

Children's Commissioner for Wales' guide for

CHALLENGING THE **NEGATIVE** MEDIA REPORTING

of the LGBT community



About us

The Children's Commissioner for Wales wants children and young people to have safe and happy lives. We work for every child and young person in Wales who is under 18 or up to 25 if they have been in care.

We:

- ➔ **Support** children and young people to find out about children's rights.
- ➔ **Listen** to children and young people to find out what's important to them.
- ➔ **Advise** children, young people and those who care for them if they need help with their problems.
- ➔ **Influence** politicians to make sure they make positive differences to the lives of children and young people.
- ➔ **Speak** up for children and young people in Wales on important issues - being the children's champion in Wales.

I want to complain about



"We have to put an end to this. We must stop homophobia"

The guide

This guide has been made so that you can *take action* against something you've read in a *newspaper*, seen on *TV* or the *internet*, or that you've heard on the *radio* that you think is offensive or damaging.

As a young person living in Wales you have a right to be treated fairly. A list of rights called the *UN Convention* on the Rights of the Child, or *UNCRC* for short, says that all children and young people have the right to be protected from discrimination and that the media should not make material that causes harm to children and young people.

The *UNCRC* also says that children and young people have the right to have their voices and opinions heard.

Digon

We've teamed up with Digon, an LGBT rights group in Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr, Cardiff, to create some artwork for this guide.

Here's why they think challenging media portrayal is so important:

Despite living in the 21st century, negative, homophobic attitudes are still a problem in our society. Over the last five years, we've seen big developments in the rights of LGBT people, particularly through the legalisation of equal marriage. Sadly, homophobic attitudes are still a problem for young people in Wales. The time has come to tackle homophobia once and for all.

As an opinion shaper, the media has a huge influence on the way we think about gender and sexuality, and therefore a duty to present these issues in a fair and balanced way. By portraying LGBT people in a negative light, deliberately or not, prejudice is spread to society through the media, reaching the school yard and social networks. In 2015 we're more dependent on the media than ever, and although we value freedom of expression, only one click separates young people from extreme views on a variety of topics, including sexuality. Therefore, we need to learn to celebrate our own identity so we can escape one-dimensional portrayals.

In some corners of the media vile and cruel attitudes are given a platform to preach. Of course, the right to satirise is a part of free speech, but it's important that it comes with a responsibility to protect. In television programmes, films and on the radio, LGBT characters are persistently portrayed as stereotypes¹. The 'gay best friend', someone to go to the shops with, characters that are presented as accessories. These characters are completely one-dimensional; their only notable attribute is their sexuality. Portrayals of transgender, asexual, bisexual and pansexual characters are still a rarity². How can young people who are questioning their sexuality/gender make an informed decision if they can't relate to similar characters in the media?

It's time to offer a better representation of LGBT people. A real representation of regular people. Rounded and developed characters whose sexuality is just a small part of their personality and not a defining feature. Stereotypes create long-lasting stigmas that young people are perpetually faced with.

More positive representation is appearing, but there's definitely more work to do. It's important that we make sure that the young people of Wales have the best possible role models across society to create an open, flexible, emotionally intelligent society and that our schools are free of the stigma associated with sexuality.

The 'Digon' group,
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr

Why is this guide for me?

We want you to be treated as fairly as possible in all parts of your life. If you're a member of the LGBT community and you've been treated differently because of your gender or sexual orientation, then this means that you aren't being *treated fairly* at all.

Even if you're not a member of the LGBT community but have been affected by homophobic abuse, we hope you'll find this guide useful.

The media has a huge effect on how other people see and think about things. This means that the negative portrayal of LGBT people that you see or hear on the TV, the internet and the radio can have a direct effect on the lives of all members of the LGBT community.

This can be really harmful; over half of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people have experienced homophobic bullying at school³.

What can you do?

When you see something in the media that you think is offensive to LGBT people, pick up this guide.

Choose the right section, and follow the instructions to make a complaint. Help us to put a stop to negative LGBT portrayals. *Now.*

"Every single one of us has the right to feel safe in our day-to-day life"

Facts and figures⁴

79%

of Welsh adults surveyed in 2013 thought that the media still relied heavily on clichéd stereotypes of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

62%

thought that the media frequently used lesbian, gay and bisexual people as the subject of jokes.

45%

thought the media had a responsibility to tackle prejudice against lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

75%

of young people aged 18-29 believed the BBC had an obligation to portray lesbian, gay, and bisexual people accurately.

83%

of people who thought prejudice against lesbian, gay and bisexual people existed thought it was right to tackle it.

57%

of people aged 18-29 said there was homophobic bullying in their school

³ www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/education-resources

⁴ www.stonewallcymru.org.uk/sites/default/files/LIVING_TOGETHER_2012_ENGLISHFINAL_.pdf

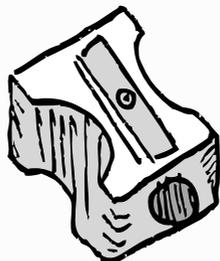
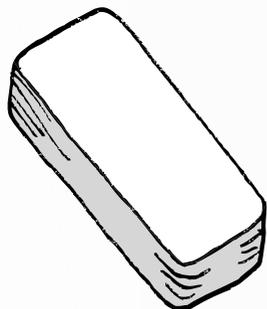
Newspapers, magazines, and comments on news/ magazine websites.⁵

43%

of people who thought anti-gay prejudice existed held tabloid newspapers responsible.

14%

thought broadsheet newspapers were responsible for prejudice against lesbian, gay and bisexual people.



WHO to get in touch with, and HOW to complain.

The people who look into complaints made about the press (newspapers etc), and the comments made on news and magazine websites, are called the Independent Press Standards Organisation.

According to the IPSO, the press 'should not publish inaccurate or misleading information, including pictures' and details of a person's sexual orientation should only be included if it is 'genuinely important to the story.'

There's also a group called the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) who try to make journalists' reporting as fair and truthful as possible. The NUJ state that information should be 'honestly conveyed, accurate and fair' and that nothing that is 'likely to lead to hatred or discrimination' should be published.

If you see an article that you find offensive or unacceptable, first of all you should contact the person who's written the article to complain. Details of the writer can usually be found at the top of the article. You can also flick to our 'Useful links' page to find the address of the British Media Information website, who hold the contact details of lots of newspapers, magazines and TV broadcasters. If they don't reply, if you can't find their details or if you don't manage to get the result you were hoping for, contact the IPSO. The IPSO will look at complaints within four months of the article being published, or 12 months if the complaint is about an article on a website.

Complaints should be made in writing using an online form which can be found here:
www.ipso.co.uk/oxbxApps/app/complaint1.html

You can also email
inquiries@ipso.co.uk

Phone
0300 123 2220

Or you can send them by post to
IPSO
Gate House
1 Farringdon Street
London EC4M 7LG

Complaining about a comment on a newspaper or magazine website

Use the same steps as above, but be sure to give the URL (the web address at the top of the screen, e.g. www.url.com/website/complain) when you make a complaint.

You should also quote the comment (write it word-for-word) or use a screenshot if you're complaining using the online form.

If you can:

- Say if you've been in contact with the person who's written the article, and if you have, explain what they said.
- Say where you read the article you're complaining about (e.g. Daily Mail, The Sun).
- Say what date it was published.
- Write the headline (title) of the article.
- Say why you are complaining (e.g. discrimination).
- Say how it has affected you.
- Say why it's important that it's removed.
- Give your details, including your name, address, phone number, email address etc.

TV and Radio⁶

A recent report found that in a sample of

126 hours, 42 minutes and 17 seconds

of 20 popular programmes on BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, C4 and C5, LGBT people were portrayed for

5 hours and 43 minutes 4.5%

of total programming. LGBT people were positively portrayed for

46 minutes just **0.6%** of total programming.

Only **7 minutes** featured scenes where homophobia was challenged.

WHO to get in touch with and HOW to complain

Ofcom (*The Office of Communications*) looks into complaints made about TV and Radio programmes that haven't been broadcast by the BBC.

Ofcom only deals with complaints about programmes that have already been broadcast. If you need to complain about a programme before it comes on, you'll need to contact the broadcaster directly (*e.g. Channel 4, ITV, Channel 5*) Ofcom has a set of rules that all broadcasters must follow. The rules are there to protect people from content that may be harmful to them or could cause them offence.

If you have seen content that has offended you, try to contact the broadcaster directly. You'll find their contact details by flicking to our '[Useful Links](#)' section and visiting the British Media Information website.



If you don't get a response from the broadcaster, or if you're not happy with their answer, use Ofcom's online complaint form.

The complaint form can be found here consumers.ofcom.org.uk/complain

If you want to complain by phone, contact 0300 123 3333 or 020 7981 3040.

To write to Ofcom

Ofcom Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA

When you contact Ofcom, try to:

- Say the name of the programme.
- Say what channel it was on and what date it was broadcast.
- Say why you are complaining.
- Say how it has affected you, or how it could affect others.
- Leave your details so you can be contacted.

TV and Radio (BBC)

The BBC also has a set of rules that their programmes must follow. They say that their programmes aim to 'reflect fairly all of the UK's people and cultures'. If you feel like a BBC TV or Radio programme hasn't done this and you want to complain, visit www.bbc.co.uk/complaints/complain-online/.

To complain by phone, contact **03700 100 222**.

To complain by post, write to **BBC Complaints**
PO Box 1922
Darlington
DL3 0UR

Adverts

The ASA cover advertisements on/in:

- Magazines and newspapers
- Radio and TV
- Websites (e.g. banner ads)
- Social media (e.g. a promoted Tweet)
- Email
- Posters and brochures
- Cinema adverts
- Smartphone apps
- DVDs and CD ROMs

To make a complaint to the ASA, fill in the online form which can be found here

www.asa.org.uk/Consumers/How-to-complain/Online-Form/Step1.aspx

Alternatively, you can phone 020 7492 2222.

Or write to

Advertising Standards Authority Limited
Mid City Place
71 High Holborn
London
WC1V 6QT

When you contact the ASA, try to:

- Give your details (i.e. name, address, contact number, email address).
- Say what type of advert you're complaining about (e.g. television advert, radio advert, newspaper advert, internet advert etc).
- Say where you saw/heard it (e.g. on Channel 4, in the Daily Mail, on Capital FM, on www.website.com).
- Say when you saw it (time and date).
- If you saw/heard it on the tv/radio, say what programme you were watching/listening to at the time (e.g. Coronation Street).
- Say who the advertiser was (e.g. Cadbury, Ford).
- Say what was being advertised (e.g. a new programme, a bar of soap, a bicycle).
- If you are complaining about a website and you're complaining through email or the online form, include a screenshot of the advert.
- Say what was offensive about the advert.
- Say what effect it has on the LGBT community.
- Say why it's important that this advert is removed.

Social Media

Facebook

How to complain

To report a profile, a page or an event

Click or tap the 'More' button (three dotted symbol) on the top right hand corner of the page. Select 'Report' from the dropdown menu and follow the instructions.

To report a post (status, link etc)

Click or tap the downward facing arrow (v) in the top right hand corner of the post. Choose 'I don't want to see this' or 'I don't like this post' from the dropdown menu and follow the instructions.

To report a comment

Click the small cross in the top right hand corner of the comment box. Click 'Report' and follow the instructions. If you're using a smartphone or tablet you'll need to press and hold the comment to display the options.



To report a photo or video

Click on the photo or video to make it bigger. Click 'options' at the bottom of the photo/video and then choose 'Report' and follow the instructions. If using a smartphone or tablet tap the 'More' button at the bottom and select 'I don't like this photo'.

To report a message you've received

Open the message and click the 'Options' wheel and select 'Report as spam or abuse'.

Twitter complaints

To report a tweet

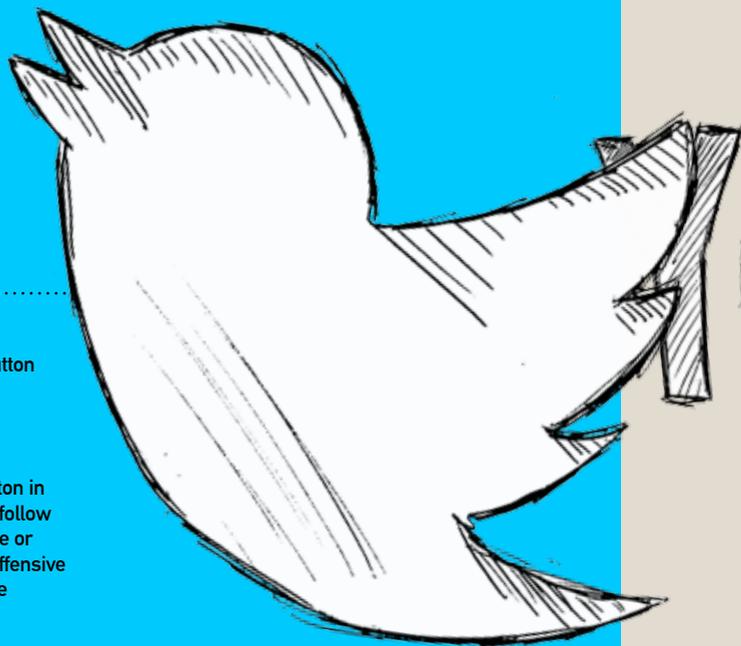
Open the tweet and click or tap the 'More' button (the one with three dots) and select 'Report'. Follow the instructions.

To report a direct message

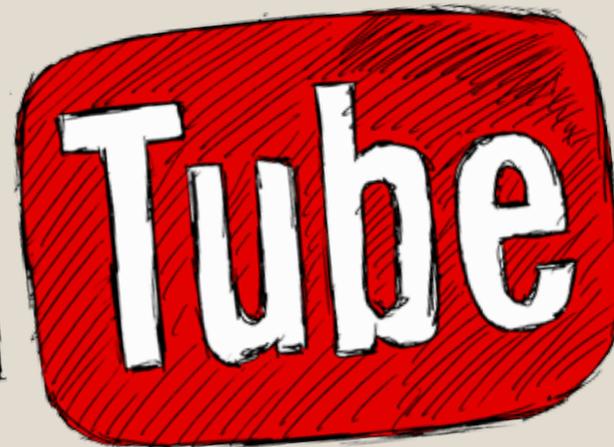
Open the message and select the 'More' button in the top right hand corner. Choose 'Flag' and follow the instructions. If you're using a smartphone or tablet, open the message, tap and hold the offensive comment, select the 'Flag' option and choose 'Mark as abusive'.

To report a profile/user

Open the user's profile and click or tap the 'more' icon. Select 'Report' and follow the instructions.



You



To report a video, click or tap the three dotted button near the video, choose 'Report' from the menu and follow the instructions.

To report a comment on a video, click the downward facing triangle in the top right hand corner of the comment box to bring up the options. Click 'Report as spam or abuse' and follow the instructions. If you're using a smartphone or tablet, tap the comment itself, tap 'Report' and follow the instructions.

To report a channel or user, visit the channel's page, click 'About' and click on the flag icon. Click 'Report user' and follow the instructions.

"The right to free speech is not a right to bully"

"it's more important than ever that young people have realistic role models to help them shape their own self-identity"

Other social networks

Usually, the network you're using will have a procedure for dealing with complaints. A Google search like this: '[report abuse on "name of social network"](#)' should give you the information you need.

If you have difficulty finding the information, please feel free to contact us.

Children's Commissioner for Wales
Oystermouth House
Phoenix Way
Llansamlet
Swansea, SA7 9FS

01792 765600

post@childcomwales.org.uk

What if I need help?

We hope that this guide has given you the information you need to be able to challenge negative reporting confidently.

But if you need help with a complaint or if you need more information, you can contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales' free and confidential advice and support service. It's there to help and support children and young people or those who care for them if they feel that a child or young person has been treated unfairly.

You can contact us by

Twitter: @childcomwales

Phone: 0808 801 1000 (Freephone) or 01792 765600

Email: post@childcomwales.org.uk

Post: Children's Commissioner for Wales
Oystermouth House
Phoenix Way, Llansamlet
Swansea, SA7 9FS

Remember, you should never be treated differently because of your gender or sexual orientation.

When you see something harmful, pick up this booklet and make a difference.

Useful links

Note: In the future it's likely that all of the links in this guide could change. If you follow a link and it has been moved, either follow the on-screen instructions to find the new address or type the underlined words into a search engine, like [Google](#).

[The British Media Information Website](#) (Contact details for newspapers, TV companies etc)
www.media.info/uk

[Editors' Code of Practice](#)
(Rules that all journalists should follow)
www.ipsa.co.uk/IPSO/cop.html

[The Ofcom Broadcasting code](#)
(Rules that TV and Radio broadcasters should follow)
www.stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/broadcasting/broadcast-codes/broadcast-code/

[The UK advertising codes](#)
www.cap.org.uk/Advertising-Codes.aspx

[Facebook's terms of service](#)
www.facebook.com/legal/terms

[Twitter's terms of service](#)
www.twitter.com/tos

[YouTube's community guidelines](#)
www.youtube.com/t/community_guidelines?hl=en-GB&gl=GB

[ATVOD's Rules and Guidance](#)
www.atvod.co.uk/rules-and-guidance

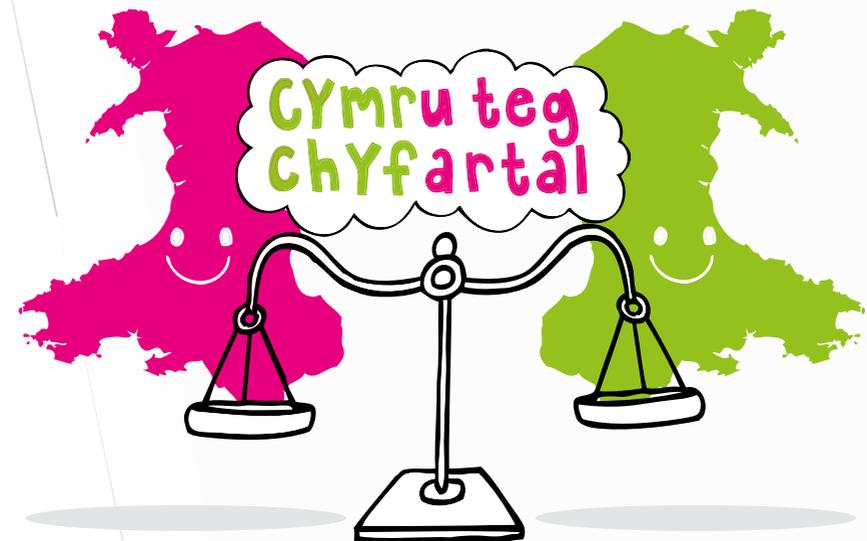
[The BBC's editorial guidelines/guidelines/](#)
www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/guidelines/

[Stonewall Cymru](#)
www.stonewallcymru.org.uk/

[David Setter](#)
www.davidsetter.co.uk

Thanks to the members of Digon, an LGBT rights group at Ysgol Plasmawr, and to artist David Setter, for enriching this guide with their creativity.

The following images were created through a one-day workshop with Digon, an LGBT rights group based in Ysgol Gyfun Plasmawr, facilitated by artist David Setter





Cefnogaeth

