

How to be a good ally to **bi+** people at work

We all need people on our side, celebrating with us when things go well and supporting us when times are hard, but not everyone feels confident doing this. It's not complicated. Read on to find out more.



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How to be a good bi+ ally in the workplace

In UNISON the term 'Bi+' relates to the umbrella definition of bisexuality. We include all people who are attracted to more than one gender. This includes people who are pansexual, omnisexual, bi romantic, questioning and/or bi-curious to name a few.

The bi+ umbrella is inclusive of trans and non-binary people

Every non-bi+ person can be an ally for bi+ equality, but not everyone feels confident doing this.

It's not complicated, so here are some tips on how to be a good ally to bi+ people.

It really comes down to three things:

- Listen to bi+ people
- Challenge biphobia
- Don't be a bystander

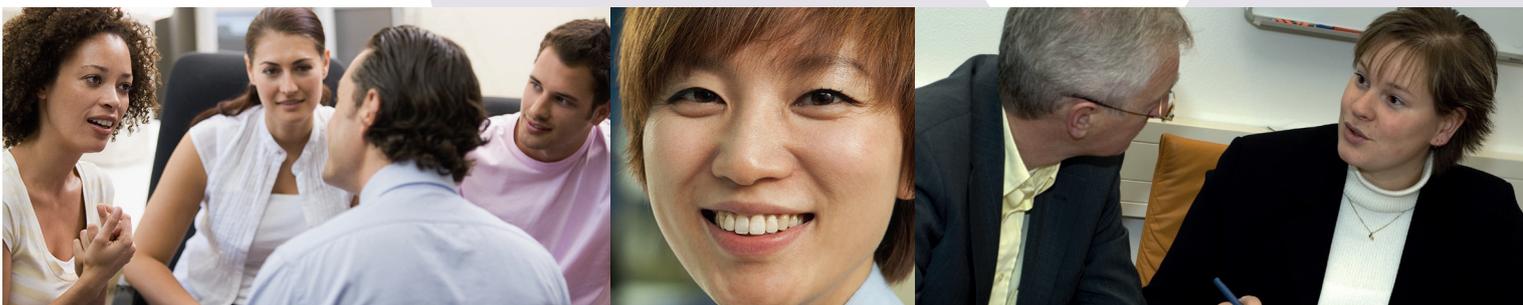
Tips for being a good bi+ ally

In general

- Speak up for bi+ people, bi+ equality and against biphobia and don't leave it to bi+ people to defend bi+ equality.
- Speak up when there are no bi+ people present. Biphobia is always wrong and shouldn't be ignored.
- Do this in meetings, on social media, with family and friends and colleagues.
- Don't assume you do not know any bi+ people. There may be people who you work with or family members or friends who are bi+.
- Biphobia is no laughing matter. It's just as important to challenge it even when it is presented as a joke.

In your union

- Raise Bi+ equality in your union branch.
- Check your employer's policies for LGBT+ inclusion.
- Don't think you have to be an 'expert'. But do inform yourself. UNISON has some excellent and accessible resources at unison.org.uk/out
- Publicise UNISON's work for bi+ equality and our national bi+ network.
- Never 'out' someone as bi+ unless they agree – never talk about someone's sexual orientation unless they have given you permission to do so. They may have told you in confidence.



- Remember, they may be out in some circles, such as in an LGBT+ group, or with close colleagues, but not others.
- If you want information, there's plenty of reliable websites (such as our own unison.org.uk/out or bicomcommunitynews.co.uk) on the internet.
- Don't tell bi+ people that they're 'brave' if they do disclose their sexual orientation to you. Instead, ask them if they need support and if so what support they need.
- Recognise that bi+ people can at times feel excluded – make an effort to include them.

People are people

- Try not to make assumptions.
- Don't ask personal questions that are more intimate than you would ask someone who is not bi. It is certainly inappropriate to quiz people about their personal sexual orientation.

And finally...

- Remember that being bi+ is just one aspect of a person's life – talk to them about other stuff!

UNISON resources

We have lots of resources to help you understand and negotiate around bi equality. Many are downloadable for free at www.unison.org.uk/out

Not in UNISON?

Join today at joinunison.org or call **0800 171 2193** or ask your UNISON rep for an application form.

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“Bi+ people are often overlooked or forgotten about when others make reference to LGBT+ rights or discrimination. At a time when LGBT+ rights as a whole are under threat, it is essential that our voices are heard on the existence of bierasure and biphobia. With the support of allies, we can challenge stigma and express ourselves openly without fear of prejudice, discrimination or hate.”

Sophie

‘UNISON and trade unionism are all about solidarity, with no one left to face trouble alone. We are stronger together.’

'Bi+ allies mean that bisexual people don't always have to be the only ones trying to change a workplace culture.

Having a Bi+ ally speak up without being prompted means that there is someone you can be more yourself around'.

Asha



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