



**The Needs and Experiences of
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People
in Glasgow**

**Final Report
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We would like to thank the eight organisations which assisted this research through setting up focus groups:

- Glasgow Women's Library
- St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral
- LGBT Forum
- Gay Men's Health
- Crosslynx
- Sandyford Centre
- LGBT Youth Scotland
- Strathclyde Gay and Lesbian Switchboard.

We would also like to thank the individuals who took part in the survey, telephone interviews and discussion groups. Many organisations also provided research and statistics to inform this study.

Executive Summary

This research explored the needs and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people living, working or using services in Glasgow. It was commissioned by Glasgow Community Planning Partnership and undertaken by ODS Consulting between December 2010 and March 2011. The research was qualitative, involving surveys, telephone interviews and discussion groups to explore views, experiences and attitudes. Approximately 170 LGBT individuals took part.

Health

Most people involved in this research were happy with their health. However, over half had experienced problems or issues with their health at some point. Mental health issues appear prevalent, with many experiencing depression, stress or isolation which had a knock on effect on other aspects of their lives.

Health services were generally rated highly, particularly LGBT specific services. Views on mainstream services such as GP surgeries and health centres were very varied. Overall, there was a picture of inconsistent levels of service amongst GP practices, resulting in some awkward situations and poor levels of service.

Safety

Although most survey respondents were happy with their safety, almost half had experienced an issue with their safety at some point. Issues ranged from “subtle hassle” to severe and ongoing harassment – involving physical assault and/ or verbal abuse. Many participants modified their behaviour to enhance their safety – often involving significant changes to daily routines.

While some participants felt that the police support for LGBT people in Glasgow was improving centrally, others felt that this was not evident at a local level. Many felt that more could be done through better publicity for services such as hate crime reporting; more consistency in dealing with homophobic and transphobic behaviour; and LGBT equality training for all police officers.

Housing

Almost all participants in this research were happy with their current housing situation - but a third had previously had problems with their housing.

Housing is closely linked to safety. Some participants had left home and experienced homelessness due to abuse or negative attitudes from family members. Others had experienced harassment and abuse targeted at their home. Some chose to live in poorer quality private sector accommodation in more expensive areas of Glasgow, which were perceived as more safe.

Participants felt that housing services could be improved through training housing staff on LGBT issues; providing specific housing advice for LGBT people; providing more information on areas which were safe for LGBT people; and ensuring that LGBT people receive additional priority for social housing, to allow access to higher demand areas.

Education

Most participants were happy with their current education situation, but around a fifth had experienced problems at school. Many felt that schools did not know how to support LGBT young people, or how to deal with harassment and bullying related to sexual orientation or gender identity.

Some participants had experienced discrimination in further and higher education, particularly disabled people. However many felt that colleges and universities offered more inclusive and supportive environments for LGBT people than schools.

Almost all participants felt that education services in Glasgow could be improved. People felt that schools could play a significant role in raising awareness of LGBT issues and same sex families within schools and communities, and providing appropriate sex education for young LGBT people. Participants also felt that schools should be better at tackling harassment and bullying.

Employment

One third of survey respondents were not happy with their current employment situation. Some young people were concerned that their sexual orientation or gender identity would limit their opportunities. Indeed, half of survey respondents had experienced issues in the past relating to employment. Most of these issues were related to negative attitudes or discrimination.

Some people felt that they had to hide their sexual orientation at work, or not disclose much about their private life. Others had experienced

significant attitudinal barriers or bullying from colleagues. Some participants had left their job due to bullying or harassment.

Social Opportunities

Most participants were happy with their social networks. However, a minority were unhappy – largely because of a lack of spaces where LGBT people can feel welcome, which are not linked to alcohol. Many participants had experienced disruption to their social networks when they came out or had a gender transition.

Almost all survey respondents (92%) felt that there was a need for an LGBT centre in Glasgow. However, some stressed that this was a 'tentative' yes depending on the type of centre. Many participants stressed that an LGBT centre should not follow the same model as previous LGBT centres in Glasgow.

Views on what a centre should be for were varied. It was seen as a space which could allow people to make connections, build a sense of community, access support services, and raise awareness of LGBT communities in Glasgow.

A minority felt strongly that there shouldn't be a centre at all. Those who did not think that there should be a centre felt that it might lead to more segregation, or that funding would be better spent on targeted LGBT activities, or enhancing mainstream services.

1. Introduction

1.1 About This Report

This report sets out the findings from research into the needs and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Glasgow. Glasgow Community Planning Partnership commissioned us – ODS Consulting – to undertake this research between December 2010 and March 2011.

1.2 Research Aims

In 2009, Glasgow Community Planning Partnership commissioned research exploring the size, profile, needs and experiences of people from equalities groups in Glasgow. The research focused on equalities in relation to age, gender, gender identity, disability, faith, ethnic origin and sexual orientation. This research found that there was a gap in the information available on the number, characteristics and experiences of LGBT people in Glasgow. However, it found that there was evidence that LGBT people in Glasgow faced barriers around:

- safety – including hate crime and harassment;
- health – with higher than average levels of drug addiction, smoking, depression, eating disorders, self harm and attempted suicide, and lower levels of physical exercise; and
- learning – discrimination at school, and belief that academic performance is affected by sexual orientation.

This research aims to explore these experiences in more detail. The purpose of the research is to explore the needs and experiences of LGBT people in Glasgow in relation to a range of topics, including:

- housing;
- education and training;
- employment;
- health and wellbeing;
- harassment and crime;
- personal support networks;
- cultural and social activities; and
- LGBT organisations and services.

1.3 Research Terminology

Sexual orientation refers to the gender (or genders) to which a person is attracted. The Equality Network¹ identifies different types of sexual orientation as follows:

- **Straight/heterosexual:** Someone who is emotionally and physically attracted to the opposite gender.
- **Lesbian:** A woman who is emotionally and physically attracted to other women.
- **Gay:** Someone who is emotionally and physically attracted to the same gender. Most often it refers solely to men, but some women may prefer the term.
- **Bisexual:** Someone who is emotionally and physically attracted to both men and women.

Those whose sexual orientation is not straight/ heterosexual are often grouped as lesbians, gay people and bisexual people, commonly abbreviated to LGB people.

In Scotland, the term transgender, or trans, is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from that assigned to them at birth. Gender identity can be expressed in a variety of ways (or, in a discriminatory society, may be suppressed). Various terms have developed as transgender expression has become more widely understood and recognised in an attempt to highlight similarities and differences. Trans people include transsexual men and women (who have had legal gender reassignment), cross-dressing and transvestite people, polygender, androgyne and third gender people (who see themselves as between or without gender).

Again, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are often grouped together and commonly abbreviated as LGBT people.

Although this report uses the terms LGB and LGBT, we recognise that everyone is an individual, and people do not fit neatly into categories. We also recognise that there are significant differences in experience between lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

¹ Equality Network: www.equality-network.org

2. Methods

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the methods used to gather information on the needs and experiences of LGBT people in Glasgow.

2.2 Overview of Methods

This research involved:

- an online survey of organisations providing services in Glasgow;
- a survey of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Glasgow;
- telephone interviews with 27 survey respondents;
- nine discussion groups with LGBT people in Glasgow; and
- a feedback event with all participants in the research.

2.3 The Organisational Survey

We issued a short online survey to public sector organisations providing services in Glasgow. The aim was to gather the information that these organisations held about the needs and experiences of LGBT people in Glasgow. The survey asked for:

- existing research;
- monitoring information;
- customer feedback information; and
- views on services for LGBT people.

A total of 31 people responded to the survey, from 28 organisations or departments. Responses were from:

- six colleges or universities;
- six public sector organisations or departments;
- four housing associations;
- ten LGBT focused voluntary organisations; and
- two other voluntary organisations.

Ten organisations provided existing research or statistics for inclusion in this report. One organisation was in the process of research, and would be willing to share findings once this research is complete. Other organisations indicated that they had raw data, but had not analysed or collated this. We did not gather raw data for reasons of data protection.

2.4 The Individual Survey

We issued an online and paper survey for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people living, working or using services in Glasgow. This survey was issued to:

- LGBT organisations in Glasgow and Scotland;
- LGBT social venues, groups and clubs in Glasgow;
- equalities and other voluntary organisations in Glasgow;
- community planning partners;
- all libraries in Glasgow;
- all NHS health centres in Glasgow; and
- all GlasgowLife leisure centres in Glasgow.

A total of 130 individuals responded to the survey. Overall 123 responded online, and seven responded using hard copies. As the number of people in Glasgow who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is unknown, it is not possible to determine the response rate. However, estimates suggest that there are between 8,000 and 44,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender adults in Glasgow². This therefore represents a small sample of the overall population.

A mix of people responded to the survey. There were significantly more male than female respondents. Few respondents were over 60.

Age Band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 aged 25 and under • 53 aged 26 to 40 • 44 aged 41 to 60 • 3 aged 61 plus • 1 no response
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 lesbian • 67 gay • 13 bisexual • 5 heterosexual/ straight • 4 don't know
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 female • 75 male • 4 transgender • 1 no response
Gender Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 have different gender identity than at birth

² See more detailed analysis in Chapter Three

Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 disabled
Ethnic origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 minority ethnic
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 with a minority religion or belief
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 102 living in Glasgow • 28 living in surrounding areas

2.5 The Telephone Interviews

We held 27 telephone interviews with people who had responded to the individual survey. The purpose was to gain more detail about needs and experiences, and explore any issues raised in the survey. Half of those interviewed were members of LGBT groups or organisations in Glasgow, and half were not.

Age Band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 aged 20 to 25 • 12 aged 26 to 40 • 8 aged 41 to 50 • 3 over 50 • 1 no response
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 lesbian • 11 gay • 4 bisexual
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 female • 11 male • 3 transgender
Gender Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 have different gender identity than at birth
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 disabled
Ethnic origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 minority ethnic
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 with a minority religion or belief
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 living in Glasgow • 6 living in surrounding areas

2.6 The Discussion Groups

We held nine discussion groups with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Glasgow. The discussion groups were mainly

organised through existing LGBT or equalities focused groups and organisations. The groups included:

- four general discussion groups involving lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (one of which focused specifically on faith);
- two transgender only discussion groups;
- one women only discussion group;
- one men only discussion group (focusing on health); and
- one young person's discussion group.

Eight discussion groups were organised by:

- Glasgow Women's Library
- St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral
- LGBT Forum
- Gay Men's Health
- Crosslynx
- Sandyford Centre
- LGBT Youth Scotland
- Strathclyde Gay and Lesbian Switchboard

One further discussion group was organised by inviting survey respondents who had indicated that they would be interested in being further involved.

A total of 52 people took part in these discussion groups. The youngest participant was 18 and the oldest was 74.

Age Band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 aged 25 and under • 7 aged 26 to 40 • 24 aged 41 to 60 • 9 aged 61 plus
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 gay • 10 lesbian • 6 bisexual • 7 heterosexual • 2 don't know • 1 didn't answer
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 female • 20 male • 1 didn't answer
Gender Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 have different gender identity than at birth

Ethnic origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 minority ethnic
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 with a minority religion or belief
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43 living in Glasgow • 9 living in surrounding local authority areas

2.7 Feedback Event

We invited everyone who had taken part in the research to attend an event to hear about the initial findings, and discuss these. This event took place in March 2011 and a total of 18 people attended. Most attendees worked for public or voluntary organisations in Glasgow, but a small number of individual participants in the research also attended. At this event, we presented our initial findings, and then discussed these under the themes of housing, safety, health, education, employment and social opportunities. The feedback from this event has been built into this report.

3. LGBT People in Glasgow

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the information available on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people living in Glasgow.

3.2 The Number of LGBT People in Glasgow

Robust estimates of the number of LGBT people in Glasgow do not exist. No survey has yet been undertaken with a sufficiently large and representative sample. The same applies for Scotland as a whole.

The largest and most recent survey on sexual identity was undertaken by the Office for National Statistics in 2009/10. This survey, of 450,000 people across the UK, found that 1.5% of adults in the UK identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual³. Overall, 1% identified as gay or lesbian, and 0.5% as bisexual. A further 1% identified as 'other'. A breakdown of the ONS figures geographically suggests that in Scotland a slightly lower than average proportion of people identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual – at around 1.3%.

This is considerably different to previous estimates, based on smaller samples. The British National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles 2000 (based on respondents aged 16–44) reported that 6.2% of men and 7.2% of women in Scotland had ever felt attracted to an adult of the same sex.⁴ In 2004, the UK Government estimated that around 5 to 7% of the population was LGB.⁵ At the time, Stonewall Scotland believed that this was a reasonable assumption.⁶

As this is the first time the ONS has produced statistics of this kind, the figure of 1.5% is classed as 'experimental'. This means that it is consulting people on how this figure has been reached, and gathering views on strengthening the statistics in the future. However, it is based on a large volume of respondents, and helps to build a picture of the number of people in the UK who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

³ *New ONS Integrated Household Survey: Experimental Statistics*, Office for National Statistics, 2010

⁴ Reported in *Dimensions of Diversity: Population Differences and Health Improvement Opportunities*, Public Health Information for Scotland, 2010

⁵ *Final Regulatory Impact Assessment: Civil Partnership Act* (Page 13), Department of Trade and Industry, 2004.

⁶ Stonewall Scotland at www.stonewall.org.uk/at_home/sexual_orientation_faqs/2694.asp

These varied statistics mean that it is challenging to estimate how many lesbian, gay and bisexual people there may be living in Glasgow. Applying a figure of 1.3% (the Scottish average from the ONS survey) would suggest that around 7,650 people in Glasgow are lesbian, gay or bisexual. However, applying a figure of 5 to 7% (previous estimates of the size of the population) would suggest that there are between 29,000 and 41,000 lesbian, gay or bisexual people in Glasgow⁷.

There are no reliable estimates on the number of transgender people in Glasgow, Scotland or the UK. In 2000, after informal consultations with the Passport Section of the Home Office, Press for Change estimated there were around 5,000 transsexual people in the UK, based upon numbers of those who had changed their passports⁸. 'More than 100 patients' from Scotland have undergone gender reassignment surgery between 2004 and 2009.⁹ But the transgender population is significantly larger than those who have formally changed their sex.

Estimates of the size of the transgender population in the UK range from 65,000 and 300,000.¹⁰ This is from 1 in 200 people to 1 in 1,000 people. Applying this figure to Glasgow would suggest that there may be between 590 and 2,940 transgender people living in the city. However, this should be treated with caution as there is no substantive knowledge of how many people in Glasgow identify as transgender¹¹.

3.3 The City Impact

There are strong indications that there is migration of LGBT people from rural areas and towns to cities in Scotland (particularly Edinburgh and Glasgow). Recent research by Stonewall Scotland¹² shows clear evidence of movement from rural areas and smaller towns to Glasgow and Edinburgh. In total, 150 LGBT people who had moved to the cities contributed to the survey. Reasons for moving to cities included:

⁷ These estimates are based on a proportion of the 588,642 people in Glasgow in 2011 based on 2008 population projections

⁸ *Report of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Transsexual People*, Home Office, 2000

⁹ *The Herald*, www.heraldsotland.com/nhs-in-scotland-spent-pound-1-5m-on-sex-changes-1.917144, 24 August 2009

¹⁰ Both quoted in *Trans Research Review*, Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2009

¹¹ *Engendered Penalties: Transgender and Transsexual People's Experiences of Inequality and Discrimination*, S Whittle, L Turner, M Al-Alami, 2007

¹² *City Lights: A Study of Scottish LGBT Migration Patterns*, Stonewall Scotland, 2009

- 87% thought it was ‘very difficult’ or ‘quite difficult’ to be out in rural areas;
- 58% thought rural areas were homophobic and transphobic;
- 59% thought that lack of services for LGBT people in rural areas was a problem;
- 64% said that a lack of understanding of LGBT issues (particularly by the public sector and employers) made being ‘out’ in a rural area difficult;
- 20% of respondents were ‘out’ in their home town or village – but 73% were ‘completely out’ once they moved to the city.

This would suggest that Glasgow may well have more than the estimated number of LGBT people, as the numbers may be larger through inward migration from other parts of Scotland. Indeed, although there was almost certainly significant under reporting, the question in the 2001 Census about same-sex cohabiting couples shows that Glasgow (along with Edinburgh) have considerably higher rates than any other part of Scotland. The rate in Glasgow for cohabiting same sex couples was 0.8% of all couple households. In Edinburgh it was 0.75% and in Aberdeen (the next highest rate) it was 0.3%.

In Scotland, there are very few transgender community groups and NHS gender identity clinics. This means that transgender people of all ages may move to cities to access transgender support.

However, the research by Stonewall Scotland also found that there is evidence of migration of lesbian, gay and bisexual people from Scotland to London.

3.4 Participant Views

Our research with LGBT people living, working and using services in Glasgow found strong evidence of the draw of a city like Glasgow. People came to the city to use services, and some had moved to the city from surrounding areas to be able to access services easily. Others – generally from rural Scotland - had moved because Glasgow had more social opportunities for LGBT people than the area they previously lived in.

“I just got the bus to Glasgow...I didn’t know anyone and had no where to stay.”

Others felt that there could be a sense of safety in being anonymous in the city, compared to living in small towns or rural areas.

“I come to Glasgow because no one knows me. At home there are school people who recognise my face and they laugh, or snigger or sneer at me, but here I have anonymity.”

However, others challenged this view, feeling that parts of Glasgow could also foster isolation.

“Being gay in a rural community is no worse than being gay in a scheme in Glasgow”.

A number of participants also mentioned that they had moved primarily to get away from existing family and connections, and make a fresh start. Some suggested that they moved away very deliberately and consciously, as a way of being themselves. However, others reflected that it was only when looking back that they realised that this may have influenced their decisions about moving to Glasgow.

“Migration is a way to be yourself.”

“It felt like a new start.”

Some participants were able to compare Glasgow to other places they had lived. For those who had lived elsewhere in Scotland, Glasgow was generally seen as a place where it is easier to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

“People treat me a lot better in Glasgow than they do in Lanarkshire.”

Another commonly expressed theme was that Glasgow catered well for those who enjoyed the pub and club scene and that it had lots of social facilities.

“Glasgow is a good place to be gay once you have made a lot of contacts – there is plenty to do, but you really have to be plugged in to the scene in order to access things.”

Some people moderated their behaviour more outwith the city. For example, one participant didn't behave 'in an openly gay way' in his home town, but would be happier and more confident being himself in Glasgow.

Other participants had lived elsewhere – in England, America or other countries. Generally, participants who had lived outwith Scotland felt that other cities – particularly Manchester, Newcastle and London – had better services and social activities for LGBT people.

“Manchester was very inclusive.”

Generally, people who had lived outwith Scotland felt that LGBT communities were more visible and there were more tailored services for LGBT people than in Glasgow. A number of participants felt that other cities – such as Seattle, Vancouver, San Francisco or Amsterdam – were very “progressive and liberal”, with significantly better lifestyles for LGBT people. The biggest difference was in the lack of tailored services for LGBT people, and the lack of social opportunities.

“I find Glasgow incredibly backward.”

While some felt Glasgow was generally an ‘accepting place’, others felt that some parts of the city were more welcoming and safe than others. Some felt that LGBT people living in more disadvantaged parts of the city were more likely to experience discrimination. There was a general feeling that attitudes in Glasgow were improving, but that the city still lacked social opportunities for LGBT people.

“Glasgow is moving into the 21st century without prejudice or bias.”

3.5 Summary

Number of LGBT People in Glasgow

Robust estimates of the number of LGBT people in Glasgow do not exist. A recent UK wide survey found that 1.5% of adults in the UK identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual, falling to 1.3% in Scotland¹³. Previous estimates had suggested that between 5 and 7% of the UK population identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual¹⁴. These varied statistics mean that it is challenging to estimate how many lesbian, gay and bisexual people there may be living in Glasgow. However, these wide ranging figures suggest that between 7,650 and 41,000 people in Glasgow are lesbian, gay or bisexual¹⁵. It is not possible to be more precise based on the current available information.

There are no reliable estimates on the number of transgender people in Glasgow, Scotland or the UK. Estimates of the size of the transgender population in the UK range from 1 in 200 people to 1 in 1,000 people¹⁶. Applying this figure to Glasgow would (tentatively) suggest that there may be between 590 and 2,940 transgender people living in the city.

Migration to Glasgow

There are strong indications that there is migration of lesbian, gay and bisexual people from rural areas and towns to cities in Scotland (particularly Edinburgh and Glasgow)¹⁷. This would suggest that Glasgow may well have more than the estimated number of LGB people. Transgender people may also move to the city to access social opportunities and services.

Our research with LGBT people living, working and using services in Glasgow found strong evidence of the draw of a city like Glasgow. People came to the city to access services, to access social opportunities, for anonymity, and to be themselves away from existing family and links.

People who had lived elsewhere in Scotland generally felt that Glasgow was more tolerant, friendly and accepting. However, people who had

¹³ *New ONS Integrated Household Survey: Experimental Statistics*, Office for National Statistics, 2010

¹⁴ Reported in *Dimensions of Diversity: Population Differences and Health Improvement Opportunities*, Public Health Information for Scotland, 2010

¹⁵ These estimates are based on a proportion of the 588,642 people in Glasgow in 2011 based on 2008 population projections

¹⁶ Both quoted in *Trans Research Review*, Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2009

¹⁷ *City Lights: A Study of Scottish LGBT Migration Patterns*, Stonewall Scotland, 2009

lived in England or abroad often felt that other cities had better services and social opportunities for LGBT people, and were more inclusive.

4. Health and Wellbeing

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the needs and experiences of LGBT people in Glasgow in relation to health and wellbeing. It begins by summarising existing research, and then provides an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative information gathered during the course of the study.

4.2 Existing Research

There is some existing research into the health of LGBT people in Glasgow. There is evidence of issues around:

- **Drug misuse** – Levels of drug addiction appear to be slightly higher among gay men, and significantly higher for lesbian or bisexual women¹⁸.
- **Smoking** - In 2005, research found that gay men in Scotland had a higher smoking rate (32.5%) than the general male population (26%)¹⁹.
- **Physical activity** - Rates were found to be low among young LGB people in Glasgow in 2002 compared with other young people²⁰.
- **Self harm and suicide** - A study of young LGB people in Glasgow found rates of self-harm of 29% among young men and 65% among young women²¹. This compares (although not directly in terms of age or time period) with 10% in the young general population (aged under 16). It was also twice as likely that young LGB people would consider suicide.

In 2008, Stonewall explored the health experiences of lesbian and bisexual women across the UK. Information was broken down at a geographical level, allowing comparison between Greater Glasgow and the rest of Scotland. It found that:

- 49% of consultees in Glasgow had used recreational drugs in the past year (compared with 38% for consultees in Scotland);

¹⁸ *Sexual Orientation and Primary Care*, Sheffield Centre for HIV and Sexual Health, 2003

¹⁹ *Consuming Passions: Findings from the United Kingdom Gay Men Sex Survey*, Hickson F, Weatherburn P, Reid D, et al, 2005 and *Scotland's People: Results from the Scottish Household Survey*, Scottish Government, 2005

²⁰ *Something to Tell You: A Health Needs Assessment of Young LGB people in Glasgow*, Greater Glasgow NHS Board, 2002

²¹ *Something to Tell You: A Health Needs Assessment of Young LGB people in Glasgow*, Greater Glasgow NHS Board, 2002

- 15% of consultees in Glasgow had deliberately self harmed (compared with 20% for consultees in Scotland);
- 5% of consultees in Glasgow had made an attempt to take their life in the past year (the same as the average for consultees in Scotland);
- 15% of consultees in Glasgow had experienced domestic violence from a female partner (the same as the average for consultees in Scotland); and
- 45% of consultees in Glasgow had disclosed their sexual orientation to their GP (the highest in Scotland, compared with an average of 33%).

Wider research in Scotland has also identified significantly higher levels of attempted suicide among young gay and bisexual men²². Other Scotland wide research found that depression and anxiety, suicidal thoughts and self-harm, eating disorders and substance misuse all showed higher prevalence rates among LGB people²³. A Scottish survey of transgender people found that there was a high disability rate (37%) – relating to both mental and physical disability²⁴.

Information provided by the LGBT Switchboard in Glasgow highlighted that consistently around 5% of calls each year relate to health or sexual health.

4.3 Views and Experiences

Current Health

Our survey of LGBT individuals found that most respondents were quite (51%) or very (31%) happy with their current health. About a fifth were not very or not at all happy with their health. Of these, just over a third considered themselves to be disabled. Of those who provided further information on why they were not happy with their health, a third said that they had mental health issues – with some stating that this led to other issues such as self harm.

“My health isn't good as I have mental health problems and lung problems.”

²² *Live to Tell: Findings from a Study of Suicidal Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviours Amongst Young Gay and Bisexual Men in Edinburgh*, Gay Men's Health/LGBT Youth Scotland, 2003.

²³ *Towards a Healthier LGBT Scotland*, NHS Health Scotland/Stonewall, 2003

²⁴ *Transgender Experiences in Scotland*, Scottish Transgender Alliance, 2008

“Sometimes my sexuality also makes me feel back in these depressive moods I tend to self harm.”

A number of other respondents who felt that their health was quite good also mentioned issues – with the most commonly raised issue being mental health. This was raised by 4% of respondents who were quite or very happy with their health.

“Health wise, I'm fine, although I have trouble sleeping and can feel pretty down for no real reason.”

Many of those with mental health issues mentioned the knock on effect that this had on other areas of their life – including employment, education and safety.

“My health's fine, medically, but I would like to be fitter and less depressed. My employment and education hasn't been what I'd have liked, partly due to depression.”

“I've had ongoing health issues for several years. I had to give up my 2 previous jobs due to my health.”

Overall in Scotland around one in four people have problems with their mental health at some stage in their lives. However, wider research in Glasgow found that levels of self harm and suicide can be significantly higher amongst LGB people²⁵.

Over half of bisexual respondents (54%) were not happy with their health – compared with almost a quarter (23%) of transgender people, 15% of gay respondents and 12% of lesbian respondents. The average age of bisexual respondents was 35, the same as the average across all respondents. However, bisexual people exhibited significantly higher levels of disability or limiting long term illness – 33% compared with 23% for transgender respondents and 14% overall. We did not ask respondents about the nature of their disability. It is not possible to determine from this small sample whether bisexual people are more likely to experience disability, or if there is some imbalance in the profile of survey respondents.

²⁵ *Something to Tell You: A Health Needs Assessment of Young LGB people in Glasgow*, Greater Glasgow NHS Board, 2002

A minority of transgender people directly linked their gender identity with physical health issues. Others mentioned mental health, depression and isolation.

“I've been ill for most of my life with a progressive and incurable autoimmune problem common among intersex people like me.”

Past Health

Although most survey respondents were happy with their current health, over half (52%) had experienced problems or issues with their health in the past. In some cases this was a minor illness which had passed, or injuries which had since healed. Some mentioned problems with:

- poor diet and alcohol misuse;
- ongoing conditions such as diabetes or asthma; and
- mental health issues and stress.

“I have had mental health issues like many lgbt people living in a predominately heterocentric world sends out negative images being an LGBT person. There are few positive role models, or positive media images to look up to.”

“As a result of abuse and discrimination in my family I had an early unhealthy relationship with alcohol. My self esteem was low and this had an impact on my physical and emotional health in my teens and early 20s.”

Health was closely linked with other aspects of life experience. For example, participants mentioned that their health was affected by safety, harassment, housing and neighbours, family relationships, employment and finances. A number of participants highlighted close links between feeling safe at home, and positive mental health.

Over two thirds of transgender people (67%) had experienced some problem with their health in the past. This increased to over three quarters for bisexual people (77%) – a high proportion of whom were disabled. The most common problems experienced by both groups related to stress, depression and isolation – often linked to violence, abuse or harassment.

Health Services

Over two thirds (67%) of survey respondents felt that current health services were good or excellent. Health services were the highest rated

across all services, with 15% of respondents rating them as excellent. Respondents praised dedicated LGBT health services.

“I think sexual health services aimed at the LGBT community are excellent although mainly seem to be based in Sandyford.”

“Sandyford and Steve Retson project is brilliant.”

“You’re privileged in Glasgow in having the Sandyford Centre...it’s the reason I first came to Glasgow”.

Views on mainstream services such as GP surgeries and health centres were very varied. Some felt that their GP surgery was aware of LGBT issues and worked to promote support services. Others felt that staff were not well trained, and could make assumptions about the sex of your partner and need for contraception.

“I had a bit of bother with receptionists at my doctors surgery, a while ago, who refused to print male on my prescriptions and called me 'miss'.”

“They questioned the "normality" of my relationships and generally made me feel uncomfortable with my sexuality.”

“My GP doesn't listen to me and often smirks at my health complaints, especially those regarding migraines and pain in general. I feel he doesn't take me seriously.”

Two focus groups with transgender people found that health was a major issue for almost all participants. The Sandyford Centre was viewed as being the best in the UK – ‘a unique service’. However, other parts of the NHS were felt to perform poorly for transgender people, and funding decisions were thought to be erratic (for instance, in respect of electrolysis). One participant had experienced problems getting information about his partner’s status while in hospital, as he was not recognised as next of kin (this was before civil partnerships were recognised). Some participants felt that the NHS answer to transgender people’s health issues was often to refer people to the Sandyford Clinic, even when it was not appropriate or required.

Issues around assisted conception did not arise in our research, but this was raised as a potential issue by LGBT participants at the feedback event at the end of this research project. One participant felt that

adoption policies were not fair, and discriminated against same sex parents. Another highlighted that Social Work services in Glasgow were ill equipped to work with same sex parents.

Most transgender participants felt that GPs generally did not understand transgender health needs and experiences. A number of participants in the focus groups (and telephone interviews) mentioned that GPs had suggested curative treatment for what was seen as a problem, even though participants did not feel that they needed 'cured'.

There also appears to be a specific issue around information about cervical cancer tests for lesbian women. Some women have experienced difficulty getting information about whether a test is required, and have had issues about the level of awareness and attitudes of practice staff. However, in other cases, GP surgeries have worked to provide this information.

"I know my local GP has leaflets specifically for lesbians and bisexual women about cervical cancer tests, which impressed me."

"I have after years of looking finally found an understanding GP."

A small number of respondents mentioned that health services did not appear to be patient focused, with long waiting times.

Although there was a relatively high level of satisfaction with health services, over 80% of respondents felt that more could be done to improve health services in Glasgow. Most respondents suggested that more could always be done, and did not have specific suggestions about what was required. However, many suggested the need for increased promotion and awareness raising around health services. A number raised concerns that LGBT young people had low levels of awareness of AIDS and HIV. And a minority mentioned that there was a lack of specific health related services for lesbian women. One respondent suggested considering an LGBT health and wellbeing centre, as in Edinburgh.

"Continue the promotion of physical health, sexual health and mental health services available to the public, both widely and LGBT-specific."

Health was one of the most common issues raised in individual discussions and at focus groups, with many people indicating that they

would like to use LGBT specific services. Just under one third (31%) of survey respondents felt that they would prefer to use LGBT specific health services. Although many had positive experiences of mainstream health services, some participants described ‘awkward’ situations, caused by lack of awareness and understanding by health professionals. Others mentioned that they were constantly reviewing whether they should reveal their sexual orientation in a health care setting, and whether this would result in a better service or a difficult situation.

“You always balance the consequences of saying your sexual orientation”.

“I told my doctor I was gay and the GP immediately became uncomfortable and then asked me if I used condoms!”

Some participants suggested that LGBT specific health services would:

- ensure that people got informed and appropriate health advice – from experienced and skilled staff;
- reduce encounters involving stereotypes and presumptions about sexual orientation and gender identity;
- avoid inappropriate questions and judgements from others;
- allow service users to choose staff with a particular sexual orientation or gender identity; and
- ensure that people felt comfortable and confident about the health services and support they received.

“I have a particular problem with health services. I have a couple of health problems which require me to get treatment quite regularly and on my file it says that I am gay. I feel that once they establish I am gay, I get a double standard. They look down on me.”

However, most participants stated that they didn’t mind whether they used mainstream or targeted services, and many stated that they would prefer to use mainstream services. Some participants suggested that tailored services were required only until mainstream services were developed to ensure that they were accessible for all. An important part of this was ensuring that mainstream services are “obviously LGBT friendly” so that people using services for the first time can be confident about the level of service that they will receive.

4.4 Summary

- There is evidence of health inequalities for LGBT people in Glasgow. For example, there appear to be higher incidents of drug misuse, smoking, self harm and suicide.
- Our survey of LGBT individuals found that over 80% of respondents were quite or very happy with their current health. However, over half had experienced problems or issues with their health in the past.
- Of those who were not happy with their health, just over a third considered themselves to be disabled. Around a third of those who gave a reason for not being happy with their health said that they had mental health issues.
- Many people with mental health issues mentioned the knock on effect that this had on other areas of their life – including employment, education and safety.
- Over half of bisexual respondents were not happy with their health – compared with almost a quarter of transgender people, 15% of gay respondents and 12% of lesbian respondents.
- Over two thirds of survey respondents felt that health services in Glasgow were good or excellent. Health services were the highest rated across all services in the city.
- Respondents praised dedicated LGBT health services. Views on mainstream services such as GP surgeries and health centres were very varied. Some felt that staff were aware of LGBT issues and worked to promote support services. Others felt that staff were not well trained, and could make assumptions.
- While transgender participants viewed targeted LGBT health services highly, many highlighted problems with attitudes and assumptions in mainstream services.
- There is a specific issue in terms of awareness raising within the health profession around cervical cancer screening for lesbian women.

- Most participants felt that health services could be improved through enhanced awareness raising. This would include raising awareness of LGBT health issues among healthcare professionals, as well as wider awareness raising work promoting both targeted and mainstream services for LGBT people.
- Around a third of participants felt that they would prefer to use LGBT specific health services. However, some suggested that they would be happy to use mainstream services if these improved.

5. Safety

5.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out our findings in relation to the safety of LGBT people in Glasgow. It explores key themes arising from existing research, and highlights the issues raised through our survey, telephone interviews and discussion groups.

5.2 Existing Research

There is strong evidence that LGBT people in Scotland experience issues around personal safety.

- Research found that transgender people in Scotland experience high levels of harassment. Over half (62%) had experienced transphobic harassment from strangers, and a quarter had to move out of their home because of harassment²⁶.
- A 2002 study found that LGBT people in Scotland had significant concerns about discrimination and acceptance²⁷. This also found that:
 - 68% of respondents had been verbally abused or threatened by someone who has assumed they are LGBT at some time in their life. And 35% had experienced this in the past year. This mainly occurred in the street.
 - 23% of respondents had experienced a physical assault because someone has assumed they are LGBT. And 5% of respondents had experienced an assault in the past 12 months.
 - Very few respondents (17%) had reported this to the police as it was considered to be a waste of time, not serious enough or believed that the police would not do anything about it.
 - The places where LGBT people felt least safe were the street (61%), in or near a non-gay pub or venue (47%) or on public transport (45%).

There is evidence that this harassment and abuse can lead to wider problems with health, including mental health, smoking and substance misuse²⁸.

²⁶ *Transgender Experiences in Scotland*, Scottish Transgender Alliance, 2008

²⁷ *First Out...Report of the findings of the Beyond Barriers survey of LGBT people in Scotland*, Beyond Barriers, 2002

In Glasgow, homophobic hate crimes are now being recorded by Strathclyde Police as homophobic in nature and are included in the current hate crime data gathered by the Glasgow Community and Safety Services (GCSS). The average annual number of reported incidents over the last three year period is approximately 100. GCSS believe that there are high levels of non-reporting of homophobic hate crimes. Using the available figures, the highest concentration of reported incidents occur in the city centre area, although the West End/ Maryhill area also emerges as proportionally significant.

Figures for 2009/10 show a marked increase in reported homophobic incidents. A total of 286 incidents were reported in 2009/10, compared with just 50 in 2004/05. It is difficult to establish the reason for this increase. It is likely to reflect increased awareness of reporting mechanisms and increased trust in the system, but it could also reflect an actual increase in homophobic incidents.

A survey of a very small number of police officers in Strathclyde Police found that over three quarters had witnessed or were aware of homophobia against another staff member²⁹. A small survey of 29 LGBT people in Glasgow³⁰ found that over 80% felt that Strathclyde Police had changed positively in its attitude towards LGBT people, and just over 60% felt that confidence in how the police deal with homophobic incidents had increased. Around two thirds had heard of the third party reporting scheme, and over 90% indicated that they would use it.

5.3 Views and Experiences

Perceptions of Safety

Over three quarters of survey respondents were quite or very happy with their safety. Women were considerably less happy with their safety than men. The average age of those who were not happy was 37, slightly above the average for all survey respondents.

Many respondents felt largely safe in Glasgow. Most participants in individual interviews and focus groups also indicated that they mainly felt safe in Glasgow.

²⁸ Reported in *Dimensions of Diversity: Population Differences and Health Improvement Opportunities*, Public Health Information for Scotland, 2010

²⁹ GPA Strathclyde Members Survey 2010

³⁰ Homophobia: Don't Accept It (One Year On), Strathclyde Police, 2005

“I feel perfectly safe in the area in which I live.”

Often respondents mentioned that the area in which they lived was safer than other parts of the city. Respondents living in the West End of the city mentioned this most commonly – although there were still concerns about safety in this area. The Merchant City was also mentioned by some as a safer area. However, perceptions of safety were also linked to local knowledge and experience. Many people believed the neighbourhood in which they lived to be the safest area – and were more concerned about other unknown parts of the city.

“I live in probably the most tolerant neighbourhood in the city but as soon as I step outside of Dowanhill / Hillhead it all changes.”

“I don't feel that Glasgow is a safe place to live openly as a lesbian or gay person. While I live in an affluent part of the city and feel relatively safe - I don't feel that I can live my life as openly as I'd wish.”

Others felt that they were able to challenge issues around discrimination and harassment, which meant that they felt safe. Some older participants felt that over time they had become better at judging situations, and used their natural instincts to avoid situations where their safety could be compromised. Many participants modified the situations that they were in, to avoid harassment or abuse.

“I'm aware I'm confident and able to stand up for myself which may contribute to the lack of 'blatant incidences.’”

“Safety has to do with situations. For example, late night taxi queues and night buses are generally to be avoided if at all possible.”

Experience of Harassment, Abuse and Physical Violence

Just under half (42%) of survey respondents had experienced an issue with their safety in the past. Almost half of bisexual respondents had experienced safety issues (46%) compared with 40% of gay people, 38% of transgender people and 32% of lesbian women.

Of those who had experienced issues around safety, many had experienced physical abuse, often multiple times. Respondents strongly believed that this physical abuse was as a result of homophobia or transphobia.

“I have been attacked and verbally abused 3 times in close proximity to my house in the last three years.”

“I was subjected to violent homophobic harassment in Bridgeton where I lived for a year. Eventually I had to leave.”

“I’ve been physically assaulted 3 times because of my sexuality since I moved to Glasgow (13 years ago). I have never experienced discrimination until I moved here.”

“Safety-wise, I’ve been queerbashed on a few occasions, fortunately never with anything worse than a broken nose as a result.”

“I was dressed femme, and for this reason I was attacked.”

Many had also experienced verbal abuse and harassment, and physical damage to their home. In individual interviews, many respondents suggested that verbal abuse was often directed at LGBT people entering or leaving LGBT venues in Glasgow. In discussion groups, many transgender people mentioned that they could experience harassment because of the way they dressed, acted and who they were with.

“I have had a lot hassle from strangers walking in the street about my sexuality.”

“I have had derogatory comments made at me in the street when walking with a gay friend or girlfriend. It’s not nice.”

“I moved house and in the new house my windows got smashed because i am gay. I had to move back home.”

“I have been privy to 'off the cuff' remarks, comments and jokes, which I have viewed as 'micro-aggressions.’”

“I suffer homophobia from within my family particularly my two eldest children, who have not at all been sympathetic to my coming out.”

A number of respondents also mentioned poor experiences at school, with homophobic bullying and verbal harassment. Some parents mentioned the harassment and abuse that children of LGBT parents can experience at school.

“Children suffer abuse for having gay parents (mine have).”

Safety on public transport was identified as a particular issue – with some participants feeling trapped and stating that they were not confident that other passengers would intervene and help out if necessary.

Many mentioned that they modified their behaviour as a result of concerns about safety. Participants at the feedback event for this research suggested that perceptions of safety were strongly linked to expectations and levels of tolerance.

“You are only safe as long as you conceal your identity. If my partner and I hold hands we do not feel safe therefore we modify our behaviour to protect ourselves.”

“My partner of 25 years will not show affection to me in public places for fear of violence and abuse.”

“I’ve had to go for buses certain times, walk certain ways, not go out wearing certain clothes.”

Survey respondents also mentioned experience of multiple discrimination. This was most commonly mentioned by women. However, although overall women participating in this research felt less safe than men, some suggested that actually gay men were more likely to be targets of hate crime. One respondent felt that being gay and disabled meant that they experienced more homophobic abuse – “I find myself easy pickings for homophobes”.

“I have experienced homophobic and sexist abuse but to be honest I feel that it is as a woman that I am vulnerable, not necessarily as a lesbian.”

Some survey respondents mentioned that discrimination and lack of acceptance among family and friends led to them having to move home, and experience dangerous situations. This ranged from moving to a less safe area, to becoming homeless.

“Abusive family, poor diet, drinking to deal with trauma, poverty and a stint in prostitution to avoid being homeless.”

“This had a major impact on my confidence and self esteem, which has taken many years to overcome.”

Safety Services

Survey respondents had mixed views on the support available from the police. Some mentioned that they felt that the police had made an effort to focus on LGBT safety, and that the attitude of the police towards LGBT people in Glasgow had positively changed in recent years.

“I don’t have much experience of service providers in Glasgow, but anecdotally I have heard recently that the police have become far more supportive of the community.”

“I am pleased that the Strathclyde Police now have a focus on the safety of LGB and trans* people in Glasgow, I think this is vital.”

However, others did not think that this was happening. Some felt that police did not treat LGBT harassment – particularly verbal abuse – seriously. Others felt that the efforts of the police were mainly targeted at the city centre, and that the police in the outskirts of the city had not always changed their attitudes. Many felt that strategic level commitment to tackling LGBT hate crime was not always matched by individual officers on the street. Awareness of LGBT officials within the police also varied.

“The police have two very good LGBT specialist officers, but I find that general officers are horrific.”

“I just don't think there is enough provision or support for those out there. What about lgbt officers within the police? Do they even exist? As an official post holder.”

Experiences of working with the police to address specific problems were also varied. Some were disappointed with the priority given to safety issues. Others did not have enough trust in the police to believe it worthwhile to report crimes – believing that they would not be taken seriously. There was also some concern that witnesses would need to come out as a result of becoming involved in reporting issues.

“I was very disappointed by the police response as they did not seem to view it as a priority and did not understand the deep impact homophobic

abuse (even if it is just verbal) can have on someone. After calling the police I felt worse rather than better.”

Others felt that the police were generally helpful, but that the service could be improved.

“The police at times were okay and understanding, but sometimes I felt that they thought people were either gay or straight.”

“I felt as though we weren't getting much support from the police. Whilst they were generally sympathetic it didn't feel as though they were able to do anything to help.”

Survey respondents suggested that safety services could be improved through:

- more work raising awareness of LGBT issues, the impact of homophobia and transphobia and the law in relation to equalities;
- enhanced publicity for services such as hate crime reporting and LGBT Officers;
- more consistency in the way in which homophobic and transphobic behaviour is dealt with; and
- training for all police officers on LGBT awareness.

“Police responses to LGBT people are vastly improved compared with the past but this must continue. I have heard of very successful schemes with Highlands and Islands Police regarding LGBT training programmes. This should be rolled out across the country.”

5.4 Summary

- There is strong evidence that LGBT people in Scotland experience issues around personal safety. Research suggests that two thirds of LGBT people have experienced verbal or physical abuse.
- Over three quarters of survey respondents were quite or very happy with their safety. Many mentioned differences in safety across the city – with the West End seen as particularly safe.
- Just under half of survey respondents had experienced an issue with their safety in the past. Almost half of bisexual respondents had experienced safety issues compared with 40% of gay people, 38% of transgender people and 32% of lesbian women.
- Many participants had experienced multiple physical assault and/ or ongoing verbal abuse. Almost all participants felt that they experienced this abuse because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Many participants modified their behaviour to enhance their safety. This included not displaying affection in public, varying walking routes, not using public transport at certain times, not wearing certain clothes and avoiding taxi queues.
- Some participants mentioned that they felt particularly unsafe because of being a lesbian woman, or because of being LGBT and disabled.
- Some survey respondents mentioned that discrimination and lack of acceptance among family and friends led to them having to move home, and experience dangerous situations.
- Survey respondents had mixed views on the support available from the police. Some felt that the police were making a real effort to improve links with and services for LGBT people in Glasgow. Others felt that this was not evident at a local level.
- Participants suggested that safety services could be improved through:

- more work raising awareness of LGBT issues, the impact of homophobia and transphobia and the law in relation to equalities;
- enhanced publicity for services such as hate crime reporting and LGBT Officers;
- more consistency in the way in which homophobic and transphobic behaviour is dealt with; and
- training for all police officers on LGBT awareness.

6. Housing

6.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the needs and experiences of LGBT people in relation to housing. It summarises existing research and provides an overview of the findings from the survey, interviews and focus groups undertaken as part of this research.

6.2 Existing Research

There is limited research into the housing needs of LGBT people in Glasgow. Guidance produced by Stonewall Scotland suggests that there can be issues around:

- **Homelessness** - National research found that intolerance and expectations of homophobia can lead directly to homelessness for young lesbian and gay people, or can be one of the factors contributing to homelessness³¹. UK wide research found up to 30% of young homeless people in urban areas are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender³². In Transgender Experiences in Scotland (2008) over 25% of respondents reported that they had to move out of their home due to transphobic reactions of families, flat-mates or neighbours.
- **Safety** – Levels of violence and antisocial behaviour directed at LGBT people are high in Scotland, and this can be directed at people's homes. If people move home they can lose their support networks as well as their homes.
- **Support for older LGBT people** – There can be concerns about accepting personal care, and attitudes of care providers, as well as issues around isolation. An English study found that older LGBT people were up to five times less likely to access older peoples' services than the older population in general³³.
- **Privacy** – Stonewall's guidance suggests that trans people may want to move at the end of their transition, to achieve a basic level of privacy and dignity – as transphobic abuse most often occurs in the early stages of transition.
- **Domestic abuse** – Stonewall's guidance stresses that domestic abuse is a concern in the LGBT community, with similar prevalence noted to the incidence of domestic abuse in

³¹ Hidden in Plain Sight: Homelessness Amongst Lesbian and Gay Youth, O'Connor and Molloy, 2001

³² Sexuality and Homelessness, Crisis, 2005

³³ Opening Doors, Age Concern England, 2001

heterosexual relationships. This appears to be a particular issue for transgender people. The Scottish Transgender Alliance survey report (2008) found that 46% of respondents had experienced transphobic physical, sexual, mental abuse or violence in their domestic relationships.

6.3 Views and Experiences

Housing Situation

Almost all survey respondents (86%) were happy or very happy with their current housing situation. A third of survey respondents had previously had problems with their housing. Younger people appeared less happy with their housing situation. Those who were not happy had an average age of 31, slightly lower than the average age of 35 for all survey respondents. Few of the people involved in our focus groups and individual interviews raised issues related to housing.

The main reason for not being satisfied with housing was living with parents or a friend. Some respondents had moved out of their parental home, but had to move back for financial reasons. Others were unhappy with the condition of their home, the safety of their area, or difficulties accessing social housing.

The challenges accessing social housing related to:

- achieving enough priority (often as a single person or couple);
- accessing property in a safe area; and
- achieving property of an adequate size (for example if children came to visit).

“I am finding it impossible to get a tenancy with a social landlord of any kind. I think this is due to me being a single gay man. If I were straight with a family this would be a different issue.”

Often respondents mentioned that due to concerns about safety, they would not accept social rented housing in certain parts of the city. This meant that they had to achieve a higher level of priority, in order to be offered housing in a high demand area. A small number mentioned that they had children with a partner that they had separated from, and that it was challenging to get social housing providers to recognise the need for additional space for when children came to visit.

Many respondents also highlighted problems in the private sector - including housing condition, facilities and unscrupulous private landlords (not returning deposits or letting out substandard properties). A number of survey respondents mentioned that they moved home regularly within the private sector.

“I had 14 years of short term private rented accommodation meaning constant moves, making my life unstable and chaotic and meaning I often lived in expensive sub standard accommodation.”

Safety concerns strongly influenced housing options and choices in both the social rented and private sector. A number of survey respondents highlighted that they chose to live in poor quality private sector accommodation in a more expensive area, rather than move to another area which would be unsafe.

“I've always had to live in low-quality housing because I'm poor. I could get somewhere 'nicer' in another part of the city but the risks in those area, given that my family and friends and I are lgbt, would be too high.”
“I have felt unable to move to certain parts of the city which would be cheaper to live as i wouldn't feel safe living with my partner in other areas.”

“There are huge areas of the city where it's not safe to live as an LGBT person, or at least as a trans person who doesn't fit into a mainstreamed LGBT lifestyle.”

A small number of participants highlighted issues around homelessness. At least four participants had had to leave home due to poor family reactions to their sexual orientation or gender identity. In some cases, this was linked to violence and abuse within the family. This had occurred for both young and older people involved in the research.

Others gave examples of experiencing harassment and abuse targeted at their home or neighbourhood. In some cases people had moved out of the home to get away from this abuse. One RSL tenant felt that the RSL had not provided adequate support when her door was kicked in and homophobic graffiti sprayed on her home. Participants highlighted that harassment and abuse targeted at the home could have a negative impact on health, particularly mental health.

“I moved house and in the new house my windows got smashed because I am gay. I had to move back home.”

Housing Services

Only half of survey respondents felt able to comment on housing services. Of these, over half (59%) felt that housing services were excellent or good.

“With my housing problem (homeless due to a relationship breakdown many years ago) I was really impressed with Glasgow City Council (who owned council housing before GHA) as I came out to the housing officer and was rehoused quickly and sensitively in the area I was requesting.”

However, 41% of those able to comment felt that housing services were poor or very poor. Very few respondents provided any further information on why this was the case, or how services could be improved. However, suggestions included:

- ensuring that LGBT people receive additional priority for social housing, to allow access to higher demand areas;
- providing specific housing advice for LGBT people;
- training housing staff on LGBT issues; and
- producing statistical reports on crime and harassment, showing the areas which are not safe for LGBT people.

“I don't think housing is offerered swiftly enough to those in need. Or the fact they may be suffering homophobia or having LGBT related issues taken as seriously.”

One participant had previously received additional priority for rehousing due to her sexual orientation – as the landlord had provided additional points to allow her to live in a safer area. This participant was very pleased with this approach.

6.4 Summary

- There is limited research into the housing needs of LGBT people in Glasgow. Scottish guidance suggests that LGBT people can experience issues around homelessness, harassment targeted at the home, support and care, and domestic abuse.
- Almost all participants in this research were happy with their current housing situation. Younger people appeared less happy with their housing situation, often due to living with parents.
- A third of survey respondents had previously had problems with their housing. Many had experienced problems with housing condition or facilities, or had experienced unscrupulous private landlords.
- Housing is closely linked to safety. Some participants had experienced harassment and abuse targeted at their home. Others found it difficult attracting enough priority to access social rented housing in a safe part of Glasgow. And some chose to live in poorer quality accommodation in more expensive areas of Glasgow, which were perceived as more safe.
- A small number of participants had experienced problems with homelessness, often linked to poor reactions to sexual orientation or gender identity.
- A relatively high proportion of survey respondents (over 40%) felt that housing services were poor or very poor. Very few respondents provided any further information on why this was the case. However, suggestions included:
 - ensuring that LGBT people receive additional priority for social housing, to allow access to higher demand areas;
 - providing specific housing advice for LGBT people;
 - training housing staff on LGBT issues; and
 - producing statistical reports on crime and harassment, showing the areas which are not safe for LGBT people.

7. Education

7.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out our findings in relation to education and learning. It summarises existing research, and the views and experiences gathered through the survey, discussion groups and individual interviews.

7.2 Existing Research

There is little existing information about the experience of LGBT people in relation to education and learning in Glasgow. In 2006, the Scottish Government commissioned research³⁴ on dealing with homophobia in schools across Scotland. It found that:

- 84% of young people were aware of homophobic bullying in their schools and 52% had been homophobically bullied at school;
- only 15% of young people who had been homophobically bullied had reported it to school staff and none were satisfied with the outcome;
- this bullying had affected pupils in a range of ways – 12% of all survey respondents had truanted to avoid bullying; a quarter had difficulties in concentrating and lower levels of motivation at school; and young people talked of experiencing depression, feelings of shame, low self esteem, self harm, eating disorders and attempted suicide;
- just over half (51%) of schools thought that verbal homophobic bullying had taken place in their school in the last 12 months;
- only 1% of schools were aware of physical homophobic bullying – although levels could be high, with one school reporting 25 incidents in the past 12 months; and
- overall, schools and education authorities often didn't have enough information to answer these questions accurately.

In 2007, a survey of transgender people in Scotland found high levels of education (55% have at least an HND or Degree) but low levels of gross annual income (30% under £20,000)³⁵.

³⁴ *Guidance on Dealing with Homophobic Incidents: Phase One*, Scottish Government, 2006

³⁵ *Transgender Experiences in Scotland*, Scottish Transgender Alliance, 2008

A study by Glasgow University found little existing research into learning experiences of LGBT people. It quoted UK based research which suggested that LGBT students value their universities as a place where they can be themselves, but regularly experience verbal harassment and anti-gay sentiment, particularly from other students³⁶.

7.3 Views and Experiences

Experiences of Education

Overall, 89% of survey respondents were happy with their current situation in relation to education. Those who were not happy had an average age of 32, slightly younger than the average of 35 for all survey respondents. Some were unhappy because their university or college work was stressful and difficult. Others would like to go back into education, but could not afford it.

“I'm happy with my education but feel it's no longer relevant to my current career goals and I can't afford to go back into education.”

“I would like to study further, a Masters, to enhance my employment prospects. However there is no funding for the course I would like to do. I am currently an Honours graduate working as a sales assistant. I do not feel fulfilled and feel I could offer so much more.”

Just over a fifth indicated that they had experienced problems in the past relating to education. Many of these respondents mentioned poor experiences at school, with homophobic bullying and verbal harassment.

“I was bullied all through high-school I have been the victim of homophobic abuse and physical violence.”

In two cases this was related to religion.

“My teenage years were self destructingly difficult. School was a nightmare...female, lesbian and Catholic need I say more!!!”

“I had to leave school before completing my education as I came out at 16 and attended a Catholic School so I was unwelcome within the school environment... I had to return to education as an older person,

³⁶ *The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual Staff and Students in Higher Education*, Valentine, Wood and Plummer (2009)

which was a good experience but means I am now much further behind than my peers in my career, economically etc.”

This issue also emerged in individual interviews, focus group discussions and at the feedback event for this research. Young people who participated in the research – and therefore had recent experience of education – reported very mixed experiences. Some had very poor experiences at school, including bullying and violence on a daily basis. One young participant felt that their school experience was so painful that they did not wish to discuss it and another had to leave school due to harassment and abuse. However others had a very positive experience, which they said was as a result of having a strong network of friends at school.

Overall, many respondents mentioned that schools simply didn't know how to support LGBT pupils, to deal with LGBT related harassment, and to promote LGBT awareness raising. This meant that some people had repressed their sexuality, and felt that this experience left long lasting scars.

“I left secondary school with five highers, but experienced high levels of bullying on a daily basis.”

“Education can be hard if you or usually other people are concentrating on your sexuality.”

During individual interviews and focus groups, a number of participants highlighted that universities and colleges offered a great deal of support and social opportunities for LGBT students. Most participants felt that further and higher education offered a far better, more supportive and more inclusive environment for LGBT people than secondary schools in Glasgow. However, some respondents had experienced discrimination in a further and higher education setting. One participant had left college because of bullying by a lecturer, which he felt was directly linked to his sexual orientation. Although a range of people had experienced discrimination, this was a particular issue for disabled LGBT people.

“During my first degree course I experienced a lot of homophobia compounded by health problems which the university then had no helpful policy on, and by the amount of time I lost to my duty as a carer.”

“As a disabled, homosexual belonging to an ethnic minority, I just couldn’t make it up. I was intimidated severely at a Glasgow college of further education and left before completing an HND due to intimidation by a staff member.”

Education Services

Two thirds of the survey respondents were able to rate education services in Glasgow. Of these, almost two thirds (65%) felt that education services were good or excellent. However, almost all (95%) felt that more could be done to support LGBT people in terms of education. Suggestions included:

- awareness raising and education within schools on LGBT issues;
- more effective work to tackle LGBT focused harassment;
- support for LGBT people who are being bullied in education environments;
- work to raise awareness of and include same sex families;
- wider awareness raising with communities around educational establishments.

“I think more education is needed in the general community about acceptance of LGBT. Schools should approach this more.”

Many respondents felt that schools and other educational establishments needed to play a big part in tackling homophobic language and behaviour. Many also felt that schools could play a key role in educating young LGBT people about keeping themselves safe, sexual health and relationships. There was particular concern that schools were not able to provide appropriate sex education for young LGBT people. A number of participants in individual interviews and discussion groups felt that the debate around ‘Section 28’³⁷ had damaged teachers’ confidence to actively promote diversity.

“When we complained about teachers not challenging the pejorative use of the word gay in the playground we were told it didn’t mean anything and it was jus the way they talk.”

Some survey respondents with children raised specific issues about the attitude of schools towards same sex parents. Some parents were concerned that their children were bullied at school, as a result of having LGBT parents. Some felt that schools did not deal with this effectively,

³⁷ Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 was enacted in 1988 and repealed in 2000. It required that local authorities did not intentionally promote homosexuality, specifically in schools.

but others felt that schools were working hard to improve the way that they dealt with issues like this.

“I am sometimes considered to be a lesser parent because I am gay. Institutionalised discrimination continues in some of Glasgow’s oldest education centres.”

“Schools have not got it right yet but it’s better than it used to be.”

7.4 Summary

- There is little existing information about the experience of LGBT people in relation to education and learning in Glasgow.
- Scotland wide research found that half of LGB young people surveyed had experienced homophobic bullying, and over 80% were aware of this taking place in their school.
- Overall, 89% of survey respondents were happy with their education.
- Some were unhappy because their university or college work was stressful and difficult. Others would like to go back into education, but could not afford it.
- Around a fifth of participants had experienced problems at school. Many felt that schools did not know how to support LGBT young people, or how to deal with harassment and bullying related to sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Some – largely disabled respondents – had also experienced discrimination or harassment at further or higher education. Others felt that overall colleges and universities offered more inclusive and supportive environments for LGBT people than schools.
- Almost all participants felt that education services in Glasgow could be improved. Participants suggested:
 - awareness raising and education within schools on LGBT issues;
 - more effective work to tackle LGBT focused harassment;
 - support for LGBT people who are being bullied in education environments;
 - work to raise awareness of and include same sex families;

- appropriate sex education for young LGBT people; and
- wider awareness raising with communities around educational establishments.

8. Employment

8.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the employment experiences of LGBT people. It outlines existing research on LGBT employment issues, and then concentrates on the key themes which emerged from the online survey, telephone interviews and focus groups.

8.2 Existing Research

In 2007, the Scottish Transgender Alliance found that transgender people in Scotland had a high unemployment rate (37%) and a high self-employment rate (20%)³⁸. In 1999, the Glasgow Women's Library undertook research on poverty and social inclusion of lesbians and gay men in Glasgow³⁹. This involved 137 responses to a questionnaire and 21 depth interviews. This found that:

- 42% of unemployed respondents felt that their unemployment was due to their sexuality;
- 43% of all respondents stated that they had experienced sexuality discrimination or harassment at work.
- of those that had experienced sexuality discrimination or harassment at work, three quarters said that this had affected their work performance.
- a third of those who had experienced sexuality discrimination or harassment at work had reported this
- of those who did not report, almost two thirds said that fear of disclosure had affected their decision not to report.

UK wide research undertaken by Stonewall found that nearly one in five lesbian and gay people had experienced bullying from their colleagues because of their sexual orientation⁴⁰. Further research by Stonewall also found that gay and lesbian people who are out at work are more

³⁸ *Transgender Experiences in Scotland*, Scottish Transgender Alliance, 2008

³⁹ *Poverty and Social Exclusion of Lesbians and Gay Men in Glasgow*, Glasgow Women's Library, 1999

⁴⁰ *Serves You Right: Lesbian and Gay People's Expectations of Discrimination*, Stonewall, 2008

productive than those who have to hide their sexual orientation and work in less inclusive environments⁴¹.

8.3 Views and Experiences

Overall, two thirds of survey respondents were happy or quite happy with their employment. However, a third were unhappy or very unhappy. This was the highest dissatisfaction across all of the areas explored as part of this research. Of those who were unhappy, more than half were under 30. This compares to an average respondent age of 34.

Some people were unhappy because they felt that their job prospects in the current economic climate were not good. This was a particular issue for students or recent graduates, but also influenced people in industries where the job market was stagnant or shrinking.

Some people who were looking for work were concerned that their sexual orientation or gender identity would limit their opportunities. Some who had worked for LGBT organisations in the past felt that this could limit their future employment opportunities, and some altered their CVs when seeking employment so that the nature of these organisations was not clear.

“I am finding though the process of looking for a job in the industry I will be entering difficult with my sexuality, this may be in my head or my fear and worry. However the choice of jobs that I choose to apply for is based around ideas of safety and feelings of judgements which as sad as it sounds still happens today.”

Those who were in work often felt that their sexual orientation or gender identity meant that colleagues treated them differently at work. This led to some people feeling insecure in their position, or wanting to seek alternative employment. This was a considerable problem. Almost half of survey respondents had experienced a problem related to their employment in the past, and most of these problems revolved around discriminatory attitudes in the workplace.

“Previous organisations I have worked for were very friendly and my colleagues and line managers took an interest in me and my partner. Where I currently work is very unfriendly and I suspect there is an

⁴¹ *Peak Performance*, Stonewall, 2008

undercurrent of homophobia. It has had a knock on effect on my mental health.”

“I have had people refuse to talk to me in the work place because of my sexuality.”

This meant that some people did not come out at work, or restricted how much they discussed their private life with colleagues. Many indicated that they felt that they needed to hide their sexual orientation in order to progress in their career. This affected how people interacted both with colleagues and clients.

“I have had difficulties in the past not being able to come out at work and feeling discriminated against or having to cope with homophobic comments from clients or colleagues.”

“Some people in my work are very uncomfortable with my sexuality...which I keep private. They know I’m gay but it’s not like I go into detail about what I do! They think because they are married with children that what they do is right and what I do is wrong.”

In some cases, people had either lost their job or had their responsibilities reduced because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This was a particular issue for people who worked within religious institutions, who were directly discriminated against due to their sexual orientation. For others, the atmosphere or the way people were treated at work resulted in them leaving this environment. At least five participants had to leave their jobs as a result of bullying or atmosphere – one of whom had left two jobs due to homophobic bullying. In some cases these participants had worked for public or voluntary sector organisations.

“I was sacked as a minister because I came out. I lost my job, family, friends, support network and house.”

“My workplace no longer trust me to carry out work I did previously since I announced my transgender status.”

“I started my working career training in a professional office until, one evening, I was ‘spotted’ going into a gay cub – after that I was ostracised and had to leave.”

Overall, a third of survey respondents felt that employment services in Glasgow were poor or very poor. Few made suggestions about how services could be improved. However, discussion with service providers and LGBT people at the feedback event highlighted a number of suggestions:

- more information about workplace culture – people find it difficult to know about the organisational culture and atmosphere before joining a new organisation, making it difficult to establish if they will feel comfortable working for them;
- encouraging leadership amongst employers – many felt that senior staff and managers play a key role in tackling discriminatory organisational cultures, and suggested that organisations should be encouraged to develop leadership and ‘champions’ in promoting equality and tackling discrimination;
- enhanced equalities monitoring – better monitoring of sexual orientation and gender identity in public and private sector organisations would help organisations to better understand staff experiences and work to tackle problems.

8.4 Summary

- Research has shown that sexual orientation and gender identity can impact on levels of unemployment. Many LGB people have experienced harassment or discrimination at work. Many transgender people are unemployed or self employed.
- Overall, two thirds of survey respondents were happy with their employment. Those who were not happy tended to be relatively young – with concern about future job opportunities. Some were concerned that their sexual orientation or gender identity would limit their opportunities.
- Half of survey respondents had experienced issues in the past relating to employment. Most of these issues were related to negative attitudes or discrimination.
- Some people felt that they had to hide their sexual orientation at work, or not disclose much about their private life. Others had experienced significant attitudinal barriers from colleagues, and some had to leave their job because of this.

9. Social Networks

9.1 Introduction

This chapter explores social networks and opportunities for LGBT people in Glasgow. We were unable to identify existing research into this topic. As a result, this chapter focuses on the findings from the survey, telephone interviews and discussion groups held as part of this research.

9.2 Views and Experiences

Most survey respondents were happy or quite happy with their social networks. However, 15% were unhappy. Older respondents tended to be less happy, with average age of those who were unhappy being 37. Just under half of the survey respondents were members of LGBT groups or organisations in Glasgow.

Many participants felt that social opportunities for LGBT people in Glasgow focused around pubs and clubs. The lack of social opportunities outwith this scene was a big issue for many participants. There was significant concern among many participants that many LGBT activities, events and venues were very focused on alcohol.

“I am neither a heavy drinker nor a party person and find Glasgow a very lonely place to live.”

“You can’t go to a gay friendly cafe in Glasgow.”

Further exploration of this issue in individual interviews and focus groups found that this was a particular issue because many LGBT people did not feel comfortable using non LGBT specific social venues. People highlighted that this often meant they had to regulate their behaviour, and avoid showing affection to their partner.

“I want to go somewhere during the day and hold hands with my partner without being frowned on. At the moment you can only go to pubs. It would be nice to just feel a bit more comfortable.”

In the individual interviews and discussion groups, many participants felt that there was a need for LGBT groups and social activities around key interests – such as arts, books, football or swimming. A number of parents highlighted that they could feel isolated from the LGBT

community, with a lack of suitable services and activities. The work of Glasgow Life – which has introduced LGBT material into libraries in the city – was mentioned as a particularly positive development.

“It would be good to have a community centre with a wide range of things, and a cafe that you can take kids into. It needs to be a place for children.”

Many respondents mentioned that it could be difficult to find out what was happening in Glasgow, and what social opportunities or support services were available.

Just over a fifth of respondents had experienced problems with their social networks in the past. Many had experienced disruption to their social networks when coming out or making a gender transition.

“When I came out in my early twenties I lost a lot of friends and had to rebuild my social networks. I had a few friends who were hostile about my choices or just uncomfortable with my sexuality.”

“Due to having to transition, there has been extreme upheaval in my social standing.”

Many – including young people – highlighted feelings of isolation. Many younger participants mentioned that they found it difficult to speak about their feelings, and that was a particular problem when coming out and exploring their sexual orientation.

“As a person coming out, I didn’t realise that the LGBT centre had closed down... There need to be more visible things out there for the gay community – it shouldn’t be hidden away.”

Transgender participants also spoke of feelings of isolation. Many found it difficult to find anywhere to meet other transgender people, and experienced difficulty socialising and interacting with non-transgender people.

Many participants mentioned that supportive family and/ or friends were particularly important to them. Many young people mentioned close relationships with other family members – often mothers – and felt that they would turn to family members when in need of support or advice. However, others had experienced negative reactions from family members – including parents, siblings, children and partners.

Transgender participants highlighted that often they had to dress in a different way than they would normally in order to gain access to children and grandchildren. Some gay men mentioned that they had lost touch with children as a result of coming out, resulting in significant trauma, distress and feelings of isolation.

“My family still call me by my old name, they still won’t accept me and I don’t like living this solitary existence.”

Participants highlighted the value of community and voluntary groups, providing emotional support, practical help and allowing people to have “someone to speak to who understands”. Many stressed that speaking to people who had direct experience of similar circumstances and were able to offer genuine support made things a bit easier. LGBT support groups and voluntary organisations were highly valued.

“We mentor each other in the community”.

Some churches were seen as offering strong and supportive networks for LGBT people – and people travelled from outwith Glasgow to access these inclusive religious communities. However, some participants had been ostracised from their religious community resulting in feelings of isolation.

LGBT Centre

Almost all survey respondents (92%) felt that there was a need for an LGBT centre in Glasgow – although many said that this was a ‘tentative’ yes depending on the type of centre. The reason for respondents feeling tentative was often related to past experiences of LGBT centres in Glasgow. People cautioned that the previous LGBT centre had its difficulties.

Many stressed that any new centre should be run in a very different way to previous LGBT centres in Glasgow. Many women highlighted that the previous centre was very male dominated. A number of participants highlighted that it was not a place that children would feel safe and welcome. A number of participants felt that there was a need for imagination and vision in considering how an LGBT centre could be set up as a welcoming, relaxing environment where everyone feels comfortable.

“Not in the way it previously was run. I was uncomfortable going into those centres.”

“It cannot and should not be what it has been and what it is now - a haven for drunks and druggies and pervs hunting young men and women at risk.”

Many also felt that it should be a space which does not involve the sale of alcohol – or only on certain occasions - providing an alternative to pubs and clubs in Glasgow. This would also avoid the combination of alcohol and vulnerable people which was perceived to have resulted in some of the problems experienced at the previous LGBT centre. This view came from a wide range of participants, including younger people and older people.

“Somewhere that doesn’t revolve around drink, drugs and sex”.

However, there was broad agreement that the loss of the previous LGBT centre left a gap in terms of social opportunities. It had also made it difficult for some organisations to meet, due to the lack of an alternative safe and welcoming space. Some also felt that the lack of an LGBT centre suggested that public sector organisations were not committed to supporting and working with LGBT people in Glasgow. Some participants suggested that the level of investment in services for LGBT people can be perceived as related to the amount of pride that a city has in its LGBT population. Many felt that a centre would provide greater visibility for the LGBT community in Glasgow.

“It was all about making you feel welcome and being able to just talk to people – it was excellent. The loss of a centre like this is a really great loss to the city.”

Views on what the centre should be for varied considerably. Ideas included:

- **A place for people to make connections** – for people who are coming out, are new to Glasgow or are visitors to the city and want to get information and advice, and meet friends.
- **A safe social space which provides a sense of community** – a cafe, networking, meeting and event space with social and community groups
- **A place for support services** – a hub with a range of support and advice services for LGBT people.

- **A place to raise awareness** – to increase visibility of LGBT communities in Glasgow, to show that LGBT people are important, and to provide a space for all members of the public to increase their awareness of LGBT issues.

“There needs to be a safe space dedicated to the LGBT community where people can grow into wholeness.”

“People need space to plan, to campaign, to socialise, to get information.”

“We often speak of the idea of a ‘gay community’ but where is a community without a central service / focal point / meeting point?”

However, a minority of people (8%) felt strongly that there shouldn't be a centre at all. Those who did not think that there should be a centre felt that:

- it might lead to more segregation;
- it would be more appropriate to fund existing organisations and activities to support LGBT people across Glasgow; or
- it would be better to work with public agencies to make sure that all services are accessible and fair.

Some participants highlighted that while an LGBT centre would be beneficial, there was also a need for other places that LGBT people could feel comfortable – particularly during the day. Participants highlighted that there was a real market for social opportunities that were accessible to LGBT and straight people, and that this could be a good business opportunity for private businesses. Many participants highlighted the economic resources that LGBT customers could bring for businesses, and some suggested that public sector organisations should work with local businesses to encourage them to promote themselves as LGBT friendly.

Others suggested that there was a need for ongoing and increased funding for a wide range of LGBT social opportunities, including festivals and events. Some participants felt that public sector organisations in Glasgow did not support the LGBT community well in terms of cultural and social events, and that more could be done to invest in this type of activity. It was felt that this would raise the profile of LGBT communities, and demonstrate commitment to promoting equality.

“Only 2 out of 35 events planned in Glasgow over the next year are LGBT orientated.”

9.3 Summary

- There is limited existing research into social networks and opportunities for LGBT people in Glasgow.
- Just under half of respondents to our survey were members of an LGBT group or organisation in Glasgow.
- While most were happy with their social networks, 15% were unhappy. In many cases this was because LGBT social opportunities in Glasgow tended to focus on pubs and clubs.
- There was demand for more spaces where LGBT people feel comfortable, including cafes and social groups. Many people moderated their behaviour in public places which were not LGBT focused.
- Many participants had experienced disruption to their social networks when they came out or had a gender transition. This included family and friends excluding people from existing networks, or behaving differently.
- Almost all survey respondents (92%) felt that there was a need for an LGBT centre in Glasgow – although many said that this was a ‘tentative’ yes depending on the type of centre.
- Views on what a centre should be for were varied. It was seen as a space which could allow people to make connections, build a sense of community, access support services, and raise awareness of LGBT communities in Glasgow.
- Many participants stressed that an LGBT centre should not follow the same model as previous LGBT centres in Glasgow.
- Some people, however, felt strongly that there shouldn’t be a centre at all. Those who did not think that there should be a centre felt that it might lead to more segregation, or that funding would be better spent on targeted LGBT activities, or enhancing mainstream services.

10. Key Findings

LGBT People in Glasgow

Robust estimates of the number of LGBT people in Glasgow do not exist. The best available estimates suggest that there could be between 7,650 and 41,000 people in Glasgow who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, and between 590 and 2,940 transgender people living in the city. These estimates could increase as there is strong evidence that LGBT people in Scotland migrate to Glasgow (and other cities) to access social opportunities and services, and to gain the anonymity of living in a big city.

Overall, people who had lived elsewhere in Scotland generally felt that Glasgow was more tolerant, friendly and accepting. However, people who had lived in England or abroad often felt that other cities had better services and social opportunities for LGBT people, and were more inclusive.

Health

Most people involved in this research were happy with their health. However, over half of all respondents had experienced problems or issues with their health at some point. Mental health issues appear prevalent, with many experiencing depression or other mental health issues which had a knock on effect on other aspects of their lives.

Health services were generally rated highly, particularly LGBT specific health services. Around a third of participants felt that they would prefer to use LGBT specific health services. Views on mainstream services such as GP surgeries and health centres were very varied. Some felt that staff were aware of LGBT issues and worked to promote support services. Others felt that staff were not well trained, and could make assumptions which resulted in a poorer level of service for LGBT people.

Safety

Although most survey respondents were happy with their safety, almost half had experienced an issue with their safety. Although some people reported “subtle hassle”, many of the safety issues experienced by LGBT people were severe and ongoing – involving physical assault and/or verbal abuse. Almost all participants felt that they experienced this abuse because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Many participants modified their behaviour to enhance their safety. In many cases this involved significant changes to people's daily routines and behaviours. Women and disabled people appear to experience multiple issues relating to fears about safety.

While some participants felt that the police support for LGBT people in Glasgow was improving, others felt that this was not evident at a local level. Many felt that more could be done through raising awareness of LGBT issues; better publicity for services such as hate crime reporting; more consistency in dealing with homophobic and transphobic behaviour; and LGBT equality training for all police officers.

Housing

Almost all participants in this research were happy with their current housing situation. Younger people appeared less happy with their housing situation, often due to living with parents. A third of survey respondents had previously had problems with their housing.

Housing is clearly closely linked to safety. Some participants had left home and experienced homelessness due to abuse or negative attitudes from family members. Others had experienced harassment and abuse targeted at their home. Some found it challenging to attract enough priority to access social rented housing in a safe part of Glasgow. And some chose to live in poorer quality accommodation in more expensive areas of Glasgow, which were perceived as more safe.

Participants felt that housing services could be improved through training housing staff on LGBT issues; providing specific housing advice for LGBT people; providing more information on areas which were safe for LGBT people; and ensuring that LGBT people receive additional priority for social housing, to allow access to higher demand areas.

Education

Most participants were happy with their education. But around a fifth had experienced problems at school. Many felt that schools did not know how to support LGBT young people, or how to deal with harassment and bullying related to sexual orientation or gender identity.

Some participants had experienced discrimination in further and higher education, particularly disabled people. However other LGBT

participants felt that overall colleges and universities offered more inclusive and supportive environments for LGBT people than schools.

Almost all participants felt that education services in Glasgow could be improved. People felt that schools could play a significant role in raising awareness of LGBT issues and same sex families within schools and communities, and providing appropriate sex education for young LGBT people. Participants also felt that schools should be better at tackling harassment and bullying.

Employment

Overall, two thirds of survey respondents were happy with their employment. Some young people were concerned that their sexual orientation or gender identity would limit their opportunities. Indeed, half of survey respondents had experienced issues in the past relating to employment. Most of these issues were related to negative attitudes or discrimination.

Some people felt that they had to hide their sexual orientation at work, or not disclose much about their private life. Others had experienced significant attitudinal barriers from colleagues, and some had to leave their job because of this.

Social Opportunities

Most participants were happy with their social networks. However, a minority were unhappy – largely because of a lack of spaces where LGBT people can feel safe and comfortable, which are not linked to alcohol, pubs and clubs. Many participants had experienced disruption to their social networks when they came out or had a gender transition.

Almost all survey respondents (92%) felt that there was a need for an LGBT centre in Glasgow. However, some stressed that this was a 'tentative' yes depending on the type of centre. Many participants stressed that an LGBT centre should not follow the same model as previous LGBT centres in Glasgow.

Views on what a centre should be for were varied. It was seen as a space which could allow people to make connections, build a sense of community, access support services, and raise awareness of LGBT communities in Glasgow.

A minority felt strongly that there shouldn't be a centre at all. Those who did not think that there should be a centre felt that it might lead to more segregation, or that funding would be better spent on targeted LGBT activities, or enhancing mainstream services.