



<b>Founded</b>	Originally founded in 2002 – name changed to include Allies in 2014
<b>Membership</b>	Mailing list is now 600, plus over 1800 followers on Twitter and Facebook. Includes both employees and community/partnership organisations.
<b>Communication Channels</b>	<p>Email: <a href="mailto:lgbt@birmingham.gov.uk">lgbt@birmingham.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Monthly Online Newsletter: Sign up here <a href="http://eepurl.com/Ddy_b">http://eepurl.com/Ddy_b</a></p> <p>Newsletters: <a href="http://us7.campaign-archive2.com/home/?u=0cb69fa5026dac605d97e9de3&amp;id=649335a351">http://us7.campaign-archive2.com/home/?u=0cb69fa5026dac605d97e9de3&amp;id=649335a351</a></p> <p>Webpage: <a href="http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/lgbtnetwork">www.birmingham.gov.uk/lgbtnetwork</a></p> <p>Facebook: <a href="http://www.facebook.com/bcclgbt">www.facebook.com/bcclgbt</a></p> <p>Twitter: <a href="http://www.twitter.com/bcclgbt">www.twitter.com/bcclgbt</a></p> <p>Yammer: <a href="http://www.yammer.com/birmingham.gov.uk">www.yammer.com/birmingham.gov.uk</a> (employees only)</p>
<b>Network Leads</b>	<p>Emil Prysak, Workforce Development Officer (Chair)</p> <p>Marie Dobinson, Business Analyst (Communications Lead)</p> <p>Peter Hay, Strategic Director for People (LGBT Champion &amp; Exec Sponsor)</p>
<b>Steering Group</b>	<p>Currently 15 network members, different grades and roles</p> <p>eg – Social Workers (Adults &amp; Children’s Services),</p> <p>Adoption &amp; Fostering, Training &amp; Development, IT, Housing,</p> <p>Commissioning, Libraries, Adult Education,</p> <p>Facilities/Building Management,</p>
<b>Awards</b>	<p>2014 &amp; 2015 – Stonewall Employee Network of the Year (West Midlands)</p> <p>2015 – Stonewall Role Model of the Year (West Midlands) – Marie Dobinson</p> <p>2016 – Stonewall Employer of the Year (West Midlands)</p>
<b>Main Objectives</b>	<p>Increase the visibility of employees who identify as LGBT, promoting equality across the organisation by supporting personal and career development</p> <p>Improve the quality of services offered to our customers and citizens of Birmingham, especially those who identify as LGBT</p>

## Our Top 10 Tips for Employee Networks

1. **Get a senior sponsor and develop a business case** – It is important that network activities are supported at a senior level. It is incredible how much more you can get done with the right people in the room, and the senior sponsor can also help unlock extra budget if needed. Consider the benefits to the business and LGBT staff/customers/clients. Try to develop an action plan which has clear and realistic aims and objectives.
2. **Elect a committed Steering/Exec group with wide skills and abilities** – This is often easier than it sounds because a lot of what we do has to be squeezed alongside our day jobs. It is not essential to have a large group – just 1 or 2 committed people can make a huge difference, but try to draw on a mixture of skills, abilities and levels to help support. It is important that not everyone is there to steer, some people need to pedal too.
3. **Role Models - Celebrate the diversity of your network** – Encourage your Bisexual, Transgender, Female, BME or Disabled staff to step up as role models for others. Organise activities and themes which will engage with different people including working time, lunch or social events. If you can't identify particular role models within the organisation then work with external networks or individuals to share knowledge & understanding.
4. **Communicate well and be visible** – use different channels which staff can access from work or home if needed. Harness your internal communications and make sure you are linked into any corporate communications to help amplify your message. Use simple promotional items which will be used in the workplace to advertise your network like Rainbow Lanyards for ID badges, or pens, mugs, shoe laces etc.
5. **Engage your allies** – the Council's Non-LGBT members or 'Allies' have been some of our most productive members, particularly in areas like HR, Social Care, Public Health, Commissioning. We developed a programme to engage our allies with support of Stonewall and Accenture's LGBT Employees Network – this was responsible for tripling our membership in the last 2 years. Allies are invited to most events, but we do still have the occasional LGBT only event if necessary.
6. **Little actions / BIG EFFECTS** – Encourage new members first to identify how they can make an impact on improving LGBT equality and inclusion within their current role, skills or expertise. This will help them to build confidence and contacts which can be built upon to make bigger policy changes or take on larger projects. As the majority of our work is undertaken on a voluntary basis it has been important to keep it realistic.
7. **Mentoring & Career Development** – A LGBT network is a great source of support for staff to learn new skills and further their careers within an organisation. New staff can be supported around coming out (and staying out), developing inner confidence, public speaking skills, leadership. Keep an eye out for conferences and leadership courses as these experiences can really help staff to generate new ideas.
8. **Feedback and Evaluation** – Gather feedback after every event or activity, or consider running an annual / bi annual survey which could be used to help inform the network action plan. Or you could ask an external organisation to help evaluate you – for example Stonewall or GIRES.
9. **Work with other Networks in the area** – Don't do it alone! There are lots of other networks, community groups and individuals out there you just have to find them, and they all have a wealth of good practice to be shared. Eg the Birmingham LGBT Centre, Stonewall, Midlands LGBT Employees Network, other Employee Networks, Unions.
10. **Work with communities, partnerships and customers** – Birmingham City Council has had lot of success in this area working in partnership with other organisations or community groups – for example: The Educate & Celebrate Programme in Schools ; "Coming Out Stories" Film and Exhibition (with Birmingham LGBT and Heritage Lottery Fund and OUT Central Youth Group); Transgender Day of Remembrance (with local trans community groups) ; LGBT History Month events (with SHOUT Festival).