

# LGBT+ NETWORK

Helping you in the workplace

For more info, to get involved or to join online, visit  
**[prospect.org.uk/joinus](https://prospect.org.uk/joinus)**



# SUPPORTING YOUR LGBT+ COLLEAGUES AT WORK

**“It is a basic human right to work in an environment free from harassment and discrimination”**

The **LGBT+ community** is made up of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as well as those who are intersex, gender fluid or questioning their sexuality.

We come in all shapes, sizes, religions and creeds. We have different life goals, but we all want to be treated equally at work and in society.

You don't have to identify as LGBT+ to be part of the LGBT+ community or to get involved in most networks.

**'Straight ally'** is a term used by LGBT+ charity Stonewall and other communities to describe heterosexual people who believe in equality for their LGBT+ colleagues at work and in wider society.

**Working together**, everyone has a role to play in creating LGBT+ friendly workplaces and environments.

Being involved as a 'straight ally' in your workplace means you can offer support to your LGBT+ friends and colleagues and campaign for change that is positive for everyone.

Interventions and support from allies can have a huge impact in getting positive change and counter the charge that networks only work for their own interests.

You can be as active or passive as you like within the network.



# Why Prospect can make a difference

## How we can help

As a trade union, Prospect is uniquely placed to negotiate with your employer on policies and practices in your workplace.

We can help you bring about the changes that you want to see at work. Sometimes the issues that you want to challenge are organisation-wide and cover all staff.

## Updating policy

It will usually require the company's management to change and update policies to better reflect the changes in society, including:

- pensions
- flexible working
- maternity, paternity and adoption leave.

In other circumstances, new policies might be needed to help LGBT+ members feel secure in the workplace. An example would be to support those who are transitioning.

## Training

We also offer advice and training on:

- unconscious bias
- pensions
- mental health first aid
- stress
- bullying and harassment.

***“Promoting positive changes  
does not mean putting one group  
of people above another”***

# Creating a positive workplace environment

## How we can help

Networks are an important way of ensuring that your employer takes the needs of all employees into account. Networks also provide a channel for workers to challenge discrimination or suggest changes that will help all employees.

An active LGBT+ network can help ensure that your workplace respects its LGBT+ employees and is a fair and open place to work.

It can also create a positive workplace environment that doesn't stigmatise anyone.

We should all call out casual homophobia just as we would with racism, sexism or any other bad behaviour.

Prospect is also keen to encourage networking between its various branches so that LGBT+ members can support each other and share best practice and successes.

***“People do their best work when they feel that they can be open at work”***

## Prospect's LGBT+ Network

A person's sexuality or gender identity should not determine whether they are employed, promoted or selected for redundancy. Nor should they be the brunt of discriminatory “jokes”.

Prospect's network is open to everyone who supports our LGBT+ aims.

### **We are committed to:**

- supporting lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans people in the workplace and in the union
- ensuring that employment benefits and agreements, such as pensions and family leave arrangements, include same-sex couples
- securing equality policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity
- ensuring that workplace procedures dealing with discrimination and harassment cover sexual orientation and gender identity.

Prospect's network for LGBT+ members provides support and advice, campaigns against discrimination in the workplace and facilitates contact between network members.

One of its key aims is to increase the visibility of LGBT+ employees in the workplace. By being more visible, we can start to tackle negative behaviours and policies at work.

It also provides the opportunity for network members to feed in their views and experiences of developments in their workplaces and wider changes in the law.

# HOW TO SET UP A NETWORK

**If you don't already have a network in your workplace, Prospect can give you the tools to set one up. You will need to:**

- find a group of like-minded individuals to support you. Depending on the size of your workplace or site, we recommend four or five people to help spread the workload
- identify issues that are widely and deeply felt, visible and winnable
- draw up a clear action plan with milestones
- agree on a list of short, medium- and long-term goals that you and the committee would like to achieve
- arrange regular meetings so that your membership is engaged.



# LGBT+ rights

## How we can help

The Equality Act came into force in October 2010. It covers all the previous strands of discrimination law, including sex, gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, and age.

The Act says you must not be discriminated against because:

- you are heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual
- someone thinks you have a particular sexual orientation – this is known as discrimination by perception
- you are connected to someone who has a particular sexual orientation – this is known as discrimination by association.

The Act not only covers rights in relation to employment, but also applies to goods and services, education, transport and public appointments.

## UK nations

It applies to England, Wales and Scotland. It does not apply in Northern Ireland, which continues to have separate, though very similar, legislation.

There are also significant differences in the Isle of Man and Channel Islands.

The concept of “protected characteristics” lies at the heart of the Act. These characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

See Prospect’s members’ guide to equality at work:

<https://library.prospect.org.uk/download/2008/00092>

Although the Act offers some protections for LGBT+ people, a union can help you use these protections effectively. Prospect offers training to help reps understand the limits of the Act and the best way to resolve issues.



# SUPPORTING YOUR LGBT+ COLLEAGUES AT WORK

**Prospect is a modern, professional union that represents more than 144,000 managers, engineers, scientists and specialists of all kinds.**

Our members do demanding and important work in hundreds of private and public sector organisations.

We are a community of people like you – successful individuals who care about their jobs and careers.

## **We strive to:**

- protect your interests at work
- negotiate your pay and conditions
- represent you if you need individual support
- campaign for jobs and standards
- provide individual benefits and services
- influence employers and government.

**Join the thousands of professionals already in Prospect. Sign up now at: [www.prospect.org.uk/joinus](http://www.prospect.org.uk/joinus)**

Membership is confidential and we treat all our members equally

## **Contact**

For more information, or to sign up to Prospect's LGBT+ network:

Email [rainbow@prospect.org.uk](mailto:rainbow@prospect.org.uk)

Call us on **0300 600 1878**

Visit [prospect.org.uk/lgbtplusnetwork](http://prospect.org.uk/lgbtplusnetwork)

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**Standing for Equality**  
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