

# Domestic Violence & Abuse

Additional Findings Report  
December 2007

## Count Me In Too



## LGBT Lives in Brighton & Hove

Report written by

Dr. Kath Browne

in consultation with:

Count Me In Too Domestic Violence & Abuse Analysis Group

Research undertaken by Dr. Kath Browne and facilitated by Arthur Law

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Press enquires contact Dr. Kath Browne



**University of Brighton**

### Dr Kath Browne

University of Brighton

☎ 01273 642377

✉ K.A.Browne@brighton.ac.uk

✉ School of the Environment,  
Cockcroft Building,  
University of Brighton,  
Lewes Road,  
Brighton BN2 4GJ

**spectrum**

### Arthur Law

Spectrum LGBT Community Forum

☎ 01273 723123

✉ arthur.law@spectrum-lgbt.org

✉ Spectrum,  
6 Bartholomews,  
Brighton BN1 1HG

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# Synopsis of key findings

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30% of Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) people experience abuse from a family member or someone close to them in their lifetimes, there is evidence of multiple perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. There are differences between those within the LGBT grouping, bi and trans people are more likely to experience domestic violence and abuse than lesbians and gay men, as are those who are disabled and have poor mental health. 22% report the violence or abuse. Almost a third of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse defined their latest relationship as poor/troubled and 39% do not know where to go for help around sex or relationships.

A third of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse have been homeless. 60% would like to have safe temporary accommodation that is LGBT specific. Domestic violence and abuse survivors are less likely to feel safe at home, going out at night or going out during the day, they also avoid going home and other spaces more than those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse. Survivors of domestic violence and abuse are significantly more likely to have poor relationships with their families of origin, be at risk of suicide and experience difficulties with their mental health, than LGBT people who have not experienced abuse or violence from a family member or someone close to them. There is a desire for LGBT specific services for survivors of domestic violence and abuse. Those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are more likely to be disengaged from services and more reluctant to use services. The majority of survivors think that their sexuality/gender orientation is important in their use of services.

# Executive Summary

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## Introduction

This report addresses all those who answered the question 'Have you ever experienced any abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to you?' and it therefore addresses domestic violence and abuse in a broad context, including family and partner violence and abuse. It forms part of the in-depth analysis of the Count Me In Too project which sought to identify and address the needs of LGBT people in Brighton and Hove. It draws on 819 responses to a questionnaire that elicited both qualitative and quantitative responses and a domestic violence focused interview. The report seeks to advance social change for LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse.

## Experiences of domestic violence and abuse

- 30% (n. 244) of this sample of LGBT people experienced violence, abuse or harassment from a family member or someone close to them in their lifetimes
- 55% (n. 123) of those who experienced domestic violence and abuse were abused by a partner or ex partner, 43% (n. 106) experienced some form of abuse from a family member
- 21% (n. 22) of those who experienced abuse from a family member also experienced abuse from a current or ex partner.
- 13% of the sample (of 819) experienced child abuse
- Domestic violence and abuse survivors are more likely to have experienced sexual assault (8%) and criminal damage (9%) in the past five years than LGBT people who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse.
- 29% (n. 71) of those who had experienced domestic violence and abuse indicated that someone else had been affected by the abuse.

## Differences within the LGBT grouping

- Women (36%) and those of a gender other than male/female (39%) were more likely to have experienced some form of abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to them, compared to men (27%).
- Trans (64%) people were far more likely than other groups of LGBT people to report domestic violence and abuse.
- Bisexual people (44%) and sexualities other than lesbian, gay or bisexual (50%) were more likely to have survived domestic violence and abuse than lesbians and gay men.

- Although gay men who experienced domestic violence and abuse were most likely to have experienced violence from a male partner (56% of those who had experienced domestic violence and abuse), 16% of female domestic violence and abuse survivors reported being abused by a male partner or ex-partner
- 51% of those who defined as physically disabled or as having a long term health impaired and **42% of those who defined as deaf, deafened or hard of hearing** had experienced domestic violence and abuse. It is unclear if this caused the disability/deafness or if individuals were vulnerable to this form of abuse due to some form of disability/deafness.
- Those who are disabled (39%) and those who are deaf or hard of hearing (54%) are more likely to have experienced domestic abuse or violence from others than those who are not disabled or deaf.
- Over half (53%) of those with poor mental health in the last twelve months, and over a third (37%) of those who had experienced a mental health difficulty over the past five years indicated they had experienced abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or from someone close to them
- 58% of those who experience domestic violence are in debt
- 20% of those who have experienced domestic violence are parents or closely related to child

## Reporting LGBT domestic violence

- 22% have reported incidents of domestic violence, mainly to the police (56% of those who reported).
- For those who reported 42% said the response they received was good and 32% indicated that it was poor.
- Reasons for not reporting were varied and included a level of tolerance of violence and abuse

## Relationships and sex

- 32% of those who have experienced abuse from a partner and 24% of those who had experienced family violence and abuse described their most recent relationship as poor/troubled, compared to 13% of those who have not experienced abuse or violence.
- 39% of domestic violence and abuse survivors said that if they needed help around sex or relationships they would not know where to find it. Qualitative data indicated the lack of support for same sex relationships that could exacerbate already volatile situations leaving.
- 16% of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse have been married

- Those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are more likely to have taken payment for sex (15%) than those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse (8%).

## Housing

- 33% of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse (this % is true of both those abused by family members and those abused by partner or ex-partners) have been homeless at some point in their lives
- The qualitative data indicated that those who are subject to family domestic violence and abuse can put themselves into vulnerable partnered relationships to escape this abuse and violence.
- Vulnerabilities in terms of home ownership by a partner and there is the potential for these to be exacerbated in areas such as Brighton & Hove with the high cost of housing were identified in the qualitative data. These issues clearly have resonances with heterosexual partnered domestic violence.
- Applications for re-housing may not account for LGBT experiences of domestic violence and can cause further vulnerabilities, particularly if coupled with a requirement to come out
- 60% of survivors of domestic violence and abuse would like to have LGBT specific safe temporary housing
- Women's refuges can be alienating for women who have experienced same sex partnered violence.

## Safety and fear of crime

- Domestic violence and abuse survivors are less likely to feel safe at home (3% compared to below 1%), outside during the day (3% compared to 2%) and outside at night (23% compared to 11%).
- 27% of those who have experienced domestic violence avoided going home. They are also more likely to avoid spaces associated neighbourhoods, work and education/training, as well as public services and public transport because of their safety fears.

## Risk factors for survivors of domestic violence and abuse

- Over a quarter of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse described their current relationship with their family of origin as poor or very poor compared to less than a tenth of those who had not experienced domestic violence and abuse.

- Survivors of domestic violence and abuse are significantly less likely to report their families of origin as supportive of the sexual/gender identities (32% compared to 40%) compared to those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse
- 12% of those who have experienced domestic violence say that no one supports them on a regular basis. They are less likely to receive support from their families of origin both regularly (41% compared to 51%) and in a crisis (43% compared to 31%)
- 50% of those who experienced domestic violence reported feeling isolated in Brighton & Hove compared to 25% of those who had not experienced domestic violence and abuse
- Those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are at a higher risk of suicide than those who have not. 35% had suicidal thoughts compared to 15% of non domestic violence survivors
- Those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are more likely to have experienced difficulties with their mental health in the past five years and are far less likely than LGBT people who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse to say that they have not experienced any of these difficulties in the past five years (8% compared to 23%)

## Services

- There is a desire for specialist provision for LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse. 70% of survivors of domestic violence and abuse want an LGBT specific service providing support and counselling and 69% want an LGBT specific officer to report domestic violence to.
- Domestic violence and abuse survivors are more likely to be disengaged from services. 46% (compared to 25% of the rest of the sample) felt much more excluded/uncomfortable using mainstream services both because of their sexuality and for other reasons than those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse. 15% said there were services that they did not use that were designed to meet their needs. 9% said that that they find the council and other mainstream services unfriendly (compared to 1% of the rest of the sample).
- Services are not believed to work together to support survivors of domestic violence and abuse
- Survivors of domestic violence and abuse were more likely to disclose their identity to their GP (72%), who could potentially be a key point of contact, compared to those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse (55%).
- 50% of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse would like a specialist GP service. 92% of survivors of domestic violence and abuse would like to see a healthy living centre.
- 69% of domestic violence and abuse survivors think their sexual/gender identity is important in their use of services



## Accessing and engaging LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse

- 78% of LGBT survivors read the LGBT media at least twice a year
- LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are less likely to enjoy using LGBT scenes and events compared to LGBT people who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse (12% compared to 4%)
- Survivors of domestic violence and abuse would like to be consulted by statutory services about the way services are provided through questionnaires (68%), open public meetings (57%) and LGBT focus groups (46%).
- LGBT people who volunteer do so for service to others (77%) and personal development (65%)

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# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1. Introduction

LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse have multiple layers of vulnerability that need to be considered in service provision and research. Those who experience domestic violence and abuse are heterogeneous and demonstrate resilience and strength in surviving these experiences. This research seeks to contribute to improving their lives.

Domestic violence and abuse has long been an under-investigated and under resourced area. Domestic violence is also chronically under-reported, but despite this research shows that:

Domestic violence accounts for 15% of all violent incidents.

- ◆ One in four women and one in six men will be a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime with women at greater risk of repeat victimisation and serious injury.
- ◆ 89% of those suffering four or more incidents are women.
- ◆ One incident of domestic violence is reported to the police every minute.
- ◆ On average, two women a week are killed by a current or former male partner.

When considering lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) lives in relation to violence and abuse perpetrated by a family member or a person close to the survivor, this area has long been neglected. This report along with others that address same-sex partner abuse (Donovan et al, 2006) seeks to address this lacuna offering useful data for the development of provision in Brighton and Hove, as well as, more broadly beyond the city. It will contest the assumptions of heterosexuality that continue to dominate this area of research and service provisions. In particular LGBT domestic violence and abuse contests presuppositions regarding the gendered patterns of intimate violence, within specific heterosexual frameworks. In addition to contesting (implicitly and explicitly) the assumptions of domestic violence and abuse as heterosexual, this report will highlight multiple areas of vulnerabilities that intersect the presumed distinctions between adult and childhood abuse and violence. Thus in addressing intimate violence and abuse perpetrated by a family member or someone close to the person, this report looks at LGBT experiences of domestic violence and abuse beyond what is currently understood and/or catered for in service provision.

It should be noted from the outset that this project only reports on research that included LGBT people (see Donovan et al, 2006 for comparisons between heterosexual and same sex partnered domestic violence).

## 1.2. Background and context

In 2000 the award winning Count Me In survey was developed from the grassroots of the then predominantly lesbian and gay communities (Webb and Wright, 2000). This research was used to form the LGBT community strategy for Brighton & Hove 2000-2006. Although recommendations regarding abuse, harassment and/or violence in the home were suggested, despite various attempts, there had been little action on this issue until the formation of the LGBT Domestic Violence & Abuse Working Group in 2005 which was set up by the Domestic Violence Forum and Spectrum. Nevertheless the data from this report is useful and provides us with an understanding of domestic violence and abuse which this research builds upon. The data will be used throughout the report in areas where it is relevant.

Count Me In Too was initiated in 2005 as a joint venture between Spectrum and the University of Brighton. It is a community led action research project that seeks to advance progressive social change in the city. The research phase ran from January - October 2006. The research consisted of a large scale questionnaire with 819 respondents and 20 focus groups that had 69 participants. Participants were recruited using email contacts, posters, local mainstream press and local and national LGBT press. Further details of the Count me In Too research can be found in the initial findings reports which can be downloaded at: [www.countmeintoo.co.uk](http://www.countmeintoo.co.uk)

This report draws on aspects of this research, namely the questionnaire data regarding abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to the person and the qualitative data from one supported interview with a survivor of domestic violence and abuse. It refers to both childhood and adult abuse. This data offers the opportunity for identifying priority needs in this area. Further in-depth work is needed that specifically addressed LGBT need in the city.

### 1.2.1. National context

The National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan 2007/08 sets the milestones and actions for 2007/08 and thereafter, nationally regionally and locally, for reducing and preventing domestic violence. The overriding objective is to ensure a co-ordinated community response to prevent domestic violence in every area, in order to -

1. Increase early identification of – and intervention with – victims of domestic violence by utilising all points of contact with front-line professionals
2. Build capacity of the domestic violence sector to provide effective advice and support to victims of domestic violence

3. Improve the criminal justice response to domestic violence (increase reporting, arrests, offences brought to justice)
4. Support victims through the criminal justice system and to manage perpetrators to reduce risk and harm to victims and their children.

In relation to LGBT domestic violence, the National Delivery Plan –

- ◆ Acknowledges that although it is known that domestic violence occurs in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, what isn't known is the extent of the problem nationally and what the community's service needs might be.
- ◆ Acknowledges that under-reporting of domestic violence appears to be particularly severe among some groups, for example victims from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, and victims from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.
- ◆ States it is a priority to commission research into the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities for the coming year (07/08).
- ◆ States that the Government remains committed to providing a service to the LGBT community, and will be developing new proposals for delivering a domestic violence helpline service to victims from the LGBT community, and ensuring the community contributes expertise to broader training packages.
- ◆ States that the Forced Marriage Unit's two-year strategy will include "taking forward work to engage with men, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, and members of the older generation".

*(National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan:  
Annual Progress Report 2006/07)*

In relation to the above, Count Me In Too in part meets the requirement for "consulting with and identifying what the LGBT community's service needs are in relation to domestic violence". The recommendations from Count Me In Too both address and could inform future national domestic violence delivery plans.

### 1.3. Definitions

For the purposes of this report the term **domestic violence and abuse is used to represent the experiences of those who answered yes to the question; "have you experienced abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to you?"** This is slightly different to the question posed in the 2000 Count Me In survey, where the question posed related to experiences of abuse, violence or harassment experienced *in the home*. The differences between those who have experienced abuse, violence and harassment and those who have not are also reported in this report.

It should be noted from the outset that this includes all personal relationships including with family, partners and others who are defined as 'close'. This report cannot comment in depth on the motivations for this violence as this was beyond the scope of the research. However, it is noted that some of this abuse may be attributed to homophobia, transphobia and biphobia (by all forms of perpetrators - including partners). This is distinct from the traditional view of domestic violence which locates it within heterosexual partnerships, and can attribute the abuse to factors such as patriarchy (see Pain, 1997), although misogyny and patriarchy should not be ruled out as motivations for LGBT domestic violence and abuse.

In this report **survivors of domestic violence and abuse are defined as those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse as an adult as well as when they were children**. It is recognised that this definition cross-cuts current service provision which differentiates between child abuse and adult domestic violence. It also sits uneasily with the literature that separates these forms of abuse and violence. There is often a distinction made between child abuse and adult domestic violence, adult domestic violence can also include abuse from a family members experienced in adulthood. Further distinctions are often made between current or former intimate partner violence, harassment and abuse, and family abuse.

**The government defines domestic violence**, for monitoring purposes as:

**Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are, or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.**

*(The National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan, 2007)*

This incorporates issues such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so called 'honour' killings, as well as elder abuse when committed within the family or by an intimate partner. An adult is defined as any person aged 18 years or over. Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, and grandparents, whether directly related, in laws or stepfamily. Violence involving people under-18 years of age is classified as child abuse and is dealt with by separate policies and legislation. Nevertheless, children and young people are affected by domestic violence. Although it is conceded that this definition does not prevent agencies using a wider definition for their own operational purposes, the homogeneity of the definition is designed to ensure that domestic violence partnerships are all defining the issue in the same way. In practical terms, it is argued that all agencies should monitor and evaluate their domestic violence work to this definition.

These distinctions between adult and child can be unhelpful when addressing LGBT experiences of domestic violence and abuse, as this report will illustrate. This does not account for the diverse experiences of LGBT domestic violence and abuse, which can include 'child abuse' and adult domestic violence that is not 'elder abuse'. Although this problem is not unique to LGBT people and other women and men can experience forms of family violence (including partnered domestic violence, physical, sexual, psychological, financial, and social, rape and sexual violence, stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, early marriage, Female

Genital Mutilation (FGM), so-called 'honour' crimes and killings; trafficking into forced prostitution and forced labour), violence and abuse perpetrated by someone close to the survivor is an important consideration when addressing LGBT experiences of domestic violence and abuse. This has ramifications for the provision of services, including domestic violence and abuse services, to LGBT people.

Whatever form it takes, domestic violence is not a one-off incident, and should instead be seen as a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which the abuser seeks power over their victim (Fountain and Skolnik, 2007). Abusers choose to behave violently to get what they want and gain control. Their behaviour often originates from a sense of entitlement which is often supported by sexist, racist, homophobic and other discriminatory attitudes. Domestic violence occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth, and geography. In this context domestic violence and abuse can relate to homophobia, biphobia and transphobia (thus gender in this context does not solely refer to men/women). It is not limited to partnered violence as these behaviours and patterns can be perpetrated by someone close to the survivor. The age distinction is problematic where 'adults' and 'children' may experience similar forms of family domestic violence and abuse that may be related to their gender or sexual identity.

Reported research and figures argue that domestic violence consists mainly of violence by men against women. However, partnered and family domestic violence may not be gender differentiated in LGBT contexts. Children within partnered relationships can also be affected by partnered domestic violence. Not only are many traumatised by what they witness; there is also a strong connection between partner domestic violence and child abuse. In an LGBT context, it may be that others are also affected by family domestic violence and abuse, but this is not necessarily age delineated.

Brighton & Hove Domestic Violence Forum is in the process of reviewing its definition, in relation to the new national definition of Domestic Violence, recent strategic developments, and the work of the LGBT Domestic Violence & Abuse Working Group.

The **LGBT Domestic Violence & Abuse Working Group's** Terms of Reference (2005) explicitly recognise that domestic violence and abuse can involve **'two or more people** within a relationship'. Its definition is currently being revised further:

**This group recognises that the term Domestic Violence may not fully describe the range of behaviours that are used by one person in a relationship to establish and maintain power, control and dominance over another. These behaviours do (but don't necessarily) include direct violence to an individual but also involve emotional and psychological abuse.**

*(LGBT Domestic Violence & Abuse Working Group; draft Terms of Reference, 2007)*

The Working Group deliberately sought to define 'a relationship' as 'a **family member or ...someone close to you**' in their framing of the questions for the Count Me In Too questionnaire section on domestic violence and abuse.

LGBT people are often survivors of multiple forms of abuse and distinctions between child and adult abuse can be unhelpful (and this also applies to violence against women generally as above) and may not address the commonalities LGBT domestic violence and abuse survivors have across a range of perpetrators. Nevertheless, despite the limitations of this definition the report seeks to engage with existing local structures to address the absence of services that address LGBT domestic violence and abuse. Therefore, throughout the report distinctions are made between violence and abuse from family members, from partners and from others.

However, due to the way the question was asked it is not possible to differentiate between those who have experienced domestic violence as a child and those who have experienced domestic violence as an adult from family members (we can tell who has only experienced domestic violence as an adult (i.e. those who said no to the question, 'when you were a child did you experience abuse or violence from a family member or someone close to you. However, this figure is not an accurate representation of all of adult domestic violence and abuse as there may be those who experienced violence and abuse as an adult and as a child). Therefore, child abuse and adult abuse from family members are reported together. However, it is assumed that abuse by partners and ex-partners constitute adult domestic violence and abuse. Therefore partnered domestic violence can be reported.

In this report, those who have been abused by partners, and those who have been abused by family members are reported, in order to facilitate engagement with specific services. Where they are not reported as separate groups, the difference in percentages was marginal. It should be noted, however, that 21% of respondents who experienced violence and abuse from a family member also experienced violence and abuse partner/ex-partner and therefore these categories are not mutually exclusive. Further research should seek to differentiate these categories and explore potential similarities and differences between those abused as children and those abused as adults. This research offers fruitful lines of enquiry to begin this venture, pointing to further areas of research development as well as suggesting policy guidelines and recommendations.

## 1.4. Outline of the report

This report will now move on to the findings of the data:

- ◆ Sample of LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse: This chapter will outline who is addressed in this report and the distinctions made between partnered and family domestic violence and abuse.
- ◆ Diversities within the LGBT and their experiences of domestic violence and abuse: This will cover differences relating to gendered identities (including trans people), sexuality, ethnicity, disability, deaf and hard of hearing and mental health difficulties the research illuminates some key differentiations between these groupings and it then outlines the age range of the sample, number of parents and differences from the overall sample in relation to debt.

- ◆ Reporting of domestic violence and abuse: level of reporting and satisfaction as well as outlining why incidents of domestic violence were not reported.
- ◆ Relationships and sex: This chapter covers partnered relationships, marriage and sex, exploring specific issues for LGBT people who have experienced both partnered and family domestic violence and abuse.
- ◆ Housing: The housing chapter will explore homelessness and experiences of fleeing partnered domestic violence and abuse, this will highlight the absence of services in this area.
- ◆ Safety Fears: The report addresses LGBT survivors of domestic violence and their fear of crime in relation to the rest of the LGBT sample.
- ◆ Risk factors for survivors of domestic violence and abuse: The risk and vulnerabilities chapter will address specific risk factors identified in this research, examining support networks, isolation, suicide thoughts and attempts, and mental health.
- ◆ Services: The report outlines what services survivors of domestic violence would like to see, their use of GP services, their perceptions of, and access to, mainstream services. It will highlight specific areas of need and the potential for development.
- ◆ Consultation and monitoring: In the final findings chapter the report will examine some of the findings regarding getting information to LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse through examining their use of LGBT media and the LGBT scene and consulting this group.
- ◆ The report finishes with a set of conclusions and recommendations.





## 2. LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse

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### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter will outline the prevalence of domestic violence and abuse in the sample. It will give the details of the perpetrators of violence, multiple perpetrators, child abuse, other forms of related crimes and others affected by the abuse. In this way this chapter sets the context of the report and introduces how distinctions were made between particular categories that are used throughout the report.

### 2.2. LGBT experiences of domestic violence

**Just under one third (31%)** of (244) respondents said that they had experienced abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to them during their lifetime (table 2.2a). These figures are similar to those reporting abuse, harassment or violence in the home in 2000 (33.1%, see Webb and Wright, 2000). 11.4% (n. 122) of the sample experienced this once, with 20.3% (n. 232) experiencing it more than once. 24% (n. 82) of those who had experienced abuse, violence or harassment said that these incidents occurred in the last 12 months, 28.7% (n.100) between 1 and 5 years ago and 47.9% (n.167) more than 5 years ago.

**Table 2.2a: Have you ever experienced any abuse from a family member or someone close to you?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	244	29.8	30.8
No	549	67.0	69.2
Total	793	96.8	100
Missing	26	3.2	
Total	819	100	

The figures from the Count Me In Too survey (and potentially the Count Me In research, Webb and Wright 2000) are undercounting of experiences of domestic violence and abuse. This can be demonstrated when comparing response to this question with responses to the hate crimes question (which asked about abuse in the past five years in relation to gender and

sexual identities). This question highlighted that 12 people who said no to the domestic violence and abuse question, reported that they had experienced abuse, bullying or harassment from family, partners and/or lovers in relation to their gender/sexual identity in the past five years. Although a small number, this highlights under-reporting of this issue and perhaps a general lack of understanding regarding domestic violence and abuse. However, in this paper for brevity and clarity, those who reported that they had not experienced abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to them are considered as domestic violence or abuse survivor.

### 2.2.1. Perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse

The respondents were asked a general question regarding who perpetrated the violence, abuse or harassment. This question allowed for multiple responses. The results are shown in figure 2.2a below. These percentages only include those who answered yes to experiencing violence, abuse and harassment from a family member or someone close to them.

**Figure 2.2a: Was the abuser a...** (% of those who answered yes to Q23, i.e. who had experienced abuse from a family member / someone close to them)

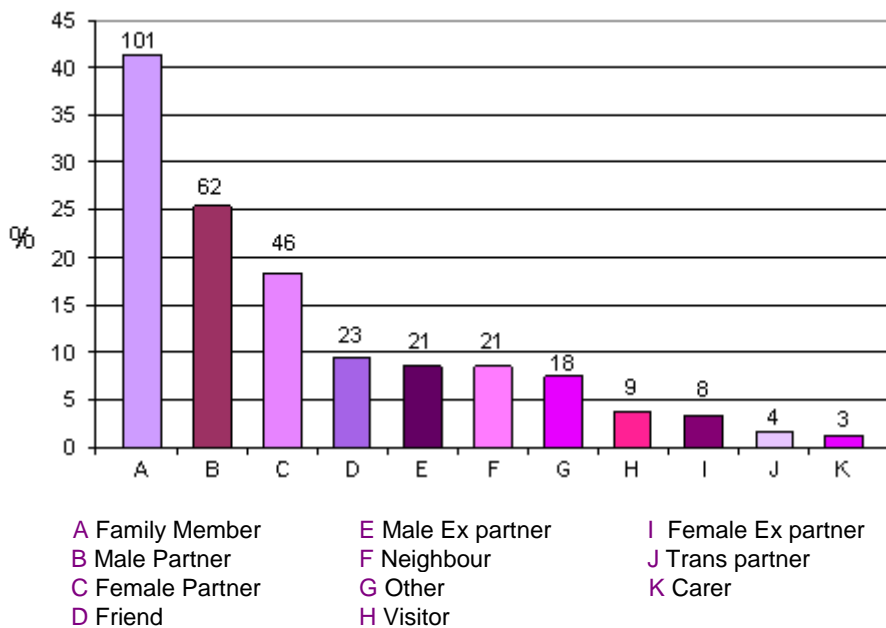


Table 2.2b shows the composition for the categories of analysis used for this survey. These are the composite categories used to create statistically significant results and also address the service provision that differentiates between adult and child abuse, as well as between partner and other forms of abuse and violence. Four people had experienced abuse from a trans partner. These are classified in the 'other' category in order to create abused by male/female partner categories. Although this is not ideal, the trans category could not be differentiated on the basis of gender for this research.

**Table 2.2b: The composition of each of the categories used for analysis**

Family members	experienced violence, abuse and/or harassment from family members
Partners or ex-partners	experienced violence, abuse and/or harassment from female or male current and/or ex-partner(s)
Male partners or ex-partners	experienced violence, abuse and/or harassment from male current and/or ex-partner(s)
Female partners or ex-partners	experienced violence, abuse and/or harassment from female current and/or ex-partner(s)
Others	experienced violence, abuse and/or harassment from friend, carer, trans-partner, visitor, neighbour or other

In this research, **the most common perpetrator of violence, harassment and abuse was a partner or ex-partner** (55%, 16% of the entire sample), then a family member/dependent (43% of all who had experienced this kind of abuse or 13% of all respondents) (see table 2.2c). Partner abuse from same-sex partners was at 13% of the entire sample.

These figures are at the lower end of estimates from US sources (see Brighton & Hove Child and Adult Service Audit, 2003) which suggest that between 15% and 48% had experienced violence in same-sex relationships, which could suggest a potential under-reporting on this survey. Due to the way the figures are reported in the 2000 Count Me In survey it is not possible to ascertain comparable figures from this research.

**Table 2.2c: Recoded 'abused by' categories**

Abused by ...		Total
Partner or ex-partner	No.	131
	%	55.0
Family Members	No.	102
	%	42.9
Male partner or ex-partner	No.	82
	%	34.5
Female partner or ex-partner	No.	51
	%	21.4
Others	No.	64
	%	26.9

## 2.2.2. Experiences of multiple perpetrators

**Of those who were abused by family members, 21% (n. 21) also experienced abuse, violence and harassment from a partner or ex-partner.** Of those who experienced abuse, violence and harassment from a partner or ex-partner, 16% also survived domestic violence and abuse by a family member. 22% (n. 22) of those who had experienced abuse from a family member also said that they had experienced violence and abuse from someone other than a family member or partner or ex-partner. 19% (n. 25) of those who had survived abuse from a partner or ex-partner, had

also experienced abuse from someone else other than a partner or ex-partner or family member. 9 people were abused by people in all three of these categories.

These experiences of multiple perpetrators suggest ongoing experiences of violence and abuse. They also point to particular vulnerabilities to further abuse and violence from those other than the original perpetrator. This is a risk factor which should be accounted for when addressing LGBT needs.

### 2.2.3. Childhood abuse

**Just under half (48%)** of those who answered the domestic violence and abuse question said that yes to the question ‘when you were a child did you experience abuse or violence from a family member or someone close to you?’ (see table 2.2d). Thus, 13% of the entire sample **had experienced abuse or violence as a child**. However, this question was only posed to those who had experienced abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to them and not to the entire sample. Therefore, this may be an undercounting of the prevalence of experiences of abuse or violence in childhood as it does not include that perpetrated by anyone other than family members or people close to the individual.. Due to the sensitivities associated with this question, particularly amongst the LGBT population, where child abuse can wrongly be associated with sexual/gender identities, it was felt that this was the most appropriate place to put this question.

The **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children** (NSPCC) estimate that 7% of children experienced serious physical abuse at the hands of their parents or carers during childhood, 6% of children experienced serious absence of care at home during childhood, 6% of children experienced frequent and severe emotional maltreatment during childhood (Cawson et al, 2000). Although these figures are not comparable with the question asked here, they do highlight an area of need for LGBT young people. The NSPCC figures and the Count Me In Too figures point to a need that may need to be addressed with LGBT young people and with LGBT people as adults.

**Table 2.2d: When you were a child, did you experience abuse or violence from a family member or someone close to you? (% of those who answered ‘yes’ having experienced abuse, violence and/or harassment from family / someone close to them)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	107	43.9	47.6
No	102	41.8	45.3
Unsure	16	6.6	7.1
Total	225	92.2	100
Missing	19	7.8	
Total	244	100	

Perhaps unsurprisingly there was a highly significant association between having experienced abuse during childhood and experiencing abuse from family members ( $p < .0001$ ). Those who experienced childhood abuse reported that 55.2% of the abuse they experienced came from close family members compared to those who didn't experience childhood abuse (25%). Also, those who were unsure about whether they experienced childhood abuse reported the highest percentage (75%) of abuses carried out by family members.

**Table 2.2e: Who the abuser was** (for those who reported incident(s) of abuse during the last 5 years)

		Childhood abuse experience	No childhood abuse experience	Unsure	Total
Abused by family members	No.	58	25	12	95
	%	55.2	25.0	75.0	43.0
Abused by partner or ex-partner	No.	51	63	8	122
	%	48.6	63.0	50.0	55.2
Abused by others	No.	34	23	4	61
	%	32.4	23.0	25.0	27.6

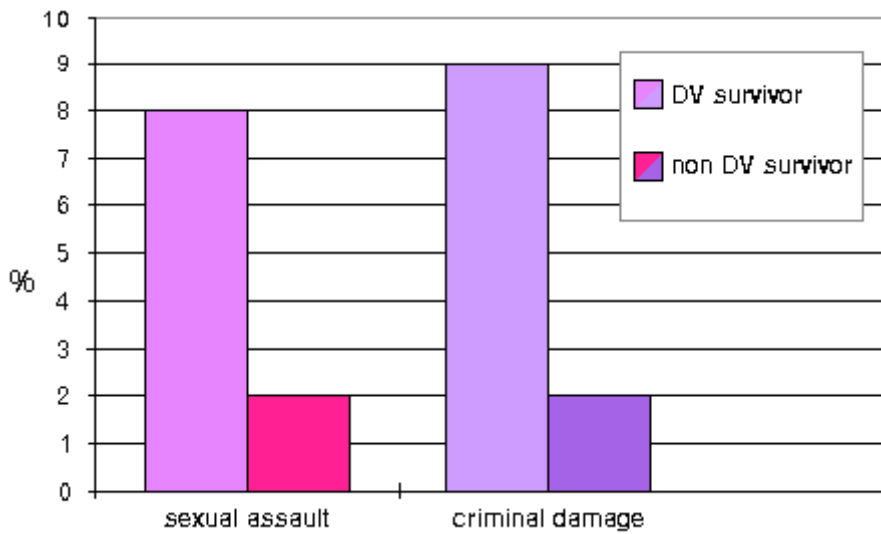
It should be noted that 49% of those who have been abused by partner or ex-partners have also experienced childhood abuse. **In addition, at least 25% of those who experienced violence and abuse from a family member did not experience child abuse.** Consequently, along with child abuse, adult domestic violence and abuse from a family member is a significant issue that needs further investigation and services to support these survivors. This should include an exploration of the complexities, links and overlaps between LGBT experiences of adult domestic violence and abuse by a partner and child abuse.

Although these figures regarding childhood abuse are relevant here, they will also be further addressed in depth during other data analysis and dissemination events.

## 2.3. Experiences of other forms of related crime

**Domestic violence and abuse survivors are more likely to have experienced sexual assault (8%) and criminal damage (9%)** in the past five years (see figure 2.3a) than those who have not experienced domestic violence (2% in both cases) ( $p < .0001$ ). Although this cannot be shown to be related to experiences of domestic violence and abuse, it is an area that needs further investigation and is also an indicator of vulnerability and risk (see chapter 8). This should ascertain whether LGBT survivors of domestic violence are more likely to experience particular forms of crime, as a result of violent close relationships or whether experiences of hate crime can make LGBT individuals vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse.

Figure 2.3a: Experiences of sexual assault and criminal damage by surviving domestic violence and abuse



### 2.3.1. Other people affected by the abuse

70 respondents (which equates to 29% of all who had experienced abuse from a family member / someone close to them, or 9% of all respondents) selected at least one of the boxes in question 23b, indicating that **someone else had been affected by the abuse**. The most common people to have also been affected were a partner or ex-partners (44% of those who were affected), children (35%), friends and others (31%), and other family members were also affected in 13% of cases. As will be noted below, 39% of those who were parents also said that a child was affected by the abuse. Whilst it cannot be ascertained if it was these children who were affected by the domestic violence and abuse, this is an area for consideration. It should be noted that violence and abuse may come from family members and other and not only partner or ex-partners.

## 2.4. Conclusions

Just under a third of LGBT people have experienced domestic violence and abuse (i.e. abuse, violence or harassment as an adult and/or child from a family member or someone close to them), although this is an under-reporting. Survivors of domestic violence and abuse have experienced abuse mainly from (ex)partners (16% of overall sample) and family members (13% of overall sample). Partner abuse from same-sex partners was at 13% of the entire sample. Just over 10% of the overall sample had experienced child abuse.

**In each perpetrator category (family member, current partner or ex-partner and other) around a fifth of these respondents had also experienced abuse and violence from someone else.** 49% of those who have experienced child abuse have also experienced abuse from a partner or ex-partner. Almost a third of those who have experienced abuse,

indicated that other people were affected by this abuse. This suggests that there are particular vulnerabilities relating to experiences of abuse and violence. The British Crime Survey (2000) found that 57% of domestic violence victims were repeat victims. Previous sexual assault is also a risk factor for future violence (see chapter 2.3). Supporting this is the evidence from other safety questions (regarding sexual assault) which indicate that survivors of domestic violence are more likely than those who have not experienced domestic violence to have been victims of sexual assault as well as criminal damage. From this research it is unclear if this was related to their experiences of domestic violence and abuse.

The prevalence of domestic violence and abuse suggests that **there is a need to address this across a range of services, including child and adult services, domestic violence, safety services and other support systems**. Although domestic violence and abuse should never be presumed simply because a person is LGBT, neither should it be ruled out. The remainder of the report will address variations between LGBT people and experiences of domestic violence and abuse before moving into the specific areas of reporting, relationships, families, fear, support, health, housing and consultation and monitoring.





# 3. Differences in experiences of domestic violence and abuse between LGBT people

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## 3.1. Introduction

Although the term LGBT is used throughout this and other reports, this is a disparate grouping. This chapter investigates the differences between this grouping, exploring those who may be most vulnerable within this categorisation. It also offers key demographics for this grouping. The chapter moves through gendered differences, to differences relating to sexuality, ethnicity, disability, deaf and hard of hearing and mental health difficulties. The research illuminates some key differentiations between these groupings and it then outlines the age range of the sample, number of parents and differences from the overall sample in relation to debt.

## 3.2. Gender of the survivor

Findings from the British Crime Survey (Walby and Allen, 2004), found that in the year prior to interview, there were an estimated 12.9 million incidents of domestic violence acts (nonsexual threats or force) against women and 2.5 million against men in England and Wales. Moreover, the often cited figure of domestic violence affecting one in four women and one in six men conceals that 47 per cent of male victims experienced a single incident with a mean average of seven incidents per victim compared with only 28 per cent of female victims experiencing a single incident with a mean average of 20 incidents per victim. Researchers concluded therefore that gender, is a "significant risk factor" as "women are more likely than men to experience interpersonal violence, especially sexual violence" (p74).

Of those who experienced domestic violence and abuse in this sample, 49% were male, 47% female. There is however a gendered difference in the experience of domestic violence, with women and those who define as another gender experiencing domestic violence more than men. **36% (n. 116) of those who defined as female and 39% (n. 9) of others (those who defined with a gender other to male/female in the questionnaire) had experienced some form of abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to them, compared to 27% (n. 119) of males** (p=0.03). Although there is a significant difference between genders, the relationship is weak. One in three (rounded down from 2.7) LGBT women and one in 4 (rounded down from 3.7) LGBT men experience

domestic violence. Thus, LGBT men may be at more risk of this form of abuse and violence than the general sample. However, due to the lifetime scope of the data it is important to treat these figures with caution. Further research is needed to ascertain whether LGBT experiences mirror or challenge heterosexual gender differences in experiences of repeat violence - that is if, repeat violence is more often experienced by women within LGBT populations.

Walby and Allen (2004) also conclude that "women are the overwhelming majority of the most heavily abused group. Among people subject to four or more incidents of domestic violence from the perpetrator of the worst incident (since age 16) 89 per cent were women" (Walby and Allen, 2004 p.vii). Furthermore "...of those women who have been subject to domestic force half (48%) have also been subject to frightening threats and nearly half (41%) to emotional or financial abuse. However, men's experiences are much less nested, that is, of those subject to domestic force, only 9 per cent had also experienced frightening threats and 28 per cent emotional or financial abuse" (Walby and Allen, 2004 p.18). Based on the findings that 11% of women compared to 1% of men reported frightening threats (since 16 years of age), the researchers commented that "the context of fear is an important element in the understanding of domestic violence as a pattern of coercive control" (p.19).

Fear is also an important factor in LGBT lives and can be used to control actions and behaviours through violence and intimidation. Where violence occurs in close personal relationships, it also can have severe impacts on the lives of LGBT people, who may feel alienated further because of their exclusion from heterosexual society. Within the LGBT context, fear of hate crime, rejection and abuse due to sexual/gender identity is not necessarily delimited along gendered boundaries but operates through experiences of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, which incorporate but are not reducible to, gendered differentiations.

The gender of both victim and perpetrator influences the behaviours of both in heterosexual contexts. For example, women victims are more likely to be injured, more likely to be frightened, more likely to be repeatedly abused and more likely to be murdered. Male perpetrators are far more likely than female abusers to abuse post-separation; whereas for female survivors this is the most common high-risk situation:

'Every year, since 1991, on average of 97 women have been killed by a current or former partner (a total of 42 per cent of all women killed). On average 28 men have been killed annually by a current or former partner which amounts to 7 per cent of all men murdered. In an analysis of homicide data from 1985 to 1994 in Scotland, England and Wales it was concluded that one in five of male partner homicides were by gay partners but it was 'quite rare; for homicides of partners in lesbian relationships' (Soothill et al., 1999 quoted in Greater London Authority 2005:13)

Although these risk factors should be accounted for here it is important to recognise that this research is based in particular heterosexual paradigms of partnered domestic violence. This is not to suggest that LGBT women do not experience this form of gendered partnered violence. Rather it is to suggest that these do not encompass the diverse experiences of LGBT domestic violence and abuse.

Table 3.2a shows the gendered breakdown of experiences of domestic violence and abuse. This result mirrors that found in the Count Me In research where men (18%) were less likely to have experienced abuse, harassment and violence in the home than were women (29%). However, the figures for domestic violence and abuse for this research are larger and the difference between men and women is less pronounced. This may be due to the phrasing of the questions, specifically 'in the home' versus 'family member or someone close to you' (in both survey's partners, ex-partners, family members and others were included). The geographical restrictions of 'in the home' may have resulted in some difference in reporting, where domestic violence and abuse may not take place in the home. This needs further investigation and should be considered when engaging with experiences of domestic violence and abuse amongst LGBT people.

**Table 3.2a Gendered experiences of domestic violence and abuse**

		Male	Female	No gender or 'other'	Total
Survivor of domestic violence and abuse	No.	119	116	9	244
	%	27.1	35.5	39.1	30.9
No experience of domestic violence and abuse	No.	320	211	14	545
	%	72.9	64.5	60.9	69.1
Total	No.	439	327	23	789
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**There were also gendered differences in the experiences of partnered domestic violence relating to the perpetrators gender.** 54% of *males* who reported domestic violence and abuse were abused by current or ex male partners compared to 16% of female domestic violence and abuse survivors or no gender/other domestic violence and abuse survivor (12%). This is a rather strong effect/relationship between the gender of domestic violence and abuse survivors and being abused by a current or ex male partner ( $p < .0001$ ). *Female* domestic violence and abuse survivors (40%) were more likely to be abused by current or ex female partners compared to male domestic violence and abuse survivors (3%) or no gender/other domestic violence and abuse survivor (25%). As above, this is a rather strong effect/relationship between the gender of domestic violence and abuse survivors and being abused by a current or ex female partner ( $p < .0001$ ). It should be noted that female LGBT experiences of different sex partner domestic violence at 16%, is more than male experiences of different sex partner (3%) domestic violence. Therefore, the gender of the partner cannot be assumed when individuals are reporting incidents of partnered domestic violence and abuse.

Although there was no significant differences between the categories table 3.2b shows that those who identified as having no gender or as other, reported a higher proportion of abuse by family members (62%) and a lower percentage of abuse by partner or ex-partners (38%). This needs further investigation.

**Table 3.2b Have you ever experienced any abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or from someone close to you?** by recoded 'abused by' categories

Abused by ...		Male DV&A survivors	Female DV&A survivors	No gender/other gender DV&A survivor	Total
Partner or ex-partner	No.	66	60	3	131
	%	56.9	55.0	37.5	55.0
Family Members	No.	47	49	5	102
	%	40.5	45.0	62.5	42.9
Male partner or ex-partner	No.	63	17	1	82
	%	54.3	15.6	12.5	34.5
Female partner or ex-partner	No.	4	44	2	51
	%	3.4	40.4	25.0	21.4
Others	No.	31	27	2	64
	%	26.7	24.8	25.0	26.9

### 3.3. Trans

There was a statistically significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between sexual / gender identities and likelihood of having experienced some form of abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or from someone close. **64% of trans respondents had experienced domestic violence and abuse, compared to 29% of non trans respondents** (see figure 3.3a). Qualitative data from the questionnaire indicated that this abuse could be due to violent, aggressive and abusive reactions to trans identities. This is an area that needs further in depth investigation, and policy development in order to prevent this form of abuse. However, this finding contested the assumption that family violence and abuse can solely be attributed to homophobia and partnered violence attributed to other more traditional motivations. Emerging research in this area notes that trans people can experience domestic violence and abuse from a range of 'family members' including parents, partners, children as well as other forms of rejection and exclusion (see Whittle et al., 2007).

**Table 3.3a: Experiences of domestic violence by trans identities**

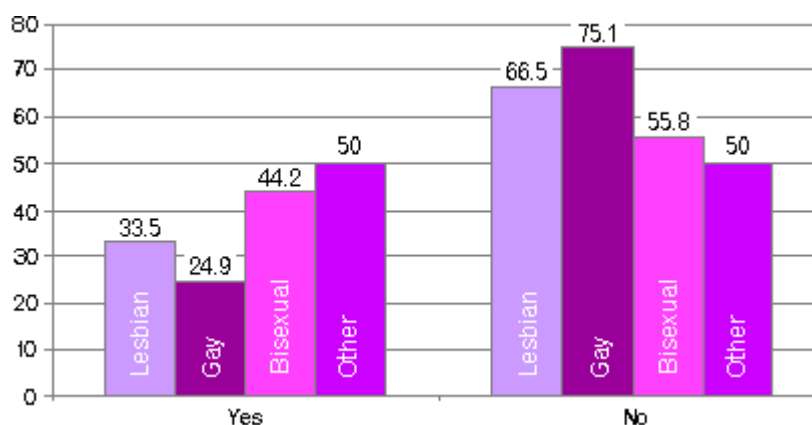
Trans	No.	25	14	39
	%	64.1	35.9	100
Not trans	No.	217	524	471
	%	29.3	70.7	100
Total	No.	242	538	780
	%	31.0	69.0	100

$P < 0.0005$  (Continuity Correction)

### 3.4. Sexuality

**Slightly under half of bisexuals (44%, n. 19) and around a third of lesbians / gay women (34% n. 91) also stated they had experienced abuse, violence or harassment from a family member / someone close to them. Gay men were the least likely to have experienced this (25%, n. 104) (see table 10.3 a). The presence of a significant difference between the bisexual and other category and lesbians and gay men is another area that needs further interrogation ( $p < 0.0005$ ). 3.4a**

**Figure 3.4a: Have you ever experienced any abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to you by sexuality?**



Slightly under half of bisexuals (44%) and around a third of lesbians / gay women (34%) stated they had experienced abuse, violence or harassment from a family member / someone close to them. Gay men were the least likely to have experienced this (25%) (see table 3.4b).

**Table 3.4b: Perpetrator of abuse by survivor's sexuality**

Abused by ...		Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Other	Total
Family Members	No.	40	43	7	12	102
	%	46.0	41.0	38.9	42.9	42.9
Partner or ex-partner	No.	49	60	10	12	131
	%	56.3	57.1	55.6	42.9	55.0
Male partner or ex-partner	No.	9	59	6	8	82
	%	10.3	56.2	33.3	28.6	34.5
Female partner or ex-partner	No.	41	2	4	4	51
	%	47.1	1.9	22.2	14.3	21.4
Others	No.	21	27	4	12	64
	%	24.1	25.7	22.2	42.9	26.9

There is no significant differences by sexuality between those abused by a family member, others or partner or ex-partner. However, when partner or ex-partner are reclassified into male and female partner or ex-partner, gay men were more likely to have been abused by male partner or ex-partners than any other identity category ( $p < 0.05$ ). Similar to the gendered differences above, lesbians and gay women were more likely to have been abused by female partner or ex-partner than any other identity category. Nevertheless 10% of lesbians/gay women reported being abused by a male partner or ex-partner. This supports the mainstream research which indicates that women are more likely to experience domestic violence from men and LGBT women are not exempt from these experiences.

### 3.5. Ethnicity

The breakdown of the sample grouping under investigation here is: 91% of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse in this survey self defined their ethnicity as white with 9% defining in other categories including Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and other (that is those who did not define as white or BME). However, there was a statistically significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between ethnicity and likelihood of indicating having experienced some form of abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or from someone close. Those in the 'Other' or traveller category were most likely to have indicated they had experienced this (54%, n. 14), compared to a third (33%, n. 7) of BME respondents and 30% (n.222) in the White category (see table 3.5a) However it is unclear as to who the 'other' category are and the links between ethnicity, sexualities and domestic violence need further investigation.

**Table 3.5a Domestic violence and abuse by ethnicity**

		Yes	No	Total
White	No.	222	522	744
	%	29.8	70.2	100
BME	No.	7	14	21
	%	33.3	66.7	100
Other / Traveller	No.	14	12	26
	%	53.8	46.2	100
Total	No.	243	548	791
	%	30.7	69.3	100

P=0.032

From other research with Black, Asian and minority ethnic women's experiences, domestic violence is known to affect women from all ethnic groups, and there is no evidence to suggest that women from some ethnic or cultural communities are any more at risk than others. However, the form the abuse takes may vary; in some communities, for example, domestic violence may be perpetrated by extended family members, or it may include forced marriage, or female genital mutilation. Survivors from Black or minority ethnic communities may also be more isolated, or may have to overcome religious and cultural pressures, and they may take into consideration bringing shame onto their 'family honour'.

For all LGBT people, domestic violence and abuse can pertain to a rejection of their sexual and gender identities. This can have similar consequences for all genders (for example forced marriage, isolation and overcoming religious and cultural pressures).

### 3.6. Disability

**Those who identified as disabled or having a long term impairment were more likely to have experienced abuse, violence or harassment from a family member / someone close to them (p<0.05) than other respondents.** Half (51%) of those who defined as physically disabled or long term health impaired had experienced this compared to just over a quarter (27%) of those who did not identify in this category (see table 3.6a). This indicates an area of vulnerability that may have been caused by domestic violence and abuse, or may be exploited by perpetrators of violence.

**Table 3.6a: Domestic violence and abuse by physical disability or long term health impairment**

Physical disability/long term health impairment		Yes	No	Total
Yes	No.	57	56	113
	%	50.4	49.6	100
No	No.	182	484	666
	%	27.3	72.7	100
Total	No.	239	540	779
	%	30.7	69.3	100

P<0.0005 (Continuity Correction)

This is consistent with the limited research that has been conducted into the experiences of disabled women, which shows that disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic violence as non-disabled women (1995 British Crime Survey, also confirmed by data from other countries). They are also likely to experience abuse over a longer period of time and to suffer more severe injuries as a result of the violence. Further research should explore LGBT experiences of domestic violence and abuse in relation to disability.

Disabled people are also more likely to have experienced abuse from others (39%) than non-disabled people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse (23%). Although some of these others included friends and family, there is a need to investigate the vulnerability of this grouping within LGBT populations.

### 3.7. Deaf or hard of hearing

**Those with a hearing impairment were more likely (42%) to have experienced abuse from a family member or someone close to them than other respondents (30%),** but the difference was not statistically significant.

**Table 3.7a Domestic violence and abuse by hearing impairment**

		Yes	No	Total
Yes	No.	10	14	24
	%	41.7	58.3	100
No	No.	230	530	760
	%	30.3	69.7	100
Total	No.	240	544	784
	%	30.6	69.4	100

Not Significant

Similar to the disabled grouping above, deaf and hard of hearing people (54%, n. 7) are more likely to be abused by others than non-deaf people (35%, n. 56) ( $p=.02$ ) who have experienced domestic violence and abuse. Although these figures are low, they should be taken as indicative and addressed both within Deaf communities and services and LGBT communities and services.

### 3.8. Mental health

There was also a statistically significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between those who identified with particular mental health difficulties and those who have experienced some form of abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or from someone close. **Over half (53%) of those with poor mental health in the last twelve months, and over a third (37%) of those who had experienced a mental health difficulty over the past five years indicated they had experienced abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or from someone close to them.** This compared to 26% of those who had better mental health in the past year and 19% of those who had experienced no mental health difficulties with over the past five years.

It is now well accepted that abuse (both in childhood and in adult life) has a significant impact on someone's mental health is often the main factor in the development of depression, anxiety and other mental health disorders, and may lead to sleep disturbances, self-harm, suicide and attempted suicide, eating disorders and substance misuse (e.g. Barron, 2004; Department of Health, 2002; Humphreys and Thiara, 2003; Stark, Evan and Flitcraft, Anne, 1996). However, as is addressed below, experiences of mental health difficulties may also mean that LGBT people are vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse.



**Table 3.8a Domestic violence and abuse by mental health and wellbeing in past twelve months**

Mental health and well-being in the past 12 months		DV&A survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Poor mental health	No.	78	69	147
	%	53.1	46.9	100
Better mental health	No.	165	478	643
	%	25.7	74.3	100
Total	No.	243	547	790
	%	30.8	69.2	100

This will be further addressed in chapter 8.5.

### 3.9. Age

The age range of the sample (see table 3.9a) was reflected in the age range of those who had survived domestic violence and abuse (table 3.9b). This is attributed to the question which addressed lifetime experiences rather than the previous five years. This table is included to show that **survivors of domestic violence and abuse are not located solely in one age category and service provision should be addressed across age ranges.**

It's often assumed that domestic violence is mainly experienced by younger people, but often domestic violence against older people is subsumed under the broader heading of "elder abuse", and so there is no firm data about the extent of domestic violence in this age group. A recent report released by the Department of Health and Comic Relief estimates that 227,000 older people were neglected or abused in their own homes in the past year – and domestic violence was clearly a significant part of this (O'Keefe et al., 2007). For LGBT people the fear of coming out in sheltered or residential care and the availability of LGBT friendly accommodation can result in unsafe partnered or family arrangements. Therefore, LGBT older people may be vulnerable in both the state system and 'at home', for reasons relating to the gender/sexual identities, including, and potentially in addition to, the violence addressed in this report.

**Table 3.9a: Age range of the entire sample**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
16 – 25 years old	122	14.9	14.9
26 – 35 years old	242	29.5	29.6
36 – 45 years old	250	30.5	30.6
46 – 55 years old	126	15.4	15.4
56 – 65 years old	58	7.1	7.1
66 – 75 years old	16	2.0	2.0
over 76 years old	4	0.5	0.5
Total	818	99.9	100
Missing	1	0.1	
Total	819	100	

**Table 3.9b: Age range of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Under 26 years old	34	13.9	13.9
26-35 years old	64	26.2	26.2
36-45 years old	79	32.4	32.4
46-55 years old	43	17.6	17.6
Over 55 years old	24	9.8	9.8
Total	244	100.0	100.0

### 3.10. Debt

Despite these similar income levels between those who have experienced domestic violence and those who have not, there is a significant difference between these groupings in relation to debt. Those who are **domestic violence survivors (58%) are more likely to perceive themselves to be in debt than those who have not experienced domestic violence (49%)** ( $p = 0.02$ , see table 3.10a). This could be attributed to domestic violence as this can include financial abuse as part of the controlling behaviour, and may relate to family abuse in terms of a lack of financial support from families or origin. Domestic violence can also have a detrimental impact on employment, as many survivors who are employed either have to take time off work or lose their jobs as a result. These results are similar to those in other domestic violence studies which found that debt can be a result of fleeing violent and abusive situations (Wilcox, 2000). From this research it can be noted that these violent and abusive situations may not simply be located within partnered scenarios but can also be related to experiences of abuse and violence by family members.

These figures should be read cautiously and taken as indicative because the question asked about lifetime experiences and therefore it cannot be determined whether these debts are related to instances of domestic violence. There is a need to investigate LGBT experiences of poverty and class, without offering classist assumptions regarding experiences of domestic violence and abuse.

**Table 3.10a: Do you consider yourself to be in debt? by experience of domestic violence and abuse**

		DV&A survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
In debt	No.	140	266	406
	%	57.9	48.6	51.5
Not in debt	No.	102	281	383
	%	42.1	51.4	48.5
Total	No.	242	547	789
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

### 3.11. Parenting or closely related to a child

**20% of those who have experienced domestic violence, compared to 14% of those who have not experienced domestic violence are parents or closely related to a child** (p. =.04). 23% of those who have been abused by family members are parents and 24% of those who have been abused by partner or ex-partners are parents.

39% of those who said that a child under 16 was also affected by the violence are also parents. Although from this survey it cannot be ascertained whether it was these children that were affected by the violence and abuse, this is an area of consideration for services and further research. It should be noted that a violent or abusive home situation could be coupled with bullying at school due to a parents sexual/gender identity and other forms of vulnerability for children. This would require support mechanisms for both children and parents.

### 3.12. Conclusions

It can be seen that more vulnerable/marginalised/less powerful groups within the LGBT such as women, those who are disabled, D/deaf or have had poor mental health in the past 12 months are more likely to have experienced domestic violence and abuse. Similarly, those who can be considered more marginalised, trans people, bi people and those who defined their ethnicity as 'other' are also more likely to be survivors or domestic violence. Similar to other research, it can also be concluded that domestic violence is gendered, that is, the gender of both victim and offender influences the behaviours of both. Those who have survived domestic violence are more likely to be in debt. Women are more likely to have experienced abuse from a partner or ex-partner of a different gender than men. From this research it is clear that there are areas of potentially multiple marginalisation and vulnerabilities associated with surviving domestic violence and abuse. Further investigations should explore the intersections between different experiences of marginality and abuse and violence. Furthermore, it is clear that domestic violence and abuse should be considered across the range of services that provide for LGBT people.



## 4. Reporting of domestic violence and abuse

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### 4.1. Introduction

It is acknowledged that domestic violence and abuse is hugely under-reported to authorities and the police in heterosexual partnership contexts and in terms of child abuse. This chapter examines the reporting of LGBT domestic violence and abuse. It addresses the level of reporting and satisfaction of the participants in this research as well as outlining why respondents did not report incidents of domestic violence and abuse. Whilst there is no specific offence of 'domestic violence' under criminal law, many offences may be used to apply to domestic violence, such as assault, false imprisonment, harassment, rape, criminal damage, attempted murder. Not all forms of domestic violence are criminal offences e.g. some forms of emotional violence.

### 4.2. Levels of reporting and satisfaction

Less than a quarter (22%) of those who experienced abuse, violence and harassment from a family member or someone close to them indicated that they had reported the incident. The majority of those who did report the incident (56%) reported it to the police (see table 4.2a).

**Table 4.2a: If you reported some form of abuse, violence and harassment from a family member or someone close to them, who did you report it to?**  
(% is of those who had experienced some form of violence, abuse and harassment from a family member or someone close to them.)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
The police	30	12.3	55.6
The Community Safety Team	3	1.2	5.6
Domestic violence agency	3	1.2	5.6
LGBT organisation	2	0.8	3.7
Other	16	6.6	29.6
Total	54	22.1	100
Missing	190	77.9	
Total	244	100	

These figures need further investigation to establish the experiences of reporting, triggers to report and the number of incidents experienced prior to reporting.

Nationally, much domestic violence still goes unreported to the police. While many survivors have sought help from the police in an emergency, for others calling the police is not the first option, and is often only a last resort after repeated attacks. Every minute in the UK, the police receive a call from the public for assistance for domestic violence. This leads to police receiving an estimated 1,300 calls each day or over 570,000 each year (Stanko, 2000). However, according to the British Crime Survey, only 40.2% of actual domestic violence crime is reported to the police (Dodd et al, 2004).

Many aspects of domestic violence are difficult to define as crimes, nor do they fit readily into common categories of 'assault' under criminal law. This 'incident-focused' system doesn't adequately address many aspects of ongoing coercive, abusive and threatening behaviour, and the psychological harm that this can cause. Nevertheless the criminal justice system has an important role to play in preventing and challenging domestic violence, both symbolically and practically.

There was some evidence that the police were not always respectful to LGBT survivors. This incident occurred outside of Brighton & Hove:

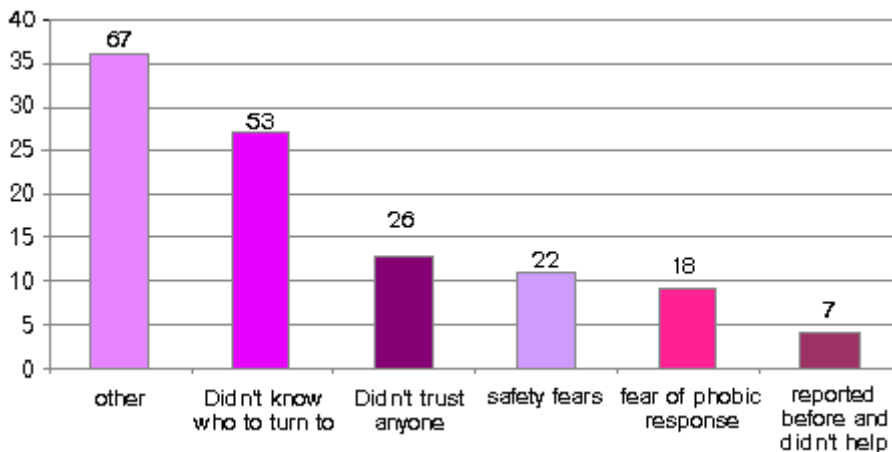
*Researcher 1:* Do you feel they [the police, outside Brighton & Hove] were respectful to you?

*Judith:* **No, they used to say 'Oh, it's you two dykes again. Oh, it's yours two'. So yeah, that was a problem.**

*(Domestic violence and abuse interview)*

For those who reported some form of violence, abuse and harassment from a family member or someone close to them, 42% said the response they received was good and 32% indicated that it was poor. Figure 4.2b highlights this and illustrates the frequency of the other options offered.

**Figure 4.2b: If you did not report the incident (from a family member / someone close), was it because....** (%'s are of those who answered this question)



Respondents were least likely to state that they did not report because of their non-productive past experience of reporting (4%). Of those who gave reasons for not reporting an incident (of domestic abuse), over a third (36%) indicated they this was for another reason to those offered on the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to specify why they didn't report the incident. Table 4.2c indicates the more common reasons in this data.

**Table 4.2c: Why didn't you report?- other please specify**

Reason given	Number
Not important/serious/not realising it was abuse	12
Dealt with it myself	9
Personal/private issue	6
Didn't need reporting/unreportable (e.g. verbal abuse)	8
Too long ago	2
Would have outed myself/related to coming out	2
Violence from both parties	3

12 people said that they did not realise it was abuse or did not consider the incident serious enough. This points to a need for education regarding domestic violence and abuse, as well as a re-assessment of acceptable forms of interactions. A further 8 people said that the incident was either unreportable or that it didn't need reporting. The level of abuse that may be 'tolerated' is an issue here and the insidious nature of such abuse may reflect that of hate crime, where low level abuse is both experienced and tolerated.

Domestic violence and abuse has long been seen as a 'private/personal issue' that should be dealt with by those in the relationship/family. This perception of experiences of violence is also apparent here and the reliance on 'myself', is a theme that re-emerges when the figures for support networks are examined below (see chapter 8.2, support networks). This may also be entangled with a fear of outing oneself if someone was to seek help or report the incident. Here it is noted that **continued and sustained education is needed to address the stigma of domestic violence and abuse, as well as the continued prejudices regarding LGBT**. This should be delivered to, and partnered with, services that can help LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

Other reasons general reasons included: I didn't want to endlessly go over what was already a painful experience; Psychological/controlling behaviour- no one can help that!; Didn't feel I would be taken seriously; No one believed me; I was embarrassed; Cannot trust the police.

Partner specific reasons included: *Wanted to sort it out within the relationship (questionnaire 364); My partner needs help not prosecution (questionnaire 14); I also loved the person (questionnaire 67)*. These reasons clearly point to an emotional entanglement and relationships that need support (this issue will be further addressed below, see chapter 5.3).

Family specific reasons included: *Because he was my father and we thought it was discipline I was a child; I just kept quiet; Family disagreement over inviting other family members to a commitment ceremony.* These reasons highlight the diverse nature of family domestic violence and abuse that may or may not be related to sexual/gender identities.

### 4.3. Conclusions

**Domestic violence and abuse is clearly underreported amongst LGBT people.** Amongst the wide variety of reasons for not reporting domestic violence and abuse, it is clear that there are specific emotional issues, that relate to connections between those who are implicated in the experience, the perception of 'private issues' and the concealment of sexual/gender identities. **The desire to help and heal is one that should be noted and points to the need for partnership working to increase domestic violence and abuse reporting,** and perhaps more importantly to ensure that survivors of domestic violence and abuse are supported. However, there is a need to address the under reporting of domestic violence and abuse across the range addressed here from family violence and abuse to partner violence and abuse as well as violence and abuse from others.



# 5. Relationships and Sex

## 5.1. Introduction

99% of those who have experienced domestic violence have been in a relationship (compared to 96% of those who have not experienced abuse,  $p = .02$ ). 37% are not in a relationship now, 55% are in a relationship with someone of the same sex, 5% with a person of a different gender, 1% with more than one person. This chapter will address partnered relationships, marriage and sex, exploring specific issues for LGBT people who have experienced both partnered and family domestic violence and abuse.

## 5.2. Poor/troubled relationships

**73% of those who have survived domestic violence described their current or most recent relationship as good or satisfactory, compared to 87% of those who had not experienced domestic violence and abuse.** Although we cannot infer that these relationships were violent or abusive, there is a highly significant association ( $p < .00001$ ) between being a domestic violence survivor and describing your most recent or current relationship as poor or troubled (27% compared to 13%). Almost a third (32%) of those who have experienced abuse from a partner described their most recent relationship as poor/troubled. This was a higher proportion compared to those who were abused by someone other than a partner or ex-partner (21%). Nevertheless, 24% of those who were abused by a family member also described their most recent relationship as poor/troubled.

**Table 5.2a: The quality of most recent/current relationship by domestic violence and abuse survivor**

		DV&A survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Good/Satisfactory	No.	172	445	468
	%	72.6	87.1	62.6
Poor/troubled	No.	65	66	131
	%	27.4	12.9	17.5
Total	No.	237	511	748
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

Although the data does not indicate if their latest relationship was violent or if domestic violence and abuse affected the experiences of recent relationships, it does indicate that there may be a link between these. This is an area that requires further investigation to ascertain whether previous experiences of domestic violence affect current relationships as well as exploring resilience strategies for those who have described their most recent relationships as good.

### 5.3. Information and support regarding sex/relationships

**39%** (39% of those abused by family members, 38% of those abused by partner or ex-partners) of domestic violence and abuse survivors said that **if they needed help around sex or relationships, they would not know where to find it**. These are similar to the proportions in the overall sample, but this should be read with the results above which indicate the higher proportion of poor and troubled relationships for this group. The qualitative research identified a lack of support for LGBT relationships and the detriment that this can have on individual, children and relationships:

*Judith:* **My ex-girlfriend was really obsessive. As I said I was kind of motherly to her. Like she was 22, I'm 28, and I'm a cook, I clean, I'm a mum. She'd just left home and she can't cook, she can't clean, she can't do nothing, she just plays football. She suffers from depression, she self-harms, and she doesn't eat properly, so it was like when it would come to an argument, you know, insecure, she was jealous of my mum, she was jealous of my friends, I couldn't have no friends or anything. I had a lesbian friend and she thought she was trying to get hold of me. So she'd go and smash up her house. So it was really not very nice for my children to be brought up round that. Signed an agreement with social services to remove my children from them incidents, which I did. I moved numerous times to get away from her, but she's obsessiveness... She's burgled me, she's took my clothes off of me, she took my makeup, even my nail clippers. Do you know what I mean, it's...**

*R2:* Was she violent towards you as well?

*Judith:* **Yeah, she was and then I would retaliate by being violent back. So it was tit for tat really, so...**

*R2:* It sounds a really difficult situation.

*Judith:* **Oh yeah, she'd take tablets and I'd be grabbing the tablets off her and she'd be running out the door and there's my kids in the front room and I can't run after her because it's like, who do you stand by?**

*R:* Very difficult.

*Judith:* **You know. It's quite scary. It was scary.**

*R:* so the outcome was that you were the one that had to leave the home that you shared...

*Judith:* **Yeah, I left my home. I had to for my children, so they have a normal upbringing. And I'd have a stress free life, hopefully, because that wasn't right, it was not normal and I've been in a few relationships and it's never been like that. So, she's had problems. Had**

**problems, and she's didn't address them and we did ask for counselling for her and even me, I said that I would like to go with her maybe, to help her see what's wrong with her and to help her understand herself. But there wasn't enough things open for us as being a lesbian couple. There was nothing, without children, and I can't do everything myself, you know.**

In Canada there have been instances where children have been removed from their families due to homophobic attitudes from social workers towards same sex relationships. These have included the attribution of the abuse in lesbian relationships to the 'unhealthy / abnormal' state of lesbian relationships. In this quote, Judith indicated that social services were involved in ensuring the safety and well-being of her children and required her to make changes to her behaviour and sign and undertaking to do so. The harm of domestic violence and abuse to children should not be underestimated, yet the dangers of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic attribution should also be guarded against.

Judith's narrative in this quote reiterates the reasons given for not reporting domestic violence and abuse (see chapter 4 above). Participants in the questionnaires noted specific difficulties pertaining to the punishment model of the policing system and the problems with attributing blame to one partner. Here the **lack of general support for LGBT troubled relationships was problematic**. However, services and support for, and interventions in, LGBT relationships should be aware of the potential **harm of remaining in abusive relationships**. This is a particularly important factor for relationship counselling (e.g. Relate and similar projects). There is growing evidence of the **contra-indication of relationship counselling in order to sustain an abusive relationship**, as this can put survivors at further risk and increase the negative emotional impacts of these relationships. However, where domestic violence and abuse is not a current issue, these counselling services could prevent abusive situations occurring as well as helping LGBT relationships.

In detailing the abusive relationship, it is clear that Judith's ex-partner was both dependant and violent, and that this violence was at times reciprocated. Yet, the focus on her children's protection is clear in the narrative and it is apparent that this is Judith's primary concern and the reason she fled her home. Parents can employ diverse strategies to protect their children in violent and abusive situations. It is important in violent relationships that the safety of children is recognised by services and those involved in the relationship, in order to mitigate against the effects of domestic violence and abuse for children. Although the presence of the children made the situation difficult, it was also the reason that Judith left. This indicates that where children are present they can in part offer some incentive to leave the relationship and the relationship can have some support from children's social services (although only for the protection of the children). Where having children is perceived as a barrier, financially and emotionally, to fleeing the home, this may result in hiding/minimizing the abuse. Judith was aware of the implications of domestic violence and abuse on her children and sought to bring them to safety. This may not be the case for all. Moreover, children may effectively 'tie' a partner into an abusive relationship. In addition, leaving an abuser can result in more danger as Judith notes she moved numerous times to 'get away from her'.

Leaving relationships can be complex and risky and cannot be simplistically ascribed to 'protecting the children'. In contrast, where children are not present, individuals will not be motivated to end the relationship to ensure the safety of the children, and will not receive intervention from social services seeking to minimise harm to the children.(as Judith notes 'there was no counselling that did not involve children'). There should be further investigations of relationships where children are not and are present, considering **the safety of those in the relationship, and not solely the safety of the children**. This should also consider the factors that trigger LGBT people to report and leave domestic violence and abuse situations.

## 5.4. Marriage

**16% of those who have experienced domestic violence have been married.** 11% of male survivors have been married, compared to 20% of female survivors of domestic violence and abuse. This should be coupled with the statistic reported above that 16% of LGBT women experienced domestic violence and abuse from a male partner or ex-partner (3% of male respondents reported violence or abuse from a female partner or ex-partner). Count Me In research found that 32% of female respondents who reported abuse, violence and harassment in the home said they had experienced violence from a male ex-partner compared 4% of male respondents from a female partner.

It cannot be assumed that these marriages were violent relationships. They could be escape mechanisms from family violence and abuse:

**I was only a teenager at the time so I don't remember much about it but my clothes were always creased because I slept in them and I was sneaking into the local sports centre first thing in the morning when the cleaner left the door open, to get a shower. I just couldn't be at home at the time because it didn't feel safe. It's how I ended up married to a man because he looked after me when I was 16.**

*(Questionnaire 326)*

In this quote the respondent does not refer to a violent relationship, however, she does highlight the vulnerability of those who suffer abuse and violence from family members, such that individuals can put themselves into further unsafe relationships. In this case, troubled family environments and the need to feel safe can mean that LGBT people find solutions to their homelessness in ways that may conflict with their sexual identities and can potentially put them into further danger (see chapter 6.2). This again suggests an area of vulnerability which may affect those dependant on family support, housing and finances and may offer some indication of why **21% (n. 21) of those who were abused by family members also experienced abuse, violence and harassment from a partner or ex-partner.**

## 5.5. Payment for sex

People who have experienced domestic violence and abuse (15%) are more likely to have taken payment for sexual acts, whether coerced or by choice, than those who have no experience of domestic violence (8%) ( $p=.001$ ). This figure is **13% for those abused by family members and 16% of those abused by partner or ex-partners**. 18% of those abused by male partner or ex-partners (n. 15) and 10% of those abused by female partner or ex-partners (n. 5) had taken payment for sex. Conclusions cannot be drawn from this data regarding links between the respondents' experiences of abusive relationships with families, partners and others, and their acceptance of payment for sex or their potential vulnerability to violence and abuse because they have been paid for sex. These figures are a clear indication of the exposure to risks for those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse and those who receive payment for sex. One participant highlighted the potential for vulnerable LGBT people to engage in sex work due to necessity that results from domestic violence and abuse (again it should be noted that this could be exacerbated in areas where housing is expensive and limited):

**... needed money because I needed to pay rent to avoid an abusive home**

*(Questionnaire 185)*

There was also some evidence in the qualitative answers of sex being forced (and this is supported by the finding discussed in chapter 2.3 that those who experienced domestic violence and abuse were more likely to have experienced sexual assault). When asked how people worked in relation to selling sex, one respondent said:

**... was forced by an abuser, who profited from it**

*(Questionnaire 556)*

Although, this clearly shows that abuse can have a sexual element, it should not be assumed that sex is only sold in this way, and other answers indicated a desire to 'experience' sex work.

## 5.6. Conclusion

LGBT people in this sample who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are more likely to describe their most recent relationship as troubled/poor. Although this is higher for those who reported partner violence and abuse, it is still significant for those who reported family abuse and violence. In addition to the negative experience of recent relationships, 39% survivors of domestic violence and abuse reported that they would not know where to find information regarding sex/relationships. The qualitative data indicated **a lack of support for LGBT relationships which can exacerbate violence and leave survivors with few coping strategies**. It is suggested in the chapter that counselling should only be used to sustain a relationship where partners and children are not in danger of domestic violence and abuse. Alongside the need for support for relationships, there is the need to protect survivors of violence and abuse,

as adults and as children. In partnered relationships the harmful impacts of domestic violence and abuse can in part be mitigated against by survivors, perpetrators and services. This requires awareness training of children's needs and ensuring these are met.

In reporting the statistics for marriage, it was not assumed that these were violent relationships. Yet the **potential vulnerability of those who are subject to family domestic violence and abuse** to enter unsafe relationships (including martial ones) was highlighted. This will be further addressed in housing and homelessness (see chapter 6). Those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are more likely to have accepted payment for sex. Although, this cannot from the data be attributed to the domestic violence and abuse, it is an area that needs to be considered both by services who cater for sex workers and those who engage with survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

# 6. Housing

## 6.1. Introduction

Similar to the rest of the sample, 87% of survivors of domestic violence live in Brighton & Hove, with 13% living elsewhere. 84% of those who have experienced violence from a family member and 89% of those abuse by partner or ex-partners live in Brighton & Hove. This chapter will explore homelessness and experiences of fleeing partnered domestic violence and abuse, this will highlight the absence of services in this area.

## 6.2. Homelessness

**33% of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse** (this % applies to both those abused by family members and those abused by partner or ex-partners) have been homeless at some point in their lives with the same proportion being homeless elsewhere and in Brighton & Hove compared to those who did not experience domestic violence and abuse (16%, see table 6.2a). Finally, those who never experienced domestic violence and abuse reported are more likely to have never been homeless compared to those who are survivors of domestic violence and abuse ( $p < .0001$ ).

Nationally, domestic violence is recognized as a major cause of homelessness; relationship breakdown has been recognised as one of the top three causes of homelessness, and there is also increasing recognition from government of the link between domestic violence and repeat homelessness (Pawson et al., 2006)

**Table 6.2a: Homelessness by experiences of domestic violence and abuse**

Homeless ...		Survivor of domestic violence and abuse	Not reported domestic violence and abuse experience	Total
In Brighton & Hove	No.	39	50	89
	%	16.4	9.3	11.5
Elsewhere	No.	39	37	76
	%	16.4	6.9	9.8
Never homeless	No.	160	452	612
	%	67.2	83.9	78.8
Total	No.	238	539	777
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

6% of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse and have been homeless at some point in their lives are sleeping rough (including **sleeping rough; living in temporary council accommodation; staying in a hostel; staying with friends; sofa-surfing**) now. For those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse there is an age differential to this figure, with 15% (n. 2) of those who are aged between 16 -25 having experienced domestic violence and abuse, and being currently homeless (see table 6.2b). Although these numbers are low (n.2), there is a need for housing and other youth services to consider experiences of domestic violence and abuse. It should also be noted that 27% of those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse are now homeless and are aged between 16-25 (n. 4). Thus, these experiences should not be considered universal or the only reason young people are homeless. (Note: these results are only indicative as the counts in 20% of the cells are less than 5 and therefore too small for statistical significant results. It is appreciated that 13 people who are currently homeless engaged with this survey).

**Table 6.2b: Experience of domestic violence and abuse by current homelessness and age**

Have you ever experienced domestic violence and abuse	Are you now sleeping rough?	Age Group					Total	
		16 - 25	26 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 55	56 - 65		
YES	Yes	No.	2	1	2	0	0	5
		%	15.4	5.3	5.9	.0	.0	6.3
	No	No.	11	18	32	10	4	75
		%	84.6	94.7	94.1	100	100	93.8
	Total	No.	13	19	34	10	4	80
		%	100	100	100	100	100	100
NO	Yes	No.	4	4	0	0	0	8
		%	26.7	13.3	.0	.0	.0	8.9
	No	No.	11	26	28	10	7	82
		%	73.3	86.7	100	100	100	91.1
	Total	No.	15	30	28	10	7	90
		%	100	100	100	100	100	100

### 6.3. Experiences of homelessness

The figures for homelessness further highlight areas of concern for those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse. As was noted above, family violence and abuse can put LGBT people into difficult and vulnerable situations, including homelessness because of adverse reactions to sexual and gender identities (see Cull et al, 2006). The questionnaire asked respondents to describe their experiences of homelessness. This qualitative data indicated areas of vulnerability for LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse. The chapter will illuminate some key areas exploring the interlocking relationships between family and partnered violence.



### 6.3.1. Family

It is well established that 'heterosexual' parents and families of origin can have violent and/or disapproving reactions to their LGBT children's gender or sexual identities or relationships. This has clear housing implications, perhaps most obviously where young people are dependant on their parents. The combination of dependencies and parental reactions can range from discomfort in the 'family' home to physical violence and abuse:

**At the time I didn't identify as homeless, but was living with parents when I came out and didn't want to stay at their house because of their reaction so I stayed with friends in temporary sublets until I sorted somewhere to live**

*(Questionnaire 610)*

**I was homeless in the sense I had no permanent address. Parents were unhappy about sexuality so I had to get other housing ASAP – hence why I am in supported housing now.**

*(Questionnaire 538)*

The urgency of second quote suggests that for some remaining at home is not possible. The area of vulnerability highlighted in these narratives surround the family home. Family housing is often presumed to be a safe area for children and young people. However, as this and other LGBT studies (Cull et al, 2006) illustrate, LGBT youth can be vulnerable not only to domestic violence and abuse but also to homelessness as a result of parents/guardians reactions to their sexual and gender identities. Family abuse and violence, as well as feelings of discomfort and rejection can mean that LGBT people are pushed into vulnerable or unpleasant situations.

### 6.3.2. Partner

Similar to results found in heterosexual studies and studies of lesbians and gay men, those LGBT people who live with their partners are vulnerable when these relationships break down. However, this **vulnerability may not have a gendered dimension** (in the traditional assumption of patriarchal power). This research found that there were clear class-based issues related to home ownership and control of the primary residence.

**Breakdown of a relationship with a partner whom I lived with was homeowner and therefore I had to leave the property with nowhere to go.**

*(Questionnaire,449 )*

**I moved out of my flat and stayed in a hostel in London for awhile, after my partner was getting drunk and starting to push me around. ... (I) ended up in this awful unsafe hostel.**

*(Questionnaire 262)*

Although relationship breakdown can cause one partner to leave the flat, potentially causing homelessness, some respondents reported a pressure to live together due to house prices and rent in Brighton & Hove. This could clearly exacerbate a violent situation and these narratives illustrate a specific vulnerability that is potentially worse in areas where house prices and rent are higher and housing options are limited. This has resonances with heterosexual partnered domestic violence and abuse.

There are some (limited) support mechanisms that are available particularly for women fleeing domestic violence and abuse, but LGBT people can find that their needs are not understood or catered for:

**An application to the council for rehousing based on domestic violence was turned down with the statement 'has adequate housing already'. I may be wrong but were I a woman in a straight relationship the response may have been different.**

*(Questionnaire 432)*

This **ineligibility due to being 'adequately housed' in a violent situation** can result in an inability to leave a violent or abusive relationship, or potentially making oneself homeless in order to leave the relationship. (The violence and abuse may not be located in the home). This situation can again be exacerbated where individuals do not wish to be 'out' to services, a reason that was cited for not reporting domestic violence and abuse in chapter 4 above. This emphasises the need for housing services to be aware of potential violence and abuse, without forcing sexual or gender identities to be disclosed in order to access support.

Another area of potential risk is where exclusion from family networks and other social support can push LGBT people into unsafe positions.

**I was staying with my partner many years ago on his floor then moved in with him. I was quite poor at the time and was just coming out so felt very excluded from my family and support network. As such I felt I had little choice other than to accept his invitation. However, it did not feel like a very safe choice and I was so reliant on my partner I felt very trapped at the time. Luckily for me he was quite a considerate man. However, my concern is that as I was feeling vulnerable / trapped at the time if he had been a more abusive character I may have suffered more acutely with fewer tangible options.**

*(Questionnaire 280)*

The narrative here highlights the *possibilities* for abuse and violence. The quantitative data illustrates that just over a fifth of those who experienced domestic violence and abuse from a family member also experience violence and abuse from a partner. Consequently, those who experience one form of domestic violence and abuse could potentially be exposed to further violence and abuse when seeking to escape the initial situation.

## 6.4. Housing and escaping partner domestic violence and abuse

Where domestic violence occurs between intimate partners, the home can be a site of violence and there may be a need to escape this space. Despite the potential similarities between heterosexual and LGBT vulnerability to homelessness by those who have escaped partnered domestic violence and abuse, **there is a lack of provision that addresses specific LGBT needs**. Within the United Kingdom there are limited provisions for women seeking to escape domestic violence in the form of refuges. A refuge is a safe house with where women with or without children who are experiencing domestic violence can receive support and help to remain safe from abuse. There are over 500 refuge and support services in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Good practice dictates that refuges don't generally accept women from the local area as this might not be safe. There are very few services specifically for lesbian and bisexual women, and even fewer for transgender women/men. Most refuge organisations will, however, offer accommodation to women experiencing abuse from a female partner, and some projects have specialist services for lesbian and bisexual women or lesbian couples. Trans women may be excluded from these services, or choose not to access them and this needs further investigation. It should be noted that capacity limitations mean that only approximately 15 per cent of those homeless due to domestic violence are accommodated in refuges (Greater London Domestic Violence Project, 2007). All other housing options are available irrespective of gender or sexual identities, however as we have seen, reporting domestic violence and abuse may necessitate revealing ones sexual/gender identity to the service provider. This can be an obstacle for some LGBT people.

Local councils also have some responsibilities to re-house those who have experienced domestic violence. As with other agencies, these services can operate under the implicit assumptions that partnered domestic violence only occurs between men and women, in heterosexual relationships. **LGBT relationships can contest the implicit heterosexuality and gendered nature of the assumptions of domestic violence** and this can have consequences when applying for re-housing and the availability and use of services including refuges. Most services are not gender or sexuality specific, yet they may not have the skills or capabilities to deal with the particular issues pertaining to LGBT domestic violence and abuse.

When LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse were asked about services for LGBT people who had experienced domestic violence, **60% replied that they would like to see LGBT specific safe temporary housing**. This is of course problematic where partnered abuse may implicate both partners, however this safe housing should cater for all who

are fleeing from domestic violence and abuse and not only those who have experienced partnered violence (see also Cull et al, 2006).

The remainder of this chapter will draw on the domestic violence and abuse interview conducted as part of the research to highlight two key areas of concern for same-sex partners fleeing domestic violence. This data is presented in the narrative tradition of enabling people to speak at length about their experiences and was recorded with trained support workers acting as interviewers.

### 6.4.1. Refuge experiences

In the domestic violence interview the interviewee highlighted some key areas and problems relating to the use of refuges by in her case lesbian women. These stories are indicative and need further investigation. They are used here to shed light on some of the key issues facing lesbians and bisexual women in refuges.

Coming to a refuge as a survivor of same sex partnered violence can be difficult particularly where other refuge users may assume that survivors have come from heterosexual relationships. This participant identifies the problems of coming out in refuges:

*Researcher 1:* What was the refuge experience like for you?

*Judith:* **They was all shocked that I was gay.**

*Researcher 2:* Did they treat you any differently?

*Judith:* **Well, yeah, because they thought it was just normal... they had got kids and it was normal for men and women, problems with their men and when they found out it was with my girlfriend...**

*Researcher 2:* It was a surprise.

*Judith:* **Yeah, it...**

*Researcher 1:* Was it quite uncomfortable?

*Judith:* **Yeah it was, very.**

*Researcher 1:* Did you feel isolated?

*Judith:* **Yeah, I did. I was in my room most of the time. Because they might have thought that I was going to come on to them or they couldn't go to the bathroom with their towels or, do you get what I mean, so...**

*Researcher 2:* And did you feel like the workers at the refuge understood what it was like particularly...

*Judith:* **No, they didn't.**

*Researcher 2:* ... for you being in a gay relation... lesbian relationship.

*Judith:* **No, they didn't, not at all.**

*Researcher 2:* Can you give an example?

*Judith:* **Because there was mostly straight people in there. Well, all straight people. I was the only gay person there. So...**

*Researcher 2:* So do you feel that they felt that domestic violence between lesbians wasn't as important...

*Judith:* **No, they didn't. They thought it was more important for man and woman, because it's just a cat fight basically, they see it as. Do you get what I mean?**

*(Domestic Violence interview)*

A key aspect of this narrative is the **presumed abnormality of any other sexuality beyond heterosexuality, or potentially the presumption that domestic violence and abuse occurs only between men and women.** Research in Canada and America has shown that LGBT women can have similar issues to Judith when using refuges. In addition, and perhaps because of this, lesbian and bisexual women in refuges can experience isolation from other women and in Judith's case alienation from refuge workers. Other women's fear of them as a potential lesbian 'sexual predator' can play on the minds of lesbian and bisexual women. Although this fear may not be fairly attributed to the other women in the refuge, fears such as these are not uncommon amongst LGBT people and can influence how they act, feel and use services. One does not have to experience prejudice and rejection in order to fear and react to it (see Browne, 2007). This can be particularly pertinent for LGBT people who may have experienced homophobia, biphobia and/or transphobia as part of their experiences of domestic violence and abuse (these prejudices can be perpetrated by LGBT and non-LGBT people). In this case, the woman decided to withdraw from others who may be able to provide support, due to her perception of their reactions to her violent and abusive same sex relationship. Where refuge workers are perceived to rate the experience of same sex domestic violence as less important than that of male-female violence, this can exasperate the feelings of isolation and a lack of understanding.

#### 6.4.2. Temporary housing

*Researcher 1:* What would you say isn't working out so well at the moment about being in Brighton? I know you mentioned that the actual...

*Judith:* **It's just housing basically, housing. ...I've only been here for a little while of time, about six to seven months. So it is... and plus I've moved twice since I've been here.**

*Researcher 2:* And you're saying at the moment that you're in a one room.

*Judith:* **Yeah, and it is really difficult. Even to go out and find friends or... because we can't have people coming**

**round into my little room, basically, there's not enough space. We've only got this space to play and eat and whatever.**

*Researcher 2:* And are you... are you out in the... I guess you're in a... is it kind of hotel...

*Judith:* **Yeah, it's a hotel. So we stay out quite a lot, until it's bedtime or just after 5, we come in, so then they go to bed at 7. So they have their dinner and their bath and then get into bed and have a little story and then they're in bed and tucked away by 7:30. But by 9 o'clock I'm shattered [LAUGHS] running all the way to Portslade [to take them to school] from here to Portslade is quite a distance and then back four times a day.**

*Researcher 2:* Oh that's a long way.... So apart from the privacy issues about having one room, what are the other problems about living in temporary accommodation?

*Judith:* **Not being stable. I need some stability for my children. They need to have a normal life and to go to bed in their own room and like, and have a story and things like that and not be involved with the TV and can't play the computer because it's in the same room. Do you get what I mean, because our front room is our bedroom and our living room and our food, where our kitchen, it's all in one room and that's not very nice.**

*Researcher 2:* It's hard to have a normal routine.

*Judith:* **Yeah. So yeah, it's always play time and it's like come on boys get into bed I'll read you a story. "I don't want a story, I wanna play football". You know, and my time's my time, then two hours or three hours, when they've gone to bed, is my time. But I don't get that time.**

In this narrative Judith emphasises the lack of suitability of the temporary accommodation that she has been assigned. The accommodation is clearly located quite far from her children's school, it is one bedroomed for 3 people and Judith doesn't feel she can access it during the daytime. Judith feels that her children are suffering from the lack of 'normality and routine, but it is clear that this is taking its toll on her also. The lack of stability is clearly an issue for Judith and contests the ideals of home as stable and a place to relax. These issues are not specific to Judith's sexuality but they highlight areas of concern in placing people into temporary and unsuitable accommodation. The use of temporary accommodation and unsuitable accommodation as a result of domestic violence and abuse may be taken into consideration by those who are experiencing domestic violence and abuse when contemplating leaving a violent situation.

## 6.5. Conclusion

Housing is clearly a key issue for those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse. This is because family homes may become unsafe for dependants, the problems of removing oneself from partnered houses and the very real possibilities of homelessness following a relationship breakdown, particularly in areas such as Brighton & Hove. This may result in individuals being forced to stay in violent and abusive home places or as this research has illustrated moving into potentially unsafe relationships and other forms of dependencies (including potentially violent relationships). **Traditional avenues of support for housing for LGBT people fleeing domestic violence may be unavailable and/or unfriendly to LGBT people** and temporary housing can be unsuitable, in part because of issues pertaining to gender and sexual identities. This area requires input and specialist support for all LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse, both to consider the **implications of family violence and abuse**, and the **potential vulnerabilities of leaving home and the experiences and support needs of those who are fleeing domestic violence and abuse from partners.**

This chapter has not addressed the absence of provision for male survivors of partnered domestic violence and abuse, nor does it explore the full range of experiences for trans people or bi people. Further research is needed into these areas and the supporting partners in domestic violence and abuse situations where although there may be some imbalance there is evidence of violence from both partners. To establish the 'victim' and the 'perpetrator' in this context may fit the definition of 'domestic violence' per se but may not be helpful in addressing the situation. There is a need for further research on this. In highlighting some structural concerns and key points, this chapter highlighted the unique issues faced in refuges for lesbian and bisexual women and the potential common issues people may face in temporary housing following fleeing ones' home.





# 7. Safety Fears

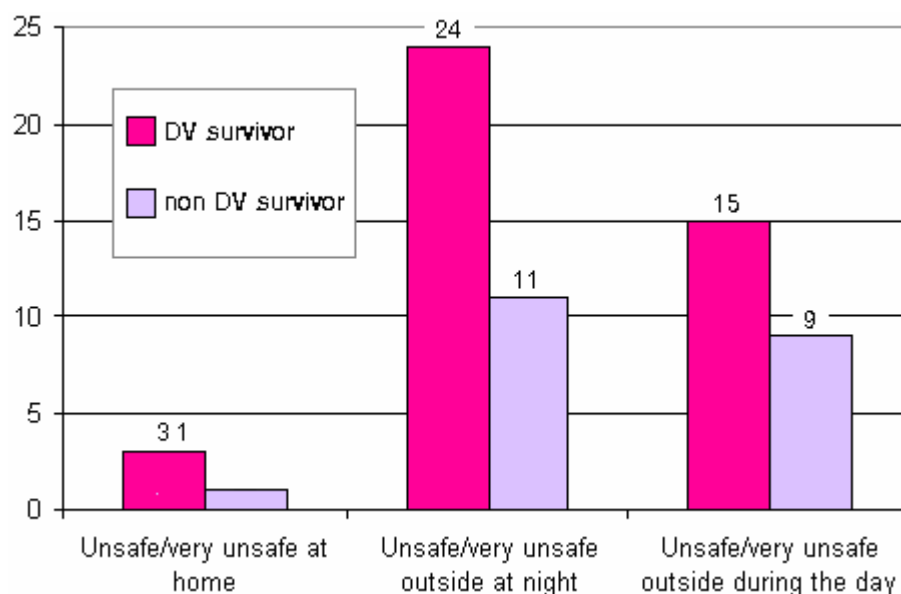
## 7.1. Introduction

Fear of crime is not necessarily linked to risks of experiencing crime. However, it can be a serious infringement on an individual's movement and their use of public and private spaces. This chapter will address LGBT survivors of domestic violence and their experiences of crime in relation to the rest of the LGBT sample. It should be noted that LGBT people in general can be more fearful of crime related to their sexual/gender identity than heterosexuals. This chapter will investigate survivors feelings of safety and their avoidance of places, from the outset it is noted that fear of crime can relate to a plethora of issues and cannot be conflated with experiences of domestic violence and abuse.

## 7.2. Feelings of safety

There is a statistically significant association in the data between those who have experiences of domestic violence and abuse and feelings of safety in your home, outside during the day and night, and going out at night. **People who had experienced domestic violence and abuse from a family member or someone close to them were more likely to say that they felt less safe at home (3% compared to below 1%), outside during the day (3% compared to 2%) and outside at night (23% compared to 11%)** (see figure 7.2a) ( $p < .0001$ ).

Figure 7.2a: How safe do you feel at home, outside at night, outside during the day by surviving domestic violence and abuse



### 7.3. Avoidance of places

The above figures may seem quite small but those who experienced domestic violence also sought to avoid particular spaces and this may account for low rates of fear. Although there was not a significant difference between those who have experienced domestic violence and those who have not in their avoidance of public displays of affection, survivors of domestic violence were **more likely to avoid spaces associated with home and neighbourhoods, work and education/training, as well as public services** (see chapter 9 for a further discussion of services) and public transport because of safety fears (see figure 7.3a). Safety fears mean LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse are also **more likely to avoid the LGBT scene as well as LGBT groups and events** and perhaps then unsurprisingly, they are more likely to avoid going out at night ( $p < .0001$ ) than LGBT people who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse. It cannot be ascertained whether these fears relate to domestic violence and abuse, however the figures regarding the prevalence of isolation (see chapter 8.3, can perhaps in part be explained by these fears. Those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse are also more likely to say that they never avoid these activities.

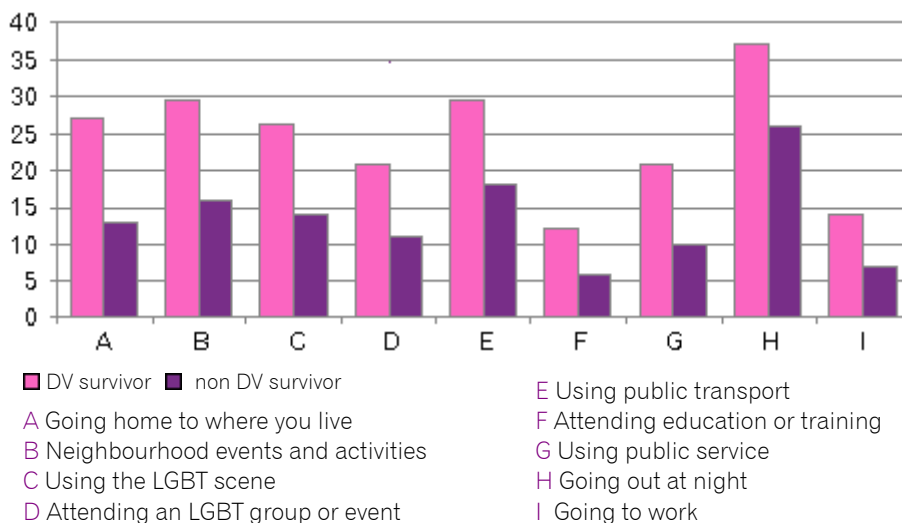
The qualitative data pointed to fear in relation to abusers that continued to live in the same area. This respondent described themselves as being part of a paedophile ring when younger:

**My safety fears are only due to me not reporting the abuse so I live in fear of bumping into my abusers (which has happened) but as far as homophobia goes I feel safe and able to defend and stand up for myself if need be**

*(Questionnaire 556)*

This respondent illustrates the diverse fears that can lead to different uses of space and the limitations of only understanding LGBT fear in relation to homophobia. The paralysing effect of abuse and fear of abuse is obvious in this narrative.

**Figure 7.3a: Have safety fears lead you to avoid ...**



## 7.4. Conclusion

LGBT who have experienced domestic violence in this research are more likely to feel unsafe at home, outside at night and outside during the day. Perhaps more indicative of feelings of fear and safety is the avoidance of particular areas. LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence are more likely to avoid home, work/education and training, public services and transport, and LGBT scenes, venues and events. Although from this data we cannot deduce a direct correlation between experiences of domestic violence and abuse, and these fears, **it can be noted that those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are more likely to be fearful and restrict their use of particular places.** The data suggests that fear is a significant factor for LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse, it also highlights an area of multiple marginalisation.



## 8. Risk factors for LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse

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### 8.1. Introduction

Previous research has highlighted specific risk factors for domestic violence survivors (these particularly pertain to heterosexuals who have experienced partnered violence):

- ▶ **Previous experiences of domestic violence and abuse:** This is one of the most robust, simple and straightforward risk factors for domestic violence. The British Crime Survey 2000 found that 57% of domestic violence victims were repeat victims and that “no other type of crime has a rate of repeat victimisation as high as that for domestic violence.” Previous sexual assault is also a risk factor for future violence.
- ▶ **Gender of both victim and perpetrator** can influence the behaviours of and indicates the risk faced by victims and perpetrators (see chapters 3.2, 3.3). In generic research, which focuses mainly on heterosexual perpetrators and survivors, male perpetrators are far more likely than female abusers to abuse post-separation; whereas for female survivors this is the most common high-risk situation. For women, the early stages of separation (particularly the first three months) are particularly dangerous. It is important to note that a child contact dispute can indicate particular risk to both the partner and children. This research needs further exploration in relation to LGBT experiences of domestic violence and abuse, where the heterosexual presumptions of gendered violence can be usurped and unsettled. Moreover, the vulnerability of trans people who can contest simplistic male/female boundaries is also important here, particularly as trans people are clearly an at risk group from domestic violence and abuse.
- ▶ Other factors that indicate a high or very high risk of escalating domestic violence leading to homicide include: attempted strangulation or ‘choking’; obsessive possessiveness and morbid jealousy; threats to kill; psychological and emotional abuse, in particular dominance and isolation. Men who sexually and physically assault their partners, and who deny or minimise the violence, have been found to be particularly dangerous.

- ▶ Victims may also be particularly vulnerable to future harm if they lack of financial resources to leave; face greater social isolation; have less access to informal and formal support networks; or live in a physically or socially isolated community. Some victims from minority groups may experience particular social isolation due to perceived and actual racism, homophobia, language, and cultural, religious or immigration issues that can all be barriers to help seeking and reporting violence.

*(ACPO, 2005)*

This research is clearly important when exploring LGBT experiences of domestic violence. These risk factors may be different in terms of gender associations but vulnerability and previous experiences of domestic violence and abuse have clear resonances here. This chapter will address specific risk factors identified in this research. The increased vulnerabilities are in relation to other LGBT people. The chapter will examine support networks, isolation, suicide thoughts and attempts, and mental health.

## 8.2. Support networks

### 8.2.1. Families of origin

It has long been acknowledged that for LGBT people relationships with families of origin are strained and can be difficult. The Count Me In Too research found some interesting data that this trend may not be true for all. 81% of those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse described their current relationship with their family of origin as good or very good. This compared to only 58% of those who have survived domestic violence (see table 8.2a). Similarly there is a highly significant association ( $p < .00001$ ) between experiencing domestic violence and abuse and describing your relationship with your family of origin as poor or very poor. Over a quarter of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse described their current relationship with their family of origin as poor or very poor, compared to less than a tenth of those who had not experienced domestic violence and abuse (26% compared to 7%). Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who had experienced domestic violence and abuse from a family member reported more often that their relationship was either poor or very poor (37%) compared to those who were not abused by family members (18%) (see table 8.2b). Yet, 23% of those who were abused by a partner or ex-partner also described their current relationship with their family of origin as poor/very poor.

**Table 8.2a: How would you describe your relationship with members of your family of origin? By experiencing Domestic violence and abuse**

Abused by		Domestic violence and abuse survivor	Not reported domestic violence and abuse experience	Total
Very good/good	No.	137	432	569
	%	58.1	81.1	78
Neutral	No.	38	66	104
	%	16.1	12.4	13.5
Poor/very poor	No.	61	35	96
	%	25.9	6.6	12.5
Total	No.	236	53.3	769
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 8.2b: How would you describe your relationship with members of your family of origin? by abused by family members**

		Abused by family members	Abused by someone other than a family member	Total
Very good/good	No.	48	88	156
	%	49.0	66.6	59.1
Neutral	No.	14	20	34
	%	14.3	15.2	14.8
Poor/very poor	No.	36	24	60
	%	26.7	18.1	26.0
Total	No.	132	98	230
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

In addition to being **more likely to have poor relationships with their families of origin, survivors of domestic violence and abuse are significantly less likely to report their families of origin as supportive of their sexual/gender identities** (32% compared to 40%,  $p = .04$ ) compared to those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse (see table 8.2c). This figure was slightly smaller (30%) for those who were abused by family members. 44% of all domestic violence and abuse survivors (45% of those abused by family members) said that their families of origin accept their sexual/gender identity. Just under a quarter (23%) of those who said they were out to their families of origin said that their families did not like their sexual or gender identity. However, there is a difference between survivors of domestic violence and abuse ( $p < .0001$ ) and 34% of those who were abused by family members. This is perhaps unsurprising where family members have been abusive, yet the risk factor of a lack of support from family members should be acknowledged and potential vulnerabilities that are unique to LGBT groupings taken into account when addressing both partner and family domestic violence. Specifically, here it is clear that although people may be out to their families of origin, this does not automatically result in acceptance (on the contrary it can lead to abuse and violence). Connected with, where abuse and violence is occurring, traditional forms of support may be unavailable due to LGBT identifications. 18% of those who have been abused by a current or ex partner said that their family did not like their sexual/gender identity, with 4% of this group saying that they will never tell their family

about their gender/sexual identity. These are clearly vulnerable in terms of accessing traditional support systems and sexual/gender identities can be used in relation to families in order to isolate individuals and to keep them from discussing relationship issues.

**Table 8.2c: Are you 'out' to your family?**

		DV&A Survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Yes, they are supportive	No.	76	214	290
	%	32.2	39.9	37.6
Yes, they accept	No.	104	236	340
	%	43.7	44.1	44.0
Yes, they don't like it	No.	55	40	95
	%	23.0	7.5	12.3
No, but I think they will be supportive if I tell them	No.	5	26	31
	%	2.1	4.9	4.0
No, I will never tell them	No.	11	19	30
	%	4.7	3.6	3.9
Other	No.	13	36	49
	%	5.5	6.8	6.4

## 8.2.2. Support

**12% of domestic violence survivors said that no one supported them on a regular basis.** They received less support from their family of origin (41% compared to 51%  $p=.009$ ) than those who had not experienced domestic violence and abuse (see table 8.2d). However, those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse reported to receive significantly more support from lovers (8% compared to 4%  $p=.01$ ) and more support from others who were not specified in the survey (7% compared to 3%  $p=.03$ ) than those who had not experienced domestic violence and abuse (see table 8.2e). There were no significant differences and support from partners (live with 41%, do not live with 15%), straight friends (57%) or LGBT friends (67%), (see Browne et al, 2007 for further detail). Therefore, as with the entire sample, survivors of domestic violence received most support from LGBT friends.

**Table 8.2d: Who's providing support regularly by experiences of domestic violence and abuse**

		DV&A survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
No one	No.	28	59	87
	%	11.8	11.2	11.4
Lovers	No.	19	19	38
	%	8.0	3.6	5.0
Family of origin	No.	97	271	368
	%	40.9	51.1	48.0
Other	No.	16	17	33
	%	6.8	3.2	4.3



Similarly to the figures regarding regular support mechanisms, in a crisis LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence are less likely to find support from their families of origin (38% compared to 51%,  $p = .001$ ) and more likely to rely on their own resources (43% compared to 31%,  $p = .003$ ). They were also more likely to find support from professional services (22% compared to 12%,  $p = .001$ ), in internet chatrooms (5% compared to 1%,  $p = .001$ ) and from their lovers (7% compared to 3%,  $p = .04$ ). There were no significant differences between those who had experienced domestic violence and the support they find from their friends (80%), partners (48%), voluntary services (7%), support groups (6%) and internet groups (7%) (see Browne et al, 2007).

**Table 8.2e: Reliance in crisis**

		DV&A survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Lovers	No.	14	16	30
	%	6.5	3.2	4.2
Family of origin	No.	81	254	335
	%	37.7	51.1	47.1
Professional services	No.	47	60	107
	%	21.7	12.1	15.0
Internet chatrooms	No.	11	5	16
	%	5.1	1.0	2.3
My own resources	No.	93	154	247
	%	42.7	31.2	34.7

These figures present some worrying insights into the support networks of LGBT survivors of domestic violence, particularly their reliance on their 'own resources' in times of crisis and the lack of family support both regularly and in crisis situations. Their reliance on professional services and internet chatrooms is interesting and suggests formal and informal support is sought in crisis situations. Yet the absence of support on a regular basis for 12% of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse can also be taken as a serious risk factor. Further research is needed into what form of support is most helpful for LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse and why.

### 8.3. Isolation

There was a statistically significant relationship between sense of isolation and having suffered from abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to you amongst LGBT people. **Those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are more likely to feel isolated than those who have not.** 50% of those who experienced domestic violence reported feeling isolated in Brighton & Hove compared to 25% of those who had not experienced domestic violence and abuse ( $p < .001$ , see table 8.3a).

**Table 8.3a: Isolation by domestic violence and abuse survivor**

		DV&A survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
yes/sometimes	No.	120	136	256
	%	49.8	25.1	32.7
no/unsure	No.	121	406	527
	%	50.2	74.9	67.3
Total	No.	241	542	783
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

52% of those who experienced violence from a family member said that they felt isolated, this is slightly less for those who have experienced abuse from partner or ex-partners (51%) and higher for those who have experienced abuse from others (71%) (see table 8.3b).

**Table 8.3b: Do you feel isolated in Brighton & Hove? By the recoded 'abused by' categories**

Abused by* ...		Yes / Sometimes	No/unsure	Total
Family Members	No.	52	63	115
	%	51.5	47.0	48.9
Partner or ex-partner	No.	61	54	115
	%	47.3	50.9	48.9
Others	No.	45	70	115
	%	71.4	40.7	48.9

(\*note abused by categories are not mutually exclusive)

Although concerning and an area that needs to be addressed, this data does not reveal insights into whether this isolation is related to experiences of domestic violence and abuse, or whether through experiences of isolation, individuals are more vulnerable to particular forms of harm. This is an area that needs further investigation and should be considered when either providing services to survivors of domestic violence or attempting to access these individuals. Particular avenues of access may not be possible and this could perhaps be a hard to reach group.

## 8.4. Suicidal thoughts and attempts

Those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are at a higher risk of suicide. 35% of domestic violence survivors reported having had suicidal thoughts (compared to 15% of LGBT people who had not experienced domestic violence and abuse,  $p < .001$ ). **41% of this LGBT domestic violence and abuse survivor grouping reported having had suicidal thoughts in the last 5 years**, compared to 23% of LGBT people who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse ( $p < .001$ ). A higher proportion of domestic violence survivors reported that they attempted suicide in the last 5 years (14.9%, compared to 10% of other LGBT people, although this difference is not statistically significant  $p = .15$ ) or in the last 12 months (11.3%) compared to LGBT non-domestic violence and abuse survivors (5%,  $p = .039$ , see table 8.4a). Although these figures

are generally concerning, the differences between LGBT individuals in relation to experiences of domestic violence and abuse illuminates a specific risk factor relating to survivors of domestic violence and abuse. It should be noted that the suicide questions were only posed to those who had said that they experienced difficulties with particular mental health issues, including suicidal thoughts in the last 5 years.

**Table 8.4a: Domestic violence and abuse and risk of suicide**

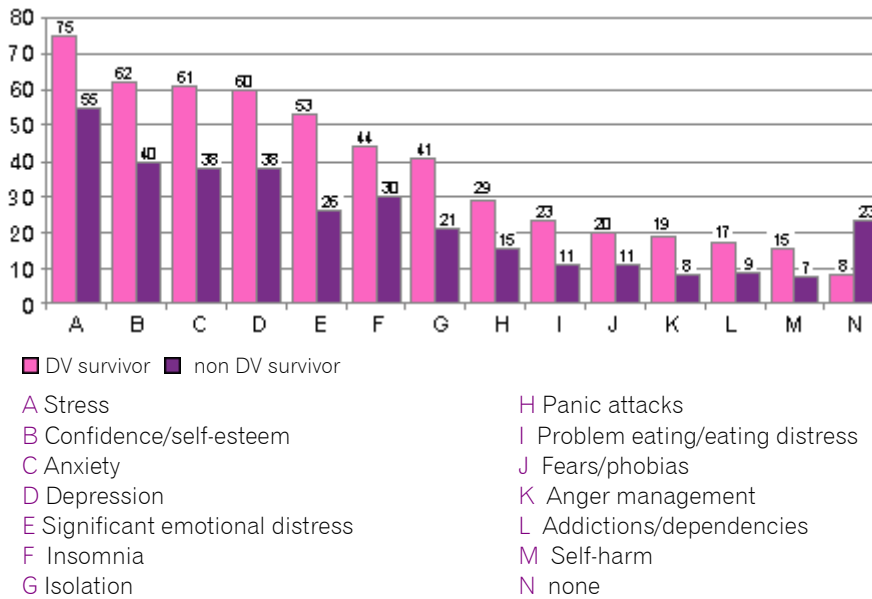
		DV&A survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Difficulties with... Suicidal thoughts ( <i>question posed to entire sample</i> )	No.	85	82	167
	%	35.1	15.5	21.7
Serious thoughts of suicide in the last 5 years	No.	88	95	183
	%	40.7	23.4	29.4
Attempted suicide in the past 5 years	No.	24	25	49
	%	14.9	10.1	12.0
Attempted in the last 12 months	No.	13	9	22
	%	11.3	4.9	7.4

These figures cannot be attributed directly to experiences of domestic violence and abuse. However, they point to areas of vulnerability when engaging with survivors of domestic violence and abuse, and those who are at risk of suicide.

## 8.5. Mental health

Along with higher levels of suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide, **those who have experienced domestic violence are more likely to have experienced difficulties with their mental health in the past five years.** These significant differences pertain to all the difficulties listed in the questionnaire and detailed in figure 8.5a below (suicidal thoughts are however reported above) ( $p < .0001$ ). They are less likely to say they have not experienced any of the difficulties listed. Figure 8.5a illustrates that across the range of mental health difficulties listed, those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are more likely to have issues with their mental health. They are also far less likely than LGBT people who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse to say that they have not experienced any of these difficulties in the past five years (8% compared to 23%).

Figure 8.5a: Mental health difficulties in last five years %



Whilst it is clear that survivors of domestic violence and abuse are more likely than those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse to have experienced mental health difficulties in the past five years, it cannot be ascertained from this data **whether those who may have mental health difficulties are targeted for abuse, violence and/or harassment from someone close to them or if domestic violence and abuse caused mental health difficulties.** One respondent said that domestic violence was not helping them to manage or overcome their mental health difficulties but this is clearly an area that requires further investigation and engagement from services.

These findings are important, both for those who work with LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse, and for those who work with people with mental health difficulties. They suggest particular risk factors for example self-harming, may be more prevalent amongst LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse.

## 8.6. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted significant risk factors for those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse. Those who have experienced domestic violence are less likely to have support from their families of origin, they are more likely to feel isolated, they are more likely to be suicidal and they are more likely to have mental health difficulties. Although it is recognised that domestic violence and abuse can result in homicide, suicide is also a clear risk factor for LGBT people who experience domestic violence and abuse. Additionally, although mental health difficulties and isolation are seen to result from domestic violence and abuse, it could also be that these difficulties render LGBT people vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse. As mental health and isolation

is a significant issue for LGBT people, the increased prevalence of these issues in this grouping are specifically important. The combined risk factors identified here, in addition to those already established from heterosexual studies, can make this part of the LGBT population vulnerable and marginalised, as well as simultaneously harder to reach and more in need of support and services.

What is not clear from the data is whether **these risk factors are a result of domestic violence and abuse and/or these risk factors make individuals more vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse**. It is clear that those working with LGBT people should be aware of these issues and the potential vulnerabilities of this group. The co-ordination and linking of services is important to supporting LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse.



# 9. Services

## 9.1. Introduction

Although there are services that cater for survivors of domestic violence and abuse, these are grossly under-funded (Brighton & Hove City Council, 2003). Moreover, mainstream services can be unaware of the specific issues for LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse. This chapter explores what services survivors of domestic violence would like to see, their use of GP services, their perceptions of, and access to, mainstream services. It will highlight specific areas of need and the potential for development.

## 9.2. Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Abuse

For survivors of domestic violence and abuse the most popular request was for an **LGBT specific service providing support and counselling** (70%). This was closely followed by an LGBT specific officer to report domestic violence to (69%). LGBT temporary housing (60%) is desired by the majority of those who answered this question, with awareness training for statutory and voluntary services (59%) follow closely behind this.

**Table 9.2a: Could any of the following improve the services to LGBT people experiencing domestic violence by those abused by family members and ex-partners**

Could any be improved		Abused by family members*	Abused by partner or ex-partner*	All*
Awareness Training for Statutory/Voluntary Agencies	No.	53	38	93
	%	57.0	58.5	58.9
LGBT specific Police Officer to report domestic violence to	No.	64	45	110
	%	68.8	68.2	69.2
LGBT specific service to report to	No.	44	37	81
	%	46.8	56.9	50.9
LGBT specific service providing support/counselling	No.	61	51	112
	%	64.9	77.3	70.0
LGBT specific safe temporary housing	No.	54	42	96
	%	58.1	63.6	60.4
Other	No.	5	2	6
	%	5.4	3.1	3.9

\* (note 'abused by' categories are not mutually exclusive)

Qualitative data suggested there needed to be further interactions between different services- which supports the points made regarding reporting of domestic violence and support for those in LGBT relationships (see chapters 4 and 5.3)

**Services do not handle same sex domestic violence with mental health component – no cross services working Police, Health services & Social services**

(Questionnaire 48)

As has been suggested above working across the boundaries of services can be central to reporting and receiving support for troubled and potential violent partnered relationships. However, this interlinking of services is not simply limited to abusive partnered relationships. From the findings above regarding risk factors, lack of support, homelessness and safety fears, it is clear that LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse may require a variety of support mechanisms, that may not be neatly delimited into one service.

### 9.3. GPs and health services

GPs can be a key initial point of contact for survivors of domestic violence and abuse. **Survivors of domestic violence and abuse were more likely to disclose their identity to their GP (72%)** compared to LGBT people who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse (55%). 72% of those who were abused by family members disclosed to their GP and 73% who were abused by partner or ex-partner have disclosed their sexual or gender identities to their GP's. The percentage was slightly higher for those abused by female partner or ex-partner 77% that male partner or ex-partners 71%. Yet there was no significant difference between male and female respondents and their disclosure to GPs (70% male, 74% female). This does not mean that survivors of domestic violence and abuse revealed their experiences of this to their GPs, however it does establish some level of openness with this key health provider. It should be noted that in the qualitative data, disclosure regarding sexual/gender identities to GP's was usually forced through necessity, and was not always safe (see CMIT Action Group, 2007)

**Table 9.3a: Disclosing LGBT identities to GPs**

Disclosed to GP about sexual identity		DV&A survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Yes	No.	173	301	474
	%	71.8	55.2	60.3
No	No.	68	244	312
	%	28.2	44.8	39.7
Total	No.	241	545	786
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

p < .0001



## 9.4. Specialist LGBT Health Services

Just over half of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse would like a specialist GP clinic or service (see table 9.4a). Coupled with the finding that LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse would like to have specialist services relating to their experiences of domestic violence and abuse (including reporting and counselling), this findings indicates a desire for specific services (as well as friendly services)

**Table 9.4a: Would you prefer to use a GP clinic/service that was specifically for you as an LGBT person?** By Domestic violence and abuse survivor

		DV&A Survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Yes	No.	122	231	353
	%	50.6	42.7	45.1
No	No.	75	183	258
	%	31.1	33.8	33.0
Don't Know	No.	44	127	171
	%	18.3	23.5	21.9
Total	No.	241	541	782
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

92% of those who have experienced domestic violence would like a healthy living centre providing a range of LGBT health and community services. This is a similar proportion to those who have not experienced domestic violence (90%). This could act as a reporting and support centre and should clearly have resources available for survivors of domestic violence and abuse, including housing resources, health resources and relationships (addressing the call for specialist reporting mechanisms and counselling services above).

## 9.5. Access to mainstream services

### **Domestic violence and abuse survivors at 46% (compared to 25%) felt much more excluded/uncomfortable using mainstream services**

both because of their sexuality and for other reasons ( $p < .0001$ ) than those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse. Domestic violence and abuse survivors are also almost twice (25%) as likely to say that they feel uncomfortable using mainstream services because of their gender/sexual identity than those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse (13%). 21% of those who have experienced domestic violence say that they feel uncomfortable but not because of their gender/sexuality, compared to 13%.

**Table 9.5a: Do you ever feel excluded/uncomfortable using mainstream services (public but not LGBT specific) services by domestic violence and abuse survivors**

		DV&A Survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Yes, but not because of my sexuality	No.	51	66	117
	%	21.3	12.5	15.2
Yes, because of my sexuality	No.	59	68	127
	%	24.7	12.8	16.5
No	No.	93	312	405
	%	38.9	58.9	52.7
I don't know	No.	36	84	120
	%	15.1	15.8	15.6
Total	No.	239	530	769
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

15% of domestic violence and abuse survivors said that there were services that were designed to meet their needs that they cannot or choose not to use. This is significantly more than those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse (6%, see table 9.5b) ( $p < .00001$ ). Survivors were also less likely to report not knowing about services that are relevant to them (44% compared to 50%). This indicates that survivors may know about services but choose not to use them.

**Table 9.5b: Are there services designed to meet your needs, which you cannot or choose not to use?**

		DV&A Survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Yes	No.	34	31	65
	%	15.2	6.0	8.8
No	No.	92	229	321
	%	41.1	44.3	43.3
I don't know	No.	98	257	355
	%	43.8	49.7	47.9
Total	No.	224	517	741
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

Those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are more likely to say that they find the council and other **mainstream services unfriendly at 9%** (compared to 1% of those who had not survived domestic violence and abuse) ( $p < .0001$ ), see table 9.5c. This perceived unfriendliness may account for their caution regarding accessing services designed to meet particular needs and may also in part address their feelings of exclusion/feeling uncomfortable when using mainstream services.

**Table 9.5c: How LGBT friendly are the Council and other Public Services?**

		DV&A Survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Very friendly/friendly	No.	104	285	121
	%	45.4	55.5	16.4
Neutral	No.	105	216	321
	%	45.9	42.5	43.6
Unfriendly/very unfriendly	No.	20	7	20
	%	8.8	1.4	2.7
Total	No.	229	508	737
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

These findings point to vulnerabilities, marginalisations and exclusions for LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse that is different from the rest of the LGBT people in the sample. Although the services that need to be accessed or have been negatively experienced may not be related to domestic violence, this is a clear area of disengagement and potential disenfranchisement from mainstream services. Further work is needed to ascertain why survivors are less likely to access services (despite being more likely to know of their existence), and to address this (self-?) exclusion and negative engagements and experiences.

For the **majority of domestic violence and abuse survivors (69%) their sexual/gender identity is important in their use of services**. In addition to domestic violence and abuse survivors feeling more excluded and uncomfortable using mainstream services, they are also less likely to see their sexual/gender identity as unimportant in their use of services (29% compared to 34%  $p = .004$ ). There was also some desire to see an element of LGBT specific services, either alone or as a package of provision (49%). It is impossible to deduce, from this data, the type of services that survivors of domestic violence would like to see and how this could relate to their experiences of domestic violence and abuse. Consequently more research is needed in this area, however **as gender identity and sexuality are important to survivors, it is essential to keep this in mind when designing services for survivors of domestic violence**. As has been shown above, LGBT awareness and friendliness is crucial to engaging with LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

**Table 9.5d: Type of service domestic violence and abuse survivors prefer to use**

		DV&A survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
LGBT specific service	No.	30	64	94
	%	12.6	12.1	12.3
LGBT friendly services	No.	48	106	154
	%	20.2	20.1	20.1
A mixture of LGBT services (including specific and friendly services)	No.	86	117	263
	%	36.1	33.6	34.4
My sexuality is unimportant in my use of services	No.	68	180	248
	%	28.6	34.2	32.4
Other	No.	6	0	6
	%	2.5	.0	.8
Total	No.	238	527	765
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

## 9.6. Conclusion

Although LGBT people in the sample who have survived domestic violence and abuse are more likely to be out about their sexual/gender identities to their GP's, there is a clear disenfranchisement within this group from mainstream services. It is not possible to tell from this data the causes of this disenfranchisement. **This data has pointed to domestic violence and abuse as a key area for development for mainstream services** that cater for those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse and more broadly key services (including housing, those that deal with relationships, health services and safety services). These services should; offer specialist provision, work across traditional boundaries and should be trained to understand LGBT domestic violence and abuse issues. **There is a desire for specialist services** that cater for both LGBT people and specifically for LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse. As the majority of those who had **experienced domestic violence and abuse felt that their sexuality and gender identity was important in their use of services, this needs to be accounted for when designing services** for survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

# 10. Accessing and Engaging LGBT Survivors of Domestic Violence and Abuse

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## 10.1. Introduction

It is clear from chapters 7 and 9 above that survivors of domestic violence and abuse are more likely to report that they feel isolated, avoid places because of safety fears and are more likely to avoid services even where they are known to them. It has also been acknowledged that this group can be hidden from services, difficult to access due to isolation issues. This chapter will address some of the findings regarding getting information to LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse through examining their use of LGBT media and the LGBT scene and consulting this group.

## 10.2. Engagement with LGBT media

Similar to the overall sample most survivors of domestic violence and abuse read LGBT news at least once a month (48%). The majority will access this media at least twice yearly (79%). Therefore, **information campaigns and other publicity ventures should seek to be sustained for at least 6 months** before it can be assumed that they will have been heard of initially through this media.

Table 10.2a: Read LGBT news ...

Survivor of domestic violence and abuse		
At least once a week	No.	73
	%	30.3
At least once a month	No.	116
	%	48.1
At least twice yearly	No.	26
	%	10.8
Have done in the past	No.	18
	%	7.5
Never	No.	8
	%	3.3
Total	No.	241
	%	100.0

## 10.3. LGBT scenes and events

In addition to avoiding LGBT scene, groups, venues and events for safety reasons (see chapter 7.3 above), more of those who are domestic violence and abuse survivors disagree (12%) with the statement that they enjoy going to / using the LGBT commercial scene compared to those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse (4%) ( $p < .0001$ ).

This question was designed to access those who used the scene but did not like it, as well as those who did not use the scene. Table 10.3a shows that although survivors of domestic violence and abuse who use the scene are less likely to enjoy it than LGBT people who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse, they are not less likely to use the scene. In addition, 66% said that they enjoy using the scene in Brighton and Hove. Therefore, this finding needs further investigation in relation to how survivors use the scene and LGBT venues and events. In the domestic violence interview, it was clear that LGBT events such as Pride can expose survivors to chance meetings with ex-partners who were abusive. The 'coming' together of the LGBT community at such events, may therefore not be enjoyable for all.

**Table 10.3a: Do you enjoy using the LGBT scene in Brighton and Hove by experiences of domestic violence and abuse?**

Enjoy the scene ...		DV&A survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Agree	No.	161	415	576
	%	66.3	76.0	73.0
Disagree	No.	29	24	53
	%	11.9	4.4	6.7
I don't use	No.	30	69	99
	%	12.3	12.6	12.5
Unsure	No.	23	38	61
	%	9.5	7.0	7.7
Total	No.	243	546	789
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

## 10.4. Consultations

**Survivors of domestic violence and abuse would like to be consulted by statutory services** about the way services are provided through questionnaires (68%, although this information was collected through a questionnaire and therefore this finding should be used with caution), open public meetings (57%) and LGBT focus groups (46%). Thus, although this data is skewed in favour of questionnaires, survivors can be accessed through public meetings and LGBT specific groups and community forms and events. It is therefore recommended that a variety of methods are employed to reach this disparate grouping.

**Table 10.4a: Ways in which domestic violence and abuse survivors want to be consulted by the Police, Council and NHS (not specific to domestic violence and abuse)**

		DV&A survivor	Not reported DV&A	Total
Questionnaires	No.	159	330	489
	%	67.9	63.8	65.1
Open Public Meetings	No.	129	247	376
	%	55.6	47.8	50.2
LGBT Focus groups	No.	108	176	284
	%	46.4	34.3	38.1
LGBT community forums	No.	101	200	301
	%	43.5	39.1	40.5
Community events	No.	95	298	303
	%	40.6	40.4	40.5
Citizen Panel	No.	69	120	189
	%	29.9	23.4	25.4
Don't Know	No.	27	56	83
	%	11.7	10.9	11.2
Other	No.	7	10	17
	%	3.0	2.0	2.3

There were no significant differences between those abused by partner or ex-partners and those who have been abused by family members. (It should be noted that this question asked about general consultation and was not specific to domestic violence or safety. This could have an impact and should be considered when seeking to address these issues). This should be read in line with recommendations from Wilcox and Pemberton (2006) who advocate specific models of consultation form survivors of domestic violence. These should be augmented by including a space that is specifically for LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse and effectively addresses the differences between LGBT people and heterosexual partnered violence.

## 10.5. Volunteer work

LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse have similar reasons for undertaking volunteer work to those who have not experienced domestic violence. The main reason both groupings seek to volunteer is service to others (see table 10.5a). They differ in just one area, those who are domestic violence and abuse survivors are more likely to volunteer for personal development (65%) compared to those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse (53%).

**Table 10.5a: Experiencing domestic violence and abuse by reasons for wanting to undertake volunteer work**

		<b>DV&amp;A survivor</b>	<b>Not reported DV&amp;A</b>	<b>Total</b>
Social reasons	No.	90	162	252
	%	56.3	56.3	56.3
Employment reasons	No.	43	75	118
	%	27.4	26.2	26.6
Service to others	No.	123	227	350
	%	76.9	78.5	78.0
Personal development	No.	104	154	258
	%	65.0	53.1	57.3
Other	No.	13	17	30
	%	8.2	5.9	6.7

## 10.6. Conclusion

The majority of LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse in this sample read the LGBT media at least once a year, access the scene and would take part in a questionnaire. However, it is clear from this data that this is not all of the survivors of domestic violence and it is recommended that diverse means are used both to access this grouping for consultation and also addressing this grouping when considering educational materials, safety campaigns and other engagements. Finally it should be noted that those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse would like to undertake volunteer work and could perhaps act as a resource for to support other survivors but they of course should not be limited to this area of voluntary engagements. Care should be taken in ensuring that suitable support and supervision is at all times given to any volunteer working with and supporting other survivors.



# 11. Conclusions

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LGBT people can experience different forms of vulnerability and violence throughout their lives. This report has addressed those LGBT people who have experienced abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to them and who live work and/or socialise in Brighton and Hove.

30% of LGBT people in this sample experienced some form of domestic violence and abuse in their lifetimes, there is evidence of multiple perpetrators of violence and abuse, including 21% of those who had been abused by a family member also experiencing abuse from a partner or ex-partner. This is an under-counting and at least 12 people did not identify with the question that could be classified into the domestic violence and abuse survivor grouping. Where there is evidence of multiple forms of abuse, it can be concluded that domestic violence and abuse **survivors may need access to multiple disparate services that need to operate in co-ordinated way**. It also suggests vulnerabilities as a result of previous experiences of abuse and violence.

Those within the categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans are not homogenous and throughout this report differences have been identified between those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse and those who have not reported experiencing domestic violence and abuse. However, there are also differences between those LGBT people and their experiences of domestic violence and abuse. Bisexual and trans people are more likely to experience domestic violence and abuse, as are those who are disabled and have poor mental health. This diversity points to the need to explore the links between experiences of domestic violence and abuse and experiences that are different from the LGBT grouping.

22% of this sample reported their experiences of domestic violence or abuse. Reasons for not reporting point to a need for support for survivors, relationships and abusers. These suggest that **reporting should not be confined to safety services and a variety of avenues for reporting should be encouraged**.

LGBT people who have survived domestic violence and abuse in this research were more likely than the overall sample to describe their current or latest relationship as poor/troubled. This could indicate a continuing need to support for those who have experienced violence (and not simply that the last relationship was violent or abusive). Despite the qualitative data indicating that violence and abuse can be exacerbated by a lack of services, 39% of LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse in this sample do not know where to go for help around sex or relationships.

In this research, a third of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse have been homeless. This vulnerability to homelessness may be because of domestic violence and abuse, or homelessness can result in

domestic violence and abuse. Traditional avenues of support for housing for partners fleeing domestic violence may be unavailable and/or unfriendly to LGBT people and temporary housing can be unsuitable. This report has not addressed the gap in provision for male or trans survivors of partnered domestic violence and abuse, where refuges cater for cis-gendered women, or adult survivors of family violence where services cater for young people. Yet, there is a clear area of need here and 60% of those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse would like to have safe temporary accommodation that can cater for their needs that is LGBT specific.

Domestic violence and abuse survivors in the sample were less likely to feel safe at home, going out at night or going out during the day, they also avoid going home and other spaces more than those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse. Although the heightened fear of crime and avoidance of specific spaces cannot be attributed to experiences of domestic violence and abuse, these fears and avoidance tactics can have implications in relation to isolation, use of services, support networks and daily living.

This research found that LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse have identifiable risks that differ from the rest of the LGBT sample that has not experienced this form of violence and abuse. Those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are significantly more likely to have poor relationships with their families of origin, be at risk of suicide and experience difficulties with their mental health, than LGBT people who have not experienced abuse or violence from a family member or someone close to them. It is unclear whether these issues are related to their experiences of domestic violence and abuse (either a cause of this violence and abuse or resulting from these experiences).

Those who have experienced domestic violence and abuse in this sample are more likely to be disengaged from services and more reluctant to use mainstream services. They are more likely to be out to the GP's who could act as an important reporting mechanism and allow them access to a range of services. They believe that their sexual and/or gender identity is important in their use of services and there is a desire for LGBT specific services for survivors of domestic violence and abuse. Although LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse should not be ghettoised into LGBT services, LGBT specific services are desired in a package of choices.

LGBT survivors in this research would like to be consulted in a range of ways (see also Wilcox and Pemberton, 2006) and would also like to volunteer. They do access the LGBT scene but are more likely to say that they do not enjoy it, which may indicate that there is a disengagement from this element of social life.

These findings indicate a range of areas of need for LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse. More broadly they indicate the diversity within the LGBT category which may in part pertain to experiences of domestic violence and abuse but cannot be reduced to these experiences. The recommendations outline clear areas of need for LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse and have been designed in the main by those who were part of the analysis group which gave rise to this report.

# 12. Recommendations

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## 12.1. Training & Capacity building

- ▶ Extend the capacity of existing service providers via training and awareness raising around both LGBT, domestic violence and abuse, and LGBT domestic violence and abuse issues, across both statutory and voluntary sector organisations.
- ▶ Develop multi-agency facilitated training package on LGBT and domestic violence and abuse issues (including partnered and other forms of domestic violence and abuse), as part of a citywide domestic violence training strategy, which is in line and affiliated with the national service standards for domestic and sexual violence services and the emerging National Occupational Standards for professionals working in domestic violence and abuse, child protection, and other associated services and thus appropriately accredited.
- ▶ Training should recognise the diversity of the LGBT communities and the differences within this collective, particularly in regard to the different needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexual and trans people. Particular issues include:
  - ◆ Varied and nuanced understandings of 'same-sex' or 'opposite sex' partnered violence
  - ◆ The variations in the ability to, and necessity of, declaring sexual/gender identities
  - ◆ LGBT experiences of domestic violence and abuse that are not located within partnered violence

## 12.2. Brighton & Hove LGBT Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy and Policies

- ▶ Local agencies and fora agree a shared definition of domestic violence and abuse that is inclusive of domestic violence occurring within non-partnered, multi-partnered, family and other 'relationships'
- ▶ Ensure that local strategic links are developed between the Local Authority, the Primary Care Trust, the Police and relevant forums, such as the Brighton & Hove Domestic Violence Forum and associated working groups, Spectrum, the LGBT Domestic Violence

& Abuse Working Group and other LGBT working groups, and the Domestic Violence Senior Officers Strategy Group.

- ▶ Ensure that LGBT domestic violence and abuse priorities are incorporated into the city's domestic violence strategy and action plan, LGBT community strategies, city community safety, housing and health strategies and the Local Area Agreement.
- ▶ Address underreporting of domestic violence and abuse from within the LGBT communities through a citywide domestic violence awareness raising strategy that incorporates raising awareness of domestic violence and abuse amongst LGBT people (see also publicity and funding).
- ▶ Address underreporting of domestic violence and abuse from within the LGBT communities by ensuring all statutory agencies and local authority departments develop (or review), implement and monitor domestic violence policies and protocols for delivery of public services in order to encourage early intervention of domestic violence, assess and manage risk effectively, and promote appropriate responses to challenge perpetrators and increase the safety of survivors including LGBT, Black and minority ethnic and disabled survivors.
- ▶ Implement clear reporting, referral and monitoring mechanisms across agencies, to put in place domestic violence and abuse data collection and monitoring includes a breakdown of domestic violence by ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age and ability.
- ▶ Develop effective systems for signposting to services for LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse accompanied by clear support mechanisms that recognise and respond to the needs of LGBT people and LGBT relationships.
- ▶ Ensure specific strategic links, policy, procedure and protocol are developed within the Every Child Matters framework. These should feed into the Common Assessment Framework and Extended Schools programme ensuring that the needs of LGBT young people are addressed.

## 12.3. Education

- ▶ Ensure specific strategic links, policy, procedure and protocol are developed within the Every Child Matters framework. These should feed into the Extended Schools programme.
- ▶ LGBT domestic violence and abuse should be incorporated to sit within Brighton & Hove City Council education strategy, with a longer term outcome to introduce this into the Personal and Social Health Education curriculum, through domestic violence and abuse preventative education programmes that incorporate an understanding of LGBT domestic violence and abuse.

- ▶ Ensure the justice system and statutory providers develops effective mechanisms for identifying, challenging and holding LGBT perpetrators of domestic violence to account for their violence, and monitor the effectiveness of agency responses in this regard.

## 12.4. Services and Service Providers

- ▶ Improve the capacity of both domestic violence and other services to respond to LGBT needs, and of LGBT services and groups to respond to domestic violence issues.
- ▶ Raise awareness amongst all services of issues pertaining to domestic violence and abuse for LGBT individuals. This includes the justice system GPs, mental health, housing, relationship support and education services.
- ▶ Develop specialist expertise amongst services/staff within existing services through training and awareness raising, (e.g. such as a specialist LGBT domestic violence and abuse housing options officer) and ensure all generic services and specialist support domestic violence and abuse services have a trained LGBT worker to work with survivors of LGBT domestic violence and abuse who approach them looking for support
- ▶ Develop awareness of the cross cutting issues of domestic violence and abuse, that may need to be addressed across a range of services, including housing, child protection and mental health and work across traditional distinctions between service provisions including those that pertain specifically to adults and children.
- ▶ Ensure that the local development of a co-ordinated community response to domestic violence addresses the needs of LGBT survivors and brings the perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse to justice, including ensuring the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service, Specialist Domestic Violence Court and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, address the needs of LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse where commensurate with levels of risk and need.
- ▶ Ensure domestic violence and abuse specific services locally develop and deliver accessible and effective services for all LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse in accordance with national service standards for domestic and sexual violence services.
- ▶ Assess the need for safe appropriate temporary accommodation and supported housing for LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse survivors, including the option of designated LGBT temporary housing for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

- ▶ Research the most effective framework for developing an LGBT 'one stop shop' offering housing, counselling, and support, with LGBT domestic violence and abuse services included within this broader piece of work.
- ▶ Ensure appropriate & safe temporary housing is available for LGBT service users reporting domestic violence and abuse, which takes into account the safety needs of the individual user.
- ▶ Monitor the justice system's intervention with LGBT perpetrators, including the number of cases arrested, charged, brought to court, sentenced and referred to probation. The Integrated Domestic Abuse Programmes (IDAP) does not address same-sex domestic violence so individual probation intervention with LGBT offenders should be developed and monitored.
- ▶ Local community-based (voluntary) perpetrator programmes should work with Respect (the national association of perpetrator programmes and associated support services) to develop and pilot community perpetrator programmes for LGBT domestic violence, in line with national standards and accreditation processes for this work.

## 12.5. Support Needs

- ▶ Develop relationship support systems and information portals for all LGBT people incorporating an understanding of domestic violence and abuse issues, including family, partnered and other forms of violence and abuse.
- ▶ Parenting support for LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse. This needs to work with services to ensure the protection of children in all domestic violence and abuse situations and is not limited to partnered circumstances.
- ▶ There may be particular support needs for the children of LGBT people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse, these need to be further investigated and considered when supporting survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

## 12.6. Publicity & Funding

- ▶ Develop awareness raising campaign targeted at LGBT communities through resources such as magazines, newspapers, internet sites, leaflets, public meetings, radio, TV, Pride and other high profile events etc. These awareness campaigns should be sustained for a prolonged period and not operate as one-off, short lived events.

- ▶ Develop awareness raising campaign targeted at mainstream communities through resources such as magazines, newspapers, internet sites, leaflets, public meetings, radio, TV, Pride and other high profile events etc. These awareness campaigns should be sustained for a prolonged period and not operate as one-off, short lived events.
- ▶ Monitor relevant funding streams locally, regionally and nationally to take forward LGBT domestic violence and abuse work in the city. Where funding is limited, this should be prioritised in accordance with need, risk, and seriousness of harm.

## 12.7. Research

- ▶ Further research into LGBT domestic violence and abuse is needed, locally, nationally, and globally. What follows are some of the gaps identified in this research.
- ▶ Investigate dynamics, barriers to disclosure and service provision, implications to service providers, and existing models
  - ◆ Ascertain why survivors are less likely to access services (despite being more likely to know of their existence), and to address this (self-?) exclusion and negative engagements and experiences of services and service provision
- ▶ The extent of domestic violence and abuse amongst LGBT people is still not known and further investigations of this diverse population should consider the prevalence of violence and abuse perpetrated by family, partners and other people who are defined as 'close' or 'intimate'.
  - ◆ This data should consider the prevalence of child and adult abuse, but it should consider the important overlaps identified in this research.
  - ◆ This data should also collect information on repeat domestic violence and abuse patterns
- ▶ Further qualitative data is required regarding the experiences of domestic violence and abuse survivors and:
  - ◆ Experiences of child abuse and the implications of this
  - ◆ Parenting and child support issues
  - ◆ The experiences of others affected by the abuse (including, but not limited to children, in abusive home situations, partnered and family domestic violence and abuse)
  - ◆ Mental health needs and vulnerabilities to domestic violence and abuse
  - ◆ Bi and trans identities

- ◆ The needs of the individuals within abusive partnered relationships
- ◆ Use of LGBT scenes and events
  
- ▶ Explore existing gaps in current service provider's service provision, both at grass roots and policy/strategic level.
- ▶ Undertake all research in line with guidelines developed in the domestic violence and abuse literature
- ▶ Draw on existing international research to examine existing models, prevalence rates, relationship dynamics, service provision, training materials, policies, publicity and funding models.

## 12.8. Consultation, Monitoring and Evaluation

- ▶ National domestic violence delivery plan: ensure that local LGBT research, services and groups inform local and national domestic violence work to ensure LGBT needs and experiences are reflected in the development of research, services, training or other resources
- ▶ Develop shared monitoring and evaluation systems with and within the police, housing, social and healthcare, and LGBT services. Distribute data collected, collated and published, to be utilised appropriately.
- ▶ Consultation should be undertaken using a variety of formats and advertised in a range of LGBT and non-LGBT media (see also recommendations from Wilcox and Pemberton, 2006).



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# Your feedback

We welcome any comments and suggestions.

Please email your feedback to us at:

[comments@countmeintoo.co.uk](mailto:comments@countmeintoo.co.uk)

or by post to:

Kath Browne, School of the Environment, Cockcroft Building, University of Brighton, Lewes Road, Brighton BN2 4GJ. or Count Me In Too, c/o Spectrum, 6 Bartholomews, Brighton BN1 1HG

[www.countmeintoo.co.uk](http://www.countmeintoo.co.uk)

Downloadable copies of this and other resources are available from the Count Me In Too website including a directory of local LGBT support organisations and groups.