Key actions for delivering LGBTQ+ inclusive services online and offline

LGBTQ+ people continue to experience a wide range of challenges accessing services and products. Find out how you can help as an LGBTQ-friendly business.

One common barrier that consumers face is business websites and social media lacking visible reassurance that LGBTQ+ customers and service users will be protected from discrimination and have their needs catered to equally.

In addition to adding LGBT-friendly attributes to your Business Profile on Google, there are many ways to support your LGBTQ+ customers and allies. Follow these steps below.

Make no assumptions: Adopting a more inclusive and gender-neutral approach to your customer relationship management

- Refer to customers by their first names in emails, contracts, and other communications.
- Be fully inclusive of nonbinary customers and website visitors by providing gender-neutral title options like "Mx".
- Provide an open text option for customers who don't identify as male or female, and let them add in their own term when signing up to any forms that request a gender identity.

Provide a safe space: Training customer-facing staff to take appropriate action

- Introduce a zero-tolerance policy for homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic harassment and abuse from customers, volunteers, or staff.
- Provide a clear protocol for staff to appropriately respond to and report discriminatory or abusive language from customers and service users.
- Train staff on how to apologise and remedy the situation should they ever mistakenly misgender a customer by their voice or how they present themselves.
- Provide a clear policy for your staff on managing situations where anti-LGBT comments are expressed by store patrons or even staff.
- Reward those who get it right by mentioning staff who champion inclusion in internal team communications.

Be proactive on social media: Having a clear social media response strategy

- Offer clear guidance on managing instances of anti-LGBT comments being expressed on your social media channels. Word can spread when an LGBT person or ally has a bad experience with your business, so take swift action.
- How comfortable is your social media team in responding to complaints from LGBTQ+ customers? Provide a clear process and guidelines to help empower your employees to give customer feedback.
- Ensure you have a policy and robust process in place for reacting to, hiding, or removing homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic comments from any of your digital platforms.

For more insights and advice on combatting the discrimination and poor treatment of LGBTQ+ consumers, refer to Stonewall's latest research.