



INTERNATIONAL  
TRANSPORT  
WORKERS'  
FEDERATION

The background is a collage of colorful illustrations. It includes a yellow section with a group of diverse people, a teal section with a bus, a blue section with a person in a uniform, a purple section with people at a meeting, and an orange section with a person at a control panel. The central text is contained within a white cloud-like shape.

A TOOLKIT FOR  
**UNIONS** ON  
**LGBT+ ISSUES**

# Dear Readers,

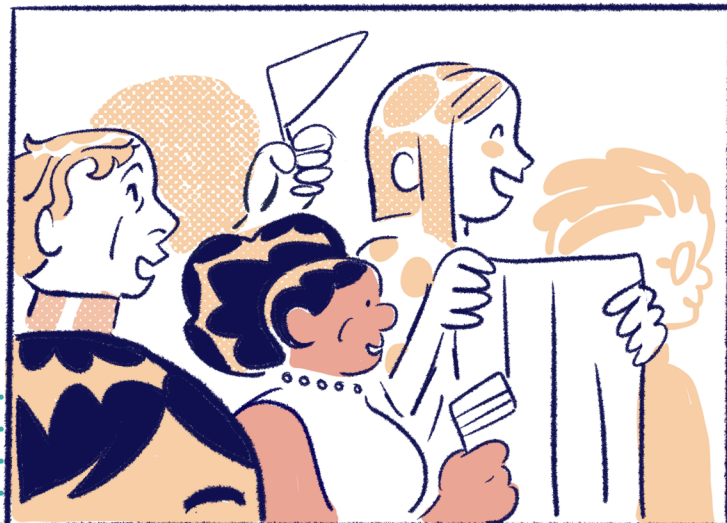
We hope you enjoy this booklet on LGBT+ issues in the transport sectors!

The ITF has always advocated for equality, in the workplace and wider society – it is a core principle of the international labour movement. However, only in recent years have we begun to focus on the particular challenges facing LGBT+ transport workers. We are still at the beginning of a long journey, but we have already made significant steps forward.

This booklet brings together important aspects of our work on LGBT+ issues in an accessible way. Along with background information and some important sources, it includes a comic and a toolkit (both produced by our friends at Pushpin) based on the ITF's first research project on the status of LGBT+ workers in the aviation and public transport sectors. There are also signposts to further resources that you and your unions might find useful.

We hope you find the booklet educational, inspiring and fun, and we look forward to working with you in the years to come to advance LGBT+ equality around the world.

In solidarity,  
Alana Dave, *ITF Urban Transport*  
Gabriel Mocho Rodriguez, *ITF Civil Aviation*







# Table of Contents

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Timeline .....                                 | 4     |
| ITF Congress Resolution .....                  | 5     |
| Council of Global Unions LGBTI programme ..... | 6     |
| Introduction to Comics .....                   | 7     |
| Comics .....                                   | 8-17  |
| Collective Bargaining .....                    | 18-19 |
| Advocating for LGBT+ colleagues.....           | 20    |
| Union Initiatives .....                        | 21    |
| Glossary .....                                 | 22    |
| Links to External Sources .....                | 23    |

# TIMELINE



We have come a long way over the last few years in recognising the vital role that LGBT+ workers play in the transport sectors. This timeline shows some of the key milestones – and you may spot where you and your unions fit in!

1999

The ITF Education Department launches a landmark programme on HIV/AIDS in the transport sectors, focussing on de-stigmatising these conditions and opening up access to healthcare for workers. However, explicit references to LGBT+ communities are kept in the background. It is important that everyone gains access to support for their health condition without having to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity.

2018

At our 44th Congress, held in Singapore, the ITF passes our first ever resolution in support of LGBT+ workers' rights. The Congress screens light up with Pride flags as delegates celebrate!

2019

The ITF helps form the Council of Global Unions LGBTI Coordinating Committee, bringing together trade-unionists from all sectors of the economy to jointly advocate for equality. In parallel, the ITF Cabin Crew Committee adopts its own resolution on LGBT+ equality.

2023

At the Urban Transport Conference, held in South Africa, ITF unions pass the first sector-wide resolution on the industrial issues of LGBT+ workers in public transport. This is followed by similar resolutions by unions in other transport sectors and specific regions of the world.

2024

At our 46th Congress, held in Morocco, the ITF upgrades our existing mandate to create our first ever democratic structure for LGBT+ transport workers. Now we look to the future!









# ITF Congress Resolution


## Combating discrimination against LGBT+ transport workers

The 46th Congress of the ITF, meeting in Marrakech 13-19 October 2024, noting the ITF's demand for "Equality for transport workers" in the ITF Congress vision 2024-29:

### CONSIDERING THAT:

- 
- 
- LGBT+ persons face exclusion, stigma, discrimination, violence and harassment, killings, sexual violence, threats and hate speech. They face discrimination in their workplaces and in public spaces and experience economic and social inequalities and marginalisation in many ways. This is due to discriminatory legislation, discriminatory practices in workplaces and discriminatory attitudes. Discrimination in the workplace runs counter to decent work and can lead to poverty, threatening sustainable development, undermining productivity and competitiveness and promoting political instability.
  - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 recognises discrimination as a violation of human rights; ILO Convention 111 concerning Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) 1958 (one of the fundamental ILO conventions) provides for explicit protection against discrimination on the basis of sex under Article 1.1.a; and Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 concerning Violence and Harassment 2019 recognise the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination affecting workers.
  - The human, social and economic costs of discrimination are huge, and by improving the situation for LGBT+ persons the whole of society will benefit. International studies have confirmed the benefits of LGBT+ inclusion at work, which helps ensure that all people feel valued, are treated fairly and are empowered to contribute to and influence outcomes in the workplace.
  - The ITF has a key role to play in combatting discrimination against LGBT+ persons, in trade unions, at workplaces and in society. We move the world and therefore we are best placed to move attitudes, practices and legislation that can support a world without discrimination.

### CALLS ON THE ITF TO:

- 
- Establish an advisory group on LGBT+ issues to support the ITF Executive Board and secretariat in building equality in our unions and workplaces.
  - Continue conducting studies on the extent of discrimination against LGBT+ persons in the transport sectors, with recommendations on ITF policies and actions. Develop programmes to win protection against discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.
  - Encourage trade unions to ensure that LGBT+ workers can organise and exercise their right to freedom of association, and that LGBT+ issues are reflected in collective bargaining agreements with employers, workplace policies and other tools.
  - Promote LGBT+ inclusion in the world of transport, as well as in union decision-making structures, including by negotiating and working together with employers.
  - Work together with the ILO, global union federations and NGOs on the development and implementation of programmes, courses and training to raise awareness about the status of LGBT+ transport workers.



# The Council of Global Unions LGBTI Programme

Of course, the struggle for LGBT+ equality doesn't begin or end with the transport sectors. There are LGBT+ workers in every sector of the economy, and so the fight for equality is a matter for all local, national and global unions.

The Council of Global Unions (CGU) brings together the ITF and our counterparts organising workers in different sectors of the economy. In 2019, the CGU created an LGBTI Coordinating Committee so that the global unions could work more closely on their strategies to win equality in the workplace and beyond.

We have done some important work with our CGU partners, including:

- Developing educational resources on how to use ILO Convention 190 as a tool to protect LGBT+ workers from violence and harassment
- Organising a union caucus within the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) to bring the labour and LGBT+ movements closer together
- Advocating for equality with multilateral institutions, like the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights

You can find out more about the CGU LGBTI programme on the LGBTI Workers website.



# COMICS



Sharing stories can be a powerful tool for promoting and championing LGBT+ rights, especially in transport workplaces. Through these comics, workers can connect, nurture an emotional connection with readers, and foster solidarity. These narratives can humanise the struggles faced by LGBT+ workers and challenge the biases and assumptions that fuel discrimination. Moreover, they can inspire others to take action and advocate for more inclusive policies and practices.

Share these comics to generate interest, engage in discussions, or point them to the full report for additional information and context. You can also access editable versions of the comics on Canva; these enable you to edit and create translations in your own languages. Click the link here or scan the QR code below:





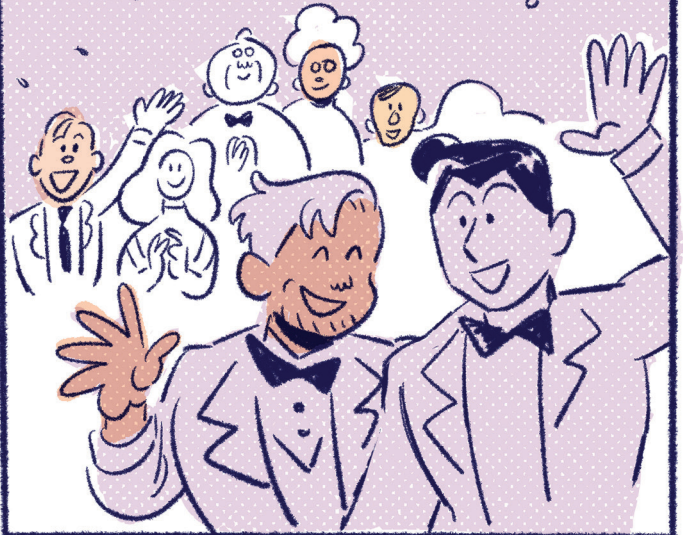
**LGBT+ WORKERS ARE EVERYWHERE**

LGBT+ workers exist all over the world.

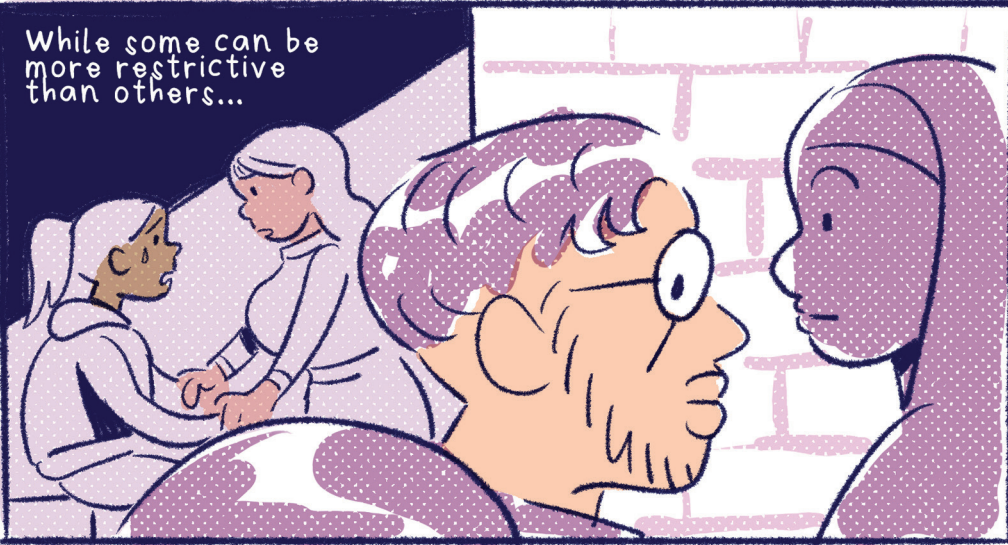
But the way they are treated varies drastically between different contexts.



Some places can be more progressive.



While some can be more restrictive than others...

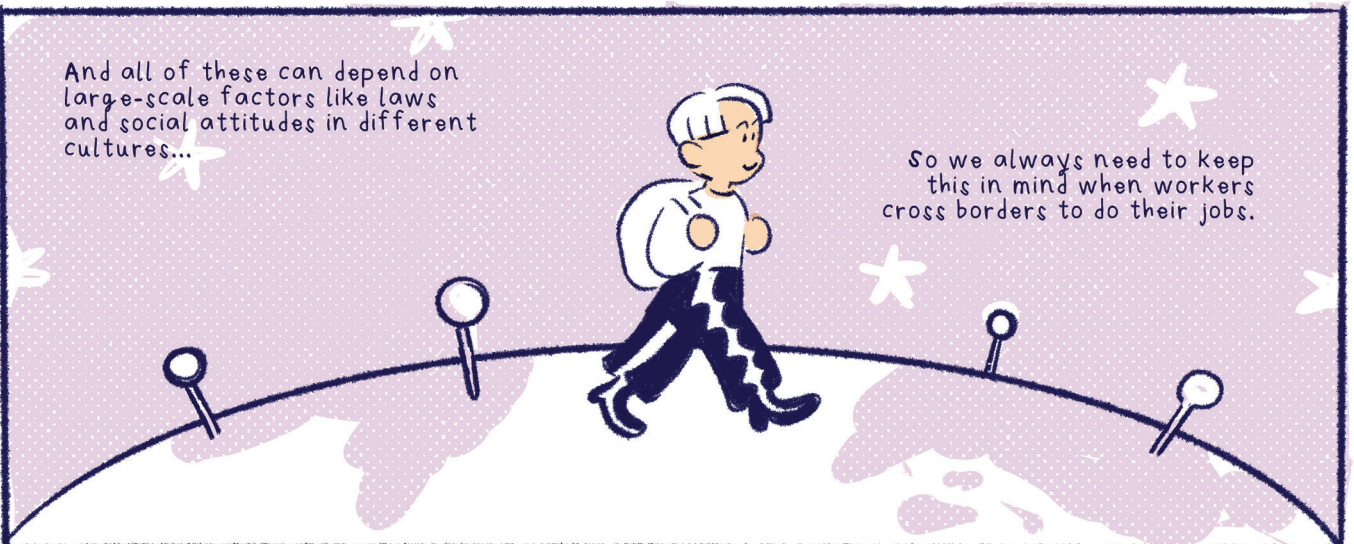


And some hope for a better future!



And all of these can depend on large-scale factors like laws and social attitudes in different cultures...

So we always need to keep this in mind when workers cross borders to do their jobs.

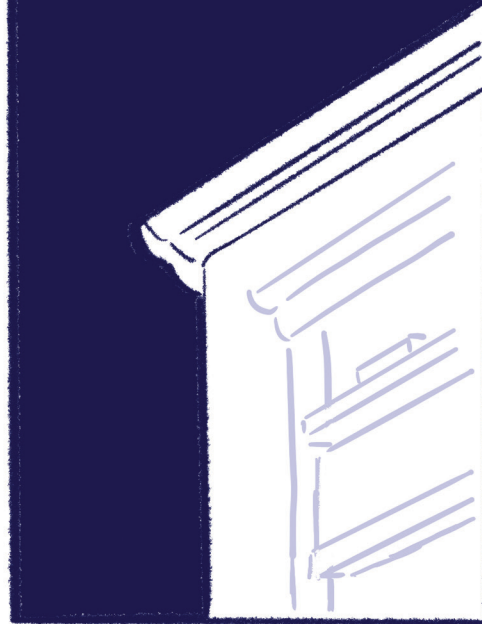




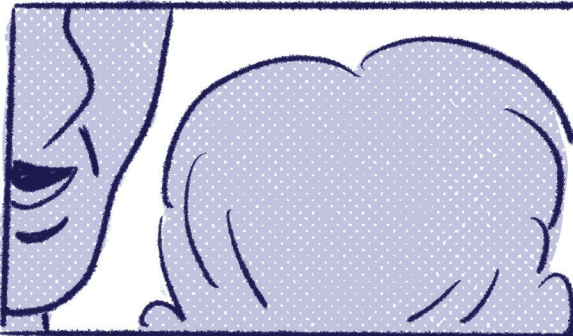
DISCRIMINATION  
AT WORK AND  
CHALLENGES LGBT+  
WORKERS FACE.



Despite increasing  
acceptance in many  
areas of life...



...Many LGBT +  
workers still  
report  
instances of  
harrasment  
and  
discrimination.



In one survey of  
LGBT+ adults in the  
United States,  
nearly one-third  
reported  
experiencing  
discrimination.



...while nearly 40  
percent report  
experiencing  
harrasment!



These lack of consistent  
formal policies, as  
protections affect  
hiring, job assignments  
and benefits.





## ISSUES IN AVIATION

Work in the transport sectors can often mean people moving between very different jurisdictions.

There are a lot of vulnerabilities LGBT+ workers have to consider when working abroad or crossing borders...



Laws may vary dramatically depending where they are because their identities are heavily politicised...



For some, travelling abroad can mean sleeping in separate rooms because you feel this is a safer option...



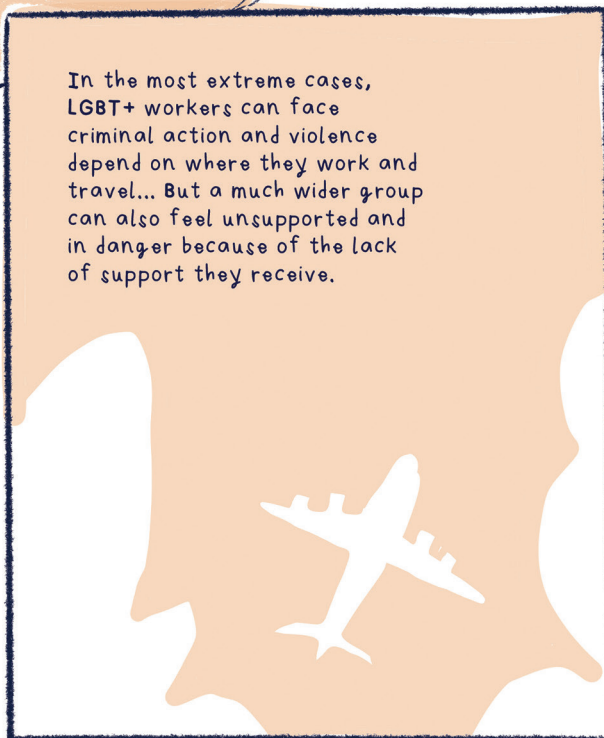
...or being careful of outing yourself

Where you could face serious harm because of sexual orientation or gender identity.

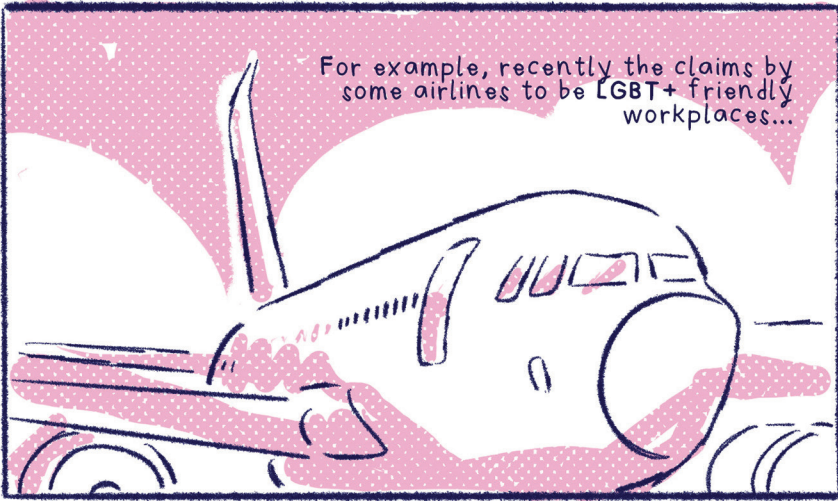
I know I have to travel to a part of the world that doesn't recognise my gender identity... Can I even use the toilet without being harassed?



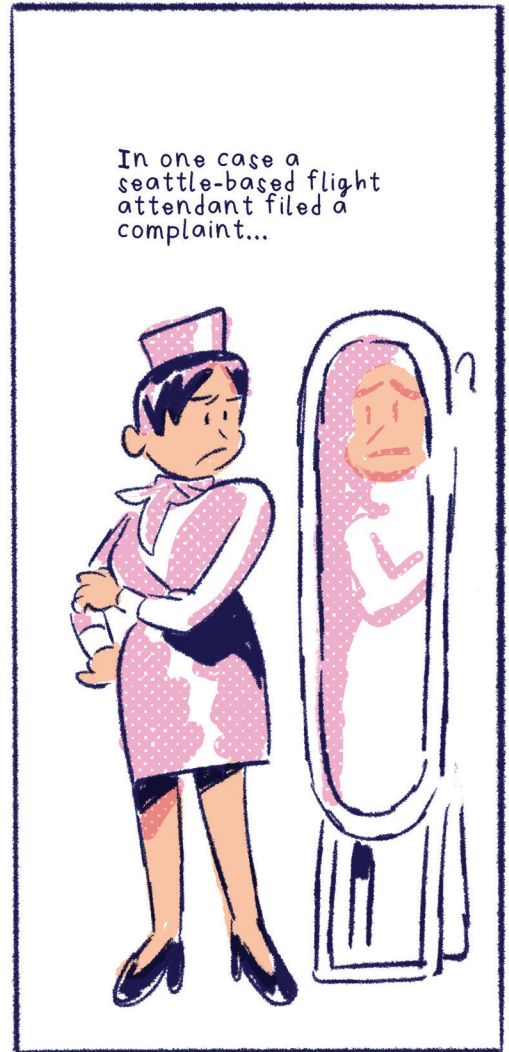
In the most extreme cases, LGBT+ workers can face criminal action and violence depend on where they work and travel... But a much wider group can also feel unsupported and in danger because of the lack of support they receive.







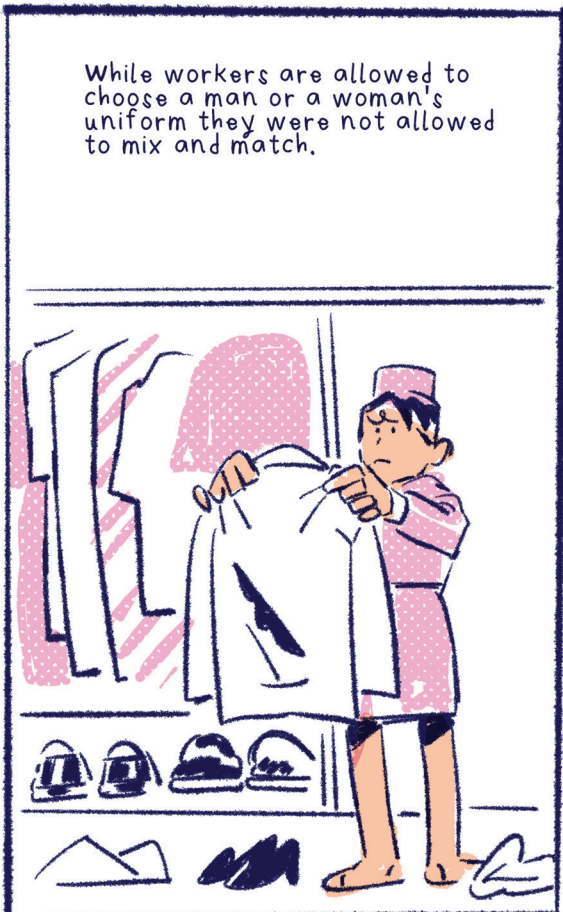
For example, recently the claims by some airlines to be LGBT+ friendly workplaces...



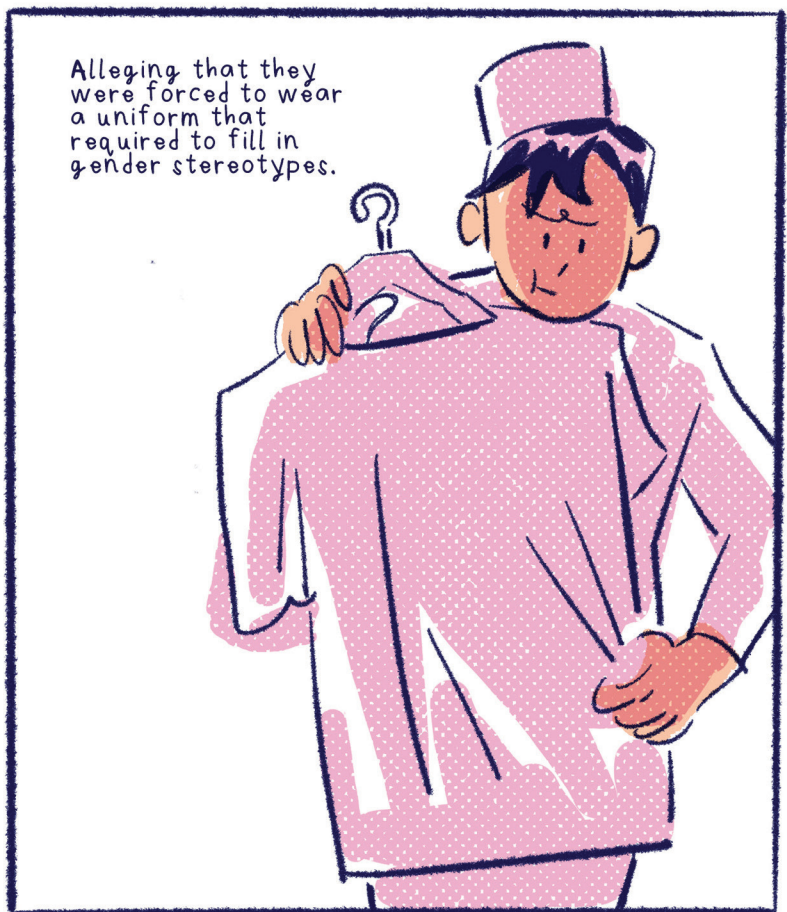
In one case a seattle-based flight attendant filed a complaint...



...has been challenged by lawsuits on behalf of nonbinary workers.



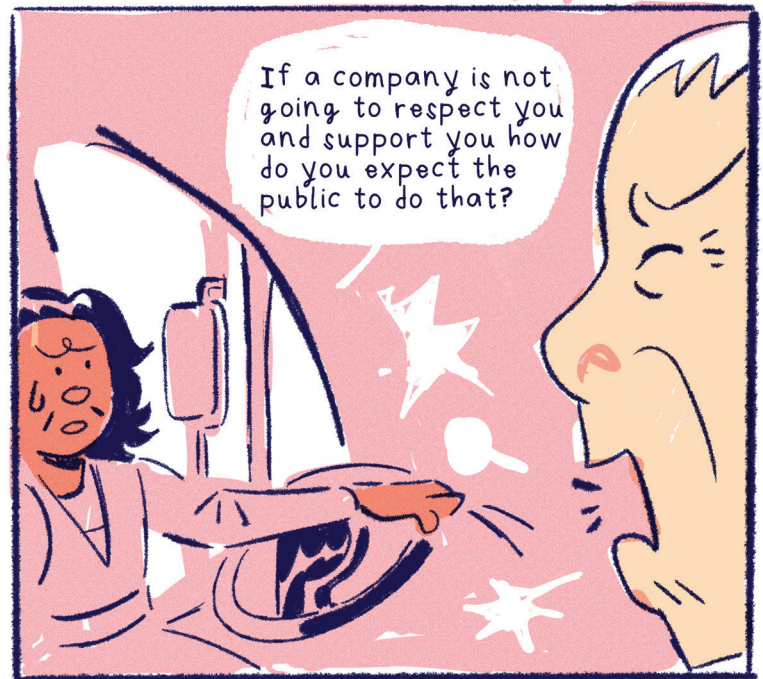
While workers are allowed to choose a man or a woman's uniform they were not allowed to mix and match.



Alleging that they were forced to wear a uniform that required to fill in gender stereotypes.

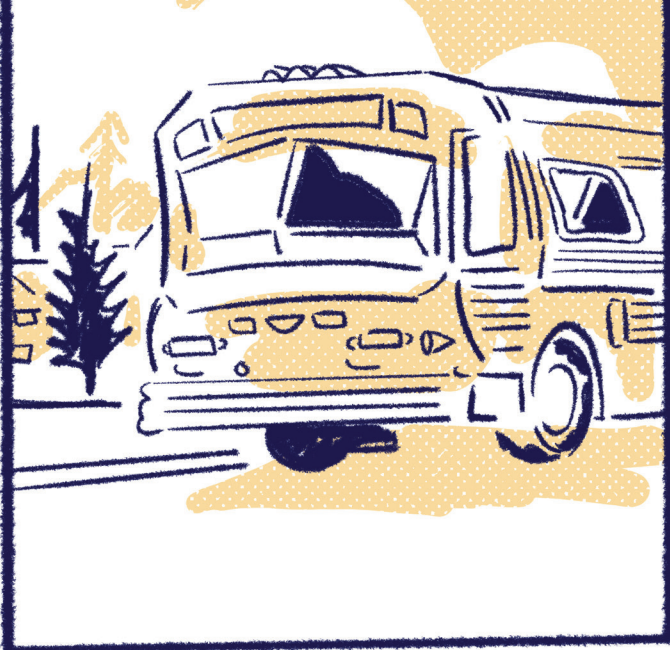


# ISSUES IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT





One early example of the power of public transport workers to organize on behalf of LGBT+ workers happened in the 1970s



In Ann Arbor, Michigan Lesbian Activists in the union led a takeover of the elected positions



In the first contract the new leadership bargained, they were able to convince both their membership and their employer to write "sexual preference" into the contract's nondiscrimination section.



This resulted in their union becoming the first on record to collectively bargain an LGBT+ rights provision.

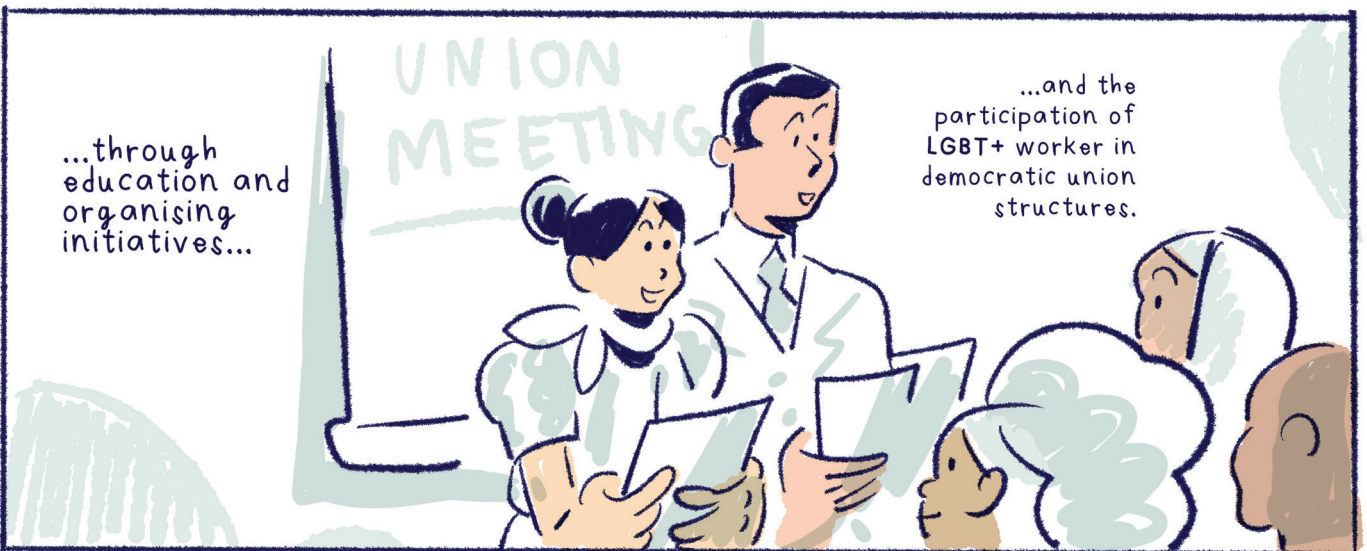
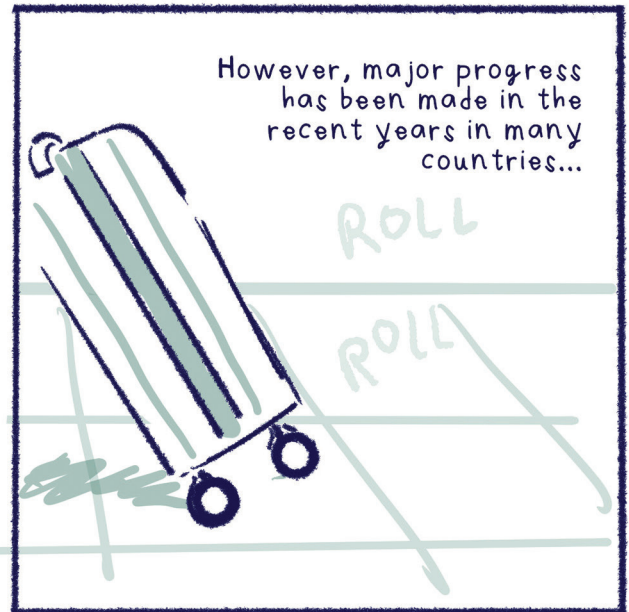
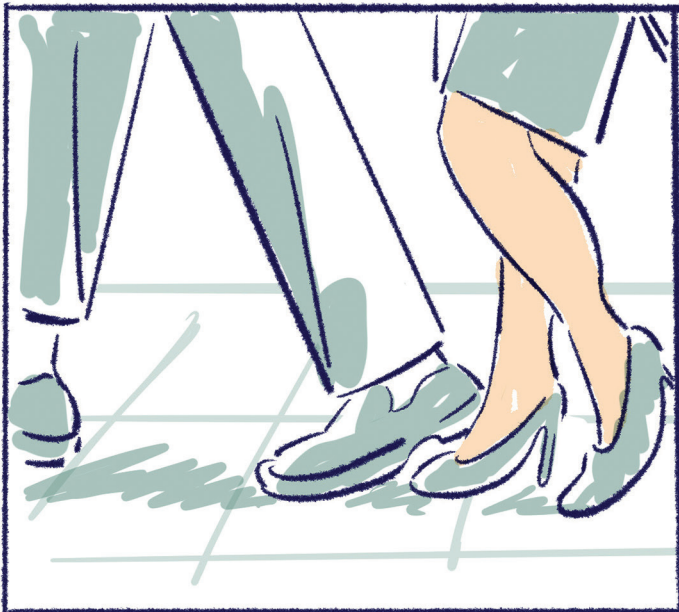
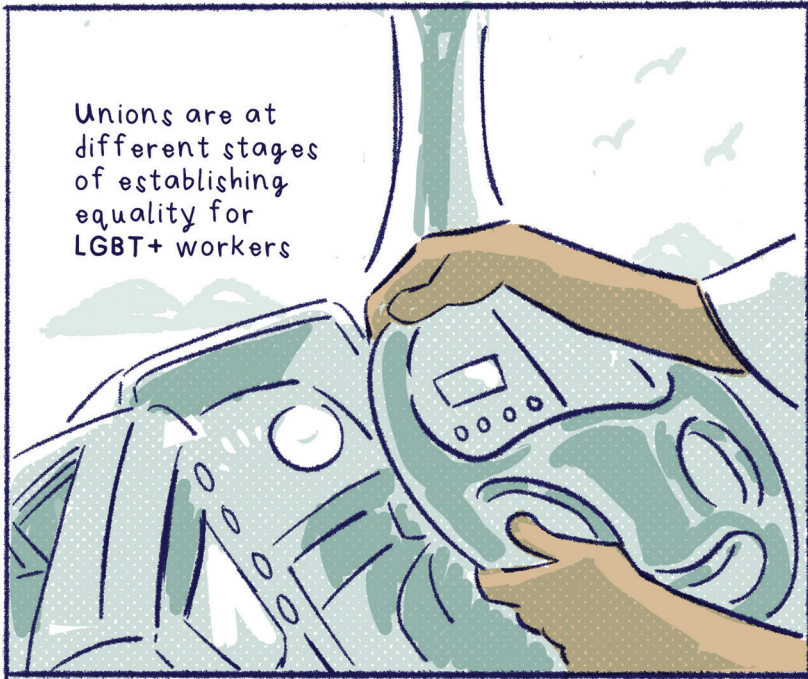


There's a lot more room for research into LGBT+ experiences at work, as well as the strategies and tactics for resistance and labour organising.





# HOW INCLUSIVE ARE OUR UNIONS?





New Horizons: Building Equal Workplaces and Lasting Union Structures.



Using Education

...that help build a LGBT+ friendly union!



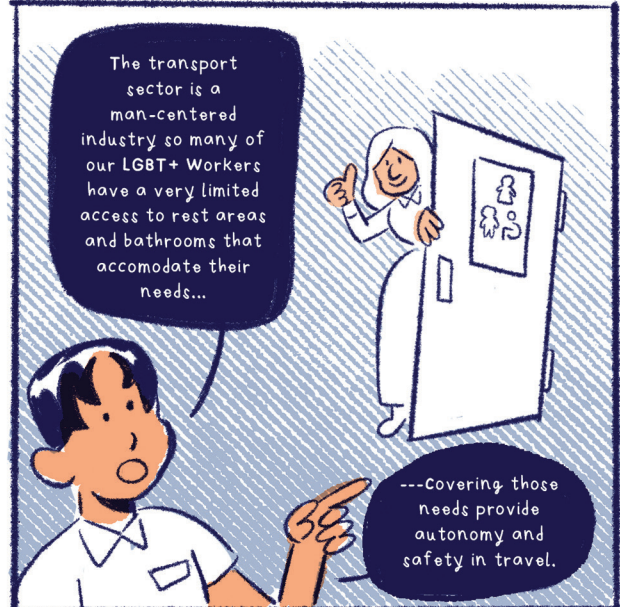
Providing Adequate Bathrooms and Changing Areas

he/him  
they/them



Uniform and Pronoun Pins

The transport sector is a man-centered industry so many of our LGBT+ Workers have a very limited access to rest areas and bathrooms that accommodate their needs...



Implementing Policies as Safeguards to stop Anti-LGBT + Harassment

Transport workers may face challenges related to wearing uniforms that do not align with their identity...

...accommodations to allow them to have uniforms and namepins that suit their identity can provide comfort and authenticity at work!



Making our unions genuinely inclusive means that we're in a stronger position to demand that employers and governments take action too...

...and all employers and governments need to stand up against violence, harassment and discrimination facing LGBT+ workers.

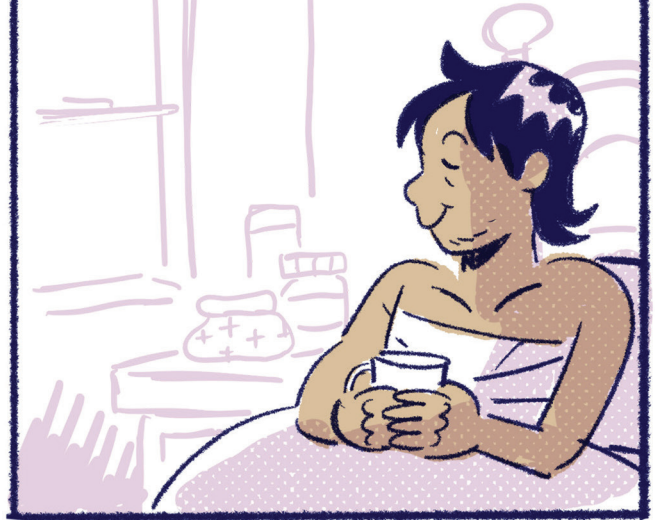




At a time when gender identity has become very controversial, unions have an important role in winning equality for trans and non-binary workers.



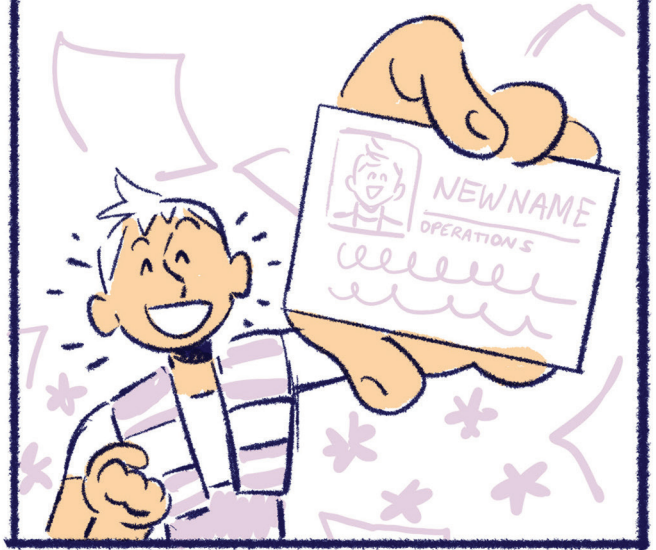
These include providing gender-affirming leave for our trans colleagues...



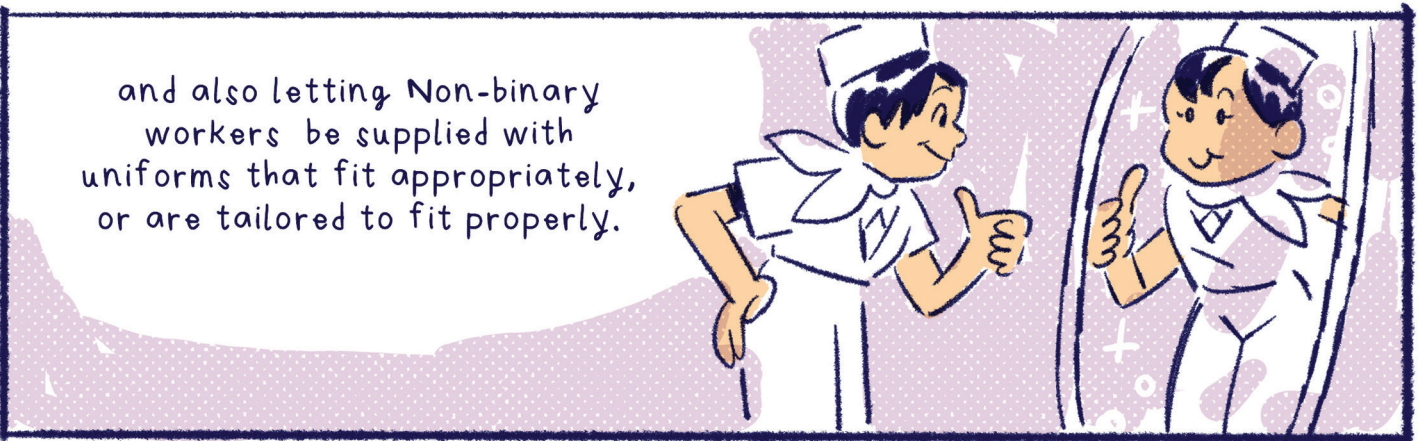
Allowing workers uniforms that correspond with their gender



Updating workplace records to replace workers' names and genders in official documents.



and also letting Non-binary workers be supplied with uniforms that fit appropriately, or are tailored to fit properly.

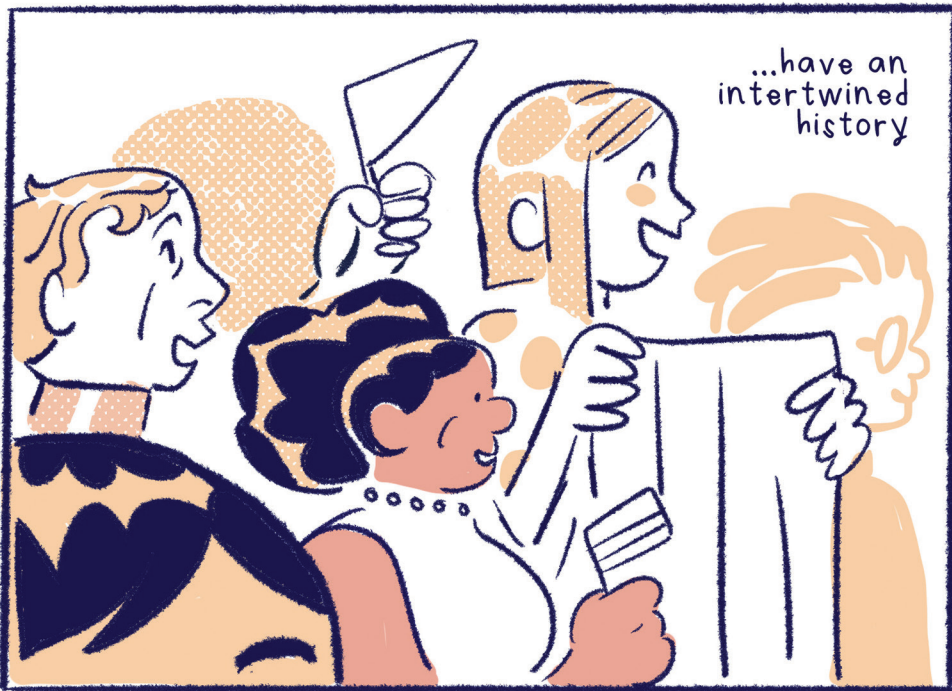




LGBT+  
Rights ARE  
LABOUR  
RIGHTS



We should remember that labor and queer liberation...



...have an intertwined history



The struggles of unions were the first in the world to enshrine protections for LGBT+ people



With authoritarian populism and far-right politics threatening all our rights, it is more important than ever that unions...



...Stand strong with our LGBT+ siblings





# TOOLKIT

Here are some tools that can help unions fight for the rights of LGBT+ workers in workplaces, in our unions, and within society.

## I. Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is a powerful tool unions can use to support LGBT+ workers. Through collective agreements, unions can negotiate inclusive and protective policies. These include:



### Inclusive Language

Unions can ensure that collective agreements use gender-sensitive language and inclusive definitions for family structures, so that LGBT+ workers feel represented.



### Non-Discrimination Clauses

Unions can negotiate clauses that explicitly protect workers based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, including protections from harassment.



### LGBT+ Family Benefits

Collective agreements can expand the definitions of family to include LGBT+ partners and non-traditional family structures, ensuring equal access to benefits like parental leave, health insurance, and pensions.



### Healthcare Benefits

Unions can negotiate for healthcare coverage that includes gender-affirming treatments (e.g., hormone therapy, surgery), and family planning options for LGBT+ couples (e.g., IVF).



### Gender-Affirming Workplace Policies

Through collective bargaining, unions can secure safe and inclusive toilet access, gender-appropriate uniforms and policies that update records to reflect workers' chosen names and genders.



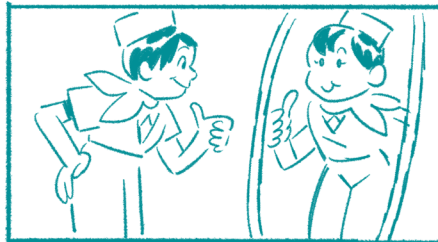
### Anti-Harassment Procedures

Unions can negotiate reporting and resolution processes that protect LGBT+ workers from harassment.



## Reflection Questions for Enlightened Advocacy

1. How can we ensure that our union's collective bargaining agreements explicitly include protections for sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression?
2. Are we negotiating for inclusive definitions of families and partners that cover LGBT+ relationships in all relevant benefit provisions?
3. How can we ensure healthcare benefits in our agreements meet the needs of LGBT+ workers, particularly regarding gender-affirming care and family planning?
4. What steps can we take to make sure our harassment reporting and investigation processes protect the privacy and safety of LGBT+ workers?
5. How do we engage our union members to increase awareness and buy-in for LGBT+ inclusive policies in collective agreements?



## Engagement Suggestions

1. **Conduct a Participatory Review of Collective Agreements** to identify gaps in language, family benefits, and health care provisions that may exclude or limit protections for LGBT+ workers.
2. **Host Workshops and Training** for union negotiators and members on LGBT+ rights, inclusive language, and the importance of gender-affirming care in health benefits.
3. **Incorporate LGBT+ Protections into Non-Discrimination Clauses**, including families.
4. **Develop Transition Support Policies** that include provisions for safe toilet facilities, uniform choices and updated records for workers undergoing gender transitions.
5. **Advocate for Inclusive Family Definitions** that ensure equal access to parental leave, health care, and pension benefits for LGBT+ couples and non-traditional family structures.
6. **Engage with community groups working on LGBT+ rights** to connect to a broader movement, build more support and share knowledge and resources.





# II. Advocating for LGBT+ colleagues

## HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE

### ACTIVE LISTENING AND LEARNING

- Listen to the experiences of LGBT+ colleagues. It is essential to understand the specific challenges they face in the workplace.
- Educate yourself about LGBT+ issues, terminology, and the impact of discrimination. Numerous resources are available online and through LGBT+ organisations.
- Recognize the intersectionality of LGBT+ identities with other forms of oppression, such as racism and xenophobia.

### CREATING INCLUSIVE SPACES

- Use inclusive language. This includes using the correct pronouns and avoiding assumptions about people's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Challenge homophobic and transphobic language and behavior when you encounter it.
- Support the creation of LGBT+ affinity committees within your workplace. These committees provide valuable support networks and platforms for advocacy.

### ADVOCATING FOR POLICY CHANGES

- Work with your union to ensure that collective agreements explicitly protect LGBT+ workers.
- Advocate for gender-sensitive toilets and changing areas.
- Support policies that allow workers to choose uniforms that align with their gender.

## Reflection Questions for Enlightened Advocacy

1. What biases or assumptions do I hold about LGBT+ people?
2. How can I be more mindful of the language I use?
3. Am I actively listening to the experiences of LGBT+ colleagues?
4. What actions can I take to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for LGBT+ workers?
5. How can I support efforts to address harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression?

## Activities for Informal Advocacy

1. Wear a pronoun pin or other symbol of LGBT+ allyship. This can spark conversations and show your support.
2. Share information about LGBT+ issues and resources with colleagues.
3. Speak up when you hear homophobic or transphobic jokes or comments. Let people know that such language is unacceptable.
4. Invite LGBT+ colleagues to participate in social gatherings and events. This can help to foster inclusion and build relationships.

By engaging in these activities, you can help raise awareness of LGBT+ issues and create a more inclusive workplace for everyone.





## III. Union Initiatives

The full report (on which this toolkit is based) also demonstrates various approaches that unions have taken to support LGBT+ workers. These range from raising awareness and creating inclusive spaces to negotiating for policy changes and advocating for better working conditions.



### Visibility and Education Campaigns

One union, facing a climate where LGBT+ workers were often closeted, focused on promoting visibility by:

- Showing solidarity at regional queer festivals.
- Creating an LGBT+ worker network. This network is especially active during the union's annual congress, raising awareness and offering a safe space.
- Publicising the stories of LGBT+ workers on the union website.
- Creating a sticker campaign where LGBT+ workers and allies could show their support.



### Pride Conference

Another union organised a Pride Conference, which offered training and education specifically for LGBT+ workers following the regular union conference. The conference included:

- Content on union organizing structures and how to engage with political leaders
- Opportunities to build community and connections among LGBT+ workers.
- Political education taught by LGBT+ instructors.
- The conference led to increased participation by LGBT+ workers in leadership roles within their unions.



### Monthly Human Rights Call

One union organised monthly human rights calls, which served as a space to discuss current issues, including LGBT+ rights. The calls facilitated:

- Awareness-raising about issues such as anti-transgender legislation.
- Mobilisation around issues affecting various identity groups.
- Opportunities to educate members and provide them with tangible tasks to support LGBT+ workers



### Uniform Flexibility Campaign

One union conducted a two-year campaign to increase uniform flexibility with an airline. This campaign resulted in:

- Meaningful changes to the women's uniform, such as no longer requiring shaved legs or specific heel heights.
- Ongoing efforts to achieve a gender-neutral uniform for those workers who want to select that option.



# Glossary

Some of the language around LGBT+ issues can be new and disorientating for people! This glossary covers some key terms to help you use language accurately and respectfully.



## ALLY

A heterosexual and/or cisgender person who supports members of the LGBT+ community



## AROMANTIC (ARO)

Someone who is not romantically attracted to other people



## ASEXUAL (ACE)

Someone who is not sexually attracted to other people



## BISEXUAL

Someone of any gender who is attracted to people of the same and other genders



## CISGENDER (CIS)

Someone whose gender identity is the same as the one they were assigned at birth



## GAY

A man who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other men



## INTERSEX

Someone whose body does not fit into conventional biological categories of male or female



## LESBIAN

A woman who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women



## NON-BINARY / GENDERQUEER

Someone who identifies as neither a man nor a woman (for example, in cultures that traditionally recognise more than two genders)



## QUEER

Formerly used as a term of abuse, now often used positively as a synonym for LGBT+



## TRANSGENDER (TRANS)

Someone whose gender identity is different to the one they were assigned at birth





## Links to External Sources

If you want to find out more about the issues covered in this booklet, here are some further resources that may be useful:

### ONLINE RESOURCES

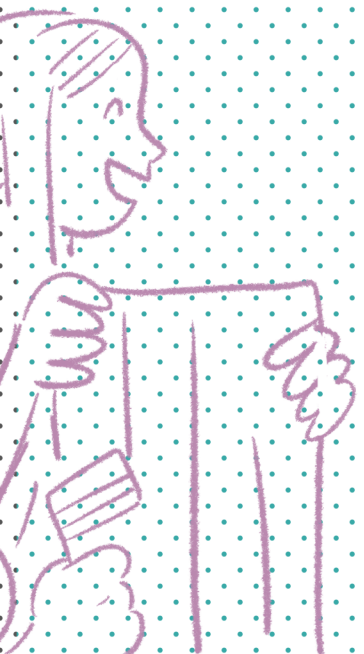
- International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA)
  - <https://ilga.org/>
- LGBTI Workers, a website run by the Council of Global Unions
  - <https://lgbtiworkers.org/>

### PUBLICATIONS

- Council of Global Unions, Fighting for Equality: Trade unions and LGBTI rights (2021)
  - <https://lgbtiworkers.org/resources/publications/global-unions-lgbti-brochure?id=12040&lang=en>
- ITF, Trade unions and LGBT+ workers in the transportation sector (2024)
  - <https://www.itfglobal.org/en/news/lgbt-workers-put-pride-in-unions>
- Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, LGBTQIA+ Inclusion within the Global Trade Union Movement (2024)
  - <https://rosalux-geneva.org/lgbtqia-inclusion-within-the-global-trade-union-movement/>
- United Nations, report on LGBTI rights and the freedoms of expression, assembly and association (2024)
  - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5649-protection-against-violence-and-discrimination-based-sexual>

### AUDIO-VISUAL

- Pride (2014), a film about the solidarity built between the mineworkers' union and LGBT+ activists in 1980s Britain
  - <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3169706/>





Become an

**EQUALITY**

**ADVOCATE**

**TODAY!**

For more info,  
check this QR code:

