



**Bisexuality means  
attraction to more  
than one gender.**

**But what is it like to  
be bisexual in the  
workplace?**

In the **Civil Service LGBT+ Network**, we want everyone to feel included and valued for who they are. However, we know bisexual civil servants feel less included than their gay and heterosexual peers.

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### Bisexual civil servants

Want a greater sense of community, having felt excluded from both 'straight' and 'LGBT+' spaces.

Feel invisible as a result of a lack of recognition and role models in the workplace and wider society.

Face negative stereotypes, assumptions, a lack of understanding about their identities, and intrusive questions.

Are more likely to experience bullying, discrimination and harassment.

Can face multiple barriers to full participation in the workplace, due to other aspects of their lives and identities in interaction with their sexual orientation.

### As a result, we are

Running dedicated, social and supportive events and an online community space for bisexual civil servants.

Raising the profile of bisexual civil servants, including senior role models, departmental LGBT+ networks, and HR teams to monitor, recognise and support minority sexual identities.

Providing knowledge, information and support to individuals, networks and departments.

Investigating how training and guidance can be developed or improved within the wider Civil Service and also within LGBT+ spaces.

Working with other Civil Service diversity networks and organising joint initiatives.

**Bisexual** means attraction to more than one gender.

**Pansexual** means attraction to all genders or attraction to people regardless of gender.

Some people are comfortable with both labels and may use them interchangeably. Others are only comfortable using one term. It is important to respect a person's identity and how they choose to describe themselves.

# What can Allies do?

Allies avoid making assumptions about a person's sexual orientation or gender.

Allies make space so that the quiet/unnoticed/missing voices can be heard.

Allies consider their own behaviour; ask for feedback, reflect, adapt and learn how to behave in ways that invite people in, instead of pushing them away.

Allies challenge constructively when they see something going wrong – an inappropriate comment or an interaction that is failing to build relationships.

Allies follow the appropriate bullying and harassment procedure if they become aware of biphobic behaviour.

Allies take into account that every bi experience is different and does not solely define a person.

Allies inform themselves and seek sources of information independently rather than assuming minority colleagues are there to inform them.

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**"In society, bi women can often be fetishised. Bi men can be stereotyped as being closeted gay men."**

**"It can be challenging to explain that it's a sexuality that exists beyond the gender of your partner, that you're not flipping between two binary states."**

**"It can be a struggle of being not quite gay enough or not quite straight enough, resulting in exclusion and feeling like you don't quite belong anywhere."**

**"I have been seeing someone of the same sex for quite some time... I am incredibly hesitant to reveal this and constantly feel like I can't be my true self at work."**

**"I feel completely comfortable and have been out from starting in the Civil Service one year ago. Everyone on my team has behaved completely appropriately, as if it is no big deal – which for me, it isn't."**

## Find out more

You can find out more about the Civil Service LGBT+ Network, the work we are doing to support bi+ civil servants, and information about our BiSpace events on our website, [www.civilservice.lgbt](http://www.civilservice.lgbt).

**“If I tell my colleagues I went to visit my girlfriend last weekend, they may assume that I identify as lesbian. It could be uncomfortable to have to add ‘but I’m also attracted to men’, or ‘I’ve also had male partners’, or even ‘but I’m not gay I’m bi’. It’s important to avoid making assumptions about someone’s sexuality if they have not explicitly come out.”**

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**BiSpace is an initiative run by bi+ civil servants, for bi+ civil servants.**

It's a chance to meet fellow bisexual, pansexual, queer and asexual civil servants in different parts of the country, particularly London, Bristol and Manchester.

Sign up to the mailing list at  
[www.civilservice.lgbt/join-us](http://www.civilservice.lgbt/join-us)  
to find out more.

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**“I feel like I’m constantly managing where people are on the basis of my relationship with them – what they know, how comfortable I feel, what version of myself to put out in those different contexts, how safe do I feel with this person, how much of myself do I show? It is exhausting.”**

**“I don’t know why it matters but I don’t want to be misrecognised as something that I am not.”**

**“It’s the repetitive process of coming out to the same people, again and again and again.”**

## Bi Visibility Day

Bi Visibility Day is on 23 September every year. The day celebrates the bisexual community, raises awareness of bisexuality, and highlights biphobia and bi-erasure.

2019 marks the 20th anniversary of the day. Visit [bivisibilityday.com](http://bivisibilityday.com) to find out more.

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