

A little guide to
being true to you if you're
LGBTQ+!

With advice on the best way to support
your LGBTQ+ friends.

BASIC FACTS

LGBTQ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender or Questioning.

Lesbian: A woman who is attracted to other women.

Gay: People who are attracted to people of the same sex.

Bi-sexual: Men and women who are attracted to both men and women.

Transgender: A general term for someone who feels their gender does not match the one chosen for them at birth.

Questioning: When you're questioning your sexuality or gender.

There are LOTS of other terms that might be used to describe someone's sexuality or gender. That's why we have added the + symbol on the front of this booklet.

Some people might prefer not to label their sexuality in any way at all.

If you're not sure how a person might prefer to be known, you can always ask them, most people won't mind you asking as long as you are polite and sensitive.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS



**A true friend is
someone who
supports you,
no matter what.**

Jordan, 14

**You don't have to
be gay to support
gay rights.**

Alex, 15

**Respect is the key
to all healthy
relationships.**

George, 13

COMBATTING STEREOTYPES

It's important not to make assumptions about someone based on the way they look.



Everyone has the right to wear what they want to wear and choice of clothes, make up, jewellery, hairstyle, can depend on how a person is feeling that day. Appearance is not necessarily an indication of a person's sexuality or gender.

You can use whatever name, pronoun (he, she, they) or title (Miss, Ms, Mrs, Mr, gender neutral Mx) you like in general life.

Avoid even 'positive' stereotypes, such as assuming all gay men have great fashion sense! You could be putting someone under unnecessary pressure to behave in a way they don't want to.

Remember everyone is unique.

Don't feel pressured by stereotypes in society!

Remember, you don't have to fit into someone else's definition of who you should be. It's very normal to need time to work out who you are. You will probably find lots of different people attractive throughout life, that might be sexually or romantically attractive, or you might just enjoy being with someone, admire or respect someone or just want to be good friends.

The important thing is to stay true to yourself and to never let other people, whether that's your partner, friends, or things you might have seen on TV, films or the Internet, make you feel pressured into doing anything you don't feel comfortable with.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Whatever your sexuality or gender, it's important to take care of your sexual health, your emotional health and your mental health.

When you're young, you can feel under lots of pressure to have sex. It's totally normal to feel interested and excited by the thought of sex and to wonder what it might be like but also to feel worried or confused about it.

Remember, it is only legal to have sex when you are 16 or older. This doesn't mean you have to start having sex when you turn 16. It's important to wait until you are ready and really want to so that you don't have any regrets later.

Sex should always be a positive experience for both of you. This is much more likely to happen if you are both feeling safe and happy about it and if you've sorted out some contraception.



Questions to ask yourself...

- Could you say no if you wanted to?
- Do you enjoy being with your partner without anything sexual involved?
- Are you having sex because you want to (and not just to please your partner or because your friends say they are all doing it)?
- Have you discussed contraception with your partner?
- Do you know how you will protect yourselves against sexually transmitted infections?
- Are you sure you won't regret it later?

Saying no

Saying no is difficult in lots of situations in life. It's normal to worry about upsetting someone or being seen as difficult or boring.

But sometimes saying no to something you don't want to do right now can be very empowering and make you feel good about yourself.

Remember, if someone else is saying no to you, it's important to respect their wishes. Any sort of sexual contact without the other person's consent is a criminal offence, such as rape or sexual assault.

**You can find more information at wigan.gov.uk/LINC2
Go to the Survival Guide and then the Friends and Relationships section. Or to talk to someone, pop into Brook in The Galleries in Wigan. They offer a confidential, free service for people under 25. You can have a chat about anything you're not sure about and get free contraception.**

COMING OUT

Telling someone else about your sexuality is often called, 'coming out'.

Some people find that telling someone they trust can help them to feel happier as sometimes keeping something to yourself can feel isolating.

However, never feel under pressure to 'come out'. It's important that you do what's right for you, when it's right for you.

If you do want to tell someone, have a think about who might be the best person for you to tell first. It's probably best if this is someone who will be positive and supportive and who you can trust to keep things confidential (not a gossip!)

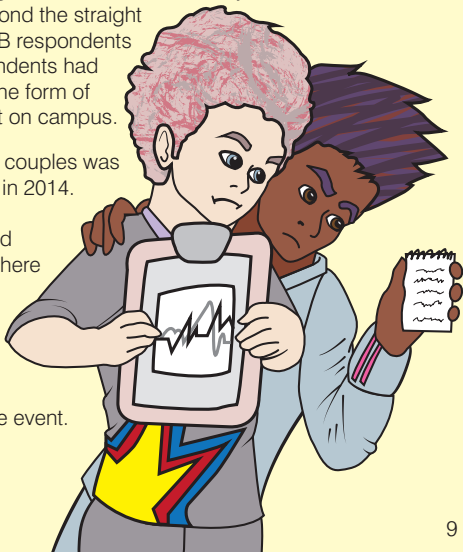
Sometimes you might have to deal with negative reactions but this doesn't mean that you are in the wrong. Even if some people have reacted negatively at first, this doesn't mean they always will be. Some people need time to get used to things. In the long run they may become positive and supportive.

However people react, no-one should ever make you feel as though you are in the wrong because of your sexuality.

If you need some support to come out, get some advice. You could email BYOU, Wigan and Leigh's local LGBT youth group, on b.youproject@wigan.gov.uk
You could call in to see a counsellor at Brook in Wigan, call 01942 483180. Or you could chat online or on the phone to a counsellor at Childline. Go to www.childline.org.uk

A FEW FACTS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW

- Homosexuality was de-criminalised in England and Wales in 1967.
- In 2003 Section 28 and 2A (the banning of the 'promotion of sexuality' by local authorities) was repealed (no longer the law) in England and Wales.
- Civil partnerships were introduced across the UK in 2003.
- In 2003, Employment Rights were amended to include sexual orientation (meaning it became illegal to be discriminated against at work because of your sexual orientation).
- Wigan Borough is estimated to have an LGBT population of around 21,500 according to the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which followed the 2011 census.
- In a survey of 4,000 higher education students by NUS in 2014 called, 'Educating beyond the straight and narrow', 1 in 5 LGB respondents and 1 in 3 trans respondents had experienced at least one form of bullying or harassment on campus.
- Marriage for same sex couples was introduced in England in 2014.
- Between April 2015 and March 2016 in Wigan there were 87 reported hate crimes thought to be motivated because of sexual orientation.
- 2016: First Wigan Pride event.



SOMEONE TO TALK TO

BYOU. Your local LGBTQ+ youth group

To find out more email
b.youproject@wigan.gov.uk

Brook

For free, confidential, sexual health advice for under 25's: 01942 483180

Childline

For anything that's worrying you:
0800 11 11

Samaritans

Like Childline, you can talk to the Samaritans about any worries or concerns you might have. They are there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call free on 116 123

Albert Kennedy Trust

For young LGBTQ+ people if you're homeless: 0161 228 3308

To report a hate crime

Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

Barnardo's

Sexual health advice and guidance in Wigan: 01942 483200



USEFUL WEBSITES

www.wigan.gov.uk/LINC2 Lots of useful information for young people in Wigan and Leigh in the Survival Guide.

www.lgbtyouthnorthwest.org.uk The Proud Trust can help you find LGBT youth groups in the North West and offer advice and useful info.

www.brook.org.uk Free confidential sexual health advice and contraception for under 25's.

www.stonewall.org.uk Stonewall campaigns for the equality of LGBT people across the UK.

www.akt.org.uk The Albert Kennneddy Trust supports homeless young LGBT people in crisis.

www.samaritans.org For advice on lots of different subjects, you can also email jo@samaritans.org

www.childline.org.uk Advice on all subjects that might concern you as a young person.

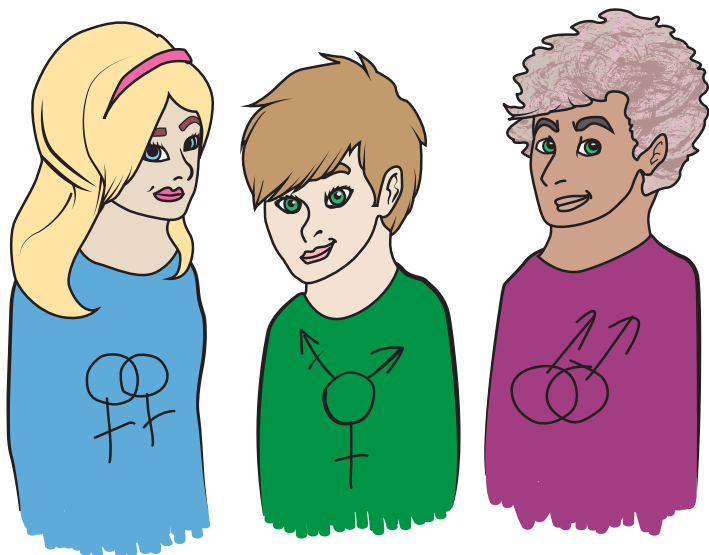
www.thinkuknow.co.uk Advice on how to stay safe online and what to do if anyone makes you feel worried or uncomfortable online.

www.lgbt.foundation Get support, news and information on local groups and events.

www.mermaidsuk.org.uk Gender identity research and education society.and education society.

www.gires.org.uk Gender identity research and education society.





We hope you have found this little guide useful. It has been based on ideas by BYOU, Wigan and Leigh's youth group for LGBTQ+ young people aged under 19. If you would like to find out more about BYOU, email b.youproject@wigan.gov.uk

Thanks to Terri-Leigh for the illustrations featured throughout this booklet.