

# **Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee**

**Items Tabled at Meeting. Item 7 LGBT Provision in Lewisham – tabled by Cllr James-J Walsh.**

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The Committee would like to thank all those who gave evidence to the review.

The Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee recommends the following:

1. That in recognition of the broad and diverse nature of this topic, the fact Lewisham has 2.4 times the national average of LGB residents (para 4.5) and the limited time and resource available through Scrutiny, the London Borough of Lewisham should draw on similar authorities approaches going forward, by resourcing, producing and adopting a Lewisham LGBT+ Community Action Plan with associated dashboard, in partnership with the LGBT+ Community and other key stakeholders, that aligns with the Councils CES, and is annually reported back to SSSC, throughout the next administration.
2. Although the report highlights areas where inequalities exist, it is important to consider the LGBT+ community, and all communities, particularly those with protected characteristics, in terms of a "community asset model" (Para 6.6), empowering and facilitating them, to use their inherent skills as a resource to form a sustainable, community owned solution. The Mayor should work to ensure that through our internal and external communications, positive and celebratory stories and imagery, that reflect all diversity strands, including LGBT+ people is woven through both specific interest pieces to that community, but also more generic topics.
3. that a consistent 'whole-organisation' approach (including via contractors/commissioned partners) to data gathering/monitoring is implemented using latest 'ONS questions and guidance' on equality and diversity be fully adopted, and to include by default the LGBT+ community, and excluded only on the rarest exception. This EDI monitoring was found to be lacking on some casework systems, and in routine questions on service users and this should be corrected at the earliest opportunity. The council should also seek to ensure it is clear to service users, why the information is being sought and how it will be used.
4. Service provision across Directorates and departments should adopt a "whole persons" approach (8.15), and consider multiple characteristics when ensuring the best options for individuals, this may necessitate reviews of screening questions as well as learning and development needs of colleagues to understand potential barriers, or issues, as they relate to their service users/customers.
5. 1.8% of LBL Staff identify as LGB (table para 9.2A), whereas 2% of UK population identify as LGB (ONS, Sexual Identity, UK: 2016) and Lewisham Residents Survey (2015) identified 4% of Lewisham's population were LGB, therefore both on the national measure, and local measure of having a workforce that reflects the community it serves, we see both underperformance (nationally), and significant underperformance (locally) against benchmark. Committee feel that the Councils workforce should match where possible the community it serves, and thought should be given on how to identify the causes and ameliorate this trend.
6. During staff inductions, new staff should be informed about the different staff forums available and HR should include in new starter information/staff packs clear information and signposting about support and staff forums (para 9.15), and that all

staff should receive training on Equalities issues, and for it to be centrally monitored (para 5.27) and this should where possible be nuanced for the service, and barriers experienced by protected characteristic communities. Human Resources should look at the best practice provided by Leicester County Council taking learning and applying it locally in consultation with the LGBT+ staff forum, to include but not be limited to: a "Managing LGBT+ Staff Guide" (para 9.26); auditing staffing policies of the Council to be more LGBT+ inclusive (i.e. family leave, and removing gender-based pronouns)(para 9.22), and; creating a pan-organisation fora, with shared and joined up best practice and joint LGBT+ initiatives.

7. The LGBT+ Staff forum and other staff fora (and the staff that facilitate it) should be given the time and resources to bring their communities interests and knowledge as a resource to embed across the Council. (9.16) the Council should see these fora as a rich resource for canvassing opinion on policies and proposals and facilitate a mechanism whereby Council Officers can, and should, garner opinion from project scoping through delivery and into evaluation.
8. The Council should adopt a system, similar to other authorities, where there is an elected member appointed Council Lead/Champion for each protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.(9.20)
9. The Committee were concerned that there was a lack of evidence on the LGBT+ Community in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and therefore recommended that: The Council should ensure there is a specific joint strategic needs assessment for the LGBT+ community. This review by the Safer Stronger Communities Committee should be used as part of the evidence base. The Health and Wellbeing Board should be instructed to consider this as an urgent priority, making use of the evidence from this review, and the earlier rapid Lewisham Council LGBT+ review in January 2017.
10. Similarly the Committee were surprised that all protected characteristics under the Equalities Act didn't have a specific needs assessments. This should also be looked into further as a matter of urgency to ensure the provision and commissioning is based on the needs of all residents.
11. Given the feedback received during the evidence sessions, and from research undertaken with the LGBT+ Foundation; NHS service users identified significant barriers to accessing LGBT+ inclusive healthcare provision in Borough. The Committee were impressed with the Royal College of GPs 'Pride in Practice' quality assurance mark for primary care services. It is recommended that the Council facilitates a meeting with local commissioners, CCG's and the LGBT+ Foundation, with the aspiration for Lewisham to be the first London Borough to launch this, or a similar scheme.
12. It is of concern, LGB People are more likely than their heterosexual peers to partake in alcohol and substance misuse. The Committee heard how some jointly commissioned services were being delivered at considerable distance from the Borough, and that future commissioned services outside of Borough should make an assessment of accessibility and cost to users, given the evidence from Metro about

LGBT facing poorer income and employment outcomes (pg22 - insert). It is recommended that to begin to tackle this issue, for the council to review and take lessons from the recommendations outlined in the [National LGB Drug and Alcohol Database "Part of the Picture" Briefing Sheet for Commissioners and Policy Makers](#), and DoH funded, [London Friend's "Out of your mind" research](#), and to advocate for other health partners to do similarly.

13. With regard to sexual health services, it is recommended the Mayor should instruct the Public Health Team to carry out a review, including where appropriate focus groups with LGBT+ communities, to ascertain why so many choose to access services out of Borough, and for an action plan to be generated to help LBL, and where appropriate NHS partners, improve services to better meet needs. It was also the case that expert witnesses felt that in Lewisham that HIV prevention work in Lewisham had an "entrenched focus on African populations" (para 8.14) at the detriment of MSM communities, further consideration should be given to this.

14. The committee heard from several expert witnesses about the lack of spaces for the LGBT+ community, (para 8.41) the closure of LGBT+ spaces in the Borough over recent years, and the impact and need for the provision of such spaces, for both adults and children. It is recommended that the Mayor and Council, seek to support the LGBT+ community in this regard through: setting a clear Council's aspiration for attracting and supporting LGBT+ services to our Borough; where appropriate, protecting LGBT+ spaces through planning policies (para 6.10) and other instruments open to it, and; if appropriate LGBT+ operators come forward, the Council give significant consideration to using community assets to enable the provision of an LGBT+ centric community space.

15. That with regard to LGBT+ People's Health & Wellbeing outcomes, that the Council, reviews and embeds the DoH/Public Health England endorsed [LGBT+ Public Health Outcomes Framework companion; Minorities inside minorities evidence base for minority groups inside the LGBT Community](#), as well as the PHE's research on [promoting the health and wellbeing of gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men \(MSM\)](#) for areas of Health & Wellbeing within its control, and secondly through Officers raise, recommend and progress, with local Commissioners, Healthwatch, CCG partners and other stakeholders, to take the learning from the [LGBT+ Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework](#) and apply it to current and planned commission activity, so as to in part meet, and demonstrate, the fulfilment of their statutory duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 which requires NHS England and CCGs, to reduce health inequalities and promote integration between services for an often marginalised community.

16. The Committee understands that the LGBT+ community are disproportionately affected by crime compared to the population as a whole. When receiving reports on the Safer Lewisham Plan, the Committee request that a specific sub-report is included on hate crime statistics affecting the LGBT+ community, as well as all other communities with protected characteristics.

17. The Council should emulate good practice from other local authorities in respect to excellent partnership working between the Council and other statutory service

authorities and universities. Sharing expertise and resources was cost-effective and ensured a joined up approach to service delivery and a commitment to innovation and excellence. (para 9.21)

18. The Committee were concerned about the experience of some older members of the LGBT+ community and some experiences accessing services and in care homes. The Committee recommends that the Council's social care providers have a commitment to equalities including a specific LGBT+ Policy and ensure their staff have completed equalities training (para 10.24) and that the Council should look at ways it can assist signposting and imbedding the Opening Doors London checklist for Social Care providers, as a resource that was requested by providers who were unsure of what or how to access this information.

19. Safer Stronger Select Committee particularly welcomed the idea of establishing extra care housing facilities for the LGBT+ community, given the concerns raised during evidence sessions, and alongside the recommendation above. The Strategic Housing Team and the Cabinet Member for Housing should progress the work with Tonic Housing to scrutinise the viability, and if appropriate support progressing the project.

20. To celebrate the fact Lewisham acknowledges the need for, and takes a two-pronged approach to, LGBT Youth Provision, by offering bespoke LGBT Youth Services in Borough, as well as creating an inclusive environment amongst other Youth Provision. To increase awareness of the bespoke LGBT youth provision in borough, by requesting other commissioned youth work providers, and schools, regularly communicate the service that is offered, and where possible track who has. To better understand the distances Young People are travelling to access the LGBT Youth group to identify if trans-borough travel is a hidden barrier. To work with LGBT young people, and commissioned providers, to evidence if generic provision is meeting their needs as LGBT Younger People

21. The committee noted the limited evidence that was available locally on Trans+ needs and issues, and that the Mayor should, going forward, request further work be undertaken to better understand the specific experiences and needs of Lewisham's Trans+ Community.