

Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee		
Title	LGBT Provision in Lewisham	
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager	Item 7
Class	Part 1 (open)	17 January 2017

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide information to members of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee on LGBT provision in Lewisham in line with their terms of reference of advising the Executive on matters relating to equalities and equality of opportunity in the borough.

## 2. Summary

- 2.1. This report considers LGBT provision in the borough of Lewisham and provides a brief overview of a range of areas and services the Council provides. The report includes, health and wellbeing of the LGBT community, youth provision, community engagement, incidences of reported Hate Crime against the LGBT community, services for older residents and a snapshot of views from the Lewisham staff LGBT forum.

## 3. Recommendations

- 3.1. The Committee is asked to:
  - note the contents of the report.

## 4. Policy Context

- 4.1. The Council's overarching vision is "Together we will make Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn". In addition to this, ten corporate priorities and the overarching Sustainable Community Strategy drive decision making in the Council. Lewisham's corporate priorities were agreed by full Council and they remain the principal mechanism through which the Council's performance is reported.
- 4.2. This report into LGBT provision crosses many of the Council's corporate policies of: community leadership: young people's achievement and involvement; safety, security and a visible presence; protection of children; caring for adults and older people; active healthy citizens. The theme also crosses over many of the priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy. "Ambitious and Achieving" aims to create a borough where people are inspired and supported to achieve their potential. "Safer" where people feel safe and live free from crime, antisocial behaviour and abuse. "Empowered and Responsible" where people are actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities. "Clean, green and liveable" where people live in high quality housing and can care for and enjoy their environment. "Healthy, active and enjoyable", where people can actively participate

in maintaining and improving their health and well-being. “Dynamic and prosperous”, where people are part of vibrant communities and town centres, well connected to London and beyond.

- 4.3. The Council’s strategic approach to delivering equality is set out in the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme 2016-20. The CES takes account of our statutory responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and incorporates the nine characteristics that are protected under this legislation, including sexual orientation and gender re-assignment. The CES also outlines the Council’s equalities objectives.
- 4.4. Lewisham’s five equalities objectives are designed to ensure a holistic approach to tackling discrimination and promoting equality, across all protected characteristics, including sexual orientation. They are as follows:
- ① To tackle victimisation, harassment and discrimination
  - ② To improve access to services
  - ③ To close the gap in outcomes for citizens
  - ④ To increase understanding and mutual respect between communities
  - ⑤ To increase participation and engagement
- 4.5. In the 2015 Lewisham Residents Survey, 4% of respondents identified themselves as Lesbian Gay or Bisexual (LGB).<sup>1</sup> Nationally the ONS estimates that in 2015, 1.7% of the UK population identified themselves as LGB. Nationally, for the younger age group of the population aged 16 to 24, 3.3% identified themselves as LGB, the largest percentage within any age group in 2015<sup>2</sup>. In 2015, the population of London had the largest percentage of any region who identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) at 2.6%.<sup>3</sup> There is very limited data available on the percentages of the population who identify as Trans. The Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) has carried out work estimating the size of the transgender population in the UK. It is estimated that there are between 10 and 45 people per 100,000 identifying as trans\* in different areas of the UK.<sup>4</sup>
- 4.6. This report will look at a number of areas of relevance including: Health and Wellbeing; Community Engagement, Crime, Young People, and Older People and consider the provision in Lewisham where relevant and provide statistics where possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Residents Survey details can be found here

<https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/performance/Documents/Lewisham%20Residents%20Survey%202015%20Summary.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> ONS, Sexual Identity, Uk, 2015

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2015>

<sup>3</sup> ONS, Sexual Identity, Uk, 2015

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2015>

<sup>4</sup> Lewisham Comprehensive Equalities Scheme Data Sift

<https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/equality-and-diversity/Documents/Comprehensive%20Equalities%20Scheme%202016%E2%80%932015.pdf>

## 5. Health and Wellbeing

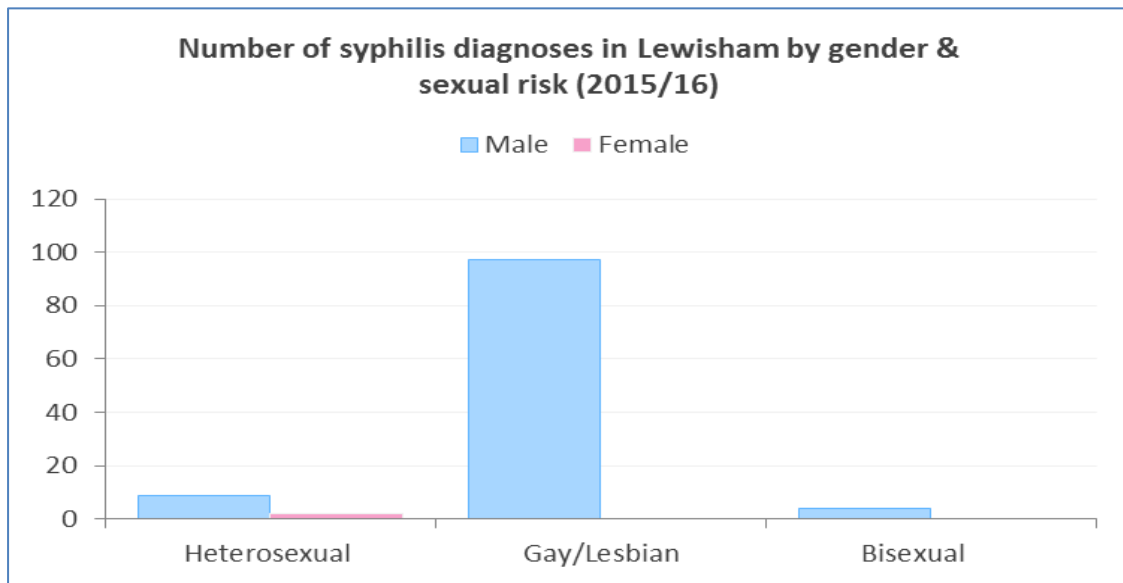
- 5.1. The Healthier Communities Select Committee is responsible for monitoring and scrutinising health services in the borough. This includes sexual health services, which the committee has examined on a number of occasions in recent years. In July 2014 the Committee was consulted on the draft Lewisham, Southwark and Lambeth Sexual Health Strategy. The Committee then considered the accompanying Action Plan early in 2015. In June 2016 the Committee scrutinised proposed changes to HIV care and support services across Lewisham, Southwark and Lambeth. Later in the year the Committee also examined a number of proposed savings to sexual health services, as part of the overall savings to the public health budget in Lewisham. Most recently, in October 2016, the Committee received up-to-date statistics on a range of sexual health indicators as part of the public health performance dashboard.
- 5.2. Sexuality is not routinely recorded for most health issues but there is growing evidence that there are areas where there are poorer health outcomes in the LGBT population. According to Public Health England<sup>5</sup> these are: sexual health and HIV; mental health; and rates of smoking, alcohol and drug usage.

### Sexual Health

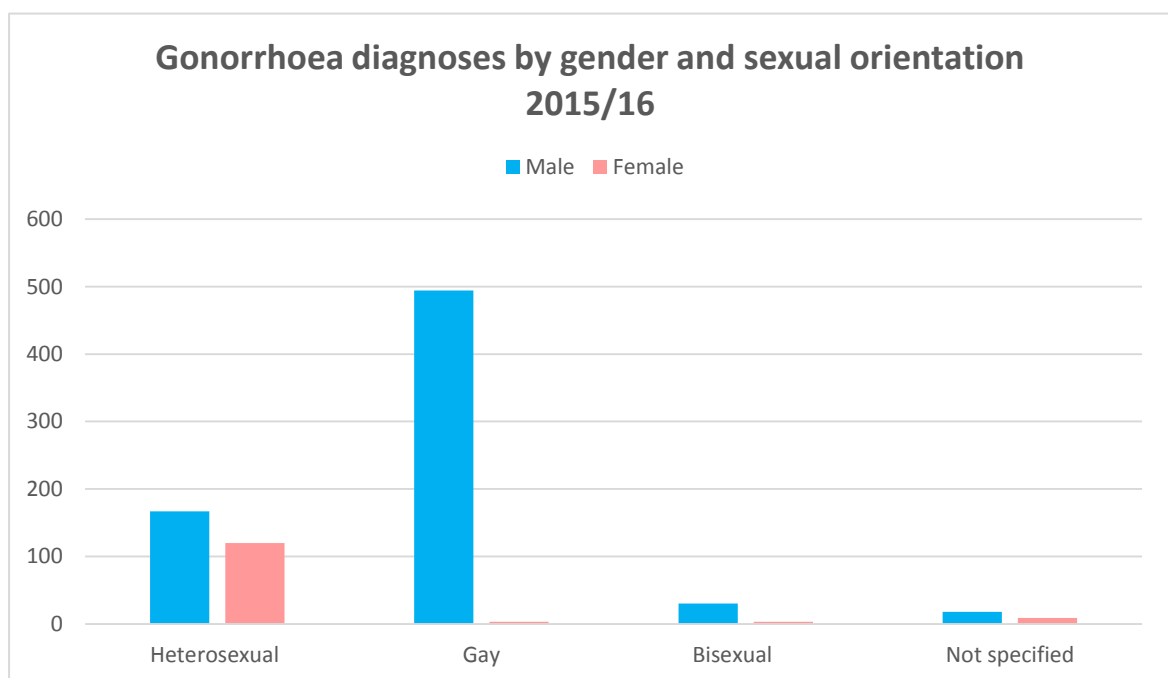
- 5.3. Sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates are highest in young people, men who have sex with men (MSM) and black ethnic minorities. Women who have sex with women are at lowest risk with very small numbers diagnosed with STIs. The number of STI diagnoses in MSM has risen sharply in England in recent years and this is also the case in Lewisham, with the number of cases of new infections more than doubling between 2011 and 2015. Over the last few years the number and rates of infection in heterosexual men has been falling, but has continued to rise in MSM.
- 5.4. Gonorrhoea is the most commonly diagnosed STI among MSM. High levels of gonorrhoea transmission are of particular concern given the emergence of gonorrhoea resistant to anti-biotic treatment. However there is no evidence of a particular problem in Lewisham in relation to resistant strains of gonorrhoea. In 2015, overall 6,346 new sexually transmitted infections (STIs) were diagnosed in residents of Lewisham, a rate of 2173.8 per 100,000 residents (compared to 767.6 per 100,000 in England). For cases in male Lewisham residents where sexual orientation was known, 40.7% (1,175) of new STIs diagnosed in sexual health clinics were among men who have sex with men (MSM).
- 5.5. In England, 70% of gonorrhoea cases and 84% of syphilis cases were in MSM. In Lewisham 90% of all new syphilis cases in men were in MSM (of which 3% identified as bisexual). The number of cases in women was less than 5 and none of these were in Lesbian women. In total there were 114 new syphilis cases diagnosed in Lewisham residents.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/phe-action-plan-tackles-health-inequalities-for-men-who-have-sex-with-men>



5.6. Of new gonorrhoea cases diagnosed in 2015/16 in men, 59% were MSM, who had over 5 times the number of infections compared to heterosexual men, despite accounting for an estimated 10% of male population. In the female population 2% of gonorrhoea infections, were in lesbian women, and a further 2% in bisexual women.



## HIV

5.7 There were around 100 new HIV diagnoses in Lewisham in 2015. The diagnosed HIV prevalence was 8.3 per 1,000 population aged 15-59 years (compared to 2.26 per 1,000 in England). There are around 1,660 people in Lewisham living with HIV accessing HIV services. Of these around 40% probably acquired their infection through sex between men, and 55% through heterosexual sex. Of the remaining 5%, 1.4% of infections were probably transmitted through injecting drug use and the

rest were either unknown or acquired through other means. New infections are more likely to be acquired through sex between men rather than through heterosexual sex.

### **Access to Services**

- 5.8 In 2015/16 there were just under 15,000 male and around 29,300 female first attendances in sexual health clinics by Lewisham residents. The figure for women is significantly higher than for men, as women access clinics for contraception as well as for sexually transmitted infection screening and treatment. Of the men attending 32% identified as gay and 2% as bisexual. Of the women attending 0.4% identified as lesbian, and 0.74% bisexual.
- 5.9 Overall around 32% of Lewisham residents accessing sexual health services do so outside of the borough. Central London clinics are more likely to be accessed by men who have sex with men than heterosexual men and women. There is a specialist sexual health clinic at the Waldron Health Centre for MSM newXclinic. However, all 4 sexual health clinics in Lewisham are able to see and clinically manage LGBT individuals.
- 5.10 In the first quarter of 2016/17, 60 Lewisham residents were tested through the HIV.test website. Due to small numbers it is not yet possible to give breakdown by sexual orientation and positive results, but Lewisham has a higher return rate (61%) than Lambeth and Southwark, both around 50%. Seventy percent of tests are in men.
- 5.11 Lewisham contributes to the London wide HIV prevention programme branded as "DO IT LONDON" which is targeted at gay men and BME groups at highest risk of HIV infection and includes outreach into 80 gay clubs/venues in central London, promotion of HIV testing and use of media (including social media and engagement via gay dating websites and apps) to develop a recognised brand to promote messages around HIV prevention. Lewisham Council contributed £59,000 to this in 2016/17.
- 5.12 Lewisham Council, with Lambeth and Southwark Councils also commission the RISE partnership which provides HIV Prevention and Sexual Health Services to Black African and Caribbean communities and gay, bisexual and MSM across Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham. The services available include peer support for BAME MSM, personal development training for MSM, Chemsex harm reduction, training for faith leaders as well as outreach services for HIV testing and condom distribution. Lewisham MSM have access to and attend a number of peer support programmes through the RISE programme - particularly for those MSM from BME groups who may face stigma within their own communities.
- 5.13 Interventions through the RISE partnership take place at 14-15 outreach locations across the borough, these include a range of religious, cultural and commercial settings. Outreach work includes support, testing, condom distribution and programme delivery such as the Testing Faith Programme and the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities Programme.
- 5.14 RISE have established new partnerships and referral pathways via the range of Rise programmes and interventions including through: Lewisham PreSchool Alliance; Welcare; Africa; Lewisham YOS; Lewisham + Bromley MIND; Lewisham

Young Womens' Resource Project; Lewisham Volunteers Centre; Lewisham Seventh Day Adventist church; The Ecumenical Borough of Deans Lewisham; Christ the Rock Ministries Lewisham; Positive Parenting and Children (working across Boroughs); Preschool Learning Alliance (Lewisham); Welcare (working across Boroughs); Working With Men (working across Boroughs); House of Rainbow (working across Boroughs).

- 5.15 From April 2016 to the end of September 2016 (Q1 and Q2), through RISE, 22 faith leaders in Lewisham have completed the Testing Faith training programme, and 292 individuals have been engaged through community outreach programmes. In addition to this 3550 condoms have been distributed in Lewisham. 3100 postcards and small media have also been distributed in Lewisham promoting RISE.

### **Alcohol and substance abuse**

- 5.16 The Prevention, Inclusion and Public Health Commissioning Team in Lewisham commissions drugs services, runs awareness campaigns, provides training and advice, and aims to help people in Lewisham with the problems that drug and alcohol use cause to individuals, families and communities.
- 5.17 Quarterly performance monitoring of service providers, includes Treatment Outcome Indicators which measures LGBT clients accessing their services, and promotes outreach work with this community.

### **Mental Health**

- 5.18 The South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, the borough's main mental health service provider, supports the Four in Ten peer support group for LGBT people with mental health problems. The group meets once a week and is intended to provide a safe place for LGBT people with mental health issues to socialise, share experiences and support one another. SLAM also offers a range of academic sessions to ensure clinicians are mindful of issues faced by their patients, this will include gender and sexuality. SLaM often refer onto specific services, such as the Metro Centre, mermaidsuk.org.uk and the Tavistock Gender Identity Clinic, when specialist LGBT support is required.

## **6 Community engagement**

- 6.1 Lewisham Council's Sustainable Community Strategy priority "Empowered and responsible" aims for Lewisham to be a place where people are actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities. Engaging in civic life and volunteering are an important part of being an active citizen and ensuring there are no obstacles to individuals' participation or prejudices due to sexual orientation, is an important consideration.
- 6.2 The following LGBT led organisations are in Lewisham: Lewisham LGBT + Forum, Metro and TAGS trans swimming club. The Lewisham Council website has a page which signposts readers to events, organisations, information and advice of interest to the LGBT community, the website is updated regularly to ensure the relevance and accuracy of data.

### **Library & Information Service**

6.3 The Library & Information Service offers a range of services to support and represent LGBT people in Lewisham:

- Fiction and Non-Fiction stock represents the diverse makeup of the community it serves, including stock relevant to LGBT users, across both physical and digital platforms. This includes Self Help titles, Biographies and quality information plus Fiction titles which may have themes or authorship around LGBT.
- Stock is used to raise awareness of LGBT issues with annual displays marking LGBT History Month, IDAHOT and World Aids Day where relevant. Regular displays also happen throughout the year.
- Lewisham Libraries participate in the nationwide initiative Reading Well for Young People. The scheme provides books for 13 to 18 year-olds with support and advice on common mental health conditions. The books are chosen by young people and health professionals and include titles specific to LGBT mental health issues in young people. Health professionals can refer young people to the booklist and anyone can borrow them for free from their local library.
- Lewisham Libraries offer information and sign-posting to services by staff and also provide spaces for local organisations to display publicity for services or for groups to meet. They have also hosted regular sessions on hate crime reporting and other relevant information. Several branches are registered as Hate Crime reporting sites where crimes can be reported and statements given and passed on to police.
- Lewisham Libraries support the “Come Correct” or “CCard” Scheme and are distributors of condoms and sexual health advice. The CCard scheme enables young people who have pre-registered to access free condoms in a variety of locations across London.
- The Home Library Service is open to all who are house bound and therefore it engages with a wide and diverse range of users, including those from the LGBT community.
- Online magazine and newspaper resources include LGBT interest titles such as GT, Attitude, Diva and Out which are free to read or download.

## **Volunteering**

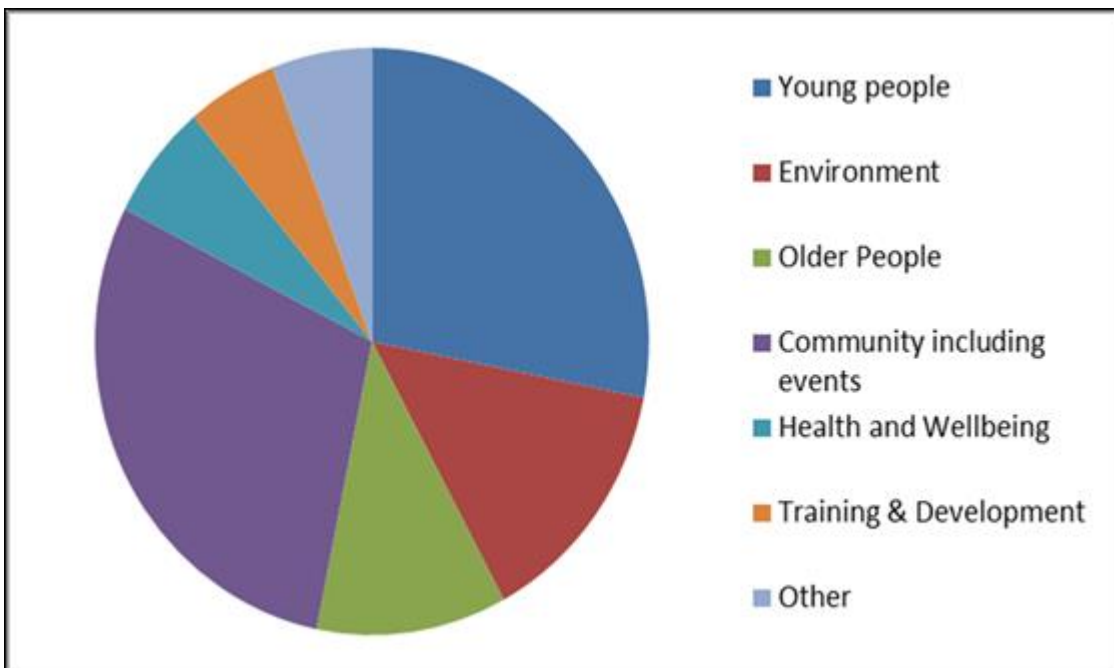
6.4 The Council is unable to monitor volunteering throughout the borough, however current figures from Volunteer Centre Lewisham (VCL) for the year November 2015 to November 2016 provide a snapshot of demographic makeup and indicate the following breakdown out of the 735 volunteers:

Heterosexual – 80%  
Lesbian/Gay – 2%  
Bisexual – 3%  
Not disclosed – 15%

6.5 These figures represent a small proportion of the number of volunteers in Lewisham as the majority do not access volunteering through VCL but approach organisations directly. The statistics above for Volunteer Centre Lewisham would appear to be in line with the general population who identify as LGB in Lewisham as outlined in paragraph 4.5 above.

## Local Assemblies

- 6.6 Local Assemblies are a mechanism to bring the local community together to discuss priorities and issues of concern, they also have a small budget which they use to address local issues. The Local Assemblies' Team monitors participation at Local Assemblies and does include sexual orientation as part of the monitoring information that it gathers at each meeting. Because of the scale of the work involved, this information is not collated until the end of the financial year when an annual report is produced. Sexual orientation has been included as a category for the first time in 2016/17 therefore data from previous years is not currently available.
- 6.7 167 groups were funded in 2014/15 through the Local Assemblies' budgets. The table below shows a break-down based on the themes of the projects, There has been an increase in the number of projects funded under the theme 'Community Cohesion Events' which now along with projects aimed at young people receive the most money from the Assembly Fund. Other areas where higher proportions of projects were delivered included environmentally-focused projects, work with older people, work focused on health and wellbeing, and training and development.



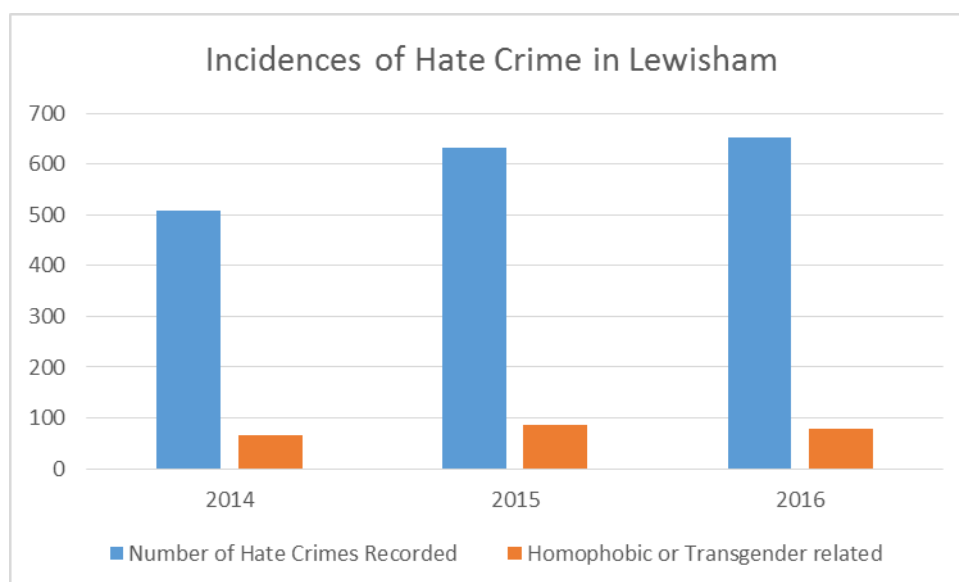
## 7 Crime

- 7.1 There is currently no way of capturing accurately, the number of victims of all crimes in Lewisham who are LGBT, as gender or sexual orientation data may not always be recorded unless pertinent to the specific crime. However for recorded Hate Crime it is possible to monitor the incidences of those recorded as homophobic or transgender Hate Crime. The Crown Prosecution Service defines A Hate Incident



as “any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone’s prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender”.

7.2 In Lewisham, the number of recorded Homophobic or Transgender Hate Crime incidents over three years (2014-16) was 230 out of 1793 recorded Hate Crimes in that period. The graph below shows the incidences over the last three years.



7.3 The Council continues to develop initiatives with its partners to encourage the reporting of homophobic and transphobic crimes affecting the LGBT community. This includes the promotion of third party reporting sites (e.g. METRO and youth clubs) to allow LGBT people to log and formally report incidents and crimes.

7.4 Third party reporting sites provide a safe and comfortable non-police environment for LGBT people, and increases their access to relevant support services. The settings are actively involved in raising awareness of hate crime and how to report it, and the visible presence sends a message to perpetrators that homophobic or transphobic hate crime is not acceptable in Lewisham. All third party reporting sites receive training on how to deal sensitively with diverse communities.

7.5 Hate crime reporting can also be reported online via the Council’s website, which tracks whether the incident was homophobic or gender-related, and also identifies whether the victim was under 16 years of age. The figures from the Council’s site are incorporated into the overall figures as cited above.

## 8 Young People

8.1 The Council expects all its provision to be inclusive and to demonstrate awareness of equalities. The Council undertook a consultation with young people as part of youth service changes 3 years ago, and one of the issues raised in that was not only that some LGBTQ young people want bespoke provision, but also that most

young people want to access the same provision as all their friends, regardless of sexuality.

- 8.2 Lewisham Council does, however, commission Metro, a charity serving lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people, and those questioning their sexuality, to provide support to LGBTQ young people aged 11-19 (25 with SEN) across 6 key areas – sexual health, mental health, drug and alcohol, bullying and hate crime, employment and healthy living. These are provided weekly meetings, generally 10-12 young people attend each week and a total of 30 individuals over the past year. In addition to this they also provide training for youth workers and workshops for all young people accessing youth provision on understanding sexuality and gender identity.
- 8.3 The Council does not routinely collect data on numbers of young people who identify as LGBTQ. Many young people are questioning their sexuality at this age and they may not want to answer or know the answer to these questions. Youth Service staff are, however, trained to listen out for, and support young people who may be questioning their sexuality, and to support young people through any challenging situations they may be facing.
- 8.4 The Council's commissioned Youth Service provider 'Youth First' has 513 directly run youth clubs and 5 Adventure Playgrounds across the borough as well as various commissioned projects. Eleven Youth First youth and play workers and youth volunteers are trained in dealing with issues regarding sexuality and gender, and are able to provide holistic support to young people. Training is delivered by Metro.
- 8.5 Youth and play workers address a range of issues with young people attending their clubs including support with 'coming out', bullying etc. They are trained not to presume that all young people are heterosexual when discussing issues such as sexual health. All youth and play workers have been trained by the Council's Community Safety Officer to provide a third-party hate crime reporting function within youth clubs. This includes homophobic or transphobic hate crimes. Staff also challenge low-level homophobia that may be evident in language usage amongst young people.
- 8.6 Youth clubs also provide a signposting service to dedicated LGBT support services, advice and information provided by either the Council or other organisations (e.g. Metro and Stonewall). LGBT posters and support leaflets are available in all youth club venues.
- 8.7 The LiVE LGBT youth group supports young LGBT people aged 16-25 (19-25 with Special Educational Needs / Learning Difficulties and Disabilities) from Lewisham. It is facilitated on a weekly basis (48 weeks per annum) on a Wednesday evening, by the Metro Youth Service. The group is funded by the Council's Youth Service Provider Youth First.
- 8.8 Lewisham - LiVE activities address a range of health inequalities faced by young LGBT people, focusing on their wellbeing, and increasing their knowledge and skills. Particular sessions include the following:

- Relationships and safer sex, including the reduction of Sexually Transmitted Infections;
- Mental health, emotional health and personal wellbeing (such as coming out, self-esteem, family problems, isolation, self-harm and suicide);
- Reducing alcohol and substance misuse;
- Support for victims of hate crime and homophobic/transphobic bullying;
- Support with employment, study and training; and
- Support for LGBT young people to access cultural events across London.

8.9 LGBT young people are actively engaged in defining the elements of the LiVE project that will best address their specific needs, and the impact of the project is measured through post-activity evaluation forms, an annual needs assessment process, and general feedback from the group's youth forum. The project also provides one-to-one assessments and referrals, supporting early intervention for young LGBT people in Lewisham. This seeks to minimize the future impact on services (e.g. CAHMS, NHS, GUM clinics) later in the client's life. Metro Youth Service staff actively signpost additional support services to young LGBT people including services available at the Metro centre in Greenwich (i.e. sexual health clinics, counselling, and mental health drop-in sessions).

8.10 In Lewisham young people can access a free and anonymous online counselling service: [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) for any 11 – 19 year olds living or attending school in the borough. The site offers a space where young people can explore their feelings in relation to sexuality and gender without the fear of recrimination or negative judgement.

8.11 In addition to the counselling element of the service, Kooth.com facilitates weekly online youth forums (all externally moderated to ensure safety), whereby a range of topics are covered. On occasion the topic may cover issues affecting the LGBT community, such as sexuality, peer pressure or body image. Online open access message boards are also available, for young people to raise issues concerning them.

## Schools

8.12 Lewisham Safeguarding Children's Board produced an anti-bullying guidance<sup>6</sup> which includes guidance on bullying linked to prejudice and discrimination including homophobic bullying. This was issued to schools approximately 18 months to 2 years ago. The Lewisham safeguarding in education officer, when visiting schools, will raise this in terms of reporting, dealing with incidents, training etc. From feedback from these visits it appears that homophobic incidents are low but where they have occurred schools have dealt with them appropriately. Although this is a matter for individual schools, the Council does see it as part of its safeguarding role and it is being added to the annual audit. It is also part of the Ofsted framework. There may also be occasions where incidents of bullying should be addressed as a child protection concern and the local authority will have statutory responsibilities on such occasions. A number of Lewisham schools do some good work, working with external organisations such as Stonewall. The Children and Young People

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<sup>6</sup> Antbullying Guidance can be found here <https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/socialcare/children/keeping-children-safe/information-for-professionals/protocols-and-policies/Documents/AntiBullyingResource.pdf>

Directorate are in the process of gathering a list of the organisations which schools commission from to good effect so that other schools which need to get up to speed know where to go.

- 8.13 The Council does not keep data on bullying in schools and has to prioritise the statutory data collection obligations. The Council is not resourced to advise schools on equalities in the curriculum and schools are expected to find that expertise from within their staff and to use external organisations to plug any gaps/give additional ideas/challenge.

### **Fostering, Adoption and Leaving Care**

- 8.14 Recruitment of foster carers in Lewisham is currently provided by an external agency. Lewisham is developing its own broad fostering strategy which will include recruitment as well as support of foster carers; this will include targeted recruitment at events such as LGBT Adopt/Foster fortnight. Providers of placement and procurement services for children and young people are monitored through the Preferred Provider Framework (PPF) to ensure that they address issues of sexual orientation and gender identity in a supportive manner, and that LGBT young people in fostering placements are being given relevant advice, information and helpline support.
- 8.15 Lewisham foster carers, and those placed with foster carers working for Preferred Provider Independent Fostering Agencies receive training on sexual orientation as part of the training courses on Celebrating Diversity, Promoting Identity and Self Esteem; as well as Sex and Relationships specifically relating to young people.
- 8.16 From 2014, requirements for PPF providers include monitoring reports on the numbers of Looked After Children that are LGBT, and how they have been appropriately supported.
- 8.17 In line with the current National agenda, the Council now undertakes much of its recruitment activity as a consortium. The members of the South London Adoption Consortium work together to undertake recruitment of adoptive parents and to promote the best possible outcomes for Lewisham children. The Council attends all recruitment events and targets LGBT groups within Adoption week. As part of this collective approach, the Council has focused collectively on recruitment of LGBT carers and have targeted LGBT groups within Adoption week.
- 8.18 Lewisham has subscribed to a service provided by New Family Social, an organisation which supports LGBT adopters. Over the last 4 years, 11 LGBT adopters have been approved by Lewisham Council; however the support service is provided to all Lewisham approved LGBT adopters; regardless of when they were approved. Lewisham also subscribe to Adoption Link and Placement Link, which provide potential matches for children who are waiting for adoptive placement.
- 8.19 The leaving care service provides support to Looked After Children who are leaving or have left care. This is targeted at young people aged between 16-25 years, and predominantly consists of advice, counselling and signposting to other support services. The service doesn't systematically monitor on the basis of sexual orientation, taking a bespoke needs-based assessment with each client instead. If a client identified their sexual orientation or gender identity as a factor that needs to be considered, this would be captured in their case report and explored as part of

their assessment. This could entail mediation work with their family, information on sexual health issues, or signposting to a relevant LGBT support group.

## 9 Lewisham Council Staff

9.1 Lewisham Council employment profile provides information on the Council's staff. According to the 2015-16 survey, the Council employs 2300 non-school staff. Data on sexuality is requested but not always completed by staff and so there is a large section of the workforce (54.74%) whose sexual orientation is unknown. This is similar to marital status and religion where a similar number of employees' data is unknown. The figures for sexual orientation in 2015/16 profile are as follows:

Lesbian or Gay	1.69%
Bisexual	0.17%
Heterosexual	39.35%
Prefer not to say	4.22%
Unknown	54.74%

As can be seen from the figures above, the non-disclosure of protected characteristics such as ethnicity, marital status, sexuality etc, remains high across the council. The HR division have said that they do make requests of the workforce from time to time and a decision has now been taken to undertake a refresh of the data once the Council IT active directory has been cleansed. This will enable HR to more effectively email employees within Directorates.

9.2 Lewisham Council has an LGBT staff forum created with the intention of providing a voice and support for LGBT staff and a means for those staff to raise specific issues and influence policy and organisational development. Membership is open to all LGBT staff working for the Council. There are currently approximately 40 staff on the mailing list and around 10 regular attendees. For the purpose of this report, the forum agreed to have a snapshot discussion with attendees to consider their experiences working at the Council and being LGBTQ.

9.3 Many of the comments from the feedback were positive citing for example the way in which the Council regularly supports gay pride and LGBT history month. The respect shown in marking the shootings in Orlando in June 2016 was also noted. Other comments included feeling confident discussing issues with managers and welcoming the commitment the Council makes to LGBT issues through actively supporting LGBT history month. Other comments included feeling accepted and that colleagues were supportive and tolerant.

9.4 There were however some concerns raised including the HR equality and diversity form which, it was felt, could be updated to ensure staff felt confident in providing data and therefore reducing the numbers of "unknowns" and providing more accurate workforce figures. Issues affecting the trans community were felt to not be widely known and it was suggested that additional training for staff could be beneficial. Additional training for managers, to ensure they are able to signpost staff to the forum, would be welcomed as would management training which ensured managers understood some of the broader issues that may affect the LGBT community and how they may be of relevance across service areas. Some forum members felt that in particular there was a lack of awareness around LGBT inter-sex and non-binary issues which meant that staff may not be supported and

services may not be taking these issues into account. There was also a comment that slang which negatively references the LGBT community had been heard in corridors on occasions.

- 9.5 The Forum members also felt they would welcome more discussions with the CYP Directorate particularly on Education and Adoption & Fostering. Forum members also queried the level of depth with which the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme considered LGBT issues. During staff inductions, new staff should be informed about the different forums available and members raised the possibility of HR providing a “New Staff pack” that includes information about support and staff forums which could be given out as part of the recruitment process.
- 9.6 The forum also highlighted the course ‘Respecting Diversity: Sexual Orientation’ which is available at the Lewisham Staff E Learning zone (<http://lewisham.learningpool.com/>). The course gives scenarios and discussion points as well as asking questions. Increasing awareness of this course and uptake was seen as being a useful aim.

## **10 Complaints**

- 10.1 The Council aims to deal with all complaints appropriately and sensitively. Current complaint categories include the “equality/diversity” complaint category on the complaints system and the Council does ask those commenting on Council services (via the complaints form) their sexual orientation. However, currently there is the potential for complaints to be categorised under another category even if there is an equality/diversity aspect to them.
- 10.2 The Council’s complaints and casework review recommended the current iCasework system should either be upgraded or replaced. In part this is because the current version does not include all necessary LGBT categorisations meaning that the data available is not statistically robust. The service is currently undertaking an analysis of available options, functionality and costs with the objective of replacing the system in 2017. The service will ensure that the replacement system has the capacity to record and report on sexual orientation appropriately, inclusive of all relevant options such as transgender. Guidance and training will be provided to staff to ensure as accurate as possible recording of complaints, an appropriate awareness of LGBT issues and a sensitive and informed workforce.

## **11 Housing and Homelessness**

- 11.1 Homelessness rates as measured by homelessness acceptances in Lewisham are higher than the London average at 5.9 per 1,000 households compared to London average of 5.1, however they have risen much less than the average since 2009. In the rest of England the figure was 1.9 per 1000 people.<sup>7</sup> Rough sleeping rates are high in London, 7,580 people were recorded as rough sleeping in London in 2014/15 (and were in touch with homeless outreach teams). The number of rough sleepers in London has increased every year since 2007 and is now more than double the number in the mid- 2000s.

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<sup>7</sup> Trust for London Poverty Profile <http://www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk/indicators/boroughs/lewisham/>

- 11.2 Single Homeless Intervention and Prevention (SHIP) provides support to single people who are homeless or are worried they might become homeless. They can be contacted either directly, or via a referral. Following an assessment of a person's situation, they will refer them to the housing service that best fits their needs, or signpost them to other agencies or support services.
- 11.3 Where a person's sexual orientation or gender identity is the cause of their homelessness, or potential homelessness, this will be discussed as part of their assessment. If the intention is to house them in supported accommodation alongside other residents, their sexual orientation or gender identity will be considered where appropriate in determining the most suitable housing option.

## **12 Older residents**

- 12.1 Lewisham Council's four lead providers of Social Care are, Medacs, Care Outlook, Westminster Homecare and Eleanor Health Care. All groups submit their Equalities policies at the time of tendering. The wording of the Equalities Policy for all four are very similar, they all refer to discrimination or harassment on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, marriage, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership.
- 12.2 For Eleanor Healthcare, as part of their training for staff, their equal opportunities policy and person centred care modules both reference LGBT clients, promoting tolerance and personal preferences. They don't have a specific policy or training course in this area.
- 12.3 Westminster covers LGBT during induction training and 'promotes their equalities & diversity policy through daily working practice.' WHC do not have specific training but if this was required then they would provide training to staff.
- 12.4 As a result of being contacted for this report some of the providers have said they would be very interested to see any examples of good practice in this area.
- 12.5 In terms of monitoring of customers, for nearly 80 % of users of social care in Lewisham, sexual orientation is unknown or undisclosed. There are many barriers to finding this information and many clients prefer not to say, are unable to say or in some circumstances family members may be completing information on behalf of the clients and it can be inappropriate to ask.

## **13 Legal Implications**

- 13.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 13.2 In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

13.3 It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.

13.4 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

13.5 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

- [The essential guide to the public sector equality duty](#)
- [Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making](#)
- [Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities](#)
- [Objectives and the equality duty. A guide for public authorities](#)
- [Equality Information and the Equality Duty: A Guide for Public Authorities](#)

13.6 The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance#h1>

## 14. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report.



## **Background Documents**

For further information please contact Katie Wood, Scrutiny Manager on 020 8314 9446

