

## Gender and Sexual Orientation in the Workplace<sup>\*</sup>

*Women are playing an increasingly important role in the workplace. Yet with statistics demonstrating that the gender gap is still wide open, UK employers cannot afford to ignore gender-related issues and must continue to work to prevent gender workplace inequalities.*

*It is recognised that many lesbian, gay and bisexual people still face discrimination in today's society. With approximately one in twenty of the population identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual, UK employers must be aware of the issues surrounding the sexual orientation of their employees in order to prevent such discrimination occurring in the workplace.*

### Legislation

The *Equal Pay Act 1970* and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975* (and more recent amendments) have been the main areas of legislation covering this important issue. However, the *Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations* and the recently introduced *Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005* and *Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007* are equally important for employers. These can all be accessed from this document.

### Key documents

#### ***Code of Practice Sex Discrimination***

The Equal Opportunities Commission *Code of Practice on Sex Discrimination* provides guidance to employers, trade unions and employment agencies on measures that can be taken to achieve equality. The chances of success of any organisation will be improved if it seeks to develop the abilities of all employees, and the Code shows the close link that exists between equal opportunity and good employment practice.

Available at the following link: (<http://www.eoc-law.org.uk/default.aspx?page=2971>)

#### ***Code of Practice Equal Pay***

The Equal Opportunities Commission *Code of Practice on Equal Pay* contains both legal advice and good practice recommendations for employers, providing a framework for developing a fair and discrimination-free pay and grading system.

Available at the following link: ([http://www.eoc-law.org.uk/PDF/law\\_code\\_of\\_practice.pdf](http://www.eoc-law.org.uk/PDF/law_code_of_practice.pdf))

---

<sup>\*</sup> As with other areas of equality, there is a huge amount of information about this important issue and this page cannot reflect all issues related to the subject matter. However, we hope our focus on the key legislation, leading campaigners, business improvement and good practice tips regarding both gender and sexual orientation equality in the workplace are helpful.

## Business improvement

### **Stonewall - Diversity Champions**

Stonewall run a good practice forum in which employers promote lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the workplace. With over 300 members - including a number of Investor in People accredited organisations - involvement in this area has helped build reputation, recruitment, productivity, and risk aversion.

Furthermore, as part of their support to employees and employers, Stonewall have also produced a series of workplace guides covering topics such as Bullying, Monitoring Sexual Orientation, and Network Groups.

Available at the following link: (<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace/1447.asp>)

### **Equal Opportunities Commission - Gender Agenda Campaign**

Women working full time earn on average 17% less than men whilst 7 out of 10 fathers are concerned work means they are not able to spend as much time with their family. These are just two of the areas of inequality covered by this report.

The downloadable document advocates for these matters to be addressed to ensure men and women are treated equally. Giving realistic timeframes, the campaign focus includes closing the income gap between men and women, giving better support to modern families, and ensuring public services meet men and women's needs.

Available at the following link: ([http://www.eoc.org.uk/pdf/Gender\\_Agenda\\_GB\\_web.pdf](http://www.eoc.org.uk/pdf/Gender_Agenda_GB_web.pdf))

### **ACAS - Sexual Orientation in the Workplace**

This booklet provides guidance for employees and employers regarding good practice related to avoiding discrimination of individuals in the workplace because of their sexual orientation. Including an overview of regulations, some practical examples, and useful frequently asked questions, it is a recommended read.

Available at the following link: ([http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/e/n/sexual\\_1.pdf](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/e/n/sexual_1.pdf))

### **Investors in People - Equality and Diversity Handbook**

Designed to benefit all organisations, regardless of size or sector, this *Handbook* introduces the ideas behind equality, diversity and inclusion. It examines how implementing those ideas can deliver tangible benefits to an organisation.

Equally relevant to organisations working towards The Standard and beyond, this book is also a valuable guide for organisations simply wishing to develop Equality and Diversity techniques. This booklet published in 2007 is available for purchase via the [Online Shop](#).

## Useful links and further reading

### Legislation

- **Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment) Regulations 2003**  
(<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031657.htm>)
- **Equal Pay Act 1970**  
([http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1970/PDF/ukpga\\_19700041\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1970/PDF/ukpga_19700041_en.pdf))
- **Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005**  
(<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20052467.htm>)
- **Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007**  
(<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/20071263.htm>)

- **Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999**  
(<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1999/19991102.htm>)

### Useful links

- **Equality and Human Rights Commission** (<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com>)
- **ACAS** (<http://www.acas.org.uk>)
- **Stonewall** (<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/>)
- **CIPD** (<http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/dvsequl/sexdisc>)
- **LDA - Diversity Works for London** (<http://www.diversityworksforlondon.com>)