

It's time to look at the evidence of poorer outcomes for the LGBT+ community and ask how policing can be about compassion in its fullest sense, as well as compliance.

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Coronavirus has had an unprecedented effect on the daily lives of everyone in the UK. The impact of the virus is widespread. However, individuals from marginalised or disadvantaged groups who already experience poorer outcomes in services have been disproportionately affected by the current situation.

My presentation will focus on the impact of COVID-19 on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) communities and will hopefully begin a new conversation among police forces about how we police – and support – members of our more vulnerable communities.

24% of homeless 16-24s are LGBT

In terms of barriers facing LGBT communities, the LGBT Foundation reports that 24% of homeless people aged 16-24 are LGBT.

18% have been homeless at some point in their lives, including 25% of trans people.

52% of LGBT people have experienced depression

A 2018 Stonewall study found that 52% of LGBT people had experienced depression in the year preceding the survey.

Additionally, 46% of trans people and 31% of cis LGBT people thought about taking their life in this time. This compares to 1 in 20 adults in the general population.

Factors related to COVID-19 such as having to staying inside, having normal routines disrupted, being unable to see loved ones and anxiety around health are having a detrimental effect on the mental health of many people.

These detrimental effects disproportionately affect those living with long-term mental health conditions. People may be unable to access professional support for poor mental health, in particular face-to-face support.

From 16th March to 5th April 2020 LGBT Foundation's helpline saw 13% more calls about mental health compared to the period 24th February to 15th March 2020.

Month 1 of lockdown: 70% more calls about transphobia

An issue that is particularly affecting LGBT young people is that many have found themselves isolating in a house with LGBT-phobic parents and family members. From 16th March to 5th April 2020 LGBT Foundation's helpline saw 70% more calls about transphobia and 36% more calls about homophobia compared to the period 24th February to 15th March 2020.

People having LGBT-phobic parents and carers is still a huge problem in the UK. The national youth homelessness charity akt found that 77% of homeless LGBT young people said that being LGBT was a causal factor in their rejection from home, adding to the homelessness problem cited above.

11% of LGBT people face domestic abuse

LGBT people are more likely to face domestic abuse. A 2018 study also by Stonewall found that 11% of LGBT people have faced domestic abuse from a partner in the last year in comparison to 6% of women and 3% of men in the general population. This means that many LGBT people are trapped inside with abusive partners or family members and domestic abuse is on the rise.

The National Domestic Abuse helpline has seen a 25% increase in calls and online requests for help since the beginning of lockdown. As LGBT people are more likely to experience domestic abuse, this rise is likely to be disproportionately affecting LGBT people.

This disproportionate impact may be being further exacerbated by the fact that some LGBT people are isolating with LGBT-phobic family members or roommates.

These figures show how important it is that we understand the needs of the LGBT+ community, if policing is to respond effectively. I look forward to discussing with you how best to respond, especially to the needs of those caught up in situations of domestic violence and abuse, on September 16th!
