

## Insight Hour with Galop

*Always act like there is an LGBT+ person in the room – because there probably is.*

This is a summary of an EIDA Insight Hour held on 19 September 2023 with Galop, focusing on understanding domestic abuse through an LGBT+ lens.

[Galop is the UK's leading LGBT+ anti-abuse charity](#), run by and for the LGBT+ community. They work with thousands of survivors and run a national LGBT+ helpline for violence and abuse. They offer specialist services and counselling for survivors of hate crime, conversion practices, domestic abuse, sexual violence, and honour-based abuse. Their frontline services inform national research and policy work and all of this work forms the evidence base for their education and organisational change work.

### **Domestic abuse through an LGBT+ lens**

*Someone's identity is never to blame for their experience. But it may broaden their experience of domestic abuse and bring greater complexities.*

Public narratives of what domestic abuse looks like may not be representative of the LGBT+ experience. Society often imagines perpetrators in a gender-stereotypical way: the perpetrator is a white, able-bodied man, and the victim is a white, able-bodied woman. They are in a heterosexual, monogamous relationship. Stories of abuse that don't fit this mould risk being minimised and dismissed. However, at the centre of all domestic abuse is power and control. [Galop's website has a collection of case examples reflecting this.](#)

### **LGBT+ experiences of violence and abuse**

LGBT+ survivors can experience all the forms of abuse that a cisgender and heterosexual person could. The core difference is that LGBT+ people's orientation and gender identity can be targeted by perpetrators in order to take further power and control.

This could look like:

- Controlling their access to LGBT+ only spaces.
- Forcing someone to pause or end their gender transition.
- Undermining their LGBT+ identity or ridiculing their gender expression.
- Threatening to out someone to their friends or family or workplace.
- Sharing private information online to encourage anti-LGBT+ hate against them.

*Don't ever assume that people in a same-sex relationship have equal amounts of power.*

Official government statistics show that sexual orientation is the third most common basis of hate crime. There has also been a 56% increase in reported hate crime towards transgender people from 2020/2021 to 2021/2022. Escalating anti-LGBT+ hate crime has an impact on how safe LGBT+ people and survivors feel.

- 1 in 4 LGBT+ women and men over the age of 16 will experience domestic abuse
- Bisexual women are twice as likely to disclose abuse than straight women.
- 1 in 3 LGBT+ survivors of domestic abuse will present with a health problem or disability
- 29% of LGBT+ people experience abuse from family members, and this figure rises to 43% for transgender people
  - Of these individuals, two thirds were under 18 and one third were under 11.

- Nearly 1 in 5 LGBT+ people have experienced others trying to change, cure or suppress their sexual orientation or gender identity.

### **Read more on LGBT+ domestic abuse experiences here:**

[“An isolated place”: LGBT+ domestic abuse survivors’ access to support](#)

[The Hidden Reality How the Cost of Living Crisis is affecting LGBT+ victims and survivors of abuse and violence](#)

[LGBT+ Experiences of Abuse from Family Members](#)

[There was nothing to fix: LGBT+ survivors’ experiences of conversion practices](#)

### **What can employers do?**

Galop outlined a clear set of recommendations for employers that want to make sure their internal policies and procedures are equitable and inclusive of LGBT+ experiences. Above all, employers must be obvious about their commitment to LGBT+ safety. LGBT+ people face many distinct barriers when seeking help, so employers should be clear, and specific about how they support LGBT+ people and survivors – stating “we support everyone” isn’t enough anymore.

For an employer to say they are a safe space for LGBT+ people, this must be built into internal systems, structures, and the organisational culture.

- Create a strategy with tangible actions, timelines, and LGBT+ development goals to create long-term change.
- Connect with LGBT+ specialist services for education, consultation, and referrals when needed.
- Strong safeguarding practices can look like: having a private space for confidential conversations and clear procedures for storing confidential information, referring an LGBT+ colleague to specialist services, and knowing the boundaries for when emergency intervention is required.

### **Conclusion**

Galop underlined that allyship has to be active. They encourage everyone to immerse themselves in how the LGBT+ experience is different, and work on their own lens of understanding as well as being led by the LGBT+ community. Awareness-raising and education are vital first steps to being an active LGBT+ ally. LGBT+ colleagues should not be expected to educate others.

Importantly, the speakers invited the audience to ask imperfect questions to combat any guilt and shame people might feel about their lack of knowledge on LGBT+ issues.

### **Resources**

For further resources: [LGBT+ resources and publications - Galop](#)

For referrals: [Make a referral - Galop the LGBT+ anti-abuse charity - Galop](#)

For information on their training support: [Training - Galop the LGBT+ anti-abuse charity - Galop](#)

For LGBT+ specialist anti-abuse support:

galop.org.uk or help@galop.org.uk

The National LGBT+ Abuse and Violence Helpline: 0800 999 5428