

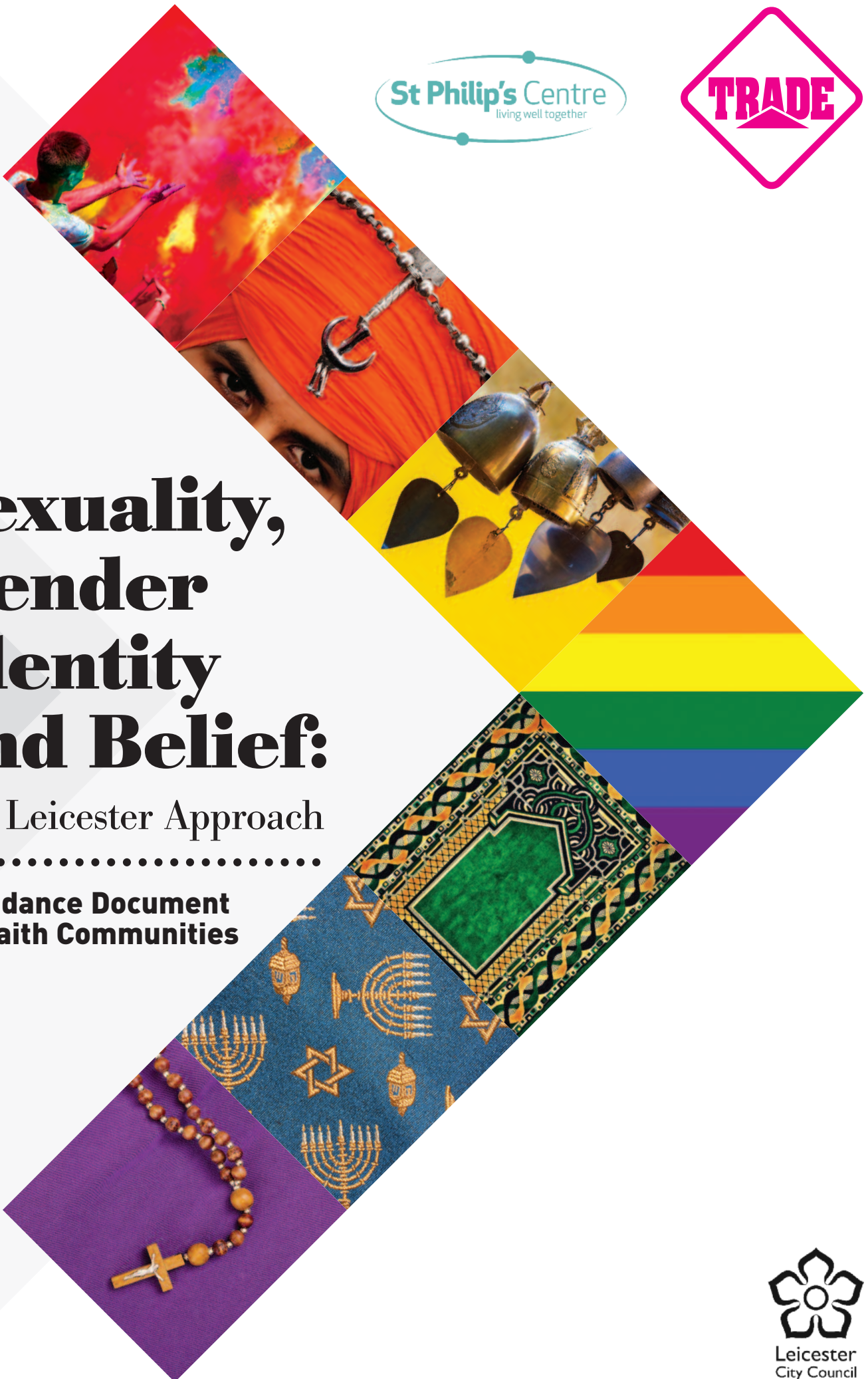


# Sexuality, Gender Identity and Belief:

The Leicester Approach

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**A Guidance Document  
for Faith Communities**



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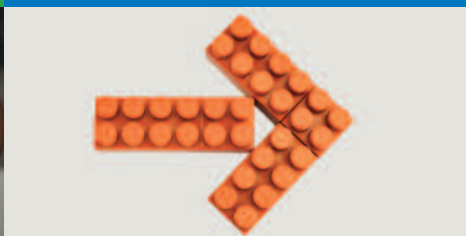
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Trade Sexual Health is a charity supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Trade works to increase the health and well-being of LGB&T individuals and groups in a holistic way.

The St Philip's Centre is an interfaith training and resource centre, based in Leicester which works across the East Midlands. The St Philip's Centre enables people to understand the impact of lived religious belief on daily life.

Trade and St Philip's Centre first met in 2014 to discuss faith and sexuality following the recommendations from the

Rainbow Asian Project (RAP).<sup>1</sup> RAP was a project to identify the health needs of South Asian gay and bisexual men.

1 Rainbow Asian Project (RAP) – Understanding Your World (2011) - Trade Sexual Health & Lesbian & Gay Foundation; <http://www.tradesexualhealth.com/download.php?i=994&f=file>



# Introduction



**The creation of the Equality Act 2010 ensured that everybody was legally protected from discrimination both within the context of employment as well as wider society.** The Equality Act ensured that characteristics including age, disability, race, sex, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment were protected.

Although these protected characteristics can be looked at individually, everybody can associate with more than one. Some of these cross-overs or intersections are spoken about more openly than others or have more of an association with one another.

One intersection that is often overlooked is that of religion, faith or belief and of different minority sexual orientations, including lesbian, gay and bisexual.

Another one of these intersections explores those of different gender identities who may fall under the transgender or trans umbrella term, and who may also have been through, or about to go through, gender reassignment, alongside religion, faith or belief.

Along with these intersections, what is often forgotten is the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGB&T) people of faith there are within faith communities. Some of the issues they have to tackle include having to reconcile with their faith and sexual orientation and/or gender identity, as well as facing stigma from both the wider LGB&T communities and faith communities.

Funding by Leicester City Council's Community Engagement Fund allowed Trade Sexual Health and St Philip's Centre to create the Sexuality, Gender Identity and Belief project, allowing these intersections to be explored further.

There were a number of aims for the project, with one of them being to bring together individuals and communities to discuss LGB&T and faith issues. With this in mind, it shaped the format of the project and the different events that were created in order to create this guidance document.

- A launch event for the project happened in November 2016 to introduce the project. The event set out what the project proposed to achieve and provided an opportunity to present previous research by Sarah-Jane Page on Religion Youth and Sexuality<sup>2</sup>, which was the inspiration for this project. The event also provided an opportunity to hear stories from LGB&T people of faith, about their journeys and struggles of reconciling their sexuality, gender identity and faith. Information and ideas for the guidance document were also gathered here.
- Between March to April 2017, several shared conversations were held to explore some of the ideas raised from the launch event. It also allowed us to gain insight into what kind of support was already being given to LGB&T people of faith and the work happening within different communities. These conversations provided an opportunity to shape the guidance document and what it would contain.
- St Philip's Centre arranged one-to-one conversations with a number of faith community leaders from different faith backgrounds to understand more about the attitudes towards LGB&T people of faith from different faith backgrounds. The conversations also allowed an opportunity to gather suggestions towards what can be done to improve support for LGB&T people of faith.

Each public event provided the opportunity to bring people together. Here we met a diverse group of passionate individuals willing to share their knowledge or experiences to help shape what the guidance document would contain. All the public events had a safe space agreement in place, ensuring that everybody was free from intimidation or harassment, resulting from prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of all of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics, but also socio-economic status, ideology or culture, and any other form of distinction.

There were a number of challenges along the way, but there has been a lot of learning which has helped to further develop this guidance document in the best way possible.

This guidance document can be used by faith communities, organisations and faith community leaders to discuss, explore and action how to make communities, groups and places of worship more LGB&T inclusive. It can also be used by LGB&T people of faith who want to work in collaboration with their faith communities and current places of worship.

Beyond faith communities, LGB&T organisations can use this guidance document to start building bridges with local faith community groups.

This guidance document hopes to provide the foundations to enable future work to improve relations between Leicester's LGB&T communities and its diverse faith communities, groups and organisations.

<sup>2</sup> Religion, Youth and Sexuality (RYS): Selected Key Finding from a Multi-Faith Exploration (2011) - Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip, Michael Keenan and Sarah-Jane Page: [http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/uploads/docs/2011\\_03/1298990240\\_rys-research-report.pdf](http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/uploads/docs/2011_03/1298990240_rys-research-report.pdf)



# Welcoming Communities



**This was a predominant theme throughout the project, whether as part of a shared conversation or more informally at the launch conference.**

What does it mean if your place of worship says “we are inclusive” or “we are a welcoming community?” How do you ensure that someone visiting your place of worship for the first time knows that it is a safe space to be who they are? And why is it important to be visibly welcoming?

Whilst most of the stories shared were positive experiences (see Zoe’s Story), there were also useful suggestions about what might signal an inclusive and friendly welcome (see Faye’s Story) for LGB&T people of faith – or no faith!

## Zoe’s Story

“A friend of mine was walking along the street: she’d just moved in and saw a big sign outside a church saying ‘all are welcome’. So she just thought she’d test it and went in on the Sunday and now she’s very much a part of that community, and they meant it. She was welcomed in, and there was joy and celebration because of that ... it’s great when there is that acceptance, when you are accepted for who you are.”

## Faye’s Story

“People seem to use the word ‘inclusive’ outside or before you get in the building, because otherwise – without that cue – people may sometimes be too frightened to go in. So there’s some sort of rainbow flag, or the word inclusive, so you know that it’s a safe space and you can expect a welcome ... And everyone may get the same bad welcome! But at least you know it’s safe to go in there!”

## Case Study: Rainbow Flag

“There is nothing that really says everyone is really welcome here. Even though you have all sorts of people there in the Gurdwara, there is nothing that really keeps everyone there, keeps them together. There is nothing that takes into account the people that go. There is nothing to take into account that this person might be lesbian or gay or trans. There should be something, even just the tiniest little thing. Even something as straightforward as having a rainbow sign up. Not that everyone needs to dress in rainbow or anything. But having a sign, or someone available to offer support and guidance would be good.”

## Questions For Discussion

1. Imagine you want to visit a place of worship for the first time. What would put you at ease and make you feel welcome?
2. Is it important to be part of a certified, inclusive faith movement (such as Inclusive Church or Imaan) for your place of worship? Or can you be visibly welcoming in other ways?
3. Does your religion / particular denomination have official teachings which might make it difficult for LGB&T people of faith to feel welcome? In what ways are you able to respond to this to ensure that it is representative of everybody, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity?

Further practical tips can be found in the “How to Make Your “Faith Space” More LGB&T Friendly” section of the guidance document.

# Things People Say



**“Why aren’t you married yet?”** A question that most single people have been asked at one point or another, and one which is loaded with cultural norms and expectations (see ‘Harpreet’s Story’). But it’s not just about tricky questions – it’s also about the language we choose to use. Poor language choices can be upsetting, especially if it occurs in a place of worship which has previously promised to be safe and

welcoming. The case study below (‘Funeral Speak’) explores this in a little more detail. During the course of our research several people said that unsuitable vocabulary was sometimes used in reference to people who are LGB&T (see ‘Comments from Participants’). Consciously choosing to tackle the use of such language within our own faith communities marks an important and positive step forward for LGB&T inclusivity.

## Harpreet’s Story

“They’re always asking why you’re not married, and all my younger cousins are married, so you’re the odd one, you should be married, blah blah blah! And no-one even entertains the thought of asking me why [I’m not married]. Or even thinking that maybe I’m gay! But they daren’t ask. So I just continue to live as I do. In fact, nobody questions me anymore because I’m too old – which is a positive!”

## Comments From Participants

- Workplace: “There was the box to tick for sexual orientation, and I remember the first time we used it at a meeting, somebody said where’s the box for normal?”
- A place of worship: “The idea that someone was ‘created wrongly’ – appalling language and way of looking at being transgender, but that’s the language [some churches] use.”

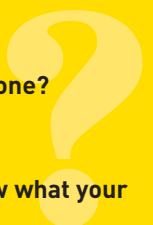
## Case Study: Funeral Speak

Calling someone’s partner ‘their friend’ is just one illustration of how language can be used insensitively during a funeral. Another comment was made that when a partner dies, “I want to be able to go to a person of faith and have a conversation about that and not be faced with ‘that must be awful but I don’t really know how to deal with what you are going through’. Well, actually I’m grieving for the person that I love”. It’s not just about the language we use in faith contexts; it’s also about making sure that LGB&T communities feel they can talk to a religious leader about their grief without having to explain their relationships, sexuality or gender at the same time.



## Questions For Discussion

1. In your faith community, could someone be open about their gender and sexuality at a funeral of a loved one?
2. Take a look at the “Comments From Participants” box on this page and discuss the language used.
3. Harpreet’s Story – Is it implied here that marriage is between two people of the opposite sex? Do you know what your faith community’s position on same-sex marriage is, either nationally or locally?



# Visibility



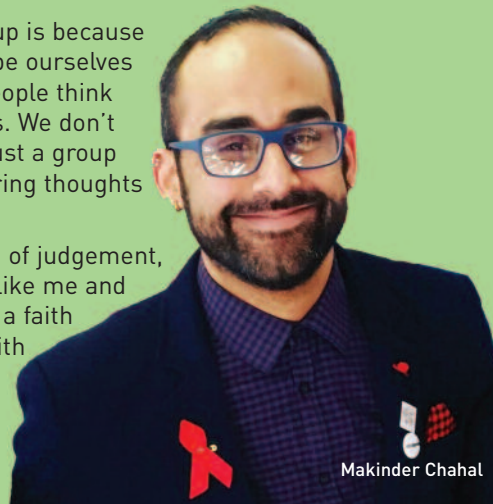
**Visibility here could mean two things: one, visibility of LGB&T communities in a place of worship or two, the visibility of religious leaders who have 'come out' as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.** It is a sad fact that for some people, coming out within their own faith context is simply not an option – this is related to the first two themes in this guidance document, as well as what a community teaches. The reflections below should give some pause for thought. However, there are people who feel safe in coming out within their own faith communities and this visibility is important. Ralph's story below speaks of growing up during the 1980s when there were hardly any role models for him to look to when he was questioning his own sexuality. Thankfully, LGB&T communities are more visible within faith contexts than they were thirty years ago, and there are more support groups around too (see the case study on Dosti opposite).

## Case Study: Dosti

Makinder Chahal, Trade's Health Promotion and Intersectionality Lead, runs Dosti, a social support group for South Asian and Middle Eastern people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual or who are questioning their sexuality. The group meets once a month and provides a safe space to share common issues, make friends and get involved in cultural activities and celebrations. Participants commented:

"The reason I came to the Dosti group is because it is a safe place where we can just be ourselves and not have to worry about what people think because of our sexuality or gender/s. We don't need to talk about our feelings it's just a group of people chilling, laughing and sharing thoughts and experiences." – Hindu, 21

"I came to the Dosti group to be free of judgement, to be me, and to meet other people like me and connect with others who come from a faith background. It didn't matter what faith background, just as long as they could understand what some of the struggles of being a gay person of faith are." – Sikh, 28



Makinder Chahal

## Reflections

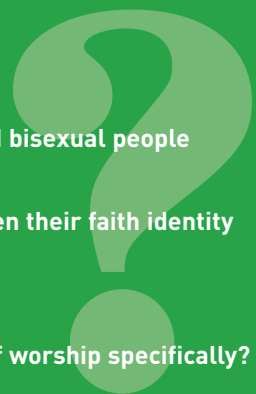
- "To be honest, I don't know how LGBTQI people of faith actually manage to find themselves places to worship."
- "I can be gay with my friends or even my family, but can I be gay at church? So there's that sort of... fracture in your personality."
- "My partner's very robust and very self-assured about his sexuality. But even he's struggled at times remaining within his faith."

## Ralph's Story

"When I was 15 years old, growing up in a sort of Christian background, I thought 'well I think I'm probably gay but I know it's wrong because I'm told it's wrong'. And in the early part of the 1980s, there were those big AIDS posters... Visible role models just weren't there for me. I did marry [a woman], but now I am openly gay in the same church I was married in... which is a bit of an odd transformation."

## Questions For Discussion

1. Why do you think LGB&T visibility is important in a place of worship?
2. One area of discussion which emerged from the shared conversations was how lesbian, gay and bisexual people were much more visible than Trans people. Do you agree with this statement? Why/why not?
3. How might your faith community help in making sure that people don't feel a disconnect between their faith identity and their LGB&T identity?
4. Is it problematic for faith leaders to be visibly LGB&T in your religious context? Why/why not?
5. Why would someone feel the need to hide their sexuality or gender identity within your place of worship specifically? And what effect might this have on their mental health?





# Faith Journeys



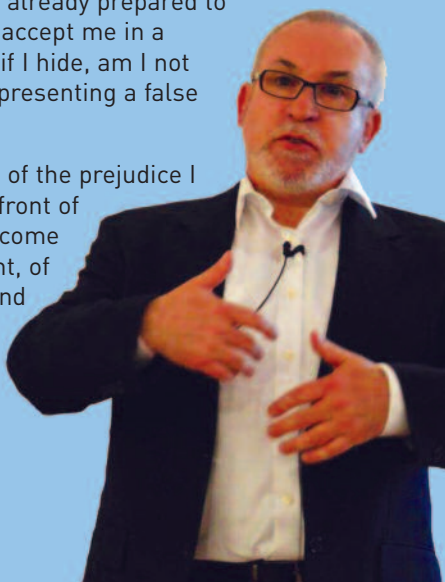
**Every person of faith has a 'faith journey' irrespective of if they were born into a community, converted or actively identified as a person of faith from a young age.** However, for some people their faith journey is also entwined with a journey of discovering/accepting their gender identity or sexual orientation. The 'reflections' section contains a small range of comments about faith journeys, from feeling excluded to being visible. None of these faith journeys should be considered 'better' or 'the right' way but simply reminds us that being an LGB&T person of faith isn't a 'one size fits all experience'. The case study below comes from Rabbi Mark Solomon, who reflects on his faith journey and being an openly gay Rabbi in Progressive Judaism. 'Gill's Story' talks about her experience with three different religious communities.

## Case Study: Rabbi Mark Solomon

"It is much easier now to be gay than twenty years ago, just as it was much easier for me then than for the generations before who were persecuted and criminalised. Even so, to come out is still an act of dissent from the tyranny of the majority, and from the weight of religious tradition that still crushes so many human spirits.

Even though I was outed in the Jewish press years ago and have lived an openly gay life, I am still faced with the decision whether to come out in all sorts of situations, and especially in interfaith encounters. With Christians it's not usually very difficult, but encountering Muslims I find myself asking: will coming out fatally compromise this moment of encounter, this possibility of friendship and reconciliation? Should I hide something essential about myself so that this person in front of me, who is already prepared to take the risk of encountering a Jew, can accept me in a solidarity of faith and tradition? And yet, if I hide, am I not compromising the encounter myself, by presenting a false or partial face?

I am ashamed of my own cowardice, and of the prejudice I nurture by assuming that the Muslim in front of me will relate to me more negatively if I come out. So the dance of solidarity and dissent, of sameness and difference, of belonging and individuality, dances on and on, in the great decisions of our lives and in the moments of our human interaction day by day."



## Reflections

- "There are people whose journey with God is being put on hold because they feel that – just because they're who they are – they wouldn't be acceptable."
- "It's only recently that some members of the congregation know I'm gay, but I've not had a frank conversation with the parish priest. So there's that discomfort there."
- "If the particular faith that you belong to is a safe, open, welcoming environment then actually you can be yourself, you can be part of that community."

## Gill's Story

"I'm lesbian...and have struggled throughout my life with faith. I started out Christian and moved on to Buddhism where I found more acceptance. Later I joined the Quakers, and I go to a Methodist church too... I joined Quakers because it's a halfway house between Christianity and meditation, because it's a lot of silence. And they are, on the surface to me, very open around sexuality."

## Questions For Discussion

1. How might coming out as LGB&T impact a person's faith journey?
2. Do you think that some religions are more welcoming of LGB&T communities than others? Why/why not?
3. If someone came out as LGB&T in your place of worship, would that be affirming or damaging for them? Why?



# Input From Faith Community Leaders



**Approaches were made to a number of individuals within the faith communities of Leicester to ascertain their views in relation to sexuality, gender identity and belief.** It was stressed that these interviews would be anonymised. No one individual can speak for the breadth of any religious tradition, and the intention was not to gain a definitive view of the topic, but rather a single snapshot that would inform how the project might be developed.

Individuals of Bahai, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh faith were contacted, and one-to-one conversations took place with six individuals: a Buddhist; a Christian; a Hindu; a Jew; a Muslim and an Ahmadi Muslim. It is unclear whether the Bahai, Jain and Sikh individuals who were approached were unable to meet because they were not sufficiently organised / interested in the project, or whether they were in some way opposed or adverse to the project. It was noticeable that there was some difficulty in getting a member of the Muslim community to agree to speak about the topic. A number of individuals were approached, none of whom were prepared to speak about sexuality, gender identity and belief from a Muslim perspective. This may indicate the particular cultural and religious sensitivities that this particular community faces in relation to this topic.

## Key Findings

### Faiths have very different perspectives

The Buddhist commented that Buddhists welcome everyone as they are, and there were both male and female same-sex couples within their wider community. By contrast the Christian explained that they knew of individuals within their community who had “indicated curiosity about whether they as individuals had LGB&T identity but had retracted for fear of reprisal from the community.” These two contrasting examples are not included to compare the two particular faiths or suggest that one is better than the other. Rather it is to indicate that there is no single “faith” position on sexuality, gender identity and belief issues. There is a wide variety of views between faiths and within each faith, but there are also faiths that make more of an issue of sexuality and gender identity and those which are less concerned with them.

### Differences between “official” and “personal” stances

It was noticeable in some conversations that the individuals distinguished between their personal views and the “official” views of their faith. Personally these individuals did not judge or condemn LGB&T people even though the orthodox/conservative position within their faith community did prohibit lesbian, gay and bisexual sexual relations and had negative views in relation to their gender identity and trans status.

This raises an important point about the difficult position faith community leaders may find themselves in. They may want to both be pastorally accommodating to LGB&T people of faith, but also want to uphold the official teaching of their faith community. Their relationship with their peers who are also leaders in the same faith community is also relevant here. It could be argued that these leaders simply need to accept the changes in social attitudes and religious understandings that have taken place over recent years. But change within religious communities is often slow and may not occur at all. Moreover, it is debatable whether doctrinal change can be externally enforced.







## What connects or divides us

The aim of this project is not to enforce a particular understanding of sexuality, gender identity and belief. Rather it is to consider different perspectives, encourage dialogue and to help people to learn to live well together despite their differences.

Participants recognised the value of encounters between heterosexual people of faith and LGB&T people of faith and no faith. It was noted that opposition to and condemnation of LGB&T people is different when it is entirely theoretical and when real people are involved.

A four stage proposal of engagement was suggested in relation to the Muslim community. This could relatively easily be adapted for use in other communities as well:

1. Establish whether homosexuality is inherent or whether it is a lifestyle choice. The issue is that for many conservative Muslims, LGB&T is understood as a lifestyle choice; one that is bad and to be rejected. This is where the discussion must focus in the early stages. Once it is established that whilst there are choices that LGB&T people make in relation to their lifestyle, these choices are not the sum of their identity. The discussion can then move on to the second stage.
2. If all agree that being LGB&T is, at least to some extent, inherent, the discussion turns to the divine intention in creating: is God fundamentally loving or fundamentally concerned with testing and trapping humanity? The inference is that God is the former, which moves the discussion to stage three.
3. If God is the compassionate and merciful (ar-rahman a-rahim), then they are not wanting to test or play with people.
4. Have we therefore misunderstood the texts in relation to homosexuality or misunderstood God? The former option is preferable, suggesting the texts are more focused on the use of force and power to dominate; of sexual abuse more than of sexuality or sexual identity. The point is that if God is fundamentally loving and not setting out to test and trap people, then the texts which appear to condemn people because of who they are must be understood in a different, contextually localised sense.

The individual recognises that progress with such conversations will be slow, and even having the conversation is a big step. Moreover it should be noted that not everyone would be persuaded by the logic of these arguments. There are some Christian groups, for example, who agree that being lesbian, gay or bisexual is not simply a lifestyle choice, but is inherent and at the same time argue that those who are "same sex attracted" should be sexually abstinent. They might therefore agree with steps one to three above, but draw radically different conclusions in relation to step four. Other Christians would wholeheartedly agree with all four steps. As was noted above, there is no single position within any faith community in relation to matters of sexuality, gender identity and belief.

## What Can Be Done?

Sexuality, gender identity and belief are all very personal and very complex. There are no simple answers to how these different aspects of our identity interact with each other. The six conversations conducted with faith community leaders as part of this project have given an indication of the range of perspectives and challenging issues to be faced in developing a truly equal, welcoming, fully inclusive society. There is much more to be done in extending the scope and scale of these conversations.

We suggest two clear action points for faith communities:

1. **Discuss these issues openly as a community;** and
2. **Create safe spaces for leaders to work through their own understandings and how they wish to respond to these complex and emotive issues.**

# How to Make Your “Faith Space” More LGB&T Friendly

**Sexual orientation and gender identity are parts of what makes someone a whole person.** For LGB&T people of faith, it can often be difficult to reconcile their sexuality or trans status with religion. From the feedback of the participants during this project, over half of the LGB&T people of faith who would like to engage with religion have been reluctant to do so, or have decreased their participation in religious activities, as a direct result of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This is due to interaction of faith community leaders, non-acceptance and places of faith being very heterosexual and heterosexist. These experiences have a direct impact on their health, wellbeing and personal belief.

It all starts with awareness. Often people are unsure how to support their LGB&T congregation or individuals in a meaningful way. These guidelines are compiled as a result of the recommendations from LGB&T people of faith who attended the Sexuality, Gender Identity and Belief project discussions. The points aim to give faith community leaders/communities the knowledge they need to create a climate in which LGB&T people feel safe, valued and part of their faith/spiritual communities. Through inclusive policies, languages and safe spaces, faith community leaders/communities/places of worship have the power to build an environment that is truly welcoming to all people regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

## Language

1. Pay attention to how people describe their own sexual orientation, gender, partners and relationships and use the same choice of language.
2. When talking to an individual, group or congregation don't assume everybody has the same sexual orientation or gender assigned at birth. Use terms such as partner(s), rather than male, female, he or she.
3. Quite often people make assumptions about marriage and speak to congregations and individuals as man and woman relationships. Be mindful of this heterosexist ideology and the impact it has on LGB&T people.
4. Ask open questions and use gender neutral language, e.g. 'do you live with anyone?' instead of 'do you live with your husband/wife?' You might also use words like 'partner'.
5. Don't make assumptions about people's bodies. Someone's gender identity doesn't necessarily tell you what their body is like.
6. Many languages use terms to describe LGB&T people which may be derogatory or offensive. If you are using other terms be aware of the cultural context you are using.

## Statement of Intent

1. Display a statement of inclusivity in public areas. Let people know that discrimination will not be tolerated in your place of worship/community or faith. For example 'we welcome everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, faith/belief or sexual orientation'. Make sure staff and volunteers know what this means and what action to take if they see or encounter someone who has experienced any form of discrimination.
2. Ensure your equality and diversity statements are on display, visible and publicised.
3. Create gender neutral toilets; Some trans people may be uncomfortable using gendered toilets. Toilets need to be included when creating inclusive spaces. One way to create gender neutral toilets could be by replacing the signage with a non-gendered sign. For example, a sign that reads 'gender neutral toilets' or 'toilets'. If toilets contain urinals, the sign could read 'gender neutral toilets with urinal' or 'toilets with urinal'.
4. Be sure to provide and create opportunities for staff, volunteers, service users, congregations and children to learn about why gender-neutral bathrooms are important.



## Safe Space

1. Create a Safe Space Policy which talks about a space being welcoming, respectful and comfortable with being who they are. Some examples are:
  - a. Listen to each other
  - b. Allow everyone to have a chance to speak
  - c. Respect peoples limits and boundaries
  - d. Think about the impact of words and actions upon others
  - e. Respect people and their faith/belief
2. Remember to include in the Safe Space Policy what will happen if the policy is broken by participants, staff and volunteers.
3. When talking about the policy to deal with a tricky situation, remember to speak about the behaviour rather than the person, making sure that while people who breach it are asked to take responsibility for their actions, they are not characterised as bad people.
4. Consider working with people who use the services to come up with a policy, making sure to include LGB&T people and people from other equality strands in the discussion.

### Remember...

These suggestions are by no means exhaustive. They have been compiled as a starting point based on the discussions and conversations of the Sexuality, Gender Identity & Belief project. Further efforts to build on and enhance this work is essential if we want LGB&T people of faith to feel accepted in their faith communities.

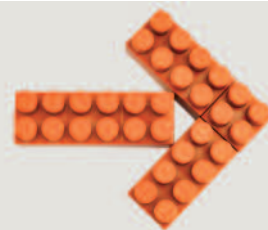
## Visibility

1. Having representation from LGB&T people of faith, same sex relationships and different gender identities on publicity sends out a great message that you welcome everybody. Ensure you have a diverse range of LGB&T people in your publicity – remember, not all LGB&T people are white or able-bodied.
2. Display certain signs such as the rainbow flag to show visibility of your commitment to creating a welcoming space.
3. Support LGB&T communities by advertising in LGB&T publications, holding LGB&T events such as LGB&T history month and Pride. Work in partnership with LGB&T organisations and groups.





# Taking Things Forward

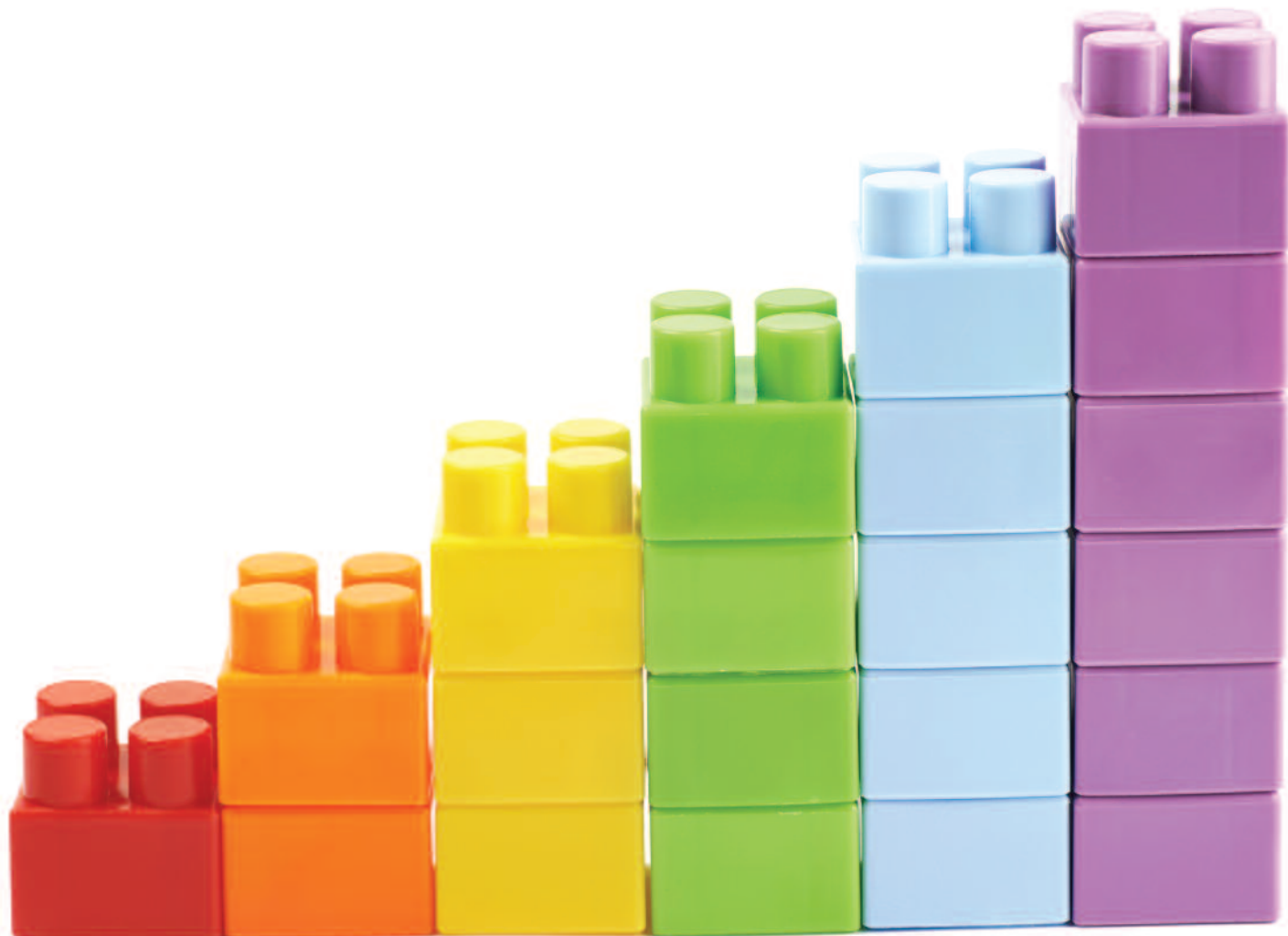


**This guidance document has set out some of the complex issues around sexuality, gender identity and belief.** There is no one size fits all solution. We can only have individual experiences.

The four themes from the conversations: welcoming community, what people say, visibility and faith journeys, provide a framework for discussing sexuality, gender identity and belief. Taken together with the comments from the faith community leaders, the range of views within faith communities and between different people of faith becomes clear. Although the problems are complex, it does not mean we should be passive in response: there is a clear need for action. Some of the suggestions for what to do next can be enacted easily. Others may take more time but that is no reason not to begin. Every journey starts with an initial step.

This project has been both rewarding and challenging. The guidance document demonstrates the scale of the challenge but also provides some suggestions as to what might come next. The resources section provides a range of support options for developing the work.

The next step is for this issue to become a topic of conversation within and between faith communities. This may be as simple as two or three friends having a cup of tea together whilst they share their views on what they have read. Or it may be more formal, involving a board of trustees (or equivalent) at a place of worship engaging in an in-depth discussion, using the guidance document as a stimulus for more detailed reflection. Whatever form it takes, we should not remain silent: we must take action.



# Links & Resources



## Multi-Faith Support

Stonewall: [www.stonewall.org.uk/search/faith](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/search/faith)

Love Thy Neighbour: What people of faith really think about homosexuality (Stonewall):  
[www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/Love\\_Thy\\_Neighbour\\_\\_2008\\_.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/Love_Thy_Neighbour__2008_.pdf)

Working with faith communities (Stonewall): [www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/working\\_with\\_faith\\_communities.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/working_with_faith_communities.pdf)

Faithbook, A Guide to Faith and Spirituality for LGB&T people: [www.lgbt.foundation/downloads/208](http://www.lgbt.foundation/downloads/208)

A Question of Faith: Homosexuality and different faiths (BBC): [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01w6th1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01w6th1)  
with factsheet: [www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/Question%20of%20Faith%20Sexuality%20BBC%202014.pdf](http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/Question%20of%20Faith%20Sexuality%20BBC%202014.pdf)

Faith and Sexuality Project (Archived): [www.web.archive.org/web/20141218115500/http://faithandsexuality.co.uk/](http://www.web.archive.org/web/20141218115500/http://faithandsexuality.co.uk/)

Faith, Gender and Sexuality: A Toolkit (Sexuality, Poverty and Law Programme): [www.spl.ids.ac.uk/sexuality-gender-faith](http://www.spl.ids.ac.uk/sexuality-gender-faith)

Facilitating Dialogue on Faith and Sexuality in Further Education (NUS):  
[www.nusconnect.org.uk/learning-resources/faith-and-belief/good-campus-relations/faith-and-sexuality](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/learning-resources/faith-and-belief/good-campus-relations/faith-and-sexuality)  
with YouTube video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBaTyF5KskI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBaTyF5KskI)

Guidance for FE and HE - Managing the interface: sexual orientation and faith:  
[www.sgforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/managing\\_the\\_interface.pdf](http://www.sgforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/managing_the_interface.pdf)

## LGB&T Support – Local and National

Trade Sexual Health: [www.tradesexualhealth.com](http://www.tradesexualhealth.com)

Leicester LGBT Centre: [www.leicesterlgbtcentre.org](http://www.leicesterlgbtcentre.org)

Stonewall: [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

Friends and Family of Lesbian and Gay People (FFLAG): [www.fflag.org.uk](http://www.fflag.org.uk)

## Trans Support

Twilight People: [www.twilightpeople.com](http://www.twilightpeople.com)

The Sibyls - Christian Spirituality Group for Transgender People: [www.sibyls.gndr.org.uk](http://www.sibyls.gndr.org.uk)

Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES): [www.gires.org.uk](http://www.gires.org.uk)

Gender Intelligence: [www.genderedintelligence.co.uk](http://www.genderedintelligence.co.uk)

## Bahá'í

Gay/Lesbian Baha'i Story Project: [www.gaybahai.net](http://www.gaybahai.net)

Being Baha'i and Gay: [www.susangammage.com/being-bahai-and-gay](http://www.susangammage.com/being-bahai-and-gay)

Huffington Post article: "Brokenhearted Bahá'is: LGBTs Rejected by Their Faith":  
[www.huffingtonpost.com/nicholas-snow/brokenhearted-bahais-lgbt\\_b\\_7111164.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nicholas-snow/brokenhearted-bahais-lgbt_b_7111164.html)

Love and Legalism – a tale of two Baha'i communities: [www.justabahai.wordpress.com/category/lgbt](http://www.justabahai.wordpress.com/category/lgbt)

## Christianity

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement: [www.onebodyonefaith.org.uk](http://www.onebodyonefaith.org.uk)

Quest LGBTI+ Catholics: [www.questgaycatholic.org.uk](http://www.questgaycatholic.org.uk)

Living Out: [www.livingout.org](http://www.livingout.org)

LGBT Catholics Younger Adults Group (YAG): [www.lgbtcatholicsyag.org.uk](http://www.lgbtcatholicsyag.org.uk)

Inclusive Church: [www.inclusive-church.org.uk](http://www.inclusive-church.org.uk) / [www.inclusive-church.org.uk/links](http://www.inclusive-church.org.uk/links)

Two:23 Network: [www.two23.net](http://www.two23.net) and Courage: [www.courage.org.uk](http://www.courage.org.uk)

## **Christianity** continued

Accepting Evangelicals: [www.acceptingevangelicals.org](http://www.acceptingevangelicals.org)

Evangelical Fellowship for Lesbian and Gay Christians: [www.eflgc.org.uk](http://www.eflgc.org.uk)

OuterSpace – Affirming LGB&T Christians: [www.outerspacelgbt.org.uk](http://www.outerspacelgbt.org.uk)

## **Hinduism**

Galva-108 – Gay and Lesbian Vaishnava Association: [www.galva108.org](http://www.galva108.org)

Hindu American Foundation: [www.hafsite.org/media/pr/haf-policy-brief-hinduism-and-homosexuality](http://www.hafsite.org/media/pr/haf-policy-brief-hinduism-and-homosexuality)

## **Humanist**

LGBT Humanists: [www.galha.org](http://www.galha.org)

## **Islam**

Hidayah Muslim LGBT: [www.hidayahlgbt.com](http://www.hidayahlgbt.com)

Imaan Muslim LGBTQ: [www.imaanlondon.wordpress.com](http://www.imaanlondon.wordpress.com)

Muslim Institute blog from Imaan Conference in 2012:

[www.musliminstitute.org/blogs/culture/muslims-building-bridges-sexuality-diversity-and-faith-shanon-shah](http://www.musliminstitute.org/blogs/culture/muslims-building-bridges-sexuality-diversity-and-faith-shanon-shah)

Inclusive Mosque Initiative: [www.inclusivemosqueinitiative.org](http://www.inclusivemosqueinitiative.org)

## **Jehovah's Witnesses**

A Common Bond Worldwide support network for people who are or were associated with Jehovah's Witnesses and are part of the LGB&T community: [www.gayxjw.org/](http://www.gayxjw.org/)

## **Judaism**

Rainbow Jews: [www.rainbowjews.com](http://www.rainbowjews.com)

Keshet: [www.keshetuk.org](http://www.keshetuk.org)

Jewish Gay and Lesbian Group: [www.jglg.org.uk](http://www.jglg.org.uk)

## **Quakers**

Quaker Lesbian and Gay Fellowship: [www.qlgf.org.uk](http://www.qlgf.org.uk)

## **Sikhism**

Sarbat LGBT Sikhs: [www.sarbat.net](http://www.sarbat.net)

## **Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group (UKLGIG) – [www.uklgig.org.uk](http://www.uklgig.org.uk)

Pride Without Borders – City of Sanctuary (Leicester): <https://lgbt.cityofsanctuary.org/>

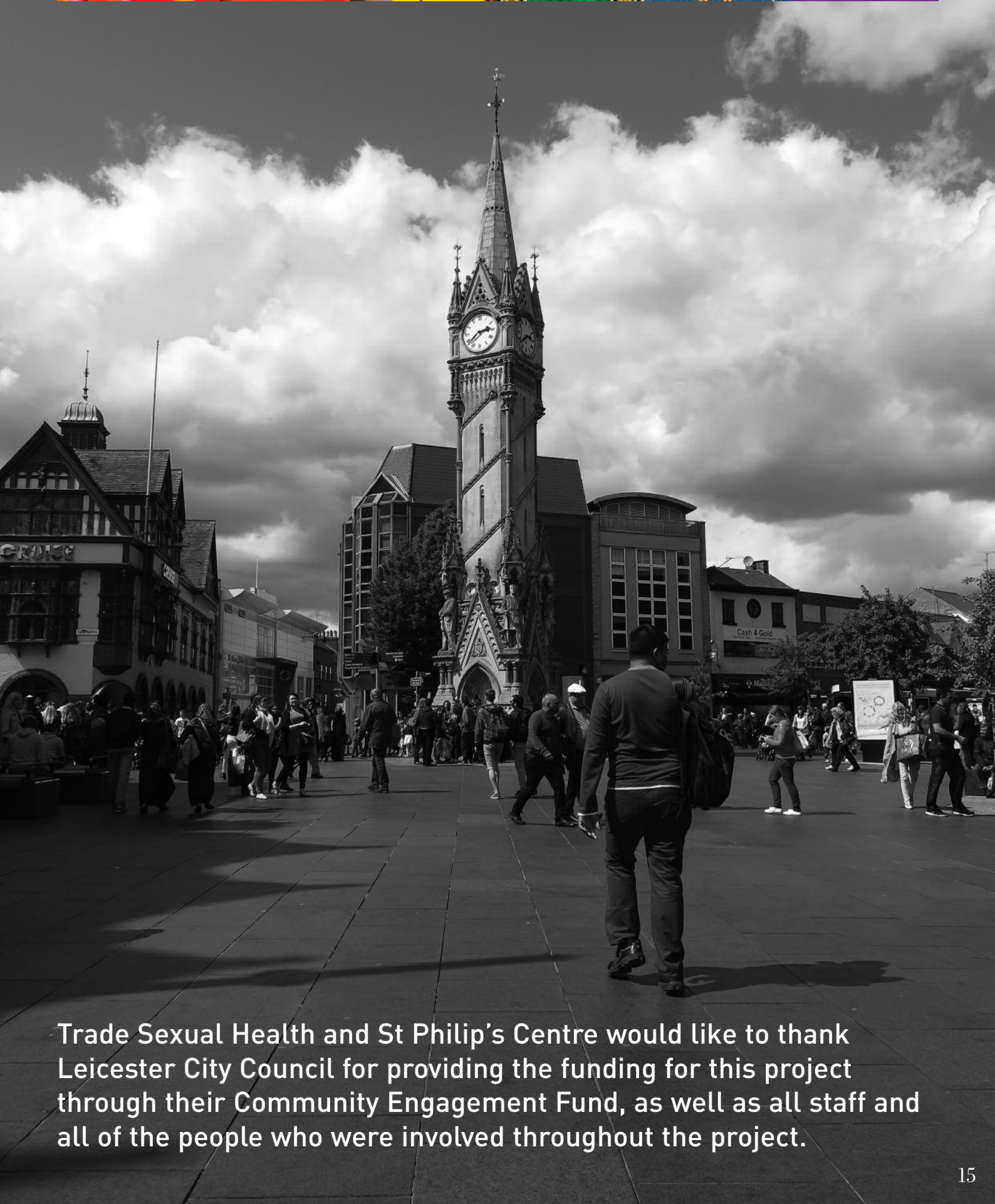
## **International**

Eliminating discrimination against children and parents based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Unicef):

[www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/Current\\_Issues\\_Paper-\\_Sexual\\_Identification\\_Gender\\_Identity.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/Current_Issues_Paper-_Sexual_Identification_Gender_Identity.pdf)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations): [www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html](http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html)





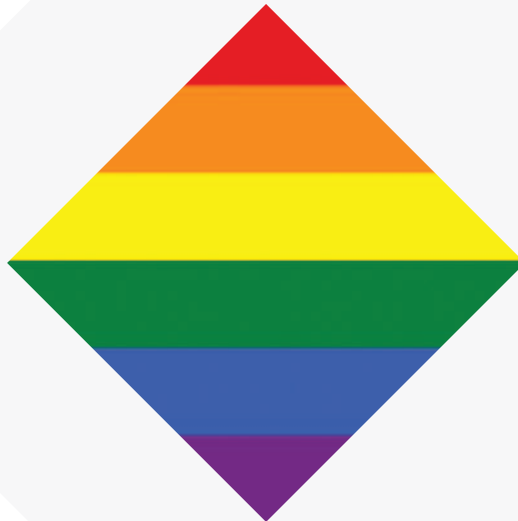
Trade Sexual Health and St Philip's Centre would like to thank Leicester City Council for providing the funding for this project through their Community Engagement Fund, as well as all staff and all of the people who were involved throughout the project.

# Sexuality, Gender Identity and Belief:

The Leicester Approach

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**A Guidance Document  
for Faith Communities**



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Charity Number: 1114686