



LGBT IN SCOTLAND

HEALTH REPORT

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FOREWORD

For many lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) people, discrimination is an everyday reality. At work, on public transport, in shops and on the streets, LGBT people are subject to verbal and physical abuse. This can have a profound impact on their mental and physical wellbeing, so it's vital that they feel able to access quality healthcare when they need it.

Sadly, this isn't the case.

The *LGBT in Scotland: Health Report* shows the extent of the health inequalities faced by LGBT people. It highlights experiences of poor mental health, substance abuse, discrimination in healthcare environments, and challenges in accessing health services.

Half of LGBT people in Scotland have experienced depression in the last year, a figure which increases to seven in ten trans people. And within the LGBT community, bi and trans people, LGBT disabled people and LGBT people from lower income households are particularly at risk.

Many LGBT people – particularly those who are trans – continue to be 'outed' without their consent, treated with inappropriate curiosity and subjected to unequal treatment by healthcare staff. Consequently, LGBT people can be deterred from accessing NHS services, with many avoiding healthcare treatment for fear of discrimination. It is inevitable that this will have lasting effects on LGBT people's long-term health outcomes; an inequality which must be tackled.

Fortunately, we've seen strong commitments from NHS Scotland to ensure health services meet the needs of LGBT people. Over the last two years, we've worked in partnership with all 22 Health Boards to upskill NHS Scotland to better understand the healthcare needs and barriers to access of LGBT people, and to develop inclusive workplaces in which LGBT staff members are supported and valued. This ongoing work is critical to ensuring our services continue to improve.

But there's much more to be done, not least ensuring that healthcare staff receive comprehensive and effective training on the physical and mental health needs of LGBT patients, so they have greater awareness and understanding, and are better able to tackle discrimination and harassment. Effective monitoring of sexual orientation and gender identity will highlight inequalities in LGBT patients' experiences and outcomes and help address them through the development of targeted services and initiatives.

We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with NHS Scotland to ensure that our health service meets the needs of LGBT people and enables them to lead healthy lives in Scotland now - and in the future.



Colin Macfarlane
Director, Stonewall Scotland

THE STUDY

Stonewall commissioned YouGov to carry out a survey asking more than 5,000 lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) people across England, Scotland and Wales about their life today. Of these, 1,261 respondents live in Scotland.

This report, part of a series based on the research, examines the mental health and wellbeing of LGBT people and investigates the specific experiences of LGBT people when accessing healthcare services in Scotland. This study shows the rates of depression, anxiety and other mental health conditions among LGBT people. Additionally, the study focuses on the accessibility of healthcare services and the discrimination LGBT people face when seeking medical support.

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KEY FINDINGS

- **Half** of LGBT people (49 per cent) have experienced depression in the last year, including **seven in ten** trans people (72 per cent).
- **More than half** of trans people (52 per cent) have thought of taking their own life in the last year.
- **One in six** LGBT people (16 per cent) have deliberately harmed themselves in the last year.
- **One in ten** of LGBT people aged 18-24 (11 per cent) have taken drugs at least once a month in the last year.
- **Four per cent** of LGBT people have been pressured to access services to question or change their sexual orientation.
- **One in seven** trans people (14 per cent) have been pressured to access services to question or change their gender identity.
- **One in four** LGBT people (24 per cent) have witnessed discriminatory or negative remarks against LGBT people by healthcare staff.
- **One in eight** LGBT people (13 per cent) have received unequal treatment from healthcare staff because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **Almost two in five** trans people (37 per cent) have avoided healthcare treatment for fear of discrimination.
- **One in four** LGBT people (27 per cent) have experienced healthcare staff having a lack of understanding of specific lesbian, gay and bi health needs.
- **Nearly three in five** trans people (59 per cent) have experienced healthcare staff having a lack of understanding of specific trans health needs.
- **One in seven** LGBT people (14 per cent) aren't out to any healthcare staff about their sexual orientation when seeking general medical care.

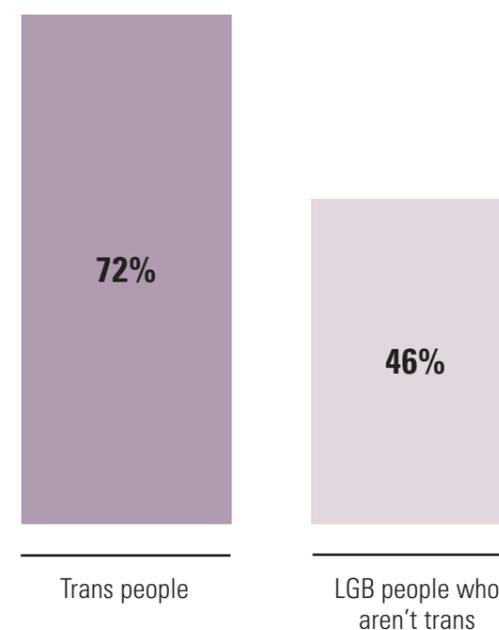
MENTAL HEALTH

A worrying number of LGBT people have experienced depression, anxiety, had suicidal thoughts or even attempted to take their own life in the last year. LGBT people are at a higher risk of experiencing common mental health problems than the general population. Participants explained how experiences of discrimination and harassment in day to day life, rejection from one's family and friends and being subjected to hate crimes and incidents can have a negative impact on mental well-being.

Half of LGBT people (49 per cent) reported that they had experienced depression in the last year, including **seven in ten** trans people (72 per cent).

Being forced to live as someone you're not, in a society that doesn't accept you, can cause mental health issues.
Sienna, 21

LGBT people who have experienced depression in the last year



Bi people experience high rates of depression, with **three in five** (59 per cent) experiencing depression over the last year. **Half** of LGBT women (50 per cent) and **more than two in five** LGBT men (43 per cent) have experienced the same.

Bi women (63 per cent) and bi men (47 per cent) are more likely to have experienced depression in the last year than lesbians (41 per cent) and gay men (42 per cent).

LGBT disabled people (70 per cent), LGBT people aged 18-24 (67 per cent), and LGBT people who have experienced a hate crime based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (65 per cent) are also more likely to have experienced depression.

LGBT people from lower income households (category C2DE) are more likely to experience depression than LGBT people from higher income households (category ABC1), **58 per cent** compared to **45 per cent**, respectively.

According to the Scottish Health Survey 2017, one in ten (11 per cent) adults in the general population in Scotland have reported experiencing two or more symptoms of depression in the last year.

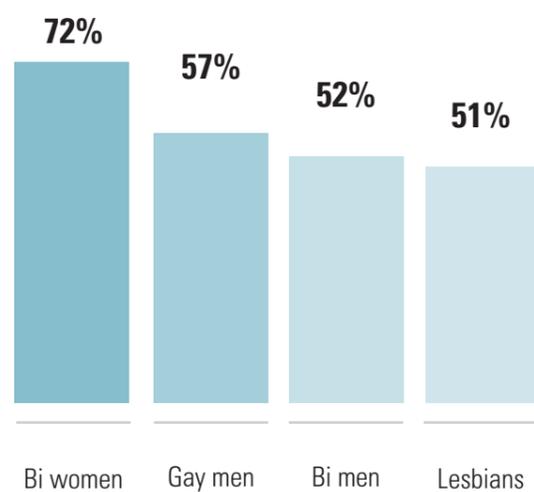
Homophobic behaviour is not the norm anymore, which I find heartening, but past behaviour has definitely taken a toll on at least one generation's mental health. Douglas, 37

Three in five LGBT people (60 per cent) reported experiencing anxiety in the last year, including almost **four in five** trans people (77 per cent). **Three in four** (75 per cent) LGBT people aged 18-24 have also experienced this. Bi women (72 per cent) are also more likely to have experienced anxiety.

Those who have experienced a hate crime because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the last year are particularly likely to have anxiety, with **three in four** (75 per cent) reporting having experienced anxiety.

Incidents of anxiety are higher among LGBT people in lower income households (category C2DE) than LGBT people in higher income households (category ABC1), **70 per cent** and **56 per cent**, respectively.

LGBT people who have experienced anxiety in the last year



One in twelve LGBT people (8 per cent) have experienced some form of addiction over the last year. This rises to **one in seven** (15 per cent) trans people.

Twelve per cent of disabled LGBT people have experienced addiction in the last year, compared to **six per cent** of LGBT people who aren't disabled.

One in twelve LGBT people (8 per cent) have experienced an eating disorder in the last year.

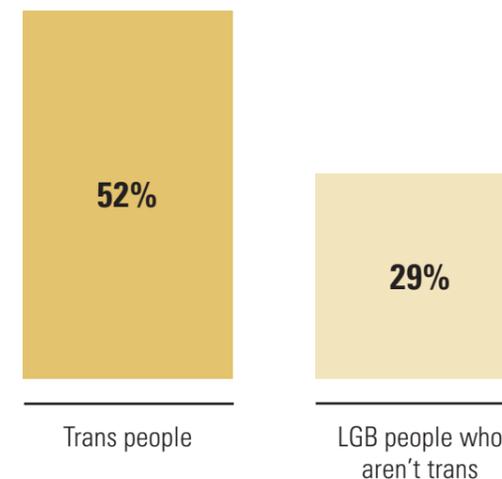
Sixteen per cent of trans people, and **23 per cent** of non-binary people, have experienced an eating disorder in the last year, compared to **eight per cent** of all LGBT women and **six per cent** of all GBT men.

One in ten LGBT people aged 18-24 (nine per cent) have attempted to take their own life in the last year. This number is similarly high for trans people, **seven per cent** of whom have attempted to take their own life, compared to **two per cent** of LGB people who aren't trans.

Six per cent of LGBT people in lower income households (category C2DE) have attempted to take their own lives, compared to only **one per cent** of those from higher income households (category ABC1). LGBT disabled people (**five per cent**) are also more likely to have attempted to take their own lives.

This is in comparison to the 6 per cent of the Scottish population who, according to the Scottish Health Survey 2017, have attempted to take their own life.

LGBT people who have thought about taking their own life in the last year



A further **32 per cent** of LGBT people have thought about taking their own life in the last year. This figure rises to **more than half** of trans people (52 per cent).

Young LGBT people aged 18 to 24 (51 per cent) and LGBT people who have been victims of a hate crime (44 per cent) because of their sexual orientation or gender identity are also more at risk.

We are still seeing terrible bullying and mental health issues in young LGBT people. A close friend's trans grandson took his life in the last two weeks. He didn't get the chance to learn that it gets better. Gillian, 50

Bi women (48 per cent) and bi men (36 per cent) are more likely to have thought about taking their own life in the last year than lesbians (23 per cent) and gay men (26 per cent).

Nearly two in five LGBT people (39 per cent) felt life was not worth living at some point over the last year. **Two in three** LGBT people aged 18-24 (67 per cent) and **three in five** trans people (61 per cent) have felt like life was not worth living in the last year.

I am open about my trans identity, but I feel dealing with my own personal mental and health issues and a society which isn't fully understanding can be somewhat overwhelming. Neil, 28

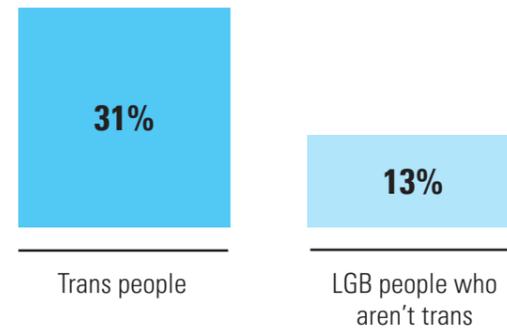
Almost three in five LGBT disabled people (57 per cent) have also felt like this, compared to **three in ten** LGBT people who aren't disabled (30 per cent).

Half of LGBT people from lower income households (51 per cent), compared to **over a third** of LGBT people in higher income households (35 per cent), have felt like life is not worth living.

One in six LGBT people (16 per cent) have deliberately harmed themselves in the last year.

Young people are particularly at risk, with two in five LGBT people aged 18-24 (**41 per cent**) having harmed themselves in the last year. **35 per cent** of non-binary people deliberately harmed themselves in the last year, compared to **19 per cent** of LGBT women and **9 per cent** of LGBT men. Three in ten trans people (**31 per cent**) have self-harmed in the last year, compared to **13 per cent** of LGBT people who aren't trans.

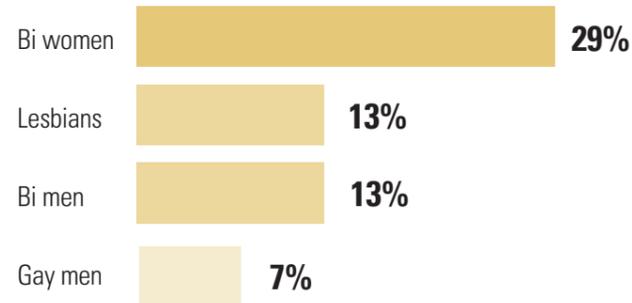
LGBT people who have deliberately harmed themselves in the last year



One in four LGBT disabled people (26 per cent) have self-harmed in the last year. This falls to **one in ten** LGBT people who aren't disabled (11 per cent).

According to the Scottish Health Survey 2017, 6 per cent of adults in Scotland have self-harmed at some point in their lives.

LGBT people who have deliberately harmed themselves in the last year



RECOMMENDATIONS

We welcome the commitments made by the Scottish Government in their recent Suicide Prevention Action Plan, *Every Life Matters*, to address the mental health needs of LGBT people, including through targeted initiatives to prevent suicides within the LGBT community and other at-risk groups.

THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SHOULD:

- Fund training for mental health professionals on LGBT patients' needs, including a focus on supporting trans patients and service users.
- Ensure that staff in schools and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are effectively trained to support LGBT young people experiencing poor mental health.
- Ensure that LGBT people's needs are taken into consideration throughout the implementation of the Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy.

- With NHS Scotland, commission new research on effective interventions that address the causes of LGBT poor mental health.

NHS SCOTLAND HEALTH BOARDS SHOULD:

- With the Scottish Government, ensure all staff are trained on the mental health needs of LGBT people, including providing training for CAMHS practitioners on referral pathways for Gender Identity Services.
- Consistently monitor patients' sexual orientation and gender identity to identify inequalities in LGBT patient experiences and outcomes and develop targeted services and initiatives to address these.
- Make LGBT-inclusive information and resources readily available for patients.

MEDICAL AND NURSING SCHOOLS, AND MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING PROVIDERS SHOULD:

- Review their curricula, standards, and compulsory and ongoing training to ensure they are fully inclusive of the needs of LGBT people.

DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTHCARE

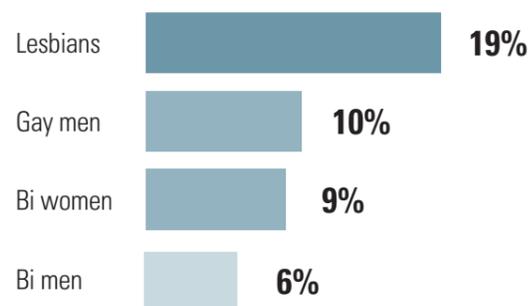
Stonewall Scotland's *Unhealthy Attitudes Scotland* research with healthcare providers revealed in 2015 that LGBT people face discrimination and lack of understanding of their specific health needs when accessing services. Healthcare services have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to treat LGBT people fairly and without discrimination. However, this research shows that LGBT people continue to face these barriers in accessing healthcare treatment today.

LGBT people have often had their specific health needs overlooked by healthcare professionals, which leaves them with a lack of trust in their healthcare provider. Multiple needs are often not taken into account, which affects some of the most vulnerable LGBT people. Some LGBT people aren't open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity when seeking medical help because of fear of unfair treatment and invasive questioning.

One in eight LGBT people (13 per cent) have received unequal treatment from healthcare staff because they are LGBT. **One in four** trans people (26 per cent) have received unequal treatment, as well as **one in six** LGBT disabled people (17 per cent).

I accessed emergency care via 111. When the nurse learned of my sexuality, her tone changed from empathetic to antagonistic and unhelpful. Lucas, 39

LGBT people who have experienced unequal treatment from healthcare staff



I have experienced repeated expression of prejudiced attitudes towards me by mental health service providers due to me being trans, some in NHS and some in non-NHS services. Repeatedly being needlessly outed as trans without my consent by NHS professionals to other NHS professionals despite being transitioned for over 15 years and having a Gender Recognition Certificate. And repeatedly being asked intrusive and completely irrelevant questions by NHS professionals about my transition and other aspects of being trans

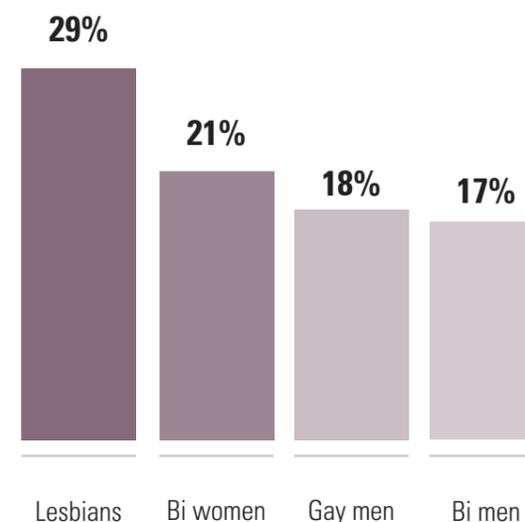
Euan, 39

One in four LGBT people (23 per cent) have experienced inappropriate curiosity from healthcare staff because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. **Eight per cent** of LGBT people have experienced this in the last year alone.

Trans people (41 per cent) have experienced inappropriate curiosity from healthcare staff, with **one in four** (24 per cent) having experienced this in the last year alone.

Lesbians (29 per cent) and LGBT disabled people (29 per cent) are also more likely to experience inappropriate curiosity from healthcare staff than other groups.

LGBT people who have experienced inappropriate curiosity from healthcare staff



One in ten LGBT people (9 per cent) have been outed without their consent by healthcare staff in front of other staff or patients. **Nearly three in ten** trans people (28 per cent) have been outed without their consent, compared to **seven per cent** of LGB people who aren't trans. **14 per cent** of LGBT disabled people have also experienced this.

One in four LGBT people (24 per cent) have witnessed discriminatory or negative remarks against LGBT people by healthcare staff. This rises to **two in five** trans people (41 per cent). In the last year alone, **seven per cent** of LGBT people – including **15 per cent** of trans people – have witnessed these remarks.

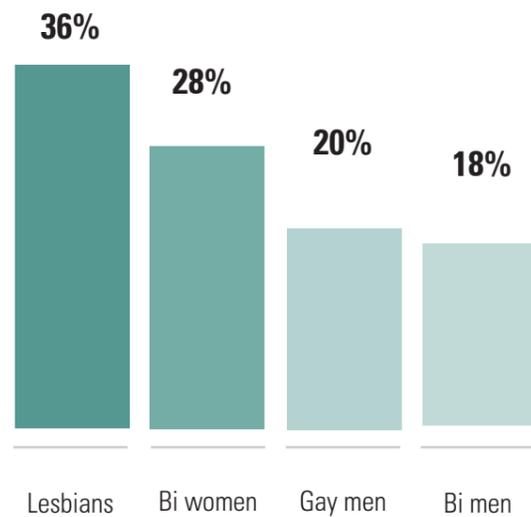
Worryingly, an alarming number of LGBT people have been pressured to access services which intend to change or suppress their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

While accessing healthcare services, **four per cent** of LGBT people have been pressured to access services to question or change their sexual orientation. This number rises to **five per cent** of LGBT people aged 18-24 and LGBT disabled people.

One in seven trans people (14 per cent) have been pressured to access services to suppress their gender identity while accessing healthcare services. **Seven per cent** have been pressured to access these services in the last year alone.

One in four LGBT people (27 per cent) said they have experienced healthcare staff lacking an understanding of specific lesbian, gay and bi health needs, with **eight per cent** saying that they encountered that in the last year.

LGBT people who experienced a lack of understanding by healthcare staff



Medical professionals are not that good with lesbians. I don't go to the GP very often because they're not familiar with lesbian issues usually. Donna, 49

Nearly three in five trans people (59 per cent) said they have experienced healthcare staff having a lack of understanding of specific trans health needs, with **two in five** (40 per cent) reporting having experienced this in the last year.

There is a Gender Identity Clinic in the city I live in, although a referral is required from your GP. Fortunately, when I visited my GP I knew that I needed to be referred here as they had little knowledge or information on trans health (and was perfectly open about this, although incredibly understanding of my situation). If I didn't know about the GIC, I'm not sure I'd have been given the correct help. Gordon, 33

One in seven LGBT people (14 per cent) aren't out to anyone about their sexual orientation when seeking general medical care. This number rises to **31 per cent** of bi men and **24 per cent** of bi women, compared to **10 per cent** of lesbians and **8 per cent** of gay men. **Almost one in five trans** people (18 per cent) aren't out to anyone about their gender identity when seeking medical care.

Health professionals ask if I might be pregnant, and when I say no, follow up with 'Have you had unprotected sex with your partner since your last period?' which, even if I had, would hardly get me pregnant. Having to decide whether to come out to people you hardly know and may never see again is never-ending and a little bit wearying. Claire, 36

More than a third of trans people (36 per cent) and **eight per cent** of LGB people who aren't trans experienced difficulty accessing healthcare because they are LGBT. **One in six** LGBT disabled people (16 per cent) have experienced difficulty accessing healthcare services.

Improved access to healthcare for my partner, who is transitioning, has made a huge positive difference to them and to our relationship. Lauren, 27

Thirteen per cent of trans people have been refused care by a healthcare service, compared to **one per cent** of LGB people who aren't trans. This was also an issue for **four per cent** of LGBT disabled people.

One in eight LGBT people (12 per cent) avoided treatment for fear of discrimination because they are LGBT. **Almost two in five** trans people (37 per cent), and **nearly one in five** LGBT people aged 18-24 (19 per cent) and LGBT disabled people (18 per cent) have avoided treatment for fear of discrimination.

Until very recently, I seldom had a good relationship with health centre staff, GPs and nurses. It seems to me that it never occurs to many of them to ask for or be receptive to information about gender & sexuality so that they can factor this in when dealing with healthcare needs. I suggest much better training is required in some areas. I'm 65 now and this is a concern as I think about ageing and how people are treated in hospitals and in care homes. Linda, 65

When I attended at A&E and more than one medical member of staff asked, "Is this your friend?" when gesturing to my wife. How hard would it be for all staff to ask all patients "who have you brought with you to hospital today?". I'm sure if my wife had been a man they wouldn't have asked if she was my friend. Elaine, 56

RECOMMENDATIONS

NHS SCOTLAND SHOULD:

- Ensure that relevant training provided to NHS Scotland staff is inclusive of the health needs of LGBT patients and service users.
- Identify best practise for LGBT-inclusive staff training and share this learning across NHS Scotland.
- Develop highly visible campaigns to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic discrimination in healthcare services and encourage reporting.
- Develop and prominently display bullying and harassment policies which communicate a zero-tolerance approach to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic discrimination, and publicise clear complaints procedures to encourage reporting.

TRAINING PROVIDERS, MEDICAL AND NURSING SCHOOLS, ROYAL COLLEGES, THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL, AND THE NURSING AND MIDWIFERY COUNCIL SHOULD:

- Review their curricula, standards and training to ensure that teaching, and compulsory and ongoing training, covers the health inequalities facing LGBT people, and providing LGBT-inclusive care, including specific information on providing trans-inclusive care.

THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SHOULD:

- Continue to publicly condemn 'conversion therapy' and consider further steps for action to ensure this practice can no longer be made available.

Further recommendations on trans inclusion in general healthcare services and transition-related healthcare can be found in our 2018 report with YouGov, **LGBT in Britain: Trans Report**

SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

In line with trends in the general population, LGBT people's smoking, alcohol and drug consumption varies according to age: older LGBT people are more likely to drink alcohol almost every day than younger LGBT people, while younger LGBT people are more likely to smoke and take drugs. Evidence suggests the alcohol and drug consumption of LGBT people is marginally higher than that of the general population, while there is now more parity in smoking between both groups.

One in seven LGBT people (14 per cent) drank alcohol almost every day over the last year.

According to the Scottish Health Survey 2017, nearly one in ten (nine per cent) adults drank alcohol on five or more days in the past week.

Older LGBT people are more likely to drink, with **one in four** LGBT people aged 65+ (24 per cent) saying they drank almost every day last year, compared to just **one in ten** LGBT people aged 18-24 (nine per cent).

One in seven LGBT people (15 per cent) smoke almost every day, however most LGBT people have not smoked in the last year, with **70 per cent** saying so.

According to the Scottish Health Survey 2017, 18 per cent of adults in the general population smoked cigarettes within the last year.

Smoking gets less common with age, with **78 per cent** of those aged 65+ claiming to have not smoked in the last year, and only **53 per cent** of LGBT people aged 18-24 saying the same.

One in ten of LGBT people aged 18-24 (11 per cent) took drugs at least once a month, compared to **four per cent** of LGBT people aged 65+. **Seven per cent** of trans people have taken drugs at least once a month, compared to **five per cent** of LGB people who aren't trans.

According to the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey for 2014-15, three per cent of adults had taken drugs in the last month, compared to nine per cent of people aged 16 to 24.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NHS HEALTH SCOTLAND AND NATIONAL RECORDS OF SCOTLAND SHOULD:

- Ensure national datasets on alcohol, smoking and illegal substance use include data broken down by sexual orientation, gender identity, and for people with multiple protected characteristics (such as LGBT disabled people, BAME LGBT people, and LGBT people from low income households).
- Support regional and local partners to implement targeted initiatives to address any inequalities for

disadvantaged groups and those with protected characteristics.

- Support public health services to routinely monitor sexual orientation and gender identity by providing guidance and training for frontline staff.

NHS SCOTLAND SHOULD:

- Ensure staff working within drug and alcohol services understand the inequalities that exist and are trained to understand the health needs of LGBT patients and service users.

METHODOLOGY

Between February and April 2017, 5,375 lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) people across England, Scotland and Wales completed an online questionnaire about their life today, which was administered by YouGov on behalf of Stonewall.

This report is based on the 1,261 respondents who live in Scotland. Participants were recruited through the YouGov panel and via an open recruitment that circulated through a wide range of organisations, community groups, and individuals.

The sample

- 45 per cent of respondents are women (including trans women), 48 per cent are men (including trans men) and 6 per cent describe their gender in a different way. Different terms that respondents used to describe their gender identity include 'non-binary', 'genderfluid' and 'genderqueer'. People who used a different term to describe their gender identity are referred to as 'non-binary people' throughout the report.
- 62 per cent of respondents are gay or lesbian, 29 per cent are bi, eight per cent use a different term to describe their sexual orientation and one per cent are straight.
- 10 per cent of respondents identify as trans and a further three per cent are unsure of whether they are trans or are questioning their gender identity.
- 33 per cent of respondents are disabled.
- Three per cent of respondents are black, Asian or minority ethnic.

Unless stated otherwise, graphs referring to LGB identities include all people who identify as lesbian, gay or bi, including people who identify as trans and those who do not identify as trans. The figures have been weighted by region and age. All differences reported in the survey are statistically significant. All names in quotes have been changed for anonymity and ages have been assigned from within age bands.

The sample size for black, Asian, or minority ethnic (BAME) LGBT people in Scotland was unfortunately too low to include a specific breakdown of their experiences in this report. However, the full *LGBT in Britain* report does include this data. We are working hard to develop relationships with ethnic minority communities in Scotland and to ensure that our work to combat the issues highlighted in this report is also reflective of the experiences of BAME LGBT people in Scotland.

LGBT IN SCOTLAND

HEALTH REPORT

We are still seeing terrible bullying and mental health issues in young LGBT people. A close friend's trans grandson took his life in the last two weeks. He didn't get the chance to learn that it gets better.

Gillian, 50

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Euan, 39

Health professionals ask if I might be pregnant, and when I say no, follow up with 'Have you had unprotected sex with your partner since your last period?' which, even if I had, would hardly get me pregnant. Having to decide whether to come out to people you hardly know and may never see again is never-ending and a little bit wearying.

Claire, 36

Designed by Annabel Dakin

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