

count me in too community summary

Domestic violence & abuse and LGBT lives

The Count Me In Too Domestic Violence and Abuse report explores the experiences and opinions of LGBT people who answered yes to the question: 'have you experienced abuse, violence or harassment from a family member or someone close to you?' This includes but does not limit Domestic Violence and Abuse to partnered violence and the introduction to the report explains this definition.

Almost a third of LGBT respondents had experienced domestic violence or abuse. The most common perpetrator was a partner or ex partner (16% of the entire sample), and 13% of all respondents had experienced this kind of abuse from a family member or dependent. 13% of the total sample had experienced partner abuse from same-sex partners. Perpetrators also included friends, carers, visitors, neighbours and others. Around a fifth of people who had experienced abuse from any one perpetrator category had also experienced abuse and violence from someone else. Over 10% of respondents had experienced abuse or violence as a child, almost half of whom later experienced abuse from a partner.

The report comments that experiences of multiple perpetrators suggest ongoing experiences of violence and abuse and point to particular vulnerabilities to further violence and abuse. Details of the demographics of domestic violence and abuse can be found in chapter 2.

Trans-, bi-, disabled- or deaf people, women, people who defined their ethnicity as 'other' and people with poor mental health are more likely than other LGBT people to have experienced domestic violence or abuse. See chapter 3 for more about

different LGBT experiences of domestic violence and abuse.

Less than a quarter of those who experienced domestic violence or abuse reported it. Just over half of those who did so reported it to the police. You can read more about reporting in chapter 4.

Key needs in terms of services identified by LGBT domestic violence and abuse survivors included: an LGBT-specific support and counselling service; an LGBT-specific police officer to report to; and awareness training for domestic violence and abuse services. Chapter 9 includes discussions of services.

Interviews and focus groups revealed a lack of support for troubled LGBT relationships. Chapter 5 examines relationships and sex.

'So, she's had problems. Had problems, and she 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 to us as being a lesbian couple.'

A third of those who had experienced domestic violence and abuse had also experienced homelessness.

Problems can arise when LGBT people try to access domestic violence refuges.

‘there was mostly straight people in there. Well, all straight people. I was the only gay person there... They thought it was more important for man and woman, because it’s just a cat fight basically, they see it as.’

60% of domestic violence and abuse survivors wanted to see LGBT-specific safe temporary housing. See chapter 6 for more.

Compared to the rest of the LGBT community, those who have experienced domestic violence or abuse are more likely to feel afraid at home and outside, during the day and at night. They are also more likely to avoid their homes, neighbourhoods, public transport, education, public services, work and the LGBT scene. This avoidance is not only due to the fear of hate crime based on sexual and gender identities. Safety fears and LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse is discussed in chapter 7.

‘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’.

Mental health and isolation are significant issues for survivors of domestic violence and abuse. 12% of domestic violence and abuse survivors say that no-one supports them on a regular basis. Compared to those who have not experienced domestic violence and abuse, they are less likely to have support from their families of origin and much more likely to feel isolated, and to have had serious suicidal thoughts in the past 5 years. Chapter 8 looks at these and other risk factors.

The analysis group recommended that:

- the capacity of statutory and voluntary service providers be extended, via training and awareness-raising around LGBT issues, domestic violence and abuse issues, and LGBT-specific domestic violence and abuse issues.
- training should recognise the diversity of the LGBT communities and the differences within this collective.
- the underreporting of domestic violence and abuse from within LGBT communities be addressed.
- further research into LGBT domestic violence and abuse be undertaken locally, nationally and globally.

To find out more details about the results of the research and recommendations (including accessing and engaging LGBT survivors of domestic violence and abuse, chapter 10), the full report can be downloaded for free from :

www.countmeintoo.co.uk