



# Conference Confronts Unconscious Biases

**T**A soldiers from the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community met those in the chain of command at the third annual Army LGTB conference held in March.

The theme of this year's conference was "Cultivating LGBT Talent" to address the fact that there are few visibly LGBT soldiers or officers in senior roles despite recent statistics from Phase 1 and 2 recruits indicating that around one in six new soldiers joining their units in 2013 are in this group.

"The concern is that LGBT senior soldiers and officers feel unable to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity, or that they leave before achieving senior positions," explains Major Damian Jenkins, chairman of the Army LGBT Forum.

"We don't know how big the Army LGBT community is, but the first Army-gathered statistics on gender identity and sexual orientation of Phase 1 and 2 recruits in 2012 showed that 1.5 per cent of men and 15 per cent of women leaving the Phase 2 training were lesbian, gay or bisexual. This means that around one in six people joining their new units in 2013 are LGBT."

Also in the 102-strong audience were commanding officers, adjutants, trainers, and medical officers, to learn about unconscious biases and the effect these have on the promotion potential of LGBT soldiers and officers.

"The attendance of those in the chain of command at the conference demonstrates a marked and increasing commitment to good management practices in the Army. The Army aims to create a working environment in which everyone can be authentic about themselves, because it improves operational effectiveness," concludes Major Jenkins.

The next LGBT conference is for all services in the Armed Forces, and will be organised by the Royal Navy at MOD Main Building on 28 June 2013.

