

LGBTQ Policy Toolkit



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LGBTQ POLICY TOOLKIT

Introduction

This Policy Toolkit brings together policies from local LGBTQ groups and organisations in Brighton and Hove in a move to share good practice and facilitate mutual learning. The guide serves as an introduction to policies and an overview of the process of developing, structuring and implementing new policies. If you would like to see policies from local LGBTQ groups and organisations, these can be found on page 7. You are welcome to use these examples to shape your own policies. Please remember that policies are not 'one size fits all' so it is important to adapt the policy to suit your group's size, client group, structure and organisational culture. We hope that this guide provides some food for thought on policy development.

What is a policy?

Policies are statements of how your organisation plans to conduct services, actions and processes. They provide guidance to help with decision-making. Policies do not need to be fancy or elaborate. The best policies are simple, jargon free and easy to understand.

Why have policies?

Policies and procedures to help to guide the actions of all individuals involved an organisation or service. Policies help to establish clear boundaries and expectations for all staff, volunteers and everyone who is connected to the service.

When policies and procedures are well thought out and, most importantly, implemented they provide common understanding and agreement on how things should be done consistently and reliable at the service.

In case your group or organisation becomes involved in a dispute, it is important to be able to evidence the relevant policies and how they have been followed. If you do not have the right policies, or have failed to follow them, you could lose the dispute and this may have an impact on levels of confidence in the group.

Why is this guide just for LGBTQ groups?

Any group or organisation may find this guide helpful and is welcome to use it. Most of the policies are generic and do not relate specifically to sexual orientation or gender identity. However, all the policies featured have been developed and shared by LGBTQ groups and organisations for LGBTQ groups in Brighton & Hove.



How to Develop a Policy

1. **Identify** a need for the new policy and the remit for what you want the policy to include. This may be based on a particular issue your group or organisation is having, or it could be a funder requirement.
2. **Consult** with staff, volunteer or service users who the policy will affect. Ask for input as to particular aspects they would like clearly outlined in the policy.
3. **Research** examples of policies that have already been developed that can be adapted and applied to your own group. Common policies such as Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Grievance policies are readily available and may be valuable when shaping your own policy. It is important that the policy is tailored to you specific organisation and needs.
4. **Adapt** your policy to the local context: for example, if you are developing a Safeguarding policy, make sure it references and aligns with the [Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Procedures](#).
5. **Agree** the policy and sign it off with the trustees or management committee. You should also agree a process of implementing the policy and decide if any procedures need to be developed in order to adhere to the policy.
6. **Share** the policy with the staff members, volunteers or service users it relates to. Make sure that all stakeholders are aware of the policy and know how to access it when the need to.
7. **Update** the policy in line with organisational or local developments and make sure that any changes are communicated to key stakeholders.

Top Tip! Involving staff and volunteers in developing a policy, means they may have more of a sense of ownership

So... you have identified the need for a policy, prepared through consultation and research and are ready to write your policy. Here are a few suggestions about how you can structure your policy

Policy Title

- Make sure it relates to the policy and is easy to understand

Introduction

- Explain why the policy is necessary
- Remit of the policy - who will use it and when

Glossary of terms

- Make sure that you include definitions of technical terms or acronyms

Procedures

- Outline any procedures that relate to the policy; the action steps that need to be carried out

Responsibilities

- Outline responsibilities of staff, volunteers and management

Acknowledgements

- Be sure to include acknowledgements if part of your policy has been adapted from another organisation



Policy Writing Checklist



All done? Use our handy checklist to make sure your policy is user-ready!

- Is the policy's **title** clear and concise? Does it accurately describe the subject(s) addressed?
- Does the policy use consistent every-day terms that are well understood, and avoid jargon?
- Does it avoid terms and statements that can be easily confused or interpreted in multiple ways?
- Does the policy include **definitions** for terms that require clarification?
- Does the policy use single idea sentences and avoid complex sentence structures?
- Does the policy clearly define **responsibilities**?
- Does the policy use gender-neutral language?
- Does the policy use **headings**, subheadings or numbering to group information logically?
- Does the policy have **bullet points and lists** to simplify text where appropriate?
- Does the policy have a **present tense** and positive tone?
- Have you **considered the audience** when deciding what information is essential?
- Have you avoided using **contact information** that may change such as a person's name, phone number, or e-mail address? (Refer to titles, positions, and departments not specific individuals)
- Is the policy as **brief** as possible? Lengthy or complex information should be included in the associated procedures or in an **appendix**.
- Have you identified draft policies clearly as **"drafts"** and included the date of the draft to avoid confusion?

Definitions

Policies: A policy is a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed officially by a group of people, a business organisation, a government, or a political party

Procedures: A procedure is the process, or set of steps followed in order to give effect to a policy.



Implementing a New Policy

There are a number of considerations to make when implementing a new policy including the following:

- There should be visible support and/ or formal sign-off for the policy from the Committee / Board of Trustees
- All committee members / staff / volunteers / stakeholders should be aware of their responsibilities under the new policy
- Relevant committee members, staff, volunteers and service users should receive a copy of the policy or know where to access it
- Staff or volunteers may need to receive training in order to be able to support the policy
- Limit the number of printed policies to reduce the risk of out-dated material being in circulation

Practical ways to implement the new policy include:

- New staff and volunteers should be guided through the policy as part of their induction
- Policies and procedures can be posted in shared online files that staff/ volunteers can access
- Discuss the policy at team meetings or briefings
- Circulate the policy via email- this is especially helpful for part-time volunteers/staff who may not be at team meetings
- Make sure you update all stakeholders when there is a change in policy so that everyone is aware of, and understands the revisions.

Top Tip! Make sure that staff and volunteers know about, and understand the policy. A policy is of no use if nobody know about it!



Reviewing Existing Policies

As your group/ service grows and develops, your policies will need to evolve alongside. Reviewing policies should be a **continual process**. It is the Manager, Committee or Board of Trustees responsibility to make sure policies and procedures are reviewed, amended and updated.

Things that may require you to change your policies and/or procedures include:

- Changes in legislation (for example Data Protection or Equalities Act)
- Request from service users, volunteers or staff
- A change in structure in the organisation which impacts on current policies

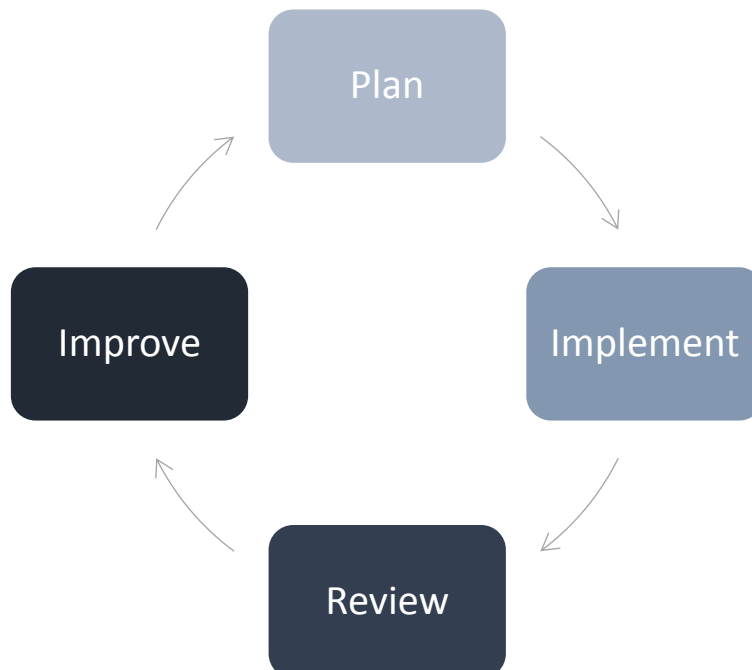
Ways that you can review your current policies include:

- Planning and annual review of all policies
- Review how effective a policy was after an incident
- Include a standing item on team meeting agendas to discuss policies

Accessibility Matters

Try to keep policies as accessible as possible by using everyday language and keeping them jargon-free

Consider producing policies in accessible formats including easy-read and large print formats





LGBTQ Policies and Procedures

The LGBT partners meeting undertook an exercise to compare policies and procedures held by LGBT Switchboard, Mindout, Allsorts, LGBT Small Groups Network members and Community Works.

Having discussed and reviewed what is legally required and what is good practice, it is recommended that LGBT groups consider ensuring they have the following policies and procedures in place within their organisations. Good practice examples can be downloaded from LGBT Switchboard's website.

It is important to stress that organisations need to carefully consider what is proportionate and appropriate for their organisation and tailor policy/procedure frameworks accordingly. Some policies can be combined or form component parts of others, which will help ensure the list isn't too overwhelming. An organisation will know best how to structure and frame its policies.

Governance: as required by charity law

- Financial controls policy and procedure
- Reserves policy
- Risk management policy
- Conflict of interest policy

Human resources with or without paid staff (as per good practice):

- Expenses policy
- Supervision and support policy
- Leave policy
- Code of Conduct
- Lone Working and Personal Safety Policy



Human resources when taking on paid staff: required by employment law

These could be streamlined/collated into a staff handbook:

TOIL Policy and Procedure	Paternity Leave Policy
Recruitment and Selections Policy	Adoption Leave Policy
Working Hours Policy	Shared Parental Leave Policy
Flexible Working Policy	Parental Leave Policy
Remuneration Policy	Dependents and Emergency Leave Policy
Absence and Ill Health Policy	Time-off for Public Duties Policy
Capability Policy	Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy
Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy	Redundancy and Redeployment Policy
Sick Pay Policy	Deployment Policy
Annual Leave and Bank Holiday Entitlement Policy	Appraisal, Training and Management Policy
Whistleblowing Policy	Absence Management Policy
Childcare Voucher Policy and Agreement	Personal Development Policy
Work-related Training Scheme Policy and Agreement	Grievance Policy
Maternity Leave and Support Policy	Staff Induction Policy



General Operational Policies: essential

- IT: Internet Use, Email Use, Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Procedure , including self-harm/suicide prevention
- Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure , including self-harm/suicide prevention
- Disclosure & Barring Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection Policy and Procedure
- Health & Safety Policy and Procedure
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Volunteer and Volunteering Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Complaints Policy incl. Children and Young People
- Service user involvement and leadership policy (assuming importance of demonstrate being client-led)

DESIRABLE Frontline Work Policies: as required according to the organisation's services/activities

- Assessment Policy and Procedure
- Audio Recording Policy
- Counselling Specific Confidentiality Policy
- Duration of Counselling Policy
- Client Relationship Policy
- Private Client Work policy
- Written Records Policy
- Service Pathways Policy
- Boundaries Policy
- Working with under 16s and under 13s Policy
- Engagement Policy
- Open Referral Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Prioritisation Policy
- Non-instructed Advocacy Policy
- Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy



Policy Bank

To complement this Policy Toolkit, LGBT HIP has collated policies from local LGBTQ groups in Brighton and Hove, which can be found on our website. If you would like to check out a specific policy, please use the quick-guide to core policies below.

To see all the policies that have been included, please look at our [website](#).

Core Policies

Equality & Diversity

[LGBT Switchboard](#)
[MindOut](#)
[Allsorts Youth Project](#)

Safeguarding

[LGBT Switchboard](#)
[Allsorts Youth Project](#)

Confidentiality

[LGBT Switchboard](#)
[Allsorts Youth Project](#)
[Trans Pride Brighton](#)
[MindOut](#)

Data Protection

[LGBT Switchboard](#)
[Allsorts Youth Project](#)
[MindOut](#)

Health & Safety

[LGBT Switchboard](#)
[Allsorts Youth Project](#)
[MindOut](#)

Financial Management

[LGBT Switchboard](#)
[Allsorts Youth Project](#)
[MindOut](#)



Additional Useful Resources



Community Works

Community Works has developed a Policy Bank featuring a wide variety of policies from local community groups in Brighton and Hove. The policy bank can be found on their website

<http://bhcommunityworks.org.uk/>



The Resource Centre

The Resource Centre has guidance on how to develop and implement strategies as well as a selection of sample policies, which can serve as good practice when developing your own policies.

<http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information-category/making-your-group-work-well/policies-and-procedures/>



Voluntary Action Islington

Although not local to Brighton and Hove, Voluntary Action Islington has a bank of a wide variety of policies, procedures and strategies samples.

<http://www.vai.org.uk/services/model-policies-and-toolkits/>