

# LGBT Community and Domestic Violence

## Challenges to Prevention, Protection and Intervention

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September | HU5.12 | 10 – 2pm | De Montfort University Leicester

### Abstracts

**Paul Fitzgerald**

**LGBT Leicester**

#### **Denial Is Not A River In Egypt**

Paul's presentation will explain the issues of LGBT Community and Domestic Violence as experienced at the LGBT Centre Leicester. He will touch on three key themes that affect the communities the Centre serves. These are;

- i) Silence, indifference and complacency
- ii) How the different communities in Leicester respond to Domestic violence, *and*
- iii) How LGBT organisations collude with sexism and racism.

Paul will also address the issue of choice when referring service users to the best organisation to deal with domestic violence and how this hampers the process. One of the main themes will highlight how different the needs of LGBT communities are in reality. Lesbians are different to gay men - Gay men are different to bisexuals and transgender people are let down in all aspects of care and support.

**the CENTRE**  
LESBIAN GAY BI & TRANS

**Maria Sookias**

**Stonewall Housing**

#### **LGBT Domestic Abuse and Housing**

The presentation will highlight the experiences of LGBT\* survivors of domestic abuse and difficulties many face when accessing safe accommodation. The focus will include institutional and social barriers, the effects of austerity and the changes taking place in specialist support services and housing provision.



**Dr Michaela Rogers**

**University of Salford**

**Breaking Down Barriers:**

**Exploring Social Care Practice With Trans Survivors Of Domestic Abuse**

As reflected in the theme of this seminar, there is increasing recognition that domestic abuse takes place outside of the heteronormative paradigm of social life. This paper presents a discussion of the findings of doctoral research which explored trans people's experiences of domestic abuse, their social care needs and whether these are met by domestic abuse agencies. This paper foregrounds debate on the intersections of domestic abuse, trans communities and social care provision as this research, and previous studies, suggests that trans survivors do not seek out or benefit from social care intervention. Qualitative data, collected via narrative interviews, was collected during 2012 from participants mainly located in the UK (two participants were based in the US). A total of twenty four interviews were undertaken with trans people ( $n = 15$ ) and social care practitioners ( $n = 9$ ). Three of the trans participants had insight in relation to gender diversity and through their practice as social care practitioners. Findings revealed that barriers are multiple and complex. Barriers include: expectations of a transphobic response and the fear of being 'Othered'; perceptions about a lack of entitlement; lack of knowledge/misunderstandings about trans social care needs; heteronormative bias of existing services; and practitioner attitudes about gender as a binary concept. The paper ends by proposing a framework for practice with trans survivors which incorporates a person-centred, narrative approach.

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**Dr Megan Todd**

**University of Central Lancashire**

**LGBT People Accessing Domestic Abuse Services in Lancashire**

This paper will be based on the preliminary findings of a survey commissioned by Lancashire LGBT to gain an understanding of what issues and barriers LGB&T people in Lancashire experience when accessing domestic abuse services. It is also informed by previous ESRC-funded research into community responses to LGB&T domestic abuse.

The population of Lancashire, roughly 1,468,850, is diverse and the survey highlights a lack of a coherent network of LGB&T people in many areas. One of the main barriers to accessing domestic abuse services for LGB&T people is the real or perceived attitudes of service providers towards LGB&T people, which can prevent many from seeking help. Particular groups appear to be more at risk of a sense of isolation, for instances older LGB&T people and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Where help has been sought, it is clear that LGB&T members of the community experienced provision that was less than 'LGB&T friendly'.



**Professor Catherine Donovan**  
**Dr Becky Barnes**

**University of Sunderland**  
**University of Leicester**

## **Understanding And Responding To Abusive Behaviour In LGBT Relationships**

This presentation reports on the findings of an ESRC-funded project which is nearing completion and which has been the first British study of the use of abusive behaviours in same-sex, bisexual and/or transgender relationships. The study used mixed methods to firstly survey people about 'what they do when things go wrong in their same-sex, bisexual and/or trans relationships' ( $n=872$ ) and then conduct follow-up qualitative interviews with selected survey participants ( $n=36$ ) who reported using potentially abusive behaviours to better understand the context in which these were used. Interviews and focus groups with practitioners were also conducted, providing valuable insights into levels of provision for LGBT perpetrators currently, perceived needs of LGBT perpetrators, and barriers to developing inclusive interventions. To capture some of the key findings from this research, survey data about the relationship expectations, conflict resolution and the use of abusive behaviours in same-sex, bisexual and/or trans relationships will be shared, while case studies from interviews with survey participants will be used to develop more complex and contextual understandings of the dynamics of LGBT relationships. Drawing on Michael Johnson's typology of domestic violence – including intimate terrorism, situational couple violence and violent resistance – and supported with data from our focus groups with different sets of practitioners nationally, the need for a variety of responses to partners who have used abusive behaviours is identified.



**University of  
Sunderland**



**University of  
Leicester**

**Vanessa Bettinson**

**De Montfort University**

## **Using Human Rights to Improve LGBT Access to Domestic Violence Support**

International human rights law has successfully increased awareness and encouraged improved responses by national governments to victim/survivors of domestic violence. However, this awareness has been firmly placed on female victim/survivors of abuse by male partners. This is perhaps unsurprising given the high levels of violence against women recognised worldwide. The development of a strong comprehensive framework of international law on violence against women is largely responsible for the newly emerging jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. For example, in *Opuz v Turkey* the European Court of Human Rights found that the state had failed to protect the life of a victim/survivors' mother and her from degrading treatment, because of an entrenched attitude towards women. This paper argues that human rights developments should extend to the LGBT community. The benefit of this to the LGBT victim/survivor would be raise awareness of the characteristics same-sex and transgender domestic violence takes. It would encourage states to adapt existing guidelines for accessing remedies to include the LGBT community. The developments gained through the influence of violence against women can assist in paving the way for greater recognition of LGBT victim/survivors of domestic violence.

