

Out on the Margins: sexual orientation, discrimination and social exclusion

**A Report for the SEQUAL Development
Partnership**

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Introduction

This report deals with some of the themes to come out of recent EU-funded research into employability and labour market discrimination linked to sexual orientation (Bellis et al 2005). The research was conducted by the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Sussex as part of the Sequal Development Partnership, consisting of eight HEIs from across the UK – the Universities of Bristol, Glasgow, Sussex, Surrey and Warwick, London Metropolitan University, Edge Hill College of Higher Education and University of Wales, Bangor. The Partnership has addressed a range of themes concerning discrimination and equal access to the labour market: gender, class, race and ethnicity, political and religious belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, language and geographical isolation.

(The SEQUAL final reports and executive summaries are available on the SEQUAL website <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/politics/cse/sequal.htm>)

The Sussex research theme presented a comparative case study of members of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) communities in two geographical localities on the south coast of England – Brighton and Hove and Hastings. Despite their location within one of the most prosperous regions of the UK, both seaside resorts in the case study have significant levels of poverty and social exclusion, with some wards included among the 157 most deprived in England (Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2000). The research provided evidence that these socio-economic divisions are reflected within local LGBT communities that represent a diverse range of experiences, needs and aspirations.

Two key findings from the Sussex research were that:

- a) diversity and social exclusion within LGBT communities are not adequately recognised by funders and policy makers, who tend to regard LGBT people as a low priority in terms of equalities and regeneration strategies
- b) LGBT community organisations in both localities were proactively engaged in offering a range of support services to their clients, including support for socially excluded groups. Despite this vital role, many of these organisations were poorly resourced and lacked the capacity and sustainable funding to carry out their work more effectively.

A similar conclusion arose from the findings of the Sequal project as a whole. Despite the complexity of issues identified by the different research themes, there were a number of common messages to emerge from the findings. One of these key messages was the unique contribution of voluntary and community organisations in addressing issues of labour market discrimination and social exclusion at a local level, for example, by providing holistic services to their clients or supporting progression into employment and training opportunities:

Organisations controlled and run within the community or by communities of interest can provide a framework through which the response to barriers, learning and 'distance travelled' towards employment may be managed more sensitively, responding to individual needs rather than oversimplified targets. (Speeden 2005: 5)

The main purpose of this extension to the original research is to explore these issues further, as part of the final 'mainstreaming' phase of the Sequal Project. The aims of this particular aspect of the mainstreaming programme are to:

- share the Sussex findings with LGBT community and campaigning organisations in other parts of the UK and explore their wider implications
- connect the Sussex findings to the broader policy agenda re sexual orientation and labour market discrimination
- further explore the role of LGBT community and campaigning organisations in addressing issues of employability, labour market discrimination and social exclusion
- identify further examples of good practice in this field as well as the challenges and barriers faced by LGBT organisations.

The first section of the report outlines the methodological approach taken in addressing the aims outlined above. The second section provides a critical overview of the key themes relating to the role played by LGBT community organisations in promoting gay equal rights both in the workplace and in wider society. This discussion is based on some of the literature and previous research relating to the history and culture of the LGBT community in the UK. The third section outlines themes arising from further exploration of the role of the LGBT community sector in Sussex, Wales and Scotland. This section highlights both positive strategies and good practice in addressing issues of social exclusion and labour market discrimination, and the challenges faced by the LGBT sector within the current social policy framework. The final section of the report offers some conclusions and key messages for addressing the equalities agenda in relation to sexual orientation.

We hope that the themes dealt with in this report will make a useful contribution to the mainstreaming of sexual orientation issues within employment and regeneration policies.

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Methodological Approach

In this extension to our original research project we have continued to work within a collaborative action research framework and to work with both Sequal partners and organisations within the LGBT community sector to further extend our understanding of issues relating to sexual orientation and employment. This approach has enabled us to consider the findings of our original Sussex based case study within a wider social policy context and to draw out some key messages for funders and policy makers.

This subsequent piece of research has focused on making contact with LGBT organisations in other parts of the UK and engaging in dialogue about the SEQUAL findings. From our SEQUAL partners and LGBT networks we had previous contact with, we were able to identify relevant organisations and individuals working in the LGBT communities in Scotland and Wales with whom we could share the findings from our research. We then looked at previous research carried out in both Scotland and Wales amongst the LGBT communities that extended our reading of the background literature on aspects of LGBT community history and activity. We also conducted desk-based research about the broader policy agenda, exploring material suggested by our earlier work. We then returned to some of our original informants to review the situation within the LGBT community in Sussex.

We have used a range of both qualitative and quantitative research methods as part of this mainstreaming phase, including:

- Refining our literature review with the addition of websites. The most significant have been included in the literature review and discussed in the findings
- On-going action research e.g. consultation and dissemination with representatives of key LGBT organisations. To facilitate this, information about the research has been circulated via email, conference presentations and informal discussions.
- Telephone and face-to-face interviews with key personnel from national and local LGBT organisations
- Case studies of good practice

This was a very small-scale piece of research and there was not time to build up the same kind of relationships amongst members of the LGBT communities in Scotland and Wales and to develop our knowledge of community and voluntary initiatives happening at the local level that had been possible within a more extended time frame in Sussex.

The process of raising the issues highlighted by the Sussex research on a number of platforms as part of the Sequal Partnership's mainstreaming activities has focussed our attention on wider policy issues, and this is reflected in the extended literature review, findings and in our conclusions.

LGBT community organisations – a brief history

As the years go by it becomes clearer that the real achievement of the gay liberation movement was to stimulate the growth of the lesbian and gay community. It is that community, in all its diversity and complexity, rather than a narrowly political movement, whatever its creativity, which has become the real actor on the stage of history.

(Weeks 1990: xiii)

Weeks (1990) describes the emergence of the LGBT community sector in the 1980s as the latest manifestation in a long history of struggle and campaigning for equal rights reaching back to the nineteenth century. He argues that this history should be viewed against the background of the development of the modern capitalist family and the narrow gender roles ascribed to men and women within this structure. One consequence was the construction of 'homosexuality' as a sickness or deviance from this social norm of Victorian family values, leading to the imposition of harsh legal and moral sanctions against same-sex relations between men that lasted from 1885 to 1967:

...as social norms became more clearly defined, and as sexuality was more harnessed ideologically to the reproduction of the population, so the social condemnation of male homosexuality increased. This is clearly seen in the development of sharper legal penalties in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and is reflected ideologically in the evolution of new concepts of homosexuality as a derangement or a sickness

(Weeks, 1990: 6).

Over same period, the relative lack of reference to lesbianism within legal and criminal codes, was due to the prevalent nineteenth century sexual ideology which labelled male homosexuality as deviant, but which also 'attempted to deny female sexuality altogether.' (Weeks 1990: 5) This general climate of social, sexual and legal suppression led to a creative response in the form of a 'gay subculture' and was also reflected in the development of 'reform groupings', which were more concerned with education and reform (1990: 6).

Weeks divides the gay reform movement into four distinct phases. The first phase beginning in the 19th century and continuing until the 1940s was '...essentially concerned with piecing together an identity, and laying the basis for future reforming efforts.' (Weeks 1990: 6) The second phase can be dated from the 1960s and was more directly concerned with bringing about legal change through lobbying and campaigning. Organisations involved in these activities, such as the Homosexual Law Reform Society, founded in 1958, were cautious in their approach and keen to gain respectability for their cause. The reform movement gained steady momentum throughout the 1960s, culminating in the Sexual Offences Act of 1967. This Bill decriminalised same sex relations between men in private, for adults over twenty-one years. Although this represented a victory, as Weeks points out, it was a limited one:

All that had effectively happened was that a difficult-to-sustain legal remedy had been removed from the statute book...and in the next few years the number of prosecutions actually increased.
(1990: 176)

The third phase was the growth of the gay liberation movement in the 1970s, influenced by feminism and the black civil rights movement, but also making its own contribution in challenging the prevailing social and cultural mores:

The gay liberation movement was itself the product of the breakdown of the rigid taboos about sex which had blighted lives for generations, but it went further to question not only modes of sexual behaviour but rigid gender divisions themselves. The result was immensely liberating, and its influence was profound, not only on homosexuals but among feminists and on the left generally.
(1990:7)

Radical organisations such as the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) sprang up in the USA, UK and elsewhere:

...GLF was revolutionary in its aims. It advocated 'coming out', working together for social change, sexual freedom and challenging gender stereotypes. It gave birth to Gay Switchboard and Gay News, Britain's first national gay newspaper. Now, pubs, clubs and newly forming social and campaigning groups could advertise their existence – and be found even by isolated individuals.
(Brighton Ourstory Project 2001)

These developments gave expression to the new found freedom and self-confidence of the gay rights movement and the struggle for equal rights. The movement had achieved recognition of the status of the lesbian and gay community as 'an oppressed minority within capitalist society' (Weeks 1990: 230). By the end of the 1970s, although much had been achieved, discrimination and prejudice against lesbians and gay men was still widespread.

Weeks describes the emergence of the lesbian and gay community in the 1970s and 80s as the fourth phase of 'gay reform movement.' Key features were the diversity and complexity of the community and a focus on 'self-identification and self-activity which is central to the emergence of lesbian and gay identities.' (1990: xii). According to Palmer, the increased self-confidence and visibility of the community was reflected in the growing diversity of its activities:

...the expansion of the lesbian and gay publishing sector; the growth of lesbian and gay groups in trade unions and in political parties; and the enormous growth in the scale of the annual pride march and festival...
(Palmer, 1995: 36).

In the late 1980s, in the UK, there was an outbreak of anti-gay prejudice following the AIDS crisis. As part of this, the introduction by the Conservative Government of Section 28 of the Local Government Act has been described as 'a defining moment' for lesbian and gay politics in the UK. The Act, which prohibited local authorities from 'promoting homosexuality' or 'pretended family relationships' led to a widespread revival of lesbian and gay political activism and '...helped to politicise a new generation of lesbians and gay men...' (Palmer 1995: 35).

Weeks also observes that, instead of weakening the resolve of the newly emerging gay community, as was the intention, the legislation had the opposite effect:

Lesbians and gays were staking their claim for full citizenship as openly gay people throughout the 1980s, in a variety of arenas and with often unanticipated support. The battle against Section 28, as it turned out, served to strengthen rather than undermine their determination.
(Weeks 1990: 243)

One consequence of this increased activism was the formation of the important national campaigning organisation, Stonewall, established in 1989. From the 1990s onwards, Stonewall has taken an active role in campaigns for equality and social justice for lesbians and gay men and in raising the profile of sexual orientation issues through research and education (Palmer 1995). One such campaign in the mid 1990s was for the equalization of the age of consent for lesbians and gay men, although it was not until December 2000 that an equal age of consent finally achieved legal status for lesbians, gay men and heterosexuals alike.

Another previously neglected area that became the focus of attention in the 1990s was the discrimination and prejudice experienced by LGBT people in the workplace. Some of the impetus for addressing this issue may have come from the growth of lesbian and gay groups within trade unions at this time (Palmer 1995). Stonewall was again in the forefront in highlighting the inadequacy of UK anti-discrimination legislation in this area, and in 1993 carried out research investigating the treatment of lesbians and gay men in the workplace. The aims of the research were to:

...investigate the extent and effects of discrimination and harassment experienced by lesbians and gay men at work, and in seeking work, the extent to which they feel obliged to conceal their sexuality at work, and whether equal opportunities policies can help.
(Palmer, 1993: 3)

The findings indicated that 16% of respondents had experienced discrimination at work and a further 21% suspected they had. An additional 48% reported harassment because of their sexuality:

The harassment described ranged from mild to very serious, and included unwanted jokes, innuendo and loaded comments, verbal abuse, being sent to

Coventry, malicious gossip, name calling, bullying and victimisation, being 'outed', false accusations of child abuse, graffiti, abusive phone calls, anonymous mail, damage to property, blackmail, violence and even death threats
(Palmer, 1993: 1)

The third major finding from the research was that two thirds of respondents concealed their sexuality in the workplace.

The Stonewall findings were reinforced by an independent report produced by the Social and Community Planning Research (SCPR) in 1995, which provided further evidence of the significant levels of discrimination and harassment experienced by LGBT people in the workplace. The report also highlighted some of the negative attitudes and mistaken assumptions about lesbians and gay men among the heterosexual population, such as the opinion of 40% of respondents that secondary school teaching was an unsuitable occupation for gay men (Andrews 2001).

The Stonewall research represented a landmark in highlighting the widespread problem of discrimination and prejudice experienced by LGBT people in the workplace, but it was to be another ten years before discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation was finally outlawed by the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations introduced in December 2003.

The LGBT community has been described as a 'community of interest' but there are significant differences within this 'community' that have often given rise to conflict and tensions. In the 1990's, there was a move towards recognition of the rights of transgender people within the LGB community:

In the nineties a new alliance was begun between lesbian, gay and bisexual communities and the transgender movement, inspired by the American example where transgender politics was thriving.
(Brighton Ourstory Project 2001)

However, this has not always proved to be an easy alliance. For example, a survey of LGBT people in Scotland carried out in 2003 asked respondents to define what the term 'LGBT community' meant to them (Morgan and Bell 2003). For many in the survey, there was a very positive understanding of what the LGBT community was, focussed around social spaces, support and friendship. There were also replies that indicated less positive views of community with a minority who saw it as threatening, a ghetto and exclusive. These responses came in particular from people who were bisexual, or transgender rather than gay or lesbian. Some respondents stated they had experienced harassment or discrimination within the LGBT community as a result of their age, gender identity, ethnic or cultural identity or because of a disability. The conclusion was that the LGBT community itself needed to be encouraged to be more inclusive.

The tensions between 'LGBT community' as an important ideological concept on the one hand and the need to recognise diversity within the community on the other was well expressed by one respondent in the Scottish survey:

I don't believe there is ONE LGBT community but MANY. LGBT people are in themselves not like-minded – they are probably as good, bad, interesting, boring etc as any other cross section of society. 'LGBT community' as a concept can be strong and positive.
(Morgan and Bell 2003:15)

As recent research indicates (Beyond Boundaries 2003; Platzer 2003; Stonewall Cymru 2004), the LGBT community sector, consisting of a diverse range of voluntary and community organisations, is increasingly gaining recognition as the representative voice of the diverse strands within the LGBT population, and as a key actor on the stage of social policy and community development in the UK. The next section outlines some key themes relating to the role of the LGBT sector in addressing issues of social exclusion and labour market discrimination.

Key themes relating to the role of the LGBT community sector

Through widening our field of enquiry in relation to sexual orientation and the labour market, we have gained further evidence that LGBT community sector organisations are actively engaged in addressing issues of social exclusion and discrimination in employment across the UK. However, the sector faces a significant challenge in terms of a lack of funding, resources and organisational infrastructure.

Social exclusion

There does not appear to be any reliable quantitative data available either about the numbers of LGBT people in the UK or the extent of social exclusion amongst this population. Collection of information about sexual orientation is fraught with difficulties, as a recent Stonewall Cymru report explains:

Unfortunately, there are no UK population statistics for the number of people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, because the opportunity to self-identify has never been given in any Census, and even if there were such an opportunity evidence from other research indicates that a reluctance to identify for fear of discrimination would be a governing factor in the degree of response.

(Stonewall Cymru 2004: 12)

Estimates of the size of the LGBT population are usually based on a calculation of 5-7% of the population as a whole, but social exclusion factors are harder to quantify. Extensive surveys have been carried out by LGBT organisations in various parts of the country in an attempt to provide a fuller socio-economic and demographic picture of the LGBT population and these have proved to be a valuable source of information (Webb and Wright, 2001; Morgan and Bell, 2003; Fairley and Nouidjem 2004).

As the SEQUAL research as a whole illustrates, social exclusion is complex and multi-dimensional and the Sussex case study concluded that issues of sexual orientation cannot be considered in isolation from other factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, class and disability. We found some evidence of social exclusion amongst the LGBT communities in both Brighton and Hastings and this was mainly gathered from interviews with workers and activists from LGBT community groups and other agencies working with 'hard to reach' LGBT people in fields such as homelessness, drug and alcohol dependence, mental health, sexual health, victim support and unemployment.

The fieldwork for the Sussex case study of Brighton and Hastings indicated that LGBT community organisations typically offered a 'holistic' package of support which addressed a range of social and health needs including: sexual health, mental health, community safety, victim support, and social isolation. Although employment and labour market issues were not necessarily addressed directly or viewed as a priority, our research identified voluntary organisations in the Brighton area which were actively involved in promoting

employability, for example, through the provision of employment advice and guidance and employment training. Through this work, a small number of LGBT voluntary organisations were helping to improve access to mainstream employment services for their clients, as well as raising awareness of sexual orientation issues within those services.

Further exploration of these issues suggests that this active involvement of LGBT community organisations in addressing a diverse range of social exclusion needs at the local level is a common pattern in various parts of the UK. For example, surveys of LGBT community organisations carried out in Scotland and Wales have reinforced the significance of their role in providing information, advice and social support to a wide range of LGBT target groups including younger and older people, disabled people, mental health service users and people living with HIV/AIDS (Beyond Barriers 2004; Stonewall Cymru 2004). However, the majority of work still continues to focus on health issues, support, social groups and breaking social isolation rather than directly addressing issues of employability.

From research in Scotland and Wales, social and geographical isolation has emerged as a major challenge to the LGBT populations in both countries. For example in Wales, the size of the LGBT population is estimated at approximately 200,000. However, the geographical landscape of Wales, with few major cities and many small remote towns, can lead to severe isolation and marginalisation of LGBT people (Stonewall Cymru 2004). This rural isolation can be exacerbated by transport difficulties. (Lack of transport was also identified by the Bangor Sequal research theme as a major barrier to accessing employment for many sections of the population living in rural areas – Piette et al 2005). One of the consequences of isolation highlighted by the Stonewall Cymru research was a problem with take-up of both specialised and mainstream services. It was estimated that only about 3% of the LGBT population were accessing services targeted at their needs.

Isolation, loneliness, poor health and lack of access to gay friendly services such as residential care were all issues raised in research with the LGBT community in Scotland (First Out; 2003). 45% of respondents expressed concern about ageing with this response being more common as the age of the respondent increased. Similar issues emerged from interviews with elderly members of the LGBT community in Hastings who:

...shared many older people's concerns regarding caring for a partner, whether they would be able to live together in residential care, what their rights were regarding pensions, tenancies or 'next of kin' rights, should they be hospitalised

(Bellis, Boice, Cairns and McGrath 2005: 21)

Social and geographical isolation reinforce the problems attendant on ageing. The Beyond Boundaries research in Scotland (First Out; 2003) indicated that the LGBT community in areas such as the Highlands and other isolated regions faced problems ignored or unidentified by those living in the central urban belt, including the urban LGBT community. These reports also highlight

how the difficulties experienced in accessing rural areas are compounded by a lack of funding and resources. Beyond Barriers notes that 'the LGBT community sector is historically under-funded and under-resourced' (2004: 5). The Stonewall Cymru report reaches a similar conclusion and attributes this lack of support to the continued invisibility of sexual orientation issues within community regeneration programmes:

The experiences of social exclusion on the basis of sexual orientation will often remain invisible and unaddressed in funding programmes. (Stonewall Cymru 2004: 9)

Discrimination in employment

Raising awareness of discrimination and promoting equal rights in the workplace currently appear to be a major focus of attention for campaigning organisations, such as Stonewall, concerned with addressing sexual orientation issues at the national policy level. This approach forms part of a broader strategy of mainstreaming LGBT issues within equalities strategies and raising awareness of the implications of the 2003 anti-discrimination legislation relating to sexual orientation. Recent surveys of the LGBT populations in various parts of the UK have highlighted the continued prevalence of discrimination and harassment in the workplace and of widespread homophobia throughout society (Webb and Wright 2001; Cymru report; Morgan and Bell 2003; Fairley A and Noudjem N 2004).

These findings were supported by the Sussex case study which identified safety in the workplace and training environment as an issue of key concern for many of those interviewed:

Issues of safety are important in the workplace or training environment. The commonplace use of homophobic language and behaviour, for example on training programmes or in some community settings, can pose a significant barrier to the equal participation of members of the LGBT community in the labour market. Discrimination and harassment in the workplace on grounds of sexual orientation still pose a significant problem, as reflected in national and local surveys, and findings from this research. We have also found evidence that the perception that it is not safe to be open about sexual identity in the workplace continues to be an issue for many LGBT people. We conclude that failure by employers to instigate measures to provide a safe and supportive workplace environment for LGBT employees can have a negative impact in a number of ways.

(Bellis, Boice, Cairns and McGrath 2005: 41)

Concealment or partial concealment of sexual identity at work, as described above, has emerged as a recurring theme in interviews and in literature we have reviewed during this phase of the project. For example, the survey conducted by Beyond Boundaries in Scotland reported that some people did not feel able to be open about their sexual identity at work in case this affected their chances of promotion and how colleagues interacted with them

(Morgan and Bell 2003). Statistics from the Stonewall Cymru research 'Counted Out' indicated the extent of this issue in Wales. 25% of respondents reported being dismissed from a job because of their sexuality while 20% concealed their sexual identity at work. (Stonewall Cymru 2003).

An informant from an LGBT community organisation in Sussex drew attention to the particular problems faced by teachers who identify as gay or lesbian and confirmed that some of their members are reluctant to come out because of the prevalence of negative attitudes in the school environment. She referred to the widespread tendency for the term 'gay' to be used as a generalised term of abuse and the negative impact this has, both on young LGBT school students and on teachers. She referred to one member, a local school teacher, who had recently decided to 'come out' as a lesbian, but who lacked the confidence to be open about her sexuality at work:

...she can't risk being seen by the pupils, for example going to gay social events...

Another member of the organisation from the teaching profession felt obliged to ask her head teacher's permission before joining the LGBT organisation's committee. The informant argued that this was discriminatory as it was unlikely that such permission would be required for involvement in other forms of voluntary activity.

This comment from an interview with a representative of Stonewall Cymru illustrates the insidious ways in which homophobia and fear of homophobia can negatively impact upon equality in the workplace:

There can be levels of 'outedness' - for example with key colleagues but not across the board...harassment and a hostile environment are still key issues...it's difficult to challenge and much of it goes unreported...it's difficult to explain the impact on LGB people...

According to this informant, homophobic attitudes and practices, which lead to silence and self-censorship among LGBT employees, contribute to the perpetuation of a workplace culture in which sexual orientation issues remain largely invisible.

The particular employment barriers faced by transgender people were also raised during interviews. As one informant pointed out, the transgender population is estimated to be very small (about 1 in 10,000 of the population as a whole) and this has made campaigning around 'trans' issues very difficult:

Transgender issues only came into the public consciousness in the late 1990s... it's easy to not be visible and not be counted...this can lead to high levels of stress, hostility and persecution...people who look very different can be shunned, not employed and treated very badly.

This point was reinforced by anecdotal evidence from another informant who recounted the hostility encountered at work by a transgender friend. This individual delivered services to businesses in the retail trade but, following transition, found that some clients refused to work with her:

Some shops wouldn't even allow her onto the premises to do her work.

Such examples serve to emphasise the point that recent legislation which outlaws discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation (Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003) and gender identity (Gender Recognition Act 2004) can only be one part of the solution. Fundamental social and cultural changes in the workplace and wider society are also required before real and meaningful equality can be achieved.

Strategies for addressing social exclusion and discrimination in employment

We identified that LGBT organisations are engaged in a number of different strategies to address issues of discrimination and social exclusion including the following:

- Partnership working and mainstreaming of sexual orientation issues:
- Engaging with employers and arguing 'the business case for diversity'
- Extending the research base
- Addressing social isolation and exclusion through improved systems of communication and networking.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive but illustrative of the kind of good practice we identified in this additional phase of the research.

Partnership working and mainstreaming of sexual orientation issues

We found that working in partnership with other organisations formed an integral part of the policy development strategy for LGBT organisations working at national level in both Wales and Scotland.

The LGB Forum Cymru was established in 2002 as a result of a joint initiative by the National Assembly of Wales and Stonewall (UK). In 2003, the Forum became Stonewall Cymru in order to access increased support and resources from Stonewall (UK). The core work of Stonewall Cymru is policy development and, according to a representative, 'putting sexual orientation on other people's agendas.' The key target groups for raising awareness of sexual orientation issues are the Welsh Assembly Government, local authorities, employers, statutory service providers and the voluntary sector. Stonewall Cymru work through the National Assembly of Wales, of which they are a standing member, and attend meetings of the Equality of Opportunity

Committee. They are also engaged in consultations about the forthcoming Commission for Equality and Human Rights and argue for the importance of including an LGBT perspective within this. This representation at national level is the organisation's key strategy for the mainstreaming of sexual orientation issues across all areas of government policy in Wales. Given the organisation's all-Wales remit and small staff base (there are currently only 2.5 paid staff) partnership working forms an essential part of the strategy.

In Scotland there is a similar approach, but the work has taken a different path within a different legislative framework. As with Stonewall Cymru, Stonewall Scotland works at a strategic policy level, providing information rather than offering advice or capacity building. It works in partnership with the Equality Network, which is concerned with campaigning on LGBT issues in Scotland and with LGBT Youth Scotland.

When the Scottish Executive was set up in 1999 it established a system of Task Forces to consult and enquire on a range of issues –they have a 2-year life span and are disbanded when they report. This provided an ongoing framework for consultation within which LGBT strategic and campaigning organisations such as Stonewall and the Equality Network could work. The links from key LGBT websites emphasise participation in the consultation processes with the Scottish Executive as well as offering guidance on volunteering in both LGBT and non-LGBT organisations, thus ensuring that the LGBT community profile is raised across a range of public fora.

In October 2001 the Beyond Barriers project was launched, managed by Stonewall Scotland and funded through the Community Fund and Northern Rock. (See p23 for a case study of the Beyond Barriers website). This was a 3-year project aimed at challenging discrimination against LGBT people through information, training, research and community development. It ended in October 2004 with the Equality Network, in partnership with LGBT Youth Scotland, taking forward some of the campaigning and capacity-building work while Stonewall Scotland continued with the development of strategic work at a policy level.

The INCLUSION Project is an example of mainstreaming activity responding at a strategic level to the health concerns of the LGBT community in Scotland. Launched in October 2002 as a partnership between Stonewall Scotland and the Scottish Executive's Health Department (SEHD). Funded by the Health Planning & Equality Division through its 'Patient Focus Public Involvement' strand, it is part of a broader NHS / SEHD Diversity agenda which aims to recognise 'the diversity of patient needs & preferences' & to 'identify the support needed by local NHS services to better meet the needs of individuals from LGBT communities' (Pringle et al, 2003). The 'Mapping LGBT Scotland' survey extended the evidence base for this work when it found that 40% of LGBT organisations that responded were involved in health related activities funded by NHS boards principally around sexual health issues (BB ?, 2004).

One of the keynote speakers to the Beyond Barriers conference on rural issues in Inverness, September 03 (Scott, 2003) was Margaret Smith, Scotland's first 'out' MSP. She was also deputy convenor of the Scottish Executive's Equal Opportunities Committee and Reporter on the Sexual Orientation Working Group. She emphasised the need to challenge the Scottish Executive as well as work constructively with it through its consultation processes, by writing to the convenor of the Equal Opportunities Committee and their MSPs as well as sending in evidence to the Hate Crimes Working Group.

This approach, to engage actively with the Scottish Executive's consultation processes, is also evident in the links to consultation events on legislation and services on the Equality Network and Stonewall Scotland's websites. Clearly there is a range of effective campaigning and partnership work taking place at a strategic level in Scotland, While the Beyond Barriers project has demonstrated the value and need for a coordinating point for the LGBT community and voluntary sector, to support capacity building at a local level.

Hastings Rainbow Alliance (HRA) is a locally based LGBT community organisation in East Sussex, which also includes working in partnership with other organisations as an integral part of its approach to policy development. Established in 2003, its main aim is to support the needs of the local LGBT community across the Hastings and Rother district of East Sussex. HRA undertake a number of activities, including organising social events, offering advice and guidance (by means of a weekly drop-in service), and delivering diversity training on LGBT issues to statutory bodies such as the local Primary Care Trust.

According to a representative from HRA, capacity and sustainability pose a significant challenge to the organisation, which is entirely run by volunteers. Because of this they have developed a strategy of working as far as possible with and through other agencies in delivering services to LGBT people and raising awareness of sexual orientation issues. For example, HRA are represented on the Hastings Local Strategic Partnership and through this body are able to ensure that LGBT views are heard by local policy makers and service providers. The representative we spoke to reflected on the value of engagement at this strategic level:

If you build up a relationship with people they'll listen to you - if policy makers see you having a positive influence on a community as a whole, they are more likely to listen to you. I've sat through a year of meetings of the LSP and I'm finally now being asked for my input...it's not just about legislation, it's about human rights – the human rights argument will often have more impact on stakeholders and policy makers than a requirement to comply with legislation.

Another reason put forward for delivering services in partnership with other organisations was to avoid the risk of creating an LGBT 'ghetto':

We work as far as possible with other agencies to offer support to LGBT people...we get them to broaden their services to include LGBT clients – this avoids ghetto-isation, which would be likely to happen if HRA tried to offer these services ourselves.

The informant from HRA felt that through these strategies, they had succeeded in increasing the visibility of the LGBT community locally.

Engaging with employers and arguing ‘the business case for diversity’

Stonewall is working across the UK with employers on legislative issues to develop equalities strategies and to inform human resources strategies. A representative from Stonewall Scotland pointed out that, as a result of the recent sexual orientation legislation, Stonewall has been funded by the DTi to provide basic training for Human Resource managers about equalities in the workplace. Stonewall UK’s strategy of mainstreaming diversity and equality in the workplace is supported through their employment guides. The employers’ guidelines offer practical advice and help on how to both comply and get the best out of the new Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations. The advice is based on methods piloted by members of Stonewall’s Diversity Champions programme. The briefing for employees outlines the new legislation and offers advice on how to take action against harassment and discrimination. The recent launch by Stonewall England of a recruitment guide for new graduates of gay-friendly employers and their HR strategy is indicative of their work around employment issues. Stonewall have only recently (Oct 05) launched a recruitment guide for new graduates which showcases their Diversity Champions programme which works to promote diversity in the workplace and their Corporate Equality Index which benchmarks the top 100 employers for LGB staff across the UK.

Addressing discrimination in the workplace is also a key strategic objective for Stonewall Cymru. The largest employers in Wales are public sector organisations such as local authorities and the health and education sectors. Stonewall Cymru give advice and guidance to employers about workplace discrimination and how to mainstream sexual orientation issues within their policies. They also give presentations to employers and staff with the aim of giving practical information about ‘how to become more LGB friendly’ through day-to-day interactions. Stonewall (UK) have produced two guides about the 2003 equalities legislation in relation to sexual orientation, one for employers and one for employees (Stonewall undated). These are useful tools for dissemination, as Stonewall Cymru does not have the capacity to follow up all the individual enquiries they receive for guidance.

One of the key messages which Stonewall Cymru aim to convey to employers, policy makers and other stakeholders about LGB employment issues is the wastage of skills and talents which can result from LGBT people ‘self-selecting themselves out’ of particular employment pathways:

LGB people are aware of the predatory stereotypes [e.g. working with children] and will avoid certain professions...some people self-exclude based on their perceptions of the harassment they think they'll experience...occupational choice is really constrained...

At a personal level this can result in 'underdevelopment, lack of attainment and marginalisation'.

The representative from Stonewall Cymru also thought it was important to draw attention to 'the huge gender disparity' between lesbians and gay men in terms of pay levels and employment progression.

Some informants emphasised the importance of working in a positive way with employers and of 'putting the business case for diversity.' As one representative from a community organisation put it:

It's our responsibility to work with employers about what their issues are and how to address them...in the past we've just been making demands rather than working with employers and other agencies to change things.

'A Place at the Table' is a partnership based in Sussex which aims to 'advance the awareness of employers, business agencies and others of the benefits of open inclusion in employment'. In order to achieve this they have devised a programme of positive strategies for engaging with employers around diversity issues such as gender, age and sexual orientation. One innovative aspect of the programme is the organisation of two LGBT Jobfairs which took place in Brighton in 2004 and 2005. The objectives of the Jobfairs have been both strategic and practical, aimed at both improving employability and raising awareness about equality issues:

We thought that creating a specialised LGBT Jobfair would:

- *Get people jobs*
- *Raise awareness of the value and employability of a social minority that is often denied employment for unfair reasons*
- *Give participating employers an opportunity to make a public statement of support to this social minority, and state their commitment to supporting inclusion both externally, and internally to their own management and staff*
- *In doing so to make this social group simply more employable*

(Kavanagh 2004: 2)

The 2004 event attracted 350 visitors from Brighton and other areas of southeast England, and 20 local, national and multi-national companies and organisations took part. In addition there was information and advice available about 'training, opportunities to volunteer, self employment for the 50+, advice on childcare and access to work' (Kavanagh 2004: 4). According to an informant from 'A Place at the Table' another positive outcome is that

others are learning from their example and planning LGBT Jobfairs in other parts of the country:

The idea is for other people to copy us and use this idea elsewhere...there are two more Jobfairs in the pipeline for 2006 – one in Guildford and one in Manchester.

This informant also raised the issue of diversity among employers themselves and the fact that some, such as those in the SME (small to medium enterprise) sector are harder to reach than larger organisations:

Sussex has large numbers of people who work for SMEs – everything is done on an ‘as need’ basis – they’re not really interested in diversity and don’t have the staff with time to deal with it...

‘A Place at the Table’ has chosen to target their diversity training and other activities at larger, mainly statutory, organisations ‘because they are more likely to have the capacity to implement diversity.’ This point echoes the findings of the Sussex Sequel research theme, which argued that the large number of small businesses and casual, seasonal employment in Brighton and Hastings was likely to pose a major challenge in raising awareness of and implementing the new equalities legislation relating to sexual orientation.

Extending the research base

There are a number of research reports, particularly from the 1990s, on specific issues such as housing, mental and sexual health, affecting sections of LGBT communities across the UK. However, the development of research activity as a coherent strategy in building the evidence base to address discrimination and social exclusion has been most evident since 2001. As with our earlier research, we became aware of a number of quantitative surveys of the LGBT communities in Scotland, Wales and elsewhere, which sought to map LGBT organisations and to identify key concerns within the LGBT communities in both countries. These enabled us to develop a better understanding of how groups have been working at a national policy level. It was clear from the research context for these surveys that opportunities to influence strategic planning had reinforced the need for the LGBT community to provide a research baseline to support demands for the development of services.

In England Regeneration and the subsequent Local Strategic Partnerships set up by the UK government have provided a framework for consultation with local communities. In 1999 Brighton and Hove Regeneration Partnership submitted a bid for single Regeneration Budget funds (round 5) entitled ‘Promoting Social Inclusion’ which was rejected by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) due to lack of consultation with local communities in its development. Money from SEEDA supported a subsequent consultation process with local communities including the LGBT community,

which had initially had been left out of both the original SRB5 bid and the initial plans for the subsequent consultation round. A summary of the resulting research data was included in the final report of the Participation programme of Brighton and Hove Regeneration Programme, while information about LGBT people from the other consultations undertaken across the city was combined with the 'Count Me In' results to develop an LGBT Community Strategy. In June 2001 the 'Count Me In' quantitative survey of the views and needs of the LGBT communities in Brighton and Hove was published (count me in 2001).

The 'Count Me In' survey was followed in 2003 by research commissioned by Spectrum (the local LGBT community forum) into the needs and services provided by LGBT community groups in order to identify their support and capacity building needs. The purpose was to inform the implementation of the local LGBT community strategy and to ensure that the voices of marginalised and excluded members of the LGBT community were heard.

Hastings Rainbow Alliance (HRA) in East Sussex produced the 'Go Hastings!' survey in 2004 in order to better understand the issues affecting the local LGBT community and to inform planning and delivery of services by statutory organisations. The HRA also joined Hastings Community Network of voluntary and community organisations in 2004, and became involved in the Local Strategic Partnership, responsible for all services provided locally. The need for an evidence base was interlinked with new opportunities for community participation in influencing service provision, as the report explains:

*Little is known about [LGBT] needs at a local level in smaller towns and cities throughout the UK [...] the need for a better grasp of the specific problems became clearer if work was to be undertaken by any organisation seeking change [...] evidence would [need] to be provided to back up any campaigns developed to assist service providers and other organisations in identifying areas requiring action and supporting their own proposals for increased resources and changed priorities.
(Fairley and Noudjem, 2004:4)*

In Scotland and Wales parallel developments in regional governance have offered similar opportunities to influence decisions about the provision of services, with research clearly linked to the provision of evidence of needs and concerns amongst the LGBT population.

With the establishment of the Scottish Executive in 1999 a new consultative and legislative framework came into existence offering opportunities to influence the development of structures and services across Scotland. Beyond Barriers - funded by the Community Fund and managed by Stonewall Scotland for 3 yrs from 2001-2004 – produced 'First Out' (2003), a survey to establish base-line evidence of the needs, experiences and concerns of the LGBT population in Scotland. From this research Beyond Barriers identified that there were specific issues for LGBT people living and working in rural areas – this resulted in a 2 day conference held in Inverness in Sept 2003 to

identify the issues, consult with members of the LGBT community from rural areas and to feed the results back to policy makers with key points and recommendations published as 'Linking Scotland: Planning Futures'.

Mapping LGBT Scotland followed in 2004. The purpose of this research was to map services provided by LGBT organisations in Scotland, and to provide a snapshot of LGBT activity in Scotland in order to inform the work of Beyond Boundaries and others in the LGBT community. Questionnaires were distributed to every LGBT organisation in Scotland. The responses indicated that a significant number of LGBT organisations were operating with very few resources. In general they stated that more information, training and resources would enable them to engage more fully with initiatives such as the Scottish Executive's Health INCLUSION Project (a partnership between Stonewall Scotland and the Scottish Executive Health Department to promote better health for LGBT people).

'Towards a Healthier LGBT Scotland', a report by the INCLUSION project in 2003, provided evidence from both existing & new research about the particular health needs of LGBT people in Scotland. The report stated that:

LGBT people experience significant problems related to both their mental and physical health. Discrimination and social exclusion are seen to be major causes of ill health [...] However, a review of both health inequalities theory and policies in the NHS in Scotland reveals that the health of LGBT people is largely ignored. Of additional concern is the discrimination some LGBT people face when accessing NHS services.
(Jarvis et al, 2003; 5)

It also outlined the work of Scottish NHS Boards to meet the health needs of the LGBT population and the role that LGBT community organisations have in addressing at the local level the diverse range of social factors that impact on LGBT people's health.

In Wales the research activity has mirrored the pattern in Scotland and locally in England. Stonewall Cymru carried out the first survey of LGB people in Wales in 2003 with the aim:

To better understand the needs of LGB people in Wales – to ensure our work is rooted in the concerns of LGB people and that policy making in Wales is based on evidence, not just anecdote.
(Counted Out; Stonewall Cymru, 2003:3)

The Welsh Ministry for Social Justice and Regeneration is committed to provide an annual update on progress towards meeting the recommendations from Counted Out. Stonewall Cymru followed this survey in 2004 with an audit of services and a needs assessment of the LGB community sector across Wales In order to inform their Community Development programme (Count us in!, 2004).

In mapping the needs of the LGBT communities in Scotland and Wales and in parts of England and establishing a research base these surveys have provided evidence of social exclusion and discrimination as a result of sexual orientation (discussed in detail on p ? of this report). Additional research has been carried out that addresses specific issues affecting different sections of the LGBT communities in the UK, and which have been highlighted, in part, by these initial mapping exercises.

Sexual orientation and age-related housing issues were addressed in a report from the Polari Housing Association in 1995 examining the housing needs of older lesbian and gay people. The National Centre for Social research, together with Stonewall Housing, investigated the causes of homelessness among lesbian and gay youth and recommended strategies for tackling the issue in 'Hidden from sight: Homelessness amongst Lesbian and gay youth', 2001.

Beyond Boundaries' previous mapping work had indicated a gap in available evidence about the needs of bisexual people in Scotland, while there was no evidence of resources from LGBT organisations targeting specific bisexual issues, suggesting a tokenistic attitude to bisexuality within the LGBT community. In April 2004 Beyond Boundaries and the INCLUSION Project facilitated two participatory research workshops in Edinburgh and Glasgow to ensure that specific issues affecting bisexual people were addressed in Scotland, published as 'Exploring Biphobia'.

The strategy of raising the profile of the LGBT community and of working in partnership with non-LGBT organisations is illustrated through the range of guides published by Stonewall. In 2001 Stonewall (through the Citizen21 project) produced a best practice guide to prevent homophobic bullying in secondary schools; in 2003 in England, they published 'Get Involved', a guide to active citizenship for LGBT people, and in Scotland 'Diverse Communities, Active Lives', a guide to community involvement.

However, this strategy of greater visibility & engagement with the wider community brings with it additional consequences as explained in the Sussex case study:

One interviewee, who had been involved in LGBT equalities and community safety issues for some years, pointed out that the existence of a large LGBT community could make living in Brighton and Hove 'more dangerous if you are LGBT, not less'. A larger community was more diverse but also more visible, and could become an easier target for those who viewed it as threatening or unacceptably different.

((Bellis, Boice, Cairns and McGrath 2005: 29)

These guides therefore sit alongside research commissioned by Stonewall in 2003 into the extent of prejudice against minority groups in England.

'Profiles of Prejudice', a quantitative survey of over 1700 adults in England, showed that prejudices against minorities often overlap, and that those prejudiced against an ethnic minority were twice as likely to be prejudiced against lesbians and gay men. The 4 minorities against whom respondents most frequently expressed prejudice were: refugees and asylum seekers; travellers and gypsies; people from ethnic minorities and gay and lesbian people. Significantly 'Profiles of Prejudice' suggested that focusing on hate crimes obscured the 'everyday ordinariness' of prejudice. Stonewall therefore followed this in 2004 with 'Understanding Prejudice', a qualitative investigation aimed at trying to understand more deeply what triggers and sustains prejudice against minority groups – a key finding was the strong perception that the white majority was being unfairly treated and that minority groups received preferential treatment. Alongside prejudice the research found a 'perceptible tolerance' to minority groups rather than respect, which was conditional on maintaining a low profile. The development of respect and overcoming prejudice was achieved through qualitative contact with members of a social group where 'levels of acceptance [were] linked to knowledge and understanding' The recommendations also emphasised the importance for employers to support a workplace culture that fostered positive contact & therefore deepened knowledge & understanding between minority & majority groups (MacDonald and Valentine, 2004).

Addressing social isolation and exclusion through improved systems of communication and networking

In both the Scottish and Welsh LGBT surveys (Mapping LGBT Scotland, 2004; Count us in!, 2004), social isolation was compounded by the limitations of networks provided through LGBT community groups. Stonewall Cymru found that, although helplines were the most used gateway to information on LGB services there was neither an all-Wales LGB helpline nor a system of coordination between local LGB helplines. Opening hours were also limited by the availability of local LGB volunteers. A key recommendation was the establishment of at least 3 regional fora which would develop communication, centralize information and provide a coordinating focus within each region (Count us in!, 2004).

While traditional approaches such as social and peer support groups and helplines continue to develop despite the difficulties they face, there is also an increased use of new technology. It is worth noting that Beyond Barriers survey 'First Out' (2003) produced an on-line version of their questionnaire for distribution through email networks and websites. Of the 924 responses, over 1/3rd (379) were received online (First Out, 2003). Beyond Barriers survey 'Mapping LGBT Scotland' (2004), found that nearly all the responding organisations (95%) had access to the internet while 4 out of 5 actually had a website with a key individual responsible for its upkeep, while those organisations without a website stated their interest in setting one up. One organisation's response on how training could be delivered stated it could be

through 'e-learning (particularly in rural areas [with] volunteers'. Beyond Barriers make the point that:

this is a good way to get information to an internet-literate target audience, particularly as 86% of organisations produce information'. (Mapping LGBT Scotland; 2004: 49).

Comments from 'First Out' again reinforce the importance of websites and the Internet as sources of information:

'When coming out had difficulty accessing community information - but internet has solved that!; Not enough access to LGBT info-but hopefully your website will make a difference...; No centralised source of info re groups, events – tend to stumble across info by chance'

('First Out' 2004:22)

Beyond Barriers – Case Study

Beyond Barriers (Scotland) was a Stonewall Scotland project run with funding from the Community Fund along with Citizenship21 (England and Wales) launched in Oct 2001. Their website is a comprehensive resource providing an information hub, downloadable research reports initiated by the Beyond Barriers team, but also providing links through an interactive bibliography to other recent research on LGBT issues undertaken in Scotland by other organisations from 1999 – 2004, along with research in the UK and US on issues such as homelessness, mental health and ageing that have a specific LGBT dimension. The Beyond Barriers project ended in October 2004, although the website will continue to provide information on a wide range of issues affecting the LGBT community in Scotland until 2006.

The training section of the website details Beyond Barriers workshop programme for statutory, public and voluntary organisations on LGBT issues as well as training and capacity-building workshops for LGBT voluntary sector – these are no longer being organised but the range of training that was offered during the 3 years of funding was comprehensive. A valuable element of the training section is the Equality Policy Development toolkit, a downloadable resource for organisations to enable them to develop a better understanding of LGBT issues and to integrate these into their Equalities policies.

The community section acts as a contact point for community-based LGBT organisations as well as those working at a national level. The website states that it takes a community development approach and that it would be developing a series of "how-to.." guides for community organisations on things like; Developing an action plan, working with volunteers and finding funding. However these are not available although there are a further 2 elements to this section: a guide to volunteering and community participation – encouraging participation in both LGBT community and mainstream organisations with specific advice about how to work in non-LGBT organisations; a list of active links to the Scottish voluntary organisation umbrella (SCVO) as well as a range of Scottish 'active citizenship' and Scottish Executive websites.

The Regions section is organised geographically, with an interactive a map of Scotland linked to an information section for each region about: local LGBT groups; services for LGBT people; events and local news information and campaigns. This section of the Website highlights the urban/rural divide in detailing contact points for the LGBT community in each of the different regions of Scotland. The difference in range of activities and facilities available across the central belt, in Glasgow and Edinburgh compared to the highlands, islands or the Border region is stark, while it also points to its value as a point of contact and support for LGBT communities outside of the urban centres in more isolated locations.

There is also an information section with links to a variety of networks about equality and diversity issues; advice about hate crimes, including same sex domestic violence along with a comprehensive section offering advice about education, employment, parenting and partnership issues and background information about Europe and an LGBT history of the Holocaust.

The Beyond Barriers website has brought together links and information from disparate sources and provided a contact point for both LGBT communities across Scotland as well as individuals and organisations working with them. Although the majority of information is national and concentrated in Edinburgh and Glasgow, information about more locally based work and contacts in more remote areas of Scotland are evident in the regional section of the website. The potential for continued development is evident – although no funding is currently available. The Beyond Boundaries website can be found at url: www.beyondbarriers.org.uk

Conclusions and key messages

The final report of the Sussex Sequel research presented a number of conclusions and recommendations addressed to policy makers, funders, employers, mainstream service providers and other stakeholders with an interest in promoting equality and diversity in their policies and practices. The following key points from this additional phase of the research both reinforce and extend the findings from the Sussex case study. Most importantly, they confirm that our original conclusion about the important role played by the LGBT community and voluntary sector is not a local phenomenon but is replicated elsewhere in the UK.

- The 'LGBT community' is a positive ideological concept that affirms the identity of a 'community of interest' with shared aims of offering support to LGBT people and campaigning for equal rights and freedom from discrimination. However, it should also be acknowledged that there are differences within the community, for example in relation to gender, age, class and geographical isolation, which can give rise to subtle and complex forms of discrimination for certain sub-groups within the community.
- Transgender issues have been highlighted within this phase of the research as requiring particular consideration within the employment context. The very small size of the transgender population combined with a general lack of awareness of gender identity issues, mean that this group is particularly vulnerable to marginalisation
- The LGBT community sector, consisting of a diverse range of voluntary and community organisations, is actively engaged in addressing issues of social exclusion and discrimination in employment in various areas of the UK.
- At the grass-roots level, LGBT community organisations typically offer a holistic package of support that addresses a range of social needs, and employability issues tend to be subsumed within this broad approach, rather than addressed directly. In Scotland and Wales, community development initiatives focus particularly on social and geographical isolation as many members of the community live in remote rural areas.
- We have identified a number positive strategies and examples of good practice in addressing issues of social exclusion and discrimination in employment. These include: working in partnership with other organisations to facilitate the mainstreaming of social exclusion issues; engaging constructively with employers and arguing both the 'business' and 'human rights' case for diversity; proactively addressing the need for a research baseline about the LGBT population by conducting a number of quantitative surveys; addressing social isolation and exclusion in a number of

innovative ways including the use of new technology and website development.

- As the evidence outlined above indicates, a great deal of progress has been made in recent years in terms of 'putting sexual orientation on other people's agendas'. However, the LGBT community still faces a number of major challenges in carrying out its campaigning, community and policy development work and these are outlined below:
- Under funding, under resourcing, a lack of capacity and infrastructure. Many LGBT groups have grown out of a tradition of self-help and peer support and are still run on a voluntary basis. However, surveys of these organisations have identified a growing need for training in areas such as management skills and strategic planning in order to offer their services on a more sustainable basis. The view expressed by Stonewall Cymru (2004) that this lack of organisational support is linked to the continued low priority given to sexual orientation within regeneration and funding programmes, echoes our own earlier findings in the Sussex Sequel research theme.
- A strategy of engagement with the wider community also brings additional challenges as recent research into the roots of prejudice indicates. However, greater citizenship involvement by the LGBT community alongside a workplace culture that encourages positive social engagement, & therefore better knowledge between social groups, is seen as key.
- Recent anti-discrimination legislation in relation to both sexual orientation and gender identity has been a significant development in raising the profile of these issues within the employment context. However, one of the key messages which has emerged from discussions with representatives from LGBT organisations is that legislation on its own is not enough. Homophobic, biphobic and trans-phobic attitudes and practices continue to have a negative impact in the workplace that can lead to: concealment or partial concealment of sexual identity; self-exclusion from certain professions; constraints on occupational choice and wastage of skills and talents.
- There is diversity among employers too, but awareness-raising strategies seem to be mainly targeted at larger employers in the private and statutory sectors rather than at SME level. This can pose a problem in some areas of the UK, for example in southeast England, where SMEs form a major part of the employment sector.

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