Everyone has a sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is a combination of emotional, romantic, sexual or affectionate attraction to another person. In other words, it’s about who you are attracted to, fall in love with and want to live your life with.

It is the responsibility of all NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde staff to ensure that everyone who uses the health service or works for us is treated fairly.

By law, public organisations must promote equality and remove discrimination in the delivery of all their functions.

This guide will tell you how to ensure you are not discriminating on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Homophobic attitudes are all around us in the media and we have all absorbed them to some extent. We can explore and consider our own attitudes by learning more:

www.equality.scot.nhs.uk

Consider your own information about your service should represent lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people, for example in the language and pictures you use.

Don’t make assumptions about the people using your services based on stereotypes.

Making your services welcoming and accessible to lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people can improve their experience of services and improve their recovery.

“I worry about coming out to service providers as I am concerned that I will receive a lesser service once they know I am gay. Will they treat me differently, will they have a negative reaction or will they just not get it and I will have to spend an already stressful situation explaining to someone who I am and why that is important to the way they provide me with that service?”

Don’t make assumptions about the people using your services based on stereotypes.

Making your services welcoming and accessible to lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people can improve their experience of services and improve their recovery.

NHS GG&C – Standing together against homophobia
If you overhear or witness homophobia from a colleague or a patient in your workplace you should always take action. The law says that you do not have to be lesbian, gay or bi-sexual to make a claim for discrimination.

For instance, two members of staff are overheard making derogatory comments about gay men. This is unwanted behaviour on the part of the person who hears the conversation. A straight/heterosexual person hearing the conversation could take a case under the Equality Act 2010.

Homophobic hate crime is any criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated by an offender’s hatred of someone because of their sexual orientation.

If you believe you have been a victim, or witness to hate crime, there are several ways you can report this to the police. See the Strathclyde Police website: www.strathclyde.police.uk

Don’t make assumptions

If we don’t ask patients about their sexual orientation as part of our equality monitoring we won’t understand their use of services or how we could improve them. This includes asking people about their sexual orientation – is it OK to ask patients this question?

If you have a ‘joining the practice’ appointment, the nurse asks you lots of things, including sexual health things, but they don’t establish your sexuality first, so you aren’t put on the spot to have to talk about it if you are not ready to.

For tips on how to explain why the NHS collects this kind of information, see What’s it got to do With You? www.stonewall.org.uk

If you want to make sure that we are providing services that don’t discriminate, we would like you to help.

Don’t ask your patients about their sexual orientation

Sexual orientation

Homophobia is an irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against people who are lesbian, gay or bi-sexual.

Homophobia is no different to racism or sexism and has no place in NHSGGC.

If you are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual lesbian, gay and bi-sexual employees can experience bullying and harassment and may find it difficult to report the problem. Most people believe that workplaces should be gay-friendly. Play your part in supporting colleagues who are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual to make gay-friendly workplaces a reality.

Straight Allies

How they help create gay-friendly workplaces www.stonewall.org.uk

Bullying

preventing the Bullying and Harassment of Gay Employees www.stonewall.org.uk

Address homophobic behaviour

If you overhear or witness homophobia from a colleague or a patient in your workplace you should always take action. The law says that you do not have to be lesbian, gay or bi-sexual to make a claim for discrimination.

For instance, two members of staff are overheard making derogatory comments about gay men. This is unwanted behaviour on the part of the person who hears the conversation. A straight/heterosexual person hearing the conversation could take a case under the Equality Act 2010.

If you overhear or witness homophobic hate crime you could report it to the police. See the Strathclyde Police website: www.strathclyde.police.uk

Homophobic hate crime is any criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated by another’s hatred of someone because of their sexual orientation.

If you believe you have been a victim, or witness to hate crime, there are several ways you can report this to the police. See the Strathclyde Police website: www.strathclyde.police.uk