

Gloucestershire County Hate Crime and Incident Conference 27 February 2009

LGBT Workshop – notes

(These are an amalgamation of 3 ‘tables’ run in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. The points raised were very similar from all groups. They are NOT listed in any hierarchical order.)

Impacts of homophobia and transphobia

- Impact on individuals not always obvious
- Small triggers can often have a major effect
- Afraid to challenge for fear of being ‘labelled’ (especially for young people)
- Feeling - unsure, scared, isolated, alienated
- Uncomfortable being put in the spotlight
- Loss/lack of confidence, self esteem, self worth
- Health – psychological, disturbed mental wellbeing, anxiety, anger, frustration, stress (mental and physical), depression, suicidal, attempted suicide
- Reduced quality of life – changing behaviour to avoid any repeat
- Guilt
- Lack of trust in self and others
- Hiding identity/who are
- Limits access to employment and social contact
- Forced living/career choices (having to move or leave a job)
- Not reaching own full potential – poor and unrealised expectations
- Knock-on effect on family and partners – on wider community through friends and ‘the grapevine’ – society as a whole
- History of how organisations have dealt with things in the past lasts, especially if negative
- Negative images/stereotypes on tv/radio/media – (sometime can be positive)

Barriers to reporting – to any agency

- Confidence, self doubt
- Perception of being ‘weak’ in not being able to take it - by self and others
- A balance – tolerating the abuse v consequences/impact of reporting
- ‘Ignore it, not serious enough to report’
- ‘Not worth the bother’
- Where to report an incident as opposed to a crime – what is the difference?
- Acceptance level, conditioned to think ‘its OK’, I brought it upon myself
- Agencies won’t understand me or see it as important to them – being judged by others
- Not being out, not obvious that you are LGBorT, having to out yourself
- Not knowing or understanding the terminology
- Not knowing how, to whom, or where to report
- Not knowing what will happen
- Not knowing of existence of Gay Liaison Officers and Trans Liaison Officers in the constabulary
- Not knowing about the criminal justice/court process
- The issue being made ‘public’
- Who to trust
- Fears/worries – not being taken seriously, being blamed, being outed, repercussions

- Conflicts with religion
- Not knowing if anything will be done - 'Nothing will happen anyway'
- Past history – personal and 'community'
- Lack of confidence/low expectations of police and other agencies' systems
- Being realistic about what can be achieved
- Court appearance – confronting the offender, a forum for everyone to know who you are, being 'outed' in public
- Confidentiality

Other issues

- It is a personal attack on the individual, singled out and chosen because they are (or perceived to be) gay – also LB and T
- Support for the victim
- Security sometimes in having someone outside friends/family network to talk to
- Appropriate adult when necessary
- Confidence in 'the system'
- Education – particularly of young people
- Recognise the importance of 3rd party reporting
- 'Crimestoppers' put forward as possible number to promote – but issues about if being 'police' and 'crime' as opposed to 'incidents'
- Frustration when things are reported and dealt with, relationships formed and then reorganisation result in mechanisms being lost (eg staff changes, closing of police station)

Key points brought back

- Establishing and building links between agencies and ensuring that those links are maintained and not broken through organisational changes
- Raising awareness – public understanding of hate crime/incidents, staff training
- Having 'out' gay people in organisations and support networks (eg gay police association, GPA)
- Education, education, education – schools must be got on board