

National Ambulance  
LGBT Network



Supporting Lesbian, Gay,  
Bisexual, Trans staff, patients  
and communities

A partnership of UK Ambulance  
Services

# Supporting LGB Patients and Staff

Understanding the health  
inequalities and needs of LGB  
patients and staff

Ash Deakins and Leigh Keyte  
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# Presenters



**Ash Deakins**

Paramedic  
West Midlands Ambulance Service

Committee Member  
National Ambulance LGBT Network



**Leigh Keyte**

Operations Manager  
West Midlands Ambulance Service

Committee Member  
National Ambulance LGBT Network

**Important Note:** This presentation is an expanded version of the slides providing additional statistical information that was discussed in the '**Supporting LGB Patients and Staff**' workshop in 24 August 2018. Some of the visual elements and photographs may also differ from those used in the workshop.



# Introduction



**Health Inequalities**

**Helping the Young and the Elderly**

**Good Practice**

**How LGBT Networks Can Support**



# Health Inequalities



## Health Inequalities for the LGBT population:

- Between **5 and 7%** of the UK population are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered.
- 13%** of gay men, and **31%** of lesbians have children.
- 67%** of gay men have not disclosed their sexual orientation to their GP.
- Gay and bisexual men are **7 times more likely** to commit suicide than the general population.
- 49%** of lesbian and bisexual women drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week.
- Incidences of HIV / AIDS are highest amongst gay and bisexual men. **43%** of infections are amongst this group.
- Older gay and lesbian people are **2.5 times more likely** to live alone in their senior years.
- Incidences of eating disorders and domestic violence are also **higher**.

**Many health services do not recognise these health inequalities as issues.**



# LGBT Rights



**Under the Labour government, that held office from 1997 to 2010 more LGBT rights were equalised than at any other point in history.**

- Achieving an equal age of consent
- Ending the discrimination against lesbian and gay partners for immigration purposes
- Giving LGBT individuals and couples the right to adopt children
- Scrapping the homophobic Section 28 bill
- Banned discrimination in the workforce and vocational training with the introduction of the Employment Equality Regulations
- Included homophobia in the definition of hate crimes
- Removed outdated offences such as gross indecency and buggery
- Implemented the Gender Recognition Act
- Created Civil Partnerships

**Although rights have changed, achieving attitudinal change in the population is much slower to achieve.**



# ‘Unhealthy’ Health Services



Our recent health report **Unhealthy Attitudes** also shows that a large proportion of healthcare staff are not confidently equipped with the necessary skills to provide thorough care for LGBT people, elderly or otherwise.

Unhealthy Attitudes, Stonewall, 2015



# The Young and The Old



In 1989, a sixteen year old boy jumped to his death from a car park in central Manchester. The death of **Albert Kennedy** highlighted the rejection and depression suffered by many young people coming to terms with their sexuality, and today a charity is named after him.

Those who think the problems are resolved today need only look at the results of some recent studies. According to the NSPCC two thirds of young LGBT people have suffered homophobic or transphobic bullying at school. Young gay people are four times more likely to make a suicide attempt requiring medical attention.

It is not just young people that may get a raw deal. In recent studies of elderly lesbian and gay people in care homes, there are reports of homophobic abuse directed towards residents. Equally, the needs, and even existence of LGBT people is often overlooked, making the experience of people in their senior years a very lonely one. The Ambulance Service, like many other health organisations, often fails to acknowledge the existence of LGBT elderly people.



*Albert Kennedy's death highlighted the needs of young LGBT people.*



# Young People



## Stonewall 'The School Report' (2017) found that...

- Nearly half (**45%**) of LGBT pupils - including **64%** of trans pupils - are bullied for being LGBT in Britain's schools. This is down from **55%** of lesbian, gay and bi pupils who experienced bullying because of their sexual orientation in 2012 and **65%** in 2007.
- **Half** of LGBT pupils hear homophobic slurs 'frequently' or 'often' at school.
- **Seven in ten** LGBT pupils report that their school says that homophobic and biphobic bullying is wrong, up from half in 2012 and a quarter in 2007.
- However, just **two in five** LGBT pupils report that their schools say that transphobic bullying is wrong.
- Just **one in five** LGBT pupils have been taught about safe sex in relation to same-sex relationships.
- More than **four in five** trans young people have self-harmed, as have **three in five** lesbian, gay and bi young people who aren't trans.
- More than **two in five** trans young people have attempted to take their own life. as have one in five lesbian, gay and bi students who aren't trans.





# LGB People in Later Life [1]



Lesbian, gay and bisexual people over 55 are:

- More likely to be single. Gay and bisexual men are almost three times more likely to be single than heterosexual men, **40%** compared to 15%.
- More likely to live alone. **41%** of lesbian, gay and bisexual people live alone compared to 28% of heterosexual people.
- Less likely to have children. Just **over a quarter** of gay and bisexual men and **half** of lesbian and bisexual women have children compared to almost nine in ten heterosexual men and women.
- Less likely to see biological family members on a regular basis. Less than a quarter of lesbian, gay and bisexual people see their biological family members at least once a week compared to more than half of heterosexual people.

Taken from 'Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in Later Life, Stonewall, 2011



# LGB People in Later Life [2]



## Older lesbian, gay and bisexual people:

- Drink alcohol more often. **45%** drink alcohol at least 'three or four days' a week compared to just **31%** of heterosexual people.
- Are more likely to take drugs. **1 in 11** have taken drugs within the last year compared to **1 in 50** heterosexual people.
- **49%** of lesbian, gay and bisexual people worry about their mental health compared to **37%** of heterosexual people.
- Lesbian and bisexual women are more likely to have ever been diagnosed with depression and anxiety – two in five have been diagnosed with depression, one in three with anxiety.
- Gay and bisexual men are **twice** as likely to have ever been diagnosed with depression and anxiety than heterosexual men.

Taken from 'Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in Later Life, Stonewall, 2011



# Principles of Inclusive Working



## What can you do to support LGBT patients and colleagues?

- Make sure your vehicle has a 'rainbow star-of-life' displayed prominently in the patient area.
- Be informed about LGBT people and some of the challenges they may face.
- Avoid making assumptions about a person's sexual orientation or gender.
- Listen to how people describe their own identity, partners and relationships and reflect their choice of language.
- Challenge people make negative remarks and encourage others to address negative comments and jokes about LGBT people.
- Be proud of the symbol and explain what it means to anyone who asks.



# Impact of the LGBT Badge



Originally created by the Yorkshire Ambulance LGBT Network in 2012, this symbol was later adapted as the logo for the National Ambulance Network in 2015.



# Cultural Change in our Services



**This can be slow to achieve and requires strategy...**

- Joint working between management and staff networks can have a really positive impact
- Think about the impact you want to have on patients... the spin off is staff become more informed.
- Making information available to staff and continually refreshing this is necessary.
- Take advantage of national events to raise the profile of LGB and T issues.
- Make use of the badge. Is it working!
- As more people become visible at work, more people are encouraged to do so. Role model programme are very effective.



# Being Visible in our Communities



Many ambulance services have decorated vehicles for Pride events. Yorkshire Ambulance Service was the first service to have a decorated vehicle in service, briefly in 2016.





[www.ambulanceLGBT.org](http://www.ambulanceLGBT.org)

