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LGBT
youth
SCOTLAND



Voices Unheard

DOMESTIC ABUSE: LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL
AND TRANSGENDER YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES

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Introduction

Research has found that one in four Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people will experience domestic abuse in their lifetimes¹. Very little, however, is known about the experiences and impact of domestic abuse on LGBT young people.

The Voices Unheard Project was established by a group of young people from LGBT Youth Scotland to find out about young LGBT people's experiences of domestic abuse. Using peer research, the young people from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and the Scottish Borders sought to find out people's understanding, knowledge and experiences of domestic abuse in their families and in their relationships.

This research seeks to highlight the additional needs, unique experiences, and barriers to accessing help that young LGBT people in Scotland face.

The project is coordinated by LGBT Youth Scotland with support from the LGBT Domestic Abuse Project, which is funded by the Scottish Government, to raise awareness and improve service responses to LGBT people who experience domestic abuse. The project is supported by a reference group of members from the Scottish Government's Violence Against Women team, Scottish Women's Aid, The Women's Support Project, Open Road, the Equality Network and the Scottish Transgender Alliance.

RESEARCH

Colin Best, Georgie Burton,
Michaela MacGillivray, Jaye Ware.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Jamie McGregor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all the young people who were involved in the project at various stages; all their help and hard work has helped shape this report. The Voices Unheard Project would also like to thank all of the young people who took part in this research.

¹ Donovan *et. al* 2006: 2

Key Findings

- 61% of the respondents had witnessed some form of abuse in their families.
- 79% of the young people believed that someone who had witnessed domestic abuse in their family or home would feel less confident to 'come out' as a result.
- 52% of respondents said that they had experienced some form of abusive behaviour from a partner or ex-partner.
- Although 52% of respondents identified having experienced some form of abusive behaviour from a partner or ex-partner, only 37% recognised the behaviour as abuse.
- 24% of respondents had experienced physical violence from a partner or ex-partner.
- Half of the respondents who identified as transgender had been made to feel insecure about their gender identity by a partner or ex-partner.
- Over 30% of those who had experienced abuse had deliberately tried to hurt themselves since experiencing domestic abuse.
- 20% of respondents who had experienced abuse had tried to kill themselves since experiencing domestic abuse.

“It’s hard enough to come out under normal circumstances never mind if you’re being abused too.”

Definitions

LGBT Youth Scotland supports the Scottish Government definition of domestic abuse. It believes that a gendered analysis of domestic abuse can be applied to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people’s experiences. We have amended the definition, however, to take account of the specific experiences applicable to LGBT people.

“Domestic abuse can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate and are perpetrated against the person’s will, including rape), and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, homophobic/biphobic/transphobic abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as ‘outing’ or the threat of ‘outing’ or enforced isolation from family and friends).”

“In accepting this definition it must be recognised that children are witness to, and may be subject to the abuse, and children who witness or are used in the abuse, can experience stress and fear and may suffer a range of adverse effects, including physical injury, poor health and an array of psychological difficulties.”

LESBIAN this is the term used to describe women who are emotionally and physically attracted to women.

GAY this is the term that is used to describe men who are emotionally and physically attracted to men.

BISEXUAL this is the term that is used to describe people who are emotionally and physically attracted to both men and women.

TRANSGENDER this is an umbrella term used to describe a whole range of gender identities and expressions, including transsexual, intersex and cross-dresser.

Methodology

Young People from across LGBT Youth Scotland’s services put themselves forward to take part in a LGBT children and young people’s domestic abuse project. This group of young people were taken on a residential weekend and through a range of workshops explored their understanding of domestic abuse and the national domestic abuse delivery plan, focusing where appropriate, on an LGBT perspective.

Young people were then supported to become peer researchers. In Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and the Scottish Borders the young people developed and completed a mapping exercise of domestic abuse services in their areas. They recorded the services that they were able to find easily using internet search engines, what these services advertised, and who the websites and literature included as service users. The aim of this aspect of the research was not to provide a comprehensive list of services in each area, but to identify **what services young people would find if they were looking for support**, for whom these services **say** that they provide a service and what services they **say** that they offer.

Workshops were developed by the peer researchers and conducted in LGBT Youth Scotland groups in the four areas. These included informal focus groups and a paper-based survey to investigate young people’s understanding, knowledge and experiences of domestic abuse. A total of 59 young people took part in these workshops across the four areas.

An online survey was advertised by, and distributed to, members of LGBT Youth Scotland and other services and LGBT organisations. Direct links to the survey were also placed on the LGBT Domestic Abuse Project website, the LGBT Youth Scotland website, and social networking groups. The survey was online for one month and received 46 usable responses.

From the data collected, the peer researchers developed key findings and recommendations for each of the four areas and nationally.

This report contains five sections: local research findings from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and the Scottish Borders, and a national report bringing together the local reports and online survey findings.



The Voices Unheard Project was established by a group of young people from LGBT Youth Scotland to find out about young LGBT people's experiences of domestic abuse. Using peer research, the young people from Glasgow sought to find out people's understanding, knowledge and experiences of domestic abuse in their families and in their relationships.

This research seeks to highlight the additional needs, unique experiences, and barriers to accessing help that young LGBT people in Scotland face. This research consisted of three things:

- Mapping of services in their area
- Workshops with eighteen young people to find out young LGBT people's knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse
- Paper-based survey to find out their knowledge and experiences of domestic abuse

SERVICES

Peer researchers in Glasgow investigated where young LGBT people could go to access support if they were experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse. The researchers wanted to find out what services young people would easily come across. Researchers recorded what was advertised online.

DOMESTIC ABUSE PROJECT

www.domesticviolencescotland.org

- Provides a service for women and children.
- Does not mention young people, LGB or T people on its website.
- Does not advertise a service at evenings or weekends.

SAY WOMEN

www.say-women.co.uk

- Provides a service for young women and men
- Website mentions young people, but has no information about LGB or T people.
- Can provide an evening service, but no weekend support.

GLASGOW WOMEN'S AID

www.glasgowwomensaid.org.uk

- Provides a service for women, children and young people.
- Website mentions young people, but has no information about LGB or T people
- Does not advertise a service at evenings or weekends.

CARA PROJECT

No website, advertised via other local websites

- Provides a service for women.
- Does not mention young people or LGB or T people in its advertising.
- Doesn't advertise services at evenings and weekends online.

HEMAT GRYFFE WOMEN'S AID

www.hematgryffe.org.uk

- Provides a service for women, children and young people
- The website mentions young people, but has no information about LGB or T people.
- Does not advertise an evening or weekend support service, but does have 24 hr service for women experiencing domestic abuse who are at risk of homelessness.

SERVICES OVERALL

- There were a wide range of services for women who experience domestic abuse in Glasgow.
- There were good public transport links available to access services.
- There is a wide range of services available to young people in Glasgow.
- None of the services that were found had any information for LGBT people on their websites.
- Few out of hours services were listed on websites.
- There was no refuge accommodation for men found.
- Only one of the services found provided support for men who had experienced domestic abuse.

The young people who took part in the research were able to identify a range of services that they could access if they were experiencing domestic abuse. These included domestic abuse services, youth services, and LGBT organisations.

Only twenty-nine per cent of the young people thought it would be easy to access a domestic abuse service. Forty-seven per cent of the young people thought that this was dependent upon certain things such as access to the internet and whether they lived in Glasgow or in surrounding areas. Twenty-four per cent of the young people also thought it would be more difficult to access a domestic abuse service as an LGBT person, with particular difficulty for men.

A fear of the consequences of going to a domestic abuse service was the most common barrier that young people mentioned (35%), along with fears of being outed and homophobia.

“People would be scared to tell people, get upset remembering what happened to them.”

When asked who they would approach for support if they were experiencing domestic abuse the most common response from the young people was friends (53%) youth workers (53%), or family (47%).

THE POLICE

Fifty-nine per cent of the young people in Glasgow said they would not feel comfortable reporting domestic abuse to the police. The reasons given for this included fear of homophobia from the police and embarrassment that they were experiencing domestic abuse. Previous negative experiences with the police were also mentioned.

“They’re useless, I doubt much would happen.”

“I’ve had to contact police before and haven’t had a good dealing due to (being) LGBT. To an extent that a formal complaint was made and investigated into!”

Only 41 per cent of the young people thought that the police would take it seriously if they reported same-sex domestic abuse. A further 24 per cent said they were unsure or it would depend on the officers who they reported to.

YOUNG PEOPLE’S KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

The young people in Glasgow were able to identify a wide range of types of domestic abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual and verbal abuse. They acknowledged that domestic abuse didn’t always involve physical violence.

“Abuse is making someone feel bad about themselves.”

They talked about different ways that LGBT people can experience domestic abuse including ‘outing’ and being forced to dress in a certain way. They also mentioned the lack of positive examples of LGBT relationships and acknowledgement of LGBT domestic abuse in the media.

Young people felt that the representations of people who experience domestic abuse did not reflect the reality of domestic abuse. They felt that the media “portrayed (domestic abuse) as a poor family issue.”

“Media doesn’t give an impression that it can happen to anybody, just [the depiction of] mainly heterosexual relationships in poorer areas.”

YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Two-thirds of the young people who took part in the research in Glasgow knew someone who had experienced domestic abuse.

Twenty-nine per cent of the young people knew friends who had experienced domestic abuse, thirty-five per cent had experienced domestic abuse in their family and forty-one per cent had experienced domestic abuse in a relationship. This is extremely high and would indicate the need for future research in this area.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO MAKE THINGS BETTER FOR LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE?

The young people in Glasgow were asked what could be done to make things better for LGBT people who are experiencing domestic abuse. The three most popular responses were:

- More services specifically for LGBT young people.
- Raising public awareness of LGBT experiences of domestic abuse.
- More advertising of services that are available to LGBT young people.

Recommendations

- The design of gender-based violence policies and service provision in Glasgow should include a focus on the specific experiences and needs of young LGBT people.

Organisations that provide a service for people who have experienced domestic abuse should:

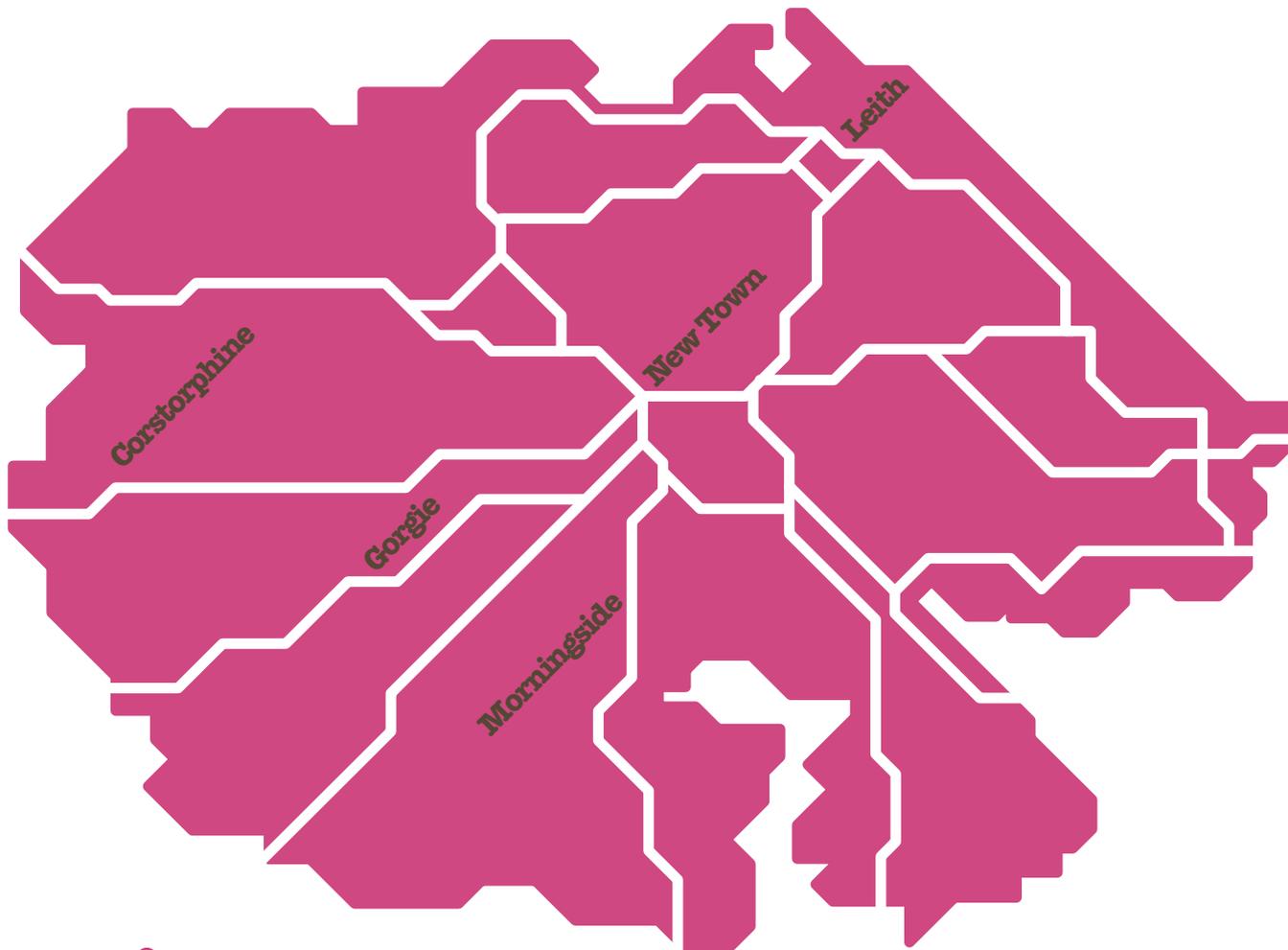
- Positively include LGBT people and young LGBT people in advertising and materials including websites and literature.
- Provide and advertise out-of-hours services or outreach services for young people, including LGBT young people.
- Include examples of LGBT people in campaigning and awareness raising materials.

THE POLICE

- Training for officers to increase LGBT awareness.

RESEARCH

Michaela MacGillivray



Edinburgh

The Voices Unheard Project was established by a group of young people from LGBT Youth Scotland to find out about young LGBT people's experiences of domestic abuse. Using peer research, the young people from Edinburgh sought to find out people's understanding, knowledge and experiences of domestic abuse in their families and in their relationships.

This research seeks to highlight the additional needs, unique experiences, and barriers to accessing help that young LGBT people in Scotland face. This research consisted of three things:

- Mapping of services in their area
- Workshops with a total of 22 young people to find out young LGBT people's knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse
- Paper-based survey to find out their knowledge and experiences of domestic abuse

SERVICES

Peer researchers in Edinburgh investigated where young LGBT people could go to access support if they were experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse. The researchers wanted to find out what services young people would easily come across. Researchers recorded what was advertised online.

BARNARDOS SKYLIGHT PROJECT

www.barnardos.org.uk

- Provides a service for children and young people
- Mentions young people on the website, but provides no information about LGB or T people.
- Does not advertise a service at evenings or weekends.

BEYOND TRAUMA

www.health-in-mind.co.uk

- Provides a service for women and men over 16.
- Does not mention young people, under 16, or LGB or T people on the website.
- Advertises an evening service by appointment.

SHAKTI WOMEN'S AID

www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk

- Provides a service for women, children and young people.
- Mentions young people on the website, but provides no information about LGB or T people.
- Does not advertise a service at evenings or weekends.

CALEDONIA YOUTH

www.caledoniayouth.org

- Provides a service for children and young people.
- Does not mention young people, LGB or T people on the website
- Does not advertise a service at evenings or weekends.

EDINBURGH WOMEN'S AID

<http://ewa.smartchange.org/>

- Provides a service for women and any accompanying children
- No mention of young people and LGB people.
- Does not advertise a service at evenings or weekends.

EDINBURGH WOMEN'S RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE CENTRE

www.ewrasac.org.uk

- Provides a service for women, young women and all transgender people.
- Mentions young women and transgender people on the website, but not LGB people.
- Does not advertise an evening or weekend service on the website.

SERVICES OVERALL

- None of the services that were found had any information for LGB people on their websites.
- Only one of the services found advertised the availability of evening or weekend services.
- There was no refuge accommodation advertised that was available to men.
- Only one of the services found would provide support for men who had experienced domestic abuse
- Most of the services were centrally located and easily accessible by public transport.

The Edinburgh Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre was highlighted by the peer researchers for its positive inclusion of transgender people in all aspects of its service. Transgender people were included and positively mentioned throughout the website. The centre provides a service for all transgender people.

Many of the young people said that a fear of being outed by a service and fears of a lack of confidentiality would be key barriers for them when accessing a service. The most common barriers to accessing services that people mentioned were related to the respondents identity as LGB or T. Despite this, most of the young people (75%) who took part in the research were confident in identifying as LGB or T to a service. There were several young people who expressed concerns about this information remaining confidential.

The young people in Edinburgh were able to identify a variety of organisations and services that they could access if they were experiencing domestic abuse. These included Women's Aid, Samaritans, Caledonia Youth and Childline. When asked, however, who they would actually go to most young people said that they would tell a friend or family member. Other services that young people said they would go to for support were LGBT Youth Scotland, a youth worker or teacher.

"I would need to know them."

Less than a third of the young people said that they would feel able to approach a domestic abuse service if they were experiencing domestic abuse.

The young people also acknowledged that there were far less services for GBT men who were experiencing domestic abuse and saw this as a barrier to GBT men being able to access support.

“The lack of services available for men would make it more difficult to get help.”

THE POLICE

Sixty-three percent of the young people said that they would not feel comfortable reporting domestic abuse to the police. Fear of the consequences, including the possibility that they may be ‘outed’ and “lack of trust” were reasons given for this. Previous negative experiences of the police were also mentioned.

“They haven’t helped in previous situations.”

Most of the young people felt that the police would take it seriously if they reported same-sex domestic abuse, yet over a third said no or were unsure.

“Some police still discriminate with LGBT people.”

YOUNG PEOPLE’S KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

The young people in Edinburgh who took part in the research had a very good knowledge of domestic abuse and the different types of abuse that people could experience. They talked about a range of different types of abuse including physical, mental, sexual and emotional abuse. The workshop was ran

with the over 18’s youth group and the under 18’s youth group. The older group of young people were much more likely to talk about the unique aspects of domestic abuse faced by LGBT people such as ‘outing’, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and the impacts of coming out when seeing abuse in the family. The younger group were more likely to highlight online abuse, such as stalking and bullying.

“Abuse, especially sexual abuse, can happen through coercion and so you don’t need to be physically strong.”

“There is no excuse.”

Some of the young people were unsure whether experiencing domestic abuse when you were growing up would make it more likely that you would perpetrate or experience domestic abuse as an adult.

“Some people grow up seeing awful things and if they see this from a young age they might think it’s ok and be an abuser with their partner.”

But this view was not felt by everyone and some people felt that this would make you less likely to be an abuser.

“If you see the pain that men inflict when you are growing up you’re not going to abuse anyone because you know the pain that it causes.”

“People need to stop making excuses for domestic abuse.”

YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Seventy-three percent of the young people knew someone who had experienced domestic abuse. Most of these experiences were within their families, although two of the young people said that they had experienced domestic abuse within their relationships.

“Witnessed from a young age, and in trying to stick up for her my sister and me were also abused. All in the past, my parents are divorced now. It’s affected my views of men as a whole and relationships with my dad from a young age and I think it always will.”

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO MAKE THINGS BETTER FOR LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE?

The young people in Edinburgh were asked what could be done to make things better for LGBT people who are experiencing domestic abuse. The three most popular responses were:

- Raise young LGBT people’s awareness of domestic abuse
- Increase resources for services to work with young LGBT people.
- Increase domestic abuse organisations’ awareness of LGBT people’s experiences of domestic abuse

Recommendations

- The design of gender-based violence policies and service provision in Edinburgh should include a focus on the specific experiences and needs of young LGBT people.

Organisations that provide a service for people who have experienced domestic abuse should:

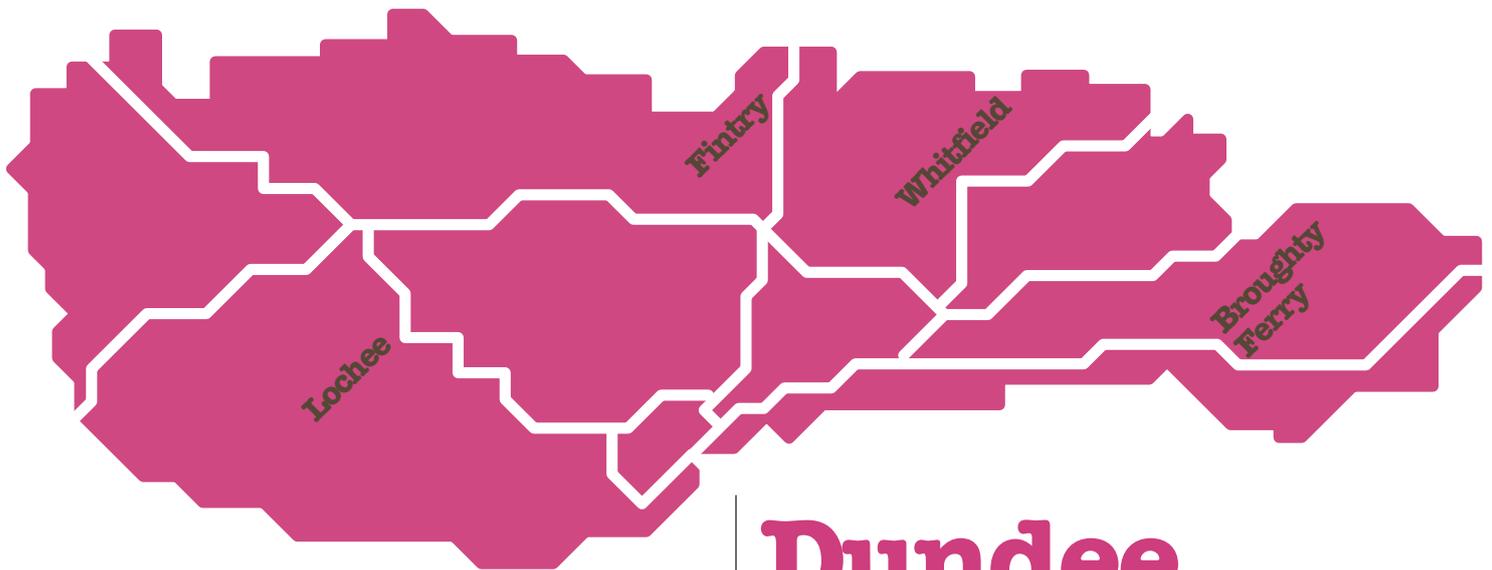
- Positively include LGBT people and young LGBT people in advertising and materials including on websites and literature.
- Training for staff to increase LGBT awareness and the unique experiences, and specific needs, of LGBT people who experience domestic abuse.
- Provide and advertise out-of-hours services or outreach services for young people, including LGBT young people.

THE POLICE

- Training for officers to increase LGBT awareness.
- Provide active outreach to LGBT young people through youth groups, schools, and other organisations.

RESEARCH

Jaye Ware



Dundee

The Voices Unheard Project was established by a group of young people from LGBT Youth Scotland to find out about young LGBT people's experiences of domestic abuse. Using peer research, the young people from Dundee sought to find out people's understanding, knowledge and experiences of domestic abuse in their families and in their relationships.

This research seeks to highlight the additional needs, unique experiences, and barriers to accessing help that young LGBT people in Scotland face. This research consisted of three things:

- Mapping of services in their area.
- Workshop with ten young people to find out young LGBT people's knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse.
- Paper-based survey with eight young people to find out their knowledge and experiences of domestic abuse.

SERVICES

Peer researchers in Dundee investigated where young LGBT people could go to access support if they were experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse. The researchers wanted to find out what services young people would come across when they searched online. Researchers recorded what was advertised online.

DUNDEE WOMEN'S AID

www.dundeeomensaid.co.uk

- Provides a service for women and children
- No mention of young people or LGBT people on the website.
- Advertise a service in the evenings, but not at weekends.

VICTIM SUPPORT

www.victimsupporttayside.org.uk

- Provides a service for women, men, children and young people.
- Website was not working on day of mapping exercise and research write-up.

LILLY WALKER CENTRE

www.dundee.gov.uk/housingoptions/hodomeesticabuse

- Provides a service for women, men, children and young people.
- No mention of young people or LGBT people on website
- Provide evening and weekend services through a phonenumber.

TAYSIDE DOMESTIC ABUSE INITIATIVE

www.barnados.org.uk/polepark

- Provides a service for women, men, children and young people.
- No mention of LGBT people on the website.
- Do not advertise a service at evenings or weekends

TAYSIDE POLICE DOMESTIC ABUSE LIAISON OFFICER

www.tayside.police.uk/Information-Advice/Domestic-Abuse

- Provides a service for women, men, children and young people.
- Mentions LGB people in a different section of the website.
- Advertises a service on Saturdays and one evening a week.

WOMEN'S RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE CENTRE DUNDEE

www.wrasacdundee.org

- Works with women, children and young women.
- No mention of LGBT people on website.
- Advertise an evening service on Wednesday and Friday, but no weekend service.

SERVICES OVERALL

- None of the services advertised proactively to transgender people.
- Only two of the services mentioned LGB people.
- Some evening and weekend services were found.
- There was one service found that would provide refuge accommodation for LGB and T people.

The young people in Dundee knew a range of services that they could go to if they were experiencing domestic abuse, either in their families or relationships. These included the Women's Rape and Sexual

Abuse Centre, Police and Women's Aid. They did not know of any services that would provide a response to transgender people and were also unsure if any services would provide a response for gay or bisexual men. They did not know if they would find it easy to access services if one was needed. The young people felt that they would find it easier if there were good online resources and if the service was in the city centre. Being LGBT was considered a barrier to accessing services.

When asked who they would go to for support, although they were aware of a wide range of services, most young people said they would tell a youth worker (88%) or friends (25%) and family (25%). None of the young people said they would go to a domestic abuse service.

Ninety-six percent of the young people said that they would be confident in telling a service that they were LGB or T.

THE POLICE

Most of the young people (75%) said that they would not feel comfortable reporting domestic abuse to the police. There were a variety of reasons why this was the case including being scared and the process being too formal. One person said;

"I love the person, and couldn't do it."

When asked if they thought the police would take seriously reports of same-sex domestic abuse, just under half said no.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

The young people had a good understanding of the different forms of domestic abuse including physical, sexual and emotional abuse and the use of children in the abuse. They also talked about abuse that was related to a person's sexual orientation and sexuality.

EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Eighty-nine percent of the young people knew someone who had experienced domestic abuse.

"I can't say who it was but it was bad. Their dad attempted to strangle them."

Two of the young people had experienced domestic abuse in their families and four in their relationships.

WHAT COULD BE DONE TO MAKE THINGS BETTER FOR LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE?

The young people in Dundee were asked what could be done to make things better for LGBT people who are experiencing domestic abuse. The three most popular responses were:

- More information and advice for young LGBT people on domestic abuse.
- Increased support for LGBT young people from domestic abuse services.
- More positive representations of the issue in the media.

Recommendations

- The design of gender-based violence policies and service provision in Dundee should include a focus on the specific experiences and needs of young LGBT people.

Organisations that provide a service for people who have experienced domestic abuse should:

- Positively include LGBT people and young LGBT people in advertising and materials including websites and literature.
- Provide more information for young LGBT people and distribute these in schools, youth groups, and online.
- Training for staff to increase LGBT awareness and the unique experiences and specific needs of LGBT people who experience domestic abuse.

THE POLICE

- Training for officers to increase LGBT awareness.
- Provide active outreach to LGBT young people through youth groups, schools and other organisations.

RESEARCH

Georgie Burton



The Scottish Borders

The Voices Unheard Project was established by a group of young people from LGBT Youth Scotland to find out about young LGBT people's experiences of domestic abuse. Using peer research, the young people from the Scottish Borders sought to find out people's understanding, knowledge and experiences of domestic abuse in their families and in their relationships. This research consisted of three things:

- Mapping of services in their area.
- Workshop with nine young people to find out young LGBT people's knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse.
- Paper-based survey with seven young people to find out their knowledge and experiences of domestic abuse.

SERVICES

Peer researchers in the Borders investigated where young LGBT people could go to access support if they were experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse. The researchers wanted to find out what services young people would come across when they searched online. Researchers recorded what was advertised online and what they were told when the organisations were phoned.

BORDERS WOMEN'S AID

www.borderwomensaid.co.uk

- Provides a service for women and children
- Does not mention young people or LGB or T people on its website.
- Does not advertise a service at evenings or weekends.

SAMARITANS

www.samaritans.org

- Provides a service for women, men, children and young people
- Website mentions young people, but has no information about LGB or T people.
- Advertises a service at evenings and weekends

CITIZENS ADVICE

www.cas.org.uk

- Provides a service for women, men, children and young people.
- No local website but national website mentions young people, LGB and T people.
- Does not advertise a service at evenings or weekends

LOTHIAN AND BORDERS POLICE

www.lbp.police.uk

- Provides a service for women, men, children and young people.
- The website mentions young people, LGB and T people.
- Advertises a service at evenings and weekends

VICTIM SUPPORT

www.victimsupport.org.uk

- Provides a service for women, men, children and young people.
- Website mentions young people, LGB and T people.

- Does not advertise a service at evenings and weekends

SERVICES OVERALL

- Only one service dealt specifically with people experiencing domestic abuse.
- Most of the services found offered gender neutral services.
- Only the police and Victim Support mentioned LGBT people in the literature or on their website.
- No services providing refuge accommodation for men were found.
- Young people in certain areas of the Scottish Borders would need to travel long distances to access a service

A women only service was phoned by a peer researcher during the research. When asked who they provided a service for, the young person was told that the organisation would not provide a service for transgender people.

The young people in the Borders knew a range of services that they could go to if they were experiencing domestic abuse, either in their families or relationships. These included their doctors, the domestic abuse helpline, Samaritans and Women's Aid. When asked where they would go to if they were experiencing domestic abuse, however, most said that they would go to a friend (43%) or their mum (43%). Many of the young people said that they would need to know and trust the person.

All of the young people said that they would be confident in telling a service that they were LGB or T. Still, many acknowledged that they would be concerned about the reaction that they might get after coming out, when they accessed a service.

“(I would be) too scared or frightened what they would think.”

THE POLICE

Most of the young people (71%) said that they would not feel comfortable to report domestic abuse to the police.

When asked if they thought the police would take seriously reports of same-sex domestic abuse, over half said no or that they were unsure. Reasons for this included fear of what would happen or worries that they may experience a homophobic response.

“Whilst my mum was experiencing domestic abuse the police wouldn’t do anything. They refer you to (the) domestic abuse line and said they couldn’t do nothing. This was for her ex-husband and ex-female partner.”

YOUNG PEOPLE’S KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

The young people had a good understanding of the different forms of domestic abuse and acknowledged that LGBT people may experience additional forms of abuse such as homophobic abuse from a partner or ex-partner.

The young people who took part in the research also acknowledged that domestic abuse happens over a period of time and may not be physical and can therefore be difficult to see that what a person is experiencing is abuse.

“If it’s emotional abuse then your confidence is rock bottom.”

COMING OUT WHEN EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Throughout the research young people in the Borders talked about the specific and unique issues that may be experienced by LGBT young people who witness abuse in their families. They acknowledged that this would have a “major impact” on young people being able to come out.

“It would be traumatic for the person coming out.”

“It’s hard enough to come out under normal circumstances never mind if you’re being abused too.”

People talked about young people being scared or frightened about talking to their parents about their sexual orientation if domestic abuse was happening in their homes. They thought that people would have lower self confidence and self esteem.

“I never told him, until I was eighteen because I had seen what he had done to my mum.”

– *Young person, Scottish Borders*

EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Most of the young people said that they had not experienced domestic abuse, although almost half knew someone who had. Most of those who had experienced domestic abuse had experienced it within their families.

WHAT COULD BE DONE TO MAKE THINGS BETTER FOR LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE?

The young people in the Scottish Borders were asked what could be done to make things better for LGBT people who are experiencing domestic abuse. The three most popular responses were:

- More information and advice for young LGBT people on domestic abuse.
- Increased support for LGBT young people from domestic abuse services.
- More advertising of services that work with young LGBT people.

Recommendations

- The design of gender-based violence policies and service provision in the Scottish Borders should include a focus on the specific experiences and needs of young LGBT people.

Organisations that provide a service for people who have experienced domestic abuse should:

- Positively include LGBT people and young LGBT people in advertising and materials including on their website and literature.
- Improve online presence through improving their websites position on search engines.
- Provide outreach to young LGBT people who experience domestic abuse who may not be able to, or want, to access an office within working hours.
- Training for staff to increase LGBT awareness and the unique experiences, and specific needs, of LGBT people who experience domestic abuse.

THE POLICE

- Training for officers to increase LGBT awareness.
- Provide active outreach to LGBT young people through youth groups, schools and other organisations.

RESEARCH

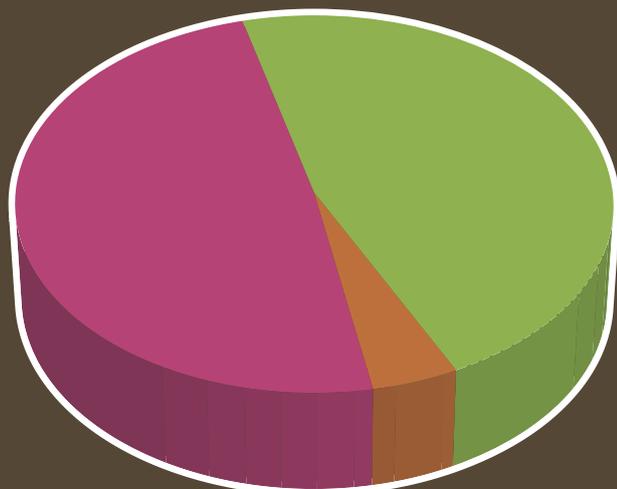
Colin Best

National report

Demographics

The average age of respondents was 19.6 years. Most of the respondents identified themselves as students, with 22 at school and 40 percent in higher or further education. Thirty-five percent of the respondents were in paid employment, with smaller numbers in voluntary work, acting as carers, or not working.

A person's gender identity is how they perceive their own gender identity. What is your gender identity?

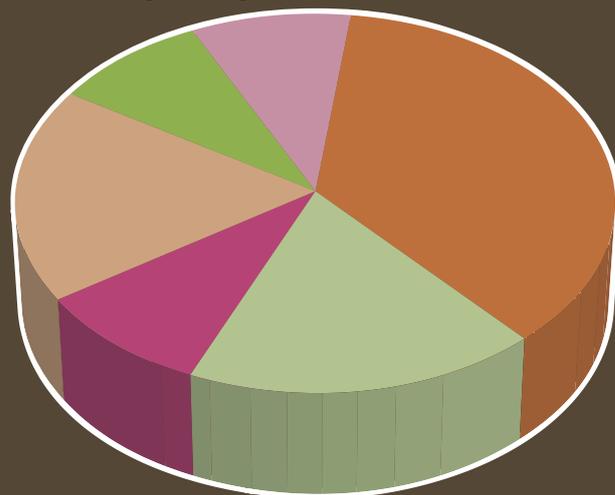


Woman (including MTF trans woman)	23
Man (including FTM trans man)	22
Other gender identity (e.g. androgyne person)	2

Twenty-two of the respondents identified as women and twenty-two as men. Two of the respondents identified as another gender identity.

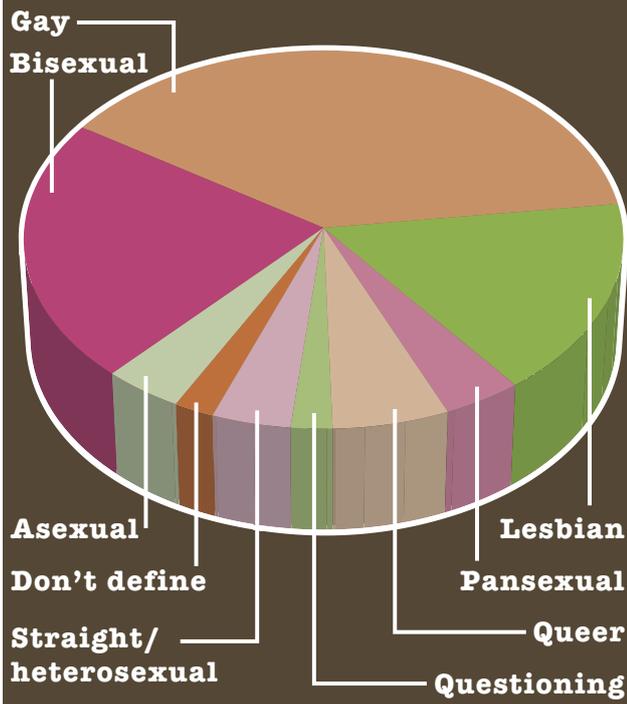
Ten of the respondents identified themselves as transgender. People identified within a range of different transgender descriptors, the most common response being FTM (female to male)/trans man. One of the respondents ticked more than one box.

We use the terms 'transgender' and 'trans' for a range of people who find their gender identity or gender expression differs in some way from gender assumptions made about them when they were born. Do you consider yourself to be within and of the following categories?



Women with a transsexual background	0
Man with a transsexual background	1
MTF/trans woman	1
FTM/trans woman	1
FTM/trans man	4
Intersex person	0
Androgyne/polygender/genderqueer	2
Cross-dressing/transvestite person	1
Other type of gender variant person	2

'Sexual Orientation' is a term used to describe a person based on who they are physically and emotionally attracted to. How would you describe your sexual orientation?



As shown in the graph above, there was a broad range of responses relating to how people described their sexual orientation with some respondents ticking more than one option.

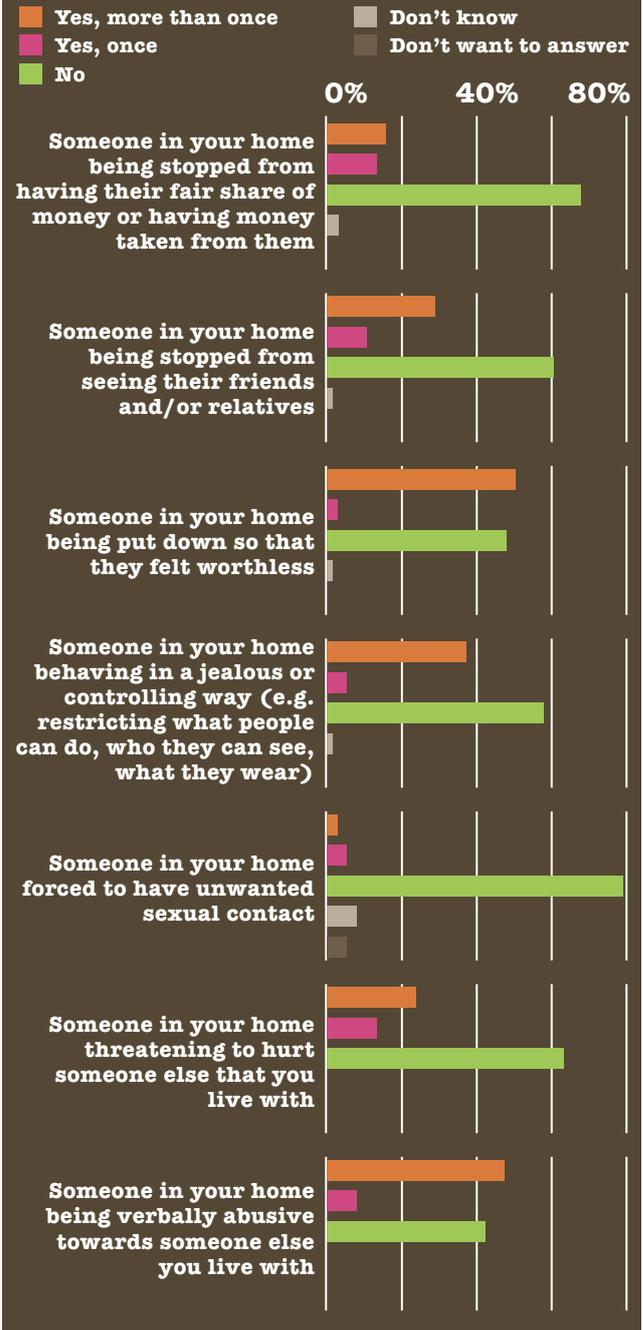
Most of the respondents were currently single (56%), with a further 43 percent having a partner: either living together (19%) or separately (24%).

Young people's experiences of domestic abuse in their family

YOUNG LGBT PEOPLE WITNESSING ABUSE IN THEIR FAMILIES

Forty-two percent of respondents had seen someone in their home behaving in a jealous or controlling way. These behaviours included witnessing someone in the home being stopped from having their fair

Have you ever witnessed any of the following?



share of money or having their money taken away from them (29%) and witnessing someone in the home being stopped from seeing friends or relatives (39%). Over half of the young people (52.6%) said that they had seen someone in their home being put down so that they felt worthless.

Thirty-seven percent had witnessed someone being threatened by another family member, and fifty-five percent had witnessed verbal abuse, in the home. Just under eight percent of the young people said that they had seen someone in their home being

forced to have unwanted sexual contact.

When asked at whom the abuse was being directed, all of the young people said that the abuse was being directed at their mother, their siblings or themselves. When asked who was being abusive, the young people tended to identify adult male family members, such as fathers, uncles, or partners of their mothers. This correlates with statistics on the perpetrators of domestic abuse in Scotland².

Despite nearly 40 percent of the young people describing what they had witnessed as a crime, 46 percent of the young people didn't tell anyone about the abuse that they had seen in their families. Many of the young people (26%) were unsure how to define what had happened and a smaller percentage (just over 7%) felt that it was 'just something that happens.'

THE IMPACT OF WITNESSING DOMESTIC ABUSE ON LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE

The Scottish Government definition of domestic abuse acknowledges that:

“Children who witness or are used in the abuse, can experience stress and fear and may suffer a range of adverse effects, including physical injury, poor health and an array of psychological difficulties.”

Young LGBT people face many of the same negative impacts and consequences of domestic abuse as young people in general. The young people in the research reported experiencing emotional problems, fear, anxiety or panic attacks. Thirteen of the young people said that they stopped trusting people as a consequence of abuse in their families and eleven started using things such as alcohol or drugs as a way of coping.

There are however, additional issues that young LGBT people may experience. Seventy-nine percent of the young people thought that LGBT people who had experienced domestic abuse in their family or home might feel less confident to 'come out' as LGB or T as a result. This was supported by the findings of the local research conducted by the peer researchers.

“I never told him, until I was eighteen because I had seen what he had done to my mum.”

– Young person, The Borders

“Yes – you are adding to the fire. They have problems and you are just adding to it.”

There are many reasons why young LGBT people find it difficult to tell their families about their gender identity or sexual orientation. LGBT Youth Scotland's 2008-2009 Stakeholdervoice survey found that respondents had waited just under 3.5 years between realising that they were LGB or T and coming out³. If a young person is witnessing abuse in their families they are less likely to feel safe and confident within their home, creating additional barriers to 'coming out'. Previous research has highlighted the period before coming out as a point of high stress levels for young LGBT people. It also identified an association between stressful home situations and depressed feelings amongst LGBT young people.⁴

It is therefore vital that services and agencies that work with young people experiencing domestic abuse provide safe and positive places for young people to talk about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

² Eighty-eight percent of crimes and offences of domestic abuse and ninety-five percent of crimes of indecency (mostly sexual assault) were perpetrated by men against women. See: Scottish Government 2007

Young people's experiences of domestic abuse in their relationships

- Only 37% of the young people felt that they had experienced abuse from a partner or ex-partner.
- 52% of respondents had actually experienced some form of abusive behaviour from a partner or ex-partner.
- 24% of the young people said they had experienced physical violence from a partner or ex-partner.

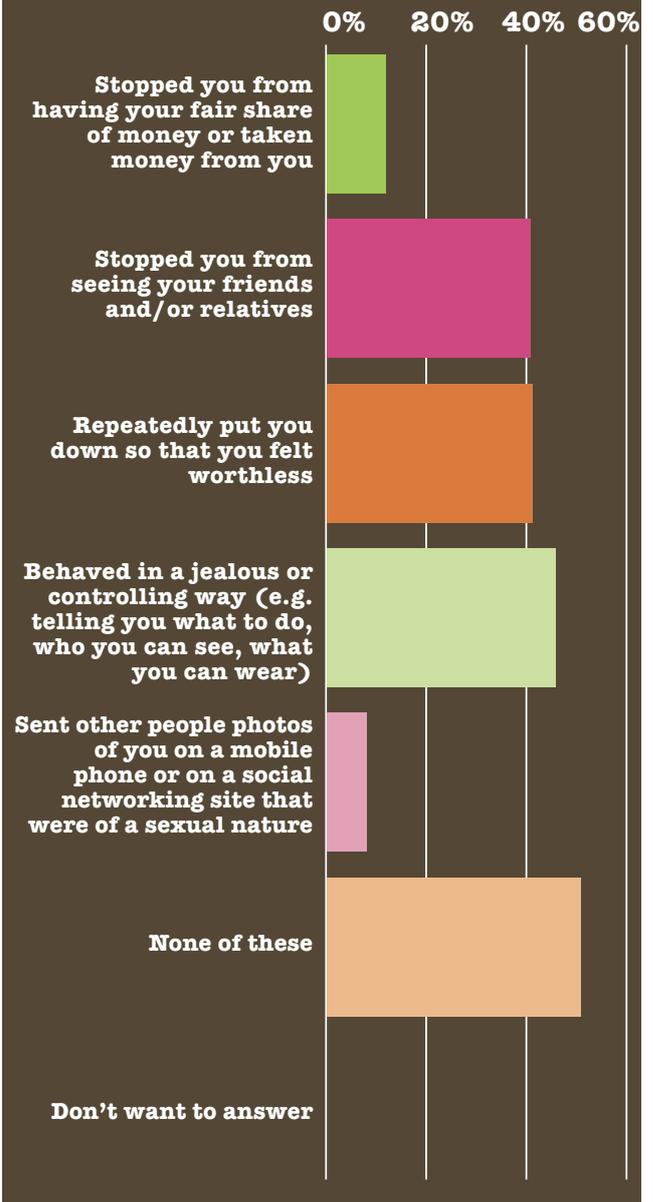
Respondents were given a list of examples of abusive behaviour. They were asked to indicate if they had experienced any of these behaviours from a partner or ex-partner. This was not an exhaustive list, but rather some examples of different types of abuse that includes examples of physical, sexual, emotional and controlling behaviours.

The young people were asked about their experiences of controlling behaviour from partners or ex-partners. Fifty-one percent of the young people said that they had not experienced any of these things, yet nearly forty-six percent of the young people said that a partner or ex-partner had behaved in a jealous or controlling way. Jealous and controlling behaviour can be experienced by anyone, but the context within which this happens and the consequences of the abuse can often be different for LGBT people.

Research has shown that many young people believe that abusive or violent behaviour is acceptable in relationships in certain circumstances⁵. Young people are often unsure about what a healthy relationship looks like, or what is acceptable behaviour, and are therefore less likely to be able to see their experiences as abuse.

The media does not include positive portrayals of LGBT relationships and LGBT young people are therefore less likely to identify with the depictions of such healthy relationships⁶. This is compounded by the high levels of negative portrayals and stereotypes of same-sex relationships. Research has shown that young LGBT people, especially young gay men, are

Has any partner or ex-partner ever done any of the following things to you?



more likely to experience domestic abuse in their first relationships⁷. With negative portrayals of relationships around them, and often not being out to family and friends, young gay men may not have the knowledge or confidence to see what they are experiencing as abusive and harmful.

Forty-one percent of respondents said that a partner or ex-partner had stopped them from seeing friends or family. For many young LGBT people, the process of coming out to their families has made relationships with them difficult. Abusive partners can exploit this by claiming that their families will not accept them or their relationships, further isolating those experiencing domestic abuse.

IS IT DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Through the local workshops and the survey young people identified the lack of information about, and acknowledgement of, LGBT people's experiences of domestic abuse.

“I didn't tell anybody for a long time because I wasn't sure that what I experienced

was proper domestic abuse, since it was by a female partner and I was male-assigned at birth.”

In the media and society examples of relationships, whether positive or negative, are generally heterosexual. A lack of representations of same-sex relationships and transgender people in public-awareness

campaigns and prevention work for domestic abuse, can make it very difficult for young LGBT people to understand their experiences as abuse.

“Men would be much less likely to talk about it because people think it's something that happens to women.”



THREATENING BEHAVIOUR

Threatening behaviour is used by abusive partners as a way of controlling a partner. The respondents had experienced high levels of this type of abuse. Almost a third of the respondents said that a partner or ex-partner had threatened to hurt them and fourteen percent had threatened to kill them.

The threat of violence is as harmful as the actual violence that people may experience. The daily and continuous threat of violence can lead to a negative impact on confidence and wellbeing. The fear of the consequences may lead people to feel unable to tell anyone about the abuse that they are experiencing.

“There are many barriers (to disclosing)... communication could be restricted as people may be afraid to call, leave the house.”

Twenty-seven percent of the respondents said that a partner or ex-partner had threatened to kill or hurt themselves as a way of making them do something or stop them doing something. For many people who are

3 LGBT Youth Scotland: Stakeholdervoice 2008-2009: 14

4 Mayock *et. al* 2009: 18

5 Health Scotland 2005: 2

6 Batchelor *et. al* 2004: 674

7 Robinson and Rowlands 2006

experiencing this type of threatening behaviour, it is difficult to identify it as domestic abuse and they may blame themselves for their partner's feelings and actions. The guilt from falsely believing that they are the 'cause' of the interactions, can make it more difficult for those experiencing abuse to acknowledge that it is abuse, or to seek support.

TRANSGENDER YOUNG PEOPLE

Of the ten respondents who identified as transgender, five of them (50%) said that a partner or ex-partner's behaviour had made them feel insecure about their gender identity. This supports previous research by the LGBT Domestic Abuse Project⁸ which found that abuse focussed on a person's gender identity was the most common form of domestic abuse experienced by transgender people. This abuse could include a partner purposely using the wrong pronouns or calling them by their birth name. It could also include the abusive partner buying the person inappropriate gifts or focusing on parts of their body with which they feel uncomfortable.

Transgender people experience extremely high levels of transphobia and discrimination⁹. The same research also estimates that 73 percent of transgender people have experienced transphobic harassment and eighty percent of respondents had experienced some form of domestic abuse from a partner or ex-partner¹⁰.

The impact of this type of abuse on a young transgender person can have serious consequences in addition to those experienced by the wider community. Many young transgender people may just be starting to transition, or be thinking about transitioning. This type of abuse may lead them to feel unable to transition or present their true gender identity.

CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSE

Those who had experienced abuse from a partner or ex-partner were asked to identify the ways in which the abuse had impacted upon their lives. A range of negative consequences were identified by the young people.

Thirty-seven percent of the young people said that they experienced psychological or emotional

TECHNOLOGY

Three of the young people said that a partner or ex-partner had sent other people photos of a sexual nature of them on a mobile or social networking site. Online sexual abuse and gender based bullying are becoming more and more prevalent in the UK¹¹. For LGBT young people there can be additional tools used such as being outed through the distribution of sexual images.

The young people in Edinburgh, in particular, highlighted the prevalence of cyber-bullying as a form of domestic abuse.

problems, such as depression, low self-esteem, or nightmares as a result of the abuse that they had experienced. Forty percent had stopped trusting people or had difficulties in other relationships and over twenty percent experienced isolation from friends or family.

Over thirty percent of the respondents had deliberately tried to hurt themselves and twenty percent had tried to kill themselves since experiencing the abuse. This is an extremely worrying statistic. Rates of suicide and self-harm are very high in the LGBT community as a result of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, as well as the lack of positive messages in society on LGBT identities. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers¹². Thirty four percent of 872 transgender people surveyed in the UK had attempted suicide at least once¹³, which is 7.7 times the suicide rate of the general population¹⁴.

The emotional and physical impact of domestic abuse on LGBT young people can be more extreme given that they may not be 'out' or if they are they are still unable to disclose their relationships, and therefore the abuse, to those around them. This inability to talk about issues and problems in their lives can lead to the impact being more serious and long-term. It is therefore vital that services are knowledgeable and approachable for LGBT young people and somewhere that they feel they can be open and honest about their lives.

Young people's experiences and understandings of services

- 47.1% of the young people said that fear of homophobia, biphobia or transphobia would make them less likely to access domestic abuse support services.

Young people who responded to the survey were also asked questions about their knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of services.

Respondents were asked what they felt were the most important things when accessing services. Eighty percent of respondents said that feeling secure and able to speak without fear or harm, discrimination, prejudice, or abuse, was important to them when accessing services.

“I don't think anyone would want to have help from someone who didn't appreciate them, or looked down upon them, because of who they loved. It would also make that person feel worse. If you're in a domestic abuse situation, and on top of that you also have to deal with homophobia from people who are trying to ‘help,’ would put you off telling anyone.”

- 8 Roch *et. al* 2008
- 9 Morton 2008
- 10 *Ibid.*: 11
- 11 Cross *et. al* 2009
- 12 See McNamee 2006, Hunt and Fish 2008
- 13 Whittle *et. al* 2007:78
- 14 Office for National Statistics 2002: 2



There are many barriers to accessing services for anyone when experiencing domestic abuse. Fearing prejudice or discrimination would further increase these barriers and for many LGBT people this fear prevents them from telling anyone about the abuse that they are experiencing.

The respondents also mentioned many issues that are common to all young people. Seventy-one percent of respondents said that knowing that they were safe was important, as was having the confidence to speak their mind without being talked down to or ignored.

“I found that they [a women's domestic abuse service] were sometimes insensitive and uncaring... I think the staff need to take more care of LGBT young people.”

Seventy-seven percent of the young people said that confidentiality was important to them. This would obviously be a fear for many young people, but there are added fears for young LGBT people. Worries that friends or families may find out that they are in a same-sex relationship may increase the barriers to going to a domestic abuse service as would uncertainty about who the service would tell. This supports the findings from the local areas where many of the young people said that confidentiality was an important concern.

“I would want to find someone useful, but confidential.”

EXPERIENCES WITH SERVICES

Respondents who felt that they had ever experienced domestic abuse from a partner or ex-partner were asked to answer questions relating to services. Twenty-seven responded to these questions.

Of these respondents, most told friends (55%)

or relatives (26%) of the abuse. Only three of the respondents had accessed a Women's Aid group and one person told the police. Forty percent of the respondents had not told anyone about the abuse that they had experienced.

These responses were supported by the local workshops in which young people were able to identify a wide range of services, agencies and individuals providing support for domestic abuse, yet said they were more likely to seek support from friends or relatives. LGBT organisations and youth services were also highlighted as places where young people felt safe to talk about abuse.

“I was very reluctant to speak to any domestic abuse service for a very long time, though I was able to access non-specialised support from LGBT support services.”

“LGBT Youth Scotland centre would help me out, that I know!”

WHAT WOULD MAKE THINGS EASIER?

The respondents were also asked what would make them more likely to access a domestic abuse service. According to the respondents, what would make them more likely to access a service, is clear inclusion of LGBT people on websites and literature. Fear of discrimination emerged as the main barrier to accessing services. Clarity over what support services offer to LGBT people and confidence that they will receive a positive and confidential response is vital for young LGBT people.

Inclusion, a positive response, and confidentiality are particularly important for



young transgender people. Previous research has highlighted that many transgender people believe that there are not domestic abuse services willing, or able, to support them¹⁵. When researching services in their local areas, the Voices Unheard peer researchers were told by one organisation that they would not provide a service for transgender people. This response highlights the lack of understanding amongst many service providers of transgender people and their experiences.

When asked what else would make it easier for them to access a domestic abuse service, one young person said:

“(Clarity) on what “women-only” means (in) regard (to) transgender and gender-variant people.”

Remote services, such as telephone or email support were identified as important. Young people are less able to travel to services or access them during office hours. It is therefore important that organisations find ways of providing a service that are accessible and practical for young people. Online resources and email and phone support are ways in which this could be done.

Young people's experiences and understanding of the police

Of the young people who said that they had experienced abuse from a partner or ex-partner, only one person said that the police came to know about the incident(s). Of the twenty young people who had no contact with the police, the main reason given was that it was a private matter (55%). Many of the reasons given were very similar to those in the wider population, such as

15

Roch *et. al* 2010: 29

16

Scottish Government 2008

wanting to deal with the matter themselves (30%) or fear that it would make matters worse (25%).

Other reasons given were unique to, or issues that would be faced disproportionately by, LGBT people. Twenty-five percent of people thought that the police would not have taken it seriously and two of the respondents felt that their LGBT background or identity would have negatively influenced the way that the police dealt with the incident. One of the young people had not reported the incident(s) because they had not (or did not want) to disclose their LGBT background or identity to the police.

Thirty percent of the respondents said that they had not contacted the police about the abuse experienced because they do not like, or are frightened of, the police.

“I’ve had to contact police before and haven’t had a good dealing due to (being) LGBT. To an extent that a formal complaint was made and investigated into!” – Young Person, Edinburgh

This finding is supported by the workshops that were done in local areas. Most of the young people who took part in the research said that they would not be comfortable reporting domestic abuse to the police, with results as high as 73 percent in the Scottish Borders group.

Young People’s understanding and views on national policy

Nine LGBT Young People took part in a workshop to help them make sense of the Scottish Government’s National Delivery Plan on Domestic Abuse¹⁶. As part of this workshop they were also given the opportunity to think about the delivery plan from the perspective of an LGBT young person.

As would be expected with most policy docu-

ments, only 1 young person was aware of the delivery plan’s existence. The young people worked through case studies on each of the priority areas, highlighting an LGBT perspective on each of the priority areas.

The young people made the following key points on the priority areas:

HEALTH SERVICES They stated that young people may not feel able to come out to their GP.

ACCESSING SERVICES The young people stated that if they were accessing support they would want help to meet people to talk to and for services to be there for support

DOMESTIC ABUSE COURT The young people stated that it was important for children and young People to feel safe and that they need to know that help is out there with the domestic abuse court. They did raise concerns about follow on support for Gay, Bisexual and Transgender men.

“Follow on support – it’s not there for men.”

SPECIALIST SERVICES Young people stated it was important that the organisations understood LGBT issues, again specifically highlighting the needs of transgender young people.

TRAINING Without the correct training, staff may not be able to support LGBT young people in a way that they need.

TEACHER TRAINING The young people discussed the fact that many LGBT young people experience homophobic or transphobic bullying in schools. They were concerned that if a teacher was aware of this they may not see the signs of domestic abuse as they may think the young person was acting differently because they were being bullied.

PARTICIPATION Young People saw this as crucial to ensuring services meet the needs of LGBT young people.

“Not adults guessing, its young people’s actual thoughts.”

“Young people have first hand knowledge and are able to speak.”

Recommendations

It is important to recognise that LGBT young people are facing a 'double barrier' to seeking help and support when they are experiencing domestic abuse. They have the same barriers to accessing a service as the rest of their peers, with the added fears and anxieties around coming out and about receiving a homophobic, biphobic and or transphobic response.

Services that work with people who have experienced domestic abuse should:

- Positively advertise services to LGBT people, by including information on your service for LGBT people within websites and literature.
- Increase staff and volunteer awareness of LGBT people and their experiences of domestic abuse through training.
- Increase the visibility of LGBT people in any campaigning or awareness-raising materials produced.
- Provide outreach to young LGBT people through youth groups, schools and other services.
- Increase knowledge, understanding and use of new media and online methods of communication and support within services.

POLICE SERVICES THROUGHOUT SCOTLAND SHOULD:

- Increase and improve outreach to young LGBT people through engaging with youth groups, schools and LGBT organisations.
- Promote remote reporting sites and other methods of reporting domestic abuse that are safe and accessible for young LGBT people.
- Increase knowledge and awareness of LGBT young people and their experiences of domestic abuse through training.

LGBT ORGANISATIONS SHOULD:

- Advertise LGBT-friendly domestic abuse services within your organisations.
- Increase knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse through training.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SHOULD:

- Prioritise the experiences and impact of domestic abuse on young LGBT people when developing policy relating to young people and domestic abuse.

RESEARCH:

- Further research should be undertaken to gain more of an understanding of all forms of gender-based violence experienced by young LGBT people.

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SCOTLAND'S LESBIAN, GAY,
BISexual AND TRANSGENDER
DOMESTIC ABUSE PROJECT



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39/40 Commercial Street, Leith,
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