

## **UK Gays and Lesbians Unable to Reveal Sexuality at Work**

*Gay at home, but not at work. In the UK gay people recently started visiting their local registry offices to say 'I do'. But when it comes to being honest to their co-workers about being gay, up to half say 'I can't'. New research shows why.*

London, UK (PRWEB) January 13, 2006 -- Research findings released today show that up to half of UK lesbians and gay men do not feel able to reveal their sexuality to all those they work with. The research also discovered that as many as one in ten gay men, and one in eight lesbians were harassed at work in 2005 because of their sexuality.

These new workplace research findings are uncovered for the first time in the UK by the Out Now Consulting Diva and Gay Times Readers Surveys, carried out between March and October 2005. The figures are revealed today in the UK's only gay and lesbian news journal, The Pink Paper.

Only 52% of gay men and 51% of lesbians say they can be completely honest about their sexuality with their work colleagues.

Official Whitehall figures released last month say that 6% of the UK adult population, or around 3 million people, are lesbian or gay. This new Out Now research suggests there are up to 1.5 million UK workers who do not feel they can be honest about this fundamental aspect of their lives when they are at work.

"Being accepted by the government is a big step forward in terms of Civil Partnerships, but being able to be yourself at work is something all workers in the UK really ought to be able to do," says Ian Johnson, managing director of Out Now Consulting, a specialist gay marketing consultancy which conducted the research.

"These figures show that this is not currently the case for a large number of UK lesbians and gay men," says Johnson. "In the medium to long term that affects workplace productivity, loyalty and ultimately can result in otherwise well-qualified lesbian and gay staff leaving a job because they can no longer keep up a pretence of being heterosexual. UK workplaces need to improve on these figures both as a matter of social justice and also as a matter of business profits and workplace productivity."

"Perhaps it may be understandable why many UK lesbians and gay men choose to keep quiet about their sexuality, when we consider what our research showed about how likely people are to be harassed for their homosexuality at work in the UK," says Johnson.

9% of male respondents and 12% of female respondents reported they had been harassed at work during the previous 12 months because they were gay.

These figures compare poorly with research Out Now Consulting undertook in the Netherlands in 2004 where only 2.8% of gay men said they had been harassed at work.

UK gay men seem three times more likely than Dutch gay men to have experienced this situation.

"This is quite alarming," said Kim Watson Deputy Managing Director of MPG, publishers of Diva and Gay Times magazines. "How many heterosexual people in the workplace feel the need to keep the existence of their partner a secret? Practically none. Even if they are not in relationships, these results show that for a great

number of lesbians and gay men there is still a long way to go until the UK is a truly accepting society for gay people."

Johnson said he felt that companies need to do more to improve on these results.

"We recommend UK companies should improve their workplace equality and diversity policies. Training on gay and lesbian issues is also likely to help improve the current situation. This would build improved comfort levels, for all staff, working together, irrespective of sexuality. Often Human Resources managers say 'but we don't discriminate' - and that is probably true. But the situation on the ground, as revealed by these figures shows that for UK lesbians and gay men, almost half do not currently feel they can truly be themselves at work. "

Notes to editors:

6% of UK adults are believed to be lesbian or gay. Source: Whitehall, December 2005.

Publication of this information must be credited as the "Out Now Consulting Gay Times and Diva Readers Surveys", for copyright reasons.

The report by Out Now Consulting, was undertaken following independent research with more than 1,000 readers of Diva and Gay Times magazines between March and October 2005. Sample size is 1118 respondents.

Gay Times and Diva (published by Millivres Prowler Ltd.) are Europe's best selling gay and lesbian glossy news stand magazines. Gay Times was launched in 1984 and Diva in 1994, both titles are distributed by Seymour Distribution Ltd.

Millivres Prowler Ltd. is Europe's largest media business targeting the gay and lesbian market and celebrated its 30th Anniversary in 2004. In that same year the company registered as a Stonewall 'Diversity Champion' and achieved 'Investors In People' accreditation.

Established in 1992, Out Now Consulting is a leading source for gay marketing research and strategy, and is a global gay market agency relied upon by organisations involved with lesbian and gay people. Services include market research, training, advertising, public relations and strategy development.

Out Now clients include Barclays Bank, IBM, Toyota, German National Tourist Office, Qantas Airways, British Tourist Authority, Lufthansa, South African Tourism and Citibank.

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