

challenging homophobic & transphobic hate crime

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# FILLING IN THE BLANKS BLANKS

## LGBT HATE CRIME IN LONDON

Executive Summary

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**HOMOPHOBIC  
TRANSPHOBIC  
ABUSE?**

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# Introduction

Filling in the Blanks is a landmark investigation into homophobic and transphobic hate crime in London. The research aimed to increase our understanding about the nature of homophobic and transphobic hate crime, and about the options for victims to report their experiences and get the support they may need.

The research, funded by the City Parochial Foundation, the Metropolitan Police Service and the Metropolitan Police Authority, was undertaken by Galop in partnership with Stonewall Housing and London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard.

The research was approached in three phases. In the first phase the aim was to map the range of reporting and support services targeted at victims of homophobic and transphobic hate crime in London. The second phase involved a period of partnership working between the three organisations, to create a collated dataset of incidents reported to each organisation. In the final phase the data that had been collected was analysed and, where possible, compared with MPS data.

This document presents a summary of the research conclusions and findings. A much fuller report, with a detailed breakdown of the range of reporting services available in London, and a more comprehensive and complex analysis of the cases, is available from Galop. The report can also be downloaded at Galop's website [www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk).



# 1. MAPPING EXERCISE



In this phase, the aim was to find out what kind of services were available for victims of homophobic and transphobic hate crime in London. A range of methods were used, including internet searches and phone surveys, to get a broad picture of the range of services and how they work. The full chapter on the mapping exercise gives details of the types of third party reporting schemes which exist, and some of the challenges faced in trying to ensure they are effective.

It is clear from the mapping exercise that a significant proportion of otherwise unreported homophobic and transphobic hate incidents are either informally 'told' or more formally reported to a range of agencies and organisations across London. However, in the majority of cases, these agencies do not have a system for recording this information – leading to a wealth of missing data and an inhibited understanding of homophobia and transphobia. Even where information is recorded, it tends to be retained by the individual organisation, with no shared recording systems and no method for wider dissemination. The mapping exercise also identified a lack of shared language and terminology relating to both hate crimes, and methods of reporting. This further inhibits shared understanding and action.

The research identified some good practice in individual London boroughs, and highlighted the fact that despite a lack of tools and guidance, many local authorities, police boroughs and voluntary sector organisations have sought to be proactive in combating LGBT hate crime. However, although committed to action, there were a number of challenges to overcome, including:

- No consistency or standardisation of third party reporting services across London, with no minimum standards in existence.
- No evidence base identifying what makes an effective hate crime initiative. There appeared to be little guidance for organisations funding or providing a LGBT third party reporting service to show what initiatives are likely to increase reporting and provide help to victims.
- Inconsistent involvement of the MPS, or of LGBT police liaison officers in third party reporting initiatives locally.

The research found no overall strategy on increasing reporting and providing third party reporting options in London. As a result of this and the challenges outlined above, there appears to have been a proliferation of initiatives across London, most of which were funded to work within a single borough or area. This has led to an uneven and inconsistent approach to encouraging the reporting of hate crime across London, with some boroughs having more than one reporting initiative, and others with none. Many schemes have proved ineffective, often because of a range of issues which, in addition to those outlined above, include:

- Inherent problems with a borough based approach which doesn't always reflect the reality of LGBT people's lives.
- Little sustainability for schemes because of a lack of long term funding commitments.
- Unrealistically low funding which didn't include resources for training and relied on volunteers and under-resourced voluntary sector partners to deliver services.

There has been no effective evaluation of the delivery and performance of third party reporting services across the capital. Some respondents to the mapping exercise also questioned the effectiveness of True Vision, which has also not been evaluated.

The research also found that victims and organisations providing victims with support often encountered problems in contacting the police for example out of date information on websites, phone numbers that don't work, and no central place listing reporting options. Emphasis appeared to be focused on increasing the numbers of incidents reported, rather than focusing on outcomes sought by victims and ensuring that reports are properly followed up.

# Mapping exercise recommendations

## A strategic approach

A strategic approach to reporting of homophobic and transphobic hate crime in London is needed. Leadership from the criminal justice system and London government, as well as Galop and other key stakeholders is needed to move this forward. Any strategy should ensure the following:

- A focus beyond simply increasing levels of reporting, which seeks to ensure positive outcomes for victims who report incidents.
- Minimum standards guidance for third party initiatives are developed (by Galop in partnership with other stakeholders), including shared language, standardisation of questions and information sharing protocols.

## Evaluate what works

There is a need for effective evaluation of third party reporting initiatives. This should include:

- Which models are proven to provide a good service to victims.
- An evaluation of True Vision.
- An assessment of what kind of advertising is effective in increasing reporting levels.

## Increase the effectiveness of third party reporting initiatives

Third party initiatives need to be provided with support to ensure that they are effective. This should include:

- A realistic assessment of voluntary sector capacity (including available resources) factored into initiatives.
- The MPS should play a more consistent role in local third party initiatives, and there should be increased consistency in the role of the LGBT Liaison Officer.
- An agreement about minimum standards on sending third party reports to police, and on police response time, including feedback on outcomes to organisations making third party reports.
- The MPS should provide a single point of contact to report inaccurate or out of date information on publicity and websites.
- Encouragement for LGBT organisations to record and share information.
- Setting up systems for central dissemination of learning and statistics to ensure improved understanding.
- Setting up systems for joint working between LGBT organisations to share good practice and take advantage of economies of scale.
- Coherent publicity for third party reporting should be developed, which could include a single telephone helpline for victims of LGBT hate crime.

## Improve funding

A strategic and effective reporting service for victims of homophobic and transphobic hate crime requires on reliable and consistent statutory funding from central government, London government and

London criminal justice system sources, which needs to include funding for:

- Pan-London reporting services.
- Galop to provide ongoing training and support to encourage other organisations to record information on hate crime.
- Galop to continue to collate and disseminate this shared information.



## **2. PARTNERSHIP PHASE**

During this second research phase, a working partnership between Galop, Stonewall Housing and London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard was established. This enabled all three organisations to improve and increase the amount of information that they were able to collect on incidents experienced by their clients.

The project worker worked with each organisation to develop recording and monitoring systems that were appropriate to the organisation, but which used common language and categorisation, enabling the sharing and comparing of the data that was collected. This phase of the research demonstrates the achievement, benefits and some of the obstacles to joint working with LGBT voluntary sector organisations to encourage them to record and increase intelligence on homophobic and transphobic hate crime. The project successfully brought together three voluntary LGBT organisations to work jointly to collect more data on homophobic/transphobic hate crime, and do so in a more coherent way. This led to the ability to share information both within the sector and with the MPS, which would not usually have been disseminated (or even collected).

It is clear from the process of collection and analysis that victims of incidents are reporting to LGBT voluntary organisations. However, numbers of cases reported to LGBT voluntary organisations suggest that homophobic and transphobic hate crime is under-reported. It will be important in future research to develop a more complex understanding of reasons for under-reporting, beyond a fear of the police, as this is only part of the problem.

The project particularly highlighted the ways in which relatively small changes to existing monitoring systems used by LGBT voluntary organisations can lead to more detailed data being collected on hate crime.

All organisations involved in the project were operating with restricted resources, for various reasons. For example, for a significant period Galop did not have funding for its full time caseworker role. During the project, Stonewall Housing's funding for its hate crime advice worker ended. LLGS's services are provided by volunteers, which though a strength of its business model, created restrictions in its ability to implement consistent monitoring and recording. As a result of these restrictions, as well as the different remits and focus of the organisations, it is clear that LGBT organisations are more likely to agree to minor additions to their existing data collection rather than use a separate system to record data, with some LGBT organisations being able to collect more data than others.

The project emphasised the fact that changes to the way voluntary organisations record data do not necessarily lead to an increase in the number of cases being reported but do result in more consistent data being collected about incidents.

Finally, it is clear that it takes considerable time to implement and sustain a joint initiative to gather data on hate crime because of insecure funding and staffing within the LGBT voluntary sector. The success of the joint working pilot was reliant on the additional resource that was provided by the project, as dedicated staffing had a key role in supporting change through negotiation, problem solving and staff development. Change takes time, and the expertise and leadership of the project were needed to create a standard for recording and reporting, as well as to implement this standard. Any longevity of the project is entirely dependant on securing funding to lead the collection, recording and analysis process. The goodwill of LGBT organisations themselves cannot be relied upon, as they do not have the capacity to collect/collate data alone.

# Partnership phase recommendations

## Galop should:

- Continue to collate and interpret shared data.
- Disseminate statistics from non-police reports to statutory organisations that collate figures on homophobic and transphobic hate crime.
- Work with partners to produce new guidelines on standardising recording and reporting methods.
- Provide training and support materials to assist volunteers and staff working in the LGBT voluntary sector to gather data on homophobic/transphobic hate crime.
- Work with organisations that are unable to record information about incidents to encourage them signpost victims to Galop and the MPS.

## LGBT organisations:

- Current project partners should continue collecting and sharing data.
- Third party reporting initiatives across London should work with Galop to develop standardised reporting forms, and should share data with Galop for dissemination across London.
- Should build links with statutory services in education, health and housing to encourage more reporting and ensure that victims of homophobia/transphobia receive help and protection.
- LGBT Forums should disseminate information on homophobic/transphobic incidents reported to local organisations.

## Central Government, London Government and London criminal justice partners:

- Should take account of the number of non-police reports when reporting on figures on homophobic/transphobic hate crime.
- Provide Galop and other LGBT partners with the funding and resources necessary to build and maintain an ongoing database of non-police reports.
- Work with Galop and other LGBT partners to standardise collection and reporting methods across London, and ensure that this standard is met in any new or existing reporting initiatives.



The image features a blue sky with scattered white clouds. A solid dark green horizontal band is positioned across the middle of the image. The text '3. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS' is printed in white, bold, uppercase letters on the right side of this green band.

### **3. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

The final phase of the research was an in-depth statistical analysis of the data which had been collected during the partnership phase, in addition to some historical data from Galop which was added to the dataset. The voluntary sector dataset was made up of over 700 cases, and was compared, where possible, to comparable data from the MPS, to discover any relevant differences in the types of cases that were being reported within the voluntary sector. This analysis differs from traditional survey data, in that it reflects actual cases which were reported to LGBT organisations, as opposed to asking a survey sample about any experiences they may have had.

This analysis of the data reveals a number of key patterns. The figures reveal some of the ways in which different sections of the LGBT communities experience homophobic and transphobic hate crime. These differences mean that it is important for those responsible for hate crime initiatives to ensure that they target different sections of the community, and do not treat LGBT people as a homogenous whole.

There are a number of similar patterns discernable in the cases reported to the MPS and LGBT organisations; however there are also some important differences which highlight areas where people are less likely to seek help from the police instead approaching LGBT organisations for support and alternative outcomes. It is clear that LGBT organisations play a vital role in providing alternative routes for reporting experiences, and getting appropriate advice and support, and that without these services some victims would simply not report at all.

The data reveals that gay and bisexual men were most likely to report hate incidents, to both LGBT organisations and the MPS.

- About three quarters of all reports made to LGBT organisations were from men, and about four fifths of reports made to the MPS were from men.

A higher proportion of men reported violence, and a higher proportion of women reported sexual assault.

- Three in ten reports to LGBT organisations from men involved violent incidents, compared to two in ten reports from women

Higher proportions of trans people reported verbal abuse and repeat harassment.

- Almost six out of ten reports to LGBT organisations from trans people involved verbal abuse and/or repeat harassment, compared with just over three out of ten of reports from non-trans people.

Both younger (18 and under) and older (over 50) LGBT people appear less likely to contact either LGBT organisations or the MPS about incidents. BME LGBT victims of homophobic or transphobic incidents appear more likely to be the victim of an incident in or near their home.

- This occurred in three quarters of incidents, compared to half of incidents targeted at white victims.

A significant percentage of victims contacting LGBT organisations were living with a disability. Those with mental health issues might be particularly vulnerable, and this underlines the importance of inclusive mental health and counselling services for LGBT people.

- More than a quarter of all clients contacting LGBT organisations were living with a disability, and more than three in ten of these clients had mental health difficulties.

In general verbal abuse and threats were the most commonly reported type of hate crime, followed by physical violence. There was also a range of other incidents which were also homophobic or transphobic in nature, including sexual violence, domestic abuse and damage to property.

- More than three in ten incidents reported included some form of verbal abuse or threats.
- Over a quarter of all incidents involved physical violence.
- Nearly one in ten incidents involved domestic abuse.

Despite perceptions about the nature of hate crime, victims were as likely to contact LGBT organisations about incidents that occur in or near to their homes as they were about incidents taking place in the street or near LGBT venues. Incidents also occurred in a wide range of locations, however there is likely to be particular under-reporting from certain settings such as PSEs and schools.

- Nearly three fifths of incidents reported to LGBT organisations took place on or near the home, compared to one fifth taking place in the street.

The MPS appear to be more likely to be contacted by victims who were attacked in public areas but less likely to be contacted about incidents occurring in/near the home. It appears that victims are more likely therefore to approach an LGBT organisation to report domestic abuse or ongoing harassment.

More incidents were recorded as taking place in inner London boroughs compared to outer London boroughs and incidents occurred at all times of the day/week/month, not just at night or on during the weekend.

Victims contacting organisations about an incident appeared more likely to know the perpetrator(s) than for the perpetrator to be a stranger, which is likely to be because the majority of attacks took place in or near the home.

- Nearly half of all victims reporting to LGBT organisations knew the perpetrator of the incident, compared to over three tenths of cases in which the perpetrator was a stranger.

Perpetrators of incidents are most likely to be young men. Given the significant majority of perpetrators who fit this category this is a group that could be targeted in any initiatives seeking to prevent hate crime.

- Between five and six tenths of identifiable perpetrators were aged under 30, and in more than seven in ten incidents the perpetrator was male.

Around half of all callers to LGBT organisations did not report their experiences to the police, because of lack of confidence in the police, or because they feared the consequences of reporting to them, such as reprisals. Significant proportions of victims however, make contact with LGBT organisations after already reporting to the police or other statutory service, because they want further help or advice. A large number of these victims did not want to make a formal third party report to the police, but were seeking other sorts of outcomes. In addition, a large percentage of victims contacting LGBT organisations are dissatisfied with the response of the police after having reported an incident. One in ten felt the police response had been negative/unhelpful or homophobic/transphobic. The large percentage of victims expressing dissatisfaction with the police response, as well as the numbers choosing to contact LGBT organisations for additional support and advice, suggest that the emphasis on reporting alone may not be appropriate. As discussed in the findings and conclusions of the mapping exercise, many people 'tell' someone about their experiences, rather than directly wanting to report. These people are often seeking outcomes that the police cannot offer, such as emotional support or

legal advice. It is vital both that these more supportive reporting services continue to exist, but also that the experience of reporting directly to the MPS is improved, particularly in ensuring communication with both victims and organisation which pass on reports.

## Statistical analysis recommendations

### Victims

Further work needs to be done in reaching specific groups, both in crime prevention and in reporting services and related advertising. All agencies working with LGBT victims of crime need to recognise and respond to these differences as well as the cross-sectional discrimination many LGBT victims experience. This might include:

- Different strategies may be needed to target men and women, and trans people, to encourage reporting due to their different experiences.
- Strategies for reporting should recognise the specific obstacles faced by both older and younger LGBT people, recognising that the need may be for alternative outcomes such as housing, rather than just reporting.
- A focus on BME people who experience particular problems with housing, following repeat incidents of homophobic or transphobic incidents.
- LGBT voluntary organisations providing hate crime services should build links with organisations that support people with disabilities and those with health problems. This could include building expertise in supporting LGBT people with mental health issues.

### Incidents

Whilst attacks by strangers in public continue to be an important focus of hate crime initiatives, it is also important to recognise that significant proportions of incidents occur in or near the home, and that a focus on these types of incidents is also necessary. This might include:

- A strategic response within housing services to homophobic and transphobic harassment, including a recognition of the risk of escalation when no or ineffective intervention is made.
- An explicit agreement between third party reporting services and the MPS regarding the level of response a victim of verbal abuse can expect, which can be communicated to the victim.
- A continued attempt by both voluntary and statutory organisations to promote greater understanding of the nature and extent of domestic abuse experienced by LGBT people, including the recognition that domestic abuse can also involve hate crime.
- Central Government, London Government and London criminal justice partners should work together to provide appropriate refuge space for gay and bisexual men, and trans people fleeing domestic abuse.

### How often, where and when incidents occur

The data challenged some of the commonly held perceptions about when and where homophobic and transphobic crime can occur. Services need to consider the following:

- Establishing a system for hotspot mapping based on data from both LGBT voluntary sector

groups and the MPS. This mapping should be disseminated widely via LGBT forums and other methods, to ensure that organisations can focus their resources appropriately.

- LGBT voluntary organisations should be provided with funding from central government to assist victims approaching them from outside the London area.
- Targeting interventions at homophobic/transphobic hotspots such as public transport hubs and public sex environments, with the MPS working in partnership with LGBT organisations.
- Using publicity to challenge the myth that attacks only happen in the evenings.
- Where possible, LGBT voluntary organisations should keep a clear record of the time and dates of incidents reported to them to identify any patterns or hotspots.

## Perpetrators

The research highlighted the value of collecting information on perpetrators. Building on this information by continuing to analyse information on perpetrators would allow the development of programmes to prevent homophobic and transphobic hate crime. To assist with this aim:

- Where possible, LGBT organisations should consistently collect data on perpetrators to identify patterns.
- The MPS and LGBT voluntary sector organisations should develop interventions that target perpetrators of homophobic/transphobic hate crime, focusing on particular areas such as the home, local neighbourhoods and schools.
- Initiatives focused on homophobic and transphobic hate crime could consider interventions targeted at potential perpetrators, for example, by challenging the cultural values and prejudices of young men (the largest perpetrator group).

## Outcomes

Victims of homophobic and transphobic hate crime seek a variety of outcomes which can only be achieved by an effective partnership between the MPS and LGBT voluntary sector organisations. Ensuring that both types of service deliver the outcomes that victims need would involve:

- Ensuring that LGBT third party reporting initiatives are funded to provide comprehensive assistance to victims rather than being used simply as a tool to increase the numbers of reports.
- Research by the MPS into why the levels of dissatisfaction exist following reports of incidents, and a strategic response to improving satisfaction levels. This may include minimum standards on reporting back on progress with a case, and a single point of contact to report out of date or inaccurate information on the public domain.
- Central Government, London Government and London criminal justice partners working together to provide appropriate resources to LGBT organisations to develop and maintain services for victims of hate crime who need help and support following homophobic/ transphobic incidents. This service should be consistent throughout London.
- Where possible, LGBT organisations recording anonymous data on homophobic and transphobic incidents where a victim does not want to make a formal report.







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