

# count me in too community summary

## Deaf LGBT lives

Chapter 10 of the Count Me In Too General Health report describes the particular issues that emerged as significant for identify as deaf, hard of hearing, deafened or deaf-blind LGBT people. 28 people (4% of respondents) identified themselves within this category.

The term deaf is used in exploring the experiences of auditory difference, while recognising that many respondents did not feel that the term 'deaf' captures their identity. We use the term 'deaf' (in lower case) for this summary, as directed by the steering group, while recognising its limitations.

**This chapter showed that issues of multiple marginalisation are key to understanding deaf LGBT people's lives and experiences.** These pertain to both deaf communities not accepting LGBT people, and LGBT people marginalising deaf people.

18% of deaf LGBT respondents said that they had experienced bullying, abuse, discrimination or exclusion from mainstream venues and events, and 11% from LGBT venues and events.

**'I am not accepted by deaf people because I am Gay and I am not accepted by LGBT because I am deaf.'**

One third of deaf LGBT respondents felt marginalised by their LGBT identity.

**'I don't necessarily feel more marginalised by mainstream society than straight deaf people, but I do feel marginalised by straight deaf people!'**

**Only 25% of respondents said they found it easy or very easy to be an LGBT deaf person in Brighton & Hove.** This compared to 76% of the overall sample in the research when they were asked just about LGBT identities.

**LGBT deaf people experienced difficulties with services, health, safety and housing.**

47% of deaf respondents found it easy or very easy to access services specifically for LGBT deaf people, while 11% found it very difficult. There were also particular difficulties in accessing health services.

**'in huge capital letters "HE IS DEAF" is there, right on the folder. But they don't do anything with that information. Still it's the same service as hearing people, so there's no addition'.**

42% of deaf respondents said that they had experienced domestic violence or abuse and there were indications that they were more likely than non-deaf people to have been abused by people other than partner or family members.

**46% of deaf respondents found it difficult or very difficult to find deaf-friendly LGBT pubs, clubs or organisations in Brighton and Hove.** None said it was very easy.

For many deaf LGBT respondents, LGBT communities and spaces were inaccessible because of assumptions regarding the normality of hearing. As a result, these people felt excluded from such communities and spaces.

‘From the deaf community’s perspective, the LGBT community is a hearing community. So deaf LGBT person can still see the LGBT community as primarily hearing and therefore different to ‘me’.’

More than a third of deaf respondents found it difficult or very difficult to find information about what help or assistance is available to them.

‘Deaf people can have problems accessing support services and even knowing which ones are available. Support has to come from deaf friendly people and can’t be accessed only through the phone. For example, police didn’t have communication access and so that service could not be used.’

It was not just mainstream services that were inaccessible for deaf people. The research found evidence that deaf services could also be antagonistic towards LGBT people.

‘There’s the Sussex Deaf Association, which is our sort of local association, but I wouldn’t go there because it’s a very church-led organisation... and has a real sort of history of being quite discriminatory against LGBT people... they’re the service, the provider that the council would first look to if they wanted to access the deaf community for Brighton, and yet they’re not welcoming for LGBT people.’

When deaf LGBT people were asked about what they would like to **change in Brighton & Hove** there were five clear categories:

- **less prejudice** and more understanding;
- less **loud music** in venues;
- **better access** in general;
- more and better **information**;
- wider use of **British Sign Language**.

The analysis group recommended that:

- services commissioned and provided for deaf people should be LGBT friendly as a condition of funding, and that achievement in this area should be monitored.
- issues identified in this research by the deaf LGBT community be taken to the cross-sector City Disability Equality Scheme Steering Group.
- deaf LGBT people continue to be encouraged to join the City Disability Equality Scheme Steering Group, to work with health providers to ensure that improvements are made.
- LGBT communities, voluntary groups and businesses should work to become more deaf friendly and provide inclusive spaces.

To find out more details about the results of the research and recommendations the full report can be downloaded for free from :

[www.countmeintoo.co.uk](http://www.countmeintoo.co.uk)