

LGBT+ inclusion:

Guidance for councillors, local authorities and community leaders

What can I do to support LGBT+ inclusive education?

Councillors are a bridge between the community and the local authority. Building and maintaining meaningful relationships with a diverse range of people in your community is essential to you fulfilling your duties. Making sure people on all sides of a debate are heard is key to effective local leadership. However, freedom of speech does not warrant hate speech, which can impinge on people's right to safety.

The local authority can take a lead in developing a borough/region-wide approach to LGBT+ inclusion in education. In doing this, local authorities will meet their responsibilities around public health, safeguarding, community cohesion, wellbeing, suicide prevention and education, while also protecting individual staff and schools from targeted abuse and harassment.

There have been some great examples of councillors working together to be proactive on LGBT+ inclusive education.

- In July 2019, [Lewisham](#), [Lambeth](#), [Nottingham](#) and [Haringey](#) councils passed supportive motions on LGBT+ inclusive Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).
- [South Tyneside council](#) co-developed an LGBT+ school standard with young people.
- [Brighton and Hove city council](#) updated its toolkit for supporting trans students in late 2018.

By having a clear policy on LGBT+ inclusive education, councils can send a clear message to the community about equality, while also safeguarding schools, staff and pupils from harmful protests and abuse.

Regardless of your personal views on LGBT+ inclusion, as a councillor you are required to adhere to your council's code of conduct for elected members, deriving from Nolan's seven principles of public life. Most relevant here are selflessness, objectivity, leadership and honesty.

What can I do about anti-LGBT+ inclusion meetings/protests in my area?

Anti-RSE lobby groups are well-resourced and are trying to co-opt faith communities, framing their campaigns as religious opposition. There are numerous questions about how representative these groups really are, their funding sources and their connections globally. Anti-RSE websites promote links to anti-abortion, anti-LGBT+ rights and anti-women's rights groups in the United States.

While groups targeting Muslim parents and carers have received the most media attention, there are groups lobbying other faith communities including [Anglican](#), [Christian](#) and [Jewish](#) communities. Meanwhile, LGBT+ led and LGBT+ inclusive faith groups have been vocal about their support for LGBT+ inclusive RSE, see more [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

A significant feature of the Birmingham school gate protests is that the organisers of the protests admitted they did not have children at the school, indicating the deliberate wedge anti-RSE lobbyists, and elements of the media, are seeking to create between members and parents/carers. This is a false division. Parents/carers and members have campaigned successfully together in recent

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years around many issues including SEN pupils needs, assessment regimes and academisation, demonstrating the strength of many school communities. Communicating with staff and parents/carers of the mutually beneficial relationship between parent/carers and members is essential to moving this conversation forward.

As soon as you become aware of leaflets in your area, contact your local union office and the local authority. Don't seek to handle the issue alone, taking a borough/ district/ academy-trust wide approach to the issue will safeguard your school and your staff.

Here are what some local authorities have done about protests:

- **Haringey's motion on inclusive schools** included an agreement to use Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) where protests are taking place outside school gates. PSPO propose to deal with a particular nuisance in a particular area that is having a detrimental effect on the quality of life for those in the local community. They can prohibit certain things or require specific things to be done.
- In Birmingham, the council applied to the High Court for an injunction against named and unnamed persons-the order is viewable [here](#).

Where can I find out more?

The Local Government Association has developed a comprehensive RSE resource [here](#).