

(CCC) Homelessness

1. A) Does your council routinely ask your homeless service users about their sexuality as part of monitoring?
1. B) Does your council routinely ask your homeless service users about their gender identity as part of monitoring?

2. A) Does your council require 'proof' to show that people have been asked to leave home by their family members?
2. B) Would you contact the family members of LGBT people who have been asked to leave their homes, for further proof?

3. Have your housing officers received specialist LGBT homelessness training?

4. Does your council offer an emergency homeless shelter/service for LGBT people?

5. How much money did your council spend on LGBT related merchandise for Pride events, or LGBT diversity celebrations, in the financial year 2019-2020 (e.g. Rainbow flags for Pride 2019)?

Response:

1. A) Does your council routinely ask your homeless service users about their sexuality as part of monitoring?
Yes, we ask for the sexual orientation of the main applicant. Applicants can choose not to state their sexual orientation. We ask questions relating to our applicants' sexuality in order to determine any additional obligations that we may owe them under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010). We also need to be clear about the type of accommodation that would be suitable for the applicant (to minimise risk), and to assist in joint working on a Personal Housing Plan. Equalities monitoring is also used to gain an understanding if the service is performing well for all customers with protected characteristics.
1. B) Does your council routinely ask your homeless service users about their gender identity as part of monitoring? Yes, all people who are part of a homeless application are asked to identify their gender but are free to choose not to identify a gender.

2. A) Does your council require 'proof' to show that people have been asked to leave home by their family members? It is a statutory requirement that a local housing authority makes enquiries into an application made under Part VII (Homelessness provisions). S184 reads: "184. - (1) If the local housing authority have reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, they shall make such inquiries as are necessary to satisfy themselves- • whether he is eligible for assistance, and • if so, whether any duty, and if so what duty, is owed to him under the following provisions of this Part." Contact would be made with any person who is evicting an applicant as part of these inquiries, unless to do so would clearly put the applicant at risk.

3. B) Would you contact the family members of LGBT people who have been asked to leave their homes, for further proof? We would not distinguish between an applicant who self-identifies as LGBT and another applicant when making these statutory inquiries, unless it was clear that the applicant's sexuality is relevant to the circumstances of the application. We would make a judgement in each individual case as to what kind of inquiries are necessary to establish the facts of the case, without putting the applicant at risk.

4. Have your housing officers received specialist LGBT homelessness training? Our Housing Advisors receive regular training on the application of Public Sector Equality Duty. Training was last held on 20th October 2020 and was delivered by Five Paper Barristers. Advisors are trained in identifying protected characteristics under S4 of Equality Act 2010, and in understanding what additional duties may be owed to individuals who have any protected characteristic(s). Advisors also receive periodic presentations from specialist LGBT organisations during their team meetings. Also, our Housing Advisors have access to an online manual of resources to assist with advising customers with specific issues. In our district, Housing Advisors are able to signpost customers who are LGBT towards specialist support organisations, including Stonewall Housing; SexYOUality (LGBT Young People in Cambridge); Diamonds (Cambridge Trans Support Group). In addition, the council runs transgender awareness training open to all services to support people to have a greater understanding of the experience of trans and gender variant people, issues of risk and safeguarding of transgender children and adults, and increase confidence to effectively support trans and gender variant people at work – looking at using positive language, good practice with form filling and understanding different terms.

5. Does your council offer an emergency homeless shelter/service for LGBT people? We do not run our own emergency homeless shelter. The principle homeless shelter provision in our district is run by a third sector organisation. It is not specific to any one client group. 6. How much money did your council spend on LGBT related merchandise for Pride events, or LGBT diversity celebrations, in the financial year 2019-2020 (e.g. Rainbow flags for Pride 2019)? The council did not spend any of its own budget on these items during the subject year

Further queries on this matter should be directed to foi@cambridge.gov.uk