



**Supporting
LGBT+ Teachers**

What can employers do for LGBT+ teachers?

All employers have a responsibility to tackle discrimination and harassment in the workplace. This is especially important in schools; enabling LGBT+ teachers to feel comfortable and respected benefits the whole school community. Public sector institutions in the UK also have a **legal duty** to actively advance inclusivity and equality.

Here are some steps that will help create more welcoming environments for LGBT+ teachers:

- **Train:** provide comprehensive equality and diversity training for all staff that specifically addresses LGBT+ issues.
- **Support networks:** support staff in setting up LGBT+ staff and/or staff-student networks.
- **Show pride:** create visibly welcoming environments, such as providing and encouraging rainbow lanyards, pride flags or posters of historical LGBT+ role models.
- **Build it in:** audit policies to ensure they are fully inclusive of LGBT+ staff.
- **Celebrate:** actively take part as a whole school in celebrating events in the LGBT+ calendar, such as LGBT+ History Month and LGBTSTEM day.
- **Take responsibility:** Do not assume that LGBT+ staff should have to be responsible for education relating to being LGBT+, such as LGBT+ sex and relationships education.

Useful resources:

- **LGBT+ history month**
- **Schools Out UK**
- **The Classroom**
- **The Proud Trust**
- **RSC Education in Chemistry – LGBT+ resources**



For more information see our [resource on LGBT+ inclusivity for employers](#)

Support and resources for LGBT+ teachers

As an LGBT+ teacher you deserve to experience a welcoming and comfortable workplace that treats you equally and with respect. Whether or not you choose to be out as LGBT+ at work should be your choice, not something you feel pressured into either one way or the other.

Knowing your rights is an important way to equip and empower yourself at work. LGBT+ people in the UK are legally protected against:

- **Direct discrimination** – being treated differently because of their LGBT+ status.
- **Indirect discrimination** – being put at a disadvantage as an LGBT+ person because of a policy, practice, or rule.
- **Harassment** – unwanted conduct that creates a hostile or offensive environment on the basis of LGBT+ status.
- Also, trans people must be allowed time off work for gender transition on an equal basis as time off for illness or injury.

Seeking out community for support and solidarity can make a big difference to emotional wellbeing. Trade unions can be a useful source for resources, support and advocacy, as well as facilitating access to LGBT+ teachers' networks.

Useful resources:

- **LGBTed** - LGBT+ teachers' network
- **Courageous Leaders** - free leadership programme for LGBT+ teachers
- **NEU resources for LGBT+ equality**
- **NEU toolkit for transitioning teachers**

The landscape for LGBT+ teachers

LGBT+ primary, secondary, and further education teachers can experience very different working environments to other LGBT+ people in STEM.

The Institute of Physics, Royal Astronomical Society, and Royal Society of Chemistry's 2019 report *Exploring the Workplace for LGBT+ Physical Scientists* found a greater disparity of experiences in the workplace among teachers than respondents in other workplaces. Although many teachers reported 'very comfortable' workplaces, a significant proportion also described their workplace as 'uncomfortable' or 'very uncomfortable,' demonstrating a greater disparity than that which exists between other kinds of workplaces. This indicates that workplace climates for LGBT+ teachers can vary significantly between different schools.

Very few teachers reported being aware of any existing LGBT+ network (official or unofficial) in their workplace. The networks they did know of were generally aimed at supporting students rather than staff.

Notably, more teachers reported feeling that LGBT+ people were expected to be secretive (23%, vs 15% of other workplace respondents), and that LGBT+ people were pressured not to come out (28% vs <20%). **Research** suggests that **Section 28** has a continuing negative effect, particularly on teachers who experienced it first-hand. Education in Chemistry's **video** with one LGBT+ teacher provides an invaluable perspective on these difficulties.

Taking concrete steps towards greater LGBT+ inclusivity is a key part of fostering diverse and welcoming scientific workplaces.

This resource is part of the Royal Society of Chemistry LGBT+ toolkit, which aims to tackle the key workplace issues faced by LGBT+ physical scientists. The toolkit builds on the findings of the 2019 report *Exploring the Workplace for LGBT+ Physical Scientists*, and includes resources to equip everyone to take part in positive change: employers, colleagues, and LGBT+ people.



Whoever you are, you can make a real difference towards LGBT+ inclusivity in science.

Find out more at rsc.li/lgbt-toolkit

To learn more about the terminology used in this resource, see our **Glossary**

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Registered charity number: 207890

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