

The 4 Ps Model: Creating an LGBT-Friendly Service

GLEN - Gay and Lesbian Equality Network

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October 2016

The 4 Ps Model

The 4Ps model is a strategic framework for achieving a service that is inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and one that LGBT people experience as being helpful and supportive. This model was originally developed in Canada in the 1990s and has been adopted by GLEN as a framework to assist services to become more LGBT-friendly. It has four interlinked components which are key building blocks for creating LGBT-inclusive services: public profile; policy and procedures; programmes; and professional development. By addressing all four areas within the 4 Ps model, the overall culture of the service can be enhanced and senior management can ensure practice within the service is LGBT-friendly for service users and their families as well as for staff and volunteers.

1. Public Profile

This refers to the message that the service communicates publicly about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Consider the following questions:

- What message does your service communicate about LGBT people? (no message is a message!)
- How would an LGBT person know the service is LGBT-friendly and that it's safe for them to disclose their LGBT identity?
- How does your service demonstrate its understanding of the needs LGBT people may have when using the service?

It's vital for services to profile publicly that they are LGBT-friendly. This will let prospective LGBT service users know that they're welcome and will receive the same high quality service as everyone else. It will also show that the service is aware that they have LGBT service users and demonstrates that they understand the types of issues LGBT people may experience. GLEN can help your service to enhance its LGBT public profile in a way that is appropriate for your service. Some of the ways this can be achieved is by:

- Indicating on your website that the service is LGBT-friendly. While this can be done in the context of a non-discrimination statement covering all diversity grounds, it is good practice to go beyond this and state clearly that the service is an LGBT-friendly one

- Including LGBT information and images of LGBT people on the service's website and in information for service users (e.g. brochures)
- Displaying an LGBT poster (e.g. LGBT Helpline), a rainbow sticker or copies of LGBT publications/resources, in areas such as waiting rooms
- Partnering with LGBT services/groups and advertising in LGBT media
- Retweeting LGBT tweets and posting LGBT content on Facebook

2. Policy & Procedures

This refers to the service's policies and procedures relevant to LGBT service users and staff. Consider the following questions:

- Does the service have an equality and diversity policy and if so does it make explicit reference to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people?
- Does the service have LGBT-inclusive policies and procedures to ensure compliance with legislative requirements (equal treatment of spouses and civil partners, next-of-kin, involvement of partners in care, etc.)?
- Is there a clear procedure for dealing with homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour, comments or attitudes at all levels of the service?
- Is there a policy in place to ensure transgender people are addressed according to the name and style of address that they choose and for records to reflect this?
- Is there a procedure in place to ensure transgender staff are supported to transition in work?
- Are these policies and procedures communicated to services users, staff, volunteers and implemented throughout the service?

Under the [Equal Status Acts 2000-2015](#), public and private services must ensure non-discrimination and equal access in the provision of their services. To demonstrate compliance with this legislation it is good practice to have a written equality and diversity policy that outlines the nine grounds of the Acts, making explicit reference to LGBT people, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

Under the [Equality Employment Acts 1998-2015](#), employers may not discriminate against employees or potential employees on the basis of any of nine grounds. As with the equality legislation, it is good practice to have a written

employment equality policy that makes explicit reference to LGBT people, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression as well as related LGBT procedures such as supporting trans employees to transition.

Adopting and implementing such policies and procedures communicates your service's commitment to valuing diversity and promoting equality. It also conveys your ethos of being an LGBT-friendly service to staff and service users. GLEN can assist services with the development of LGBT-friendly policies and procedures.

3. Programmes

This refers to work being done by your service to address gaps identified in public profile or policies/procedures as well as other actions to enhance the LGBT-friendliness of the service. Consider the following questions:

- If LGBT people are underrepresented in your service user profile, what could you do to target your service at the LGBT population?
- Are there structures in place to ensure transgender people have a positive experience of using the service and are appropriate supports and referral pathways for transitioning put in place?
- What steps could be taken to ensure that the service is an LGBT-friendly workplace for LGBT staff members

Many services have developed successful programmes to make their service LGBT-friendly and GLEN can assist your service to do the same. Consider the following:

- Establish a project or initiative to so your service caters for the specific needs of your LGBT service users, e.g. targeting mental health support at young LGBT people, structures to support trans people who are transitioning, responding to the needs of married people coming out, supporting older LGBT people isolated due to no contact with family of origin, etc.
- Advertise your service or communicate with the LGBT community via publications (e.g. Gay Community News) and websites (e.g. www.theoutmost.com)
- Include LGBT people/organisations in consultations in the design, delivery and evaluation of your service
- Celebrate the annual LGBT Pride festival in the service

4. Professional Development

This covers the work being done by the service to support staff and volunteers to be LGBT-friendly in their work. Consider the following questions:

- What can your service do to ensure staff/volunteers understand LGBT issues and are aware of the needs LGBT service users may have?
- What can the service do to ensure staff/volunteers are comfortable with LGBT language use and ask questions in a sensitive/appropriate manner?
- What resources can be put in place to support staff/volunteers to be LGBT-friendly and help them cater to the specific needs of LGBT people?

Increasingly services are developing resources to support staff/volunteers to provide an LGBT-friendly and inclusive service. Examples of such professional development are:

- Have an LGBT good practice guide within the service. There are already numerous LGBT guides available in Ireland. For example, GLEN in partnership with the Mental Health Commission published a guide for mental health services and this can be adopted by mental health services as part of implanting the 4 Ps model. You can find it [here](#)
- Provide LGBT awareness training to staff and volunteers. GLEN can provide your service with training that addresses common learning needs, including: LGBT language use, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, research findings on LGBT health and wellbeing issues, good practice guidelines and implementing the 4 Ps model.
- Including LGBT issues as part of CME/CPD activities, in-services, team meetings, seminars/conferences and service publications

Resources to Implement the 4Ps

The following resources will help service to implement the 4Ps model:

Providing a Service to Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People:

- ***For a Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation & Homosexuality***
American Psychological Association, 2008.
www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/orientation.pdf
- ***Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Patients: The Issues for Mental Health Practice:***
College of Psychiatry of Ireland & GLEN, 2011
www.glen.ie/attachments/CPsychI_LGB_Mental_Health_Guide.PDF
- ***Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual People: Guide to Good Practice for Mental Health Nurses:*** Irish Institute of Mental Health Nursing & GLEN, 2010.
www.glen.ie/attachments/IIMHN_LGB_Mental_Health_Guide.PDF
- ***Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual People: A Guide to Good Practice for Social Workers:*** Irish Association of Social Workers & GLEN, 2011.
www.glen.ie/attachments/IASW_LGB_Mental_Health_Guide.PDF
- ***Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation:***
American Psychological Association, 2009.
www.glen.ie/attachments/APA_Therapeutic_Responses.PDF

Providing a Service to Transgender People:

- ***Transgender People, Gender Identity and Gender Expression***
American Psychological Association, 2014.
www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/transgender.pdf
- ***Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People:*** WPATH, 2012.
www.glen.ie/attachments/WPATHstandards.PDF
- ***Good Practice Guidelines for the Assessment and Treatment of Adults with Gender Dysphoria:*** Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2013.
www.gires.org.uk/assets/Medpro-Assets/CR181_Nov15.pdf
- ***Guidance for GPs, Other Clinicians and Health Professionals on the Care of Gender Variant People: Transgender Wellbeing and Healthcare:***
National Health Service, 2008.
www.gires.org.uk/assets/DOH-Assets/pdf/doh-guidelines-for-clinicians.pdf

Irish LGBT Research Reports:

- ***The LGBTIreland Report: National Study of the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex People in Ireland:*** Higgins et al, 2016. Key findings report available at:
www.glen.ie/attachments/The_LGBTIreland_Report_-_Key_Findings.pdf
- ***Speaking from the Margins: Trans Mental Health and Wellbeing in Ireland.*** McNeil et al, 2013
www.teni.ie/attachments/5bdd0cd5-16b6-4ab6-9ee6-a693b37fdbcf.PDF
- ***Visible Lives: Identifying the Experiences and Needs of Older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in Ireland:*** Higgins et al, 2011
www.glen.ie/attachments/Visible_Lives_Report.PDF
- ***LGBT Health: Towards Meeting the Healthcare Needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People:*** Health Service Executive, 2009.
www.glen.ie/attachments/HSE_LGBT_Health_Report.PDF

Resources for LGBT People & Their Families:

- ***Coming Out as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual***
www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/coming_out_-_web.pdf
- ***I think I Might Be Transgender, Now What Do I Do?***
www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/transgender.pdf
- ***Look After Yourself, Look After Your Mental Health: Information for LGBT People***
www.glen.ie/attachments/The_LGBTIreland_Report_-_Key_Findings.pdf
- ***Supporting Parents – BeLonG To Youth Service Information***
www.belongto.org/service.aspx?sectionid=144
- ***Our Daughters and Sons: Questions and Answers for Parents of LGBT Youth and Adults***
www.community.pflag.org/document.doc?id=495

About GLEN

The Gay & Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) is a policy and strategy focussed organisation which aims to deliver ambitious and positive change for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Ireland. Our work programmes address legal recognition and support for same-sex relationships, families and LGBT identities; education; mental health; sexual health; community safety, workplace diversity and immigration.

Odhrán Allen is GLEN's Director of Mental Health. Our mental health programme is part-funded by the Health Service Executive and the National Office for Suicide Prevention who we work closely with. For more information about our work on mental health see [here](#). Odhrán Allen can be contacted directly at odhran@glen.ie

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