The NHS Rainbow Badge Scheme
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Rainbow Badges FAQ

What is the Rainbow Badge Scheme?

A recent Stonewall survey (published November 2018) stated that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) patients face inequalities in their experience of NHS healthcare. The survey estimates that one in five LGBT+ people are not out to any healthcare professional about their sexual orientation when seeking general medical care, and one in seven LGBT+ people have avoided treatment for fear of discrimination.

Having simple visible symbols - such as these rainbow badges - can make a big difference for those unsure of both themselves and of the reception they will receive if they disclose their sexuality and/or gender identity.

The Rainbow Badge initiative originated at Evelina London Children’s Hospital to make a positive difference by promoting a message of inclusion to patients and among staff. Rainbow Badges is an initiative that gives staff a way to show that Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust offers open, non-judgemental and inclusive care for patients and their families, who identify as LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender—and the + simply means that we are inclusive of all identities, regardless of how people define themselves).

Why do I need to wear a rainbow badge if I wear a rainbow lanyard?

A rainbow lanyard is a great way to show your solidarity and support for people in the LGBT+ community and is well received and appreciated. However the badges symbolise that the person has undertaken additional training and has more knowledge about the issues facing LGBT+ people in Healthcare. Both can be work together if you choose!

What does it mean if I don’t wear a badge?

Lots of people may decide not to wear a badge, that’s ok. All trust employees have a duty to act in an accepting and inclusive manner with staff, patients and visitors. Not wearing a badge does not change this, it simply means that a person may opt to approach a staff member with a badge due to the extra knowledge and understanding that they may have.

Do I need training to wear a badge?

Yes, there will be regular training in the Education and Training Centre. These will last no longer than 1 hour.
How do I access training?

Dates for these and details about how to book on can be found on the Equality and Diversity Webpage at http://intranet.xcoch.nhs.uk/support-services/people-organisational-development/equality-diversity.aspx or my contacting your Equality and Diversity Manager at sophiehunter@nhs.net

What does the training involve?

Training involves 1 hour of considering what issues a person may approach a badge holder with, and how to signpost to local services

What extra responsibilities do I have as a badge holder?

As a badge holder, you are responsibility for being approachable and sympathetic to LGBT+ related concerns. You are not expected to have all the answers, the badge is about showing support, congruence and being able to signpost approximately.

What might I get asked if I wear a badge?

This may vary greatly. This could be a patient or visitor conscious that their family is unaccepting of their partner, to a young person wanting to find out what youth services are in the local community.
Half of LGBT people (62%) experienced depression in the last year.

Almost a quarter of NHS patient-facing staff have heard their colleagues make negative remarks about LGBT people.

Nearly half of teenagers who identify as LGBT+ report being bullied at school for being LGBT+.

Almost one in four LGBT people (27%) have avoided using designated toilets or services provided because of fear of discrimination.

More than two in five trans young people have tried to take their own life.

Almost six in 10 health and social care staff don’t think sexual orientation is relevant to healthcare.

One in five LGBT people (19%) won’t come out to any healthcare professional about their sexual orientation.

One in seven LGBT people (14%) avoid seeking healthcare for fear of discrimination from staff.

More LGBT+ teenagers than their peers self-harm, or attempt suicide.