

## Homosexuals and jobs

### 1. Are there any well-known gay people in your country in the following areas?

- the church
- the law
- fashion
- politics
- TV
- sport

### 2. Are there more gay people in some professions than in others? Why do you think that is?

### 3. Read the articles below.

#### Gay naval officer faces keelhauling

The Navy has threatened to court martial a serving officer who is a finalist in the [Mr Gay UK 2005](#). Richard Cowell, 25, is weapons engineer on Type-23 frigate HMS Northumberland. He's also [Mr Plymouth](#) and in the running for the UK's top gay male accolade - much to the chagrin of the Senior Service. Cowell has been ordered to withdraw from the contest or face a keelhauling, UK tabloid the *Sun* reports. The paper has pulled its defence correspondent off Iraq duty to cover this most pressing of issues, apparently without effect because top Navy brass has instructed Cowell not to speak to the press. His

18-year-old boyfriend Sean Wright, though, is not bound by military law, and declared: "The Navy say they are pro-gay but it seems that's only if you don't act it." For its part, the Navy says it's not about gayness, stating: "It isn't appropriate for an officer to participate in any competition with a sexual theme." Homosexuality in the armed forces was deemed acceptable back in 2000. Prior to that, it was very seriously frowned upon.

[http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/09/29/navy\\_officer\\_keelfuffle/](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/09/29/navy_officer_keelfuffle/)

#### Lesbian row at town hall

The newly elected mayor to be of a Welsh town has caused a stir by announcing that her lesbian partner of 20 years will be mayoress.

Jaci Taylor, a 55-year old Plaid Cymru councillor, who will be sworn in as Aberystwyth mayor next week, said Felicity Roberts, also 55, would join her on formal duties.

The local Conservative Party chairman, Aubrey Palmer, immediately attacked her decision to make Felicity Roberts her mayoress: "It is going to cause a storm in Aberystwyth because it is not normally something we associate with this town. Things like this don't normally happen here. I think it just degrades the position of a mayor."

Ms Taylor, who has two grown-up daughters, defended herself, saying: "It does take a lot of guts to make a decision like this, but everyone has a place in society and everyone is equal whether it is in terms of sexuality, race or culture. It shouldn't really be an issue. There are more important issues like getting a better life for people." She added: "We have been together for 20 years and have never hidden the fact we are together".

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/wales/737319.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/737319.stm)

#### Comprehension: True or false?

1. There are military reasons why gays should not be allowed in the armed forces.
2. The Senior Service does not want Cowell to take part in the contest.
3. Jaci Taylor's lesbian relationship has been a secret for 20 years.
4. Aubrey Palmer is unhappy with the idea of Taylor's partner being the mayoress.



**Discussion:**

1. Do you think it is OK to have gay people in the army? Why? Why not?
2. The US excludes homosexuals from eligibility to serve in the armed forces. Do you agree with this *US* policy act concerning the service of homosexuals in the military?  
*The presence in the armed forces of persons who demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion that are the essence of military capability.*
3. Should Taylor be allowed to choose her lesbian partner as mayoress?
4. “Things like this don’t happen here” – Comment on this quotation by Palmer.

**Personal opinion**

Discuss these questions in pairs:

1. Do you think that there are any jobs which homosexuals should not be allowed to do?
2. Do you think people should have to declare their sexuality when applying for the job of a
  - politician
  - doctor
  - nurse
  - child minder
  - teacher ?
3. Would you employ a gay person? Why? Why not?
4. Have you ever worked with someone who was gay?  
Was his/her sexual orientation a problem?