

count me in too community summary

Housing & LGBT lives

The Count Me In Too housing report explores the housing experiences of LGBT people in Brighton & Hove.

48% of LGBT respondents lived in privately owned housing, 30% in privately rented housing, and 9% in social housing. A quarter of respondents said they had difficulties in obtaining accommodation – 86% of these people suggested it was due to the cost. See chapter 3 for more on obtaining and maintaining accommodation in Brighton & Hove.

32% of respondents living in social housing were not happy with it. 17% of these respondents said they cannot use, or choose not to use, certain services which are designed to meet their needs. A number of people described discrimination from housing services.

‘we are still getting the worst treatment and they automatically still believe that gay guys like us must be going out every single weekend, must be having parties, must be causing trouble, must be annoying the neighbours. When in fact it’s actually the people who are in a much older age bracket and straight and married with kids who cause the most mess and fuss and noise.’

You can read more about LGBT people and social housing in chapter 4

8% of respondents had specialist housing needs – these were mostly people who were disabled, who had mental health difficulties, who were HIV positive or over 46 years of age.

62% of older respondents would be interested in LGBT-specific sheltered housing, extra-care housing or residential care.

71% of younger respondents desire housing schemes specifically for younger LGBT people. For more on specialist housing needs, see chapter 6.

‘I would like to see more, if not training, just more kind of actual LGBT services rather than mainstream because if they can’t actually deal with LGBT people properly then maybe we need our own services to deal with it’

22% of LGBT respondents have been homeless at some point in their lives. Those more likely to have experienced homelessness include trans-, bi- and queer people, people who identified their sexual identity as ‘other’, disabled people, people who were HIV positive, people on low incomes and people with mental health difficulties. Chapter 5 includes a full discussion of homelessness.

‘I was homeless in the sense I had no permanent address. Parents were unhappy about sexuality so I had to get other housing ASAP – hence why I am in supported housing now.’

8% of LGBT people have had sex or made themselves available to have sex in order to have somewhere to stay.

Although the majority of respondents said that Brighton & Hove was a good place to live, 77% stated that there are places in Brighton where they do not feel safe. 69% of these respondents said that housing estates on the outskirts were where they felt less safe. The main reasons for not feeling safe were homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Further details can be found in chapter 7.

'I had that in my old flat, there were these two people they were hassling me putting lit matches through my door, just writing Dyke right across the landing.'

The 2005 Civil Partnerships Act was a key issue for those who live with a partner. More than a third of people who live with their partners felt that they did not have enough information regarding civil partnerships.

'I know the Up sides, but not the down sides'

'Didn't realise there could be financial implications'

'Don't know how it applies to foreign citizens'

Over a quarter of those who reported their civil partnership to relevant agencies experienced financial loss. The average loss was £246 per month. This could have serious consequences for some LGBT people.

'No notice, no transitional relief, £400 a month worse off and a Council determined to have us evicted and living in a bed n' breakfast in Whitehawk because they don't understand this issues of trans people and the need to live in a safe area.'

The analysis group recommended that:

- The breadth of housing services are promoted to LGBT people, particularly those who are vulnerable or new to Brighton & Hove, emphasising that these services are not just for council housing applicants. It is proposed that this includes a specialist LGBT Housing Options Officer within the council and a local service guide for LGBT people in housing need.
- Safety needs of LGBT people are accounted for in housing decisions.
- There is a need to improve the awareness of rights and what actions can be taken by the council or other bodies where incidents of abuse or discrimination against LGBT people in social and private rented accommodation.
- All housing services continue to engage with LGBT service users to use their views and experiences to guide service improvement.
- Services continue to improve systems and processes, and monitor services to LGBT people, with consideration for needs of specific groups within the LGBT collective including trans people, bi people, older people, and youth homelessness.

To find out more details about the results of the research and recommendations (including the sample of those living in Brighton & Hove, chapter 2; LGBT health and support needs, chapter 8; domestic violence and abuse, chapter 10; and monitoring and consultation, chapter 11), the full report can be downloaded for free from :

www.countmeintoo.co.uk