

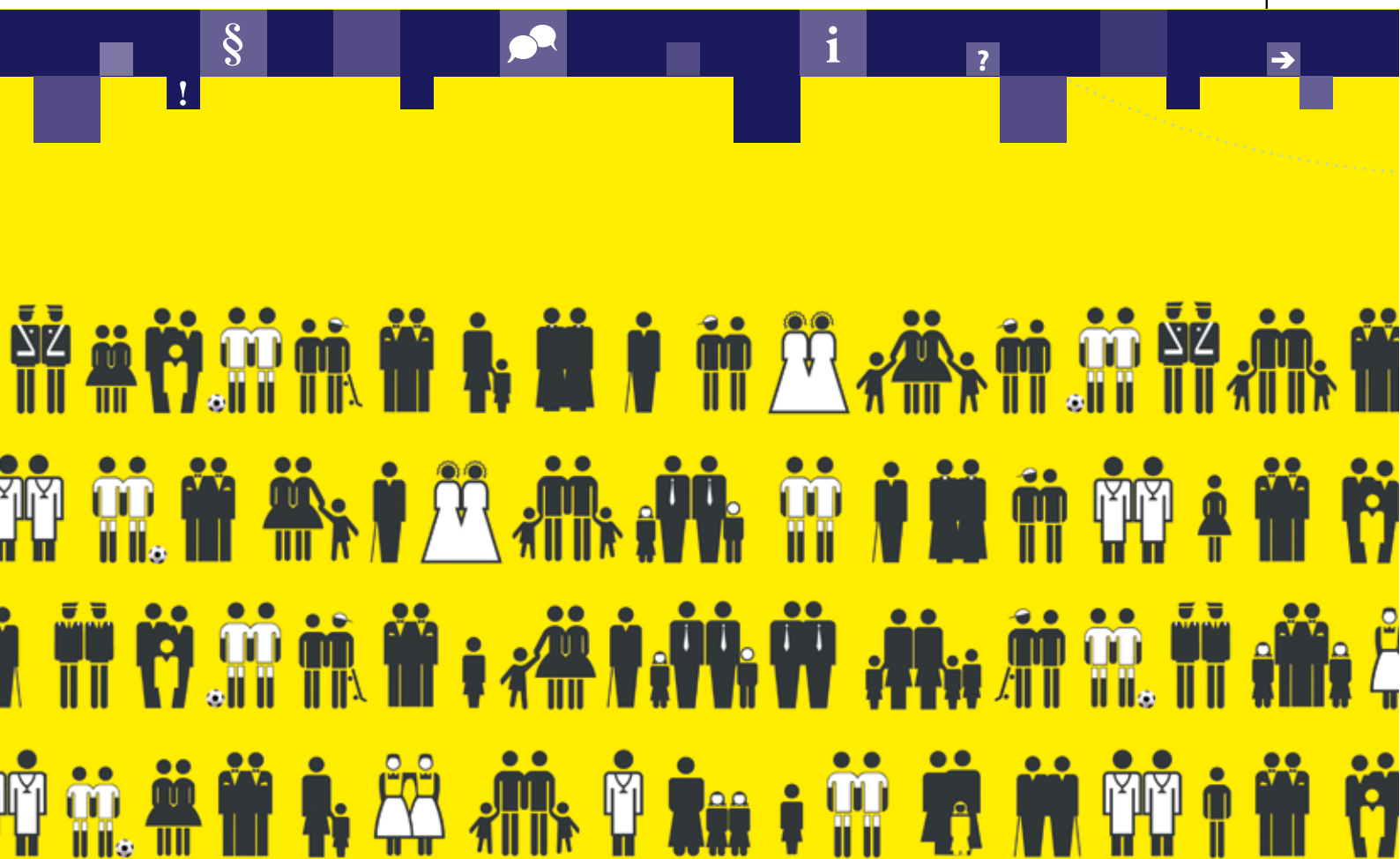


NORWEGIAN MINISTRY  
OF CHILDREN AND EQUALITY

The Norwegian Government's action plan

# Improving quality of life among lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons

2009–2012





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## ► Foreword

The Government has taken a number of steps to safeguard social diversity and to strengthen efforts to combat discrimination. The goal is a society characterised by openness, tolerance and inclusion. This must also apply to sexual orientation and to the various forms of sexual expression. The Storting has recently adopted a common Marriage Act for gay and heterosexual couples. A Government Commission on Anti-discrimination Legislation is due to submit a proposal for more uniform legislation against discrimination by 1 July 2009.

Many lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT) have a good life today. The LGBT organisations have visible spokespersons in the public debate and in politics. However, in surveys of living conditions, a higher proportion of the LGBT population characterise their own quality of life as poor. LGBT people are more subject to violence and harassment than the rest of the population. Research, both in Norway and abroad, shows LGBT people to be heavily overrepresented in some groups of persons with substance abuse and mental disorders. Many attempt suicide. There is unfortunately a correlation between the lack of acceptance for different sexual orientations and forms of sexual expression and the prevalence of mental disorders and substance abuse. Young LGBT persons are particularly exposed. This requires work on attitudes at all levels, and knowledge development is taking place in the various services. In order to achieve these ambitions, research, sound methodology and practical experience in the LGBT area must be documented, systematised and made available.

By means of this action plan the Government wishes to place the LGBT perspective in all policy areas and in the ministries involved. We wish to integrate knowledge concerning the needs and challenges of the LGBT group in the various public services. Lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons are entitled to a school without the risk of bullying and violence. Threats of forced marriage must be met with offers of support and counselling. In working life, safety representatives and employers must acquire the necessary knowledge to deal with exclusion and bullying.

Efforts to achieve openness and tolerance in all areas of society must continue. School, working life, friends and family and the sport and recreation sector must all play a role. The health sector must meet LGBT persons in all phases of life with knowledge, respect and consideration. There are exciting and challenging tasks here for us all, and I hope that many people will contribute.

*Oslo, 25 June 2008*



**Anniken Huitfeldt**

*Minister of Children and Equality*



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# 1 ▶ Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The Government's political platform, the Soria Moria Declaration, makes particular reference to the rights of gays. It states that the Government "will safeguard the rights of gays and lesbians, support gays and lesbians in living openly and actively oppose discrimination". Amendments to the Marriage Act have now been adopted. On 1 June 2007, a Government Commission on Anti-discrimination Legislation ("the Graver Commission") was appointed to prepare a proposal for strengthened and more comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and possible incorporation of protection against discrimination in the Norwegian Constitution. (See 1.4 for more information concerning the Commission.)

On 11 January 2008, the Graver Commission submitted a sub-recommendation<sup>1</sup>. The Commission proposes the repeal of the special provision of the Working Environment Act that gives religious communities the explicit right to refrain from employing a person who lives in a gay partnership. The right of religious communities to practise discrimination shall instead be provided in the general and more stringent "just cause" provision of the Act, which also applies in other areas of society. The Commission proposes a tightening of the Gender Equa-

lity Act's exception from the prohibition of sex discrimination for the internal affairs of religious communities. The Government will follow up with any statutory amendments after the consultation round.

Report 25 to the Storting (2000-2001), the White Paper on the living conditions and quality of life of lesbians and gays in Norway, concerned the Government's policy regarding lesbians and gays, and clarified the challenges facing the groups themselves and society at large. The Report has been followed up by implementation of a large number of measures in many different sectors. The authorities' policy for improvement of gays' and lesbians' living conditions has adopted a markedly interdisciplinary approach. Lesbians' and gays' NGOs play a proactive role as partners for the authorities. Society has become more open, and new interest organisations have been established to represent various groups among lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT). Among others is Skeiv Ungdom [Queer Youth], which has been established as the independent youth organisation of Landsforeningen for lesbiske, homofile, bifile og transpersoner (LLH) [the Norwegian LGBT Association]. Skeiv Verden [Queer World] has emerged as an important and secure forum for LGBT persons of immigrant background.

1 NOU 2008:1 Women and gays in religious communities



In order to establish the status quo after the White Paper on the living conditions and quality of life of lesbians and gays in Norway and lay the basis for an action plan for LGBT policy, the Ministry of Children and Equality held the conference “*Safety and Diversity. A Queer experience-based conference*” in Oslo 13–14 September 2007. The conference identified challenges, appropriate goals and potential measures, and gathered 130 representatives from the authorities, research institutions, NGOs and other bodies. The conference elicited a number of valuable papers and other input, which were documented in a conference report.

The conference documented that lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons are overrepresented as regards mental disorders, suicide attempts, substance use and a number of sexually transmitted diseases (STD<sup>2</sup>). The documentation is derived from both Norway and other countries. In addition to the living conditions perspective, an important perspective is antidiscrimination.

For example, a survey conducted by HomO, the Swedish Ombudsman against Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation, shows that it is usual for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons to conceal their sexual orientation at work<sup>3</sup>. Openness makes them more subject to discrimination at the workplace. In 2007, NOVA – Norwegian Social Research submitted a report on the prevalence of violence against lesbian and gay teenagers, which unfortunately shows that young people who early identify themselves as gay encounter a considerably greater risk of serious discrimination in forms that include bullying, threats and gross violence<sup>4</sup>. The perpetrators of violence are usually peers or family members.

After the White Paper on the living conditions and quality of life of lesbians and gays in Norway of 2001, some main challenges seem clear:

- It is necessary to intensify antidiscrimination efforts in relation to LGBT persons
- There is a need for better knowledge of the living conditions of groups that face particularly great

challenges and more targeted efforts in relation to these groups, particularly young LGBT persons

- There is a need for more knowledge about LGBT persons who are subjected to discrimination for more than one reason
- There is a need for increased awareness and knowledge among employees in different parts of the public sector concerning how they should and can provide for the needs of the group in their respective fields or service sectors: working life, school and education, family/child welfare and the health and care sector
- There is a need for better and more robust systems to provide the services and the general public with documentation in this policy area
- Availability and re-use of experience-based and research-based knowledge about LGBT persons must be ensured
- Economic predictability for NGOs in this area is important

## 1.2 Purposes and objectives

The overall purpose of the action plan is to put an end to the discrimination met with by lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT) in different phases of life, social contexts and working life, and promote better living conditions and quality of life for these groups.

Realisation of the purposes of the plan is, among other things, characterised by the following:

- LGBT persons experience an expressed zero tolerance for smears, threats, exclusion, violence and other forms of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or sexual expression, and that this be complied with in all sectors and in all social arenas
- LGBT persons experience all services and arenas as inclusive, relevant and respectful in all phases of life

The overall purposes of the plan are to be achieved by means of the following objectives, which also describe the principal strategic instruments:

1. *Mainstreaming* of LGBT perspectives in all central government sectors, i.e.:

2 Cochran, 2007

3 Ytterberg, 2007

4 Moseng, 2007

- a) integration in all projects and plans where social diversity, gender equality, inclusion, discrimination and bullying are included as topics
- b) incorporation in the agencies' initiatives in relation to working environment and in personnel policy
- c) integration in guidelines for mainstream services to the public

2. Any specific needs of the LGBT group must be met by means of targeted measures. Needs must otherwise be met by means of the ordinary service provision.
3. Consider establishing an interdisciplinary resource centre to document, systematise and make available research, sound methodology and practical experience in this field. In order to obtain a satisfactory basis for decision-making, a preliminary, elaboratory project shall be carried out.
4. Clarify how discrimination on various grounds should be viewed in context and point out consequences of multiple discrimination, i.e. cases where individuals are subjected to discrimination for more than one reason.

### 1.3 Implementation and follow-up of the plan

The Ministry of Children and Equality has chaired an interministerial group consisting of the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform, the Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also provided valuable contributions to the action plan. The measures in the action plan are described in part 4 of the plan. The ministry listed as responsible for a measure has responsibility for implementation of this measure, including organisation of the measure.

The interministerial group that prepared the action plan will continue to function throughout the plan period. The working group is responsible for ensuring sound

coordination of the measures during the plan period. The implementation and scope of the measures described in the action plan will be adapted to the annual budget proposals and the Storting's consideration of these.

The plan will be subject to final and mid-term evaluation. The Ministry of Children and Equality will gather and collate the status reports during the plan period.

### 1.4 The anti-discrimination policy

The Government's anti-discrimination policy is designed to safeguard the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT). This group will be given support to enable them to live openly in accordance with their sexual orientation, gender perception and sexual expression, and actively oppose discrimination in all social sectors.

The Ministry of Children and Equality administers all statutes combating discrimination and promoting non-discrimination that are enforced by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO) and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal (LDN). Although it is the LDO and LDN that are responsible for enforcing the anti-discrimination Acts, it is assumed that, where LGBT policy is concerned, all of the ministries involved and their subordinate agencies base their sectoral policy on an integration approach (i.e. mainstreaming). Likewise, the integration of a general LGBT perspective must be included in the governments dialogue with the municipal sector, on first line services.

The principle of sectoral responsibility is a mainstay of the implementation of equality and antidiscrimination policy. This entails that each ministry is responsible for efforts to realise the aims of LGBT policy within its own policy area, both in the ministry and in subordinate authorities and agencies. Measures are developed and implemented by one or more ministries assigned responsibility.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of sectoral objectives and measures, these must:

- be derived from the overall objectives
- be based on a sound, up-to-date knowledge base concerning the various discrimination and equality-related challenges in the sphere of responsibility concerned
- be based on the specialised knowledge and systematic insight of the individual ministry or specialised agency in its own field

The Ministry of Children and Equality also plays an inducing role in the ministerial cooperation, and in assisting the other ministries in developing and implementing sound objectives and measures.

### **Anti-discrimination legislation**

Norway prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, age, etc. by law. However, the different discrimination grounds are not given equal level of protection by the legislators. The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation currently applies only in working life and housing sector, and is embodied, respectively, in the Working Environment Act and in housing legislation.

In its practice, the office of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud has assumed that protection against discrimination of trans persons must be inferred from the protection against gender discrimination provided in the Gender Equality Act. This practice is moreover in agreement with the European Court of Human Rights' interpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights regarding non-discrimination and the European Court of Justice's interpretation of the EU Directive on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women.

### **The Government Commission on Anti-discrimination Legislation (Graver Commission)**

As referred to in the introduction, the Government has appointed a commission to prepare a proposal for more cohesive anti-discrimination legislation.

The Commission is chaired by Professor Hans Petter Graver and is composed of researchers and experts on

discrimination, human rights, labour law, etc. In order to ensure that relevant parties are involved in the process, a reference group has been appointed including representatives of different bases for discrimination and the social partners. The Norwegian LGBT Association (LLH), the Norwegian Association of Trans Persons (NTP) and the National Organisation for Persons Diagnosed as Transsexual (LFTS) are represented on the Commission. The Commission is due to submit its recommendations by 1 July 2009.

The following questions, derived from the Commission's terms of reference are particularly relevant in relation to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons:

- Should protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation be extended to apply not only to working and housing sectors, but also to other areas of society, such as education, the health service, bars, restaurants and night-clubs and the property market?
- The Commission will consider whether new bases for discrimination shall be included in the legislation and whether or not a list of the discrimination grounds recognised by the Act shall be exhaustive. Should the law prescribe clear protection against discrimination on the basis of transsexualism or gender identity in general?
- A more general question is how situations where a person is subjected to discrimination for multiple reasons (multiple discrimination) should be dealt with by the Act and in enforcing the Act



## 2 ▶ Terms and concepts

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or alternative sexual expression often arises out of stereotype norms for gender and sexuality established in material, legal and religious conditions inherent in the social culture. Language too provides us with both opportunities and limitations and thus is affecting the way we communicate and the way we think about other people and about ourselves. In many ways, discrimination is associated with the possibilities and obstacles inherent in language. For example, the Norwegian language does not provide a particularly broad range of expressions for or interpretations of what lies between or peripheral to the categories “man”/“woman” and “heterosexual”/“gay”.

The Government attaches importance to opening up culture and language on the basis of the diverse society Norway has become. In this chapter, we will present a number of central terms and concepts that are used in this action plan. It is our wish that a more refined conceptual apparatus may contribute to better awareness and greater openness concerning the different sexual minorities and variations of sexual expression, and may thereby over time help to put an end to the discrimination of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT).

### 2.1 Heteronormativity

The concept “heteronormativity” is frequently used by researchers as well as by representatives for the various professions, politicians and activists. Heteronormativity refers to the tendency for heterosexual orientation almost always to be an implicit assumption when people meet. Lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT) therefore feel that they constantly stand outside the “heterosexual community.” Homosexuality is “the other sexuality”, i.e. the opposite of heterosexuality. In everyday life, this expresses itself as the need for LGBT persons to repeatedly undergo a “coming-out process” in new meetings with people unless they wish to be perceived as heterosexual or non-trans persons. Lesbians and gays are often confronted with questions about when they discovered their sexual orientation, an unpleasant and discriminating question, and an existential burden to have to bear. Heteronormativity concerns both sexual identity and gender identity.

Another practical consequence of heteronormativity is that it makes the variations bisexuality and homosexuality invisible. If gays refuse to accept staying invisible and silent, they may be subjected to heavy sanctions and penalties. There is a broad range of such reactions, from subtle contempt and exclusion from career opportunities, to violence, abuse, smears, threats, ostracism, exclusion from family life, pressure to marry a person

of the opposite sex and, worst of all, the possibility of being killed.

Heteronormativity with the associated erasure of sexual minorities also exists in the public service. For the person concerned, sexual orientation may have major significance in a learning situation, a treatment situation or a job situation. Pushing sexual minorities out of the visible may result in reduced returns and a diminished quality of life at an individual level. However, consequences in the form of reduced learning yield, lower work effort and slower recovery from illness may also have consequences for company profits and for the learning environment at school, and increase the strain on the public health and welfare provision.

## 2.2 The LGBT concept

Public policy should reflect the diversity of sexualities, gender perception and sexual expression. The Government shall make efforts to ensure greater use of terms that allow the expression of more shades of meaning and give room for the experience of diversity and reduction of unnecessary language barriers. As a consequence of this, the designation “lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons,” abbreviated to LGBT is used throughout in the action plan as opposed to “lesbians and gays”, which was used in the White Paper on the living conditions and quality of life of lesbians and gays in Norway. This is in consistency with terms used internationally, both by the authorities and by research institutions as well as by most organisations by and for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons.

The principal NGOs for LGBT people in Norway are the Norwegian LGBT Association (LLH), *Skeiv Ungdom* [Queer Youth] (LLH’s youth organisation), *Skeiv Verden* [Queer World] (LLH’s network for LGBT immigrants) and the Norwegian Association of Trans Persons (FTP).

### Bisexuals

Bisexual denotes a person who can fall in love with or feel attracted to both men and women. Bisexuality as a concept, and as a potential way of life or identity, conflicts with the notion that the population can be divided into two groups,

respectively, the heterosexual and the gay. A number of personal anecdotes show that bisexuals can experience exclusion and also experience not being taken seriously and other forms of discrimination both from heterosexuals and gays. Bisexuality is often not accepted as a life-form or as a fully satisfactory identity on an equal footing with a heterosexual or gay identity. The view of bisexuality as a transitory phase or a phenomenon that arises as a result of strict rules for relations between men and women is probably widely held, but is unlikely to find support with persons who view themselves as bisexual. In this action plan, the identity that bisexuals themselves find natural is regarded as that which should be assumed in meetings with persons in this group.

### Trans persons

In this action plan, the designation “trans persons” is used for a group of persons who in one or more ways break with the traditional two-gender model in society. Trans persons is an umbrella term that includes transvestites, transgender persons, crossdressers, drag kings and queens, etc. A typical definition is individuals whose gender identity and/or form of sexual expression, sometimes or always differs from social norms for gender. In international specialist environments, the term “the transgender range” is often used to refer to the diversity of people who identify themselves as trans persons.

*Transgender* is an alternative umbrella term that is much used in Europe and North America. The term is often used to refer to a person who lives parts of or the whole of his life with his own preferred form of sexual expression. Some use hormones to alter their bodily expression, but do not generally seek gender-confirming surgery. The term transgender is sometimes also used to refer to crossdressers and transvestites.

*Trans sexual* refers to persons who seek gender-confirming treatment in consistency with international diagnosis manuals, including genital surgery in countries where this is available. Some people refer to themselves as man-to-woman trans persons or, the other way round, woman-to-man trans persons. The term transsexual man or woman is also used. Following gender-confirming treatment, many people will also be perceived, and perceive themselves, as men or women.

In Norway, persons in this group have organised themselves in the LFTS. LFTS is a user organisation that works to spread information and increase knowledge about the diagnosis transsexual, and plays a proactive role in promoting sound and safe treatment provision in Norway. It is the object of the organisation to work politically and socially to ensure that women and men who undergo gender-confirming treatment are able to live openly without fear of being ostracised or discriminated against. The LFTS regards persons in this group as women or men, and is therefore not willing to identify with the term trans person. This group therefore falls outside the scope of the plan.

A *transvestite* is a person who alternates between being or appearing as a man and a woman.

Intersex differs from the trans concepts because it does not concern the experience of gender identity, but denotes persons whose bodies have both male and female sexual characteristics. Intersex is not within the scope of this plan, but is mentioned here for the sake of clarity. Approximately two out of 100 children born in Norway each year have so-called intersex factors, i.e. their genetic gender differs from chromosome pairs XX for girls and XY for boys. They can be just X, XXX or XXY and sometimes mixtures. Children are also sometimes born with both male and female genitals. Some are XY, but not responsive to testosterone. A few do not develop a penis and scrotum until puberty.

Combating narrow gender stereotypes and discrimination on the basis of alternative sexual expression has long been and is increasingly an integral part of the campaign for gay rights in very many countries. In English, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans persons) has been an umbrella term for the groups that most gay-rights organisations have had as their target groups.

There are primarily three organisations that carry out interest policy work for trans persons' quality of life and living conditions in Norway. The Norwegian Association of Trans Persons (FTP), *Skeiv Ungdom* [Queer Youth] (SU) and the Norwegian LGBT Association (LLH) all work to promote social acceptance of different gender identities and forms of sexual expression on the basis of a diversity and

antidiscrimination perspective. All three organisations are affiliated to the umbrella organisation *Menneskerettsalliansen* [Human Rights Alliance].

The report *Hälsa på like villkor* [Health on equal terms] issued by the Swedish Institute for Public Health in 2006 shows that the incidence of health problems is greater for trans persons than for the rest of the population<sup>5</sup>. The frequency of mental disorders and suicide attempts is partly much greater. The reasons for this are largely the same as those for lesbians and gays; experience of discrimination, minority stress, exposure to violence and abuse, rejection and lack of social affiliation. The Swedish report is included in the basis for the new Swedish Discrimination Act, which provides trans persons and persons with alternative sexual expression with explicit protection against discrimination. This question has also been considered by the Norwegian Government Commission on Anti-discrimination Legislation.

## 2.3 Intersectionality

Lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT) are found among both young and old, women and men, in the ethnic Norwegian population and among ethnic minority groups. LGBT persons can also have visible or invisible disabilities. Trans persons may identify themselves as hetero, homo, lesbian, bisexual or none of these. Both lesbian women and gay men can have heterosexual experiences, just as heterosexuals can have sexual experiences with persons of the same sex. LGBT persons are thus not a homogeneous group as regards age, sex or experience.

The concept *intersectionality* can be used in this context. The concept reflects how LGBT status influences and interacts with, for example, age, sex, sexual practice, degree of ability/disability, class, ethnicity, religion and cultural affiliation.

<sup>5</sup> Roth et al, 2006





### 3 ► The lifespan approach to work with lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons

The majority of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT) have by and large good health and good economy on an equal footing with the rest of the population. However, most members of this group have faced challenges and difficulties that are not experienced by heterosexuals. These may be difficulties associated with their status as a minority in a heteronormative society.

In order to achieve the objectives of the action plan, strategies and measures must be adapted to the age, sex, identity, functional ability and cultural and geographical affiliation of the target groups. Regard shall be paid to the specific vulnerability factors of the different target groups.

When incorporating LGBT perspectives in the public services, a knowledge-based lifespan approach must be adopted.

#### Children and adolescents

We know that:

- the basis for development of a secure sexual identity is laid in early childhood
- the majority of adult lesbians, gays and bisexuals knew already at an early age that they had different feelings than were expected of them by people around them

- approximately 4 per cent of the adult population were cross-dressing during childhood to an extent that gave rise to concern among the adults around them
- “coming out” at an early age is associated in the research with early sexual debut, use of drugs and alcohol, mental disorders and increased frequency of suicide attempts
- according to a survey conducted by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO), “homo” is the most frequent term of abuse in Norwegian schoolyards
- LGBT teenagers are more subject to violence from peers and close family members than other teenagers
- LGBT adolescents of immigrant background probably have to struggle with additional challenges, among others, the risk of threats, forced marriage and rejection by their families
- LGBT adolescents in some religious communities may be subjected to social rejection if they make their sexual orientation known

#### Adults

We know that:

- a large proportion of adult gays, lesbians and bisexuals conceal their sexual identity or practice from health personnel and social workers
- it is usual for lesbians and gays to conceal their sex-

ual orientation at the workplace, and openness involves an increased risk of exclusion, bullying and other forms of discrimination

- lesbians and bisexual women aged 45–64 report poorer than average health
- adult lesbians and bisexual women report considerably lower social participation than other women, while gay men report higher social participation than other men
- the proportion of persons struggling with serious substance abuse is higher in the LGBT population than in the general population
- one-third of persons diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Norway are men who have sex with men (MSM)
- in a Swedish survey, half of all trans persons state that they have considered suicide<sup>6</sup>

## **Elderly**

We know that:

- fewer gays and lesbians than people in the remainder of the population have children who can provide them with help and support in their old age
- twice as many elderly among lesbians, gays and bisexuals live alone than in the remainder of the population
- many elderly LGBT persons have concealed their sexual identity as a survival strategy for fear of being penalised, losing their jobs or losing contact with family and friends
- owing to historically conditioned prejudices and other traditional attitudes, many elderly persons choose alternative words and terms to describe their lives and partners in life
- owing to demographic and social developments, an increasing number of elderly lesbians, gays and bisexuals in the years ahead will expect health and care services adapted to their lives and experience

6 Roth et al, 2006





## 4 ► Research and knowledge development

### 4.1 Research

#### Objectives

A number of studies on lesbians and gays have been carried out in recent years. Further objectives for knowledge work are:

- review the status of Norwegian LGBT-related research to the present day in the light of international front-line research, including both basic research and applied research, including evaluations.
- update knowledge concerning the living conditions and quality of life of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT)
- focus more keenly on LGBT persons subject to dual/multiple discrimination, including LGBT persons of immigrant background and LGBT persons in the Sami population (Samis are an indigenous people, recognized as a national minority in Norway)
- improve knowledge in the various areas of society on how discrimination and rejection of LGBT persons takes place in the arenas concerned

#### Ongoing research

In recent years, following the completion in 1999 of the living conditions survey conducted by Norwegian Social Research (NOVA), *Levekår og livskvalitet blant lesbiske kvinner og homofile menn* [Living conditions and quality of life among lesbian women and gay men], important basic research was carried out under the auspi-

ces of the Research Council of Norway's programme "Kjønn i endring" [The Changing Face of Gender]. A number of studies of limited scope have also been conducted, mainly under the auspices of NOVA, including studies on lesbians and gays of immigrant background, substance use among lesbians and gays, lesbians and gays in working life, violence against lesbian and gay adolescents (see references).

In 2007, Statistics Norway was assigned the task of investigating how background variables concerning sexual identity can be included in their regular surveys of living conditions. This work is due to be completed in 2008.

A project has been initiated at the University of Bergen to survey attitudes to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons. The project is planned to be completed in autumn 2008.

#### ► Measures

**Measure 1 ► Include questions concerning sexual identity in Statistics Norway's living conditions survey**

In order to lay the basis for actual equal opportunities for sexual minorities, more knowledge is needed about the living conditions of gay people on the basis of a representative sample of the total population. The Ministry of Children and Equality collaborates with Statistics Nor-

way on including questions concerning sexual identity in the living conditions surveys. The first, on health, is planned for 2008. This will provide data for further analysis.

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 2 ► Analysis based on the results of Statistics Norway's living conditions survey**

The data set from Statistics Norway's living conditions survey is to be analysed. These analyses shall as far as possible be linked to the results of the NOVA survey conducted in 1999 and later research. The objective is to connect available knowledge to be able to develop a more comprehensive understanding.

*Implementation: 2011-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 3 ► Forskning om lesbiske, homofile, bifile og transpersoner i innvandrerbefolkningen**

Det er mangelfull kunnskap om livssituasjonen til lesbiske og transpersoner i innvandrerbefolkningen. There is a lack of knowledge about the circumstances of life of LGBT-persons of immigrant background. Relevant areas of focus may be the experience of being at the intersection of norms for sexuality and gender in, respectively, minority cultures and Norwegian society, including, for example, dealing with the expectations of minority communities and LGBT communities in Norway. It may also be relevant to focus on challenges associated with mental health.

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality and Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 4 ► Research on how lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons are received at the workplace**

There is a lack of knowledge about how rejection and erasure of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons takes place and how it relates to the psychosocial environment at the workplace. There is a need for research-based knowledge about the nature of erasure and implicit/silent discrimination and how it is experienced.

What are the consequences for individuals and for the various occupational groups and trades? The objective is to propose strategies for a more open and inclusive working environment, with no discrimination of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons.

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality and Ministry of Government Administration and Reform*

**Measure 5 ► Survey of the living conditions of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in the Sami population**

A survey will be conducted of the circumstances of life and living conditions of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons of Sami background. The survey will culminate in proposals for measures to improve living conditions and prevent discrimination of these groups.

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 6 ► Research on children who grow up in families where the parents are lesbians, gays, bisexuals and/or trans persons**

There is a need for more knowledge about the conditions of children who grow up with parents who are lesbians, gays, bisexuals and/or trans persons. A survey and analysis will be conducted of the living conditions and circumstances of life of children of LGBT parents.

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 7 ► Research on defining LGBT culture and what it provides to the community**

A review shall be made of the scope of the LGBT culture concept. What does LGBT culture mean to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons? What does queer culture provide to the society in the form of emotional and aesthetic experiences and values?

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 8 ▶ Research of the coming-out phase**

A study shall be carried out comparing the coming-out experience from different periods, religious standpoints and ethnic origins. This knowledge will be useful for making better provisions for people who are in a “coming-out” situation in the future.

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 9 ▶ Research and development in relation to sports**

Research and development in relation to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in sports should be strengthened. (This measure is derived from Report 25 to the Storting (2000-2001), the White Paper on the living conditions and quality of life of lesbians and gays in Norway)

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs*

## 4.2 Knowledge management

### Objectives

This plan constitutes an effort to establish an LGBT policy as a clear and inter sectorial policy field. Mainstreaming of the field entails that ministries and agencies are given a clear signal that they must make an effort to raise the quality of life and living conditions of LGBT people as part of the work on producing and improving all types of public service provision.

It is important that agencies and service providers, NGOs and researchers can easily determine what measures have been implemented, what can be successfully repeated in other areas and what should be done otherwise in similar situations. The following objectives have therefore been defined:

- research, sound methodology and practical experience achieved through measures and projects in this area are to be documented, systematised and made available.

- The Government will consider establishing an interdisciplinary LGBT resource centre that can be responsible for these tasks.

### ▶ Measures

**Measure 10 ▶ Preliminary project on the possible establishment of a resource centre for knowledge about lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons**

As a first step, the Government will set up a pilot project that will be charged with the task of investigating and considering alternative organisational models, location and staffing, etc. The aim is to establish an interdisciplinary/cross-sectoral resource centre for questions concerning lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons, preferably associated with a state directorate or supervisory body.

It is conceived that such a resource centre could have responsibility for:

- establishment and operation of an LGBT-website for publication, searching and download of information on LGBT issues across sectors and fields
- collection and adaptation of documentation for the LGBT network, dissemination of LGBT information, including preparation of presentations and training schemes
- participate in developing training schemes on LGBT perspectives at university and college level for different professions and service providers

It is not intended that the centre will carry out its own research, but it may produce summaries of current knowledge and articles, develop and implement training schemes and commission external research assignments if funds are made available.

On completion of the preliminary project, the Government will consider the establishment of a resource centre. This must be viewed in relation to the annual budget proposal.

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*



## 5 ▶ School and education

### Objectives

The overall purpose of the education and training sector's efforts is that the sector's course provision and working and teaching environment shall be inclusive for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT) in the same way as for other people. Education and training shall pay regard to the differences among pupils and students, and lay the basis for a diverse community at schools and education institutions.

In addition, the following concrete objectives shall apply:

- Schools and education authorities shall strive to achieve an inclusive and caring learning and working environment for all pupils, students and employees
- Increased knowledge concerning the scope and contexts of harassment and bullying associated with sexual orientation and sexual expression
- Participate in measures to combat bullying and violence associated with sexual orientation and sexual expression
- Materials shall be developed for use in teaching about sexuality and relationships that pay regard to LGBT perspectives and support the objective of zero tolerance of bullying associated with sexual orientation and sexual expression.

It is the responsibility of the higher education institutions to provide high-quality education in compliance with the overall plans laid down by the Ministry of Edu-

cation and Research. It is important that different sectors, such as health, child and family care and education, provide feedback to the education institutions on the needs of the various professions for LGBT competence.

Achievement of these objectives demands more than that the central government and the education institutions do their share; the municipalities too must take into consideration that LGBT perspectives and necessary initiatives against discrimination of LGBT people shall be integrated into the local school policy.

### Implemented and ongoing measures

In the national curriculum regulations for pre-school teachers and general teachers, equal-opportunities and other gender concerns are specifically mentioned under the subjects and subject areas to be included in the studies.

In connection with the "Knowledge Promotion" reform, new curriculums have been prepared for all subjects in the primary and lower and upper secondary schools. A number of changes have been made that are designed to make LGBT perspectives clearer and better integrated in the teaching:

- sexual orientation is mentioned under several competence aims
- sexual orientation shall be included in instruction

from grades 1–4, and instruction concerning families with same-gender parents shall be included by grade 4 at the latest

- terminology has been changed in order to show up variants of sexual orientation and gender identity that go beyond the traditional divisions of straight/gay and male/female. This may pave the way for broader discussions and greater understanding of the topic

In spring 2008, the Ministry of Education and Research launched an action plan for gender equality at the pre-school, primary and lower secondary levels. This action plan concerns the principal measures the Ministry of Education and Research wishes to implement in order to promote equal opportunities in day-care centres and primary and lower secondary schools.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is collaborating with the Centre for Behavioural Research on design of the national survey of school environment. This is a sample survey carried out in spring 2008 and otherwise every 4th year. In order to identify issues concerning gender-related bullying and bullying on the basis of sexual orientation, questions concerning this are to be included in this survey from 2008.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and the Ministry of Children and Equality have provided funding to UNIFOB Helse [UNIFOB Health] for development of an educational “school package” to prevent and deal with homophobic teasing in the lower secondary school. The school package is planned to be completed during spring 2008.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has financed a survey of sex education at the lower secondary level in Trondheim municipality. The survey is part of the collaborative project “Seksualisert trakassering og undervisning om seksualitet” [Sexualised harassment and sex education] initiated by the Norwegian LGBT Association (LLH Trøndelag) and Trondheim municipality, and was completed in May 2008. The survey will form part of the basis for preparation of new material for instruction on family, intimate relations and sexuality in the primary and lower secondary school (see measures below).

The Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Children and Equality provide funding for distribution of the monthly magazine BLIKK to schools and libraries.

## ► Measures

### **Measure 11 ► Continuation of the national initiative against bullying**

In cooperation with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, the Union of Education, Norway and the National Parents’ Committee for Primary and Lower Secondary Education, the Government has committed itself to combating bullying and discrimination of children and adolescents through the Manifesto against Bullying during the period 2006–2008. Gender-related bullying and bullying related to sexual orientation are areas that have been focused on. During the course of 2008, it will be decided how the national initiative for a sound and inclusive learning environment and efforts to combat bullying shall be continued and strengthened.

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Education and Research*

### **Measure 12 ► Questions concerning bullying on the basis of sexual orientation in the pupil survey**

The pupil survey is primarily a survey to help schools and school owners in the local quality work. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is working on the inclusion of questions concerning the topic ‘discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation’ in the pupil survey.

*Implementation: 2008-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Education and Research*

### **Measure 13 ► Prepare new materials for instruction on sexual relationships and sexuality**

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and the Norwegian Directorate of Health are collaborating on preparation of new resource and guidance

materials concerning instruction on sexual relations and sexuality, which are intended for use as guidance materials by teachers and education institutions. Information adapted to pupils and parents will also be produced. The new materials are to be adapted to the national curriculum for Knowledge Promotion, and LGBT topics will be given a more central place. The materials will be available from autumn 2008.

*Implementation: 2008-2009*

*Responsible: Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Health and Care Services*

**Measure 14 ► Increased visibility and normalisation of lgbt-perspectives among children (and adolescents) through the book and exhibition project Gay Kids in Norway**

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has provided funding for Gay and Lesbian Health Norway's book and exhibition project Gay Kids in Norway. The project is aimed at raising awareness, and is intended to help increase visibility and normalisation of lgbt-lives among children (and adolescents). The project is designed to disseminate experiential and research-based knowledge about same-sex relations in a pedagogical and aesthetic form. The book is adapted to the curriculum objectives that concern sexual orientation and forms of family up to and including grade 7, and shall be used in primary and lower secondary schools as a contribution to the schools' preventive work on bullying and discrimination of gay people.

*Implementation: 2008-2009*

*Responsible: Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 15 ► Make clear the importance of integrating LGBT topics in relevant educational provision and research projects**

The involved sectoral authorities must have a good overview of the needs for LGBT competence and competence development in their own sectors. The Ministry of Education and Research will make clear to the education institutions the importance of integrating LGBT topics in relevant educational provision and research projects.

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Education and Research*





## 6 ► Child and family policy

### Objectives

It is an overall objective that the services provided to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT) by family and child welfare services shall be equivalent to those provided to other people. The Ministry of Children and Equality and the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs have the main responsibility for adapting such services.

The objectives for the LGBT initiative in the child welfare service and the family counselling offices are:

- Mainstreaming of the LGBT perspective in the ordinary service provision and in the personnel and diversity policy
- Improve competence on LGBT perspectives among staff and management
- Include questions concerning needs and service-provision in relation to LGBT persons in evaluations of the services
- Incorporate relevant tasks and signals in management guidelines and descriptions of routines and methods. Efforts in relation to LGBT people should as far as possible be made clear in report and documentation routines

Strategies and measures for further development of child and family care services in relation to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons must as far as possible be prepared in an integrated manner. The “mar-

keting” and content of the various assistive measures, courses and other provision, and the competence of the staff, must be revised so that the needs of LGBT persons can be met.

### Implemented measures

All family counselling offices have received training through the Norwegian LGBT Association project, Rosa Kompetanse [Pink Competence]. Individual projects and measures have been implemented in several places, specifically directed towards lesbians and gays. It has proved challenging to design these services so that they appeal to same-sex couples. It is particularly difficult to convince male couples that the services may be useful to them.

#### ► Measures

See also measure 6: Research on children who grow up in families where the parents are lesbians, gays, bisexuals and/or trans persons.

#### *Measure 16 ► Implementation of the service development project for the family counselling offices*

During the action plan period, the Ministry of Children and Equality and the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs will implement and integrate the

LGBT perspective into the family care service (see measure 23 on competence raising in the child welfare service).

The experience gained from the implemented competence raising measures will be used as a basis for the further development of the family counselling offices' ordinary, nationwide service provision. In the light of this, a one-year service development project will be set up, led by the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, aimed at optimising the family counselling offices' service provision (therapy, counselling and relationships courses, training provision to other service providers, etc.). Parallel information work is necessary so that the service provision is available and as far as possible meets the needs of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons throughout Norway. In collaboration with specialist departments at the Directorate and some selected regional and local offices, the project shall:

- consider the need for a special "GAP analysis" to assess service provision in relation to the needs of the group consisting of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons, and thus lay the basis for appropriate development in the longer term
- prepare proposals for developmental measures so that the service provision appears as attractive as possible to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons
- prepare proposals for improvements in the basic and further training provision for professions/employees of the family counselling offices with regard to perspectives relating to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons
- propose adjustments to the family counselling offices' management and personnel policy so that lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons among staff and management of the organisation are supported and valued on an equal footing with other members of staff (cf. employment project of the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform).

*Implementation: 2009-2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 17 ► Continued efforts against bullying – efforts in relation to recreational institutions**

An objective of the Manifesto against Bullying 2006-2008 is that children and adolescents shall not be subjected to offensive words or acts such as bullying, violence, racism, homophobia or other discrimination or exclusion. The parties to the manifesto commit themselves to preventing harassment and offences on the basis of gender and sexual orientation. This focus has been maintained through several measures associated with gender-related bullying, cf. the measures in chapter 5, School and education.

In its work on the Manifesto against Bullying, the Ministry of Children and Equality has furthered its efforts in relation to organised recreational institutions, among other ways, by means of a handbook on bullying to stimulate dialogue on this topic. After the manifesto period (2006–2008), the Ministry of Children and Equality will continue to maintain such a perspective. A focus on bullying associated with LGBT will be given priority.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 18 ► Counteract violence against young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and/or trans persons**

Young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and/or trans persons have been found to be far more subject to gross violence from their own parents than young heterosexuals are. They are also to a much greater extent than other young people subject to violence from peers<sup>7</sup>. The services directed towards children, adolescents and their families must acquire this knowledge so that lesbians, gays, bisexuals and/or trans persons receive satisfactory follow-up and help. The Ministry of Children and Equality's web site for the child welfare service, [www.barnevern.no](http://www.barnevern.no), is an important forum for dissemination of such knowledge. The web site is an element of the competence raising for the municipal child welfare service during the period 2007–2011.

<sup>7</sup> Inter alia, Moseng, 2007



Violence against young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons both within and outside the home will be included in the work of the Ministry of Children and Equality on young people and violence, and the perspective will be included in the annual letters of allocation and priorities to the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, so that the state child welfare service involves itself actively in these issues in its work.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 19 ▶ Measure for unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers who are lesbians, gays, bisexuals and/or trans persons**

The child welfare service took over responsibility for unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers under 15 years of age in 2007, and will probably take over responsibility for unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers over 15 years of age from 2009. The child welfare service must ensure that the reception centres are a homophobia-free zone. Employees of the care centres shall be aware of problems that young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons may have faced in their country of origin and at reception centres where attitudes from the country of origin persist. The Ministry of Children and Equality will make efforts to ensure that this perspective is included in the training of employees at the child welfare service's care centre for children at Eidsvoll. If the child welfare service takes over responsibility for unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers between 15 and 18 years of age, this shall be included in the training of employees who are in contact with this group.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 20 ▶ Measures against forced marriage**

There is reason to believe that young LGBT persons of immigrant background are exposed to forced marriage. Challenges in relation to forced marriage and sexuality shall be included in guides and taken into consideration in the activities of relevant organisations and in competence raising provision for employees who work on combating forced marriage.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 21 ▶ Evaluation of LGBT perspectives in the action plan against forced marriage**

The planned evaluation of the Government's action plan against forced marriage is to include an assessment of the extent to which the objectives and measures of the plan meet challenges and needs among lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons who are being or may be subjected to forced marriage. Following the evaluation, special measures may be implemented.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 22 ▶ Provision of support to exposed young LGBT persons of immigrant background**

On the basis of experience gained from the work of Selvhjelp for innvandrere og flyktninger [Self-help for Immigrants and Refugees] for exposed LGBT persons of immigrant background in 2008, the Ministry of Children and Equality will consider further support for this type of provision each year throughout the plan period.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 23 ▶ Competence raising in the state and municipal child welfare services**

The Ministry of Children and Equality is to prepare a competence raising scheme directed towards employees of the state and municipal child welfare services. The Norwegian LGBT Association may be an appropriate collaborator. The regional specialist teams for the child welfare service will be offered competence raising schemes, and LGBT perspectives will be implemented in the activities of the specialist teams. Satisfactory collaboration between the services and between municipalities and regions plays an important role in enabling assistance and follow-up of young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and/or trans persons.

It is important that the course focuses attention on young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and/or trans persons with backgrounds in religious communities and/or immigrant communities with little tolerance for homosexuality and alternative sexual expression. There are clear indications from research that these young people

face particularly great challenges in relation to forced marriage and exclusion from the family.

Emphasis shall be placed on viewing the development of competence raising schemes for the child welfare service as far as possible in connection with measure 16, Implementation of the service development project for the family counselling offices.

Perspectives concerning lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons are to be incorporated in guides for the state and municipal child welfare services.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 24 ► Review of university- and college courses associated with the work of the child welfare service**

The Ministry of Children and Equality has appointed an expert group to review the courses associated with the work of the child welfare service. The expert group will be requested to assess the extent to which LGBT perspectives are taken into consideration in the courses on the basis of research into adolescent lesbians, gays, bisexuals and/or trans persons and violence in the family.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*



## 7 ► Recreation, sports and NGOs

### Objectives

NGOs provide a valuable supplement to the public equal treatment and antidiscrimination work. A number of LGBT-rights organisations are involved in the Government's increased efforts for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT), for example, the Norwegian LGBT Association (LLH), Skeiv Ungdom [Queer Youth] (LLH's youth organisation) and Skeiv Verden [Queer World] (LLH's subgroup for LGBT persons of immigrant background).

The Government's policy regarding NGOs is stated in the white paper, Report 39 to the Storting (2006–2007) on the voluntary sector in Norway. Here, the Government makes four main strategies the basis of its support of the voluntary sector and in order to encourage increased participation:

- Improved framework conditions for the voluntary sector
- Increased focus on resources for local activities and “low-threshold activities”
- Increased attention to inclusion and integration
- Strengthened knowledge and research

Measures mentioned in the white paper relating to the LGBT group are that “the Government will involve different homopolitical organisations in its work on

securing the rights of lesbian and gay people”.

The objectives for LGBT policy in relation to NGOs are:

- each year to reassess and possibly strengthen the economic framework conditions of the LGBT organisations
- to focus on satisfactory provision for persons subject to multiple discrimination
- to further develop relations between the authorities and voluntary LGBT organisations in all relevant sectors and at all levels
- to make efforts to ensure that sports clubs and NGOs for young people and adults are perceived as inclusive and open to a diverse membership including LGBT persons, among other ways, through support schemes, projects and dialogue with sports organisations

It is essential that the municipalities too, in view of their responsibility for a number of recreation areas and sports measures, emphasise active inclusion of LGBT persons. It is important that the municipalities integrate LGBT perspectives in the local sport and recreation policy and in their dialogue with NGOs, including the local sports clubs.

## Implemented measures

The Ministry of Children and Equality is the principal contact and most important economic contributor for the Norwegian LGBT Association and Skeiv Ungdom [Queer Youth]. Skeiv Verden [Queer World] is also funded by the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). Local organisations, subgroups, festivals and other initiatives receive various degrees of funding from various central and local authorities.

See also chapter 6 concerning child welfare and chapter 11 on health and care services and on health-oriented LGBT organisations.

In recent years, the Norwegian LGBT Association and Skeiv Ungdom [Queer Youth] have received considerable increases in operating grants. Skeiv Verden [Queer World] and local branches of the Norwegian LGBT Association and Skeiv Ungdom [Queer Youth] have also received funding for projects and operations in recent years.

In 2008, Skeiv Verden [Queer World] received NOK 1.1 million from the Directorate of Integration and Diversity's support scheme for NGOs' consciousness-raising work against forced marriage

During the years from 2005–2008, the Ministry of Children and Equality increased the budget framework for individual projects and measures. A large number of large and small projects and measures that contribute to an improved quality of life for LGBT persons have thus been implemented.

New regulations for basic funding of national voluntary child and youth organisations in Norway entered into force in 2008. In these regulations, the Ministry of Children and Equality provides that:

- it is a condition for receiving such funding that the organisation creates no obstacles to full participation for children and adolescents of all social groups, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation
- funding will not be granted to organisations that discriminate against people, or to organisations that foster negative attitudes to people on the basis of

gender, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation

- a person cannot be disqualified from holding office in such an organisation on the basis of that persons most personal and possibly innate qualities, such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability

As regards the Ministry of Children and Equality's grant scheme for initiatives for children and adolescents in large urban communities, the LGBT perspective is maintained through a special point in the circular for the scheme. The LGBT perspective shall be made clear at meetings and gatherings.

## ► Measures

See also measure 7: Research on LGBT culture and what it provides to the LGBT-community and the society and measure 9: Research and development in relation to sports

**Measure 25 ► Ensure financial support to the Norwegian LGBT Association, Skeiv Ungdom [Queer Youth] and other organisations that work to improve the circumstances of life for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons**

Operational support is granted subject to amendments resulting from the Storting's deliberations on the annual budget proposals. The Ministry of Children and Equality will continue its financial support of various projects and measures carried out by the Norwegian LGBT Association, *Skeiv Ungdom* [Queer Youth], *Skeiv Verden* [Queer World] and other NGOs that work for improvement of the circumstances of life of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons subject to the approval of the Storting.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 26 ► Integration of LGBT perspectives in sports**

The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs shall encourage the Norwegian Confederation of Sports (NIF) to maintain an active involvement in the integration of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in the sporting community. The topic lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in sports should be included in the NIF education system.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs*

**Measure 27 ► Diversity and inclusion**

*Mangfold og inkludering* [Diversity and inclusion] is a support program for children and adolescents that focuses on diversity, attitudes and participation. The scheme was set up in 2008, and is a continuation of the European youth campaign “All Different – All Equal” and the support scheme Idébanken [the ideas bank]. The purpose of this support scheme is to:

- encourage children and adolescents to demonstrate that diversity is a positive element in society
- contribute to increased knowledge about diversity, attitudes and participation in local communities
- develop and communicate new methods and activities for inclusion

Types of project that have priority:

- Projects that speak out against prejudices and/or discrimination on the basis of ethnic minority background, disability or sexual orientation
- Projects in local communities that have a clear focus on diversity, attitudes and participation and are open to collaboration with various organisations/parties
- Projects that are innovative and have a major intention of communicating and further developing knowledge and experience

The support scheme is administered by the Norwegian Youth Council on behalf of the Ministry of Children and Equality.

*Implementation: For the first time in 2008. Continuation has been submitted for consideration in the annual budget proposals.*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 28 ► Financial support for culture events/festivals for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons**

The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Children and Equality provide financial support for the holding of major culture events to assist in developing a positive LGBT culture. The support measures are continuously assessed and viewed in relation to the annual budget proposals. Financial support from the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs or the Norwegian Cultural Fund is normally dependent on high ambitions regarding artistic quality.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and Ministry of Children and Equality*



## 8 ► Working life

### Objectives

- Bullying and rejection of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT) in working life shall be actively combated
- Information on LGBT persons and their situation in working life shall be elucidated and disseminated
- The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority shall focus on this issue

### Implemented measures

The Government maintains a continuous dialogue with both Trade Unions and employers organizations on national level. Enforcement of protection against discrimination of gays in working life lies under the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO), while the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority has responsibility for provisions concerning the psychosocial working environment. The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority and the LDO have a close dialogue concerning matters with an interface to both agencies. The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority and the LDO have signed a joint collaboration document specifying how the two agencies shall collaborate and exchange experience. The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority has recently completed a three-year project against bullying in working life, “Jobbing uten mobbing [The Bully-free

Workplace]”. Here the focus was directed towards increasing the knowledge of all parties in working life on the nature of bullying and how it can best be prevented and dealt with.

### ► Measures

See also measure 4: Research on how lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons are received at the workplace.

#### **Measure 29 ► Measure for attitude change in working life**

The Ministry of Children and Equality, the LDO and the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion shall implement an attitude change measure directed against bullying of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in working life.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality and Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 30 ► The rules for training of safety representatives and working environment committees**

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion will consider amending the rules for training of safety representatives and working environment committees to include a requirement that the obligatory training shall include the topics psychosocial working environment and discrimination.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 31 ► Dialogue meetings with the labourmarket partners**

The Ministry of Children and Equality will propose a request for dialogue meetings with the national labourmarket partners, for example in Arbeidspolitisk råd [the Labour Policy Council], that cases of discrimination of LGBT persons be reported to the LDO.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 32 ► Review of the central government employment policy**

An interministerial working group shall be established, consisting of the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and the Ministry of Children and Equality, to review and coordinate all elements of the central government employment policy that concern or have bearing upon sexual orientation. The Ministry of Government Administration and Reform shall provide a uniform approach to the policy.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Government Administration and Reform*

**Measure 33 ► Prepare an information booklet on diversity in the Civil Service**

The Ministry of Government Administration and Reform will prepare an information booklet on diversity in the Civil Service. Sexual orientation shall be dealt with specifically and on an equal footing with other causes of discrimination.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Government Administration and Reform*





## 9 ► Immigration and integration

### Objectives

- The Government will ensure that antidiscrimination work covers those who are subjected to multiple discrimination, e.g. persons who are discriminated against because they are lesbians, women and immigrants
- In its efforts against discrimination, the Government is concerned to combat discrimination of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons that occurs in the immigrant population

### Implemented measures

The report “*Lesbiske og homofile med innvandrerbakgrunn – En pilotundersøkelse*” [Lesbians and gays of immigrant background – a pilot survey], issued by NOVA - Norwegian Social Research in 2003<sup>8</sup>, identified topics and issues that should be focused on in future research, as well as by public services that come into contact with lesbians and gays of immigrant background. The report was sent to the national organisations in the immigration field, Norway’s Contact Committee for Immigrants and the Authorities (KIM) and the Norwegian LGBT Association, requesting them to assess the need for follow-up or measures in their own areas. The issues addressed in the report associated with discrimination and negative attitudes have later been the subject of meetings between the national organisations in the immigration field and the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion.

<sup>8</sup> Moseng, 2003

The Act on an introduction programme and Norwegian language training for newly arrived immigrants (the Introduction Act) gives immigrants the right and/or obligation to participate in 300 hours of Norwegian language training and social knowledge (250 hours of Norwegian language training and 50 hours of social knowledge). The syllabus states that the topic “Children and family” shall include family patterns, gender roles and forms of cohabitation. VOX, the Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning (an agency of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research) has issued booklets for use in the social knowledge course, where gay partnership is taken up. The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, via VOX, encourages teachers of Norwegian for newly arrived immigrants to take up the issue of gay partnership in the teaching on the basis of existing materials.

### ► Measures

As regards children and adolescents of minority background, we refer also to measures referred to under chapter 6 Child and family policy and measure 3: Research on lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in the immigrant population.



**Measure 34 ► Dialogue with national organisations in the immigration field**

In the dialogue with national organisations in the immigration field, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion shall raise questions associated with discrimination of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons of immigrant background.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 35 ► Establishment and operation of an inter-faith council**

The Ministry of Children and Equality will set up an interfaith council, where representatives of the Council for Religious and Life Stance Communities and the Minister will be able to discuss questions of values and life stance and relevant discrimination topics, including LGBT issues.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 36 ► Training of reception centre employees and Directors of Operations**

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion will take the initiative to ensure that reception centre employees and Directors of Operations receive targeted training in topics concerning sexual orientation and different forms of sexual expression and gender perception.

*Implementation: 2009*

*Responsible: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 37 ► Strengthening of the focus on the information programme at state reception centres for asylum seekers**

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion will take the initiative to ensure that residents of state reception centres for asylum seekers are given more information on the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in Norway. As a stage in the strengthening of information in this area, printed and/or audio-visual information materials are being prepared for the target group.

*Implementation: 2009*

*Responsible: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 38 ► Preparation of guidelines for dealing with asylum cases where gender-related persecution is a factor**

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion shall prepare guidelines for dealing with asylum cases where gender-related persecution is a factor. The guidelines concern challenges and issues that may be relevant in relation to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons.

*Implementation: 2009*

*Responsible: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*



## 10 ► The Sami population and the national minorities

### Objectives

In the Sami community, lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT) are currently subject to taboo, and information about their presence in the Sami population is largely suppressed. The Government wishes to encourage changes here. Clarification of questions surrounding lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in the Sami community is necessary in order to enable improved living conditions and greater security for Sami LGBT persons. Little knowledge is available concerning attitudes to LGBT persons among national minorities: Kvens, Jews, Skogfinns, Roma and Romani in Norway.

### Implemented measures

In 2008, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion submitted a Report to the Storting (white paper) on Sami policy (Report 28 to the Storting (2007–2008), which mentions the situation of Sami lesbians and gays.

### ► Measures

See also measure 5: Survey of the living conditions of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in the Sami population

### **Measure 39 ► Set up a Sami (North Sami) page on the Norwegian LGBT Association's web site**

In collaboration with the Norwegian LGBT Association (LLH), the Ministry of Children and Equality will set up a web page in the Sami language.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

### **Measure 40 ► Invite the Sami parliament and the LDO to joint efforts to combat discrimination**

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and the Ministry of Children and Equality will take the initiative to invite the Sami parliament and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO) to joint efforts to combat discrimination in the Sami community.

*Implementation: 2009*

*Responsible: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and Ministry of Children and Equality*



## 11 ► Equivalent health and care services

### Objectives

The Government will make an effort to ensure that lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT) are taken into consideration in the work on improved public health and in the development of equivalent services.

The following objectives and perspectives will be taken into consideration in the work of the health and care services on meeting the future needs of the LGBT population:

- LGBT persons who receive health and care services shall be met with openness, respect and inclusive attitudes
- When measures, procedures or strategies are implemented in the health and care sector, LGBT perspectives should be taken into consideration
- Health and care personnel and service providers shall have good access to knowledge about health and living conditions in the LGBT population

In Report No. 25 to the Storting (2005–2006) “*Mestring, muligheter og mening*” [Coping, potential and meaning], the Government stated that it would pursue a policy of counteracting discrimination and stigmatisation of all people, and that it will develop high-quality services characterised by dignity and respect, adapted to the needs of individual users and life situations. The Government stated furthermore that the municipal health

and care services would as far as possible be designed to serve individual desires and needs, regardless of social status, personal finances, gender, age or place of residence. This entails that the services be adapted to each individual user within the framework of universal design. This includes service recipients in the LGBT population as well as in other user groups.

### The health and service needs of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons

Norwegian and international research presents a complex picture of the health of the LGBT population. The majority are in good health. However, the proportion in poorer health is considerably greater among lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons than among the population as a whole. Surveys show that trans persons generally report the poorest health among the LGBT groups. In addition, it has been found that, for various reasons, young LGBT persons, men who have sex with men, HIV-positive persons and adult lesbian women have a high risk of various types of health problem<sup>9</sup>.<sup>10</sup>NOVA report 1/99, *Levekår og livskvalitet blant lesbiske kvinner og homofile menn* [Living conditions and quality of life among lesbian women and gay men] states that fewer lesbians and gays assess their own state of health as good than is the case in the population as a whole. Many suffer from anxiety and/or depression,

<sup>9</sup> Roth et al, 2006

<sup>10</sup> Ryan and Futterman, 1998

and the proportion who attempt suicide is higher than in the population as a whole. There is considerably more substance abuse among gays and lesbians than in the remainder of the population, and LGBT persons are more inclined to be anxious and more subject to violence than other people. Generally speaking, lesbians and gay men in the NOVA survey rate their own health as poorer than do their peers in the population in general. This particularly applies to the younger age groups<sup>11</sup>.

Skewnesses are most marked as regards:

- high consumption of drugs and alcohol
- mental disorders
- suicide attempts
- disorders associated with sexual health

Shame, guilt and identity issues, and the experience of or fear of stigmatisation and discrimination increase the risk of developing both physical and mental health problems among lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons.

Surveys show that a large group of patients are unwilling to share information about their sexual orientation with health personnel, even in cases where such information is relevant. The reasons they give for withholding information are anxiety for being met with prejudice and fear of not receiving as good treatment as other people. Patients' feelings of shame and guilt are also put forward as major reasons for their lack of openness. Expressed and unexpressed heteronormativity causes many lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons to close up about factors that may be important in a treatment situation. Therapists and other personnel need to exercise sufficient sensitivity in relation to sexual orientation and sexual expression in order to detect important information and symptoms and to avoid misinterpretations.

In order to ensure equivalent availability of services, it is important that the language used in providing information and services is inclusive and formulated in such a way that the whole population is able to identify with it.

11 NOVA Report 1/99

Measures should be directed towards general consciousness raising, and a language should be developed and used that makes all people feel included and respected, regardless of sexual orientation, gender, age, social status and the like.

### Implemented measures

Report No. 25 to the Storting (2000–2001), (Homomeldinga), the White Paper on the living conditions and quality of life of lesbians and gays in Norway, clarified a number of different LGBT perspectives in the work on improving public health and in the development of services for the general public. This particularly concerned efforts directed towards children, adolescents and young adults.

In 2002, Rådgivningstjenesten for homofile i Oslo [the Counselling Service for Gays in Oslo] received financial support to function as a guidance body for other health services. The funds have been used for marketing of the service and for establishing and running a web site.

In connection with the granting of the right to requisition hormonal contraception for teenage girls to public health nurses and midwives at child health clinics and in the school health service, approximately 3500 of these nurses have completed a special supplementary university college course to strengthen their competence in sexual health and young people. Instruction concerning LGBT persons with an emphasis on young gays and lesbians has been a compulsory part of the course.

In 2004, a free evening provision was established for guidance, testing and treatment of men who have sex with men (MSM), located at the practice *Brynsenglegene*. The purpose was, among other things, to reach sexually active men who, for various reasons, chose not to visit ordinary GPs or other health services, for testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV. In October 2007, the Institute for Public Health, in collaboration with Gay and Lesbian Health Norway, conducted a survey on chatting/dating via the Internet and on sexual health among MSM. The objective is to gain knowledge concerning which sections of the health service this group makes use of, openness in relation to health personnel concerning sexual orientation,

HIV-testing behaviour, the status of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases and substance abuse. The results will be published as scientific articles. The main findings will in addition be presented to the public authorities and to specialist environments during 2008.

The Norwegian Directorate of Health has commissioned the Institute for Applied Social Science to conduct a survey of the quality of life and living conditions of HIV-positive persons in Norway. One-third of persons diagnosed with HIV in Norway are MSM, and this will be an important target group for the survey. The final report will be available during the course of 2009.

The Institute for Public Health will conduct a survey of sexual habits during 2008. This is a survey of sexual habits in the population between 18 and 59 years of age. A number of corresponding surveys have been conducted previously.

A resource booklet has been prepared for child health clinics and the school health service on how the services can best be adapted to reach young gays or young people who are unsure of their sexual identity. The resource booklet is intended to function as a knowledge bank for help in disease prevention and health promotion work in the school health service and at the health clinics for young people.

In 2005, the Norwegian LGBT Association received funding from the former Directorate for Health and Social Affairs to establish a nationwide project whose main objectives would be to increase competence and awareness in the health sector in relation to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons, referred to as "pink competence". The work is being carried out in close dialogue with and in collaboration with specialist environments and professional organisations.

Organisations such as HivNorge [HIV Norway] and AKSEPT (centre for people affected by HIV/AIDS) have received funding for concrete projects aimed at HIV-positive MSM. Gay and Lesbian Health Norway and HIV Norway are to be evaluated in 2008.

Gay and Lesbian Health Norway is an important actor

in this work, and receives continuous funding from the Norwegian Directorate of Health for operations and for measures for prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. The measures have emphasised both individual and group-oriented approaches, primarily among MSM. Women who have sex with women also constitute an important target group. In addition, Gay and Lesbian Health Norway has examined substance use in a number of gay communities. In 2006 and 2007, Skeiv Ungdom [Queer Youth] received funding for concrete measures to increase the organisation's competence on prevention of substance abuse. In 2007, funding was also given to provide the salary of a substance abuse coordinator and to run the project Prevention of substance abuse in youth environments and the Jafnadr summer camp for queer youth.

During the period 2001–2008, the Norwegian Directorate of Health has provided funding for a number of local and regional courses and seminars for key personnel in municipalities and organisations, where challenges associated with homosexuality and sexual minority status have been given priority.

## ► Measures

The overall experience of Norwegian and international research and knowledge production as well as experience derived from implemented measures indicates that further efforts should be concentrated on the following challenges:

1. identifying and clarifying health challenges in the LGBT population
2. integrating LGBT perspectives, cf. item 1 above, and ensuring equal access to health, nursing and care services
3. strengthening collaboration with NGOs

### **Identifying and clarifying health challenges in the LGBT population**

#### **Measure 41 ► Include lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in knowledge development**

There has been done some research on the health and living conditions of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans

persons in Norway. It is nevertheless important to ensure that the health and living conditions of LGBT groups are not left out of the general knowledge development. The Ministry of Health and Care Services will make efforts to ensure that the LGBT population as far as possible is included in existing and new research programmes and in knowledge summaries in the health and welfare area.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services*

**Measure 42 ▶ Increased focus on knowledge about lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in the web site helsebiblioteket.no [Health Library]**

Helsebiblioteket.no [Health Library] is a public web site with information intended for health personnel. The objective is to raise the quality of the health services by providing health personnel with free access to useful and reliable knowledge. Today, there is considerable available knowledge about the health and need for services of LGBT groups. Methods have been developed to improve professional services to meet the needs of the LGBT group. The Ministry of Health and Care Services will consider whether provisions can be made for retrieval of more information about the LGBT group in the open, web-based health-library helsebiblioteket.no. We refer in this connection to the project Pink Competence, and it is proposed that the experience gained from this project be taken into consideration in the further development of helsebiblioteket.no.

*Implementation: 2010–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services*

**Measure 43 ▶ Implementation and clarification of knowledge about lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons**

The available knowledge concerning the particular health challenges of the LGBT groups must be implemented more broadly than it is today. Satisfactory health and care services involve meeting individuals where they are, and implementing individually adapted services based on insight into the individual's life history and medical history. The Ministry of Health and Care Ser-

vices will as far as possible ensure that LGBT perspectives are included in the work on different national action plans, strategies, etc.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services and Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 44 ▶ Child health clinics and the school health service**

Child health clinics and the school health service, including the health clinics for young people, have a key role in disease prevention and health promotion directed towards children and young people 0–20 years of age. The services have an important function as regards detecting vulnerable and exposed groups, carrying out disease prevention work, referring patients for examination and treatment and collaborating with other bodies on adaptation of medical provision. The guide to the municipalities' health promotion and disease prevention work in child health clinics and the school health service (IS-1154) states that the service should particularly address problems associated with gender identity and sexuality. Sound and simple methods shall be developed to ensure that child health clinics and the school health service clearly present themselves as places where children, adolescents and parents are welcome to ask questions about gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.

*Implementation: 2009–2010*

*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services*

**Measure 45 ▶ Instruction in the school in collaboration with the school health service**

The school health service shall collaborate with the school on measures that foster a sound psychosocial and physical learning and working environment for the pupils, and provide assistance and instruction to the extent desired by the school.

The school and the school health service should plan jointly instruction that gives equivalent presentations of the different types of sexual relationship or partnership, and directly addresses young LGBT persons. Chil-



dren, siblings, friends, parents, etc. of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons must be able to identify with the description of their everyday lives given by the school and the health service.

An evaluation has been made of the resource book *Samliv og seksualitet* [Relationships and sexuality] from 2001 with supplementary booklets for pupils and parents. In 2008, on the basis of this evaluation and updated knowledge, new materials are to be developed for use in the school, cf. measure 13. The materials are to be implemented in classroom instruction.

*Implementation: 2009–2010*

*Responsible: Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Health and Care Services*

**Measure 46 ▶ Counselling on the Internet and by telephone**

Information and counselling services on the Internet and by telephone are important facilities for reaching young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons. The services are anonymous, and provide answers to questions and thoughts that may be difficult to discuss with other people.

These facilities include:

- The health clinics for young people on the Internet at [klara-klok.no](http://klara-klok.no) and [unghelse.no](http://unghelse.no)
- Helpline services: the SUSS-telefonen (helpline of the Centre for Young People's Health, Sexual Relations and Sexuality) and *Telefonen for seksuell helse* [Helpline for sexual health]

The service [klara-klok.no](http://klara-klok.no) also provides an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers in the Sami language.

It shall be ensured that employees of Internet and telephone services for adolescents and young adults are given good training on the needs and challenges of the LGBT groups.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services and Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 47 ▶ Increased focus on lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in mental health protection**

The LGBT groups have a high risk of developing mental problems and disorders. The focus on prevention and treatment shall be strengthened. It is important to strengthen the knowledge concerning the significance that a known or unknown LGBT status should have for the treatment provided. The National Resource Centre for Mental Health Work in the Municipalities (to be established in 2008) and the Regional Centre for Children and Adolescents' Mental Health shall carry out this work as part of their normal operations.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services*

**Measure 48 ▶ Increased focus on the use of drugs and alcohol by lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons**

High consumption of alcohol and other substances is more widespread in parts of the LGBT population than in the general population. Lesbian women in particular report considerably higher alcohol consumption than other women. Persons with uncertain or bisexual identity also seem to be particularly exposed to the risk of high consumption of drugs and alcohol. The seven regional resource centres for substance abuse issues will be assigned the task of strengthening knowledge about this field. By means of the Government's escalation plan for the field of substance abuse, substance abuse prevention will also be focused on in relation to these groups.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services*

**Measure 49 ▶ Test programmes for suicide prevention for young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons**

Norwegian and international research shows that adolescents and young LGBT adults have a high level of predisposition to suicide attempts. Several risk factors seem characteristic for the LGBT group. For gays and lesbians, these involve, among others, living in a heterosexual relationship, having few heterosexual friends, coming out with one's sexual orientation in early youth and being open about one's orientation to all heterosexual friends. *Skeiv Ungdom* [Queer Youth] has taken

the initiative to develop and test the VIVAT suicide prevention course for young sexual minorities in collaboration with the Regional Resource Centre on Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention. During the course of 2009, the Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Ministry of Children and Equality will consider whether a programme for suicide prevention among young LGBT persons should be tested.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services and Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 50 ▶ Strengthen prevention in relation to HIV infection and improve follow-up of people who live with HIV**

Men who have sex with men (MSM), due to their particular vulnerability to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, have traditionally been an important target group in disease prevention work. It is important that there be a keen focus on this group. This applies both to prevention of infection and to guidance and follow-up of persons who live with HIV while belonging to a sexual minority. In 2009, the Ministry of Health and Care Services will present a new strategy for the disease prevention work in relation to MSM and follow-up of sexual minorities who live with HIV.

*Implementation: 2009–continuous*

*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services*

**Measure 51 ▶ Better follow-up of children and adolescents with alternative gender identity and sexual expression**

In Norway, there is no systematic follow-up of children and adolescents with alternative forms of sexual expression or identity, i.e. as “trans people”. The professional sexology community has expressed concern for the diagnosis, treatment and pathologising of people who could have benefited from more decentralised follow-up. These young people often meet the health services due to the negative reactions of people around them to their unclear or lacking identification with traditional gender stereotypes, or because they disregard traditional stereotype expressions of gender. In order to avoid reinforcing the child’s feelings of guilt and shame, it is im-

portant that personnel in the health and care sector have the knowledge and methods to interpret the young person’s gender in a refined and nonpathologising way<sup>12 13</sup>. Professional sexologists have good experience of local measures directed towards people in close to the child who are disturbed by the child’s behaviour, for example, in the family, day care facility or school<sup>14</sup>. During the course of 2009, the Ministry of Children and Equality will assess measures in this area in cooperation with other involved ministries.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 52 ▶ The knowledge about elderly lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans recipients of nursing and care services shall be strengthened**

Lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons who receive nursing and care services are often “invisible” to the public services as regards their orientation or identity as lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons. Many LGBT persons are also single, which in itself is an socioeconomic factor resulting in increased consumption of health and care services. Health and care personnel lack the necessary knowledge about the LGBT population, their needs for health and care and how services should be structured and provided. Generally speaking, little room is allowed in health education for the LGBT topic. The Ministry of Health and Care Services will assess measures to increase knowledge and awareness concerning LGBT persons in the nursing and care sector. Consideration shall be given to how the special needs of elderly and other lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons with a need for nursing and care services can be met in the ordinary public services.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services*

12 Benestad and Almås, 2001

13 Ryan and Futterman, 1998

14 Benestad and Almås, 2006



**Measure 53 ► Increased awareness of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons with disabilities**

Norwegian research has only to a small extent examined the combination of LGBT with disabilities. People with disabilities do not form a homogeneous group, and it is difficult to generalise on what challenges LGBT persons in this group will meet. There is nevertheless reason to believe that a number of LGBT persons with disabilities will meet greater obstacles in relation to living good and secure lives than will other groups. In recent years, the professional sexology community associated with habilitation and rehabilitation services has received increased competence in this field. There has also been a development of training materials for different groups with disabilities. In collaboration with other involved ministries, the Ministry of Children and Equality will consider how this work can be continued.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Strengthening the field-based work - communication and collaboration with user and interest organisations**

**Measure 54 ► Development of the health promotion and disease prevention work under the auspices of Gay & Lesbian Health Norway**

Gay & Lesbian Health Norway is an important contributor to health promotion and disease prevention work among lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons. Gay and Lesbian Health Norway works on the basis of the peer principle and field-based work, and is also an important knowledge provider to the services and the authorities on developmental features in the health of the LGBT group. The organisation has predominantly been financed by means of project and operating grants via the Strategic Plan to combat HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, but has in recent years extended its scope to include substance abuse and mental health. Following the evaluation in 2008, the Government wishes to assess the organisation's role in the follow-up of national strategies and measures in disease prevention work in the years ahead, including the funding of such work.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

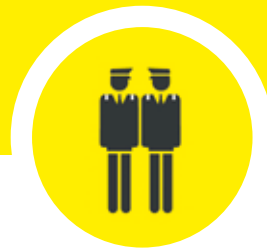
*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services and Ministry of Children and Equality*

**Measure 55 ► Continuation of Helpline for Young Gays**

Until 2002, *Homofiles ungdomstelefon* [Helpline for Young Gays] was run as a voluntary peer measure, based on youth-to-youth dialogue under the wings of the youth group of the Norwegian LGBT Association. Since 2002, funding has been granted to *Skeiv Ungdom* [Queer Youth] to ensure professional quality assurance in the form of training in crisis management for the voluntary, a second-line arrangement staffed with qualified personell and for general operation of the scheme. The helpline is much in use and constitutes an important peer-based easy-access service for adolescents and young adults who have questions concerning sexuality, identity, feelings, etc. The helpline facility will be continued at the same level as up to and including 2008.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Health and Care Services and Ministry of Children and Equality*



## 12 ► Legal position, police and prosecuting authority

For an account of anti-discrimination legislation, see 1.4.

### The police and prosecution authority

The police and prosecuting authority shall make efforts to ensure:

- zero tolerance of offensive acts related to sexual orientation and sexual expression by members of the public and internally in the police service.
- more severe penalties for violence with a basis in a person's sexual orientation and/or gender expression
- that reports of violence are registered and taken seriously by the police and the judicial system
- that hate violence cases are handled swiftly
- that the police and prosecuting authority receive the necessary training in LGBT perspectives relevant to their work
- to the extent necessary, documents and rules are reviewed so that the terms applied in connection with LGBT policy are as uniform as possible and preferably in consistency with the terms and concepts discussed in chapter 2 of this plan

### Implemented measures

Persons with gay orientation and way of life are protected by criminal law against offensive acts perpetrated by other persons through the provisions of sections 135a and 349a of the Penal Code. Section 135a of the Penal

Code concerns offences associated with discriminatory or hateful expression concerning a person on the basis of skin colour or national or ethnic origin, religion or life stance, or gay orientation. Section 349a of the Penal Code concerns offences associated with refusing a person goods, services or admission to public performance or exhibition or other public gathering owing to that person's religion or life stance, skin colour or national or ethnic origin or gay inclination, lifestyle or orientation.

If a breach of the law has a basis in other persons' gay orientation, it follows from section 77 (i) of the Penal Code of 2005 that importance shall be attached to this motive as a factor increasing the severity of the sentence. This provision is in consistency with the proposal by the Ministry of Justice in Proposition No. 8 to the Odelsting (2007–2008), and rests on the fact that, when violence towards particularly exposed groups increases, this creates anxiety and limits in their potential for living full lives. Other persons in the same situation also become insecure. Such penal offences shall be dealt with in consistency with the intentions of the legislature, and the enactment of such provisions is intended as a contribution to this.

The adopted sections 185 (hateful expressions) and 186 (discrimination) in the Penal Code of 2005 substanti-

ally maintain sections 135a and 349a of the Penal Code of 1902.

These provisions will not enter into force until the final Proposition on the specific part of the Penal Code is submitted to and considered by the Storting. It is planned that the final Proposition will be submitted before the end of 2008.

Violence and criminal acts directed against exposed groups are to be registered and followed up by the police. In November 2006, the police case handling tool Basis Løsning (BL) [Basic Solution] was equipped with a registration function to be activated when registering reports of offences assumed to have a basis in hate crime. In this way, these cases can be identified electronically in further handling, and be given the necessary investigation and prosecutory priority, documentation and progress. In order to further ensure the quality of registration of this type of crime, it would be relevant to consider more closely the registration system used in Sweden.

It is important to be aware that information concerning racist and discriminatory motives for criminal acts is not always brought to the attention of the police. The police too must often use professional discretion in assessing whether an act was so motivated. This complicates the work of registering this type of violence correctly.

The work that now will be done, both in order to increase focus from the police and to improve registration and statistics, will help to provide the authorities with a substantially better overview of this type of crime.

The time that elapses from the report of a crime to the reactions of the police, prosecuting authority, court and correctional services on the offence must be as brief as possible. Rapid reaction to criminal acts has proved to have a clear preventive effect as well as reinforcing confidence in the legal system.

Ethics has been included in the instruction at the Norwegian Police University College, and the Norwegian Police Directorate, in collaboration with Statskonsult,

has provided courses on racism and discrimination attended by at least one person from each police district. The same persons participate in the police districts' diversity councils and communicate their knowledge to colleagues through courses and local training in each police district.

The Norwegian Police Directorate also holds dialogue meetings with the police districts' management groups, where diversity is an important topic. Sexual orientation is included in the diversity concept of the police.

## ► Measures

### **Measure 56 ► Training in LGBT perspectives and hate crime**

LGBT perspectives will be included in management guidelines as part of the social diversity work of the Police Service, and an increase in employees' knowledge concerning lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons will be focused on. In collaboration with the Norwegian Police University College, the Norwegian Police Directorate will prepare training materials on social diversity for local use in police districts and specialised bodies. The materials will be based on the experience of other agencies in Norway and police organisations in other countries, and will provide increased awareness and recognition of why the LGBT perspective is a topic in the police.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Justice and the Police*

### **Measure 57 ► Survey of hate violence**

During the plan period, a survey shall be conducted of the scope, characteristic features and contexts of cases of hate violence directed against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons and the authorities' handling of such cases.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Justice and the Police*

**Measure 58 ► Review of the system for registering cases of hate crime**

The Ministry of Justice shall assess the need for further improvements in the registration systems and procedures so as to provide a better overview of hate crime directed against various exposed groups, such as lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons. The registration system shall form a basis for preparation of annual statistics concerning this type of crime.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Justice and the Police*

**Measure 59 ► Processing time limit of 90 days**

The Ministry of Justice will monitor whether the explicit objectives concerning a 90-day maximum case-handling time are achieved. The explicit objectives apply to the handling of cases concerning injurious assault and bodily harm (sections 228 and 229 of the Penal Code). This will also apply to cases of hate violence against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Justice and the Police*

**Measure 60 ► “Plan for social diversity 2008–2013”**

The Norwegian Police Directorate’s “Plan for diversity efforts 2008–2013” encompasses the work of the police in relation to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons. Implementation of the plan is due to start in 2008.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Justice and the Police*



## 13 ► Norway in the international community – combating discrimination of sexual minorities

### Objectives

In large parts of the world, lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (LGBT) are subjected to systematic discrimination and stigmatisation. In many places, LGBTs are excluded from elementary rights. Physical and sexualised violence is widespread and partly accepted by the authorities and by society. For example, homosexuality is still prohibited in many countries.

Stigmatisation and deprivation of rights on the basis of sexual orientation and sexual expression may have dramatic consequences for the health of the individual and for society as a whole. The prevalence of HIV and AIDS among sexual minorities throughout the world underlines the importance of having a clear policy that recognises and adapts to the specific health problems faced by sexual minorities. It is important to ensure that national health plans pay regard to the situation and needs of sexual minorities.

The Government has committed itself to pursuing a development policy conducive to combating all forms of discrimination and stigmatisation of persons on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. This involves a clear initiative in sensitive areas through fora for political dialogue and financial support of the rights work done by the sexual minorities themselves. This development policy is intended to raise the awareness of the authorities of partner countries concerning their

responsibility with regard to citizens' rights in all areas and, not least, to help strengthen the capacity of the authorities to promote and protect these rights. The Government wishes to provide financial support of the sexual minorities' own organisations and other forces in civil society that are involved in efforts to improve the rights and life situations of sexual minorities.

### Implemented measures

Norway is an active champion of the LGBT cause, primarily through the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. Norway has presented interventions on behalf of 54 countries concerning human rights violations on the basis of sexual orientation and sexual expression. The principal message is that:

- states must decriminalise homosexuality, and those states that apply the death penalty for homosexuality must abolish this. Homosexuality is currently a penal offence in over 80 countries, and several of these apply the death penalty for homosexuality<sup>15</sup>
- states must respect the absolute prohibition of torture, and combat violence against LGBT persons
- states must not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and sexual expression<sup>16</sup>
- all special procedures in the UN and treaty bodies monitoring the various human rights conventions

<sup>15</sup> Afghanistan, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates and Yemen

<sup>16</sup> The Yogyakarta Principles, 2006

should continue to assess such abuse within their respective terms of reference and to report it.

- The Human Rights Council should pay necessary attention to abuse of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons

Furthermore, Norway supports the Yogyakarta principles which address a range of human rights and considers how they should be applied in relation to all persons regardless of sexual orientation and sexual expression .

The development policy objectives entail promotion of tolerance to variations in sexual orientation and sexual expression, and decriminalisation and combating of all forms of discrimination and stigmatisation of persons on the basis of sexual orientation and sexual expression.

## ► Measures

### **Measure 61 ► Continue a close dialogue with Norwegian development agencies**

A close dialogue will be maintained with Norwegian development agencies that work to improve living conditions and secure the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in other countries.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad*

### **Measure 62 ► Provide support to organisations and measures that promote the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons**

Each year, financial and moral support will be considered for organisations and initiatives that promote the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad*

### **Measure 63 ► Work for international acceptance of the concept “sexual rights”**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will work to secure international acceptance of the concept “sexual rights” in consistency with the working definition prepared by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

### **Measure 64 ► Work internationally to combat discrimination of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will work in the relevant international fora against criminalisation, discrimination and stigmatisation of persons on the basis of sexual orientation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will also raise this in bilateral meetings.

*Implementation: 2009–2012*

*Responsible: Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

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