



## Rainbow Badges

Rainbow Badges is an initiative that gives staff a way to show that East of England Ambulance Service offers open, non-judgmental and inclusive care for patients and their families, who identify as LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, the + simply means that we are inclusive of all identities, regardless of how people define themselves.)

The Rainbow Badge initiative originated at Evelina London Children's Hospital to make a positive difference by promoting a message of inclusion.

### Sounds good! What do I need to do?

Read all of the information on this page which gives an overview of the issues and why it's important for all healthcare staff to be aware of them. If you want to take part, sign up to receive an NHS rainbow badge to wear at work.

### Why wear a Badge?

By choosing to wear this Badge, you are sending a message that “you can talk to me”. You aren't expected to have the answers to all issues and concerns but you are a friendly ear, and will know how to signpost to the support available.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) patients face inequalities in their experience of NHS healthcare. A recent [Stonewall survey](#) [published November 2018] estimates that one in five LGBT+ people are not out to any healthcare professional about their sexual orientation when seeking general medical care, and one in seven LGBT+ people have avoided treatment for fear of discrimination.

Despite the progress made towards LGBT+ equality in recent years, many LGBT+ people still face significant barriers to leading healthy, happy and fulfilling lives. With high rates of poor mental health and challenges when accessing healthcare services a contributing factor.

We want to disprove attitudes like these...



East of England Ambulance Service places a huge value on equality for both staff and our patients.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights encompass all our aims, objectives and actions addressing inequalities and promoting diversity in healthcare and employment. The key principle of Diversity and Inclusion is that it belongs to everyone and that every individual has the right to be treated with respect and dignity as aligned to our core values.

We are considering the impact with regards to sexual orientation as part of our equality planning. We carry out equality monitoring, including Sexual Orientation as standard practice within EEAST. We continue to develop relationships with our external partners in the LGBT communities.

The Trust has established a LGBT+ Network to provide a forum for Trust Staff and also to look externally at attending National Conferences and also to attend Pride events to both promote the work of the Trust but to also effectively engage with our communities.

Increased awareness of the issues surrounding LGBT+ people when accessing healthcare on the part of NHS staff can make significant differences to LGBT+ people's experience, and, in turn on their physical and mental health.

Simple visible symbols, such as the Rainbow Badge, can make a big difference for those unsure of both themselves, and of the reception they will receive if they disclose their sexuality and/or gender identity.

For an overview of the challenges people can face in relation to sexuality and gender read [Stonewall's LGBT in Britain Health Report](#) which includes a review of key research.

It's not just about wearing a badge, there are simple things we can all do to promote inclusion:

- Use inclusive language in all discussions<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Affirm the identity that a person chooses to use<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Assure confidentiality.

You may be the first person someone has ever felt confident enough to open up to about how they feel. For them, it may be one of the most important moments of their life, and how you respond to it is something they will remember.

### **What to do if a person discloses to you**

The badges aren't designed as a symbol intended to prompt disclosures, but they may prompt a person to disclose information about their own sexuality or gender identity, perhaps for the first time. Wearing a badge doesn't mean you'll have all the answers but most importantly you should be prepared to listen and signpost to relevant information.

### **What to do if you feel you need to escalate a conversation?**

Occasionally you may feel that a person's disclosure means that they need more immediate support, or that they are at risk.

There is always someone to ask for advice and we recommend contacting the LGBT+ network [lgbt@eastamb.nhs.uk](mailto:lgbt@eastamb.nhs.uk) or the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian at [eoasnt.f2su@nhs.net](mailto:eoasnt.f2su@nhs.net) in the first instance.

### **Where to signpost people for support:**

- The LGBT+ staff network can help signpost to a number of available charities for LGBT+ people
- The charity [Stonewall](#) have excellent resources to support LGBT+ people
- [The Albert Kennedy Trust](#) provides support for LGBT+ people who are homeless or living in a hostile home environment.

Got a question about the project? Please contact the LGBT+ Network on [lgbt@eastamb.nhs.uk](mailto:lgbt@eastamb.nhs.uk)