

Why is this issue important?

National research indicates significant inequalities in health and wellbeing faced by trans people,^{1,2,3} including an increased risk of mental ill health, as well as inequalities in housing, employment, crime and safety.

There is no reliable information regarding the size of the trans population in the UK. Recent estimates⁴ suggest that 0.6% to 1% of adults may experience some degree of gender variance.

The content of this summary is mainly drawn from the Brighton & Hove Trans Needs Assessment,⁵ published in October 2015 which used the following definition:

“Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender identity differs from their assigned sex at birth.”

Key outcomes

None of the indicators in the national Public Health, NHS or Adult Social Care Outcomes Frameworks are specifically focussed on trans people. However, gender reassignment is a ‘protected characteristic’ in the Equality Act 2010 and public sector organisations are required to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination faced by trans people.⁶

Impact in Brighton & Hove

Following the recommendations of the 2013 Brighton & Hove Trans Equality Scrutiny Report⁷ a Trans Needs Assessment was conducted. The steering group included a number of community representatives, including the co-chair. Methods utilised included:

- Community research conducted by the University of Brighton and Brighton & Hove LGBT Switchboard.⁸
- Interviews with key stakeholders⁹
- A local data snapshot exercise

The needs assessment estimated that there are at least 2,760 trans adults living Brighton & Hove. The true figure is probably greater than this because a significant proportion of trans people do not disclose their gender identity in surveys. Allsorts youth project reported in 2016 that 16 children attended its under 12s Trans Kids Group.¹⁰

In addition, as Brighton & Hove is seen as inclusive, many trans people who live elsewhere visit Brighton & Hove to socialise, study and/or work.

Data suggests that trans people in the city:

- are represented in all age groups but have a younger age distribution
- includes diverse gender identities, including non-binary identities
- are more likely to have a limiting long-term illness or disability than the overall population
- come from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds
- have diverse sexual orientations
- live throughout the city, with no concentration in any particular area
- are more likely to live in private sector rented housing than the overall population.

People who took part in the community research emphasised that characteristics other than gender identity, for example ethnicity and disability, are also important parts of their identity.

Where we are doing well

Brighton & Hove is seen as a trans-friendly and inclusive city and attracts people who have had negative experiences elsewhere. However, trans

¹ Browne K, Lim J. Count Me In Too. Trans People. Additional Findings Report. University of Brighton and Spectrum; 2008.

² Williams et al. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Public Health Outcomes Framework Companion Document; 2013

³ MacNeil et al. Trans Mental Health Study 2012. The Scottish Transgender Alliance, 2012

⁴ GIRES. The Number of Gender Variant People in the UK - Update 2011. GIRES; 2011

⁵ Brighton & Hove Trans Needs Assessment 2015 and all supporting documents are available at <http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/content/needs-assessments>

⁶ Mitchell, Howarth. Trans Research Review. Equality and Human Rights Commission. Research Report 27; 2009.

⁷ Brighton & Hove City Council. Brighton & Hove Trans Equality Scrutiny Panel. 2013

⁸ Browne K, Scott E-J, Valentine V, Antoniou M (2015), *Trans Community Research Final Project Report*. University of Brighton & Brighton & Hove LGBT Switchboard

⁹ ‘Stakeholders’ refers to representatives from a statutory and community and voluntary sector organisations whose work is relevant for trans people.

¹⁰ Why is our service needed? Allsorts. Call for evidence JSNA update 2016. May 2016.

people report that they can still face abuse, discrimination and social isolation in the city.

The trans community is becoming more visible and successful at communicating outside of wider LGBT communities; this is illustrated by Brighton & Hove Trans Pride.

The community has a number of assets, in the form of community and voluntary sector groups, including the Clare Project, FTM Brighton, Transformers (part of the Allsorts Youth Project), Trans Pride and the Trans Alliance. However, it was reported that there were limitations regarding the capacity and skills in small groups that have limited funding and rely on volunteers.

The Trans Equality Scrutiny Panel and subsequent action have helped to raise awareness, provided a catalyst for change and improved services.

Significant work has been undertaken with schools, the council and Allsorts, including the Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit and training within specific schools.

The 2015 Trans Needs Assessment attracted some national and international attention and is likely to have helped to raise awareness of issues faced by trans people and promoted improvements via its recommendations.

Local inequalities

Inclusion and support

Compared with the overall population, trans respondents to local surveys report that:

- they are less able to ask someone for help if they were ill in bed and
- they are more likely to feel anxious or stressed about their neighbourhood.

Schools and families

Education is a setting where trans young people are at risk of discrimination and harassment.

Trans and gender questioning young people are more likely to experience bullying and to feel less safe at school.

Stakeholders reported a need for more support for young trans people with mental health problems.

53 young trans people completed a six monthly survey for Allsorts in 2015/16 (October to March).

Of these 94% had experienced mental health problems including depression and anxiety in the last six months. 49% had done something to injure or harm themselves. 55% had contemplated suicide. 17% had attempted suicide and 32% had disordered eating or weight issues.¹¹

In August 2015, Allsorts had 74 young trans service users, including 45 aged 16-25 (not all are Brighton & Hove residents). In a survey of 16-25 year old service users 100% had experienced mental health problems (things like depression and anxiety that had left them feeling unable to cope); 47% had done something to injure or harm themselves; 58% had contemplated suicide; 26% had attempted suicide.

The need for more support for trans children and young people and their families and children and young people with a trans parent/carer was highlighted in the needs assessment.

Higher education

Higher education can provide a space for trans students to 'be themselves', come out, and develop an independent adult identity. However, nationally nearly one in three had taken time out of because of trans-related issues or bullying and harassment. Positive work by local higher education institutions and student unions was reported and there was a keenness to share best practice. However, community survey respondents reported mixed experiences of higher education.

Employment

Gaining and retaining employment can be very challenging for trans people due to discrimination. However, some trans people in work reported good experiences about their workplace.

Later in life

Trans people are concerned about the quality of care that they could expect in care homes and in other settings such as hospitals when they are older; this is important in ensuring all trans people are treated with dignity.

Health and wellbeing

Trans people are less likely to report that they are in good health and more likely to report that they have a limiting long-term illness or disability.

¹¹ Allsorts Youth Project. Allsorts Trans Six Monthly Report. October- March 2015-16.

There are high levels of mental health need (including stress, depression, self-harm, and suicidal ideation) which research participants related to gender dysphoria in some cases, but more commonly to factors such as discrimination and NHS treatment delays.

There is relatively limited evidence about many health behaviours, although local surveys suggest that trans people have higher rates of smoking and lower rates of physical activity than the overall population. Trans respondents to the City Tracker survey were less likely to use parks or open spaces than all respondents. Stakeholders felt that sports groups needed to be more aware of trans issues.

Stakeholders and trans people reported a lack of knowledge regarding health screening (e.g. cancer screening).

In the community research survey the most frequently suggested action for improving healthcare for trans people was more training.

Specialist gender identity services

The local research found that four in ten service users were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their specialist gender identity services, a similar level to nationally. Negative experiences reported by service users included waiting times and delays, administrative errors, travel distance, disempowerment and a lack of clarity about the care pathway. These issues were also reported by stakeholders, including clinicians.

Long waiting times are having a detrimental, often serious, impact on service users' mental health. Support, including counselling for those waiting to attend a service, is very limited.

Community members and stakeholders expressed the need for more local services. Specialist clinicians cited issues that would need to be considered for more specialist services. The role of endocrinology and counselling services in the pathway could be considered.

The gender identity service pathway for children and their families is fragmented and could be more joined up.

Community safety

Trans people feel less safe outside in their local area and in the city centre than the general population, especially after dark.

Hate incidents and crimes are widely experienced by trans people. Local survey data found that over a quarter of respondents had experienced violence over the last five years, and almost four out of five had experienced verbal abuse. A high percentage of transphobic incidents or crimes go unreported.

Domestic violence was reported by 63% of the community research survey sample. However there was felt to be a need for a better understanding of the needs of trans people by domestic and sexual violence services.

Housing and homelessness

Trans people have a high risk of homelessness, which is explained by a number of factors including financial, safety and vulnerability. The reputation of Brighton & Hove as a safe haven leads to some people arriving in the city who then find it difficult to find affordable and safe accommodation.

There are significant gaps in the knowledge of trans people and support organisations around their rights and eligibility for housing services.

Concerns were expressed regarding trans people's experience of some homeless services and letting agents.

Other services

Community research suggested that the situation in Brighton & Hove services was improving in some cases. However some people reported negative experiences, for example the incorrect use of pronouns and services set up in 'gender binary' ways that made them difficult to access.

Predicted future need

Brighton & Hove has a visible trans community and is seen to be more trans friendly than many areas. The number of trans people known to services is increasing. Future needs may relate to both a larger population and the needs of an increase in the number of older people who are trans.

The number of under 16s accessing help through Allsorts is increasing, with many presenting with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and low self-esteem. Many also report suicidal ideation. Discussions with service users tend to revolve around self-harm, depression and the trans

care pathway as well as coming out and navigating relationships.¹²

What we don't know

The needs assessment identified some areas where there is a lack of knowledge nationally and locally, e.g. some health behaviours (including sexual health needs) and the needs of older trans people.

Key evidence and policy

The Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Government Equalities Office and the Home Office recently published guidance for public authorities on meeting the needs of trans people, including recommendations for healthcare providers, local government and social care.^{13,14,15}

Recommended future local priorities

The Equality and Inclusion Partnership Trans Subgroup is working with partners across the city to ensure implementation of the recommendations of the needs assessment. These are detailed in full in the needs assessment report, but broadly fall under the following themes:

1. Ensure visibility and positive representation of trans people and raise public awareness
2. Empower trans people by providing accessible information on local support, other services and their rights (to include a central resource of information)
3. Improve inclusion by increasing awareness and knowledge across services through information and training/education
4. Ensure health services understand and meet the needs of trans adults, children and young people, including general practice, community pharmacy and mental health services
5. Quality of specialist gender identity services requires improvement (including waiting times and delays) and progress should be reported

¹² Allsorts. 2015. Submission as part of the call for evidence for the JSNA

¹³ Equality and Human Rights Commission. Provision of Goods, Facilities and Services to Trans People. Guidance for public authorities in meeting your equality duties and human rights obligations; 2010.

¹⁴ Government Equalities Office. Equality Act 2010: What do I need to know: A quick start guide to gender reassignment for voluntary and community organisations in the provision of goods and services; 2010.

¹⁵ Home Office. Advancing Transgender Equality: A plan for action. HM Government. London, UK; 2011

locally (options for local services should be explored)

6. Support capacity and capability of trans community and voluntary services
7. Ensure health improvement initiatives address needs of trans people, incorporating physical activity, smoking, mental health and wellbeing; and sexual health
8. Promote inclusive practice across the whole range of city services, with involvement of the trans community
9. Improve the availability of suitable and safe accommodation for trans people who are homeless
10. Support action to prevent transphobic incidents; support victims of hate crime and encourage reporting
11. Better provision of support for trans people, especially in relation to mental health (eg. counselling, advocacy, peer mentoring, etc.)
12. Support children/young people and families to help build and maintain supportive relationships within families
13. Improved practice around the recording and management of information and processes relating to trans people
14. Review, monitor and report progress achieved.

Further information

Brighton & Hove Trans Needs Assessment
<http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/content/needs-assessments>

Count Me In Too
<http://www.countmeintoo.co.uk/>

The LGBT Health Inclusion Project
<http://lgbt-hip.org/>

Brighton & Hove Trans Equality Scrutiny Panel
<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-committees/trans-equality-scrutiny-panel-2013>

Last updated

August 2016