

## **Modernising Commissioning Green Paper**

### **Stonewall response to the Cabinet Office consultation**

#### **Introduction**

1. This paper contains Stonewall's response to the Cabinet Office consultation on 'Modernising Commissioning: Increasing the role of charities, social enterprises, mutuals and cooperatives in public service delivery'.
2. Stonewall is a national campaigning charity that has campaigned for equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people across Britain since 1989.
3. Stonewall is not engaged in directly delivering public services, however Stonewall provides advice and support to many service providers in the public, private and third sectors on delivering services that meet the needs of Britain's estimated 3.6 million lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Stonewall's work with service providers in delivering relevant and efficient public services to local lesbian, gay and bisexual people includes:
  - Providing bespoke support and advice to local authorities through the Stonewall Education Champions programme on helping local schools address homophobic bullying and promote a safe and inclusive learning environment for all children and young people.
  - Providing tailored advice and objectives through the Stonewall Healthy Lives programme for NHS organisations to deliver improved health outcomes for lesbian, gay and bisexual patients and creating fair workplaces for LGB employees.
  - Working with over 600 employers to develop good practice in employment and community engagement through the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme. Diversity Champions include a wide range of public, private and third sector organisations engaged in delivering or supporting public services.
  - Developing tailored solutions, through Stonewall Consult, for organisations on delivering public services that address the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual users.
4. Stonewall does not have a view about the extent of civil society involvement in directly delivering public services. This response will focus on key themes posed in *Modernising Commissioning*. The detailed response can be found below but in summary:
  - Stonewall supports the focus on outcomes, on deliverables and on extracting maximum value for taxpayers. However national data sets which allow public bodies, and those delivering public services, to be held to account on achieving outcomes and meeting their obligations under the

Equality Act 2010 often do not disaggregate on the basis of sexual orientation. As a result those delivering services are unable to measure their progress on delivering outcomes and value for money to lesbian, gay and bisexual taxpayers.

- Stonewall's work with public, private and third sector organisations delivering services has clearly shown that to meet the needs of local lesbian, gay and bisexual taxpayers, and to meet the requirements placed on them by the Equality Act 2010, many service providers require support and advice from civil society organisations such as Stonewall.
- The absence of this expertise can lead to services being provided to the lesbian, gay and bisexual community that do not meet their needs and therefore do not deliver value for money for taxpayers.

### **New opportunities**

5. Stonewall do not have a view on where civil society organisations may be most appropriate to deliver public services. Stonewall however believe that all civil society organisations delivering public services must meet their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to lesbian, gay and bisexual citizens.
6. For example, Stonewall do not have a view on the proposal to establish free schools however Stonewall believe that all schools operating with greater autonomy must be held to account on issues including homophobic bullying, equality and diversity and compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
7. Stonewall is not engaged in directly delivering public services however Stonewall's ongoing work (outlined previously) demonstrates that civil society organisations such as Stonewall play a crucial role in advising and supporting public bodies and civil society organisations delivering public services in ensuring those services are value for money and can be accessed by lesbian, gay and bisexual citizens.

### **Value**

8. Stonewall supports the focus on outcomes, on deliverables and on extracting maximum value for taxpayers. However national data sets which allow public bodies, and those delivering public services, to be held to account on achieving outcomes and meeting their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 often do not disaggregate on the basis of sexual orientation.
9. As a result many public bodies, civil society organisations involved in delivering (and tendering for) public services are unable to measure whether services are being used by lesbian, gay and bisexual people, what their experience of those services are and therefore whether lesbian, gay and bisexual taxpayers are receiving value for money from those services.
10. The British Crime Survey illustrates this issue clearly. In the past the survey has not monitored the sexual orientation of respondents. For this reason it has been very difficult for police forces, criminal justice bodies and civil society organisations to measure the effectiveness of any initiatives against homophobic hate crimes and incidents.
11. In response, Stonewall has developed a number of benchmarking tools and pieces of research to enable public bodies, and those delivering services, to

measure their progress on delivering outcomes and value for money to lesbian, gay and bisexual taxpayers.

12. For example, the Stonewall Education Equality Index which enables local authorities to benchmark their progress over time on combating homophobic bullying in education. Participating in the Index also allows local parents to hold their local authority to account on their progress. The Index is free for local authorities to enter and enables them to prove they are delivering measurable outcomes and therefore value for money.
13. Stonewall believes strongly that for civil society organisations delivering (and tendering for) services to demonstrate whether they effectively deliver public services and value for money for lesbian, gay and bisexual people, official data sets must begin to disaggregate by sexual orientation. In the absence of national data sets however public bodies and those they commission to deliver services should use Stonewall tools and research to demonstrate outcomes on the delivery of services to lesbian, gay and bisexual taxpayers.

### **Citizen and Community Involvement**

14. Stonewall strongly supports lesbian, gay and bisexual community and citizen involvement in decision making about local priorities and services commissioned. Stonewall believe that it is vitally important that when commissioning services public bodies ensure that civil society organisations delivering services take into account the requirements of local lesbian, gay and bisexual citizens. As a result Stonewall has produced a guide for public bodies on 'How to engage gay people in your work' which will be launched early in 2011.
15. Many public bodies do not understand the issues affecting lesbian, gay and bisexual citizens and how these impact on the way they access services. This can mean that they fail to commission and deliver services that respond to the requirements of lesbian, gay and bisexual taxpayers. In some cases this lack of understanding can lead to specific new services being delivered when adapting existing mainstream services to be more inclusive may be more appropriate and cost-effective. In most cases gay people's requirements can be met by more considered mainstream services.
16. Stonewall believe therefore that to ensure public bodies deliver more efficient public services they should, before commissioning, engage with and understand the needs and experiences of local lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Public bodies that engage directly with local lesbian, gay and bisexual citizens understand the complexion of their local community can develop services that address the cause of local problems rather than simply the consequences. This makes them more cost-effective and improves outcomes for local people.
17. Civil society organisations such as Stonewall play a role in advising public bodies about the needs of different communities, how existing mainstream services can be adapted and if new tailored services are required. Public bodies however can be hindered in engaging with civil society organisations by a lack of understanding of the communities and issues they represent. Stonewall believes that central government has a role in collating and sharing information with public bodies about the issues they should take into account when commissioning public services. In addition central government has a role in signposting public bodies to civil society organisations with expertise in different areas and which

can aid them in delivering public services that meet the requirements of local citizens, including those that are lesbian, gay or bisexual.

18. For further information on the Stonewall programmes mentioned in this response please visit [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk). For more information on this response please contact:

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