



Brighton & Hove LGBT Switchboard



LGBTQ MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND ASYLUM SEEKERS' PATHWAYS AND SUPPORT IN BRIGHTON & HOVE REPORT

MARCH 2018

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THE LGBT HEALTH AND INCLUSION PROJECT

LGBTQ Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers' Pathways and Support in Brighton & Hove Report



MARCH 2018

THE LGBT HEALTH AND INCLUSION PROJECT

Brighton and Hove NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (BH CCG) and Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) have commissioned the [LGBT Health and Inclusion Project](#) at Brighton and Hove [LGBT Switchboard](#) to conduct a series of consultation and engagement activities with local lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people (LGBTQ). The aim is to use the information gathered to feed into local service commissioning, planning and delivery.

Please note, the following report presents information about the consultation and engagement work conducted by LGBT HIP and should not be taken as a position statement of Brighton and Hove LGBT Switchboard or of any participating organisation.

Brighton and Hove LGBT Switchboard and the Health and Inclusion Project are extremely grateful to all partners who contributed insights and energy to this consultation, especially MindOut clients, Allsorts, Brighton & Hove City Council, Brighton & Hove Faith in Action, BHT, Brighton Voices in Exile, Rainbow Pilgrims, the SOGICA Project, UKLGIG, and YMCA Right Here. We extend a special thanks to MindOut, who provided invaluable partnership and support throughout the research.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

LGBTQ organisations in Brighton & Hove and across the UK report rises in the numbers of people seeking support with immigration issues. This is taking place in a political environment that is increasingly hostile towards all migrants. Whilst many migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are dealing with poor access to legal advice and financial pressures, reports show that the difficulties are often compounded among LGBTQ people in the UK.

National research points to serious social isolation, with many people doubly excluded from home country networks and LGBTQ spaces. LGBTQ asylum seekers face a legal system that assumes false claims and appears to make inconsistent judgements. Interpreters can be a source of further discrimination and danger. Many people seeking asylum are forced to hide their LGBTQ identity or face abuse in Home Office housing. Those held in detention are frequently subject to similar kinds of violence and discrimination that forced them to leave their home countries.

SCOPE & METHODS

Within this national context, this consultation by the LGBT Health & Inclusion Project asked about pathways and access to support in Brighton & Hove among LGBTQ people who are asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants. We worked closely with MindOut in developing the scope and carrying out the research. Activities consisted of reviewing literature; discussions with frontline workers, service managers, and an immigration lawyer; a cross-sector forum attended by 6 support workers, campaigners, and advocates; an online survey of 15 professionals; and a written consultation with 3 LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Intersectional differences

The findings point to important intersectional differences among LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who access support in Brighton & Hove. In addition to their migrant status and being LGBTQ, many people face additional vulnerabilities due to factors like having low English language skills, being Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME), or having been trafficked. It is important to think about how these barriers come together and reinforce each another.

Multi-layered and complex support needs

Our research shows that support needs are complex and multi-layered. Many people first come to services looking for legal assistance, as legal advice is seriously lacking. At the same time, they may be struggling to meet basic financial needs, living in insecure housing, facing discrimination, dealing with suicidal thoughts and poor mental health, and carrying historic and ongoing trauma. Frontline services need to be highly skilled across many areas to support and refer people facing these issues.

Importance of LGBTQ services

In line with national reports, we found that many migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers prefer to attend an LGBTQ-specific service and are willing to travel large distances to visit a trusted service that affirms their identity.

Remaining barriers to support

Despite the valuable work done by Brighton & Hove's community sector, there are remaining barriers that mean the most vulnerable people are likely not accessing any services. We found that word of mouth was a key way information is spread, which suggests that the most socially isolated people and those without English language skills may not find out about available support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Research: Further research should be carried out locally, drawing on key learnings from this consultation. This should include a regular cross-sector forum, as well as consultations with refugees and asylum seekers, preferably in research led by refugees and asylum seekers.
2. New practitioner: options for a full-time practitioner to specialize in supporting LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers should be explored. Key partners should consider costs, key areas of work, and suitable partners to recruit and host a new practitioner.
3. Interpreters: LGBTQ awareness training should be delivered to local interpreters, and a list of existing LGBTQ-identified and LGBTQ-affirmative interpreters should be developed and made available online
4. Training: Cross-trainings should be held between LGBTQ organizations and migrant groups. Statutory and community organisations should carry out training in communication with people without English as a first language. Additional peer support should be delivered to frontline workers.
5. Legal information: local groups should work together to develop a shared online resource about accessing legal information, and explore options to support a specialised legal advice service
6. Social activities: existing LGBTQ, migrant, and community groups should work together to host inclusive events, and fund social excursions aiming to bring LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers together with the wider community. Groups should explore ways to make their inclusion visible.
7. Volunteering: voluntary sector organisations should explore options for LGBTQ asylum seekers to gain voluntary experience with them.
8. Travel grants: community groups should explore options to fund LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers to travel to trusted services in Brighton & Hove, preferably booking tickets for them in advance.

CONCLUSIONS

Frontline workers are dealing with unprecedented pressures, often working over and above what they are trained and contracted to do. The community sector in Brighton & Hove urgently needs more resources to be able to support some of the most vulnerable members of the LGBTQ community.

1. INTRODUCTION

LGBTQ people seeking asylum in the UK face an inconsistent and impenetrable legal system, requiring a lot of support to navigate changing laws and an extremely high burden of proof. At the same time, many are struggling to meet their own basic needs for food and housing within a hostile environment, often whilst dealing with historic and recent traumas. For most LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum, the difficult journey continues once they are in the UK.

Brighton & Hove is a City of Sanctuary and local community organisations are striving to provide exceptional care and support. Voluntary services are doing valuable work and responding to unprecedented pressures. Often, the support they are giving is over and above and what they are trained or contracted to do.

This report presents evidence about LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and people seeking asylum, who access support in Brighton & Hove. The findings and recommendations made are based on a series of meetings, a cross-sector forum, and an online survey of 15 professionals and frontline workers, as well as a written consultation with 3 LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers.

1.1 BACKGROUND

This section draws together research and evidence from community sector and campaigning organizations about the situation of LGBTQ+ refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers in the UK.

Just 50 countries around the world provide trans people with legal recognition of their gender, and consensual sexual acts between same-sex adults are criminalized in 72 United Nations member states.¹ In 45 of these countries, the law is applied to women as well as men. In eight countries, homosexuality is still punishable by death.² In countries where LGBTQ people lack legal protection or are criminalized, they often experience violence and discrimination. Persecution – and the fear of it – causes severe physical and mental distress to LGBTQ people in many areas of the world.³

Under EU law, individuals persecuted due to their sexual orientation and gender identity qualify for refugee status.⁴ People facing persecution on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity can claim asylum in Britain. These cases are managed by UK Visas and Immigration, part of the UK Home Office.⁵

1.1.1 Numbers

The UK Home Office doesn't publish data about the numbers of asylum claims made on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The Epsilon project points out that this is part of a wider gap,

¹ Stonewall & UKLGIG (2016). [No Safe Refuge](#).

² Stonewall (2018). [What's the situation for LGBT people worldwide?](#)

³ Epsilon (2017). [National Reports](#).

⁴ Epsilon (2017). [Supporting and Including LGBTI Migrants: Needs, Experiences & Good Practices](#).

⁵ Stonewall & UKLGIG (2016). [No Safe Refuge](#).

as there is shockingly little evidence or research into LGBTI migrants and refugees.⁶ As well as their needs and realities, little is known about the size and composition of these populations. Very few EU Member States have specific national guidelines about interviewing LGBTI people making asylum claims, and most asylum processes are not adjusted to accommodate applicants being LGBTI.

Statistics about asylum in general provide a wider picture. The Refugee Council's *Asylum Statistics Annual Trends*, released in February 2018, found that 68% of initial decisions in 2017 were refusals to grant asylum.⁷ The percentage of decisions to grant refugee status in 2017 was the lowest in the past 5 years, and the percentage of refusals increased in 2017 compared with other recent years. In the same period, 35% of appeals were allowed, which indicates that initial decisions are not always made to a consistent standard.

Although we do not know how many of these claims were made on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, we should note that the top ten countries producing asylum applicants in 2017 were Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Bangladesh, Sudan, Albania, Afghanistan, India, Eritrea, and Vietnam. Of these, eight (all but Albania and Vietnam) still criminalize same-sex relations.⁸

1.1.2 Brighton numbers

The South-East coast has seen a growing refugee community in recent decades, with processing centres nearby in Kent and Croydon, and a dispersal centre in Hastings. Brighton & Hove is a City of Sanctuary, and has a long history of welcoming migrants, including international students, economic migrants, or those joining families. Since the 1990s, communities of migrants from Sudan, Iran, and China have grown in the city. More recently, Brighton & Hove has welcomed people from conflict-affected countries including Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic, and Zimbabwe. Under the 2006 Gateway Protection Programme, 79 Ethiopian refugees settled permanently in the city. A further 6,000 international students live in Brighton & Hove each year, as part of Brighton and Sussex Universities.⁹

Although Brighton & Hove has a reputation for tolerance, the Count Me in Too (CMIT) research identified asylum seekers and refugees as an especially disenfranchised group.¹⁰ CMIT highlighted that some sections of the LGBTQ community face severe housing insecurity, violence, community harassment, and poor mental health.¹¹ Often, LGBTQ asylum seekers are doubly marginalised: once as migrants, and again because of their LGBTQ identity.

The Brighton & Hove City Council recently completed an extensive [needs assessment](#) of all international migrants in Brighton & Hove. Taking a broad definition, the needs assessment reported

⁶ Epsilon (2017). [Supporting and Including LGBTI Migrants: Needs, Experiences & Good Practices](#).

⁷ Refugee Council (2018). [Asylum Statistics Annual Trends – February 2018](#).

⁸ ILGA (2017). [Sexual Orientation Laws in the World – Criminalisation](#).

⁹ University of Sussex Centre for Community Engagement (2012). [Hidden Histories: Migrants in Brighton and Hove](#).

¹⁰ Count Me in Too (2007). [LGBT Lives in Brighton & Hove Initial Findings, Academic Report](#).

¹¹ Count Me in Too (2009). [Community Summary Resource Pack](#).

on voluntary migrants (those moving for study, work, or to join family), as well as forced migrants (including asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking, and undocumented migrants). The most recent estimates from the ONS find that 50,000 residents in Brighton & Hove were born outside the UK. This represents 18% of the population, compared to an average of 15% of the South East, and 15% in England. Of 319 English authorities where the ONS can provide data, Brighton & Hove is ranked with the 61st highest proportion of residents born outside the UK. Unfortunately, there is no available local data on gender identity or sexual orientation by country of birth or nationality.¹²

The number of asylum seekers in Brighton & Hove is not entirely clear. When a person is waiting for a Home Office decision on whether to accept their claim for asylum, they are eligible for financial support and accommodation provided by the Home Office. There has been no Home Office accommodation for asylum seekers in Brighton & Hove for over 10 years, and there is very little accommodation throughout the South East. Local authority data published by the Home Office shows just 16 asylum seekers in Brighton & Hove were receiving accommodation and financial support at the end of March 2017 (compared to 126 people at the end of December 2003).¹³

The *International Migrants in Brighton & Hove* report notes that the real number is likely much higher, estimating that at least 200 asylum seekers live with communities, families, and acquaintances in Brighton & Hove.¹⁴ Since asylum seekers are not given a choice in the location of their Home Office accommodation, some people choose to live with others from their cultural or linguistic communities instead. Whilst 200 may seem a relatively small number, the report points out that asylum seekers can be especially vulnerable, often living without contact with mainstream health and council services.

Undocumented migrants are often living in an even more precarious situation, distrusting local authorities, charities, and community groups. That means they only present to services in times of crisis, so the numbers of people in this situation remains hidden.¹⁵ Likewise, there is no way to identify how many refugees live in Brighton & Hove, because once people have successfully submitted a claim for asylum there is no mechanism to monitor them (with the exception of those who arrive in a resettlement programme).

At the Brighton & Hove LGBT Switchboard, we have seen a consistent rise in queries about immigration and asylum issues on our telephone helpline. LGBTQ mental health service MindOut, based in Brighton & Hove, reported a 400% increase in immigration and asylum issues between 2015-16 and 2016-17.¹⁶

¹² Brighton & Hove City Council (2018). [International Migrants in Brighton & Hove: Part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment programme.](#)

¹³ Brighton & Hove City Council (2018). [International Migrants in Brighton & Hove: Part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment programme.](#)

¹⁴ Brighton & Hove City Council (2018). [International Migrants in Brighton & Hove: Part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment programme.](#)

¹⁵ Brighton & Hove City Council (2018). [International Migrants in Brighton & Hove: Part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment programme.](#)

¹⁶ MindOut (2017). [Annual Report 2016-17.](#)

1.1.3 Hostile environment

The SOGICA project notes that the UK has contradictory policies towards migrants and asylum seekers.¹⁷ It is common for politicians to refer proudly to the UK's history of supporting refugees. At the same time, the media publishes inaccurate stories about 'bogus asylum seekers', which foster an anti-immigrant feeling. As Home Secretary, Theresa May spoke about her desire to create 'a really hostile environment for illegal migration'.¹⁸

Migration remains highly politicized across Europe. In the UK, immigration laws have been gradually tightened over time. The 2016 Immigration Act solidified a hostile system, by stopping migrants without permission to remain in the UK from accessing housing, driving licences, non-urgent secondary health care, and bank accounts. It also introduced new measures to make it easier to remove undocumented migrants by sharing information from the NHS and local authorities with the Home Office.¹⁹

The issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers are often compounded for those who are LGBTQ. These groups are among the most vulnerable, often having faced serious trauma, enduring an unsympathetic asylum system that often draws the wrong conclusions, and facing bullying and abuse in detention centres.²⁰

Reporting to Citizens Advice Liverpool, a senior psychological therapist working for a large local charity explained that LGBTQ asylum seekers face a triple jeopardy. This begins with abuse and discrimination in their country of origin, followed by an asylum journey that can be as bad as their reason for leaving home, and finally arrival in the UK, which can bring an abusive asylum process, social isolation, and demand massive adjustments in the face of hostility and threats of violence.²¹

1.1.4 Isolation

The *International Migrants in Brighton & Hove* Report notes that LGBTQ migrants may arrive in Brighton & Hove fleeing persecution from home communities. Once here, they are likely to be particularly isolated due to discrimination on multiple fronts: from home country networks, from the local LGBTQ community, and from mainstream services.

¹⁷ SOGICA (2018). [Case Studies: United Kingdom](#).

¹⁸ The Telegraph. 2012. [Theresa May interview: 'We're going to give illegal migrants a really hostile reception'](#).

¹⁹ Brighton & Hove City Council (2018). [International Migrants in Brighton & Hove: Part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment programme](#).

²⁰ Citizen's Advice Liverpool (2017). ['You feel like a nobody'. An investigation into the support and advice needs of LGBT+ Asylum Seekers in Merseyside](#).

²¹ Citizen's Advice Liverpool (2017). ['You feel like a nobody'. An investigation into the support and advice needs of LGBT+ Asylum Seekers in Merseyside](#).

The Epsilon project points to social isolation as a key issue among refugees and asylum seekers who are LGBTI.²² The report draws on interviews with 11 LGBTI migrants in the UK as well as professionals working in support sectors. For many migrants, home country networks provide an essential source of support on arrival. This isn't always possible for LGBTI migrants, and those who fear discrimination may have to deny their identity to access support within these communities.

Exclusion and isolation can be compounded when people seek support from community organisations. The Double Jeopardy Project noted that LGBTI organisations are often ill equipped to support asylum seekers, whilst migrant and refugee community organisations may be unwilling to acknowledge the existence and needs of LGBTI people in their communities.²³

The Epsilon project highlights English language training as a vital way to support LGBTQ migrants in making connections with broader networks in the UK. It found that many migrants choose to access support from LGBTQ groups instead of immigration specialists. At the same time, urban LGBTQ spaces often cater to white, wealthy, cosmopolitan populations. LGBTQ migrants can be excluded from these spaces on the basis of their migrant status, language barriers, as well as racism. That means LGBTQ migrants can be doubly excluded: from home country networks because of their LGBTQ identity, and from the local LGBTQ scene because of their migrant status.

1.1.5 Legal difficulties

Asylum claims in the UK begin with a screening interview, followed by a full interview to assess the credibility of an applicant's claim. This system is incredibly complex to navigate – especially when an asylum claim is on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.

The legal process changed significantly in 2010. After a key Supreme Court ruling, the general message shifted from 'go home and be discreet', to 'prove that you are LGBT'. After 2010, there was theoretically better protection for those fleeing persecution due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. In practice, many have found that credibility is a new obstacle in having their claim recognized.²⁴

The Epsilon project found insidious forms of discrimination in Home Office legal processes.²⁵ There is a tendency to assume that people are making false claims, and case managers are often willing to send people back to countries where they will likely be victimized. In 2017, Epsilon found that immigration officers still default to a view that if a claimant could live discreetly they should be sent home. It is worth noting that there is no similar option for those seeking asylum for religious or political persecution, indicating that discrimination around sexual orientation and gender identity is treated less seriously. This confirms findings by UKLIG about disproportionate rates of refusal. In 2009, 98-99% of gay and lesbian asylum claims they knew of were refused, compared to a 73% refusal rate for

²² Epsilon (2017). [National Reports](#).

²³ MBARC (2013). [Double Jeopardy Project: A final report on the Trust for London funded Double Jeopardy Project](#).

²⁴ SOGICA (2018). [Case Studies: United Kingdom](#).

²⁵ Epsilon (2017). [National Reports](#).

general asylum claims.²⁶ Applicants were often sent back to face violent homophobia in home countries.

The burden of proof that falls on asylum seekers is exceptionally high. Under UNHCR guidelines, refugees are most commonly recognized under the grounds of their 'membership of a particular social group'. As Citizens Advice Liverpool notes, there is no requirement that members of the social group associate with each other, or are socially visible, in order to define someone as a refugee.²⁷ This guidance is seemingly ignored by the Home Office when assessing the credibility of claims made on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation. Solicitors are unable to give clear advice to clients seeking asylum, since there is no clear approach to what constitutes proof of sexuality.

Asylum interviews themselves can be a source of discrimination for LGBTQ people. Among 17 asylum seekers and 18 front line workers interviewed by Citizens Advice Liverpool, every person commented on the intrusive and degrading approach of asylum adjudicators. Home Office agents have a default position of disbelief, often pursuing explicit questions about sexual conduct as a way of seeking proof of someone's sexual orientation.²⁸ Likewise, many asylum seekers consulted in the Stonewall & UKLGIG report *No Safe Refuge* said that their interviewers asked questions to gain explicit answers – although this practice should have ended after a Home Office guidance in 2015.²⁹ Interviewers frequently hold and express outdated stereotypes about gender identity and sexual orientation. This echoes the findings of a 2014 investigation by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, that a fifth of asylum interviews for gay, lesbian, and bi people claiming asylum contained stereotyping, and a tenth had questions likely to elicit a sexual response.³⁰

1.1.6 Housing

While someone is waiting a legal decision from the Home Office on whether to accept their claim, asylum seekers are eligible for accommodation provided by the Home Office. The needs assessment of international migrants by Brighton & Hove City Council found that migrants are more likely to live in overcrowded households, in poor housing conditions, and may be at a higher risk of homelessness.³¹

Safety can be a problem in Home Office housing, especially for people who are LGBTQ. Nine out of seventeen people surveyed by Citizens Advice Liverpool reported facing abuse, bullying, and

²⁶ UKLGIG (2010). [Failing the Grade: Home Office initial decisions on lesbian and gay claims for asylum.](#)

²⁷ Citizen's Advice Liverpool (2017). ['You feel like a nobody'. An investigation into the support and advice needs of LGBT+ Asylum Seekers in Merseyside.](#)

²⁸ Citizen's Advice Liverpool (2017). ['You feel like a nobody'. An investigation into the support and advice needs of LGBT+ Asylum Seekers in Merseyside.](#)

²⁹ Stonewall & UKLGIG (2016). [No Safe Refuge.](#)

³⁰ Stonewall & UKLGIG (2016). [No Safe Refuge.](#)

³¹ Brighton & Hove City Council (2018). [International Migrants in Brighton & Hove: Part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment programme.](#)

discrimination in shared asylum housing.³² An article in the Guardian newspaper in March 2018 reported on serious harassment and violence against LGBTI asylum seekers in Home Office single-sex accommodation provided by private contractors. Sami, an intersex woman from El Salvador, recalls being placed in all-male accommodation for a year. She faced repeated attempts at sexual assault, had housemates verbally abuse her and throw a frying pan at her, and one man cornered her in the kitchen and told her to ‘suck his dick’.³³ Several LGBTI people in similar situations made complaints but no action was taken, leaving them to choose between living with their attacker or becoming homeless.³⁴ If an asylum seeker chooses to leave

For those who are granted refugee status, financial support from the Home Office is stopped and people are given 28 days to find a new place to live, claim benefits, get a National Insurance Number, and set up their lives in the UK. Among 17 LGBTQ asylum seekers interviewed by Citizens Advice Liverpool, only 1 had a job by the end of the 28-day move-on period, and just 4 were receiving any kind of benefits by the time their asylum support payments stopped. Refugees are extremely vulnerable to becoming destitute and street homeless. Housing can be even more precarious for LGBTQ refugees who are often unable to rely on family or home country networks for a place to stay.³⁵

1.1.7 Interpreters & language barriers

For LGBTQ asylum seekers, interpreters can be a source of vulnerability instead of connection. In a well-known case, Anne Nassovi was refused asylum in the UK and forcibly removed to Uganda because she didn’t tell officials that she was a lesbian in her first asylum interview, so her later claim was disbelieved. Both interpreters in Nassovi’s interview were Ugandan and from her tribe, so she was concerned that they would tell other people in her village if she spoke of being a lesbian.³⁶ Other reports suggest that her fear was well-founded. Four people interviewed by Citizens Advice Liverpool had such problems with their interpreters. One reported: ‘the interpreter told my family back home that I was HIV+ and the friend I was staying with found out. As a result I became homeless and my family disowned me. I can never go home and so had to claim asylum.’³⁷

The Epsilon project found that English language training is an essential step to allow LGBTI asylum seekers to access appropriate support and navigate different networks.³⁸ The employment of asylum seekers and refugees as staff and volunteers can be particularly unnerving for LGBTQ asylum seekers, who fear persecution from people from their home countries. This is one key reason why some LGBTQ

³² Citizen’s Advice Liverpool (2017). [‘You feel like a nobody’. An investigation into the support and advice needs of LGBT+ Asylum Seekers in Merseyside.](#)

³³ Kate Lyons, The Guardian (2018). [Abused and ignored: LGBTI asylum seekers let down by the system.](#)

³⁴ Kate Lyons, The Guardian (2018). [Protect LGBTI asylum seekers in Britain, private firms told.](#)

³⁵ Citizen’s Advice Liverpool (2017). [‘You feel like a nobody’. An investigation into the support and advice needs of LGBT+ Asylum Seekers in Merseyside.](#)

³⁶ Epsilon (2017). [National Reports.](#)

³⁷ Citizen’s Advice Liverpool (2017). [‘You feel like a nobody’. An investigation into the support and advice needs of LGBT+ Asylum Seekers in Merseyside.](#)

³⁸ Epsilon (2017). [National Reports.](#)

asylum seekers prefer to access support from an LGBTQ organization instead of an immigration or asylum organization.

Locally, the *International Migrants in Brighton & Hove* report found that 89% of people in the city without English as a first language speak English well, but there are some 2,500 residents who cannot speak English well or do not speak it at all. Knowledge of English is vital for migrants to be able to engage in city life. The report found that some people struggle to access any information and support due to a combination of insufficient English skills, no access to the internet, not knowing how to access services, being ineligible for services, cost barriers, and fearing deportation.³⁹

1.1.8 Detention

Seeking asylum is not a crime; it is a right according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Nonetheless, thousands of asylum seekers are detained in the UK every year. In recent decades, the scale of immigration detention in the UK has grown rapidly, and today the UK has one of the largest detention estates in Europe. The UK is the only EU state that hasn't signed up to the EU Return Directive, meaning that migrants and asylum seekers can be detained indefinitely. On 30 June 2016, 3418 migrants were held in detention centres in the UK, often living in terrible conditions.⁴⁰

The UK government admits not knowing how many LGBTQ asylum seekers are placed in detention. The *No Safe Refuge* report conducted 22 in-depth interviews with LGBT asylum seekers in 2015-2016, all of whom were detained in the UK in the last 3 years. The research records harrowing stories of LGBT asylum seekers in detention. Some LGBT asylum seekers are fleeing countries where they have already been imprisoned because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and many have experienced profound violence and abuse. Detention often subjects people to the same violence and abuse that forced them to flee their home countries.

No Safe Refuge shows that detention has a severe and lasting impact on the mental health of LGBTI asylum seekers. Most interviewees report depression, self-harm, and suicide attempts as a result of being detained. Trans detainees can be detained with the wrong population because of problems with recording their gender in the asylum system. Staff are reported to lack any training for the care needs of trans people in detention, and to be responsible for harassing LGBTI detainees.⁴¹ Some trans detainees are held in isolation under the guise of their own protection.⁴²

2. SCOPE

The key aim of this consultation is to investigate access and barriers to support among asylum seekers and refugees who live, work, socialise, or seek support in Brighton & Hove area, and who identify under the LGBTQ umbrella (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer).

³⁹ Brighton & Hove City Council (2018). [International Migrants in Brighton & Hove: Part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment programme](#).

⁴⁰ Epsilon (2017). [National Reports](#).

⁴¹ Stonewall & UKLGIG (2016). [No Safe Refuge](#).

⁴² SOGICA (2018). [Case Studies: United Kingdom](#).

The question of how to define migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers is complex. Instead of limiting our scope in advance, we decided to discuss this question together with frontline workers and campaigners.

Initially we planned to explore the pathways that people seeking asylum tend to follow. It became clear from early conversations that there is no 'typical' experience. The asylum system changes very quickly, and legal decisions often appear inconsistent. People who are held in detention face very different prospects. Through the course of the consultation, we learned about key differences across different groups.

By consulting with support workers and advocates, this consultation reports their key lessons in working with these populations, and highlights ongoing barriers to their work.

Since we focussed our efforts on support services across the city, we cannot provide evidence about the experience of people who are not accessing any support. Local organisations report that their clients have complex and severe needs; we have to wonder about people who are even more vulnerable and who are unable to make contact with them.

3. METHODS

3.1 REVIEWING LITERATURE

Important evidence has been collected about the situation of LGBTQ people seeking asylum in the UK. We reviewed publications from key organizations in the field. This literature provides an understanding of the national context and informed our approach to the work. Locally, we drew from the Brighton & Hove International Migrants Needs Assessment report. This is presented as the 'Background'.

3.2 MEETINGS

We held a series of meetings and attended events run by partner organizations. These included an informative conference by Rainbow Pilgrims about LGBTQI Migrant and Travelling Communities Perspectives. We were advised by Lucy Bryson, who oversaw the Brighton & Hove International Migrant's Needs Assessment. A number of frontline workers shared their views in formal and informal conversations, including representatives from LGBTQ projects, faith projects, interpreting services, migrant groups, campaign organizations, legal services, local government, and young people's services. The partnership of MindOut was absolutely vital to this consultation, and we met with managers and advocates multiple times to advise on our approach, share their perspectives, reflect on their clients' experiences, and reach out to their clients.

3.3 CROSS-SECTOR FORUM

A cross-sector discussion forum was held for frontline workers, campaigners, support workers and advocates. The forum was facilitated by an LGBT HIP Engagement Officer and attended by 6 representatives from LGBTQ groups, faith groups, and groups focussing on migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. One of these has a national focus, and the rest are based in Brighton & Hove or East Sussex. Notes were transcribed from a recording of the conversation and sent around to attendees of the cross-sector forum, for corrections and amendments.

3.4 WRITTEN CONSULTATION WITH LGBTQ PEOPLE WHO ARE REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

After discussions with frontline workers, we decided it was not feasible to hold interviews in our time frame of under 2 months. This was both a practical and ethical decision. It was flagged that people who are seeking asylum often need to re-arrange meetings because of unexpected changes in legal processes and day-to-day living situations. We didn't feel that we had the time to build trust, or the resources to put in place proper safeguarding for people who might be especially vulnerable. We were also cautious about the risk of re-traumatizing people by asking them to repeat their stories. Many of those who access support in Brighton & Hove travel a long way to use services where they feel safe.

Through discussions with MindOut staff, we decided to consult with service users through their advocacy team. A written form was emailed and handed out to selected clients by their advocates. We made it clear that consultants would be anonymous in the report, appearing only with a pseudonym of their choice, and that nothing they said would impact on the support they receive from MindOut or any other service.

Three consultants provided their insights. One was sent via email, and two were written by hand with a MindOut advocate present.

3.5 SURVEY FOR PROFESSIONALS

An online survey was developed in partnership with YMCA Right Here, who simultaneously ran a consultation about young refugees and asylum seekers. The survey explored the views of professionals working with young and/or LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers. Questions asked about the needs of refugees and asylum seekers using their services, and what kinds of support they provided. It also asked about gaps and barriers to support.

The survey was conducted over 3 weeks in March 2018. It was hosted on Survey Monkey and circulated in LGBT HIP and Switchboard mailing lists, targeted to key contacts, shared through the Refugee & Migrant Forum managed by Lucy Bryson at Brighton & Hove City Council, and sent to the Brighton Migrant Network mailing list hosted by Brighton Migrant Solidarity.

4. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

4.1 MEETINGS & CROSS-SECTOR FORUM

We engaged with a broad range of advocates, support workers, campaigners, and community leaders through the consultation. In most cases we did not collect demographic information about them, because our focus was on the LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who they work with.

4.2 CONSULTANTS

We heard from three consultants who were themselves LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, all clients of MindOut. We did not ask these consultants to provide detailed demographic information about themselves, because we were advised to guarantee their anonymity.

When asked to describe themselves, the responses were:

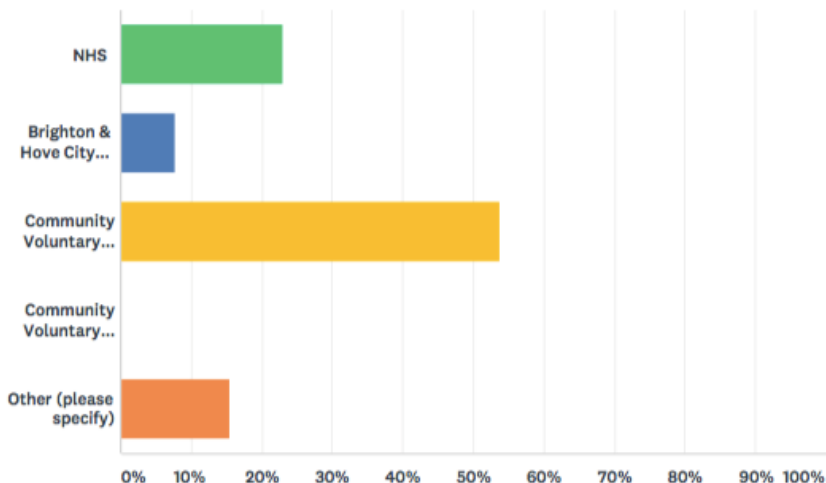
- Bi-sexual, a refugee in the United Kingdom, living in the North East of England, a Care Assistant
- From Gambia, the UK is home, left Gambia fearing for life because identifies as a lesbian, now getting support to claim asylum
- Identifies as a gay man, originally from Pakistan, where being gay is a criminal offence

4.3 SURVEY

The online survey of professionals, run in collaboration with YMCA Right Here, asked about the communities that respondents work with. The responses of 15 professionals who work with young and/or LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers, are below.

4.3.1 Organization (13 responses)

Respondents were asked 'What kind of organisation do you work for?' 53.85% (7) answered 'Community voluntary organisation (local organisation)', 23.08% (3) answered 'NHS', 7.69% (1) answered 'Brighton & Hove City Council', 7.69% (1) answered 'Education', 7.69% (1) answered 'UASC accommodation and support services'.



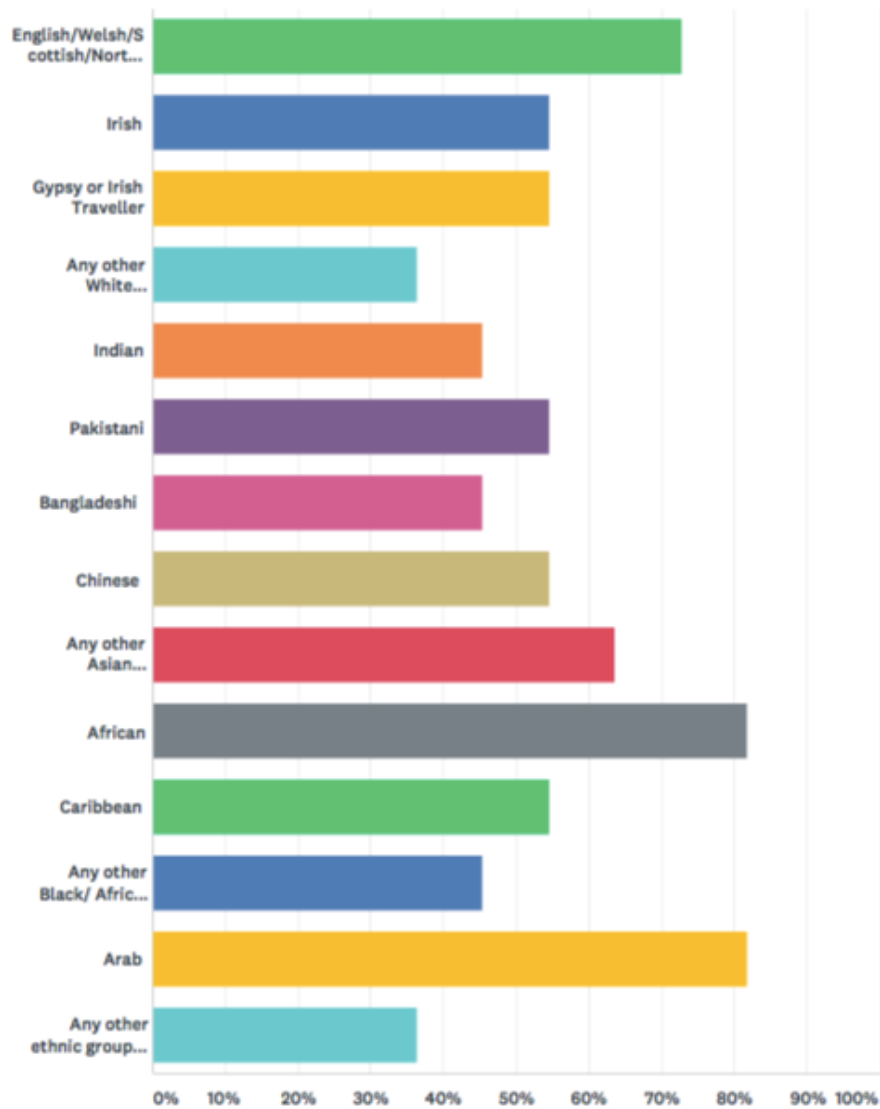
4.3.2 Communities by ethnic origin (11 responses)

Respondents were asked to identify which communities they work with by ethnic origin and prompted to tick all that apply. 81.82% (9) answered 'Arab' and 81.82% (9) answered 'African', 72.73% (8) answered 'English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British', 63.64% (7) answered 'Any other Asian background', 54.55% (6) answered Chinese, 54.55% (6) answered 'Caribbean', 54.55% (6) answered 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller', 54.55% (6) answered 'Irish', 54.55% (6) answered 'Pakistani', 45.45% (5) answered Bangladeshi, 45.45% (5) answered 'Any other Black/ African Caribbean background', 45.45% (5) answered 'Indian', 36.36% (4) answered 'Any other White background', and 36.36% (4) answered 'Any other ethnic group'.

Four comments were added:

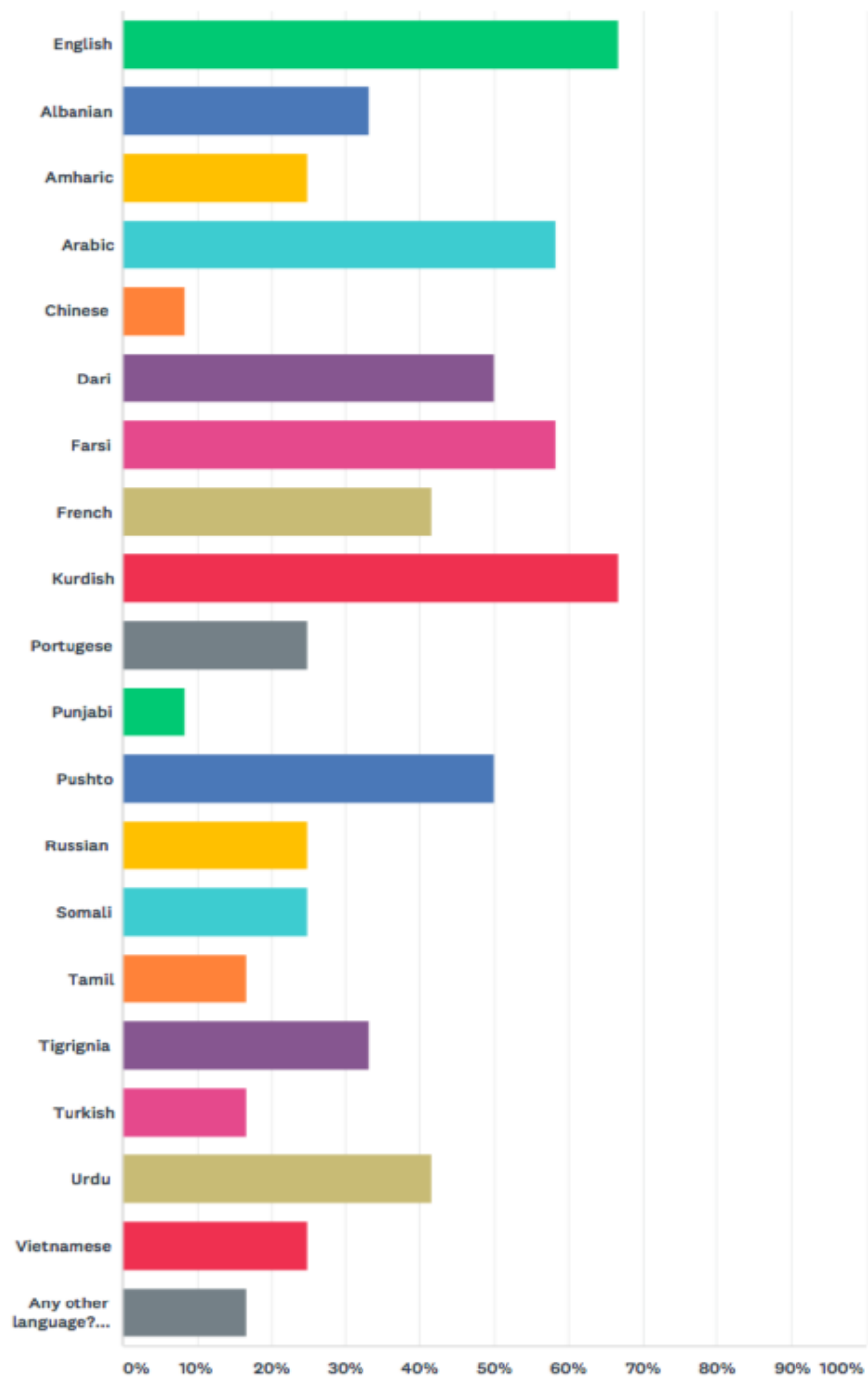
- "100% refugees and asylum seekers"
- "anyone"
- "Kurdish"

- “All BMER communities & backgrounds, including white European”



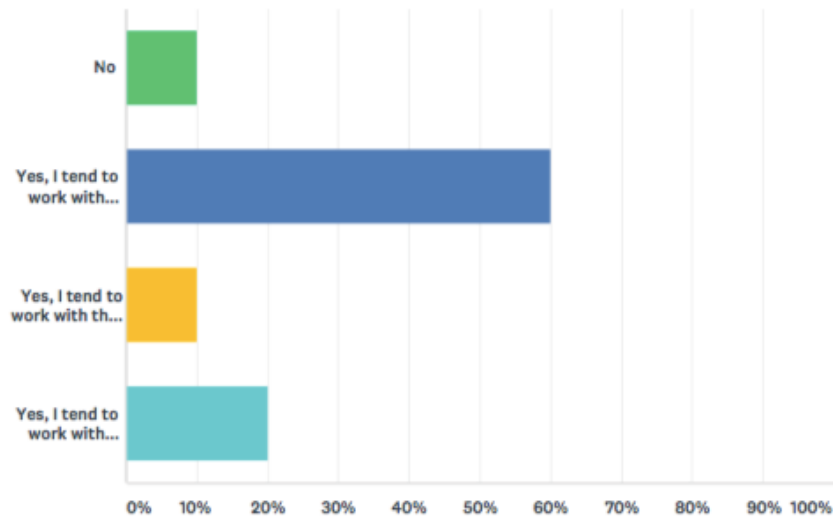
4.3.3 Communities by language (12 responses)

Respondents were asked, ‘Can you identify which communities you or your service are working with by main languages used? Tick all that apply’. 66.67% (8) of respondents said they work with communities whose main language is English, and the same proportion whose main language is Kurdish. 58.33% (7) respondents work with communities whose main language is Arabic, and the same proportion whose main language is Farsi. 50% (6) work with communities whose main language is Dari, and the same proportion whose main language is Pashto. One respondent added that they work with communities whose main languages are Afrikaans, Mandinka, and Damara.



4.3.4 Immigration status (10 responses)

Respondents were asked, 'Do you know the immigration status of the individuals you work with?' 90% (9) answered that they do know the immigration status of people they work with and 10% (1) respondent indicated they don't know. 60% (6) usually support individuals who are seeking asylum and still waiting to hear about a claim or appeal. 20% (2) Tend to work with people who have been refused asylum, and 10% (1) tends to work with those who have been granted refugee status.



5. FINDINGS: DISCUSSIONS & MEETINGS

5.1 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS WITH ADVOCATES AND MANAGERS AT AN LGBTQ PROJECT

5.1.1 Key support needs among LGBTQ asylum seekers they have worked with

- People seeking support mostly want help with the asylum process, exploring their options, and sometimes with social needs. So much of the legal process is very opaque. Others need to be vouched for in court to prove they are LGBTQ. People reach out who live far from Brighton because they want a specialist LGBTQ charity. Immigration services tend to have little LGBTQ awareness, so asylum seekers feel at risk.
- The issues are varied and layered, involving trauma, suicidality, histories of torture and abuse, and struggles with poverty and food poverty.
- A lot of people face a double isolation – from their own community, which they actively avoid because they are LGBTQ; and from the Brighton scene because they are usually not white and not understood. Many carry shame for being LGBTQ, and for their mental health needs.
- Sometimes people are in touch with the home country communities, and their LGBTQ identity is kept as an open secret, or they are closeted and living with other migrants. Some people opt out of asylum housing for fear of discrimination.
- Group work can be challenging because British LGBTQ people aren't always skilled at including migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, for example by speaking more slowly for people whose first language isn't English. A group targeting refugees and migrants can bring together people from such different backgrounds, that they don't necessarily have any shared experience.
- People have such a lack of information and nothing is centralised.

- There are differences across LGBTQ asylum seekers in who seems most comfortable in accessing services. Cis gay men seem the most confident in seeking support, whereas there are fewer cis women and trans people, and they seem less confident.
- Measuring how many service users are refugees and asylum seekers is difficult because many people don't want to self-disclose.

5.1.2 Challenges in supporting LGBTQ asylum seekers and refugees

- People can disappear quickly which can make maintaining relationships difficult. Advocacy work seems to be the most effective. It can be hard for asylum seekers to keep a regular appointment because their situations and priorities change so quickly. Many face serious transport issues including being harassed on the bus or being unable to afford it. Whilst some people want to meet other LGBTQ people, others want total discretion.
- Some people don't seem to identify with the asylum seeker label. Others are afraid to disclose to staff because they are unsure about the potential legal repercussions.
- Everyone working in this sector is overstretched and there is very little support. People are doing much more than they are commissioned to do. The pressure on support workers is huge because they are working with a population that is disempowered in every way.

5.1.3 Lessons about working with this community

- If interviewing asylum seekers, make an offer that people can come in a pair, or with a trusted advocate. Be careful about choosing the location and environment. Publicize anonymity, and that we won't ask questions that are difficult to answer. Payment and travel expenses are really difficult – be creative and offer phone interviews or work out a way to book and pay for travel in advance. Offer a meal (but be careful of when different religious people are fasting).
- Word of mouth is the main way that asylum seekers find out about services. They often come in groups, where one person may have better English and is better able to advocate for the others and their needs.
- Key reasons that people come to this service include being flexible, providing a trusted advocacy service, having an expertise in wider mental health, and supporting people to prove they are LGBTQ by getting them involved in community events.
- Financial resources are needed to pay travel expenses and support English language learning. Funding social activities is also key – a peer support model might not always work but many asylum seekers face exclusion, so inclusive community events and social excursions are essential.
- Support workers need:
 - More time to do this work
 - Access to reliable, up to date immigration information, and a clear picture of how the system works.
 - More outreach (but note the danger of flagging a service that isn't properly resourced)
 - Resources and support
 - Much more peer support (it can be an overwhelming job)
 - Specialist legal knowledge.

5.2 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION WITH A SENIOR IMMIGRATION & ASYLUM ADVISOR IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

- There is a real problem with people accessing legal aid in Brighton. BHT is the only legal aid provider here. Outside of BHT, the nearest providers are in Kent, Southampton, and Croydon.

- BHT used to run an immigration phone advice service, which would either offer brief advice or work as a referral mechanism to BHT lawyers. This was virtually a full-time position, and major cuts in legal aid mean there isn't capacity to run the service.
- Legal aid has been cut significantly, which has had a huge impact on their capacity to do the work. This doesn't only impact immigration – there are serious problems in people accessing legal representation across the board. Legal aid lawyers can only give advice on certain kinds of claims (e.g. those based on asylum, domestic violence, or human trafficking or modern slavery).
- People without the right registration can't legally provide legal advice, so support groups need to be careful about not crossing a line in giving legal advice.
- People seeking asylum on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation do need a lawyer since claims are very complicated. Each case is different depending on their country of origin, and there is a lot of case law to work through. It is never a straightforward issue.

6. FINDINGS: CROSS-SECTOR FORUM

The facilitator started the cross-sector forum with introductions and an explanation about the aim of the meeting. The conversation was structured around three main themes: defining the groups, reflecting on pathways, and learnings from support work.

6.1 KEY DISCUSSION POINTS: DEFINITIONS

The facilitator asked attendees to reflect on how they define LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, which words people use themselves and which are most inclusive, who we might be missing, and how that information is monitored.

6.1.1 Defining migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers

A key point of discussion was around which groups are prioritized. Preferences included from 'vulnerable migrants', 'people seeking asylum', and 'migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers'.

It was noted that by only addressing asylum seekers and refugees, many others with complex support needs are excluded, such as undocumented migrants and European Union migrants who are vulnerable. Immigration status can change very quickly, so someone who is an asylum seeker one day can become an undocumented migrant the next day. Vulnerability among migrants can stem from immigration status, gender, sexuality, or any other issues like not having access to public funds.

Within migrant groups with limited capacity, questions are raised about whether support should be first come first serve or focus on people who are not entitled to benefits. At the same time, many people are wary about disclosing their specific immigration status to support workers and need to build a lot of trust first, so naming a certain group might not work well. It is unclear how far people identify with the terms 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee', although the words still have important legal implications.

6.1.2 Defining LGBTQ

LGBTQ identity labels are also complex. Terms like MSM (men who have sex with men) and WSW (women who have sex with women) have been helpful in sexual health and might work for migrants who want to talk about their relationships and experiences. At the same time, identity labels are an essential part of proving asylum claims to the Home Office. Proving your LGBTQ identity can come

down to certain behaviours – such as visiting an LGBTQ group. People’s own labels aren’t always respected within the asylum system, and one attendee recounted a barrister choosing to ignore an appellant’s self-description as ‘gay’ and call him ‘homosexual’ throughout a tribunal.

One attendee noted that some people they had worked with seemed proud to name their LGBTQ identities. It may be that people who are more comfortable with these terms are more likely to reach out to LGBTQ organizations, which provoked questions about who might be missing. Another attendee mentioned that they work with many people who are unsure and whose identities change through interacting with their support workers, and so doesn’t believe the name is a barrier to people reaching out.

6.1.3 Monitoring

Attendees discussed their different approaches to monitoring, emphasizing the importance of how questions are asked. Some are hesitant to ask about their clients’ immigration status because they were unsure about their legal obligations to disclose, whilst others point out that immigration status changes very quickly, so the information would need to be updated regularly. One attendee explained their monitoring form changed from a tick box to an open field question, but this had brought new problems with some people not understanding the questions. It would be ideal for a friendly support worker to talk through the monitoring form together, but this isn’t always possible.

It was mentioned that interpreters might help because explaining the words can be tricky. At the same time, there are some real issues with interpreters discriminating against LGBTQ people, and not having the right words in either language. Some attendees felt an LGBTQ interpreter could help people to feel safe and start to break down barriers of trust; others believe that people prefer to get through in English to preserve their confidentiality.

6.2 PATHWAYS AND EXPERIENCES

The facilitator asked attendees to discuss the situations of people they have been supporting, and to think through intersectional barriers that different groups face.

6.2.1 Issues among LGBTQ people seeking asylum

The attendees underscored how complex the issues are facing migrants who are LGBTQ. Isolation is an issue, as many don’t have any family to support them. One attendee noted that some people were attending legal information sessions to make social connections. LGBTQ people face severe issues around bullying and violence in detention, and LGBTQ people are very reluctant to access mainstream asylum support services. Some people want to lay low after being granted refugee status for fear of being outed to others or get forced back into the closet to maintain their safety, which can affect housing.

When you have put in an asylum claim you have the option of asylum support and accommodation – it isn’t always safe, but you are entitled to it. Once you are refused and made destitute you have limited options. One attendee noted working with many people who are street homeless, including people who are entitled to asylum accommodation, because that environment isn’t safe for them. Homelessness also comes up after asylum is granted because the 28-day move on period isn’t long enough.

There are also legal issues associated with being LGBTQ. It is significantly harder for LGBTQ asylum seekers to get quality legal advice, harder to evidence your claim, and experimental statistics suggest

that it's harder to be granted asylum on the basis of gender and sexuality than the average of asylum seekers. Some people have faced difficulties after not disclosing their LGBTQ identity immediately, or have disclosed to solicitors who lack knowledge about how to deal with their claim. This can be compounded by caseworkers showing prejudicial attitudes.

6.2.2 Intersectional barriers and pathways to support

One area identified was faith and religion. It was pointed out that people of faith backgrounds can be particularly isolated. Some people fleeing their home countries due to persecution expect a tolerant home in Brighton, only to find a religious community here that still discriminates. However, there are an increasing number of faith groups in the city who are welcoming. Ideas were raised around marking LGBTQ inclusive faith centres with a flag. Some attendees mentioned that they had worked with asylum seekers who were fearful to disclose their LGBTQ identity to people of faith, as they assumed they would respond negatively. There is an issue in Home Office decision-making, where it is often assumed that someone can't practise a faith and be proudly LGBTQ.

Another difference is around class and gender: middle-class men have been quicker to access the help they need, whereas it can be harder for poor women who may have been married and have children to come out and access the help they need. One attendee noted that among 30-40 people they have worked with who were claiming asylum, there were only two people who identified as women. Another mentioned that the majority of their clients are men, creating a barrier for people who feel unsafe in male-dominated spaces. It's hard to know how much of it comes down to higher numbers of men in the asylum system, or structural barriers to accessing support.

Tied to class is the question of whether someone is already here on a visa. Those on student visas are more likely to be able to navigate the system than people who have just arrived or don't speak English.

Nationality is another issue. If you are from a country from which many LGBTQ people claim asylum, you might meet someone from your community who can signpost you (though not always). If you are from a country where there are fewer people in your situation, it can be harder. One attendee recounted being told by someone from Algeria that they avoid everyone else from Algeria, because if anyone knows you are claiming asylum they presume it is because you are gay. Being isolated from home country networks then makes it harder for you to hear about support organisations. Some people are in the UK for years before they even find out you can make a claim based on gender identity or sexual orientation.

Within the LGBTQ community, it was noted that it can be harder to get through the system if you are trans or bisexual, because of vulnerability to other factors. Some bi people are refused on the basis that they can go back to their home country and have a relationship with someone of the opposite sex. One attendee noted that trans people they have worked with are much more isolated than other LGB people.

One group that was identified as not accessing any support is victims of trafficking – not only those trafficked into the UK or trafficked for sexual exploitation. Many attendees mentioned working with people who were in some kind of transaction or exploitation, because of their vulnerability as an asylum seeker, compounded by their gender identity or sexual orientation. Some people live with a member of their family (who doesn't necessarily know their sexual orientation) working for little or no pay (including doing housework and childcare). Others may be involved in domestic servitude or sexual exploitation for a place to stay. People themselves might not recognize this as abuse. Those individuals are very hard to identify and find because they don't necessarily access any services at all.

One attendee pointed out that they usually see this kind of exploitation before someone seeks any help, and if they have been refused asylum.

6.3 SUPPORT WORK

The facilitator asked attendees to share their key learnings about working with these communities and explore the barriers to their work.

6.3.1 Developing inclusive services

Word of mouth was discussed as an important driving force for people to learn about and access support, as people who have good experiences spread information around their networks. This raises questions about those who are most isolated, who likely don't hear about support. One attendee mentioned that clients were good at coming to their service for support as frequently as they need it, but that staff don't always have the capacity to do the advocacy work they need.

A key theme was around the need for LGBTQ services to support migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, as well as for migrant groups to support LGBTQ people. One attendee explained the difficulty of staying up to date with a legal system that changes so quickly, whilst supporting some people with unprecedented levels of despair and suicidality. Services have made changes to how they work, such as reimbursing larger travel expenses and developing a food bank with culturally-specific food or sending supermarket vouchers when people are unable to visit the service in person. There are still barriers to support as some people don't have the money to pay for transport here to be reimbursed.

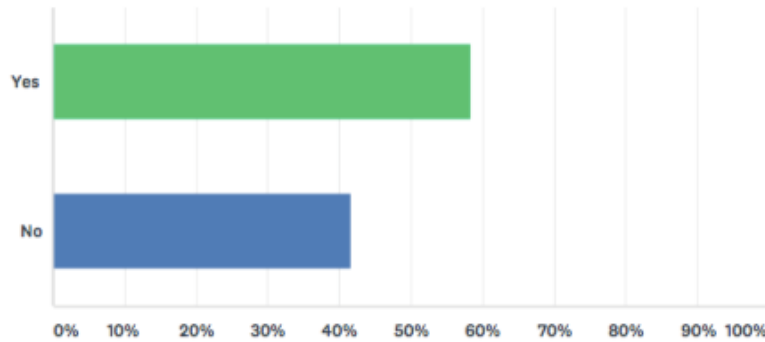
Attendees discussed how migrant groups could be more LGBTQ friendly, tied to wider questions about accessibility to people with disabilities and people with children. It was noted that staff, volunteers, and other clients can be welcoming, but some people still might only feel comfortable in an LGBTQ-specific space.

It was noted that the local increase in asylum queries among LGBTQ services mirrors the national picture. Support workers have been impacted by this work, dealing with vicarious trauma and feelings of helplessness.

7. FINDINGS: SURVEY

7.1 WORKING WITH LGBTQ REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS (12 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, *'This part of the survey is for people who work (or have worked) in Brighton & Hove with refugees and asylum seekers who are LGBTQ, for example as an advocate or support worker. Does this describe you?'* Of 12 respondents who answered, 7 (58.33%) replied 'yes', and 5 (41.67%) answered 'no'.



7.2 ORGANIZATION TYPE (9 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, 'What is the main focus of your organization?' Responses were

- a charity that support LGBTQ people
- Refugee charity
- Refugee young people
- LGBTQ mental health
- LGBT young people
- Social care
- Primary Care Mental Health Services
- Health
- Practical & legal support for refugees and migrants including LGBTQ migrants

7.3 LGBTQ NEEDS (5 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, 'In your experience, do LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers have specific needs and concerns relating to being LGBTQ? Please explain'. All respondents who responded answered 'yes', with answers categorized as follows (some responses were allocated to more than one category):

- **Stigma and shame** [For LGBTQ identity and immigration status] – 4 (80%)
- **Legal system** [unrealistic burden of proof, inconsistent decisions by Home Office] – 2 (40%)
- **Isolation** [from home country network, and from LGBTQ spaces] – 3 (60%)
- **Discrimination** [homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and racism] – 2 (40%)
- **Struggles to adjust** [dealing with trauma, getting used to new environment] – 2 (40%)

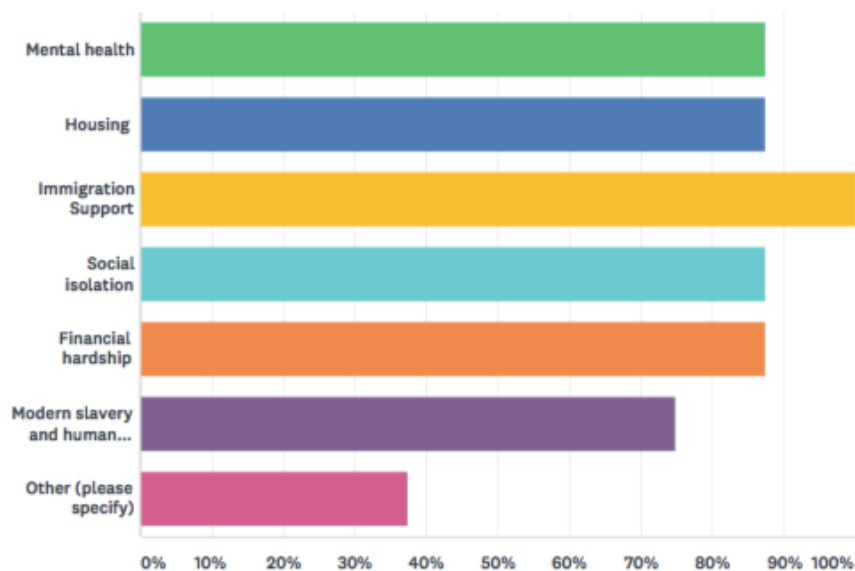
Comments included:

- "Their identity is stigmatized in many levels. They are faced with a system that is against them. They have to prove they are gay which is difficult as it's private and shame inducing. They are faced with uncertainty hopelessness and despair. They don't want people to know they are [asylum] seekers."
- "Yes - stigma & isolation within migrant communities; racism & lack of understanding migrant issues within LGBTQ communities."

7.4 SUPPORT NEEDS (8 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, 'What issues have LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers contacted you about? (Please mention why people first came to you, not issues that came up later)'. 87.5% (7) of respondents selected 'mental health', 87.5% (7) selected 'housing', 87.5% (7) selected 'social isolation', 87.5% (7) selected 'financial hardship', 75% (6) selected 'modern slavery and human trafficking (including criminal, sexual and labour exploitation)', and 37.5% (3) entered additional comments:

- Sexual health concerns. Trauma. Needing allies
- Physical health, unlawful detention by the home office, attempted deportation
- Training, moving on, working towards achieving their potential, learning about how different the UK is from their country of origin.

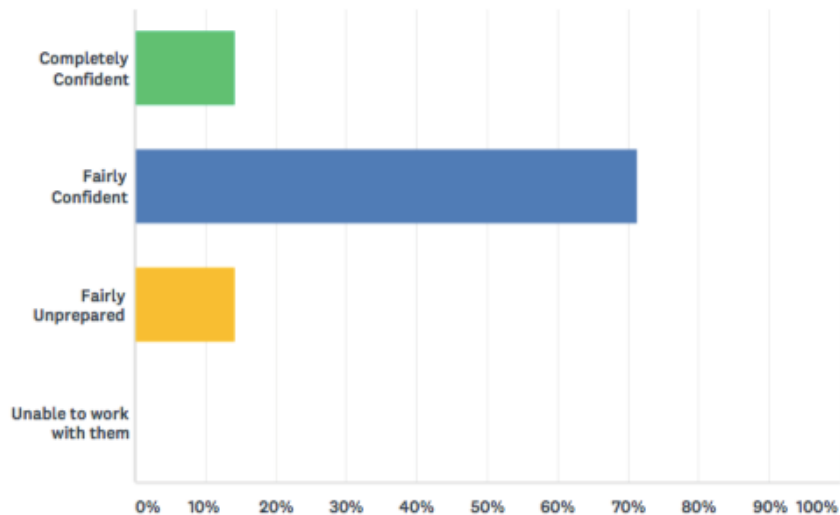


7.5 CONFIDENCE (7 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, 'How confident did you feel to support them in those needs?' 71.5% (5) answered 'fairly confident', 14.29% (1) answered 'completely confident', 14.29% (1) answered 'fairly unprepared', and none answered, 'unable to work with them'.

Comments included:

- "I'm limited in what I can do but our service is flexible so can keep them open and offer ongoing support"
- "I have learned a lot on the job (!). With asylum cases correct or reliable information is incredibly hard to find. Immigration solicitors typically provide a poor service, and it is impossible to contact any Home Office staff whatsoever no matter how urgent the situation."



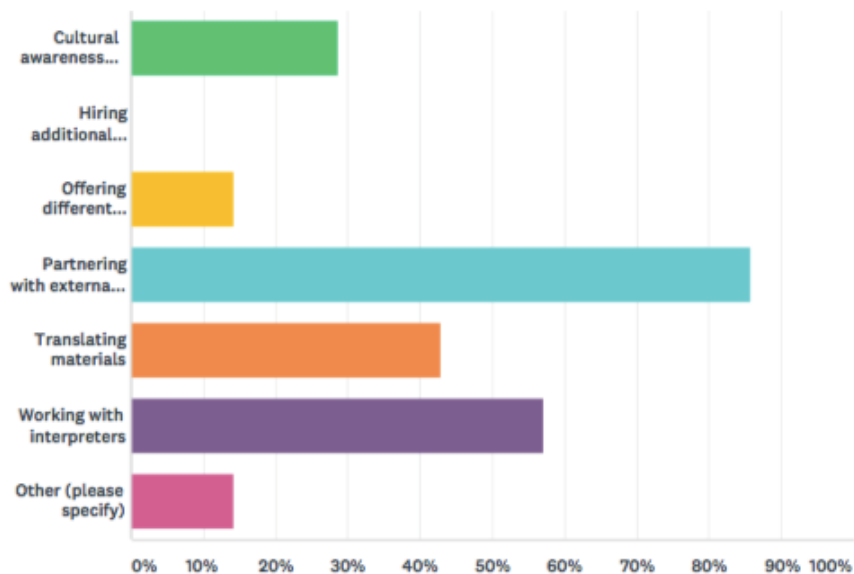
7.6 PATHWAYS TO SUPPORT (6 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, 'What do you think are the most important reasons why LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers chose to come to your service, instead of any other service?' Responses included:

- Non-judgemental
Word of mouth. We give them what they need - letter of support, someone to vouch for them
- Because we are LGBT specific and they need to demonstrate a relationship with an LGBT service to try and prove their sexual orientation or gender identity to the Home Office
- I am not sure that it is a choice - they are referred, by their GP, link worker...
- Kindness and confidentiality Established trusting relationships
- Very limited options for those with immigration needs or other migrant-related issues!

7.7 CHANGING HOW YOU WORK (7 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, 'In what ways, if any, have you changed how you work to better support LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers? Tick as many as apply'. 85.1% (6) answered 'partnering with external organizations', 57.14% (4) answered 'working with interpreters', 42.86% (3) answered 'translating materials', 28.57% (2) answered 'cultural awareness training', 14.29% (1) answered 'offering different materials', and 14.29% (1) commented that they hadn't yet made changes.



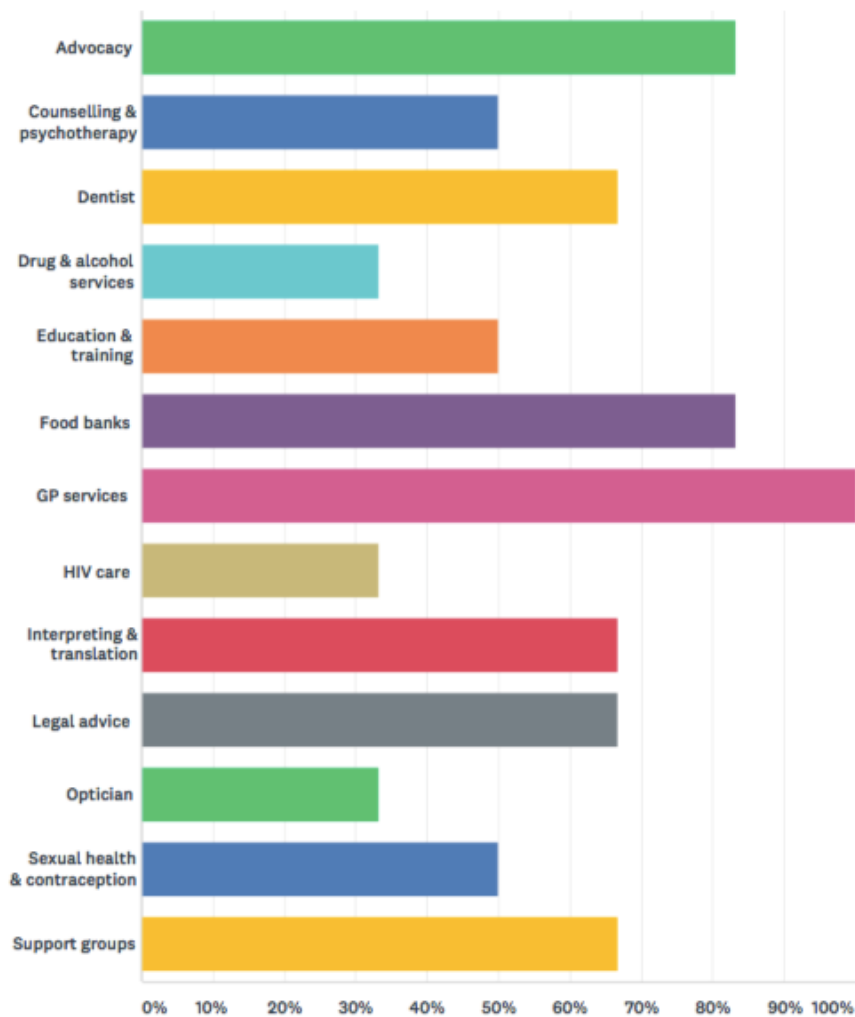
7.8 ONGOING SUPPORT (5 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, 'Have you provided ongoing support to LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers? (If yes, please comment on the kinds of issues)'. Answers were categorized as follows (some responses were allocated to more than one category):

- **Multiple issues** [unrelated to asylum] – 4 (80%)
- **Unable to provide long-term support** – 1 (20%)
- **Legal support** [writing letters for court case, preparing for asylum interview, attending court case as witness, challenging unlawful detention, preventing deportation] – 2 (40%)
- **Emotional support** – 1 (20%)
- **Group work** – 1 (20%)
- **Accessing healthcare** – 1 (20%)

7.9 SUPPORT SERVICES (6 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, 'As far as you are aware, which services are used by LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers you work with? Tick as many as apply.' 100% (6) answered 'GP Services', 83.33% (5) answered 'advocacy', 83.33% (5) answered 'food banks', 66.67% (4) answered 'dentist', 66.67% (4) answered 'interpreting & translation', 66.67% (4) answered 'legal advice', 66.67% (4) answered 'support groups', 50% (3) answered 'counselling & psychotherapy', 50% (3) answered 'education & training', 50% (3) answered 'sexual health & contraception', 33.3% (2) answered 'drug & alcohol services', 33.3% (2) answered 'HIV care', and 33.3% (2) answered 'optician'.



7.10 SERVICES NOT MEETING NEEDS (4 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, 'Are there any services you feel particularly struggle to meet the needs of LGBTQ refugees and migrants? (Please comment on the specific issues)'. Answers were categorized as follows:

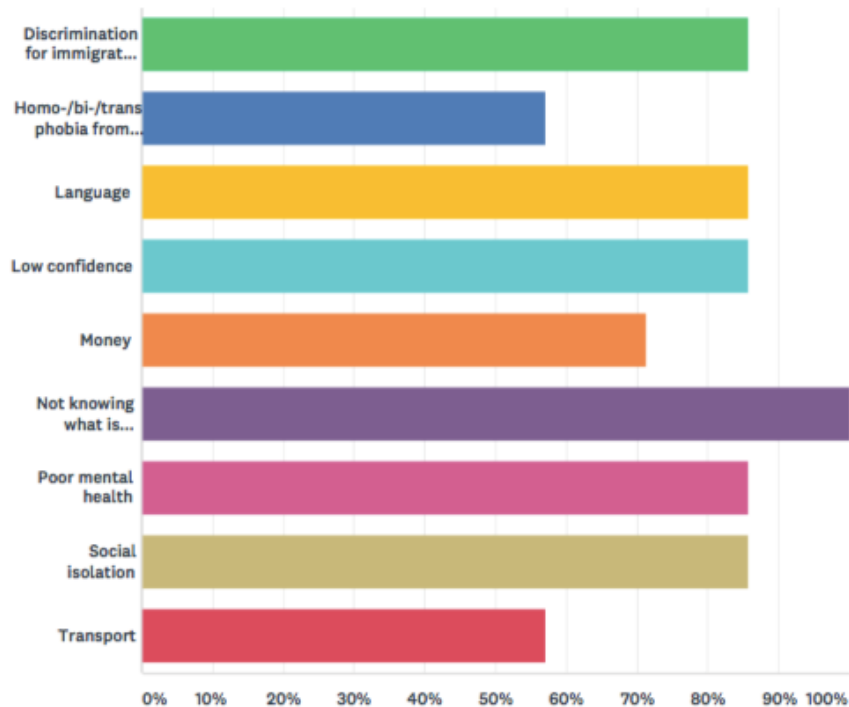
- **Unsure** – 50% (2)
- **All of them** [Legal, healthcare, mental health, housing] – 50% (2)

7.11 KEY BARRIERS TO SUPPORT (7 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, 'What do you see as the key barriers to LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers using support services? Tick as many as apply'. 100% (7) answered 'not knowing what is available', 85.71% (6) answered 'social isolation', 85.71% (6) answered 'poor mental health', 85.71% (6) answered 'language', 85.71% (6) answered 'low confidence', 85.71% (6) answered 'discrimination for immigration status', 71.43% (5) answered 'money', 57.14% (4) answered 'homo-/bi-/transphobia from professionals', and 57.14% (4) answered 'transport'.

One respondent commented on the importance of the language barrier:

- “The language barrier sticks out particularly. I have never seen a professional attempt to speak more slowly or in simpler English to an asylum seeker with obviously limited English, and I often act as a kind of interpreter, repeating that professionals have said slowly and in clearer terms. My having to re-explain things to the client and asking professionals to speak more clearly did not change those professionals' behaviour. Shocking, really.”



7.12 INCREASING TRUST (5 RESPONSES)

Respondents were asked, ‘*Recommendation #12 in the International Migrants Needs Assessment says: "Public services to consider what further they can do to increase the trust and confidence of migrant communities in using their services." How do you think local health services might do this for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers?*’ Answers were categorized as follows (some responses were allocated to more than one category):

- **New specialized service** – 20% (1)
- **Specific training around needs** – 40% (2)
- **More information in routine assessments** – 40% (2)
- **Sensitive and non-judgmental services** [including asking about gender identity and sexual orientation] – 40% (2)
- **Unsure** – 20% (1)

8. FINDINGS: WRITTEN CONSULTATION WITH LGBTQ PEOPLE WHO ARE REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Consultants were asked to provide a pseudonym, to describe themselves, and to write about their experiences in getting support from different organizations.

8.1 CONSULTANT 1: SULAYMAN A. O

My name is Sulayman and am Bi-sexual, I am a refugee in the United Kingdom, I know live in the North East of England, Am a Care Assistant.

I needed some help concerning my mental health, immigration issues, a voice and someone to be there when I needed help at the lowest period of my life. I tried contacting different organizations but none came to my rescue until I found MindOut.

Finding MindOut has been one of the greatest thing that has happened to me, they supported me through all my problems, without them I don't think I will be here today. MindOut was very easy to reach, not like other organisations where you get booked for an appointment months before you get seen or your issues been attended to. I have been using MindOut when I was living in Brighton and am still using their services.

MindOut will respond to your queries with immediate effect, they were there when I was in Immigration Detention Centre London, they correspond with my Immigration Solicitor, aid me with support letters and also do counselling over the phone. I am using this opportunity to say a very big thank you and I do appreciate all MindOut has done for me.

8.2 CONSULTANT 2: KUMBA

I am from Gambia. The UK is my home. I had to leave Gambia because I feared for my life because I identify as a lesbian. I am now getting support to claim asylum.

Before I knew about MindOut I was only supported by my friends, they helped me fill in forms. It was a friend who told me about MindOut and told me I can trust them, it was important to hear that from a friend. MindOut are very important to me and help me so much. They put me in touch with Refugee Radio who has helped me apply for financial support. I felt OK to contact them because they were recommended by MindOut who I trust.

MindOut also helped me by linking me to BHT's immigration service who are helping me claim asylum, this process is very scary and stressful so I am really glad I gave the support of MindOut.

Food is always helpful and sometimes difficult to get. Better access to free food in my local area (not Brighton) would help.

8.3 CONSULTANT 3: MIAN HUNAIN

I identify myself as a gay man. Originally I am from Pakistan, where being a homosexual is a criminal offence and prosecution is life imprisonment and death is society finds out.

I don't have support from more organisations apart from MindOut, it's like family for me, when there was no one for me in this country they hold my hand and gave me hope, support in every way.

Problems being from a country where being homosexual is criminal offense. In this country we have struggling to live, we can't afford house, people we don't have a lot, we are not allowed to work and it's so hard to live like this. We cannot afford lawyers here and it's getting worse day by day for us. MindOut is only LGBT organisation who is listening our problems and helping us out.

We have no one else. Nowhere to go. I went to an LGBT organisation in London and they said it would cost £200 for a supporting letter – you have to go there to a group for LGBT asylum seekers playing games, but not asking how I am or talking about problems.

I need to be able to talk about what I'm going through – the struggle being gay coming from a country where not even a single person will accept you.

I never go to the doctor any more. I don't have GP any more. Home Office said I could see their GP but I'd rather see another GP. I went to GP and they said to register I had to bring proof of address and proof that I can stay in the UK. I've got health problems – parts of my body becoming paralysed – I need a GP.

It's hard to get to MindOut. It's £25 on the train from London.

Services think we go to them just for visas purposes but it's not true. We are struggling for our lives, that's why we go there.

My family don't talk to me anymore. I feel suicidal – have thoughts of jumping in front of train or drowning. Where I live I can't be myself because I rely on them for somewhere to stay. I sleep in the kitchen.

9. ANALYSIS

9.1 INTERSECTIONAL DIFFERENCES

9.1.2 Defining migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers

In meetings and the cross-sector forum, it was made clear that people who fall into the category of LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers have very diverse experiences. This brings extra challenges around defining who falls into the group. Two people who fall under the LGBTQ umbrella and have migrated to the UK don't necessarily share things in common.

We must be cautious not to flatten the needs of this group. There is no typical pathway that people follow, even once they are in the UK and under the same legal system. Partly, this is because decisions and processes around asylum seem opaque and inconsistent.

9.1.3 Additional barriers

In large part, differences within these groups relate to intersectional barriers and oppressions. Several frontline workers noted that cis gay men appear to be the most comfortable in accessing mainstream services. Trans people, bi people, and women all face additional vulnerabilities during their journey to the UK and once they are here, and it was noted that they are less confident in seeking support.

Additional barriers are faced by people of faith, who may face real or perceived discrimination within faith communities due to being LGBTQ. Class differences were noted in who is most able to navigate a complex legal system and have good English language skills. Racism affects BAME people and is often perpetuated within LGBTQ spaces, which adds to the isolation of LGBTQ migrants. Support groups can be physically inaccessible to those with disabilities or caring responsibilities.

Wider understandings about the limits to accessibility and inclusion are central when working with LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. It should be noted that many migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers face multiple additional barriers at the same time, which reinforce each other and compound the discrimination they face.

9.1.4 Trafficking

People who are trafficked, including in domestic servitude and transactional relationships, are a key group needing additional support. LGBTQ people appear more likely to end up in exploitative situations, because they are often unable to rely on home country networks for accommodation and resources, due to feared or actual persecution. As Minan Hunain explains, 'Where I live I can't be myself because I rely on them for somewhere to stay. I sleep in the kitchen.' One attendee at the cross-sector forum noted that every person they had worked with was involved in a transactional relationship for housing and survival.

75% of professionals surveyed noted that LGBTQ asylum seekers and refugees who contacted them needed support with 'modern slavery and human trafficking (including criminal, sexual and labour exploitation)'. Whilst this does suggest some people in exploitative situations are reaching out, many more are likely unaware of what is available. A key limitation of this consultation is that we have only been able to focus on the experiences of those who are already accessing some kind of support. That leaves questions about who remains invisible.

9.2 MULTI-LAYERED SUPPORT NEEDS

9.2.1 Unmet need for legal advice

Every frontline worker and advocate we spoke to highlighted the injustices of the asylum system for people who making claims on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation. 100% of professionals surveyed indicated that LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers were seeking support with the immigration system when they first came to their service. One professional surveyed noted that the legal system still discriminates against LGBTQ people: 'They are faced with a system that is against them. They have to prove they are gay which is difficult as it's private and shame inducing. They are faced with uncertainty hopelessness and despair.'

For LGBTQ asylum seekers and refugees themselves, the asylum process is 'very scary and stressful. People need assistance to access and correspond with solicitors, and to challenge unlawful detention, but they feel distrusted by immigration groups, who suspect they are only there to get a visa.

Brighton & Hove was repeatedly described as a 'legal aid desert', with several years of cuts and austerity having a severe negative impact on the capacity of lawyers. Frontline workers described having to teach themselves immigration law. One professional commented: "I have learned a lot on the job (!). With asylum cases correct or reliable information is incredibly hard to find. Immigration solicitors typically provide a poor service, and it is impossible to contact any Home Office staff whatsoever no matter how urgent the situation." Almost all support workers struggle to find clear and reliable information about the asylum process.

There is a vast unmet need for legal advice for LGBTQ people seeking asylum in Brighton & Hove. Support groups do need to be cautious in this area, since people without the right registration can't legally provide legal advice.

9.2.2 Multi-layered issues

The support needs of LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are incredibly complex and layered. People often present at a service seeking legal advice but require support in every area of wellbeing and daily life. Whilst 100% of professionals surveyed indicated that LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers who came to their service for legal support, 87.5% also required assistance with mental health, housing, social isolation, and financial hardship.

MindOut clients consulted shared how multi-layered their own support needs are. Sulayman A. O. sought help with 'my mental health, immigration issues, a voice and someone to be there when I needed help at the lowest period of my life'. Mian Hunain mentions severe financial difficulties: 'struggling to live, we can't afford house...We cannot afford lawyers here and it's getting worse day by day for us', and cannot to afford travel. Mian also lacks access to medical care for a health condition, and is dealing with trauma, shame, and suicidality, so needs 'to talk about what I'm going through – the struggle being gay coming from a country where not even a single person will accept you'. Kumba explains three main support needs: sourcing food, financial support, and legal immigration advice.

It is clear that, for many LGBTQ asylum seekers, arriving in the UK means a continuation of the harm and trauma that caused them to flee their home countries. People face severe and complex difficulties from their immigration status, which are compounded by the shame, discrimination, and abuse attached to their LGBTQ identity. Social isolation is widespread, with some people fearing any contact with people from their home countries, whilst being excluded from LGBTQ spaces.

9.2.3 Implications for community services

Vulnerabilities across so many different areas mean that support workers need to be skilled at offering support across a broad range of issues. Frontline workers re-iterated that the issue people first arrive for is just one of many essential support needs. 80% of professionals surveyed are providing ongoing support to LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers. Given the difficulties that many LGBTQ migrants face in physically getting to a support service, it is even more important for services to be well-prepared and able to work together with partners to provide integrated care.

Support workers are working with unprecedented levels of despair, hopelessness, and suicidality. Whilst some frontline workers receive peer support, others are dealing with a major emotional impact including vicarious trauma. This is a demanding area of work, and people are putting in extra hours to visit LGBTQ asylum seekers in detention centres or support them in court.

Services are have adapted how they work. 85.1% of professionals surveyed have done this by partnering with external organizations. People are responding creatively by launching food banks, launching different social excursions, or extending their travel allowances. Often, these activities are being done without formal funding.

9.3 IMPORTANCE OF LGBTQ ORGANISATIONS

People are travelling across the country to access support in Brighton & Hove from an LGBTQ service that has been recommended by trusted friends. In line with national reports, local support workers indicate that many people prefer to attend an LGBTQ project instead of a migrant group, regardless of their immigration expertise. Brighton & Hove is seen by some as a safe space for LGBTQ people.

In part, people seek out LGBTQ groups who need to prove their identity in asylum claims. Other essential reasons are being non-judgemental and providing a kind and confidential service. As Mian

Hunain notes, 'it's like family for me...We have no one else. Nowhere to go...We are struggling for our lives, that's why we go there.' Kumba agrees: 'I can trust them', and Sulayman reflects that 'Finding MindOut has been one of the greatest thing that has happened to me, they supported me through all my problems, without them I don't think I will be here today.' It is clear that LGBTQ groups based in Brighton & Hove are doing crucial work supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

9.4 REMAINING BARRIERS TO SUPPORT

9.4.1 Lack of information

Word of mouth was repeatedly noted as the main way that people find out about local support services. As Kumba explained, 'It was a friend who told me about MindOut and told me I can trust them, it was important to hear that from a friend'. LGBTQ asylum seekers often travel in groups to attend support services, providing security and confidence, and at times helping each other with language barriers.

Whilst this is promising for those who are in touch with other asylum seekers, it raises questions about people who remain isolated. Some people who fear contact with others from their home communities don't know their rights to claim asylum on the basis of gender and sexuality and have no awareness of what support they could access. 100% of professionals surveyed believe that the main barrier for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers accessing help is not knowing what is available. Information is still very de-centralised and fragmented.

9.4.2 English language barriers

More support is needed for people's spoken English. LGBTQ communities and professionals are not always willing or able to change how they speak to include people whose first language isn't English. One professional noted that: "I have never seen a professional attempt to speak more slowly or in simpler English to an asylum seeker with obviously limited English, and I often act as a kind of interpreter, repeating that professionals have said slowly and in clearer terms. My having to re-explain things to the client and asking professionals to speak more clearly did not change those professionals' behaviour. Shocking, really."

Interpreters are a source of ambivalence and fear among many LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers. Many people prefer to get through in English, regardless of their level, so that they can have a one-to-one meeting with a support worker. One issue with interpreters is not having the right language to explain the terms and ideas around gender and sexual diversity in either language, but the bigger problem is their real or perceived prejudice towards LGBTQ people. It is common for LGBTQ asylum seekers to worry that an interpreter will inform their home country networks (in the UK or at home) about the details of their asylum claim, which could threaten their lives if they were refused asylum and deported.

LGBTQ-affirmative and LGBTQ-identified interpreters could provide a trusted service, helping to break down language barriers and make people feel safe.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations have been developed out of the findings from discussions with frontline workers, the online survey, the written consultation, and the cross-sector forum. It is hoped that the following recommendations may act as a guide for the CCG:

1. Research: Further research should be carried out locally, drawing on key learnings from this consultation. This should include a regular cross-sector forum, as well as consultations with refugees and asylum seekers, preferably in research led by refugees and asylum seekers.
2. New practitioner: options for a full-time practitioner to specialize in supporting LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers should be explored. Key partners should consider costs, key areas of work, and suitable partners to recruit and host a new practitioner.
3. Interpreters: LGBTQ awareness training should be delivered to local interpreters, and a list of existing LGBTQ-identified and LGBTQ-affirmative interpreters should be developed and made available online
4. Training: Cross-trainings should be held between LGBTQ organizations and migrant groups. Statutory and community organisations should carry out training in communication with people without English as a first language. Additional peer support should be delivered to frontline workers.
5. Legal information: local groups should work together to develop a shared online resource about accessing legal information, and explore options to support a specialised legal advice service
6. Social activities: existing LGBTQ, migrant, and community groups should work together to host inclusive events, and fund social excursions aiming to bring LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers together with the wider community. Groups should explore ways to make their inclusion visible.
7. Volunteering: voluntary sector organisations should explore options for LGBTQ asylum seekers to gain voluntary experience with them.
8. Travel grants: community groups should explore options to fund LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers to travel to trusted services in Brighton & Hove, preferably booking tickets for them in advance.

RECOMMENDATION	LOW RESOURCE	MEDIUM RESOURCE	HIGH RESOURCE
1. More research in Brighton	Host biennial cross-sector forum for support workers and advocates to reflect on their work, discuss challenges and successes, and offer peer support to each other	Follow-up research with asylum seekers and refugees to hear more about their support needs, using key learnings from this consultation	Community-led research carried out by asylum seekers and refugees, building on the model of the International Migrants in Brighton & Hove report
2. New full-time LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers practitioner			Recruit a new support practitioner for LGBTQ asylum seekers and refugees, integrating legal advice, social connections, mental health support, language needs, advocacy, information, and a long-term point of contact. This would need to be a well-resourced post hiring a very skilled worker, and ideally shared across multiple partners (work needed to identify most suitable partners)
3. LGBTQ-affirmative interpreters	Work with partners on a shared list of existing LGBTQ-affirmative interpreters, posted online and updated quarterly	Facilitate trainings with existing interpreters about being LGBTQ affirmative (build on example of the Switchboard & Trans Alliance Inclusion Award)	Funding to support voluntary sector organisations to translate key materials online and in print, to be updated quarterly
4. Training		<p>a) For migrant groups: on LGBTQ issues, including how to ask about gender and sexuality (building on Switchboard consultation)</p> <p>b) For LGBTQ groups: on asylum issues, especially legal rights</p>	

		<p>c) For statutory organisations: on communicating with people who don't have English as a first language</p> <p>d) Additional peer support sessions for frontline workers dealing with vicarious trauma</p>	
5. Legal information	Work with partners to create an informal online drive to share information, to be updated by members	Consult with BHT about funding and supporting the immigration telephone helpline to re-open	Develop a helpline specialising in signposting and legal advice on immigration and asylum (legal advice can only be given by qualified people)
6. Social activities	Engage with local migrant, BAME, and faith groups to signal inclusion of LGBTQ people and advertise social events as LGBTQ inclusive	<p>a) Fund existing voluntary sector groups to run social activities (e.g. cinema) aiming to bring together LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers with the wider community</p> <p>b) Voluntary organisations to work with LGBTQ venues to host events that migrant-friendly</p>	
7. Volunteering opportunities		Voluntary sector organisations explore options for LGBTQ asylum seekers to volunteer with them	
8. Travel grants		Develop fund for refugees and asylum seekers to travel to services in Brighton & Hove, either sending money in advance or booking tickets	

11.1 ACTION STEPS:

1. Switchboard plan a date for a follow-up meeting in 6 months, and partners in the cross-sector forum to share responsibility for future meetings
 - a) Switchboard consider more research with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers for the next HIP open research topic
 - b) Switchboard explore costs and resources needed to train and supervise LGBTQ community researchers, including migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers
2. Switchboard &/ MindOut consider funding needs of a new service, and discuss where it could be best housed with other potential partners
3. Switchboard &/ MindOut reach out to partners from cross-sector forum to suggest developing a list
 - a) Switchboard &/ MindOut to discuss cross-trainings with Sussex Interpreting Service
 - b) Council to consider extending interpreter funding to support translation
4. Switchboard &/ MindOut/ & Allsorts discuss offering two-way cross-trainings with migrant groups in Brighton & Hove
5. Switchboard &/ MindOut reach out to partners from cross-sector forum to suggest developing shared legal information resource
 - a) Switchboard consider funding and resources needed to support a partnership with BHT
6. Switchboard develop list of LGBTQ inclusive faith groups with Brighton & Hove Faith in Action, and reach out to migrant and BAME groups about doing this in partnership
 - a) Voluntary sector groups to seek funds
7. Voluntary sector to groups explore options. Switchboard consider training community researchers, including migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers
8. Switchboard &/ MindOut to discuss applying for travel funds

10. CONCLUSIONS

This consultation points to the exceptional work being done by support workers, advocates, campaigners, and volunteers in Brighton & Hove. Community organisations have responded creatively to growing needs and continue to strive to provide much-needed support. It is clear how highly LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers value LGBTQ groups and services, which have been life-saving for some people. People will continue to travel across the country to access support in a safe, supportive, and non-judgmental environment.

Nonetheless, work in this area remains challenging. LGBTQ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are an incredibly diverse group of people who face multiple levels of discrimination. As well as barriers for their migrant status and LGBTQ identity, many people face additional difficulties because of their race and ethnicity, language skills, class, gender, faith, disability, and caring responsibilities. Being in such a precarious situation makes people especially vulnerable to exploitation and isolation.

The needs within these groups are multi-layered and complex. There is a vast unmet need for reliable legal advice because asylum cases based on gender identity and sexual orientation are complicated and varied. Aside from the navigating a hostile asylum system, many LGBTQ asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are struggling to meet their basic needs around housing, healthcare, and food, whilst carrying lasting trauma, suicidality, and poor mental health.

The most vulnerable people are likely still not accessing any support. A lack of centralised information is compounded by social isolation and poor English language skills, meaning that some people have no way of getting information.

Support services need to be highly skilled in a number of areas to support and refer individuals facing these issues. Frontline workers are dealing with unprecedented levels of trauma, and often work over and above what they are trained and contracted to do. Through this consultation, we have produced recommendations across eight key areas: more research, a full-time specialist practitioner, LGBTQ-affirmative interpreters, further training, legal advice, social activities, volunteering opportunities, and travel grants. The community sector in Brighton & Hove urgently needs more resources to be able to support some of the most vulnerable members of the LGBTQ community.

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