

SUPPORTING YOUR LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEES



We asked Rachel Engel, Regional Head, Macquarie Group Foundation and part of the Pride at Macquarie steering group in EMEA to share her tips for supporting LGBTQ+ employees at work.

Why does diversity and inclusion at work matter?

Macquarie harnesses the strength and diversity of its people through inclusion. Inclusion means creating a workplace environment where people feel they can be themselves, regardless of their gender (including gender identity), age, ethnicity, cultural affiliation, sexual orientation, beliefs or educational background. Macquarie understands that people perform better when they can be themselves, so sees creating a culture of inclusion as a commercial priority.

Why is it important to support LGBTQ+ colleagues?

First and foremost, it's against the law to discriminate against an individual based on their sexual orientation. But beyond basic legal compliance, the importance of psychological safety, and the value of bringing your whole self to work, have been demonstrated irrefutably by many studies in recent years. Any employee who feels the need to devote energy to the distraction of 'covering', or to withhold full participation in or contribution to workplace teams, is a sub-optimal resource for their employer – it makes no business sense. It can also be dangerous: limiting the diversity of respected perspectives, encouraging 'groupthink', and even, in the example of Macquarie's own industry, financial services, adversely affect culture and conduct – an area of utmost focus these days for regulators. For the individual, the benefits are both internal and external – improved mental wellbeing personally, as well as being a valuable example to others. So, supporting LGBTQ+ colleagues drives improved productivity and engagement, staff retention and – most importantly for any business – diversity of thought.

How should you approach this?

1. People policies and training support

Macquarie has several policies in place to support our LGBTQ+ colleagues, such as equal access to benefits and family related leave. It's also helpful to offer training programmes for all employees; some of the ones Macquarie runs are:

- Orientation - a focus on diversity and inclusion throughout all orientation programmes
- Appropriate Workplace Behaviour - including specific education around protected characteristics and mentoring
- Conscious Decision Making - designed to combat unconscious bias in everyday decisions
- Diversity related content in all management and leadership training programmes
- Allies training (typically delivered by Stonewall, the UK's leading LGBTQ+ rights charity) to help non-LGBTQ+ employees understand challenges, language and support

Top tips for writing inclusive employee policies include:

- Review all existing policies and make sure inclusive language, such as gender-neutral pronouns, is being used throughout
- Specify all the protected characteristics to which a policy applies (age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion



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and belief, gender and sexual orientation)

- Make sure your policies are tailored according to the business culture - ensure that the tone of voice is appropriate and that brand guidelines are adhered to

2. Leadership and employee engagement

It's important to engage employees at all levels in supporting LGBTQ+ colleagues. Macquarie does this with a few different ways:

- The regional Executive Management Committee (EMC) has oversight and is responsible for approving the objectives and practices of all employee network groups (ENGs), by whom protected characteristics are highlighted internally
- Three members of EMC are formally designated as executive sponsors of Macquarie's LGBTQ+ employee network group, Pride, and champion the cause of LGBTQ+ workplace equality at executive level
- The Pride ENG itself is led by employees for the benefit of employees - they form the Pride steering committee and lead the focus and approach, with embedded representation from Human Resources and constant liaison with the corporate communications team
- Allies form a specific group of employees who don't necessarily identify as LGBTQ+ themselves but are advocates and supporters. They help by raising awareness and attending Pride events and are offered training (as noted above) and mentoring from LGBTQ+ colleagues to help them understand the challenges experienced by those identifying as LGBTQ+

3. Raising awareness

It's essential to make sure your employees are aware of the different LGBTQ+ support groups and resources available, and of awareness days and landmarks which the organisation may be celebrating. Some methods Macquarie has successfully used to get the message across include:

- Sending internal communications to employees around specific awareness days, such as International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) and Pride Month
- Using digital screens, posters and flyers throughout the workplace to promote the organisation's LGBTQ+ support groups
- Displaying specific LGBTQ+ related promotional material in visible areas, such as the main reception and high-traffic communal staff areas, to coincide with landmark dates or events, like Pride Month. Macquarie does this to signal, both internally and externally, its commitment to LGBTQ+ awareness and equality, with the standard motto being "We're proud when our people are"
- Running events and communications across the year, such as hosting activities on awareness days, offering training and encouraging fundraising for LGBTQ+ related activity

4. Working together

Aside from employee-related activity, it's beneficial to work with external organisations to provide training and support to your LGBTQ+ networks. Some that we have worked with include:

- Stonewall
- Interbank
- Nexus (formerly the Network of Networks)
- Diversity role models
- Opening Doors London
- Gay Women's Network
- Trans*formation
- Global Butterflies
- Gendered Intelligence



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- London Bisexual Network
- OUTstanding
- Positive East
- PositivelyUK
- New Family Social
- The Funding Network
- Give Out

Examples of policies

It's made clear to everyone at Macquarie that we must create an environment which is free from homophobia, biphobia and transphobia (as well as all other forms of discrimination) through policies such as our Acceptable Workplace Behaviour policy, backed up by a mandatory training for all new employees.

The rest of our policies (such as parental leave, leave and bullying & harassment policies) are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fully inclusive and use language applicable to LGBTQ+ people and families. We also have a specific trans policy to support transitioning people and their line managers to help us provide the best possible experience. It's important to have one of these even if you don't know who the trans people are in your workplace.

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