

Understanding Equality and Diversity Sexual Orientation Digest

Produced by the Corporate Research Team, Borough of Poole.



Purpose of this Paper

This paper has been written as one in a series of eight to inform service and policy planning, and focus the prioritisation of services. This series of papers provides available research and statistical evidence relating to the varying needs, experiences and outcomes of different equalities characteristics in Poole protected under the Equalities Act 2010. They provide a top-level view of this specific subject area and identify contacts and resources for people who would like more detailed information. National information is highlighted in grey throughout.

Structure of this Paper

Each [protected characteristic](#) has [10 domains](#) which focus directly on the most important aspects of life that people identify with, in terms of who they are and what they do. They are central to the [Equality Measurement Framework](#) which provides a baseline of evidence that enables the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to evaluate progress and decide priorities.

These papers combine the domains of 'Physical & Legal Security' and include the protected characteristics of 'Marriage and Civil Partnerships' and 'Pregnancy and Maternity' in the domain list to make it easier for the reader to interpret the data.

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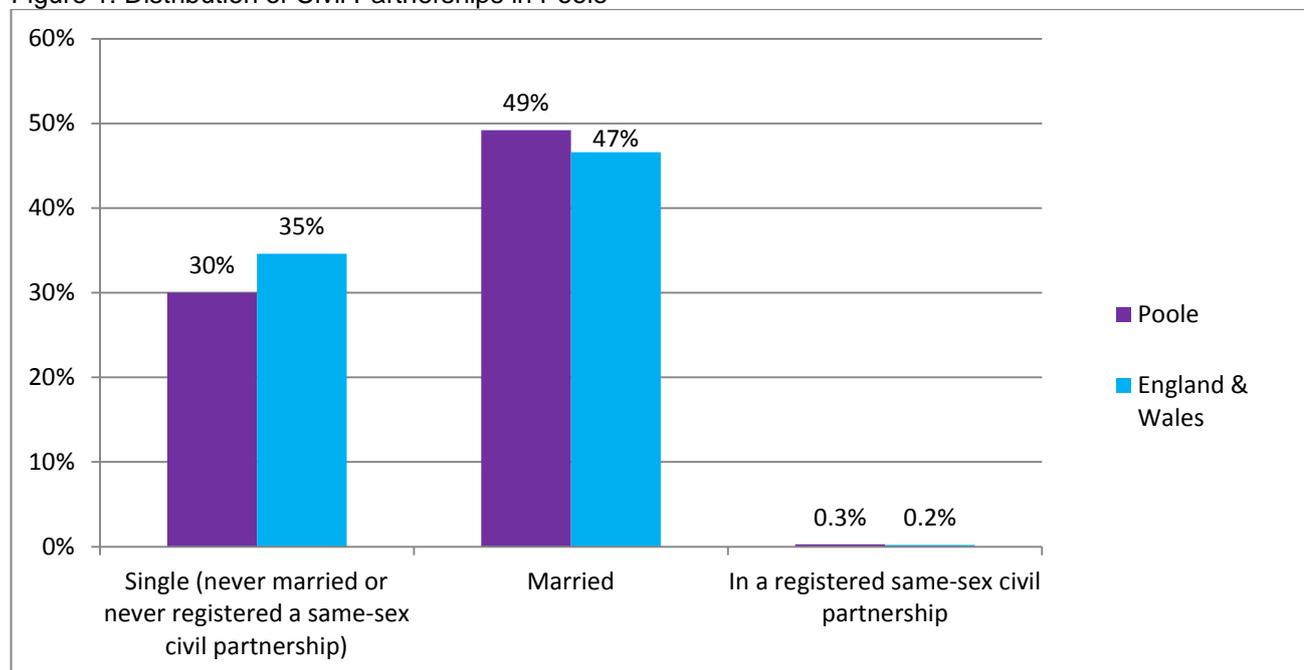
The Population of Interest

In 2011/12, 1.5% of adults in the UK identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual. 2.7% of 16-24 year olds identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual compared to 0.4% of those aged 65 and over (*Integrated Household Survey: Experimental Statistics 2011/12, ONS*).

Nationally, since the Civil Partnership Act 2004 came into force in 2005, there have been 53,417 civil partnerships formed. 6,795 were formed in 2011, 3,444 were male partnerships and 3,351 were female partnerships (*Civil Partnership Formations 2011, ONS*).

In the 2011 Census, 0.3% (n=172) of people living in Poole said they were in a registered same-sex civil partnership which was just above the number in England and Wales (0.2%). Figure 1 below shows the distribution of same-sex civil partnerships in Poole by gender:

Figure 1: Distribution of Civil Partnerships in Poole



Source: 2011 Census

There was a lower proportion of single people in Poole (30%; n=36,544) than in England and Wales (35%) as a whole. In contrast, there was a slightly higher proportion of married people (49%; n=59,960) in Poole than in England and Wales (47%) and a marginally higher proportion of people in a registered same-sex civil partnership in Poole as mentioned above.

Key Issues for this Characteristic

The following reports highlight issues nationally and from the South West and Dorset, but the information is often limited, and from a narrow range of sources, and there are no reports with data specific to Poole.

Life eg. life expectancy, deaths

Data on people's life expectancy and deaths according to their sexual orientation at both national and local levels was not available at the time of publication.

Health e.g. access to healthcare

In 2008, 46% of disabled lesbian and bisexual women had never been screened for sexually transmitted diseases. 31% had deliberately harmed themselves in the last year compared to 0.4% of the general population, and 61% had negative experiences of healthcare in the past year (*Prescription for Change 2008 (n=6,178), Stonewall*).

In 2011, 3% of gay men and 5% of bisexual men attempted to take their own life, compared to 0.4% of men in general. Also, almost half of gay and bisexual men worried about the way they looked and wished they could think about it less. 13% of gay and bisexual men had a problem with their weight or eating in the last year compared to 4% of the general male population. Over half of gay and bisexual men had a normal BMI compared to under a third of men in general (*Gay and Bisexual Men's Health Survey 2012 (n=6,861), Stonewall*).

The same survey also found that almost nine in ten gay and bisexual men had never discussed high blood pressure or high cholesterol with a health professional. Just one in ten had discussed prostate or bowel cancer with a health professional in their lifetime and only 3% had ever discussed lung cancer (*Gay and Bisexual Men's Health Survey 2012 (n=6,861), Stonewall*).

A different Stonewall survey found that lesbian and bisexual women were more likely to be diagnosed with depression and anxiety, while gay and bisexual men were twice as likely to have ever been diagnosed with depression and anxiety than heterosexual men (*Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual People in Later Life (n=2,086), Stonewall 2011*).

In 2013, 31% of lesbian, gay and bisexual felt they would be treated worse by staff in a care home than heterosexual people, and 12% felt that this would be the case with their GPs too (*Gay in Britain (n=2,092), Stonewall 2013*).

In 2014, a study conducted with young people who were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) in England aged 16-25, found that they had significantly higher levels of mental health problems including depression and anxiety, self-harm and suicidal thoughts (*Youth Chances: the experiences of LGBTQ young people in England (n=7000), METRO*).

The Intercom Trust's Big LGBT Community survey across the South West found that 51% of respondents had a mental health problem in the previous two years while 40% of respondents had experienced depression in that period. Respondents also reported experiencing anxiety, stress, lack of self-worth and social isolation. For each of these conditions, between 60% and 90% of respondents said their mental illness was associated with being lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (*The Big LGBT Community Survey 2014 (n=182), Intercom Trust*).

Physical and Legal Security e.g. freedom from violence and discrimination

In 2011, half of gay and bisexual men had experienced at least one incident of domestic violence from a family member or partner since the age of 16 compared to 17% of men in general. Four in five gay and bisexual men who had experienced domestic abuse had never reported the incidents to the police. Of those who did report the incidents, more than half were not satisfied with how the police dealt with the situation (*Gay and Bisexual Men's Health Survey 2012 (n=6,861), Stonewall*).

In 2012, 91% of bisexual, lesbian and gay people supported the Government's move to extend the legal form and name of civil marriage to same-sex couples. This support rose to 96% amongst those under the age of 35 (*Gay in Britain (n=2,092), Stonewall 2013*).

In 2013, hate crimes and incidents remain a serious issue in Britain with 1 in 6 lesbian, gay and bisexual people experiencing a homophobic hate crime or incident over the last 3 years (*Homophobic Hate Crime: the Gay British Crime Survey 2013 (n=2,544), Stonewall*). More information can be found [here](#).

Little has changed over the past 5 years with regards to the unreporting of homophobic hate crimes. In 2013, more than two-thirds of those experiencing a hate crime or incident did not report it to anyone, while more than three-quarters did not report it to the police. The primary reasons for this included a fear of not being taken seriously, a fear of negative response, and a belief that there was little the police could do. Interestingly, more than 1 in 5 of those who did report the crime or incident, did not mention its homophobic nature (*Homophobic Hate Crime: the Gay British Crime Survey 2013 (n=2,544), Stonewall*).

In 2013, fewer than 1 in 10 victims who reported hate crimes and incidents to the police in the UK said it led to a conviction. While, half of victims who reported a hate crime or incident to the police said it was recorded with no further action taken (*Homophobic Hate Crime: the Gay British Crime Survey 2013 (n=2,544), Stonewall*)

The fear of hate crimes and incidents leaves many lesbian, gay and bisexual people feeling unsafe in their homes and local community (*Homophobic Hate Crime: the Gay British Crime Survey 2013 (n=2,544), Stonewall*).

In 2014, a study found that young people who were LGBTQ experienced significantly higher levels of verbal, physical, and sexual abuse than their heterosexual counterparts. Interestingly, according to the study 88% of LGBTQ young people do not report these incidents to the police and when cases are reported only 10% lead to a conviction (*Youth Chances: the experiences of LGBTQ young people in England (n=7000), METRO*).

The same study found that almost 1 in 5 (18%) of LGBTQ young people have experienced some form of sexual abuse, compared with 1 in 10 (11%) of non-trans heterosexuals. These findings were consistent with figures from the NSPCC's work on the experience of sexual abuse in the general population (*Youth Chances: the experiences of LGBTQ young people in England (n=7000), METRO*).

Between April 2013 and March 2014, there were 77 hate-related incidents in Poole, 8 (10.4%) of which were homophobic incidents (*Community Safety Statistics 2013-2014, Borough of Poole*).

Education e.g. attainment, access to life-long learning and training

In 2010, young children with gay parents found they were answering lots of questions from friends about their family which could be stressful and uncomfortable. These children often felt invisible in school because lesbian, gay or bisexual people or families were never mentioned in school. Due to the stress of worrying about what might happen if other children knew, some children didn't tell other people that they had gay parents which increased their feeling of isolation (*Different families 2010, Stonewall*).

In 2012, 55% of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people experienced homophobic bullying in Britain's schools. More than half (53%) of gay pupils experienced verbal homophobic bullying, 23% experienced cyber-bullying and 16% experienced physical abuse. 6% of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils were subjected to death threats (*The School Report 2012 (n=1,614), Stonewall*).

As a consequence of this bullying, 44% of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils skipped school, while 13% skipped school more than 6 times in 2012. 32% of those who experienced bullying changed their plans for the future because of it. Finally, 53% of gay young people were never taught anything about lesbian, gay and bisexual issues at school in 2012 (*The School Report 2012 (n=1,614), Stonewall*).

Interestingly, homophobic bullying of gay pupils was lower in schools that explicitly stated that homophobic bullying was wrong. Schools that sought to eliminate homophobic remarks and where such language was rarely or never heard, the incidence of homophobic bullying was just 37% compared to 68% where homophobic language was heard more frequently (*The School Report 2012 (n=1,614), Stonewall*).

70% of gay, lesbian and bisexual people expected to face barriers because of their sexual orientation if they applied to become a school governor (*Gay in Britain (n=2,092), Stonewall 2013*).

In 2014, a study found that almost half of LGBTQ young people said that their time at school was affected by discrimination or fear of discrimination. In addition, about one in five LGBTQ young people said they experienced physical attack at school because of their sexual identity or gender identity. The majority don't report this and only a small proportion of those who do experience resolution (*Youth Chances: the experiences of LGBTQ young people in England (n=7000), METRO*).

The same study found that sex and relationships education was not inclusive of lesbian, gay, and bisexual relationships and did not provide young people with the emotional and sexual health information they needed. The report noted that this is a particular concern for young gay and bisexual men who are at higher risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV (*Youth Chances: the experiences of LGBTQ young people in England (n=7000), METRO*).

Data on the quality of people's education according to their sexual orientation at a local level was not available at the time of publication.

Standard of Living e.g. housing, transport, independence

Lesbian, gay and bisexual people can experience a range of housing issues. Young people can find themselves thrown out of the family home, or may choose to leave to escape homophobia. Older people in care accommodation can feel isolated and fail to receive the services they need. All LGB individuals can experience harassment and violence in their neighbourhood. Another issue is the lack of emergency accommodation for LGB people, especially gay and bisexual men, when escaping domestic abuse (*Stonewall.org.uk*).

In 2011, 42% of gay and bisexual men in the UK drank alcohol on three or more days a week compared to 35% of men in general. Half of gay and bisexual men had taken drugs in the last year compared to just one in eight men in general (*Gay and Bisexual Men's Health Survey 2012 (n=6,861), Stonewall*).

According to Homeless Link in 2011, 7% of clients in an average project identified themselves as LGBT. They also suggested that 79% of homelessness services worked with people who were LGBT, which meant they needed to be aware of the complex issues LGBT people faced (*Survey of Needs and Provision 2011, Homeless Link*).

A 2011 study by Stonewall, found that, lesbian, gay and bisexual people over the age of 55 were more likely to live alone. 41% lived alone compared to 28% of heterosexual people (*Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual People in Later Life (n=2,086), Stonewall 2011*).

The Government does not envisage an adverse impact on any specific sex groups in the UK following the introduction of benefit caps in 2013. However, it is not possible to give any accurate assessment of the impact as the DWP does not collect information on the sexual orientation of claimants (*Benefit Cap: Equality Impact Assessment 2012, DWP*).

In 2013, 18% of bisexual, gay and lesbian people in the UK said they expected to be treated worse when applying for social housing than heterosexual people (*Gay in Britain (n=2,092), Stonewall 2013*).

The 2011 Census identified that 82.9% (n=17,656) of married or same-sex civil partnership couples in Poole owned or had shared ownership of the property they lived in. While, 78.4% (n=7,311) of those who were married or in a same-sex civil partnership and had dependent children, they owned or had shared ownership of the property they lived in (*2011 Census: Tenure by household composition, ONS*).

Productive and Valued Activities e.g. employment, workplace experience

One in five lesbian and gay people have experienced bullying from a colleague because of their sexual orientation (*Stonewall, 'Serves You Right', 2007*).

In 2009, the Equality and Human Rights commission revealed that 7 in 10 lesbians and gay men felt that they could be open about their sexual orientation in the workplace without fear of discrimination. However, only around 2 in 10 of bisexual men and 3 in 10 of bisexual women felt the same (*Beyond Tolerance, EHRC, 2009*).

In a survey with lesbians in the workplace, some felt that keeping their orientation secret at work was exhausting, stressful and damaging to the morale of the individual and of the team (*The Double-glazed Glass Ceiling – Lesbians in the Workplace, Stonewall.org.uk*).

It appears that when LGBTQ young people transition from school into new environments, including the workplace, they have more positive experiences. A smaller proportion (15%) said they had been affected by discrimination or fear of discrimination about their sexuality or gender identity in the workplace. The level of name calling (10%) was also lower in the workplace than in school (61%) (*Youth Chances: the experiences of LGBTQ young people in England (n=7000), METRO*).

Data on the quality of people's employment according to their sexual orientation at a local level was not available at the time of publication.

Individual, Family and Social Life e.g. independence, equality in relationships

In 2011, a study by Stonewall found that lesbian, gay and bisexual people over the age of 55 were more likely to be single. Gay and bisexual men, in particular, were almost three times more likely (40%) to be single than heterosexual men (15%) (*Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual People in Later Life (n=2,086), Stonewall 2011*).

The same study found that lesbian, gay and bisexual people over the age of 55 were less likely to have children. Just over a quarter of gay and bisexual men and half of lesbian and bisexual women had children compared to 9 in 10 heterosexual men and women (*Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual People in Later Life (n=2,086), Stonewall 2011*).

During the year ending March 2012, 4% (160) of children were adopted by same sex couples, up from 3% (100) the previous year (*BAAF, 2012*).

In 2012, 61% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people expected their children to be bullied in primary school if it were known that they had gay parents. This increased to 83% if their children were in secondary school (*Gay in Britain (n=2,092), Stonewall 2013*).

In the same year, 80% of gay, lesbian and bisexual people expected to experience barriers if they applied to become foster parents. In addition, almost half (46%) thought they would be treated worse than a heterosexual person by an adoption agency (*Gay in Britain (n=2,092)*, Stonewall 2013).

A recent study by University of Cambridge's Centre for Family Research found that there was no evidence to suggest that children's masculine or feminine tendencies were affected by having gay or lesbian parents. Family life and the quality of relationships were very similar regardless of their parent's sexual orientation (*British Association of Adoption and Fostering, 2013*).

A 2013 survey revealed that 70% of people in Britain said that same sex couples in civil partnerships with children were a family and 52% considered an unmarried couple without children a family (*Westminster Faith Debates series 2013 (n=4,437)*, YouGov).

Data on the quality of people's family, and social, lives according to their sexual orientation at a local level was not available at the time of publication.

Participation, Influence and Voice e.g. participation in decision making

A 2010 poll by the social networking site Gaydar revealed that the majority of gay people (39.9%) said they voted for Labour in the 2005 general election. However, prior to the 2010 general election, the majority of gay people were intending to vote for the Conservatives (*Gaydar 2010 poll*).

In 2012, 74% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people said they thought they would face barriers from the Conservative Party if they wanted to stand as an MP, while 37% said the same of the Labour Party and 29% said the same of the Liberal Democrats (*Gay in Britain (n=2,092)*, Stonewall 2013).

In 2012, 88% of gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the UK had never been asked by their local service providers about their views on those services. Interestingly, 67% said they would offer their views and experiences to local services such as a council, police force, school or health trust (*Gay in Britain (n=2,092)*, Stonewall 2013).

A 2014 survey found that LGBTQ young people are twice as likely not to feel accepted in the area where they currently live compared to heterosexual non-trans young people. 59% of LGBTQ young people who would be interested in joining a religious organisation have stopped or reduced their participation due to their sexuality or gender identity. While, over a third of LGBTQ young people (34%) are not able to be open about their sexuality or gender identity at their sports club (*Youth Chances: the experiences of LGBTQ young people in England (n=7000)*, METRO).

Data on the level of people's participation according to their sexual orientation at a local level was not available at the time of publication.

Identity, Expression and Self-Respect e.g. Religion, Belief

Homophobia can be defined as 'the irrational hatred, intolerance and fear of LGB people.' Heterosexism is 'bias shown by a society or community where cultural institutions and individuals are conditioned to expect everyone to live and behave as heterosexuals.' While homophobia can cause the most obvious harm to LGB people, such as bullying and violent

attacks, heterosexism can cause more subtle damage to self-image and self-esteem. (*Mind Factsheet 2009*)

In 2007, a study found that trans people have complex gender identities, often moving from one 'trans' category into another over time. In addition, 44% of respondents not living permanently in their preferred gender (who would be known as transvestites), intended to do so in the future (*Engendered Penalties: Transgender and Transsexual People's Experiences of Inequality and Discrimination, Equalities Review, 2007*).

A 2013 poll by YouGov discovered that the more religious a person was in the UK, the more they were against same sex marriage. 53% of people who described themselves as religious did not approve, while 48% who believed in a God or higher power were against it (*Westminster Faith Debates series 2013 (n=4,437), YouGov via British Religion in Numbers*).

In 2013, 57% of gay people said portrayal of lesbian, gay and bisexual people on television was too little. In addition, 49% thought the current portrayal of lesbian, gay and bisexual people on UK television was unrealistic (*Gay in Britain (n=2,092), Stonewall 2013*).

Data on people's religion/beliefs according to their sexual orientation at a local level was not available at the time of publication.

Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Nationally, since the Civil Partnership Act 2004 came into force in 2005, there have been 53,417 civil partnerships formed. 6,795 were formed in 2011, 3,444 were male partnerships and 3,351 were female partnerships (*Civil Partnership Formations 2011, ONS*).

There is currently heated debate in the UK over whether same sex marriage should be legalised. In February 2013, the Marriage (Same Sex couples) bill received its second reading in the House of Commons. At the time of writing, a decision is yet to be reached.

The Government does not envisage an adverse impact on any marital or civil partnership groups in the UK following the introduction of benefit caps in 2013. However, it is not possible to give any accurate assessment of the impact as the DWP does not collect information on the marital or civil partnership status of claimants (*Benefit Cap: Equality Impact Assessment 2012, DWP*).

Please refer to the [The Population of Interest](#) section above for local data.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Since a new law was passed in 2009, civil partners who have children are both considered parents, removing the need for the non-mother to adopt the child. This also means that the birth mother can access maternity leave and the non-birth mother can use paternity leave (*Pregnant Pause 2009, Stonewall*).

Data on the number of conceptions in Poole according to sexual orientation at a local level was not available at the time of publication.

Sources of Information Regarding Sexual Orientation:

The following section provides links to local reports and datasets that offer further insight into the diverse nature of the varying age groups in Poole. However, it should be noted that due to population sizes and inconsistent data monitoring, the information available at local level is often limited. For more robust, national sources of equality information, please refer to the Local Government Association '[Equality Evidence Base](#)', and the Equality and Human Rights Commission '[Review of Equality Statistics](#)'. If you are aware of any further local information please contact research@poole.gov.uk.

Most reports in this section are available from our website, www.boroughofpoole.com. For access to older reports not available on our website, please contact the Corporate Research Team by email: research@poole.gov.uk, or on (01202) 633086.

Reports Providing Specific Information on Sexual Orientation

Lifting the Lid - Gay and Grey Report, 2006 explored the needs, experiences and aspirations of older lesbians and gay men in Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset between June 2003 and September 2006. Available [here](#).

Pride, Progress and Transformation in the South West – Equality South West – A survey conducted in 2010 to identify the real issues for LGB and Trans people living, working and visiting the South West Region. The results of this survey will be available [here](#).

Reports Which Contain Analysis of Information By Sexual Orientation

Youth Chances: the experiences of LGBTQ young people in England (National) – METRO: outlines the findings of a five-year research study that has surveyed over 7,000 young people aged 16-25, focusing on the experiences of LGBTQ young people in England. A summary report can be found [here](#).

Data not currently available for the local area.

Reports on Sexual Orientation Relevant Services

Data not currently available for the local area.

Sexual Orientation Information Sources

Equalities South West – Regional equality and diversity body and registered charity dedicated to promoting equality and diversity throughout the South West region. <http://www.equalitysouthwest.org.uk>

How Fair is Britain? Equalities and Human Rights commission – The first review that examines how far what happens in people's real lives matches up to the ideals of equality in Britain. The report brings together a range of sources including Census data, surveys and research. Report and supporting evidence available [here](#).

Joseph Rowntree Foundation - Independent development and social research charity, supporting a wide programme of research and development projects in housing, social care and social issues. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/>

Knowledge Base, Equality South West Data Tool - collates and disaggregates (where possible), by local area and by equality strand and socio-economic status, existing data from a wide range of reliable and widely used national data sets, and is capable of detailed interrogation and analysis for a range of local equality purposes. Available [here](#).

Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans Women's Services in the UK – A report highlighting the key issues affecting different groups of lesbian, bisexual and trans women as well as providing a picture of the sector that supports these women. Available [here](#).

Neighbourhood Statistics – Allows you to find detailed statistics within specific geographic areas e.g. Local Authority, Ward, Super Output Area.

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>

Nomisweb – service provided by the Office for National Statistics providing detailed and up-to-date UK labour market statistics. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Office for National Statistics - The Office for National Statistics produces independent information to improve our understanding of the UK's economy and society.

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/default.asp>

Stonewall – provides information and research to focusing on equality and justice for lesbians, gay men and bisexual people. <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

This paper is one in a series of seven profiling the protected Equality Characteristics produced by the Corporate Research Team, Borough of Poole. These reports have been produced in line with [LGA guidance \(2012\)](#) on measuring equality at a local level. The papers on Age, Gender, Transgender, Ethnicity, Disability, Religion/Belief, and Social Inequality can be viewed [here](#).

For more information on research and consultation reports for Poole, please contact the Corporate Research Team on (01202) 633086 or research@poole.gov.uk.