Hidden 'scandal' of LGB and T hate crime exposed

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Press release

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Fear of how they will be treated is leading to thousands of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGB and T) not reporting hate crimes. As a result perpetrators are evading justice, a new report published today reveals.

Evidence nationally suggests around 35,000 cases of hate crime committed against people because of their sexual orientation go unreported every year.

The work is supported by GB governments and produced for the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The report from the University of Leicester's Centre for Hate Studies reveals that 88 per cent of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people had experienced some form of hate incident leaving them with emotional and physical scars. Based on in-depth interviews in Leicester and Leicestershire the report also states only 14 per cent of LGB victims reported their most recent experience of hate crime to the police.

Additional national evidence in the report shows that while victims of transphobia can be targeted up to 50 times in one year, only three in ten reports the incident.

The publication of the report coincides with a major new campaign to raise awareness of LGB and T hate crime by a partnership of 31 organisations, funded by the Commission.

With the message of 'Recognise it. Report it.' the campaign will empower LGB and T people to stand up against hate crime through education and training as well as establishing local partnerships.

Led by the LGBT Consortium, this is the first time that groups from across England and Wales have come together to tackle hate crime, with a focus on rural communities where reporting is especially low.

Paul Roberts, Chief Executive of the LGBT Consortium, said:

"LGBT communities are already working with the police to remove barriers to reporting, and offer practical and emotional support. However, too often, LGBT people don't know they are experiencing hate crime or just shrug it off.

"Collectively, we are saying it is time to move on from this. Our message today is recognise hate crime when it happens, report it, and get support when you need it."

National figures highlighted in the report include:

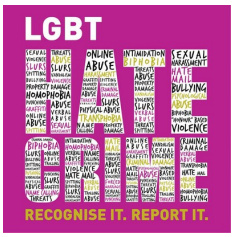
- •Only 4,267 incidents were recorded by police in 2012-13, despite the Crime Survey for England and Wales showing 39,000 homophobic hate incidents over the same period. That's nine times higher than the reported figure
- •Eight in ten LGB people have been verbally abused or harassed and one in ten have been physically assaulted
- •One in eight LGB people had received unwanted sexual contact

The report lists a variety of reasons for under-reporting including the 'normalisation' of hate incidents, concern about wasting police time, fears about being outed and previous negative experiences with the police.

Equality and Human Rights Commissioner Evelyn Asante-Mensah, called for committed action:

"Pride season is upon us and it seems an opportune moment to reflect on the great steps made towards equality, while highlighting the hidden scandal of underreporting of LGB and T hate crime.

Media:



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"Just as the Commission is doing with disability hate crime, we need to bring this problem into the open and create a culture where victims are confident to come forward and society confronts all forms of abuse."

The report makes a series of recommendations to tackle the issues surrounding reporting of hate crimes. These include; increased community outreach by police to build trust with LGB and T communities; an increase in third party reporting systems where needed; increasing awareness of how and where to report hate crime and looking at what can be learned from the reporting of other types of hate crime.

Galop, a specialist LGBT anti-violence charity, has joined the year-long anti-hate crime initiative as one of the lead delivery partners.

Their Chief Executive, Nik Noone, spoke of the urgent need for the partnership, saying:

"It is not acceptable that people go so long without support and assistance, so I am pleased that the EHRC is steadfastly behind our partnership's work to build strong local community responses to homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in every village, town and city."

Report author, Dr Stevie-Jade Hardy, a lecturer at the University of Leicester's Centre for Hate Studies, said:

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"Hate crimes are a routine, and mostly unreported feature of many LGB and T people's daily lives.

"Simply expecting victims to report without taking meaningful action to dismantle perceived and actual barriers is futile, particularly when the evidence shows that many have little confidence in the capacity of authorities to act empathetically or effectively."

The Commission is also funding the UK's only 24/7 nationwide LGB and T hate crime helpline, run by Stop Hate UK – 0808 801 0661.

Other regional helplines can be found at www.lgbthatecrime.org.uk

Ends

For more press information and interviews contact the Commission's media office on 0161 829 8102, out of office hours 07767 272 818.

Notes to Editors

- The Home Office, Ministry of Justice Westminster Government Equalities Office, Welsh Government and Crown Office Scotland representatives all sit on the project's Expert Reference Group.
- A further programme will begin shortly in Scotland to complement the work in England and Wales.
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission is a statutory body established under the Equality Act 2006. It is an independent body responsible for protecting and promoting equality and human rights in Great Britain. It aims to encourage equality and diversity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, and protect and promote human rights. The Commission enforces equality legislation on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. It encourages compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and is accredited by the UN as an 'A status' National Human Rights Institution.
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission has funded this Partnership from February 2015 through to March 2016.
- LGBT Consortium is the umbrella body for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Voluntary and Community Organisations in the United Kingdom. It provides support for organisations so they are able to deliver services to LGBT individuals.
- Galop is London's LGBT anti-violence & abuse charity. It gives advice and support to people who have experienced biphobia, homophobia, transphobia, sexual violence or domestic abuse. It also supports lesbian, gay, bi, trans people who have had problems with the police or have questions about the criminal justice system.
- Stop Hate is one of the leading national organisations working to challenge all forms of hate crime and discrimination, based on any aspect of an individual's identity. Stop Hate UK provides independent, confidential and accessible reporting and support for victims, witnesses and third parties.

LGBT Consortium Project partners are:

Allsorts Youth Project

Birmingham LGBT

Bi UK

Camden LGBT Centre

East London Out Project (ELOP)

Galop

Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES)

Gendered Intelligence

Health Equality and Rights Organisation t/a GMFA

Lancashire LGBT

Leicester LGBT

LGBT Consortium

LGBT Foundation

LGBTQ Youth Cornwall

London Friend

METRO

Mosaic LGBT Youth Group

North East LGBT Federation

Outreach Liverpool

PACE

Proud 2 b Parents

Proud2Be Project

Regard

SexYOUality

Space Youth Project

Stonewall Housing

The Intercom Trust

Trans Media Watch

Unity Group Wales

Yorkshire MESMAC

Youth North West

Details of the partnership's objectives can be found here:

http://www.lgbthatecrime.org.uk/#project-overview

Company Contact: