discussion forum shared a number of experiences of anti-LGB&T discrimination experienced both in and out of work, ranging from being the subject of malicious gossip to verbal and physical abuse.

## Awkwardness around LGB employees

Figure 12 displays the proportion of LGB respondents who have had a feeling of awkwardness or have felt uncomfortable with colleagues due to their sexual orientation. Interestingly, the proportion of LGB respondents who themselves feel awkward in a situation because of their sexual orientation is higher than the proportion of those who perceive others to act awkwardly around them. For example, one quarter (27 per cent) of LGB civil servants feel awkward whilst on a training course, whereas only 14 per cent perceive others to act awkwardly towards them in the same situation. Training courses were also the most common situation that LGB civil servants describe themselves as feeling awkward or uncomfortable in.

Training is an issue that has been cited in other research about LGB employment issues. The EHRC identified that trainers may be less comfortable in dealing with sexual orientation than other equality issues because these issues are still viewed as more controversial<sup>13</sup>.

Figure 8, shows that one in five LGB civil servants have experienced an awkwardness from their colleagues when working with other teams or departments, although it is worth mentioning that 56 per cent have felt no awkwardness from colleagues due to their sexual orientation, and 52 per cent did not feel awkward or uncomfortable towards their colleagues.

The proportion of LGB&T staff who are 'partially out' to their managers at work and feel a sense of awkwardness in one or more of the situations below is particularly high (61 per cent). This compares with 51 per cent of those who are fully 'out' to their managers and 54 per cent of those not 'out'. It is notable that those who are 'partially out' felt more awkwardness. Being unsure what colleagues or managers know about them can harm an individual's self-confidence.

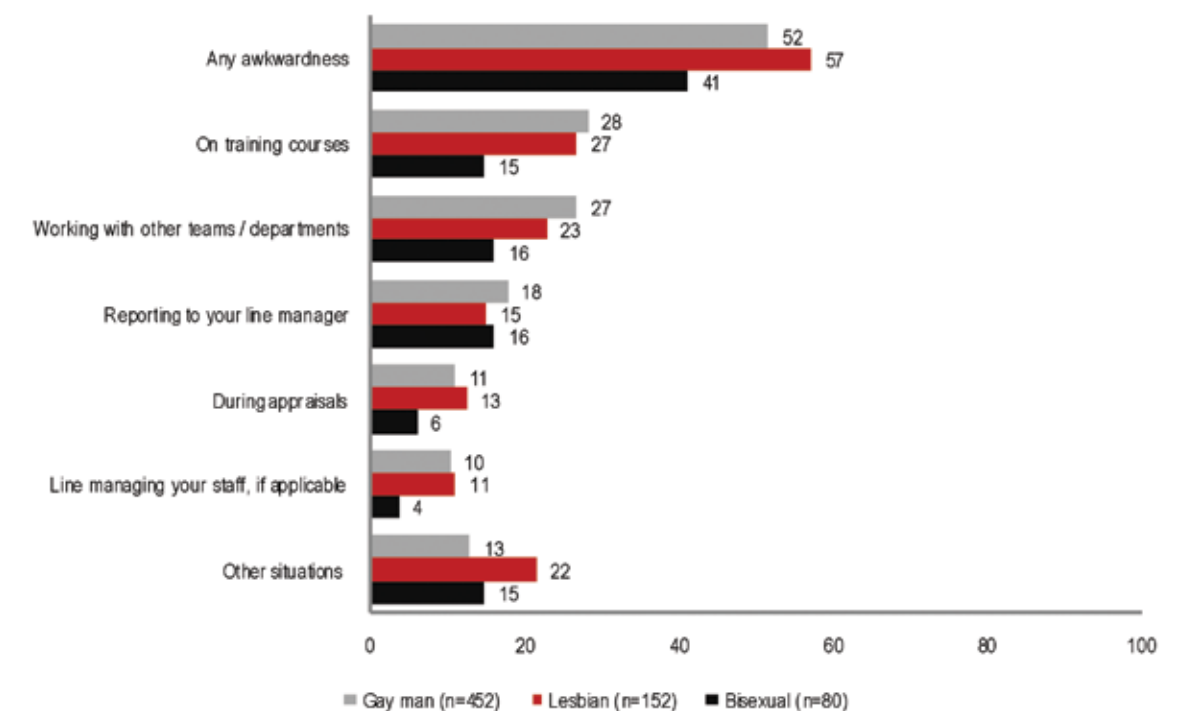
There is also an increase in awkwardness with grade, with 55 per cent of those Grade 6 or above feeling awkward around others compared with 49 per cent of those under this level. Again, there is an increase according to age and the amount of time spent in the Civil Service, with 46 per cent of those who have served under five years feeling uncomfortable compared with 57 per cent of those having served over 15 years.

That only around one in ten experienced awkwardness with their direct reports is encouraging. A recent study of those working in public and private sectors found that only just over half of heterosexual men and 61 per cent of women would be happy to have an openly LGB manager at work.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Sue Bond et al (2009) Integration in the workplace: emerging employment practice on age, sexual orientation and religion or belief (EHRC)

<sup>14</sup> Ellison and Gunstone (2009), Sexual orientation explored: A study of identity, attraction, behaviour and attitudes in 2009, Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

**Figure 10: Have you experienced awkwardness or been uncomfortable in any of these situations in relation to your sexual orientation?**



Base: All LGB respondents (742)

Note: 'any awkwardness' is a net figure, constructed of all others

## Trans awkwardness

Trans civil servants also felt more awkwardness towards others than they perceive their colleagues feel towards them, as seen in Table . The proportion who felt this increased particularly when working with other teams or departments. Working with other teams or departments causes 39 per cent of Trans respondents to feel uncomfortable.

In addition to this, 24 per cent have believed that their colleagues from other departments have felt awkward towards them. Being on training courses is the second most common reason for Trans respondents to feel uncomfortable (27 per cent) and 25 per cent felt uncomfortable when reporting to their line manager. Only two fifths (43 per cent) of Trans respondents had not felt awkward or uncomfortable in these situations, and around half (51 per cent) had never felt awkwardness from their colleagues in the same situations.

**Table 6: Have you felt/your colleagues felt being awkward or uncomfortable about your gender identity in any of these situations? (Trans only)**

	Per cent	
	<b>You (n=67)</b>	<b>Your colleagues (n=67)</b>
On training courses	27	21
Working with other teams/departments	39	24
Reporting to your line manager	25	21
During appraisals	12	9
Line managing your staff, if applicable	4	3
Other situations	25	24

Base: Trans only

## Reasons for feeling awkward

In addition to these situations, respondents who have felt awkward or uncomfortable were asked why this was. The word cloud over the page (Figure 11) represents the frequency of responses with many referring to managers, colleagues, comments made and situations such as training courses. Some representative examples are below:

“Every time I meet new people or colleagues in different situations such as training courses, new job roles, meetings etc, I have to consider whether in the course of general conversations I should discuss my personal life.”

"I do not feel that I have to share my personal life with people on training courses and so have sometimes felt awkward when other people do share."

(LGB online survey respondents)

“Because people often treat you differently when you are visibly transgender. They get things wrong, or don’t know what to say, or steer clear of you and they tend to see you as trans first and a woman second (or not at all).”

"Giving me stares when talking to my colleague, they seemed to be wondering what is he wearing under those clothes. Overhearing comments about myself and my desire to become a woman."

“People have a variety of reasons for not being able to ‘cope with’ or understand my identity/sexuality; e.g. their religious beliefs, their prejudices, their ignorance, the fact that they ‘have never met someone like me before’, their fear”

(Trans online survey respondents)

**Figure 11: Why did you feel awkward or uncomfortable?**



Source: wordle.net

Having looked at the more subtle barriers to career progression such as negative perceptions due to respondent's sexual orientation or gender identity, and feelings of awkwardness in different situations, this report now moves to look at the more explicit barriers that LGBT civil servants face due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

## Bullying and harassment

Firstly, respondents were asked whether they had ever experienced or perceived any harassment or bullying because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Table 5 shows different experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans staff with different types of colleague.

**Table 7: Whether experienced or perceived any harassment or bullying because of sexual orientation or gender identity**

	Lesbian (n=170)	Gay men (n=517)	Bisexual (n=94)	Trans (n=75)
Manager	22	20	12	21
Colleagues	36	38	20	41
People respondent manages	6	12	4	7
Customers/service users	12	18	9	24
Suppliers, partners or outsourced staff	8	11	5	17
Any	49	49	30	52

Base: all

Trans staff are the most likely to have faced any form of harassment or bullying at work with just over half (52 per cent) having done so. This is much higher than was found amongst all staff in the Diversity Survey (2000), where just 15 per cent of staff reported having felt discrimination or bullying and 12 per cent harassment<sup>15</sup>.

Trans staff are also the most likely to have received bullying or harassment from colleagues (41 per cent), customers (24 per cent) and suppliers (17 per cent). Gay men, however, are the most likely to have experienced harassment from people they line manage (12 per cent). This may be because Gay respondents were more likely than others to be from the higher management grades and therefore have staff to line manage.

Although 49 per cent of both Gay men and Lesbians reported having experienced harassment or bullying from any of the categories of staff given, the proportion of Gay men to Lesbians for most categories of staff was higher, even doubled in the case of people managed by the recipient.

Only 30 per cent of Bisexual respondents reported having perceived or experienced any harassment or bullying, with only one in twenty having done so from suppliers or outsourced staff and around one in ten having had issues with customers or service users.

When we compare these results to those from the Civil Service People Survey 2010, we find that of those reporting discrimination, 31 per cent considered that it was because of their sexual orientation and 35 per cent preferred not to say or chose "other".

### Bullying from managers

When investigating negative impacts on career development, the most damaging colleagues to have received any harassment or bullying from would be the respondent's manager (Table 7). Over one fifth (22 per

cent) of Lesbian staff reported having received bullying or harassment from their manager, 21 per cent of Trans staff and 20 per cent of Gay men. The figure was much lower with Bisexual respondents, where only one in eight had experienced such problems.

Interestingly, while LGB&T civil servants above a Grade 6 are more likely to have experienced or perceived harassment or bullying from their managers (22 per cent compared to 18 per cent of their colleagues in lower graded positions), they are less likely to have experienced or perceived harassment from their colleagues (35 per cent against 29 per cent). One factor in the increased harassment or bullying from managers for more senior civil servants could be due to the amount of time these members of staff have served in the Civil Service, as this figure increases largely with time served, from just ten per cent of those having served less than five years, to 18 per cent of those served six to 15, to over one quarter (29 per cent) of those having served over 15 years. You would be more likely to have experienced bullying over a longer career, particularly with a changing culture in more recent past.

When compared to the results of the Civil Service People Survey 2010, we find a congruence of results. With 39 per cent of LGB staff considering that bullying or harassment coming from colleagues, and 31 per cent coming from their manager. Again we do not have a breakdown from this survey for Trans staff.

Thirty-six of the 44 Trans respondents who were not open about their change of gender at work had not experienced any bullying from their manager. This was true for 23 of the 31 that were open about their gender change at work. Six of the 44 Trans respondents who were not open, had experienced bullying or harassment related to their gender identity from colleagues. This compared to eight out of 31 who were open.

<sup>15</sup> Cabinet Office (2000), Civil Service Diversity Survey

### When bullying and harassment took place

Those who had experienced or perceived harassment from their colleagues were the asked when the last such occurrence took place. Over half (54 per cent) of Trans respondents who have received harassment or bullying have done so over the past 12 months, as did 41 per cent of Bisexual respondents.

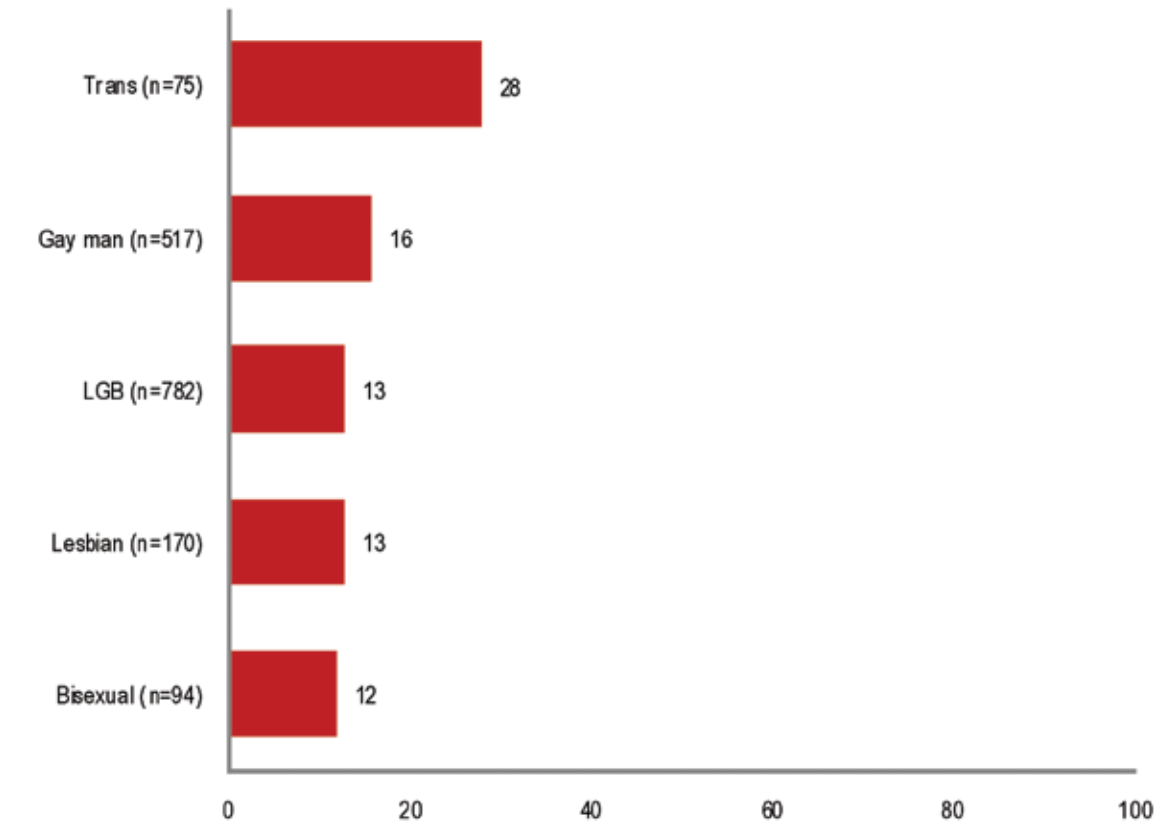
Figure 12 shows the proportion of all LGB&T civil servants who received any bullying or harassment from others they work with over the past 12 months. Prior studies have found that Trans people are more likely to experience harassment and discrimination than their LGB colleagues<sup>16</sup>.

Indeed, over one quarter (28 per cent) of Trans respondents had experienced bullying or harassment over the past 12 months, as did 13 per cent of LGB recipients.

Comparing this to the Civil Service People Survey 2010, we find that in that survey 19 per cent of LGB staff experienced bullying or harassment at work over the past twelve months, which was 7 per cent higher than for heterosexual staff<sup>17</sup>.

Of LGB recipients, Gay men were the most likely to have suffered such treatment in the past 12 months (16 per cent) followed by Lesbians (13 per cent). In addition to this, one in eight (12 per cent) of Bisexual respondents had also experienced such treatment.

**Figure 12: Proportion of LGB&T civil servants who experienced or perceived any harassment or bullying in the last 12 months**



Base: All

<sup>16</sup> Mitchell and Howarth (2000), Trans Research Review, EHRC

<sup>17</sup> Civil Service People Survey 2010



Unfair treatment with career progression

LGB&T respondents were asked more specifically whether they had ever felt treated unfairly by their manager, colleagues or organisation around their career progress or promotion.

Figure 13 shows all those who felt they had been treated unfairly in terms of their career progression or promotion.

Twenty-eight per cent of all LGB staff felt that they had been treated unfairly by their manager, colleagues or organisation when it came to their career progression or promotion, due to their sexual orientation. This was highest amongst Gay men (30 per cent) and lowest amongst Bisexual staff (18 per cent). The Diversity Survey (2000) showed that overall, just four per cent of all civil servants had felt unfairly treated due to their sexual orientation. This rose to 28 per cent of gay men, 16 per cent of lesbians and 8 per cent of bisexual respondents. It also included three per cent of heterosexuals.<sup>18</sup>

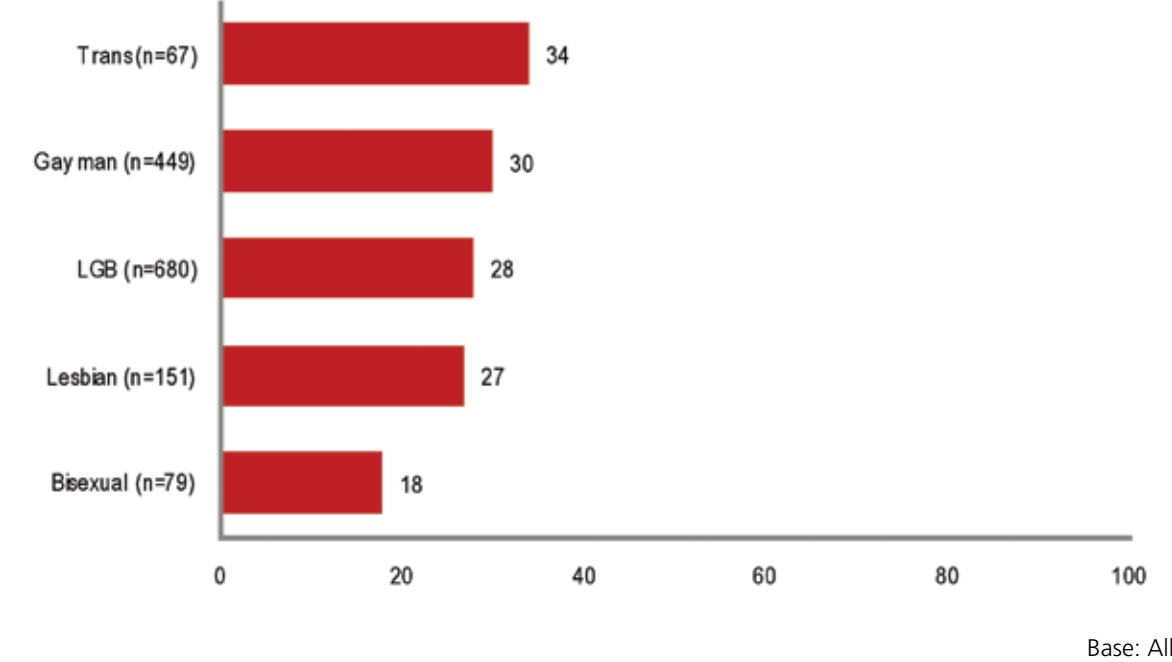
Over a third of Trans staff (34 per cent) felt they had been treated unfairly when it came to promotions or career progression due to their gender identity.

Time served is once again a factor for the proportion of LGB&T civil servants who have felt unfairly treated with regards to career progress and promotion due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Eighteen per cent of those who have served less than five years have felt this, compared to 23 per cent of those serving six to 15 years and 40 per cent of those serving over 15 years.

Twenty-nine of the 37 Trans respondents who were not open about their change of gender identity at work had not experienced any unfair treatment. This contrasted sharply with 15 of the 30 who were open at work having experienced what they considered to be unfair treatment from their manager, colleagues or the organisation in general.

<sup>18</sup> Cabinet Office (2000), Civil Service Diversity Survey

Figure 13: Thinking about career progression, those treated unfairly by manager, colleagues or the organisation generally as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity



How are LGB&T staff being treated unfairly?

Table 8 over the page shows who or what respondents felt unfairly treated by when thinking about their career development or promotion. All respondents were most likely to have felt unfairly treated by their manager, other than Trans respondents who had more problems with their colleagues (18 per cent) and organisation (16 per cent).

Of LGB respondents, Gay men were the most likely to have felt unfairly treated by their manager, colleagues and organisation whereas Bisexual respondents were the least likely to have felt unfairly treated by any of those listed.



**Table 8: Thinking about career progression and promotion, have you ever felt that you have been treated unfairly by your manager, colleagues or the organisation generally?**

	Lesbian	Gay men	Bisexual	Trans
Manager	13	17	11	10
Colleagues	9	11	8	18
Organisation	9	12	4	16
Any	27	30	18	34

Per cent

Base: all

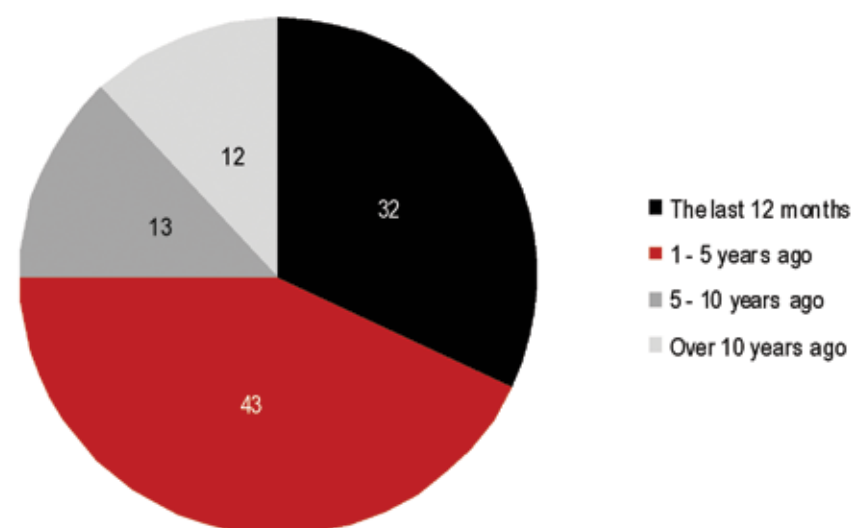
### When were LGB&T staff treated unfairly?

Those who felt unfairly treated in relation to their career progression or promotion due to their gender identity or sexual orientation were asked when the last occurrence of this took place. The chart below shows the last time LGB respondents felt unfairly treated due to their sexual orientation.

Three quarters (75 per cent) of LGB civil servants who have felt unfairly treated in terms of career progress or promotion due to their sexual orientation have felt so in the last five years.

Seventeen of the 23 Trans respondents who had experienced unfairness, reported having done so in the past 12 months.

**Figure 14: The last occurrence of LGB civil servants feeling unfairly treated in relation to career progress or promotion, due to their sexual orientation**



Base: those feeling they had been treated unfairly, by manager, colleagues or the organisation (207)

### Complaints procedures for discrimination within the Civil Service

It is important for those who experience discrimination due to their sexual orientation or gender identity to feel comfortable being able to complain about such incidents. Prior research has also found that the extent to which homophobia is accepted or challenged within the workplace is a key indicator of inclusion<sup>19</sup>.

### Can you complain?

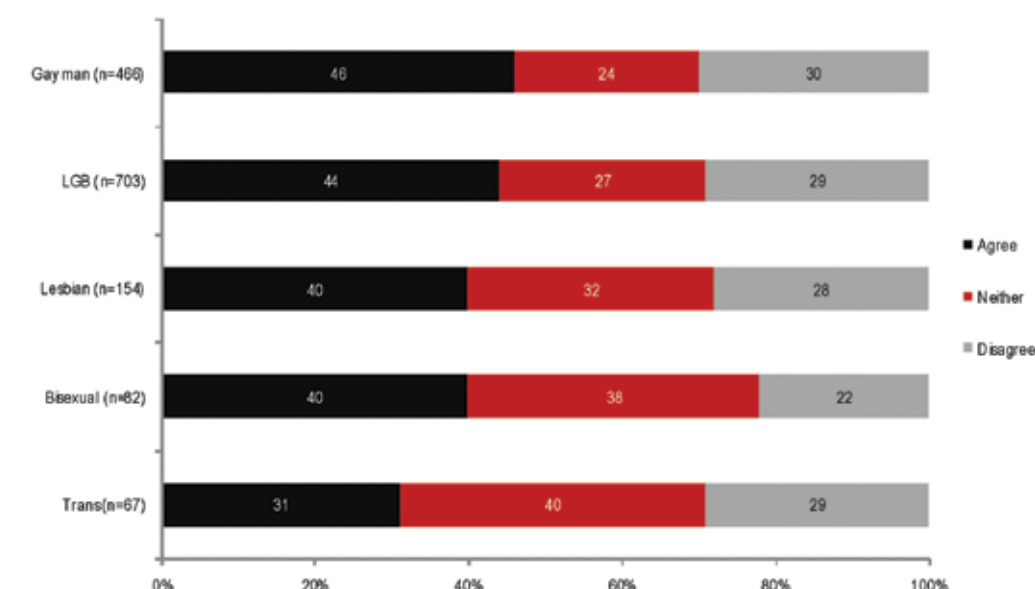
LGB&T civil servants were asked the extent to which they would feel able to complain about any career development disadvantages they might suffer, without worrying that it would have a negative impact on their career.

Two fifths of LGB respondents agreed that they would feel able to complain about career development disadvantages they may suffer (Figure 15). This was highest amongst Gay men (46 per cent). Less than one third of Trans respondents (31 per cent) feel able to complain about disadvantages suffered due to their gender identity, although over a quarter (29 per cent) disagreed with the statement.

LGB&T civil servants above Grade 6 were more likely to feel able to complain about any career development disadvantage they had felt (47 per cent) than their colleagues in lower graded positions (44 per cent).

Although, when talking about anti-gay bullying more generally (not just focussing in on career development), results from the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2011 highlight that 79 per cent of LGB staff would feel confident reporting anti-gay bullying in their workplace.

**Figure 15: How far do you agree or disagree that you feel able to complain about any career development disadvantages you might suffer, without worrying that it would have a negative impact on your career?**



Base: All

<sup>19</sup> Sue Bond et al (2009) Integration in the workplace: emerging employment practice on age, sexual orientation and religion or belief, EHRC

## Do staff complain?

The Civil Service Diversity Survey (2000)<sup>20</sup> found that whilst 89 per cent of staff were aware of procedures for complaint, only 45 per cent would feel confident enough to report unacceptable behaviour.

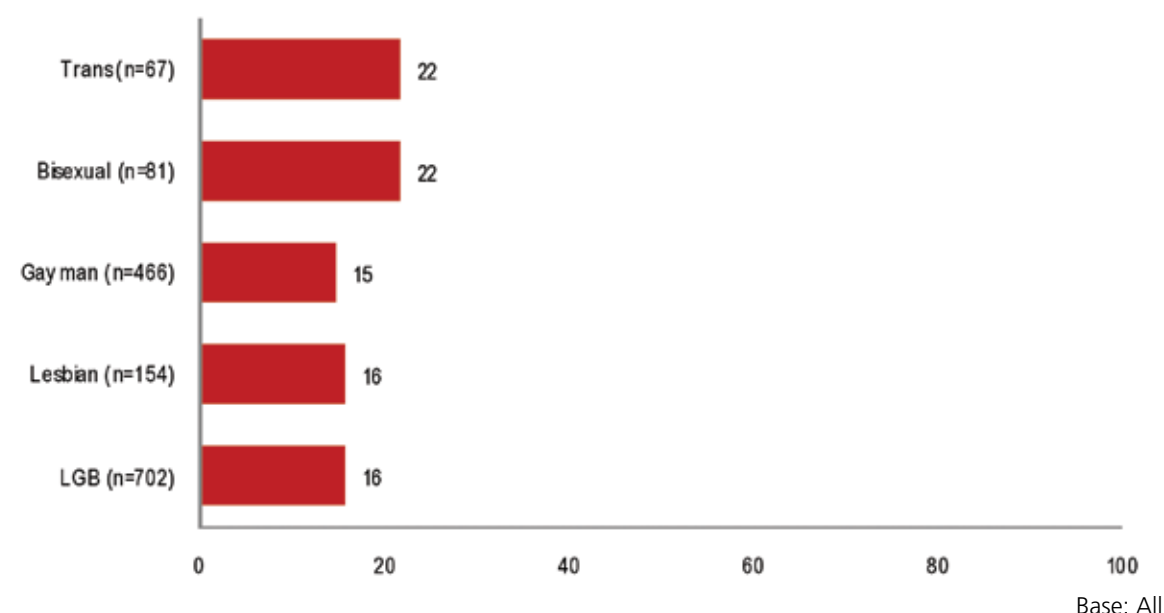
In total, only 16 per cent of LGB civil servants have ever (formally or informally) complained about career development disadvantages they have suffered (Figure 16). This compares to the 28 per cent of LGB respondents who felt they had been unfairly treated in terms of career progression or promotion due to their sexual orientation.

The biggest gap between those who feel they have been treated unfairly in terms of their career progression and promotion and those who have complained about similar treatment is with Gay men. Whilst 30 per cent feel they have been mistreated due to their sexual orientation, only 15 per cent have complained either formally or informally about such issues.

Although LGB&T employees in higher graded positions were more likely to feel able to complain about career development disadvantages in theory, they were less likely to have actually done so, with only 13 per cent compared with 17 per cent of their colleagues in lower grades. There are also interesting differences with the extent to which LGB&T staff are 'out' at work in terms of their sexual orientation, with over one quarter (27 per cent) of those partially 'out' to their managers having made a formal or informal complaint in the past, compared with 15 per cent of those fully 'out' with their managers and just 11 per cent of those not 'out' to any extent.

Seven of the 30 Trans respondents who were open about their gender identity change had complained about career development disadvantages, compared to eight out of 37 who were not open at this point.

**Figure 16: Have you ever complained (formally or informally) about career development disadvantages you have suffered? (Yes)**



<sup>20</sup> Cabinet Office (2000), Civil Service Diversity Survey

## How do they complain?

Most focus group participants stated that they would complain if they experienced discrimination, bullying or harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity in their career development. The approaches suggested included:

- Anonymous whistle-blowing;
- Mediation;
- Informal complaint;
- Formal complaint or grievance;
- Approaching either a manager, HR, the equalities team or the Union; and
- Approaching the Staff Network, CSRA or a gender

Choosing who to approach generally depended on the relationship with the individual, and any work, which the other party had been perceived to have undertaken on LGB&T issues. For example, focus group participants who were aware that their HR teams attended Stonewall Diversity Champion events said they were most likely to approach them, in the event of experiencing homophobic bullying or discrimination.

Generally it was felt that responses to complaints from LGB&T staff were inconsistent across the Civil Service and that while discrimination and harassment policies may appear to be robust, their practical implementation and effectiveness depends on the individual managers and HR teams across the different organisations.

## Dealing with transphobia

Trans focus group participants described how some complaints of transphobic discrimination in the Civil Service were not being resolved satisfactorily, with cases taking a long time to resolve and those considering the complaints having a poor understanding of gender reassignment. The participants of that focus group considered that this may be due to a lack of experience or confidence on the part of managers or Human Resources staff in dealing with transphobic discrimination. They therefore recommended that training be developed for line managers and Human Resources staff that focuses specifically on addressing and responding to complaints of transphobia, as well as also improving colleagues understanding of gender reassignment more generally.

## Experience of complaining

The online forum participants discussed their views on and experiences of complaining about anti-LGB&T discrimination in the Civil Service. Overall, most experiences of accessing the complaints procedures were deemed to be negative, time-consuming and traumatic, mainly because it appeared to some that making complaints formal was the only way to ensure they would be dealt with.

"My advice to others is, only complain if you have the evidence and strength to pursue to Employment Tribunal. This is a very sad and oppressive culture and hardly in the spirit of the equality duties... I felt I was treated with no dignity or respect (by HR)... I liked my job prior to my grievance which was only necessary as a direct result of attempting to further my career. I no longer trust HR and could not face going for another promotion as a similar experience would be catastrophic."



(Online discussion forum participant)

## Barriers to complaining

The online discussion forum also considered the barriers to complaining about anti-LGB&T discrimination. Their suggestions included:

- That people may need to 'out' themselves to report the full nature of the discrimination;
- A workplace culture which is defensive and not open to criticism; and
- Fear of being labelled a trouble-maker.

The perceived risk of being labelled a trouble-maker was a key theme and reason for people stating they would be reluctant to complain about discrimination. This was a view also shared by a number of the focus group participants.

"If you complain about LGB&T issues and it involves managers then in the future your name will always be seen as a person who will complain... therefore making you more unlikely to be promoted. This puts people off complaining."

(Online discussion forum participant)

"There's a fear that people have long memories. If you go to the union, there's a fear that it won't be forgotten and will be held against you."

(LGB focus group participant)

Those who had positive feedback on the complaints process were in the minority:

"A complaint was made to me about our security guards remarking about two 'poofs' going through the work entrance. I took this up with HR. Together we organised briefing for the reception staff about diversity behaviours and what language was not acceptable. I've not had any complaints since. Our HR is very good, there's a good diversity team in place that we can easily approach if there's a problem."

(Online discussion forum participant)

## The "Double-Glazed Glass Ceiling"

The "Double-Glazed Glass Ceiling" barrier to career progression in the form of discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexual orientation. The focus groups explored this issue with the women who attended, although it should be noted that they were in the minority in terms of overall numbers.

Generally, most of the female participants said that they did not feel they had faced a double-barrier to progression. If anything, their gender had been more of an issue, rather than their sexual orientation. Participants were more conscious of a lack of senior female role models in some departments, rather than a lack of senior Lesbian role models.

"It's harder to be a woman than it is to be a Gay person. There is a large 'old boy' network (in this department) and some of them are quite misogynistic, but they feel threatened by strong women."

(LGB focus group participant)

# 5 Impact of barriers to career development

**Having established the different barriers that LGB&T staff encounter when seeking to progress their career, the research now moves on to consider the impact of these barriers.**

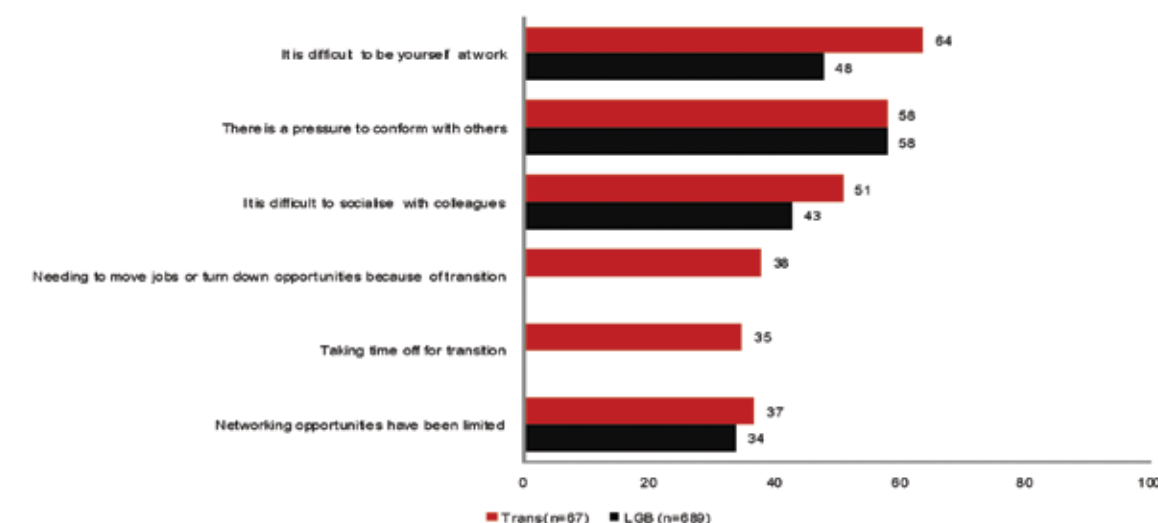
## Impact of sexual orientation on career development within the Civil Service

LGB respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with statements about career development opportunities which they may have felt they have missed out on due to their sexual orientation (Figure 17).

Almost two thirds of LGB respondents felt a pressure to conform with others at work (58 per cent). Also, around half agreed that it is difficult to be themselves at work (48 per cent).

Accessing networking opportunities seems to have been less of an issue due to sexual orientation, however, with only one third (34 per cent) of respondents feeling they had missed out due to their sexual orientation.

**Figure 17: Agreement that these aspects have limited opportunities to progress**



Base: all

Note: 'Needing to move jobs' and 'taking time off' were only asked of Trans respondents



Does being Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual have a different impact on career development?

Table 9 shows the extent to which Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual civil servants agree that they have had their career development limited given their sexual orientation. Whilst Bisexual respondents were the most likely to feel that it is difficult to be themselves at work (53 per cent), they were also the least likely to have had difficulties socialising with other colleagues (37 per cent) or to find that their networking opportunities had been limited (23 per cent). Gay men tend to feel the most pressure to conform with others (60 per cent), that it is difficult to socialise with colleagues (44 per cent) and that networking opportunities had been limited (37 per cent). They are, however, the least likely to find it difficult to be themselves at work (47 per cent).

As has been seen with previous statements around career progression, those civil servants newer to their organisation were more positive about the effect of their sexual orientation on their career development. Fifty-three per cent of those who have been in the Civil Service for less than five years feel a pressure to conform to others, compared to 60 per cent of their colleagues who have served for over 15 years. In addition to this, 29 per cent of those serving less than five years feel that networking opportunities have been limited compared to 41 per cent of those serving over 15 years. Again, there is also a trend with grade of civil servant. Those at higher grades have felt less affected by their sexual orientation or gender identity as can be seen with only 36 per cent of those above Grade 6 finding it difficult to socialise with colleagues and 31 per cent finding networking opportunities limited compared to 45 per cent and 35 per cent (respectively) agreement with these statements from their colleagues in lower graded positions.

Table 9: Agreement that the following issues have limited their opportunities to progress within the Civil Service given their sexual orientation

	Lesbian (n=152)	Gay man (n=455)	Bisexual (n=81)
There is pressure to conform with others	52	60	58
It is difficult to be yourself at work	49	47	53
It is difficult to socialise with colleagues	43	44	37
Networking opportunities have been limited	30	37	23

Base: LGB only

Subtle forms of discrimination

Focus group participants expressed a range of views about how sexual orientation impacts on career development in the Civil Service. Some felt that it had very little direct impact, and that development opportunities are as open to LGB staff as they are anyone else. Others felt that assumptions, prejudice and fixed ideas about who might be suitable for development do still impact on LGB staff. It is therefore not necessarily a case of opportunities being fundamentally unavailable to or inappropriate for LGB staff, but rather that individuals responsible for allocating them may find reasons not to allow LGB staff to access them. For example, it was suggested that Bisexual people can be stereotyped as being indecisive and not trustworthy. So when applying for promotions, where senior decision-making is required, they can face discrimination. Anecdotal evidence of this happening within a particular department was shared. Others described assumptions about LGB people’s lack of caring or family responsibilities leading to people being singled out to work late, at the weekend or during Christmas or summer holidays. However, it was also suggested that this could also work to an individual’s advantage. Being LGB and fearing potential discrimination had motivated some people to progress in their career and succeed because they want to avoid giving anyone an opportunity to use their sexual orientation against them.

“That’s a fear in the back of my mind. I’ve always been conscious about doing the best that I can. Not necessarily because I want to be very successful, but more so people don’t have an excuse to have a go at me.”  
(LGB focus group participant)

Comparing opportunities with non-LGB&T colleagues

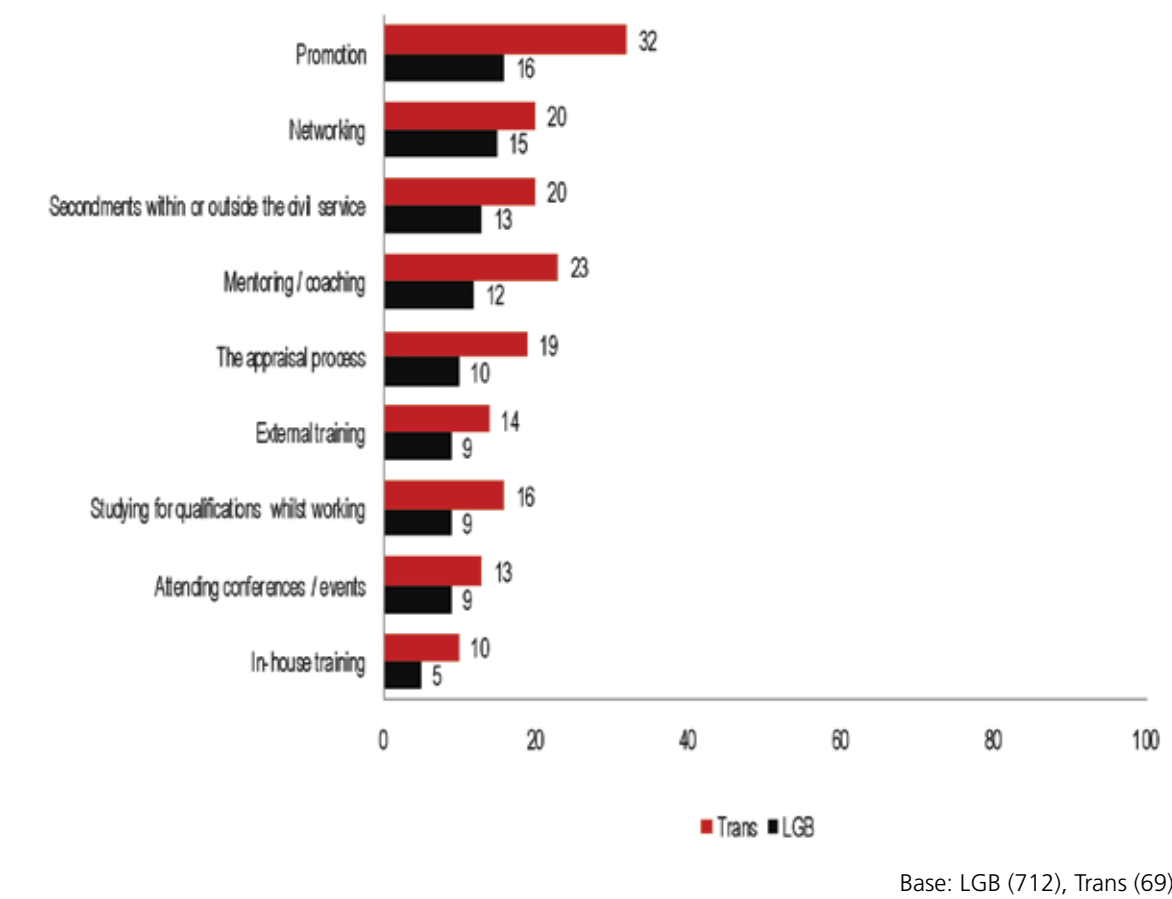
LGB respondents were also asked how they felt the opportunities they had for career development compared with their non-LGB colleagues. Figure 18 shows the proportion believing they have not had the same opportunities as non-LGB colleagues for each issue. Generally, LGB respondents feel they have had the same opportunities as their non-LGB colleagues, with only a minority answering that they have not for each statement. The biggest disparity felt by respondents, however, was that of promotion with 16 per cent feeling they have not had the same opportunities. Interestingly, the second most common disparity felt by LGB respondents was networking, where 15 per cent felt they had not had the same opportunities as their non-LGB colleagues. This being half the percentage of those who agreed that their opportunities to progress in the Civil Service due to a lack of networking opportunities implies that this issue may be one felt generally by civil servants and not linked to their sexual orientation.



There are similar patterns here when LGB staff are split by grade, time in Civil Service and the level they are 'out' at work. Taking promotion opportunities, for example, 15 per cent of those who are fully 'out' to their managers feel there is a disparity between themselves and their non-LGB colleagues, rising to 17 per cent of those partially 'out' and 19 per cent of those who

are not 'out' at all. 16 per cent of those below Grade 6 feel there is a disparity in promotions compared to 13 per cent of those Grade 6 and above, and lastly, 12 per cent of those serving less than five years feel a disparity, 15 per cent of those serving six to 15 years and 19 per cent of those serving over 15 years.

**Figure 18: Proportion of LGB&T staff who felt they have not had the same opportunities as their non-LGB&T colleagues**



### Variations within the LGB&T strands

When responses are split by sexual orientation, it appears that Gay respondents were more prone to thinking that they had not been given the same opportunities as other colleagues. They felt particularly strong about this with regards to networking (17 per cent feeling they had not had the same opportunities), promotion (16 per cent) and during the appraisal process (ten per cent).

Lesbian civil servants were the least likely to feel there were disparities between themselves and their non-LGB&T colleagues with regards to the appraisal process and attendance of conferences/events (both six per cent), external training (five per cent) and in-house training (four per cent).

Bisexual respondents were the least likely to feel disparities overall with only eight per cent, for example, feeling they had not had the same opportunities as their non-LGB&T colleagues with networking opportunities. In addition to this, only eight per cent felt a disparity with mentoring or coaching, six per cent studying qualifications whilst working and ten per cent with secondments.

Trans civil servants were more likely to believe that they had not had the same opportunities as colleagues across all forms of career development activities. The gap between Trans and LGB respondents was particularly pronounced on the subjects of promotion, mentoring and appraisals.

### A change in the 'old boys network'

While several survey respondents referred to an 'old boys network', which could lead to the exclusion of LGB&T people who were perceived not to fit in, most focus group participants suggested that times had changed, and networking opportunities were different now. Although it was suggested that some departments had 'cliques', being LGB or T was not necessarily what made ones face 'not fit'.

"It's not really about buttering people up or trying to schmooze the Permanent Secretary anymore..."

"If you went to the same choir, played in the same rugby team, did the same social activities, that would definitely benefit you. It was an issue for women in particular, and some Gay men – anyone who didn't fit in would find it harder. I don't think that's so much the case now."

(LGB focus group participant)

### Staff Networks

Involvement in a Network was discussed by most focus group participants, but more so in the LGB focus groups than the Trans groups. There were mixed views about the impact it can have on an individual's career development. For many, it was felt that involvement in a Network, particularly in a coordinating role, allowed individuals to gain experience, develop new skills and operate at a higher level than their 'day job' would otherwise enable them to do. Some also suggested it brought them into contact with 'the right people' and ensured that they were noticed.

"I get skills through managing the Network which I would not get without leaping a minimum of four grades. Four grades!"

"If you go to Pride and you're pictured standing next to the Head of HR, people think to themselves, 'who's that?' You can develop good working relationships and people know you've got that contact. You're known to be more active within the organisation, rather than just going in on a Monday morning to do your own job."

(LGB focus group participants)

All HR and diversity professionals who were interviewed rated the merits of involvement in a Network, and the value it brings to the organisation, as well as to the member of staff and the additional skills which they are able to bring to their role within the organisation. It was suggested that any Network member taking a coordinating role should be recording their activities in the personal development section of their appraisal, to ensure they and their manager recognise the full spectrum of their development and identify additional needs.

## Manager views on Networks

However, others felt that their involvement in the Network was not valued by their manager and was therefore hindering their career development. Managers who did not see the value of a Network, were less likely to consider an individual's involvement as a legitimate development opportunity.

"I believe that it's actually quite limiting (for my career). As successful as I've been as LGBT coordinator, that isn't quite enough for my manager. I really do believe that being seen to be so linked with the Network, it's still not seen as real work."

"Doing what I do now (with the Network) is the highest profile job I've ever had, but it's limiting my career. My boss would be quite happy to see me leave the Network and all the high profile opportunities which go with it and go into another job where I'll be completely invisible, in the interests of development."

"I have one colleague whose role in the Network gives her so many unique opportunities which she doesn't necessarily get at her grade. So she keeps on putting Network examples in her application forms and when she comes to interview it's like 'don't you have any real world examples which are specific to your job?'"

(LGB focus group participants)

## Impact of gender reassignment on career development within the Civil Service

Asked to what extent Trans civil servants feel their opportunities to progress within the Civil Service are limited due to their gender identity, almost two thirds (64 per cent) agreed that their opportunities were limited due to difficulties being themselves at work (Figure 16). Overall, with the exception of networking opportunities, Trans respondents indicated that gender reassignment had a greater impact on their career development than LGB respondents felt their sexual orientation had.

## Difficulties taking time off for transition

Trans focus group participants described a number of ways in which gender reassignment had impacted on their career development within the Civil Service. Having to ask for time off for absences arising from gender reassignment, and in particular asking for three months leave for relevant genital surgery, had had a major impact for some people, including those who had had to return to a lower-grade post or who had been denied promotion as a result of their extended leave. Having seen Trans people being sacked or disciplined for 'excessive sick leave', a:gender argues that 'absences arising from gender reassignment' should be treated as special leave, not sick leave. A special leave policy has been pioneered in HMRC and most recently adopted by the Home Office.<sup>12</sup>

It was reported that some people leave their job in order to transition, to avoid having to explain to colleagues. Others said they had delayed their transition until they felt secure in their career or until they were based in a team where they felt safe to change gender. For some, this had placed limitations on how and where they felt able to progress their career.

"Getting to the grade I'm at now was another factor in getting things in place before deciding to transition because I couldn't take the chance of being stranded (due to discrimination) at a grade where I couldn't afford to live reasonably on the wage I was getting. I'm now at a level where if I got stranded, I'm ok, in terms of remuneration."

"In previous teams I wouldn't have transitioned. When I chose to it was because I knew my managers would be good about it, they'd had training and were very supportive."

(Trans focus group participants)

<sup>21</sup> a:gender, (2009) Trans Equality Index Report

## 6 Improving career development opportunities

### Trans pressure to conform

Two thirds (58 per cent) of Trans civil servants also feel a pressure to conform with other staff and over half (51 per cent) find it difficult to socialise with others. In addition to the opportunities that Trans respondents feel they miss out on due to their gender identity, they also feel more strongly than their LGB colleagues that there is a disparity between themselves and their non-LGB&T colleagues in the career development opportunities that have been offered to them.

Some Trans focus group participants also described feeling excluded and isolated at work, where they were known to be Trans, or transitioning, and the negative impact this had on their relationship with colleagues and ability to network and socialise with them.

"Last year I was at a training session. All the others sat at one table, I sat by myself. They never wanted to hook up with me to go to dinner in the evening or anything else. Little subtle things like that build up."

(Trans focus group participant)

Some participants also described ways in which more sympathetic colleagues could still be inhibited about being seen to associate with a Trans colleague, in case they too were treated differently or excluded.

"I think your colleagues are more paranoid than you about associating with you – they have transphobia phobia."

(Trans focus group participant)

### Promotion and gender identity

A particular issue for Trans respondents is a feeling that they are not given the same opportunities for promotion as their non-LGB&T colleagues (32 per cent). In addition to this, almost one quarter (23 per cent) also think they were not given the same opportunities with mentoring/coaching and one fifth (20 per cent) believe they suffer when it comes to secondments and networking.

**Finally, the research explores how can we improve the career development opportunities for LGB&T staff in the Civil Service, including breaking down the barriers identified by participants in this research project.**

### General career development opportunities

Focus group participants were aware of a range of career development opportunities available to them, including:

- Talent pools;
- The fast track scheme;
- Leadership programmes;
- Network groups;
- Events;
- Training and other learning opportunities; and
- Secondments and transfers.

Focus group participants said they found out about development and promotional opportunities via their department's intranet site, recruitment pages or e-bulletins. Generally, they felt that the way in which career development opportunities are promoted is fair: everyone has access to the same information and no one is reliant on the discretion of a manager to find out about them. However, where a manager's approval or consent is required in order for someone to take a promotion or other opportunity, such as a secondment, there was a concern that there may be room for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.

"If your divisional director happens to be an evangelical Christian who thinks that people can't change gender, then it's very unlikely they're going to nominate you (to the Senior Civil Service)."

(Trans focus group participant)

A number of focus group participants suggested that career development opportunities are there for the taking, and that effectively it is up to the individual to be proactive in identifying and applying for them.

"It's up to you. It's your own development, it's your responsibility. Events and training are often compulsory but as far as recruitment is concerned, it's up to you to find out about it."

"I don't think you'd be discriminated against for being Gay. There's plenty of opportunities in the Civil Service. It's just up to the individual to be self-motivated and go and find them."

(LGB focus group participants)

However, concerns were expressed that the need to be proactive, and therefore confident, may put an LGB&T member of staff, who has low self-esteem as a result of discrimination, or who fears discrimination, at a disadvantage.



LGB&T specific career development opportunities

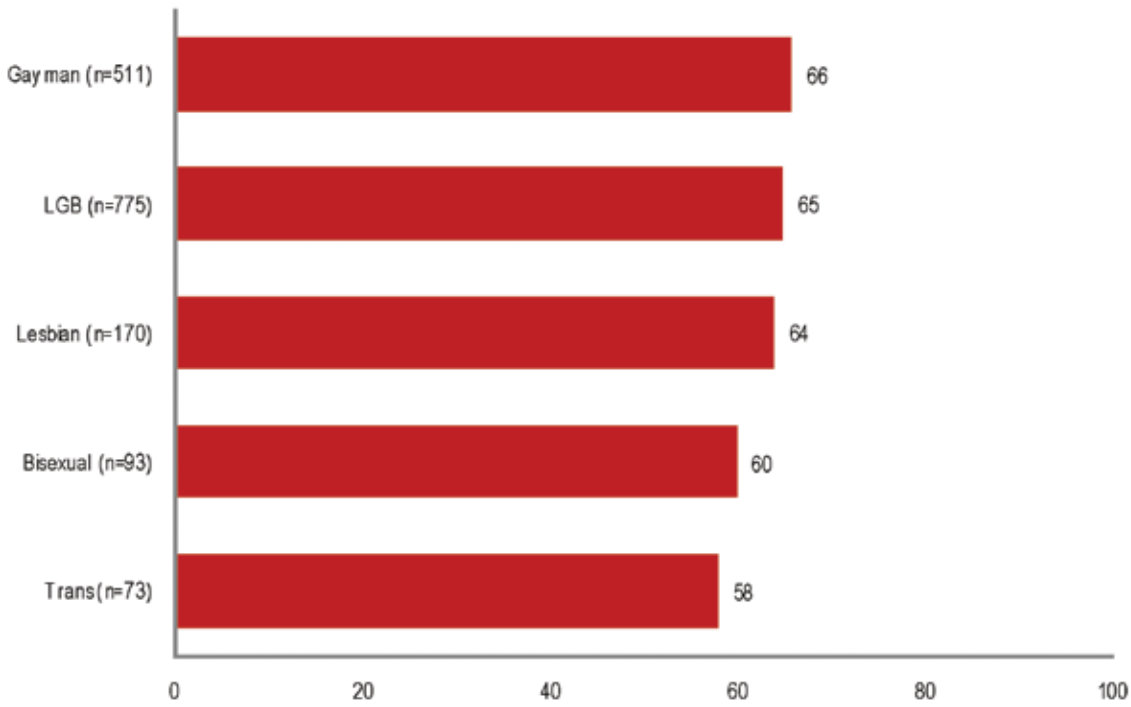
Many Civil Service departments have their own Networks who provide support and pastoral care for LGB&T staff, as well as arranging specific career development opportunities for their members. In addition to this, the Civil Service Rainbow Alliance (CSRA) works in collaboration with a:gender to, as well as other things, broaden the staff development opportunities open for LGB&T staff.

Figure 19 shows the proportion of LGB&T staff who have knowingly been given opportunities to participate in LGB&T staff development or diversity activities. Around two thirds (65 per cent) of LGB staff have been given the opportunity to participate in LGB&T staff development opportunities. This is lowest amongst Bisexual respondents, although 60 per cent have had opportunities.

Fifty-eight per cent of Trans respondents have been offered specific career development opportunities.

The opportunity to have taken part in LGB&T staff development and diversity activities has increased with the amount of time staff have been in the Civil Service (from 61 per cent of those in the Civil Service less than five years to 73 per cent of those who have been serving for more than 15 years) and the grade of the civil servant (from 63 per cent for those under Grade 6, to 79 per cent of those over).

Figure 19: Have you had opportunities to participate in LGB&T staff development or diversity activities? (Yes)



Base: all

External programmes

All LGB focus group participants were aware of Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme, and some had attended seminars and events on behalf of their department or their Staff Network. Those who were involved appreciated the opportunity to network with colleagues across the Civil Service and from other sectors.

It was also felt that the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and a:gender's Trans Equality Index were essential tools for encouraging departments to continue to improve their policies and practices for LGB&T equality and inclusion.

The Stonewall Leadership programme is another initiative which was mentioned by focus group participants, although it is aimed only at LGB people and not Trans people who don't identify as LGB. Many departments enable one or two members of staff to attend annually. Individuals who had attended said it was very worthwhile, and felt comfortable to discuss workplace issues and ambitions in an LGB-only environment. Those attending however do tend to be 'out' at work, as they generally have to ask a manager's permission to attend. This means that people who are not 'out' do not feel able to participate. However the recent change in economic circumstances and their consequential impact on training and diversity budgets, means that access to these external programmes is now severely restricted across the Civil Service.

Attending in confidence

One focus group participant suggested that they would like to see an LGB&T-specific leadership course or event run internally by their department on an anonymous basis, as they felt that the opportunities offered by the Stonewall Leadership Programme were too small.

"Even now in our LGBT Network there are people who say they can't come 'out' at work. They don't put themselves in a position where they might risk what they perceive as exposure. I think it would be really good to be able to put people in a really safe environment where they can completely concentrate on their skills development without that fear."

(LGB focus group participant)

Attending in confidence may also be of particular help to staff in small offices, who may be the only LGB or T member of staff in that office yet wish to have their sexual orientation or gender identity remain private.

How this would work in practice, to enable people to attend in confidence, was still being developed. It was suggested it might be badged as a generic diversity event. The key LGB&T-specific initiatives which people were aware of were the Staff Networks themselves, both within the departments, as well as across the Civil Service in CSRA and a:gender. Experiences of participating in Networks, either as a coordinator or member, were generally positive and had enabled people to gain new skills and make useful professional contacts, as well as helping people to raise their own profile by getting involved in events and meeting senior colleagues and other people of influence. There was firm support from both staff and HR professionals for Networks and their activities to continue. The perceived negative effect of involvement, as discussed previously, was mainly in terms of managers not recognising the value or development opportunities of their staff member's involvement in the Network.



There were wider concerns that not all staff understood the purpose of Networks, that colleagues were sometimes bewildered about their existence, and that this needed to be addressed.

“They ask why we need a Network which makes us stand out from the rest. They want to know why they can’t have a straight men’s Network. I tell them that if they’re being discriminated against they should go and set one up. I think it’s because they don’t understand the issues we face.”

(LGB focus group participant)

Finally, PCS Proud was cited as a source of support and advice for LGB&T issues. It was suggested by some that it could communicate better and do more to publicise LGB&T issues and engage directly with LGB&T staff, rather than regional representatives only.

Are there benefits to participation in LGB&T development activities?

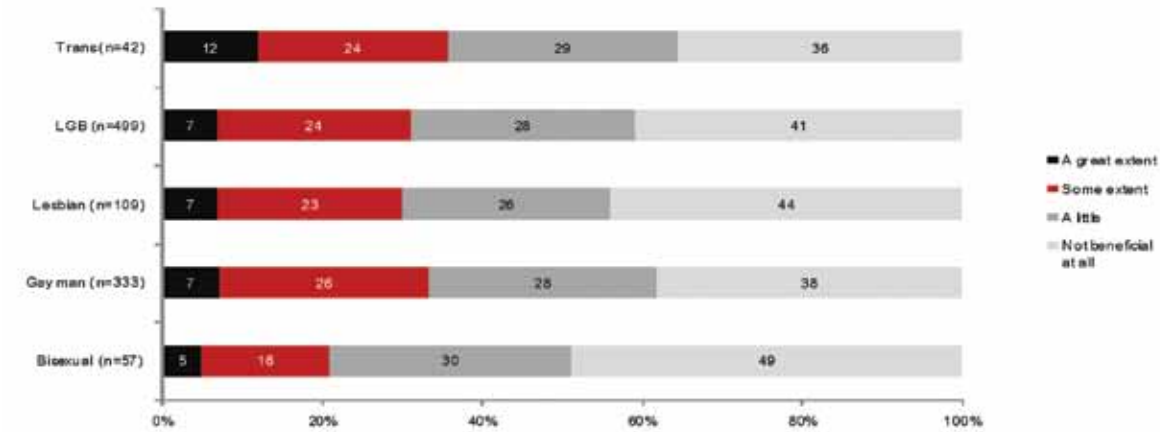
Those who have been given the opportunity to participate in LGB&T staff development activities were asked the extent to which those opportunities have been beneficial to their career.

Two fifths (41 per cent) of LGB respondents who have taken part in LGB&T staff development opportunities found that they were not beneficial to their career (Figure 20). This is particularly high amongst Bisexual respondents, where just under half (49 per cent) found them to not be beneficial to their career. Twenty-eight per cent of LGB respondents found the opportunities to be a little beneficial to their careers and just under a quarter (24 per cent) found them to be beneficial to some extent. Only seven per cent of Lesbians and Gay men found the opportunities to have been beneficial to their career to a great extent (and five per cent of Bisexual respondents).

Trans respondents were the most positive about the LGB&T career development opportunities they had undertaken with 12 per cent stating they had been beneficial to their career to a great extent and just under one quarter (24 per cent) found them to be beneficial to some extent. Over one third of Trans respondents (36 per cent) found the LGB&T opportunities they undertook to have not been beneficial to their careers at all.

LGB&T staff who are ‘out’ to their manager at work in terms of sexual orientation are more likely to have found the LGB&T staff development activities they undertook useful (63 per cent compared with 56 per cent of those partially ‘out’ to their manager and just 37 per cent of those not ‘out’ to their manager at all). Those who have been in the Civil Service for less than five years were also more likely to have found LGB&T staff development activities useful (65 per cent against 59 per cent of civil servants who have served longer than 15 years).

Figure 20: To what extent have these opportunities to participate in LGB&T staff development activities been beneficial to your career?



Organisational perceptions

Table 10 over the page shows the perception LGB&T staff had of their manager’s or organisation’s views on the benefits of LGB&T staff development or diversity opportunities. It is worth noting here that many civil servants were unsure of the opinions of their managers or organisation towards LGB&T staff development (33 per cent of LGB respondents answering don’t know and 35 per cent of Trans).

One quarter of Trans respondents feel their managers and organisation see LGB&T staff development opportunities as being beneficial to the respondents. In addition to this, 29 per cent feel that management see the opportunities as being beneficial to the organisation.

Gay men are the most positive about the perceptions of their managers and organisation (Table 10), with 15 per cent stating that they see LGB&T opportunities as being beneficial to individual’s careers, 36 per cent as benefitting the individual generally and 39 per cent as benefitting the whole organisation. Lesbian respondents are the most negative in their perception of the attitudes of their managers and organisation, with one third (33 per cent) thinking their management see opportunities as benefitting the organisation (against 37 per cent of all LGB respondents).



Table 10: Perception of manager’s and organisation’s attitudes towards the benefits of LGB&T career development and diversity opportunities

	Lesbian	Gay men	Bisexual	Trans
Benefits the individual	28	36	29	25
Benefits the individual's career	8	15	13	7
Benefits the organisation	33	39	37	29
Don't know	32	33	40	36
None of these	22	19	20	26

Base: all

### Thoughts on positive action

Generally, most focus group participants were enthusiastic about initiatives to specifically support LGB&T career development. Most felt that it would simply reflect the work which has already taken place to support the career development of women and black and minority ethnic staff. Some staff expressed concerns that positive action could create hostility towards LGB&T civil servants, especially if other colleagues felt that they were being treated preferentially or being given an unfair advantage. Some individuals suggested that it may be more effective to bring LGB&T and non-LGB&T staff together in joint initiatives which address disadvantage and discrimination across the different equality strands, issues which people share, rather than dealing with them separately. Trans focus group participants in particular felt that Trans-specific positive action could be problematic, particularly for those individuals who have transitioned, who do not want to be ‘out’ or who do not want to be labelled, and would need to be optional and carefully targeted for access by those that want such opportunities.

### The HR view

One of the HR professionals consulted had experience of LGB staff being offended by the suggestion of positive action, maintaining that their sexual orientation was irrelevant and that they wanted to be judged on their abilities alone. HR and diversity professionals who were interviewed were not opposed to positive action schemes for LGB&T career development. However, they suggested that one barrier to developing schemes is the lack of statistical data indicating a problem which needs to be addressed. Most departments now monitor sexual orientation, but in many, returns are still low, while people become accustomed to the question and the process. The risk of tokenism or of developing an initiative which is not based on real need was raised.



### What the Civil Service is doing well

The support the Civil Service has shown for its Staff Networks was considered to be a sign of its commitment to LGB&T equality and inclusion. It was felt that the activities of Networks have been key in raising awareness and educating the wider workforce about equality and inclusion. It was felt there still remains work to do, including ensuring all staff understand the purpose and value of Networks, and it was hoped that budget cuts would not lead to less value being placed on Networks and the time allocated to staff to run them. It was suggested that where Networks will need to start operating on fewer resources, there will be a role for CSRA, a:gender and the Unions in terms of sharing good practice and pooling expertise, so the Networks can continue to operate efficiently.

Other areas which were acknowledged included:

- Departments which advertise jobs and services in the LGB&T media;
- Departments which allocate a budget to participate in Pride and LGB&T History Month;
- Departments with board-level champions for sexual orientation and for gender identity equality; and
- Departments with a specific Trans policy and which take Trans people’s needs into account in their policies, particularly those who have acted proactively, rather than in response to an individual’s request.

### What else the Civil Service could be doing for LGB&T career development?

#### Mentoring and role models

The absence of senior ‘out’ LGB role models was raised throughout the research. Participants in the focus group suggested that more should be done to encourage people in the Senior Civil Service to come out, and to demonstrate that being ‘out’ is not detrimental to a career in the Civil Service. It was agreed however that it would take a lot of work to change attitudes and to challenge stereotypes which prevent people from coming out.

“In the SCS (LGB people) often just don’t come ‘out’. I know several in my department who are Gay at divisional manager and director level and they just will not come ‘out’. They think they will no longer be able to get the respect of the people working underneath them.”

(LGB focus group participant)

LGB&T mentoring was suggested as a way to increase the confidence of LGB&T members of staff seeking promotion, and this is already happening informally within some Networks. The idea of reverse mentoring is being mooted by some departments, and was suggested by some focus group participants as a way to help managers understand the issues faced by LGB&T civil servants.

## Training

Some focus group participants suggested equalities training should cover wider LGB&T issues, including social exclusion and the nature of harassment and discrimination, to enable a better understanding of the issues. It was felt that better training would help line managers support LGB&T staff, including Trans staff undergoing transition, more consistently. It was also felt that training would ensure a more consistent approach to dealing with complaints about discrimination, including informally. There is a strong perception that one of the pressure points for barriers to LGB&T career development is within the line management relationship.

“Going through transition it knocks you off the rails a bit. It’s hard to get back to where you were. One of the biggest differences is your direct line manager. I’ve had three, from the manager from hell to the current one who’s absolutely brilliant. That can make a hell of a difference. Management skills are key.”

(Trans focus group participant)

To ensure people do apply for promotions and other opportunities, assertiveness training for LGB&T civil servants themselves was suggested. Also that better use should be made of the Networks, as a source of expertise on LGB&T career development issues.

## Monitoring

Monitoring was raised as an issue which would help address LGB career development. A policy decision has already been made by a:gender and the Cabinet Office, that gender identity monitoring could not be done in any meaningful or completely safe way. Without strong data indicating where the problems lay, it was argued that the anecdotal evidence gathered from colleagues and Network members would not stand up. It was suggested that monitoring should examine not only who is LGB, but who is ‘out’, and whether they are ‘out’ at work as well as at home, and that a strategic approach and commitment should be taken to using the data to address any problems which emerge. Evidence from a recent study showed that a minority of LGB employees (12 per cent of lesbians and 14 per cent of gay men) would not answer a sexual orientation monitoring question<sup>21</sup>.

## Culture change

Finally, an overall desire was expressed for policy and practice, including around harassment and complaints, to be applied consistently across the Civil Service, and not left to the discretion of individual HR teams or line managers. Participants of the online discussion forum described this as a required fundamental culture change, to address policy and practice, but to also create a working environment in which people could come ‘out’ if they wanted to, have freedom to express their gender identity as they wish and be themselves free from the fear of bullying or discrimination.

“Fundamental culture change (is needed). A workplace that is supportive to all irrespective of irrelevant difference. A culture where everyone knows they cannot bring their petty bigotry into work. This must be driven by implementation of a good policy that everyone clearly understands. People need to understand the benefits of equality and the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.”

(Online discussion forum participant)

<sup>21</sup> Ellison and Gunstone (2009), Sexual orientation explored: A study of identity, attraction, behaviour and attitudes in 2009, Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

## 7 Recommendations

**These recommendations are drawn from the evidence base in this report and from suggestions from participants.**

The findings and conclusions of this research present a number of challenges and opportunities for the Civil Service as an employer, as well as the constituent Departments and staff support networks within the Civil Service.

To ensure the key findings of this report are taken forward, Yougov has developed 14 recommendations for the Civil Service to take forward, which we hope will improve the career development of LGB&T civil servants.

CSRA will be looking to implement these recommendations with the support of the Government Equalities Office, DWP, other Government Departments, a:gender and the Trade Unions.

- 1 There is a low level of understanding of issues facing LGB&T in the Civil Service. This is particularly true of gender identity and gender reassignment. This should be addressed through the development of consistent policies, in consultation with CSRA and a:gender, the use of diversity awareness training, and a positive working culture of openness and accountability. (Key finding 10)
- 2 Departments should ensure policies to address discrimination are widely disseminated and understood internally and, importantly, externally – particularly when working with outsourcing partners, consultants and contractors in the private sector. (Key finding 4)
- 3 Training for line managers and Human Resources should include LGB&T awareness training, with a specific focus on addressing and responding to complaints of homophobia and transphobia, as well as how to provide support to staff undergoing, or planning to undergo, gender reassignment. (Key findings 7 and 8)
- 4 Department's should recognise that low self-esteem as a result of discrimination (in and out of work) can impact severely on an employee's career development, and ensure that training on confidence and assertiveness is available to, inclusive of, and appropriate for all staff, particularly minority groups across all protected characteristics. (Key findings 4 and 8)
- 5 Training for line managers should recognise the contribution of diversity networks for the good relations of the Civil Service in general and the personal development of participants as individuals. (Key finding 9)
- 6 Appraisals of those with line management responsibility should include achievements and actions taken to strengthen or ensure equality. (Key finding 9)
- 7 Staff involvement in diversity networks should be monitored at appraisal and achievements and experience from participation in diversity networks should be considered evidence of an employee's skills. (Key finding 9)

- 8 CSRA encourages all Civil Service Departments to be bold in the gathering of sexual orientation data, continue to monitor and use the information to identify inconsistencies such as in the application of policy. However, for gender identity, the small number of Trans people in each department would negate the benefits of individual monitoring and alternatives such as the a:gender Trans Inequality Index should be used to monitor and benchmark departmental progress instead. (Key findings 1 and 10)
- 9 Yougov would encourage all Civil Service Departments to introduce mentoring programmes for LGB&T staff, in consultation with their LGB&T staff networks. (Key finding 5)
- 10 The Civil Service as a whole should more visibly recognise the significant value in terms of being a role model that just one or two senior LGB&T civil servants provide to a department. The Civil Service could also usefully provide those that are willing to volunteer, with the platform to share their experiences with others. (Key finding 6)
- 11 The Civil Service as a whole should more proactively promote the benefits of Diversity networks for Departments as well as individual members of staff. A clear and consistent message shared across Departments would be particularly helpful. (Key finding 9)
- 12 Departments should continue using benchmarking tools such as the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and the a:gender Trans Equality Index to drive continuous organisational improvement. (Key finding 6)
- 13 Departments should consider how they can improve support to LGB&T staff working in the regions or overseas. (Key finding 11)
- 14 Departments should work with their LGB&T staff networks to take forward these recommendations, and report their progress to CSRA annually.



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# Appendix A – Participant profiles

## Survey participants

The demographic and working profile of survey participants is presented in this section, beginning with their age profile. The age range of civil servants responding to the survey was wide and fairly evenly spread.

Table 11: Age profile		
	N	%
30-39	232	33
40-49	253	36
50 or over	110	16
Prefer not to say	8	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>711</b>	

Ninety-five percent of respondents were white. Of the 25 that were from a minority ethnic background, 11 were of mixed black and white ethnic groups, nine were Asian, three black and two Arabian or other ethnicity.

Table 12: Ethnicity		
	n	%
White	675	95
Minority Ethnic	25	3
Prefer not to say	11	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>711</b>	

Around a fifth considered themselves religious and for the vast majority this meant Christian (81 per cent).

Table 13: Religion		
	n	%
Religious	177	21
Non religious	509	71
Don't know	11	2
Prefer not to say	13	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	

Seventeen per cent had a limiting physical or mental health problem or disability and a similar proportion (19 per cent) had caring responsibilities for someone with a disability.

Table 14: Disability			
	N	%	n
Substantial disability themselves	17	2	
Disability but not substantial	103	15	
No disability yourself	578	81	
Prefer not to say	12	2	
Responsibilities to look after others with disability			132
No responsibilities to look after others with disability			575
Prefer not to say			3
	<b>710</b>		<b>710</b>

Eight per cent of those surveyed had parental responsibilities for at least one child under the age of 16.

Table 15: Parental responsibilities		
	n	%
Parental responsibilities	58	8
No parental responsibilities	652	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	

Although there were comparatively few from the Senior Civil Service, the break-down of responses by grade includes many from lower and middle ranks of seniority within the Civil Service. Of the 19 at SCS/Director, one was Trans and there were eight Trans within the 124 from Grades 7/6/Senior Manager.

Table 16: Grade/pay band		
	n	%
AA-AO/Administrator	140	20
EO/Junior manager	165	23
HEO/SEO/Middle Manager	232	33
Grade 7/Grade 6/Senior Manager	124	18
Senior Civil Service/Director	19	3
Prefer not to say	26	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>706</b>	

The regional distribution of participants was wide with a significant number from outside of London.

Table 17: Region of work		
	n	%
East Midlands	22	3
East of England	20	3
London	288	41
North East	36	5
North West	65	9
Northern Ireland	12	2
Scotland	49	7
South East	53	8
South West	50	7
Wales	22	3
West Midlands	40	6
Yorkshire & Humber	48	7
Total	705	

There were 32 survey participants who were currently in the fast stream or another accelerated promotion programme and 99 specialists.

Table 18: Fast stream or specialists		
	n	%
In the Fast Stream or other accelerated promotion group	32	5
A Civil Service specialist (doctor, lawyer, vet, scientist, analytical profession, IT specialist etc.)	99	14
Total	131	

Nearly half of those surveyed has been in the Civil Service for between 2 and 10 years, but there were significant numbers who had served for over 21 years, providing a long breadth of experiences.

Table 19: Length of service		
	n	%
Less than 2 years	78	11
2 to 5 years	111	16
6 to 10 years	203	29
11 to 15 years	70	10
16 to 20 years	57	8
21 to 25 years	88	13
26 years or more	92	13
Prefer not to say	7	1
Total	706	

The highest number of responses to the survey came from LGB&T staff at HM Revenue & Customs, following by Jobcentre Plus and Department for Transport. There was a wide representation of staff from many organisations taking part in the survey.

Table 20: Department or agency of work	
	n
HM Revenue and Customs	152
JobCentre Plus	44
Transport (Department for)	41
Work and Pensions (Department for)	39
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Department for)	33
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	32
Crown Prosecution Service	22
Scottish Executive	20
Health & Safety Executive	19
Health (Department of)	18
Highways Agency	18
UK Border Agency	16
Children, Schools and Families (Department for)	14
Defence (Ministry of)	14
Justice (Ministry of)	13

Table 20: Department or agency of work	
	n
Energy and Climate Change (Department of)	12
OFSTED	12
National Archives	11
Business, Innovation and Skills (Department for)	10
Treasury (HM)	10
Communities and Local Government (Department for)	9
Home Office	8
Culture, Media and Sport (Department for)	7
Cabinet Office	6
International Development (Department for)	6
Pensions, Disability and Carers Service	6
CMEC	5
British Council	5
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	4
HM Land Registry	4
National Audit Office	4
National Statistics	5
National Offender Management Service (NOMS)	4
Rural Payments Agency	4
Government Equalities Office	3
HM Courts Service	3
Identity and Passport Service	3
Welsh Assembly Government	3
Environment Agency	2
DARD	2
HM Prison Service	2
Government Offices for the Regions	2
Office of Fair Trading	2
Training & Development Agency	2
Met Office	2

Table 20: Department or agency of work	
	n
EHRC	1
Driving Standards Agency	1
NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency	1
Other	26
Prefer not to say	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>728</b>

## LGB and Trans focus group participants

Participants in the LGB focus groups worked in the following organisations:

- Crown Prosecution Service
- DVLA
- Environment Agency
- HM Revenue & Customs
- Home Office
- Identity and Passport Service
- Jobcentre Plus
- National Archives
- Valuation Office Agency
- Welsh Assembly Government

## Human resources/diversity interviews

In-depth interviews were carried out with those in the following organisations:

- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Home Office
- Land Registry



# Appendix B – Survey questionnaire

**[q2] We would like to begin by simply asking you whether you consider yourself to be...**

- <1> Bisexual
- <2> Gay/Lesbian
- <3> Heterosexual/straight
- <4> Other [q2a] {open}

**[q3] Do you identify as:**

- <1> Female
- <2> Male
- <3> Other [q3a] {open}

**[q4] Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?**

- <1> Yes
- <2> No

**[q6] Which of the following best describes you?**

- <1> Not transgender in any way
- <2> Fully transitioned, living permanently as female/male
- <3> Living partially as female/male
- <4> Intending to transition to become female/male
- <5> Cross-dressing but no present intention to fully transition
- <6> Transgender in some other way [q6a] {open}

**[q7] Are you open about your sexual orientation in the following places?**

**-[q7a] at home**

**-[q7b] with colleagues**

**-[q7c] with your manager at work**

**-[q7d] at work generally**

- <1> Yes
- <2> Partially
- <3> No

**[q8a] To the extent that you are open about your sexual orientation at work, for how long has this been?**

- <1> Less than 2 years
- <2> 2 to 5 years
- <3> 6 to 10 years
- <4> 11 to 15 years
- <5> 16 to 20 years
- <6> 21 to 25 years
- <7> 26 years or more

**[q8b] If you are not fully open about your sexual orientation at work? Please share your thoughts and experiences below.**

**[q9] Are you open about your change of gender at work?**

- <1> Yes
- <2> No

**[q10] Was it your choice to be open about your change of gender at work?**

- <1> Yes
- <2> Partially
- <3> No

**[q11] What has influenced whether or not you are open about your gender identity at work? Please share your thoughts and experiences below.**

**[q12] Thinking back to when you first joined the Civil Service, to what extent do you think that you joined because you believed that it is an LGB&T friendly employer?**

- <1> To a great extent
- <2> To some extent
- <3> Not at all
- <4> Don't know

**[q13] And thinking about what you know now, to what extent do you now agree or disagree that that the Civil Service is an LGB&T friendly employer?**

- <1> Strongly agree
- <2> Tend to agree
- <3> Neither agree nor disagree
- <4> Tend to disagree
- <5> Strongly disagree

**[q15] Have you ever experienced or perceived any harassment or bullying because of your sexual orientation or gender identity?**

**-[q15a] Your manager**

**-[q15b] Your colleagues**

**-[q15c] The people you manage**

**-[q15d] Customers/service users**

**-[q15e] Suppliers, partners or outsourced staff**

- <1 or> No, never
- <2> Sexual orientation
- <3> Gender identity
- <4> Sexual orientation and gender identity

- 
- [q16] Yes, when was the last such occurrence?**
- <1> In the last 12 months
  - <2> Between a year and five years ago
  - <3> Between five and ten years ago
  - <4> Over ten years ago
  - <5> Don't know/can't remember
- [q18a] Have you had opportunities to participate in LGB&T staff development or diversity activities?**
- <1> Yes
  - <2> No
- q18b To what extent have these opportunities to participate in LGB&T staff development activities been beneficial to your career?**
- <1> To a great extent
  - <2> To some extent
  - <3> A little
  - <4> Not beneficial at all
- [q18c] On balance, do you feel that your manager and organisation view LGB&T staff development or diversity opportunities as beneficial to...?**
- <1> You as an individual
  - <2> Your career
  - <3> Your organisation
  - <4 or> Don't know
  - <5 or> None of these
- [q18d] What have been your experiences, positive or negative about wanting to or actually getting involved in LGB&T staff development activities?**
- [q19] How far do you agree or disagree that...**
- [q19a] I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills or I am encouraged to develop new skills**
- [q19b] I believe my organisation promotes the best people for the job**
- [q19c] In my organisation you have to conform in order to progress**
- [q19d] There are opportunities for me to develop my career in this organisation**
- [q19e] I receive the support from my manager that I need to develop my career**
- [q19f] I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need to**

- 
- [q19g] Learning and development activities I have completed while working in my organisation are helping me to develop my career**
- <1> Strongly agree
  - <2> Tend to agree
  - <3> Neither agree nor disagree
  - <4> Tend to disagree
  - <5> Strongly disagree
- [q22] Thinking about each of the following, do you feel that you have had the same opportunities as non LGB&T colleagues?**
- [q22a] In-house training**
- [q22b] Mentoring/coaching**
- [q22c] Attending conferences/events**
- [q22d] Networking**
- [q22e] Promotion**
- [q23f] Secondments within or outside the Civil Service**
- [q23g] Studying for qualifications whilst working**
- [q22h] External training**
- [q22i] During the appraisal process**
- <1> Yes, same opportunities
  - <2> No, have not had the same opportunities
- [q220] Please share your experiences, positive or negative, about accessing or taking part in the development opportunities listed above**
- {end page aspects}
- [q23] How far do you agree or disagree that you feel able to complain about any career development disadvantages you might suffer, without worrying that it would have a negative impact your career?**
- <1> Strongly agree
  - <2> Tend to agree
  - <3> Neither agree nor disagree
  - <4> Tend to disagree
  - <5> Strongly disagree
- [q24a] Have you ever complained (formally or informally) about career development disadvantages you have suffered?**
- <1> Yes
  - <2> No

- 
- [q24b] If yes, what was your experience of complaining?
- [q25] What extent do you believe that negative assumptions have been made about the following because of your sexual orientation or gender identity?
- [q25a] Career aspirations
- [q25b] Abilities to progress in your career
- <1> Strongly agree
  - <2> Tend to agree
  - <3> Neither agree nor disagree
  - <4> Tend to disagree
  - <5> Strongly disagree
- [q26] How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how your career has developed over time?
- <1> Very satisfied
  - <2> Satisfied
  - <3> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
  - <4> Dissatisfied
  - <5> Very dissatisfied
- q27 Given your sexual orientation or gender identity, what features of working in the Civil Service have been helpful in developing your career?
- [q28] Have you felt that there have been or are barriers to the development of your career specifically because of your sexual orientation or gender identity?
- <1> Yes
  - <2> No
- [q29] What sorts of barriers have you experienced specifically because of your sexual orientation or gender identity?
- [q30] When did you most recently experience any barriers to career development?
- <1> In the last 12 months
  - <2> Between a year and five years ago
  - <3> Between five and ten years ago
  - <4> Over ten years ago
  - <5> Don't know/can't remember

- 
- [q32] To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following have limited your opportunities to progress in the Civil Service given your sexual orientation or gender identity?
- [q32a] It is difficult to be yourself at work
- [q32b] There is pressure to conform with others
- [q32c] It is difficult to socialise with colleagues
- [q32d] Networking opportunities have been limited
- q32f Taking time off work for transition
- q32g Needing to move jobs or turn down opportunities because of transition
- <1> Not at all
  - <2> To a some extent
  - <3> To a great extent
  - <4> Don't know
- q33 Have you experienced awkwardness or been uncomfortable in any of these situations in relation to your sexual orientation or gender identity?
- <1> Line managing your staff, if applicable
  - <2> Reporting to your line manager
  - <3> During appraisals
  - <4> On training courses
  - <5> Working with other teams/departments
  - <6 fixed> Other situations [q33a] {open}
  - <7 fixed or> None of the above
- [q34] Have you felt your COLLEAGUES being awkward or uncomfortable about your sexual orientation or gender identity in any of these situations?
- <1> Being line managed by you, if applicable
  - <2> Being your line manager
  - <3> During appraisals
  - <4> On training courses
  - <5> Working with other teams/departments
  - <6 fixed> Other situations [q34a] {open}
  - <7 fixed or> None of the above
- q35 Yes, why did you feel awkward or uncomfortable, please share you experiences

**q350 Thinking about career progress and promotion, have you ever felt that you have been treated unfairly by your manager, colleagues or the organisation generally as a result of your sexual orientation or gender identity?**

- <1> Manager
- <2> Colleagues
- <3> Organisation in general
- <4 fixed or> None of the above

**q351 When was the most recent time that you feel you were treated unfairly?**

- <1> In the last 12 months
- <2> Between a year and five years ago
- <3> Between five and ten years ago
- <4> Over ten years ago
- <5> Don't know/can't remember

\*\*We would just like to ask you some questions about yourself and your background. These will be treated in the strictest confidence with no identifying information held or passed to other parties. If you would prefer not to answer any of the questions, please tick the box accordingly.\*\*

**q36 What is your age?**

- <1> Under 20
- <2> 20-29
- <3> 30-39
- <4> 40-49
- <5> 50 or over
- <6> Prefer not to say

**q37 What is your ethnic group?**

- <1> White (English; Welsh; Scottish; Northern Irish; British; Irish; Gypsy or Irish Traveller or any other White background)
- <2> Mixed/multiple ethnic groups (White and Black Caribbean; White and Black African; White and Asian or any other mixed/multiple ethnic background)
- <3> Asian/Asian British (Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Chinese or any other Asian background)
- <4> Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (African; Caribbean or any other Black/African/Caribbean background (write in below)
- <5> Arab or any other ethnic group
- <6> Prefer not to say

**q38 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a physical or mental health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?**

- <1> Yes, substantially limited
- <2> Yes, but not substantially
- <3> No
- <4> Prefer not to say

**q39a Do you have parental responsibilities for any children under the age of 16? Please include those who live in another household some or all of the time. Include natural, step, foster and adopted children.**

- <1> Yes
- <2> No

**q39b Do you look after, or give help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either: long term physical or mental ill health or disability, or problems related to old age?**

- <1> Yes
- <2> No
- <3> Prefer not to say

**q40 Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?**

- <1> Yes
- <2> No
- <3> Don't know
- <4> Prefer not to say

**q41 What is your religion, even if you are not currently practising?**

- <1> Christian (including Church of England/Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- <2> Muslim/Islam
- <3> Hindu
- <4> Judaism/Jewish
- <5> Sikh
- <6> Buddhist
- <7> Other
- <8> Prefer not to say



**q42a In which of the following Departments, Agencies or NDPBs do you currently work? If not in the list, please tick other and type in.**

- <1> Business, Innovation and Skills (Department for)
- <2> Cabinet Office
- <3> Central Office of Information
- <4> Children, Schools and Families (Department for)
- <5> Communities and Local Government (Department for)
- <6> Crown Prosecution Service
- <7> Culture, Media and Sport (Department for)
- <8> Defence (Ministry of)
- <9> Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- <10> Driving Standards Agency
- <11> Energy and Climate Change (Department of)
- <12> Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Department for)
- <13> Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- <14> Government Offices for the Regions
- <54> Government Equalities Office
- <15> Health (Department of)
- <16> Highways Agency
- <17> HM Courts Service
- <18> HM Land Registry
- <19> HM Revenue and Customs
- <20> Home Office
- <21> Identity and Passport Service
- <22> International Development (Department for)
- <23> Jobcentre Plus
- <24> Justice (Ministry of)
- <25> Met Office
- <26> National Offender Management Service (NOMS)
- <27> National Savings and Investments
- <28> NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency
- <53> Northern Ireland Executive
- <29> Pensions, Disability and Carers Service
- <30> Rural Payments Agency
- <52> Scottish Executive
- <31> Transport (Department for)
- <32> Treasury (HM)
- <33> UK Border Agency
- <34> UK Statistics Authority

- <35> UK Trade and Investment
- <50> Welsh Assembly Government
- <36> Work and Pensions (Department for)
- <37> Other [q42b] {open}
- <38> Prefer not to say

**q42c What is your current grade/pay band or closest equivalent?**

- <1> AA-AO/Administrator
- <2> EO/Junior manager
- <3> EO/SEO/Middle Manager
- <4> Grade 7/Grade 6/Senior Manager
- <5> Senior Civil Service/Director
- <6> Prefer not to say

**q430 Are you any of the following at present?**

- <1> In the Fast Stream or other accelerated promotion group
- <2> A Civil Service specialist (doctor, lawyer, vet, scientist, analytical profession, IT specialist etc.)
- <3 or> None of the above

**q44 And which of these best describes where you currently work?**

- <1> East Midlands
- <2> East of England
- <3> London
- <4> North East
- <5> North West
- <6> Northern Ireland
- <7> Scotland
- <8> South East
- <9> South West
- <10> Wales
- <11> West Midlands
- <12> Yorkshire & Humber



**q45. And finally, how long have you been working for the Civil Service?**

- <1> Less than 2 years
- <2> 2 to 5 years
- <3> 6 to 10 years
- <4> 11 to 15 years
- <5> 16 to 20 years
- <6> 21 to 25 years
- <7> 26 years or more
- <8> Prefer not to say

Many thanks you have now completed the survey. If you would like to continue the discussion we have set up an online discussion forum where you can expand on these and other career development issues.

## Appendix C – LGB focus group topic guide

The Civil Service Rainbow Alliance (CSRA) has commissioned YouGov to carry out research examining whether or not existing career development opportunities in the UK Civil Service adequately meet the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGB&T) employees. The research, the first of its kind within the Civil Service, will document the experiences of LGB&T employees and make recommendations for improvements as necessary. In addition to an online survey and discussion forum, a series of focus group discussions are being held with LGB&T employees, to explore the issues in more depth.

This topic guide has been designed to inform the discussions with LGB staff, taking a semi-structured and flexible approach. Additional focus group discussions are being held with Trans staff. However, there may be some cross-over (e.g. Trans staff who identify as LGB) and this will be captured and not excluded from the discussion.

### Introduction

- About the research
- Introduction to the facilitator
- Aims of the discussion
- Timing: 90 minutes
- Confidentiality
  - names will not be reported back
  - quotes will be anonymised
  - individuals will not be identifiable in the final report
- Permission to record

### Introducing the participants

- Each participant should be asked:
  - first name
  - organisation/department
  - grade
  - length of time in Civil Service

### Overview of the Civil Service's approach to sexual orientation equality

- Would you describe the Civil Service as an LGB-friendly employer?
- Did you think of the Civil Service as an LGB-friendly employer before you joined? Have your views changed or remained the same?
  - What has shaped your view?
  - Probe for changes and progress
  - Probe for areas where sexual orientation inequality persists

- Are there organisations or departments within the Civil Service which have a reputation for being more or less LGB-friendly?
  - Probe for examples and explanations
  - Probe for geographical differences
- Can LGB people be themselves at work in the Civil Service?
  - In what way might this have implications for their career progression?

### Career development opportunities

- What types of career development opportunities are available to people in the Civil Service?
  - How does career development work in your organisation/department?
- How are career development opportunities promoted and allocated in the Civil Service?

### Career development and sexual orientation

- Are existing career development opportunities accessible to LGB staff in the same way that they are to heterosexual staff?
  - What works well and has a positive impact on LGB people's careers?
  - Probe for any perceived barriers or unmet need
- Does the use of talent pools, such as Fast Stream, meet the needs of LGB staff?
- How does sexual orientation impact on an individuals' career development in the Civil Service?
  - e.g. when accessing particular opportunities (e.g. training, events, networking, promotion)
  - Probe for positives and negatives
- Do LGB people face barriers to career development in the Civil Service?
  - If yes, what is the nature of those barriers?
  - Where do they occur?
  - What impact do they have?
  - How could they be removed?
- Does discrimination in the Civil Service cause LGB staff to experience disadvantage in their career development?
  - If yes, probe for examples
  - Is this the case for Lesbians, Gay men and Bisexual people?
  - Probe for any issues for specific groups, draw out issues linked to multiple identities where appropriate
  - What needs to happen to address this?

### Complaining about disadvantage in career development

- What are the procedures for complaining about discrimination in the Civil Service?
- What would you do if you had experienced discrimination in terms of your career development?
  - Would you report it?
  - What might prevent an LGB member of staff from complaining?
  - Probe for experiences where appropriate

### Positive action and LGB-specific career development opportunities

- Do LGB civil servants have any specific needs in terms of their career development?
  - In what way are these needs being or not being met?
- What are your views on LGB-specific initiatives, or 'positive action' to encourage LGB career development?
- What types of initiatives are you aware of to specifically support LGB employees' career development in the Civil Service?
  - Probe for examples such as departmental LGBT programmes, LGBT staff networks and the Stonewall Leadership Programme)
  - What has been your experience of such initiatives?
  - Are these initiatives accessible to all LGB people?
  - Probe for barriers or unmet needs within different groups of people
- What types of initiatives would you like your department or organisation to develop to help you advance your career?

### Next steps

- What do you think the Civil Service is doing well in terms of LGB career development?
  - Probe for examples of successful career progression, support for LGB staff, and good practice in different organisations/departments.
- What else would you like to see the Civil Service doing to ensure LGB people are able to access career development opportunities?
  - What are the most important issues to address and why?

Anything else to add?

**Thanks and end.**

# Appendix D – Trans focus group topic guide

The Civil Service Rainbow Alliance (CSRA), working closely with a:gender, has commissioned YouGov to carry out research examining whether or not existing career development opportunities in the UK Civil Service adequately meet the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGB&T) employees. The research, the first of its kind within the Civil Service, will document the experiences of LGB&T employees and make recommendations for improvements as necessary. In addition to an online survey and discussion forum, a series of focus group discussions are being held with LGB&T employees, to explore the issues in more depth.

This topic guide has been designed to inform the discussions with Trans staff at the a:gender event, taking a semi-structured and flexible approach.

## Introduction

- About the research
- Introduction to the facilitator
- Aims of the discussion
- Timing: 90 minutes
- Confidentiality
  - names will not be reported back
  - quotes will be anonymised
  - individuals will not be identifiable in the final report
- Permission to record

## Introducing the participants (BEFORE RECORDING BEGINS)

- Each participant should be asked:
  - first name
  - organisation/department
  - grade
  - length of time in Civil Service

## What are the needs of Trans members of staff who wish to progress their career within the UK Civil Service?

- How would you describe the Civil Service's approach to gender identity as a workplace issue, and to Trans equality and inclusion?
- Did you think of the Civil Service as a Trans-friendly employer before you joined? Have your views changed or remained the same?
  - What has shaped your view?
  - Probe for changes and progress
  - Probe for areas where inequality persists/what allows it to persist
  - Identify if views changed at a particular point of transition

- How can being known to be Trans impact on an individuals' career development in the Civil Service?
  - e.g. when accessing particular opportunities (e.g. training, events, networking, promotion)
  - Probe for positives and negatives
- What implications can the process of transitioning have on an individual's career development?
  - Probe for strategies employed to deal with these
  - Probe for personal experiences/timescales, if appropriate
- To what extent does the Civil Service/managers support people and their career development during transition?
  - Probe for good practice
  - If there are gaps/inconsistency in support, what would help?
- Are there organisations or departments within the Civil Service which have a reputation for being more or less Trans-friendly?
  - Probe for examples and explanations
  - Probe for geographical differences
- Are existing career development opportunities accessible to Trans staff in the same way that they are to non-Trans colleagues?
  - What works well and has a positive impact on Trans people's careers?
  - Probe for any perceived barriers or unmet need

## What (if any) are the barriers to career progression of Trans civil servants?

- Do Trans people face barriers to career development in the Civil Service?
  - If yes, what is the nature of those barriers?
  - Where/when do they occur?
  - What impact do they have?
  - How could they be removed?
- Does discrimination/transphobia in the Civil Service cause Trans staff to experience disadvantage in their career development?
  - If yes, probe for examples
  - Is this the case for Trans men and Trans women? What differences are there?
  - Are there stages of transition where an individual is more likely to experience discrimination and career development disadvantage?
  - Probe for any issues for specific groups, draw out issues linked to multiple identities where appropriate
  - What needs to happen to address this?



- What are the procedures for complaining about discrimination in the Civil Service?
- What would you do if you had experienced discrimination in terms of your career development?
  - Would you report it?
  - If not why not? If yes, how?
  - Are Employee Assistance Programmes/Staff Counsellors equipped to deal with issues of transphobia?
  - What might prevent a Trans member of staff from complaining?
  - Probe for experiences where appropriate

### Do existing career developmental opportunities adequately meet the needs of Trans members of staff?

- What types of career development opportunities are available to people in the Civil Service?
  - How does career development work in your organisation/department?
- How are career development opportunities promoted and allocated in the Civil Service?
- What types of initiatives are you aware of to specifically support Trans employees' career development in the Civil Service?
  - Probe for examples such as departmental 'LGBT programmes' and 'LGBT staff networks'
  - What has been your experience of such initiatives?
  - Are these initiatives accessible to all Trans people?
  - Probe for barriers or unmet needs within different groups of people
- Are LGBT initiatives genuinely inclusive of Trans people/reflective of Trans people's needs and experiences?
  - Probe for gaps
- What are your views on Trans-specific initiatives, or 'positive action' to encourage Trans people's career development?
- What types of initiatives would you like your department or organisation to develop to help you advance your career?
- What do you think the Civil Service is doing well in terms of Trans people's career development?
  - Probe for examples of successful career progression, support for Trans staff, and good practice in different organisations/departments.
- What else would you like to see the Civil Service doing to ensure Trans people are able to access career development opportunities?
  - What are the most important issues to address and why?

### Does the use of existing talent pools (such as the Fast Stream) adequately meet the needs of Trans members of staff?

- If it's relevant to ask, does the use of talent pools, such as Fast Stream, meet the needs of Trans staff?
  - Or are there other aspects of career progression which are more important?
- What is most important to you in terms of your career in the Civil Service?
- How do you see Trans civil servants' career development issues evolving in the future?

Anything else to add?

**Thanks and end.**

# Appendix E – HR interview topic guide

The Civil Service Rainbow Alliance (CSRA) has commissioned YouGov to carry out research examining whether or not existing career development opportunities in the UK Civil Service adequately meet the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Trans employees. The research, the first of its kind within the Civil Service (Civil Service), will document the experiences of LGB and/or Trans people and make recommendations for improvements as necessary. In addition to an online survey and discussion forum, a series of focus group discussions are being held with LGB and/or Trans employees, to explore the issues in more depth, as well as interviews with representatives from various HR teams.

This topic guide has been designed to inform the interviews with HR representatives.

## Introduction

- About the research
- Aims of the discussion
- Timing: 45 minutes
- Confidentiality
  - names will not be reported back
  - quotes will be anonymous
  - individuals will not be identifiable in the final report
  - option to speak off the record

## What are the needs of LGB and/or Trans members of staff who wish to progress their career within the UK Civil Service?

- How has the Civil Service's approach to sexual orientation equality and inclusion changed or developed over the years?
  - What has happened to affect change?
  - Probe for changes and progress - policies, practices and attitudes
  - Probe for areas where inequality persists
- What about the Civil Service's approach to transgender equality and inclusion? Has this changed or developed over the years?
  - What has happened to affect change?
  - Probe for changes and progress - policies, practices and attitudes
  - Probe for areas where inequality persists
- Would you describe the Civil Service as an LGB-friendly employer?
- Would you describe it as a Trans-friendly employer?
- How does sexual orientation impact on an individuals' career development in the Civil Service?
  - e.g. when accessing particular opportunities (e.g. training, events, networking, promotion)
  - Probe for positives and negatives

- How does gender identity impact on an individuals' career development in the Civil Service?
  - e.g. when accessing particular opportunities (e.g. training, events, networking, promotion)
  - Probe for positives and negatives
  - Probe for implications for taking time off to transition, support available, etc
- Are existing career development opportunities accessible to LGBT staff in the same way that they are to staff that do not identify as LGB and/or Trans?
  - What works well and has a positive impact on LGB and/or Trans people's careers?
  - Probe for any perceived barriers or unmet need

## Do existing career developmental opportunities adequately meet the needs of LGB and/or Trans members of staff?

- What types of career development opportunities are available to people in the Civil Service?
  - How does career development work in your organisation/department?
- How are career development opportunities promoted and allocated in the Civil Service?
  - Probe for how promotion happens, how opportunities are advertised, role of managers in identifying opportunities for staff, etc
- What types of initiatives are you aware of to specifically support LGB and/or Trans employees' career development in the Civil Service?
  - Probe for examples such as departmental programmes, staff networks, the Stonewall Leadership Programme (for LGB people) and any initiatives for Trans people
  - Are these initiatives accessible to all LGB and/or people?
  - Probe for barriers or unmet needs within different groups of people
- Have you been involved in delivering or promoting such initiatives?
  - If yes, how was the need identified and what was the response?
  - If not, why not?
  - Probe for plans for the future
- What are your views on sexual orientation/gender identity-specific initiatives, or 'positive action' to encourage the career development of LGB and/or Trans people?
- What do you think the Civil Service is doing well in terms of career development for LGB and/or Trans people?
  - Probe for examples of successful career progression, support for LGB staff, support for Trans staff (including those in the process of transitioning), and good practice in different organisations/departments.
- What else would you like to see the Civil Service doing to ensure LGB and/or Trans people are able to access career development opportunities?
  - What are the most important issues to address and why?
  - Probe for differences between LGB and Trans people



## What (if any) are the barriers to career progression of LGB and/or Trans civil servants?

- Do LGB and/or Trans people face barriers to career development in the Civil Service?
  - If yes, what is the nature of those barriers and how are they measured?
  - Where do they occur?
  - What impact do they have?
  - How could they be removed?
- Does discrimination in the Civil Service cause LGB and/or Trans staff to experience disadvantage in their career development?
  - If yes, probe for examples
  - Probe for differences between L, G, B and T people
  - Probe for any issues for specific groups, draw out issues linked to multiple identities where appropriate
  - What needs to happen to address this?
- What are the procedures for complaining about discrimination in the Civil Service?
  - How are staff encouraged to report sexual orientation and/or gender identity discrimination in career progression?
  - Might there be any barriers to reporting discrimination, and if so, what can be done about this?
- Does the use of existing talent pools (such as the Fast Stream) adequately meet the needs of LGB and/or Trans members of staff?
- Does the use of talent pools, such as Fast Stream, meet the needs of LGB and/or Trans staff?