

Overview of LGBT JSNA November 2016

Gender identity and sexual orientation Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people are usually grouped for various purposes, but represent a very diverse population who face different challenges. A common concern, however, is the stigmatization and discrimination they face in everyday life (often referred to as minority stress)¹. Sexual minorities in European countries report substantially worse physical and mental health than their same-gendered heterosexual counterparts²⁻⁵. Direct exposure to sexuality-based discrimination has been shown to be inversely linked to self-rated health and subjective well being among same-sex couples in Europe⁶. Women in same-sex couples also seem to have greater risk for fatal [breast cancer](#)⁷ and face mortality rates that are significantly higher than for women with a male partner^{8,9}. Mortality rates for transsexual people are about three times higher compared to controls, and transsexual women have around 10 times greater risk for [suicide attempts](#) (see page 156) compared to cisgender controls¹⁰.

Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) constitute an estimated 2.6% of the UK male population¹¹. This diverse population continues to experience significant inequalities relating to health, wellbeing and broader social and economic circumstances despite the significant improvement in social attitudes and laws that protect¹² and uphold the rights^{13,14,15,16} of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. Addressing the health problems affecting this group is a key part of improving public health nationally, as well as being a legal duty for all public bodies under the Equality Act.

Public Health England (PHE) published [a summary](#) in July 2014 that highlighted a range of evidence-based interventions that can help to reduce the inequalities affecting MSM. This identified, from the evidence, three distinct but overlapping areas in which gay, bisexual and other MSM bear a disproportionate burden of ill health: [sexual health and HIV](#), [mental health](#) (see page 156) and in the use of [alcohol, drugs](#) (see pages 10, 24, and 39) and [tobacco](#). Addressing the health problems affecting this group is a key part of improving public health nationally, as well as being a legal duty for all public bodies under the Equality Act. Adult MSM are the group most affected by HIV in the UK¹⁷ with one in twenty MSM living with HIV in the UK in 2012 and up to one in twelve in London, compared with one in 667 in the general population. It is likely that the HIV epidemic among MSM is largely due to the on going incidence from men who are unaware of their infection. In addition, MSM accounted for the majority of diagnoses of syphilis and gonorrhoea in 2013 and the number of diagnoses of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) reported in MSM has risen sharply in recent years¹⁸.

Furthermore, LGBT young people appear to be particularly vulnerable to online [Child Sexual Exploitation](#).

MSM are at greater risk of mental health problems. For instance, they are twice as likely to be depressed or anxious compared with other men¹⁹. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) adolescents are at greater risk for depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation compared with other adolescents²⁰.

MSM are also at greater risk of unhealthy behaviours and lifestyles. For instance, adult MSM are twice as likely to be dependent on alcohol compared with the rest of the male population and smoking rates are higher²¹.

Underlying these inequalities are broader inequalities that affect the health and wellbeing of MSM, at different stages of their lives. These wider determinants include the experience of, or the fear of, stigma and discrimination in different contexts – from schools to the workplace. At least 36% of older men, for example, report hiding their sexual identity through their lives²², and 55% of young LGBT students say they have experienced homophobic bullying²³. MSM are less likely to seek help from health and social care services, or to reveal their sexual identity to those providing their care²⁴.

Other Needs Assessments

- [Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender \(LGBT\) Sexual Health Needs Assessment \(February 2013\)](#)

Useful Links

- [Fulfil! Guidance document for the implementation of young people's sexual rights \(IPPF-WAS\)](#)
- [PHE \(2017\) Producing modelled estimates of the size of the lesbian, gay and bisexual \(LGB\) population of England Final Report](#)
- [EU funded project on MSM](#)
- [Annual Review of the Human Rights Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex People in Europe 2017](#)

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