

Meeting the Requirements of Equality Legislation

A Fairer NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde 2013 – 2016

Briefing Paper:
Sexual Orientation

June 2013

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Demographics / health needs

What is sexual orientation?

Everyone has a sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is a combination of emotional, romantic, sexual or affectionate attraction to another person. In other words, it's about who you are attracted to, fall in love with and want to live your life with.

Description of terms:

Lesbian – a term to describe women who are romantically and sexually attracted to women.

Gay man – a term to describe men who are romantically and sexually attracted to men

Bisexual – a term to describe women or men who are romantically and or sexually attracted to both sexes to some degree.

LGB is often used to describe or summarise the three terms above. Some organisations use the acronym LGBT to include transgender and some research which has been carried out covers LGBT as a group or differentiates between groups. Under the Equality Act 2010 transgender is covered as a separate protected characteristic called Gender Reassignment. Some people who would not claim an LGB identity may also have some feelings or behaviours oriented towards the same sex. The term “men who have sex with men” is used by sexual health services to encapsulate the complexity of male behaviours and identities.

Population estimates

There is no definitive or consistent way to measure those in the population who are LGB. The census and most large scale surveys do not include categories to describe LGB identity. In planning for introducing civil partnerships, the UK government best estimate based on synthesising survey data is that between 5-7% of the population identified as LGB.

It is known that many LGB people tend to migrate towards cities therefore although the 5-7% can be used at a board level, this number will likely be higher for the Glasgow City area.

Estimate of local authority populations who are/will grow up to be LGB using 6% estimate.

Area	Male population	Female Population
Glasgow	17,433	18,496
Renfrewshire	4,909	5,329
Inverclyde	2,270	2,482
West Dunbartonshire	2,578	2,843
East Dunbartonshire	3,024	3,249
East Renfrewshire	2,585	2,805
NHSGGC	32,799	35,204

Health needs

The Scottish Health Survey (2010) showed the following areas where LGB health and wellbeing outcomes are notably poorer:

Indicator	LGB	Heterosexual/Mainstream
Good/Very Good health	68%	76%
Mental Wellbeing Score	47.9 (bisexual) 48.8 (LG)	50%
General Health Questionnaire GHQ12 (an indicator of psychological well-being)	23% (bisexual) 16% (LG)	15%
Hazardous alcohol consumption	29% (Bisexual) 34% (LG)	23%
Exceed alcohol daily limits	49% (bisexual) 50% (LG)	39%
Smoking	27% (bisexual) 28% (LG)	24%

Patient experience

A survey into the health experiences of LGB people in Glasgow (2011) showed the following:

- Mental ill health and depression is the most significant health theme, attributed to experience of discrimination.
- General satisfaction with health services, less so for primary care, health services seem overly focussed on sexual health.
- Over half of bisexual people unhappy with their health.
- Half of LGB(&T) people had experienced verbal or physical abuse attributed to discrimination within health services.

Experience of discrimination

Several surveys have explored the impact of discrimination on health for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people. Some of these findings are summarised here:

Prescription For Change: Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Health Check (2008)

Cancer screening

- Fifteen per cent of lesbian and bisexual women over the age of 25 have never had a cervical smear test, compared to seven per cent of women in general.
- One in five who have not had a test have been told they are not at risk.
- One in fifty have been refused a test.

Mental health

- 20 per cent of lesbian and bisexual women have deliberately harmed themselves in the last year, compared to 0.4 per cent of the general population. Half of women under the age of 20 have self-harmed compared to one in fifteen of teenagers generally.
- Five per cent have attempted to take their life in the last year and sixteen per cent of women under the age of 20 have attempted to take their life. ChildLine estimate that 0.12 per cent of people under 18 have attempted suicide.
- One in five say they have an eating disorder, compared to one in 20 of the general population.

Domestic violence

- One in four lesbian and bisexual women have experienced domestic violence, the same as women in general. In two thirds of cases, the perpetrator was another woman.
- Four in five have not reported incidents of domestic violence to the police and of those that did, only half were happy with their response.

Discrimination in healthcare

- Half have had negative experiences in the health sector in the last year, despite the fact that it is now unlawful to discriminate against lesbian and bisexual women.
- Half of lesbian and bisexual women are not out to their GP.
- One in ten say that a healthcare worker ignored them when they did come out.
- Just three in ten lesbian and bisexual women say that healthcare workers did not make inappropriate comments when they came out.
- Just one in ten felt that their partner was welcome during a consultation.

Gay and Bisexual Men's Health Survey Scotland (2011)

Mental health

- In the last year, three per cent of gay men and seven per cent of bisexual men in Scotland have attempted to take their own life.
- One in sixteen gay and bisexual men aged 16 to 19 have attempted to take their own life in the last year.
- One in sixteen gay and bisexual men deliberately harmed themselves in the last year.
- One in seven gay and bisexual men aged 16 to 19 harmed themselves in the last year.
- It's estimated that between 1 in 15 and 1 in 10 young people in general deliberately harm themselves.

Eating disorders and body image

- More than two in five gay and bisexual men in Scotland worry about the way they look and wish they could think about it less.
- One in five gay and bisexual men have had problems with their weight or eating at some time.
- One in eight gay and bisexual men have had a problem with their weight or eating in the last year.
- More than two thirds of gay and bisexual men who have had a problem with their weight or eating have never sought help from a healthcare professional.

Domestic abuse

- Half of gay and bisexual men in Scotland have experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse from a family member or partner since the age of 16.
- More than a third of gay and bisexual men have experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse from a partner compared to one in seven men in general.
- One in four gay and bisexual men have experienced domestic abuse from a family member, for example mother or father, since the age of 16.
- Three in four gay and bisexual men who have experienced domestic abuse have never reported incidents to the police. Of those who did report, one in four were not happy with how the police dealt with the situation.

Discrimination in healthcare

- A third of gay and bisexual men in Scotland who have accessed healthcare services in the last year have had a negative experience related to their sexual orientation.
- More than a third of gay and bisexual men are not out to their GP or healthcare professionals. Gay and bisexual men are more likely to be out to their manager, work colleagues, family and friends than their GP.

The Bisexuality Report (Open University 2012)

- Bisexual people's experiences differ in important ways from those of heterosexual people, and from those of lesbian and gay people.
- Bisexual people often face discrimination and prejudice from within heterosexual, and lesbian and gay, communities. This can be obscured by LGBT amalgamation.
- Bisexual populations have significantly higher levels of distress and mental health difficulties than equivalent heterosexual or lesbian/gay populations.

On a wide range of health indicators young LGB people or those unsure of their sexuality, report very much poorer health than heterosexual young people. This is especially marked in relation to their mental and emotional health and in relation to alcohol consumption and smoking. Notably however, it appears that those young people who are bisexual or who are unsure about their sexuality experience outcomes that are poorer again than those who are lesbian and gay.

Glasgow City Schools Health and Wellbeing Survey (2010) – Analysis of Findings in Relation to Sexual Attraction

Some of the findings where there are particularly stark differences are that:

- Gay boys are three times more likely to have low self esteem than heterosexual boys.
- Over 40% of bisexual girls have low self esteem, the highest incidence of low self esteem.
- Lesbian and gay young people are three times more likely to smoke than heterosexual young people.
- Lesbian and gay young people are twice as likely to drink alcohol once a week or more and have 12% higher rate of weekly drunkenness.
- Gay boys are drunk once a week or more at rate of more than twice that for heterosexual young people.

Resources to help

A wide range of resources are available on the Equalities in Health website –

http://www.equalitiesinhealth.org/public_html/sexual_support_resources.html

I'm Taking a Stand Against Homophobia campaign information can be found on the NHSGGC website –

http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/content/default.asp?page=home_homophobia

A banner and leaflets are available for any teams who would like to highlight the campaign in their workplace. Contact the Corporate Inequalities Team for more information.

Training available in-house

You can access an E-learning module on sexual orientation on StaffNet –

<http://www.staffnet.ggc.scot.nhs.uk/Human%20Resources/Learning%20and%20Education/E-Learning/Pages/E-Learning%20Homepage.aspx>

Involvement

The Corporate Inequalities Team will organise an engagement session with LGB people annually between 2013 and 2015 so that NHSGGC service providers can find out how they can improve their services. Individual services can also do their own engagement activity where appropriate e.g. to find out how specific issues in their services could be addressed.

Activity to address discrimination

The 'I'm Taking a Stand Against Homophobia Campaign' ran between 2012-13 and teams can still promote the campaign in their local area. The website includes a Good Practice Guide on how we can remove homophobia from our services.

http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/content/default.asp?page=home_homophobia

Some services in NHSGGC have become 3rd Party reporting sites for homophobic hate crime and other services could be supported to do this.

The Hate Crime – What You Need to Know leaflet can be found here –

http://www.equalitiesinhealth.org/public_html/documents/HateCrimeLeaflet_000.pdf

Data collection on LGB people using our services is not routinely collected so their needs in services are not being considered. Local areas could use demographic estimates to see how many LBG people could be using their service and how they should be appropriately responding.

Acknowledgement

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