

Ten Things You Can Do To Challenge Homophobia

- 1. Do not assume heterosexuality in general discussions about people.** Be inclusive in the language that you use, thereby avoiding marginalising lesbian, gay or bisexual young people and adults.
- 2. Make sure that homophobic bullying is identified in your organisation's bullying policy.** All equal opportunities policies should include a positive statement about sexuality, as they would about race, belief, disability, gender etc.
- 3. Create a safe environment.** Use posters of Helpline numbers covering a range of issues to indicate that there is help available should people need it. Have nominated staff to whom young people and adults can turn included in this publicity.
- 4. Provide information.** Ensure appropriate books and information can be found in resources banks. Remove offensive books and materials.
- 5. Provide appropriate health information.** People identifying as gay or lesbian or unsure of their sexuality have an equal right to appropriate sexual health education as part of an organisation's Duty of Care.
- 6. Be a role model.** Actions speak louder than words. By adopting a consistently respectful behaviour to others' difference, ourselves, we can foster this in young people.
- 7. Be supportive.** If someone chooses you to discuss any issues about their sexuality it's because they respect you. Respect them for doing so and don't automatically refer them onto someone else.
- 8. Use your organisation's 'curriculum'.** Programmes of learning or education provide myriad opportunities to open up sensible, appropriate discussion around sexuality - take advantage of such "teachable moments". Don't regard issues of sexuality as the preserve of 'private life'.
- 9. Invite outside speakers to talk about difference, respect, understanding, prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination.** Invite the local council's equality unit to assist by explaining how they address equality issues generally.
- 10. Request staff training as a matter of course.** Staff cannot be expected to understand how damaging homophobia is within their organisation's culture, and how important it is to support those affected by it, without professional guidance.