

## FAQs

### How can I tell if I'm gay / lesbian or straight?

Write down all the gorgeous film stars you can think of. What sex are they?

### No, seriously!

Sorry about that. Seriously, it may be too early to tell one way or the other. Some people's sexual orientation only settles down quite late in the teens. Aim to feel secure in what you are. If you feel confused, say "OK, my hormones are confused. I'll manage to live with that till things settle down".

### Can you change from being straight to being gay, or the other way round?

People do change, especially in our teens. We can't make it happen on purpose.

### I think my brother's gay. What should I do?

How about Nothing? Isn't it totally his own business whether he's gay or not?

Remember, you can't tell by looking. Sometimes people look as though they're gay or lesbian when in fact they're straight.

And the other way round too.

### But I don't think he's happy about it.

If he seems worried about something, then it might be to do with sexuality, or it might be something totally different. If you're really worried about him, you could simply ask him what's on his mind...?

### Why am I gay? My parents think it has to be someone's fault.

Well, it happens. It's got nothing to do with the way people are brought up, and it's not a choice you've made. No-one's done anything to make it happen. Have your parents asked themselves what it was that made them straight? Very important: there's no question of "fault"! Growing up gay or lesbian or bisexual is just as good and natural and ordinary (and special) as growing up straight.

### I haven't done it once yet! Is there something wrong?

In a word, No! You're fine. Don't have sex till you feel it's right for you.

### I'm gay, and I need to find out about safer sex.

Ask your school nurse, or ring one of the information lines inside this leaflet. Everyone who has sex should do safer sex, whether we're straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual. There are some really nasty infections around like HIV and chlamydia, and they can affect anyone and everyone—boys and girls, straight and gay.

### My family's religious. So am I. And I'm lesbian. It's really difficult for me.

Religion is a very personal thing. It can be difficult to bring together what you are, and what you believe. We can't give a simple answer. But there are many lesbian or gay people in the UK who are also very committed Christians, Muslims, Jews, and Sikhs. They've found a way. It might help to talk to one of the helplines in this leaflet.

### Hey, I'm gay, and I've got no problems at all.

Good for you.

# Information Factsheet — Sexual Orientation —

## Through our teens and out the other side—

### With confidence

Respect ourselves the way we are—straight, or gay, or bisexual; tall or short; black or white; whatever.

### Without prejudice

Respect other people as they are—straight, or gay, or bisexual, tall or short, black or white; whatever.

### Informed and sorted

Throw away the stories and stereotypes. Find out about things. Find out about ourselves and others.

### Being careful

With ourselves—be safe, don't do things we're going to be sorry for tomorrow.

With other people—respect their choices. We don't force people into being what we want them to be.

### In our own families

Families can be good places to be—centres of love, fun, responsibility and respect. Equally true whether our own family is opposite-sex or same-sex.

## JAAHB—Joint Action Against Homophobic Bullying

The Intercom Trust: lesbian gay bisexual & trans people in the South West

Helpline: 01392 201018 Office: 01392 201015 [helpline@intercomtrust.org.uk](mailto:helpline@intercomtrust.org.uk)

[www.intercomtrust.org.uk](http://www.intercomtrust.org.uk) PO Box 285 Exeter EX4 3ZT Reg. charity 1072772

# Information Links and Helplines

*Intercom believes each of these organisations can provide appropriate help for young people and their families, but we cannot accept any responsibility for sites and organisations other than our own.*

## *sexual orientation & gender—general...*

### **The Intercom Trust**

#### **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans resources in the South West**

The South West lesbian gay bisexual and transgender community group.

Information and confidential help, training, and campaigns. Special project to combat homophobic school bullying. **Contact us in confidence:—**

**Helpline: 0845 6020 818** Office: 01392 201015 PO Box 285 Exeter EX4 3ZT  
helpline@intercomtrust.org.uk www.intercomtrust.org.uk

### **FFLAG**

#### **Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gay Men**

FFLAG is a national organisation of supportive parents who have lesbian daughters or gay sons. The parents run local helplines for other parents and for young people. Website: [www.fflag.org.uk](http://www.fflag.org.uk).

E-mail [info@fflag.org.uk](mailto:info@fflag.org.uk), or ring the central helpline, 0845 652 0311.

### **Gay and Lesbian Switchboard**

National helpline number — 020 7837 7324. Website: [www.llgs.org.uk](http://www.llgs.org.uk)

### **Mermaids**

Support for children and teenagers up to 19 who are transgendered.

[mermaids@freeuk.com](mailto:mermaids@freeuk.com). Website: [www.mermaids.freeuk.com](http://www.mermaids.freeuk.com)

**REGARD:** National organisation of disabled lesbian and gay people.

Email: [regard@dircon.co.uk](mailto:regard@dircon.co.uk)

## *youth groups & young people's help...*

### **Young Lesbian Gay & Bisexual Peer Support Project**

Manchester-based project, led by young people.

Helpline: 0800 169 7384. Website: [www.peer-support.org.uk](http://www.peer-support.org.uk).

**Out Youth Project, Plymouth:** 01752 257077

**X-plore, Exeter LGB Youth Group:** 07867 570944

**Respect, North Devon LGB Youth Group:** [respectlgbu@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:respectlgbu@yahoo.co.uk)

**Gay Youth UK.** Website with advice pages: [www.gayyouthuk.org.uk](http://www.gayyouthuk.org.uk)

**The Site.** [www.thesite.org/info/relationships/sexuality/](http://www.thesite.org/info/relationships/sexuality/).

## *sexual orientation & religion...*

### **Young Lesbian and Gay Christians**

Website: [www.lgcm.org.uk/ylgc/ylgc.htm](http://www.lgcm.org.uk/ylgc/ylgc.htm)

### **Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement**

Helpline (Wednesday evenings): 020 7739 8134. Website: [www.lgcm.org.uk](http://www.lgcm.org.uk)

### **Evangelical Fellowship for Lesbian and Gay Christians**

[info@eflgc.org.uk](mailto:info@eflgc.org.uk). Website: [www.eflgc.org.uk](http://www.eflgc.org.uk).

### **Safra Project**

information on issues relating to lesbian, bisexual and transgender women who identify themselves as Muslim. Email: [info@safraproject.org](mailto:info@safraproject.org)

### **Imaan UK**

Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, or questioning.

Email: [info@imaan.org.uk](mailto:info@imaan.org.uk). 07849 170793 or 07951 770735. [www.imaan.org.uk](http://www.imaan.org.uk)

### **Metropolitan Community Church, Torbay**

Part of a worldwide fellowship of Christian churches with a special outreach to the world's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities.

01803 520713 Email: [revkev@mcctorbay.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:revkev@mcctorbay.freereserve.co.uk)

## *health...*

**Eddystone Trust,** 01752 257077 and 01803 380692

Sexual health project based in Plymouth and Torbay

**Positive Action South West,** 0800 328 3508. Website [www.pasw.org.uk](http://www.pasw.org.uk)

Sexual health project based in Exeter

### **Cornwall Gay Men's Health Project**

Sexual health project working across Cornwall.

Phone: 07971 175007 or 01209 610854. Website: [www.gaycornwall.org.uk](http://www.gaycornwall.org.uk).

### **Naz Project London**

Sexual-health project working with men and women in the South Asian, North African, Middle Eastern, Horn of African and Latin American Communities.

Phone: 020 8741 1879. Email [naz@naz.org.uk](mailto:naz@naz.org.uk). Website: [www.naz.org.uk](http://www.naz.org.uk).