Your rights as LGBT patients
Who we are

The General Medical Council is an independent organisation. We make sure that doctors are working properly to keep patients safe.

We have written rules for doctors about being fair to all patients.
Coronavirus information

Coronavirus is a new illness. It has been spreading around the world.

Some people who have the illness will become very unwell and need to go to hospital.

This means that doctors and hospitals are busier than usual.

The doctor must still do their best to treat you with care and respect. They must still give you any support that you need.
Who this information is for

This information explains how doctors should be fair to LGBT patients.

LGBT stands for lesbian, gay, bi and trans.

Lesbians are women who are attracted to women.
Gay men are attracted to men. Gay can also be used to describe lesbians.

Bi people are attracted to men and women.

Trans means that the gender you were given as a baby doesn’t match the gender you feel yourself to be.
LGBT patients have the same rights as anyone else.

Your doctor must:

• be fair to you

• work with you to find the right care and treatment for you

• keep information about you private and safe.
Your doctor must not:

- behave differently towards you because you are LGBT

- stop you from having any treatment because of their own personal beliefs

- say anything to you about being LGBT that might make you upset.
Asking you if you are gay or trans

Your doctor may ask you:

• if you are LGBT

• whether you are living as a man or woman

• whether you are living as a different gender to the one you were born with.

They can ask you about this so that they can offer you the right care and treatment.

They should ask you rather than guess things about you.
Keeping your information private

Your doctor should be able to tell you how they look after any information about you.

Doctors must keep any information that says you are LGBT private.
Most doctors give LGBT people excellent health care.

But sometimes LGBT people are not treated well by their doctor.

2 organisations that support LGBT people have written reports about patients being treated unfairly.

You can read Stonewall’s report here: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_health.pdf

You can read the LGBT Foundation’s report here: www.lgbt.foundation/hiddenfigures
What the General Medical Council are doing to support LGBT patients

We are working to support LGBT people in many ways.

Working with LGBT patients

We are working with LGBT people to understand how to improve the way doctors work.

We involve LGBT people when we look at the rules we set for doctors.

We are looking at how LGBT people feel about telling their local doctor what they think.
We are working with Stonewall and GLADD.

GLADD is the Association of LGBTQ+ Doctors and Dentists.

Training doctors

When we give training to doctors, we include examples of LGBT patients.

We make sure that doctors who come to work in the UK from other countries understand how to be fair to LGBT patients.
Complaints about doctors

We take complaints about doctors very seriously.

We keep information on complaints about doctors.

This includes complaints about doctors that have treated LGBT patients unfairly.
If you are not happy with your doctor

Most doctors treat all their patients properly.

If you are not happy with the way your doctor is behaving towards you, you can complain.

When you complain, you don’t have to tell us you are LGBT if you don’t want to. It’s your choice.

How to complain

You should first complain to the health service that is treating you.
If you are worried that a doctor is being unfair to more people, you should tell us.

They should give you information about how to make a complaint.

They should tell you about local organisations that can help you to complain.

If you are still not happy

If you are worried that a doctor is being unfair to more people, you should tell us.

You can contact us by going to: www.gmc-uk.org/concerns

If we think that someone is breaking the rules about being a doctor, we can stop them from working.
Support for LGBT patients

These organisations can help you to speak up or make a complaint:

In England
Stonewall:
www.stonewall.org.uk

LGBT Foundation:
www.lgbt.foundation

In Northern Ireland
The Rainbow Project:
www.rainbow-project.org

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland:
www.equalityni.org
LGBT Switchboard NI:  
www.cara-friend.org.uk/lgbt-switchboard-ni

In Scotland  
Stonewall Scotland:  
www.stonewallscotland.org.uk

LGBT Health and Wellbeing  
www.lgbthealth.org.uk

LGBT Youth Scotland  
www.lgbtyouth.org.uk
For more information

If you need more information, please contact us by:

Phone: 0161 923 6602
Email: gmc@gmc-uk.org
Web: www.gmc-uk.org

In Wales
Stonewall Cymru
www.stonewallcymru.org.uk

LGBT Cymru Helpline and Counselling Service
www.lgbtcymru.org.uk

For more information