



Title: Telling It Like It Is: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Speak Out on Homophobic Violence.

Author: GALOP

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Document available to download at: <http://www.galop.org.uk/resources/research-publications/#more-108> (accessed June 2011)

SCS topic headings: Personal Safety; Safety in Public Spaces; Evaluation & Monitoring; Community Engagement; Equalities & Diversity

This document is a REVIEW of effective intervention and support approaches.

Summary of the review's aim

GALOP works to prevent and challenge homophobic and trans-phobic hate crime in Greater London. It is a voluntary community organisation campaigning for an improved criminal justice system, offering assistance to lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in dealing with homophobic violence. GALOP is also involved with developing community safety and crime prevention issues, including community education.

The aim of this report is to pull together data collected during the youth survey, presenting it in a useful form with analysis to, primarily, the GALOP management committee, but also other voluntary and statutory agencies (both lesbian / gay and mainstream) who have an interest in looking at their service provision to young lesbians, gay men and bisexuals and exploring how these services can be enhanced to meet the very specific needs of young lesbians, gay and bisexual people experiencing violence.

Outcomes

The 'Youth Survey' was questionnaire-based research aimed at young lesbian, gay and bisexual people (less than 25 years old) living, working or playing in the London area. The survey gathered data regarding respondents' experience of:

- verbal abuse (shouted at/called names/threatened)
- physical abuse (pushed/spat at/things thrown/beaten up)
- sexual abuse (groped/flashed at/indecently assaulted/raped)

- other harassment (hate mail/property stolen or damaged/abusive phone calls)
- respondent perceptions of the abuse.

NB. The research was conducted in 1998 and since then some recommendations then may not reflect current contexts, for example, Section 28 has since been repealed. The benefit of a source stating such suggestions is a useful to provide context of ideas at different periods of time, including what lay behind ideas and actions. Outcomes from the survey data proposed the following (selected) recommendations:

RE: Legislation

- The repeal of Section 28.
- The introduction of 'Hate Crimes' legislation which recognizes homophobic violence as a specific category as well as the multiple discrimination experienced by women/girls, black people, Irish people and people with disabilities.
- Formation of an equivalent to the Race Relations and Sex Discrimination Acts.

RE: Police practice

- Extending current liaison with the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities to focus specifically on the compounded experience of young people within these communities.
- Training for all probationary officers in lesbian, gay and bisexual issues.

RE: Education

- The inclusion of lesbian, gay and bisexual issues in sex education curriculums and the curriculum in general.
- The inclusion of homophobic bullying in anti-bullying strategies.
- Training for teachers in lesbian and gay issues and homophobia / heterosexism awareness, empowering them not only to support lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils but also to challenge discrimination in the classroom.
- Support for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff, enabling them to 'come out' without fear of prejudice and therefore to serve as important role models for lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils.

RE: Statutory Agency Service Provision

- Home Office Guidelines to statutory organisations such as social services, youth services, health services, etc. that ensure equality of provision for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

RE: Community Organisations

- Community organisations to consider their remit as to whether they offer a service specific and therefore accessible to young people e.g. dedicated advice sessions, targeted publicity, appointed youth workers, etc.
- Ensuring that services which could be relevant to young people are widely publicized.

Summary of evaluation conclusions

Apart from making recommendation to develop service delivery, the research report also concluded findings from the questionnaire data about the specific perceptions and needs of young lesbians, gay and bisexual people experiencing violence.

Motives for Abuse

A large number of female respondents experiencing violence cited motivating factors other than sexuality. The questionnaires were especially designed to illicit these more complex responses. Often research looking at homophobic violence fails to acknowledge the prevalence of misogyny within homophobic attacks on lesbians and bisexual women.

Perpetrators of Physical Abuse

The figure for physical abuse by strangers is low compared to other surveys which have addressed homophobic violence. In fact in this survey 60% of perpetrators were known to the victim. GALOP suggests that their different result is based on the proportionally higher level of lesbians and bisexual women responding to this survey as well as the focus of the questionnaire.

Awareness of Support

A high level of respondents felt that current service provision was inadequate, either because those available were not specialised or because of an absence of appropriate services. 36.5% of respondents mentioned support issues relating to the police. The most common request was for a more sensitive and supportive response from police officers.

When questioned as to what type of support victims of verbal, physical, sexual abuse, or harassment would liked to have received, the number of respondents specifying 'information on legal rights' indicates that lesbian and gay youth are unsure as to which legislation is there to support them and which legislation serves to criminalise them.

Unreported Incidents

Of the 66% who did not report incidents 51% did not specify why they had not reported. 5% said it was because of a distrust of the police. 5% said that it was because they were scared of reporting. 26% feared that the police would minimise their experience, 7% felt that their experience was not appropriate for a police report, 2% cited a combination of these factors and 4% said that it was for other reasons.

How the evaluation gathered information for findings and conclusions

202 surveys were gathered over 7 months- a response rate that can be considered suitable from which to draw trends and conclusions. The majority of survey responses were gained from actual visits to lesbian, gay and bisexual youth groups where it was possible to explain the purpose of the survey, be on hand while young people completed them and offer advice/support on the spot to any concerns that

the young people raised. Unfortunately, due to the limitations of the post, this was not possible for all the targeted organisations listed.

The researchers recognised that young lesbian, gay and bisexual people were a difficult to reach group and so, in order to facilitate as many participants as possible in the survey, a number of agencies with diverse remits, were contacted. The researchers contacted their sample through two approaches:

1) Personal visits to:

- lesbian, gay and bisexual youth groups
- lesbian and gay organisations that may be accessed by the under 25's (including those with specific remits to work with black lesbian, gay and bisexual people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people with disabilities and bisexual groups).

2) Contacted by post:

- youth counselling services that may be accessed by young lesbian, gay and bisexual people
- the National Union of Students
- housing associations that provide targeted bed space to young lesbian, gay and bisexual people
- lesbian and gay organisations that may be accessed by the under 25's (including those with specific remits to work with black lesbian, gay and bisexual people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people with disabilities and bisexual groups).
- lesbian and gay venues in London
- sexual health services, particularly those focusing on lesbian and gay issues.

Various articles and press releases also appeared in Metro News (the news letter of the South London lesbian, gay and bisexual centre), Thud, and Time Out. Attempts to utilise other press sources where not successful.

Definitions of the types of violence that the survey used are presented on page 11.

An appendix presents the research questionnaire pro forma.

Further details about the SCS evaluation of this report are available on request. Please contact info@scsn.org.uk

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