




REED & MACKAY

A Navan Company

Supporting LGBTQ+ business travelers

Is the business travel industry doing enough?

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01

Introduction



Nearly one in 10 adults across 30 countries in the Americas, Europe and Asia identify as LGBTQ+, according to IPSOS' LGBTQ+ and Pride global survey 2023. And that extends to – on average globally – one in two adults who report having a relative, friend or colleague who is gay or lesbian, one in four who is bisexual, one in eight with each one who is transgender and one who is non-binary, gender non-conforming or gender fluid.¹

Yet today it remains illegal to be LGBTQ+ in more than 70 countries^{2/2a}, meaning safely travelling across the globe can be a challenge for the community. Furthermore, LGBTQ+ travellers may also still face discrimination in destinations where it is legal but where social attitudes and legal landscapes constantly evolve.

Organizations ranging from Stonewall³ and GLAAD⁴ to IGLTA⁵ promote equality and safety for the LGBTQ+ community and offer resources and information for anyone traveling ([see Resources section at the end of this report](#)).

However, feedback from the corporate travel and events industry is that the support available to LGBTQ+ business travellers is still not consistent.

In a survey last year by security specialist World Travel Protection, 14% of travellers had felt the need to hide their own sexuality or seen a colleague hide their sexuality on a

14% of travellers had felt the need to hide their own sexuality or seen a colleague hide their sexuality on a business trip⁶

business trip. One in 10 travellers said they had even refused, or seen a colleague refuse, to travel to countries with anti-LGBTQ+ laws.⁶

And while a poll of European travel buyers showed a growing number of corporate programs were now providing special consideration for LGBTQ+ travellers⁷, it also showed that although there is a growing awareness among travel managers as to their specific needs, the community remains among the least-provided-for travellers in corporate travel programs.

This highlights that LGBTQ+ individuals still require an enhanced duty of care program if travelling for business. And this need becomes increasingly significant as generations move through the workforce, with Gen Z the age group most likely to identify as LGBTQ+^{8/9}.

Taking positive action

So where can the travel industry – from travel management companies, associations, airlines and hotels – better support corporate buyers and their LGBTQ+ travellers and delegates to make business travel, attending events or even secondments as seamless and worry free as possible?

“The industry is definitely moving in the right direction – and clients are increasingly including diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) on their agendas – but it still feels like discussions to better support the LGBTQ+ community are informal. We need to move the conversations and support along faster and make them a constant,” Reed & Mackay Group CEO Fred Stratford says.

It’s a view echoed by the Global Business Travel Association’s (GBTA) Inclusion and Culture chair Linda Bekoe. “There’s a lot of talk around how to offer better support but not that much action,” Bekoe adds. “Either people don’t know where to start or they don’t have the resources to start.”

At Reed & Mackay’s flagship conference &Beyond last year, we asked our corporate travel buyer attendees to share their thoughts on their perceived level of maturity in the LGBTQ+ space for airlines, hotels, ground transport, TMCs, meetings and events and the corporate world.



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Fred Stratford
Reed & Mackay Group CEO

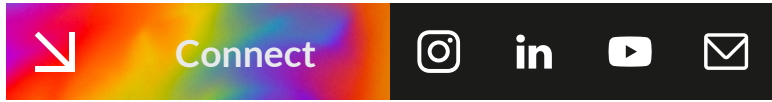


Two thirds of respondents regarded airlines and hotels as being more in the introductory and development stage supporting LGBTQ+ compared to one third citing them to have implemented or progressed with it.

This suggests there’s more to be done in this space, agrees the Institute of Travel Management’s (ITM) Head of Programme Kerry Douglas. “The travel buyer community is increasingly looking to embrace and understand their travellers’ needs and is itself working hard to increase DEI initiatives,” Douglas says.

“Furthermore, buyers will want to ensure the suppliers they work with align with them on priorities and will want to understand what steps that supplier is taking to focus on DEI within their own business. That way they can be confident they’re buying from organizations who take these areas seriously for their own staff as well as their customers.”

In this report, Reed & Mackay aims to generate further discussion on how and where the travel industry can better support LGBTQ+ travelers, and acknowledge the complexities the community faces. We explore how TMCs can help with the safety and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ employees traveling; look at what key industry stakeholders are doing to move the dial to offer better support; and ask members of our own LGBTQ+ community about their experiences while booking travel.



02

Education, duty of care and risk management

Running business travel and event programs is already complex, from ensuring policy compliance to resolving issues associated with travel disruption. Plus, a duty of care to all travellers is paramount.

There can be additional challenges to that duty of care for LGBTQ+ travellers, as Maiden Voyage – a company specializing in diverse traveller safety – CEO Carolyn Pearson explains.

“We hear from LGBTQ+ travelers about their experiences on our courses and, sometimes, it’s the first time their employers are hearing about them too,” Pearson says. “One example was an employee who’d travelled with his partner on a business trip and they both faced intense questioning about their relationship by the airport security on arrival. They were stopped multiple times when trying to exit the airport. The experience left them feeling shaken and unsafe for the entire time they were there.”

These incidences won’t disappear overnight – especially with ever-evolving changes to both the legislation and societal attitudes directed towards the LGBTQ+ community in certain countries. So how can travel managers prepare their LGBTQ+ travellers more effectively ahead of their trips?

It’s communication and collaboration from everyone involved that will help, Business Travel Association CEO Clive Wratten believes.

“The right travel policy, outlining duty of care, has to sit with the corporate; yet the travel management company’s (TMC) role is to make sure the most up-to-date information is readily available, plus recommendations of what to do if something goes wrong for your travellers,” Wratten says. “Work with them on contingency plans. In addition, corporates should have their own policies in place saying the employee’s career won’t be affected if they decide they don’t want to travel to a particular destination if they don’t feel safe there.”



“Work with your TMC on contingency plans. And corporates should have their own policies saying the employee’s career won’t be affected if they decide they don’t want to travel to a particular destination if they don’t feel safe there.”



Clive Wratten
Business Travel Association CEO

Providing education and support

Reed & Mackay Group CEO Fred Stratford agrees that TMCs are the intermediaries and should provide clients with the support they need in this area.

“The first thing we try to build is more awareness of the kind of support LGBTQ+ travelers may need,” Stratford says. “Clients are increasingly asking us about this, so we share best practice, including what we’re doing as a business around awareness. At Reed & Mackay, all employees are asked to complete a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion eLearning module. Focused on providing learners with the skills and confidence to not only comply with legal requirements but also to be allies and help make the workplace a more supportive and inclusive environment, as an employer and as a supplier.

“The conversations need to continue and I’d like to see a more formal plan put together by the travel industry for how we can all better support the LGBTQ+ community.”

One of the first steps towards this is updating travel policy and traveler communications, ITM’s Douglas believes. “For example, better articulate what would be perfectly reasonable for a traveller to expect in terms of support, regardless of whether there is an extra cost, and to address travellers in a gender-neutral way,” Douglas says. “However, any steps or initiatives taken by travel managers are a move in the right direction. Small steps can make all the difference to the communities involved.”



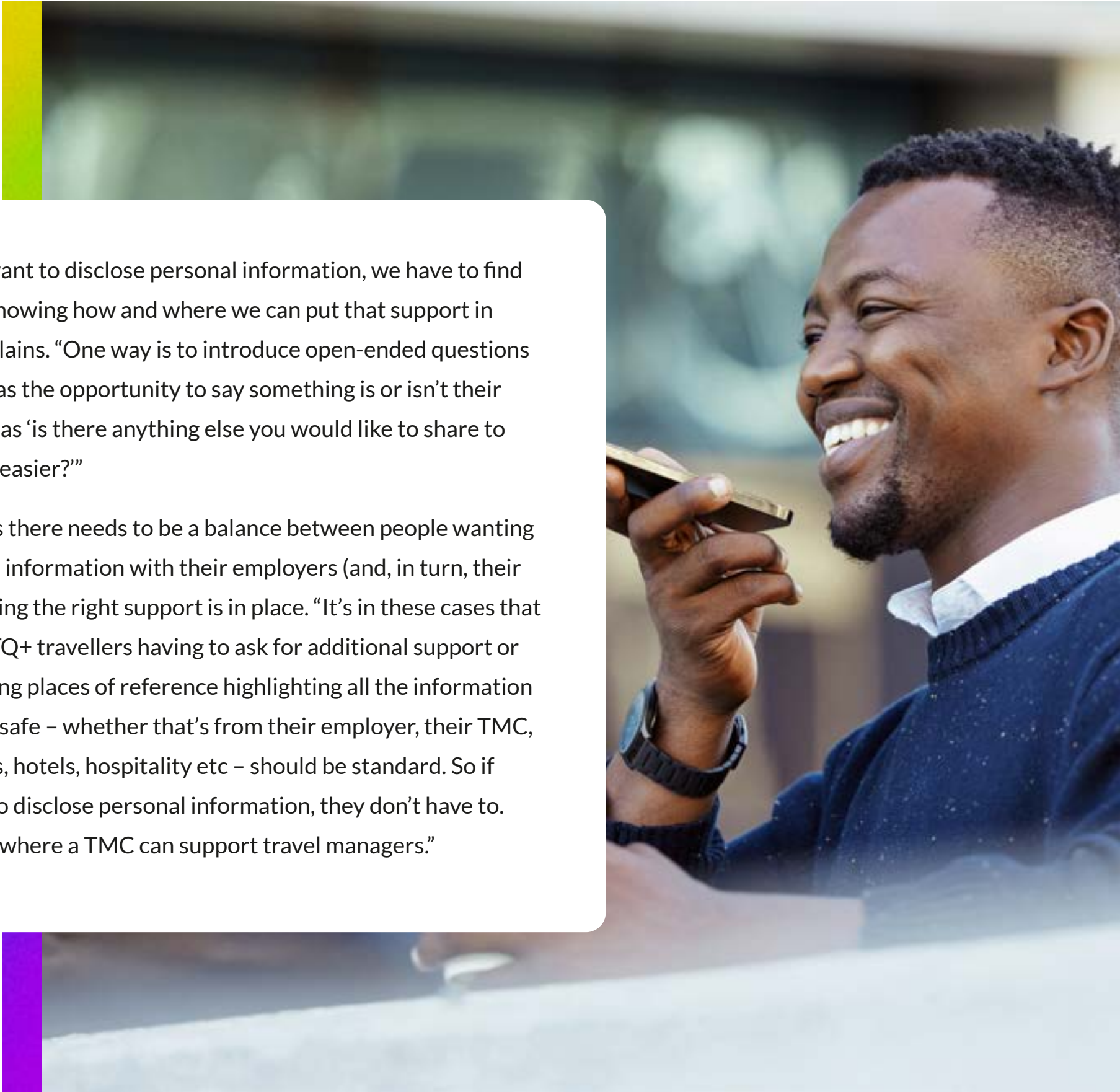


Reed & Mackay client Simmons & Simmons D&I Manager Eliz Arkut agrees that communication is key, which is why her team invites employees to take part in an annual diversity audit to ascertain whether there are LGBTQ+ travelers and if they need support. Although it's not mandatory to respond, Arkut highlights that the audit allows the team to have a better understanding of the LGBTQ+ community at the company, with an 80% response rate in the UK.

"We operate in a number of jurisdictions globally, so if we have an employee from the UK going on an international secondment, say for three to six months, and they have disclosed they identify as LGBTQ+, we can start having conversations to inform them further about the local legal landscape," Arkut says.

"This does mean we can only provide additional support to those that have disclosed their diversity data and it can be slightly more challenging by the fact we can only collect diversity data from international offices where local GDPR laws allow it."

This can present a challenge, GBTA's Bekoe agrees. Nevertheless, if the travel industry needs to find a solution to the above it needs to consider how it does so carefully.



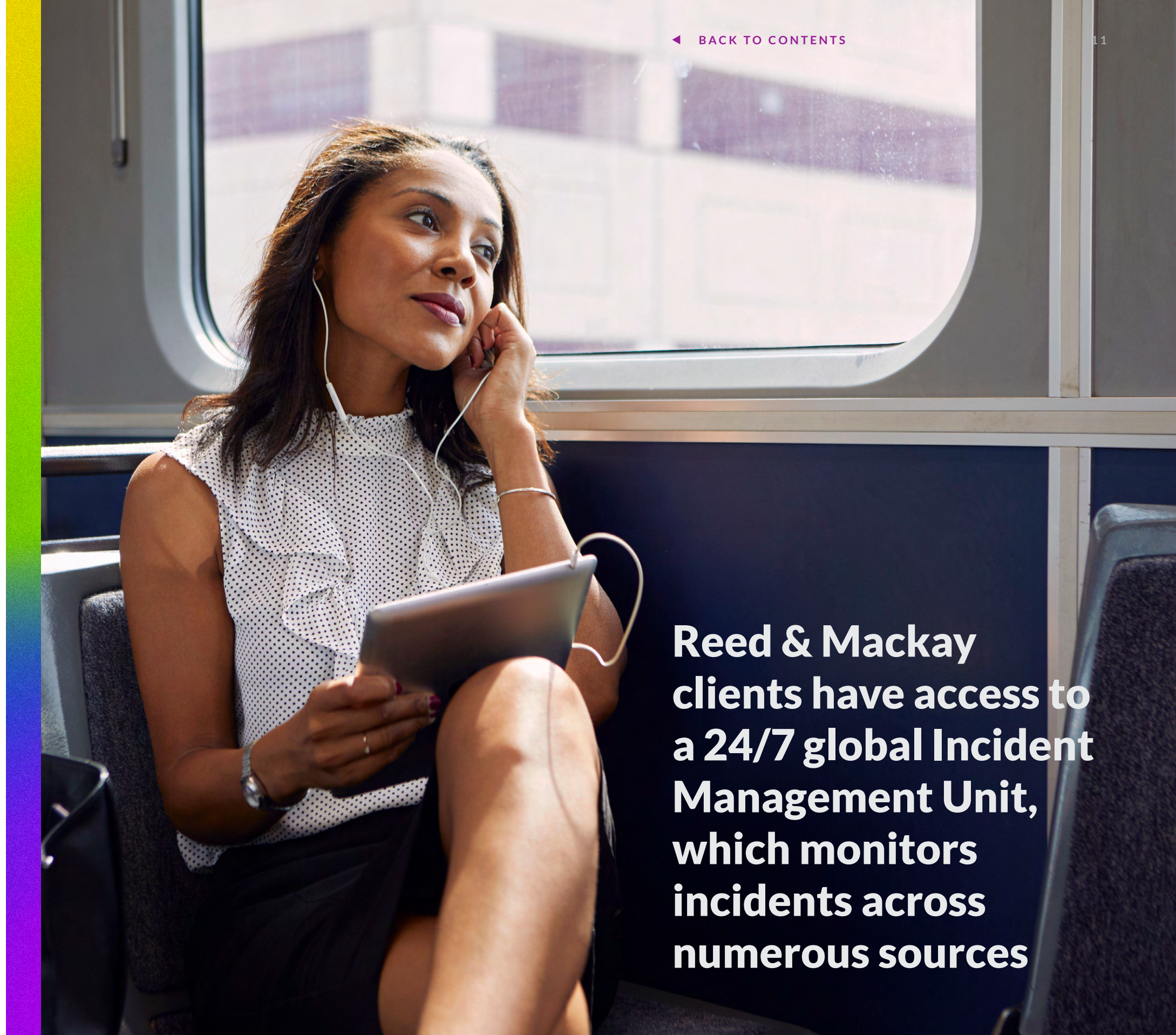
"If people don't want to disclose personal information, we have to find another way of knowing how and where we can put that support in place," Bekoe explains. "One way is to introduce open-ended questions so the traveller has the opportunity to say something is or isn't their preference. Such as 'is there anything else you would like to share to make your travel easier?'"

Stratford concurs there needs to be a balance between people wanting to share personal information with their employers (and, in turn, their TMCs) and ensuring the right support is in place. "It's in these cases that rather than LGBTQ+ travelers having to ask for additional support or information, having places of reference highlighting all the information they need to feel safe - whether that's from their employer, their TMC, individual airlines, hotels, hospitality etc - should be standard. So if they don't want to disclose personal information, they don't have to. This is a key area where a TMC can support travel managers."

Partnering with risk management companies

Travel managers are now playing a vital role in risk management. When travelling to destinations deemed a higher risk to LGBTQ+ travelers, having a comprehensive risk management strategy in place is essential.

[Reed & Mackay clients have access to our 24/7 global Incident Management Unit](#), which monitors incidents across numerous sources. In addition, clients can find all the latest travel and health restrictions from around the world, plus access our unique travel risk platform providing traveler tracking. And working with risk management partners such as Crisis24, Healix and International SOS – which last year refreshed its LGBTQ+ module¹⁰ – means detailed information can be made available.



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How can you support LGBTQ+ travelers?*

Work with your TMC and its risk management partner on destination risk assessments. Even if identifying as LGBTQ+ is not illegal in a country, social attitudes might be conservative. Ask travellers to consider what apps they have on their mobile phones that might reveal personal details about themselves. And prepare them for potential questions that may be asked at immigration, such as about a spouse.

Engage support from local HR and legal teams from the country the traveller is from and the one they're going to. Ask employees living in international destinations to share tips on lived experiences or research online for anecdotes and suggestions to better understand what challenges there may be.

Refer to advice and destination guides from LGBTQ+ associations and charities such as Stonewall, IGLTA and GLAAD ([see Resources section](#)). These provide information on societal attitudes, as well as legislation and how it will influence any member of the LGBTQ+ community.

Train other employees in allyship and bystander intervention so they can support their LGBTQ+ colleagues if they witness anti-social or harmful behaviour.



*Suggestions provided by contributors to this report



With your TMC, conduct a risk assessment of how you would remove travelers in an emergency, if needed.

How open someone wants to be about their personal life is an individual's choice. It's important they know that if they choose to not take a business trip or secondment that it won't have any effect on their career prospects.

Share information on local laws with all business travellers. Make all your travellers aware that some destinations may carry some risk to their LGBTQ+ colleagues – whether they've disclosed the information or not – and avoid putting them in a position that may cause an issue.

Work with your TMC to provide updated information on immigration, visas and border control and find out if all travellers will have access to healthcare that's available in the visited destination. Include advice such as ensuring the traveller, if taking any medication, has enough of that medication to take with them, and that the prescription's name matches the one in the traveller's passport.

*Suggestions provided by contributors to this report

Have information ready to share on LGBTQ+ friendly hotels, restaurants and venues, as well as any LGBTQ+ support groups in the destination of travel. And remind travellers to be mindful about what they post on their own social media channels while travelling.

Provide information on airlines that offer a non-binary option for gender selection on tickets, as well as the countries that allow passport holders a non-binary option. While the International Civil Aviation Organization – which sets the standards for machine-readable passports – provides three gender options (female, male or X) only a handful of countries offer this option to passport holders. These include Austria, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Malta and The Netherlands, Canada, the United States, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Australia and New Zealand.¹¹

Trans persons can be particularly vulnerable – with many passports, or when buying tickets, there is still the need to choose a gender. Engage with trans-rights organizations who can guide you.

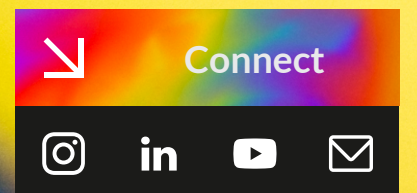


We asked one of our global clients from the legal sector to ask its LGBTQ+ corporate travelers what more support they would like to see from the travel industry.

“More information on where is safe for LGBTQ+ travelers to visit.”

“There should be more flags or information on LGBTQ+ travel so I can check for my own safety while travelling.”

“It would be good to have gender-neutral or non-binary greetings/signs/booking options.”



03

Hotels: Going beyond an inclusive welcome

Search online for 'LGBTQ+ friendly hotels' and a multitude of options appear, listed through online travel agents and tourist boards in a host of destinations that promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

Furthermore, travel associations such as the IGLTA¹² have accredited programs to assess properties, using different data points – such as training and community engagement – to determine their LGBTQ+ inclusiveness. And LGBTQ+ travel publications feature hotel brands committed to delivering an inclusive and welcoming environment, such as EveryQueer.com¹³ that highlighted brands such as Belmond, Hyatt, Accor, Marriott and Hilton.

Yet is it just these accreditations that need to be taken into account, to ensure your travellers will be staying in accommodation they feel safe and welcomed at in the same way other travellers would be?

“It’s one thing for hotels to say they’re inclusive but the important thing is they ‘walk the walk,’” Reed & Mackay Implant Manager/Client Lead James Darney says. “I would ask, what are they doing in the local community to support LGBTQ+ programs? And also what are they doing to educate people in that same community around the concerns LGBTQ+ people face on a daily basis, not just during Pride month?”





“When choosing hotels, also assess their locations. It’s important to check with local communities, research the area and the public transport to make sure all travelers will feel safe. Risk assessment is crucial.”



James Darney
Reed & Mackay Implant
Manager/Client Lead



Darney believes the role of a TMC is also to look beyond the hotel itself during recess and consider the area in which it’s located. “I once worked with a client in the legal sector who had a new intake of trainees to their business coming to spend time at the head office,” Darney explains. “Part of the introduction would be evening networking events and socializing for a young audience and we had to ensure the accommodation we booked would be welcoming to all communities.

“While the hotels we assessed were themselves welcoming, the areas they were in weren’t so much. It’s important to check with local communities, research the area and the public transport to make sure all travelers will feel safe. Risk assessment is crucial.

“I’ve also been heavily involved in hotel RFPs and would consider every element from the hotel security to the safety of the social areas and entry to the building.”

One Reed & Mackay US Corporate Travel Consultant, who wishes to remain anonymous, agrees adding that safety is a number one priority when booking for all travellers and that personal experience has helped find the right properties for business travelers within the LGBTQ+ community.

“I’ve had experience booking travel personally and for clients so I know a TMC has to be aware you can’t always block book accommodation and hope it’s okay for everyone,” they say. “Research about the location is crucial. I would like to see more external support from venues too around this – the LGBTQ+ community is a big part of the travel community so it’s essential everyone in the industry works together to ensure their safety.”





It's an appeal that Maiden Voyage CEO Carolyn Pearson backs, citing that hotels signposting their welcome to LGBTQ+ travellers can do much to promote their allegiance to the community, such as getting involved in local events year-round.

“And travel managers should look for hotels that encourage their own employees absolute freedom of gender expression at work,” Pearson adds. “However, there is still so much work to do. We hear many concerning stories affecting the trans community, such as mis-gendering at hotel check-in.”

Pearson adds that corporate travel managers and TMCs should identify properties and groups who are knowledgeable about guest inclusivity, particularly from a safety and wellbeing perspective.

“Likewise, many accommodation providers want to enhance their ESG protocols by ensuring they provide an inclusive experience for all guests, so there is definitely still a need for accreditation,” Pearson adds. “That’s one reason why we launched an Inclusive Guest Excellence Programme course, where properties look at guest needs according to protected characteristics and then workshop what they can do at their own property to really excel in this area.”

A combination of accredited hotels, TMC consultant knowledge of the properties and their locations, plus the ability to source LGBTQ+ hotels online are a good starting point from which to develop.

What else would you like to see hotels put in place to ensure better support for the LGBTQ+ community? Email helloUS@reedmackay.com with your thoughts.

Q&A with Hyatt Hotels

Senior Vice President Human Resources Monique Dekker



Hyatt is recognized as a LGBTQ+ friendly hotel – what does that mean?

It means all guests are welcome and colleagues working in those hotels, whether part of the LGBTQ+ community or not, display appropriate awareness on the topic and sensitivity to issues relevant to the community. This is shown in how they address guests and interact with colleagues and wider communities. We have achieved a 100% ranking on Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation's Corporate Equality Index every year since 2004 and, for the past 19 years, have been named by HRC as a Best Place to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality.

How do your teams show their continual commitment to progressing inclusivity?

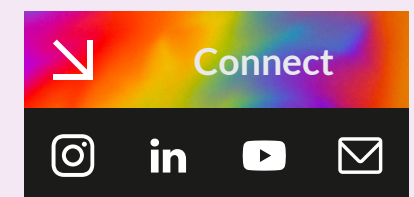
Via our resource groups and their local chapters, which help drive progress, and by taking a key role in Pride activations in specific locations.

However, we know there's always more to be done and we ensure we can offer a supportive training environment for all colleagues via our internal portal. We are also working on a project to enhance visibility and access for all our colleagues across the portfolio, in conjunction with our HyPride affinity group.

Hyatt's LGBTQ+ affinity group has also submitted a Transitioning Guideline document for leaders in the region, aimed at providing them with sufficient knowledge on the subject of gender transitioning, as well as general behaviour guidelines, in order to successfully support colleagues going through this process.

How does this commitment from the hotel group translate to guest inclusivity?

We are continually working to provide a welcoming experience for guests across our portfolio of properties, exploring additional initiatives to best cater for the needs of those belonging to the LGBTQ+ community, including around the use of pronouns [when booking].



04

At a glance: Airline initiatives

While the following doesn't cover all airlines and what they're providing, this is a snapshot to demonstrate there is movement to better support travellers in this space.



As the first US airline to fully recognise domestic partnerships in 1999, United was also the first US airline to offer non-binary gender options throughout all booking channels in 2019. Furthermore, it became the first public company to be inducted into Pride Live's Stonewall Ambassador programme in recognition of its commitment to LGBTQ+ equality.¹⁴

That has translated further into updating appearance standards for uniformed, customer-facing employees – to reflect more inclusive standards that better express individuality – and an invitation to employees to add gender pronouns to email signatures to normalise gender-inclusive pronoun practices. United was also voted one of the 2023-2024 Best Places to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality – for the 12th year in a row – and earned a top score on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index.



Qantas has a long history in supporting the LGBTQ+ community, from Pride at Sydney Mardi Gras to its support of the 'Yes' campaign for marriage equality. The airline has created an employee-led community called Illuminate, which incorporates a spotlight on initiatives across LGBTQ+ and Cultural Diversity. Some of the support Illuminate offers includes destination advice for LGBTQ+ travelers and a LGBTQ+ Employee Assistance program.

All employees are offered online LGBTQ+ awareness training, as well as participating in face-to-face training with partner Pride in Diversity. Uniform is now called capsules and is no longer male and female uniform; make-up was previously only for female employees, this has now changed; and the airline's welcome PAs say Hello Everyone instead of Ladies and Gentlemen.



Virgin Atlantic updated its gender identity policy in 2022¹⁵, giving its crew, pilot and ground team the option to choose which uniform best represents them – no matter their gender, gender identity or gender expression. This was complemented by the roll out of optional pronoun badges for all its people and those travelling with the airline.

The airline also updated its ticketing systems to allow for those who hold passports with gender neutral gender markers to select 'U' or 'X' gender codes on their booking as well as the gender-neutral title 'Mx'. In lieu of passports with gender-neutral gender markers being available for all, the airline is implementing a longer-term plan to amend communication preferences to ensure customers are addressed by their preferred pronouns across all touchpoints.

Mandatory inclusivity training was also rolled out for its people at all levels across Virgin Atlantic as well as a series of inclusivity learning initiatives for tourism partners and hotels within destinations such as the Caribbean to ensure all customers feel welcome, despite barriers to LGBTQ+ equality.

LUFTHANSA GROUP

Diversity is one of the Lufthansa Group’s core values and the airline runs its ‘The world says yes to you’ campaign, which aims to ensure everyone feels accepted and respected and can be their authentic selves. The airline celebrates that diversity through Pride events around the world, all of which are organised in collaboration with “Diversify”, the Lufthansa Group LGBTQ+ employee network.

The network focuses on cross-company exchange and mutual support on diversity, as well as promotes continuous exchange to ensure the airline is a leading employer for the LGBTQ+ community and extends that inclusivity to all customers.



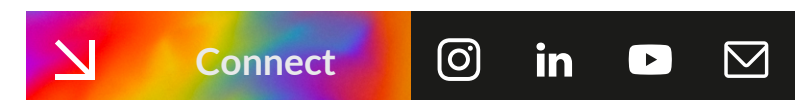
Continuing its efforts to deliver a more inclusive and personalised service, last year KLM introduced a gender-neutral alternative to the male and female courtesy titles for customers who prefer a more neutral form of address when making a booking. This feature was initially introduced for customers in the Netherlands, the UK, Germany and the US. The airline’s inflight announcements have also changed from ‘ladies and gentlemen’ to ‘passengers’.

The airline also runs employee network organisation Over the Rainbow that represents, supports and connects its LGBTQ+ community. The employee network challenges and influences KLM to create a workplace where each LGBTQ+ colleague can bring their whole self to work, feeling recognised, valued, supported and safe. In October 2022, KLM received formal recognition from Workplace Pride by being awarded the Ambassador status and again in 2023. In particular, the recognition highlighted the availability of a Transgender Policy on KLM’s intranet and the growing Inclusive Ally program that was launched at the end of 2021.



British Airways has a history of building an inclusive workplace, designed for its employees to feel able to express their identity and be themselves. The airline recently updated its policies and guides to reflect more gender-neutral language and created guidelines for managers and colleagues to support those at work who transition or have transitioned. It also supports its LGBTQ+ network, Flying Proud, who continue to raise awareness, create belonging and engage allies.¹⁶

This diverse and inclusive workplace is championed by the airline’s leaders, employee network groups and supported by relationships with external partners, including Stonewall and the National Forum for Health and WellBeing at Work.^{16a}



05

Making meetings & events more inclusive



The global meetings and events industry is projected to reach \$2.1 trillion by 2032, growing at a compound annual growth rate of 6.4% from 2023 to 2032¹⁷.

It's an enormous industry – and therefore a reasonable assumption that a percentage of delegates attending all these meetings and events will identify as LGBTQ+.

As an event organizer you want all your attendees to feel welcome and safe.

Reed & Mackay Head of Events UK Marali Kempthorne and Reed & Mackay General Manager Events US Kristy Thomas Bonet suggest some of the ways to make your event as inclusive as possible.

01.

As event organizers, you wouldn't ask directly for delegates to share personal information about themselves so inclusion should be woven into the planning of the event right from the start.

When considering venues, for example, ask about their own inclusion policies. Have staff at the venue received diversity training? Are there gender-neutral bathrooms available? Is there a specific Diversity, Equity & Inclusion contact at the venue? And ask whether they ask all of the above from any suppliers they work with.

02.

Provide country reports for each destination, particularly if the event is being hosted in a location where identifying as LGBTQ+ is illegal. Reed & Mackay clients can access these via our online portal or ask your business travel consultant.

03.

When putting together the event program, include a diverse range of speakers. While the content doesn't have to be LGBTQ+ focused, an inclusive panel of speakers avoids bias towards certain experiences and can deliver various viewpoints.





04.

Employ inclusive language right from the start, particularly around pronouns – in the registration process, in speaker scripts, on signage and programs, on name badges. Rather than welcoming delegates as ‘ladies and gentlemen’, use gender-neutral language.

05.

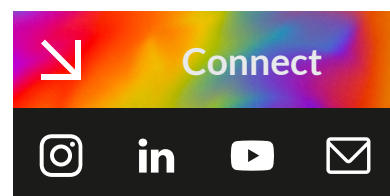
To offer additional support to delegates, you could include a pre-registration question along the lines of ‘would you like any additional support in any area?’. If delegates want to share and ask for further help, they have the opportunity to do so without feeling pressured.

06.

Will you be providing information on where to visit in the event’s host destination? Also include details on LGBTQ+ friendly restaurants and bars in the area.

07.

Give delegates the opportunity to feedback on how inclusive they felt the event to be. Ask where it can be improved for next time, or whether they’re happy to share their experiences – anonymously if they wish. And ask your own employees if they’d like to share any advice on inclusivity at events. It’s gathering information from people with lived experiences that will provide the best insights.



Did you know?

C&IT recently highlighted the most LGBTQ+ friendly European destinations¹⁸, with countries that promote diversity, equity and inclusion naturally coming high on the list: the **UK, Germany, France, Denmark and Spain** all making the top five.

US-based Advocate.com published a report on the top 15 most-LGBTQ+ friendly cities in the US, with **San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Portland and Chicago** all making the top 10¹⁹.

And Out.com reported a survey by Emisil, a provider of body prosthetics to support the queer community, that ranked the top 10 friendliest cities in the world for queer and trans travelers²⁰. Top three were **Lisbon, Copenhagen and New York**.



06

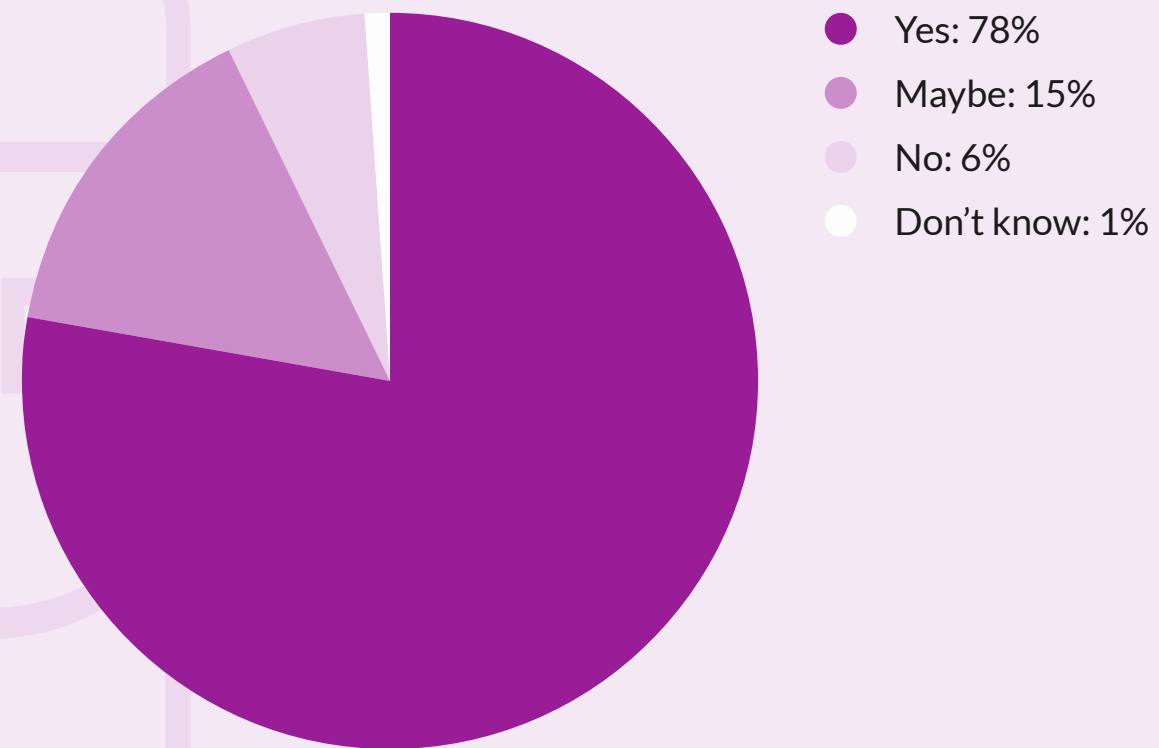
The next steps:
A collaboration
across industry?

Travellers' views

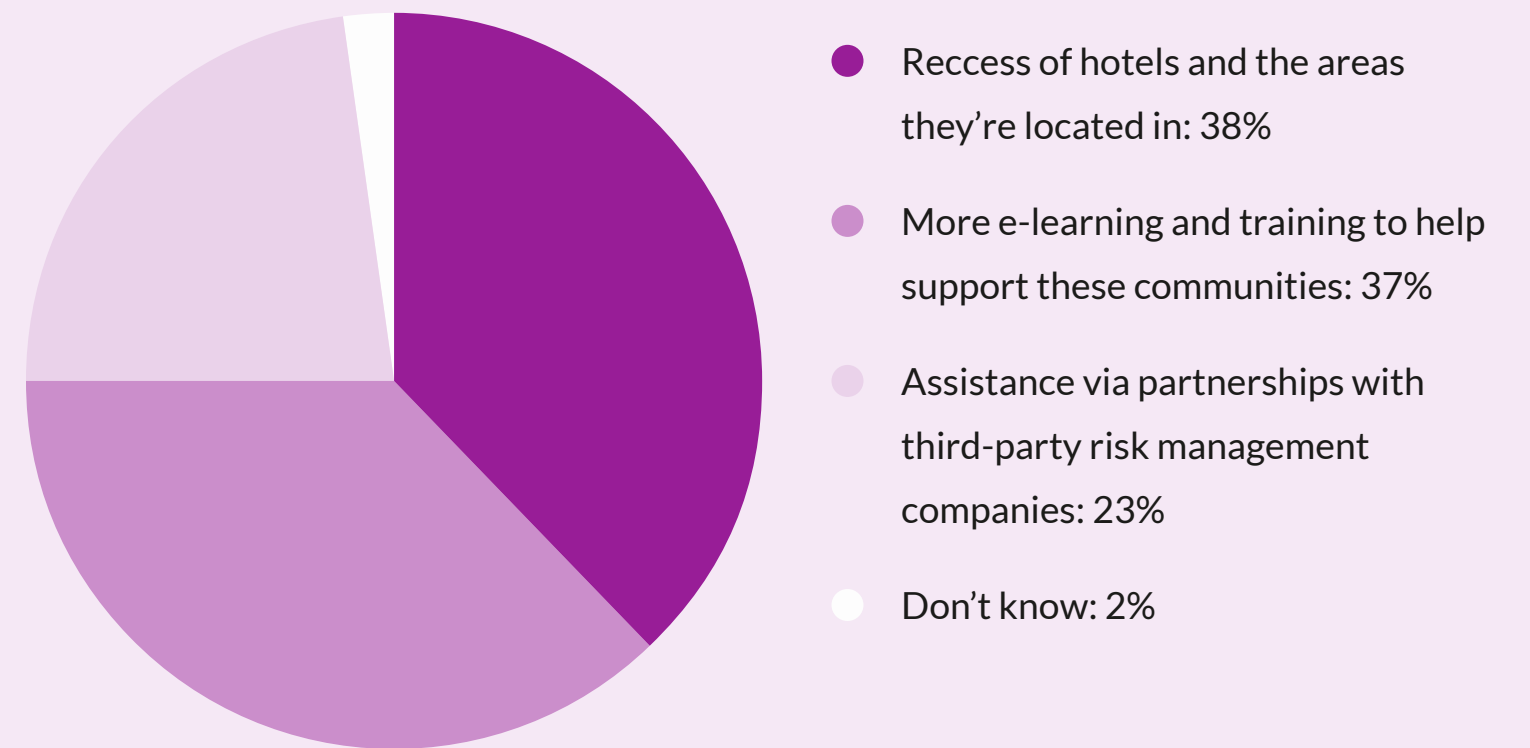
While there has been a progressive attitude towards supporting LGBTQ+ corporate travellers and delegates, the community still believes more can be done to support them feel safe and their concerns moved to the top of travel industry suppliers' agendas.

We asked one of our global clients from the legal sector to ask its LGBTQ+ corporate travelers the following:

Would you like to see a business travel industry taskforce in place, with a remit to lobby travel suppliers and governments to deliver a more inclusive, connected approach to LGBTQ+ travellers' need?



Where would you like to see travel management companies (TMCs) provide increased support?



“Corporate travel managers and event managers look to TMCs to be the expert across everything that affects their travelers or have established partnerships with third-party suppliers that can assist. It’s about every single person feeling valued and offered that dedicated service,” Reed & Mackay Group CEO Fred Stratford says.

“A lot of travel managers are by themselves in their roles, often balancing a whole range of services they provide travellers. When people talk about return on investment, that can be found by working with a TMC who can help them in all these areas, which can add extra value to their travel program.”

The Business Travel Association’s Wratten agrees, adding that more discussion is also needed with the LGBTQ+ community to ensure the right guidance is in place. “For example, if a destination is reported as safe for the community, is that the case in all areas of the country? As an industry we need to ensure we work with groups, associations and individuals with lived experiences who can share where support is needed,” Wratten says. “And what does that support look like exactly?”

There are steps that people who organize travel for their company can take as well, adds Maiden Voyage’s Pearson.

“A business should engage with its own internal LGBTQ+ network to find out what the specific challenges are that their own employees face,” Pearson says. “These could be related to a specific destination

“Listening is crucial. But you can’t have these conversations in isolation. We need to understand what’s being done for inclusivity and how that translates in different countries.”

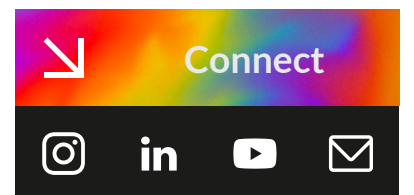
they travel to, the amount of information they have to disclose on visa applications or fears around personal safety. They then need to respond to those specific challenges.”

Global Business Travel Association’s Linda Bekoe believes the industry needs to also focus on educating travellers to ensure they feel safe wherever they are. “One of my key goals as Inclusion and Culture chair at GBTA is make sure inclusivity is at the heart of everything we do,” Bekoe says. “Listening is crucial. But you can’t have these conversations in isolation. We need to understand what’s being done around inclusivity and, crucially, how that translates in different countries.”

Stratford agrees that every traveler’s experience is individual – that there is no one-size-fits-all and more conversations need to be had. “But a really positive step in this direction would be for the business travel industry to call for a taskforce to lobby travel suppliers – and governments – to deliver a more inclusive, connected approach,” Stratford concludes. “That’s when it will be truly inclusive.”



Linda Bekoe
Global Business Travel Association Inclusion and Culture Chair



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Resources

Resources

Where to find destination reports and helpful advice on LGBTQ+ rights across the globe.

Stonewall

www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/safe-travels-global-mobility-lgbt-staff
www.stonewall.org.uk/list-lgbtq-terms#n

GLAAD

<https://glaad.org>

International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association

www.iglta.org

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA)

<https://ilga.org>

Global Butterflies

<https://globalbutterflies.com>

Government overseas travel advice:

UK

www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice

US

[LGBTQI+ Travel Information \(state.gov\)](http://LGBTQI+ Travel Information (state.gov))

GBTA

<https://gbtafoundation.org/people/dei/>



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References

References

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02. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/travelers-with-special-considerations/lgbtqi.html>
 - 2a www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice
03. www.stonewall.org.uk/
04. [glaad.org/](https://www.glaad.org/)
05. www.iglta.org/
06. [Business travellers continue to face 'negative behaviours' | Business Travel News Europe](#)
07. [More travel programmes cater to LGBTQIA+ travellers | Business Travel News Europe](#)
08. www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/articles/sexualorientationageandsexenglandandwales/census2021
09. www.statista.com/statistics/719685/american-adults-who-identify-as-homosexual-bisexual-transgender-by-generation/
10. [International SOS launches 'refreshed' LGBTQ+ module | Business Travel News Europe](#)
11. [Which countries offer gender-neutral passports? \(economist.com\)](#)
12. www.iglta.org/articles/post/iglta-accredited-for-hotels-members-launch/
13. [The Best LGBT-Friendly Hotels - EveryQueer](#)
14. [Flying with Pride | United Airlines](#)
15. [Virgin Atlantic updates gender identity policy](#)
16. www.britishairways.com/content/en/es/information/about-ba/ba-better-world/people
 - 16a. <https://careers.ba.com/inclusion-and-diversity> www.alliedmarketresearch.com/events-industry-market
17. <https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/events-industry-market>
18. [The most LGBTQI+ friendly European destinations | C&IT World \(cit-world.com\)](#)
19. [Here Are the 15 Most Gay-Friendly Cities in the U.S. \(advocate.com\)](#)
20. www.out.com/travel-nightlife/best-queer-trans-friendly-cities#rebelltitem12

Thank you for reading Supporting LGBTQ+
business travelers

We'd love to hear your thoughts to keep the
conversation going.

Email us at helloUS@reedmackay.com