EVERYONE IN

THE MINORITY ETHNIC LGBT PROJECT

Working Towards Equality
For Minority Ethnic
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
People in Scotland

RESEARCH REPORT 2009

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FOREWORD

"2009 marks the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in America, the event that kick-started the modern international movement for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights and equality, and which we commemorate each year with LGBT Pride. Yet although Stonewall is remembered annually, the fact that the rioters were overwhelmingly African-American and Hispanic has been all too often forgotten. The vital contribution that ME/LGBT people have made to our equality and our communities, nationally and internationally, has not been fully celebrated: and too often it can seem that "there ain't no Black in the Rainbow Flag."

"The Equality Network has always believed that we fail in our core mission to achieve true equality unless we represent the diversity of our communities. We have been proud to have worked with BEMIS, the EHRC, the Scottish Government and all the members of our Steering Group to promote inclusion of the needs and aspirations of ME/LGBT people within a national strategic agenda for change."

Patrick Stoakes, Director, Equality Network

"Black and Ethnic Minorities Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS) has always strived to support Cross Equality work, which for various reasons, have been ignored by various stakeholders. In this context, working in partnership with the Equality Network has provided us with a great opportunity and a platform to address a very delicate issue in relation to race equality and ME/LGBT, who, for a long time, have been disadvantaged and excluded from having an active citizenship role and where they are valued and respected equally.

This joint research has helped in shedding light into the problems faced by EM /LGBT and we are confident that it will stimulate attention to addressing support needs and equality issues in this setting. This joint research, definitely, has assisted in shifting attitudes within various EM groups as well as enhanced understanding among various stakeholders in relation to ME/LGBT and the need to invest in support for these disadvantaged groups. "

Rami Ousta, Chief Executive, BEMIS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Neither the complex oppression that LGBT people of colour …face, nor its effects are hypothetical or academic. They are very real."

[Meide, 2001: 20]

INTRODUCTION

This report is the conclusion of a nine month research project carried out by the Equality Network in partnership with Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS) and funded by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The research aims to promote greater recognition within the Scottish equalities environment of the needs of Minority Ethnic people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (or ME/LGBT people).

In order to achieve the above objectives the following activities were undertaken and this report has been structured around these:

- a literature review
- visits with eight UK organisations and groups specifically or significantly representing ME/LGBT people
- interviews with eighteen leading Scottish national organisations
- a roundtable discussion

This project exists within the particular context of an equalities environment which is fundamentally changing. The 'Renewed Social Agenda' and the proposed harmonisation of equality law at a European level; the creation of the single Equality and Human Rights Commission; the development of the Single Equality Bill at a UK level; and the concordat at a Scottish level; have all created at least a greater potential for more effective measures to tackle multiple and intersectional discrimination than existed under the previous segregated 'silo approach' to equality.

IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE

We all identify ourselves and are identified by others in a myriad of different ways. Given this complexity it is not surprising that there have been long standing and vigorous debates around: the validity of these descriptors; the nature and processes of identity formation; and what language is most appropriately used. These are not simply debates of terminology and taxonomy but go to the heart of how people want to be perceived and treated

in the social sphere, and are integral to our sense of self and right to self expression.

Questions of identity and language arose from the beginning of this project and continued through each stage of the research. Throughout this report we usually refer to 'the ME/LGBT intersection' or 'ME/LGBT people'; using this acronym as a shorthand to facilitate easier reading. We must, however, acknowledge that this 'ME/LGBT' category was contested throughout the project and we neither wish to minimise this debate nor impose our pragmatic choice of terminology for this specific project onto others.

There are a number of reasons why individuals may not classify themselves as ME/LGBT, and therefore we have prefaced the term with 'who may identify as ME/LGBT' when possible. We hope that the reader will read the term in the broadest possible sense to include as wide a range of people and views as possible. This is important as the people to whom we are referring to as 'ME/LGBT' are not one homogeneous group but come in an infinite array of races, ethnicities, sexual orientations and gender identities. They are also from all ages, religions and classes and therefore conceptualise their identities differently, as do we all.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is necessary that any work that is developed for people who are ME/LGBT has a sound theoretical as well as practical focus. The majority of the literature we have reviewed comes from the UK, with some additional materials examining the European context and a limited number of studies from Canada and America. We were unable to identify any Scottish work specific to discrimination against ME/LGBT people.

THEORETICAL, ACADEMIC AND LEGAL LITERATURE

This first part of the literature review looks at a number of key legal and theoretical issues that will impact on the way that services aimed at achieving equality for people who are ME/LGBT are developed. The following themes emerged.

Understanding multiple and intersectional discrimination

Multiple discrimination was commonly seen as where discrimination occurs on more than one ground, usually but not always those strands recognised within equality legislation. Studies consistently stressed the "profound impacts" on individuals who experience discrimination on more than one ground and the "cumulative effects" of multiple discrimination.

The concept of Intersectionality, while similar to multiple discrimination, stresses that the experience of being discriminated against on one ground cannot just be added to any discrimination faced because of another ground, nor can the experiences be separated out; they must be understood as a synergistic combination.

No one definition of discrimination will be able to fully capture the unique and personalised ways in which ME/LGBT individuals from diverse backgrounds both experience and react to being discriminated against. Although the phrase "intersectional discrimination" has its flaws, it goes beyond "multiple discrimination" in that it more explicitly sets out the complex and varied nature of people's identities and experiences. Yet multiple discrimination retains the advantage of being more easily understood by the lay person and more

explicitly delineates the cumulative impact of discrimination happening on more than one ground.

We therefore see both multiple and intersectional discrimination as distinctive and equally useful and valid models. However, when describing the individual subject, we prefer the more holistic concept of "intersectional identity" to the seemingly fragmented idea of "multiple identities".

Race, sexual orientation and gender identity: the forgotten intersections

Many authors offer examples or case studies to further illustrate their definitions of multiple discrimination or intersectionality. What is notable is the absence of illustrative examples that feature both race and sexual orientation and/or gender identity. We found particularly worrying the cases where a number of specific intersections are detailed but the ME/LGBT intersection remained absent or merely hinted at by phrases such as "etc" or "and so on".

It is not surprising that, given the historical tendency towards single strand research, multiple discrimination is often discussed only in the most general terms. Nor is it problematic that where a single example of intersectionality is given then it is likely to refer to gender and race; after all it has been largely Black women who have raised the importance and pushed for the recognition of multiple discrimination as a concept. However the continuing absence of the intersection of race and sexual orientation or gender identity from the bulk of literature reviewed, and the repeated use of the "etc" and "and so on" addenda when almost every cross strand issue other than ME/LGBT has been raised, supports arguments that there is a hierarchy not just of strands, but of intersections.

One ground approach: compounding inequality

Literature on multiple discrimination consistently stresses that the current legal approach of bringing discrimination on single grounds is compounding inequalities and preventing true recognition of the level, type and complexity of the discrimination faced by people with intersectional identities. Having to choose one ground to bring a discrimination case is widely and rightly criticised for failing to meet the needs of people whose identities intersect across strands. Such difficulties in bringing actions on multiple grounds have

been compounded by a lack of helpful case law and the failure of equality legislation to provide adequate remedies.

Several key authors would like to see the UK adopt the Canadian model of tackling multiple discrimination. Although some EU countries have adopted a more progressive approach to tackle intersectional discrimination than the UK, their efforts to achieve equality for people whose identities intersect across strands are seen as being very much in their infancy.

STRAND SPECIFIC LITERATURE

We reviewed reports on race and ethnicity in order to identify any references to ME/LGBT people and their needs; and similarly, reports focusing on LGBT issues to identify any references to the same intersection. The following themes emerged.

Sampling and Monitoring

Most of the reports on race and ethnicity in this sample did not include any information on the intersectionality of ethnicity and sexual orientation or gender identity. This was true of those reports which, while focused on race, made detailed reference to and /or collected data on the intersection between race and the other equality strands but did not include sexual orientation or gender identity. The sexual health studies were the only ethnicity focused reports that gathered information on sexual orientation, (but not gender identity).

Of the LGBT studies, only one report in our selection did not make any references to race or ethnicity. All of the other LGBT reports reviewed here have made efforts to include ME/LGBT people in their participatory research and are transparent about their monitoring processes. However, they have not found it easy nor have their efforts always resulted in recruiting enough respondents to make their observations generally statistically relevant. Concern was voiced that targeted recruiting through LGBT organisations, events and venues results in an under-representation of ME/LGBT people.

In some LGBT focused research, where the number of ME participants was small, they chose to use qualitative methods to enhance their overall quantitative research. For example, in one study where the sample size was

small, detailed personal narratives were used and analysed to create a vivid picture of the experience of multiple discrimination. This methodology was rare, but we would encourage it as best practice.

General Findings around common issues

Both reports that focused on ethnicity and those that focused on LGBT referred to some very similar issues and findings. Issues of "invisibility" and disclosure were distinctive to the LGBT strand, but, with this exception, overall the reports suggested very a similar prevalence of prejudice across all areas of life. Therefore despite any ideological or structural differences, the race and LGBT sectors could, if willing, work together around a number of key themes.

INTERSECTIONAL RESEARCH

In this section we focus on literature that has focused specifically on ME people from LGBT backgrounds. There was no such literature which we were able to find from Scotland. There was much more literature concerning gay and bisexual men than there was regarding lesbians or bisexual women. We were not able to find any research specific to transgender people who are from ME backgrounds.

One of the most commonly explored themes throughout the literature reviewed is the experiences of coming out or being open about sexual orientation or gender identity. The vital emotional task of maintaining continuity between an ethnic and a sexual /gender identity is not an easy one, and does not appears to be sufficiently recognised nor supported by either the LGBT or ME sectors.

The research highlights great variety in experiences for ME/LGBT people in being open, both positive and negative. It is important to remember the variety of experiences and not slip into the temptation of stereotyping; not all Asian lesbians are trapped in arranged marriages and not all black gay men are leading double lives.

The need for a safe space was identified in several reports as being a key factor for many ME/LGBT people; not just in relation to helping them to come out, but in their ability to feel comfortable abut their identity. There was a strong consensus throughout the literature that the commercial gay scene fails

to provide such a safe environment for people who are ME/LGBT; as well as feeling unwelcoming, it was not uncommon to encounter racism and racial stereotyping on the scene.

The literature we reviewed shows that people who are LGBT and from a ME background may often feel apart from, rather than a part of both their LGBT and ethnic communities. This can lead to feelings of isolation, low esteem as well as confusion over identity. Some, but by no means all, people who are ME/LGBT are put in a position where they feel that they do not belong to either the LGBT community or the ME community and are forced to express one part of their identity at the expense of the other.

In the case of ME/LGBT people who have recently arrived in the UK, such as asylum seekers, the isolation can be even more marked. Sexuality can prove a barrier to accessing communities of people from their own country or region and the informal structures needed to make the transition easier. This can place newly arrived migrants at risk of sexual exploitation within the commercial gay scene. Some of the literature on asylum relates to the issue of gay identity so as to qualify for protection. LGBT asylum seekers are likely to have to prove that they fear persecution on the basis of their membership of a particular social group. There has been much legal debate as to how to define 'particular social group'

The importance of the relationships with the family was highlighted in several research reports. We were not able to source any large scale qualitative studies which directly compared the family experiences of ME/LGBT people with non ME LGBT people, and therefore it is impossible to say whether homophobia within the family is more or less prevalent amongst ME communities. What the research consistently emphasises is the impact of family rejection or alienation can be greater due to the vital role that the family plays for ME people in offering support and protection from racism and other forms of discrimination.

Religious backgrounds of people who may identify as ME/LGBT are varied but the available research and reports do not adequately reflect such diversity. From the research we were able to source it is clear that there are mixed reactions from, and within, faith organisations, and in many, but definitely not all cases, reactions from faith organisations are deemed to be negative rather than positive.

People who are ME/LGBT are exposed to racism, homophobia and transphobia. For many people this is an every day occurrence. Overall we were disappointed not to find more research that examined the experiences of violence or harassment for people who are ME/LGBT and feel that this should be a priority for future research.

Three key themes relating to health emerged from the literature: HIV, sexual health and mental health. Findings relating to HIV and sexual health were exclusively focused on gay and bisexual men. References to mental health were found across the literature, commonly in sections on the difficulties of coming out and in dealing with breakdown in family relationships. There was no research that we found that was solely focused on the mental health needs of ME/LGBT people and this would be a valuable area of further research. In relation to HIV, research suggests a heightened risk of HIV infection for ME/GB men.

Throughout the literature many ME/LGBT people have commented upon feeling stranded; in the sense that they don't know where to turn for support.

VISITS TO ME/LGBT PROJECTS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE UK

There are no dedicated Scottish services or organisations for people who are ME/LGBT, but this is not the case in other parts of the UK. Visits were carried out to eight of these organisations. Although there are many differences between the situation for ME/LGBT people in Scotland and those in England, there is also a lot of common ground. Our findings illustrate some possible ways forward, but it is important that any future developments within Scotland remain focused on the Scottish context.

The process of researching highlighted some key points. The majority of groups doing work with people who are ME/LGBT were London-based and not all groups have a web presence. There is no formal UK wide coordination or single point of information for potential users but there were informal networks. Many groups were volunteer led and if the key organiser moved on, the group may no longer be fully functional. Overall, the ME/LGBT sector in England remained fragile and fluid. This coupled with the suggestion that some organisations may not wish to cold calls, could possibly make it difficult for some potential users to access some services without a referral.

Despite there being many examples of good practice, there were also marked gaps in the types and level of service provision. For example, there were no projects primarily focused on the intersection of ethnicity and gender identity. Also, the geographical spread of services was patchy. Several interviewees noted that people who are ME/LGBT have to travel long distances to find support.

Examples of Good Practice

There were many examples of innovation amongst the organisations visited. These were made possible by people and organisations paying attention to the following areas: Commitment; Involving and listening to ME/LGBT people; leadership from management and staff; using monitoring to identify needs; partnership work; outreach; and providing social support. The projects we

visited had not come about overnight, but had usually taken many months if not years to get to where they had got to. Throughout this time, ME/LGBT activists had shown not only commitment, but a willingness to keep on speaking out for people who may identify as ME/LGBT.

Issues for ME/LGBT Individuals

Interviewees highlighted a number of issues faced by ME/LGBT people in England. These included travelling long distances to find support; racism on the 'gay scene'; the need for safe spaces; isolation; need for mental health support; cultural and religious issues; issues specific to gender identity and gender stereotyping.

Priority Areas

Interviewees identified work in the following areas as being priorities in their work in England: asylum seekers; family and friends of ME/LGBT people; gender and health; language barrier; rural areas, outside of major cities; and young people.

Overcoming Barriers: Developing Services

This section feeds back on the conversations we had relating to funding, staffing and leadership and offers some insights into the hurdles that organisations in England have had to overcome to get to where they are today. The main barriers that these organisations tackle are: funding, sustainability, leadership and political support, evidencing need, and gaining the trust of potential service uses.

Key Messages For Scotland

Interviewees had the following key messages for people who are developing ME/LGBT inclusive services in Scotland: listen to and involved ME/LGBT people; be creative in raising funds and starting services; do not work alone but in partnership with others; reach out to people; remember people outside of cities and celebrate diversity through diverse arts and cultural initiatives.

INTERVIEWS WITH NATIONAL SCOTTISH EQUALITY ORGANISATIONS

This section details our visits with single strand focused services and organisations that promote equality for people from ME backgrounds, and similarly for people who are LGBT, at a national level. We also visited generic equality organisations that promote equality and rights across some or all of the seven equality strands. Between November 2008 and early February 2009 we carried out interviews with eighteen different organisations.

EVIDENCING NEED

We asked what monitoring systems organisations had in place to gather information on ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity. Practice varied on whether and how individual strands are monitored and no systems were being used to acknowledge intersections. Linked to this point is the recurring theme of the absence of existing data and access to only limited and anecdotal information.

EXPERIENCES OF ME/LGBT WORK IN SCOTLAND

There are very few examples of existing ME/LGBT work in Scotland. This research also asked why more services had not been developed in Scotland that focused on issues for people who are ME/LGBT and explored what barriers organisations faced in trying to develop such work. Often conversations were steered back to two things: a lack of funding and/or a lack of evidence that there is a need for this work to take place. Interviewees also highlighted capacity issues; limited overlap in work between the ME and LGBT sectors; and a lack of information and understanding. Interviewees also commented that "this is a sensitive area" and that a lack of confidence is a barrier to developing services.

Interviewees spoke about various barriers for ME/LGBT people trying to access existing services. Issues around faith, culture, racism, community and family pressures, homophobia and differences in how people identify

themselves were all touched upon at several of our visits. There was also a strong consensus that community level research is needed in order to increase our understanding of these issues. A commonly mentioned barrier was that of language. Another was the importance of the service being safe, friendly and user focused.

Around half of frontline organisations commented that they were concerned that by asking service users about their sexual orientation they may upset their wider clientele. Such nervousness is likely to be picked up by service users and could be a factor in people not being more open. Due to these and other factors explained in more detail in the full report, it can be safely assumed that individuals who are ME/LGBT are likely to find it difficult to know where to turn to for support. This can be exacerbated by marketing materials for LGBT services not including racial diversity and those for ME and other services being heterocentric.

LEADERSHIP

Throughout the interviews there was a strong consensus that existing services could do more to address the needs of ME/LGBT people and that more needs to be done to build partnerships, develop awareness-raising training and tackle key policy issues around the ME/LGBT intersection. There was also consensus that what is needed is for existing services to do more work and boost their capacity, rather than for new stand-alone services to be created.

The interviews uncovered a substantial willingness to do more around the ME/LGBT intersection. All of the participating organisations noted that they are willing to investigate how they can incorporate the ME/LGBT intersection more in their work. Many organisations volunteered that they would need guidance or assistance in order to do so most effectively and some of these indicated that they would welcome stronger and clearer messages from either the Scottish Government or EHRC on how they should be developing policy and practice on intersectionality.

TRAINING

Most existing training that is being accessed is being delivered internally, unless the skills required refer to a strand where there is an internal knowledge gap and a clear case can be made for paying an external trainer.

All training discussed either focused on single strands or Human Rights. Even where training does refer to different strands, the vast majority does not go so far as to look at intersectionality, but is usually done as parallel strands. Some training makes some reference to intersectionality, but not in depth. No interviewees had received any training that focused on the ME/LGBT intersection.

Interviewees spoke about a variety of challenges to accessing equalities training. The most common of these are a lack of financial recourses and time. Some organisations were also frustrated by the poor quality of training. While most interviewees expressed at least some interest in looking at intersectional identities and the ME/LGBT intersection in the future, some admitted that there are barriers around the will of equalities organisations to prioritise this. Although there was a broad consensus that specific training programmes that focus on the ME/LGBT intersection are needed it is clear that a lot of work needs to be done in raising awareness within organisations on the benefits of ME/LGBT specific training, before it is actually delivered. It is important that future training needs are investigated on a case by case basis and unique solutions developed for each organisation.

PARTNERSHIPS

Organisations that have explored cross sector partnerships indicated a number of challenges to joint work. Firstly, they found it difficult to know who is best to build a partnership with if they are unfamiliar with the sector. Secondly, organisations need the capacity to take on new work. Thirdly, issues around funding can pose different challenges. Finally, if a champion for intersectional work within an organisation is successful in overcoming all of the above, their work is at a very high risk of being abandoned should they leave or complete their post.

The challenges are serious but not insurmountable. As long as there is the real will to adequately address intersectionality, none of these challenges should prevent effective joint working in the future. Most of these challenges stem from a lack of awareness and understanding around the ME/LGBT intersection, and intersectionality in general, coupled with a lack of information and personal contact across sectors. This can be partially remedied with platforms for networking and information exchange.

EQUALITIES POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Internal policies differ greatly as to what strands are being mentioned. Much of this variation depends on what data is required by funders, as this is often used as a guide by organisations. In general, organisations that have a remit to cover multiple strands, and organisations with a higher percentage of diverse service users seem to be more confident in asking staff members diversity monitoring questions on sexual orientation. Much more work and focus is still required around awareness and confidence around gender identity. Current policies and monitoring systems are focused on multiple, but parallel strands; intersectionality is rarely addressed. A very large majority of organisations said that they were reviewing their policies. Some of these said that the interview had made them think about how to better include sexual orientation, gender identity and intersectionality in their next policy review.

MAKING SERVICES MORE ME/LGBT FRIENDLY

Services that are assured that becoming more ME/LGBT friendly is possible and viable will be better able to look at building capacity through accessing training and developing partnerships. These developments could close most of the current gaps in service provision, however further work is needed in relation to social support groups and case work. Ideally, all of this will become easier with time if we collectively campaign our leaders and funders for the inclusion of intersectionality in national and funding policy, continue to tackle racism, homophobia and transphobia in our organisations and communities and endeavour to archive and record information on the ME/LGBT service users that we encounter. The proper involvement of people who may identify as ME/LGBT in this process will be key to its success.

THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

In order to explore in more detail what changes are needed to address the needs of people who may identify as ME/LGBT in Scotland, a half day roundtable discussion event was held in Glasgow in February 2009. This day built on the information gleaned from the literature review and interviews with both Scottish and English organisations. The roundtable was important in informing our ideas and suggestions for future developments, both in relation to policy and services.

The roundtable was attended by thirty six people; bringing together LGBT and ME organisations; equality, rights and advice organisations, statutory and voluntary sector bodies as well as half a dozen individuals who may identify as ME/LGBT.

It was the first event of its kind in Scotland. It represented an important milestone in itself, as it brought people together from diverse backgrounds to openly discuss the ME/LGBT intersection; a topic that for too long had not been openly discussed.

The first discussion focused on the question: "What would we like to see change in Scotland regarding the ME/LGBT intersection?"

Five key common themes emerged from the different discussion groups. Theses were: the needs to change attitudes; the need to develop services; better distribution of more information; the promotion and celebration of intersectional identities; and the need to address discrimination within the workplace.

The second discussion centred on the question "What can we, as organisations, do to make these changes happen?"

This session aimed to move the focus of the earlier discussion about what changes are needed, to exploring ideas for future service development and policy changes. It sought practical ideas as to how work can be taken forward by asking what organisations can do to contribute to this process.

The following common themes emerged: the importance of developing services across sectors; the need for further research; the importance of

addressing issues for young ME/LGBT people; ideas on promoting and celebrating intersectional identities; and ideas for future ME/LGBT specific work.

This exercise was productive in that it provided a preliminary platform for the exchange of ideas and concerns. It brought diverse organisations and people together in a safe space for the first time and achieved as much as one could expect from a very first discussion.

From the wide range of suggestions offered by delegates it is clear that work on this intersection in Scotland is possible. It is not the case that we do not have any thoughts on what we can do, and nobody is claiming that we are not able to tackle ME/LGBT related challenges or that 'nothing can be done'. Throughout the exercise there was a strong spirit of collaboration and some expressed a keen interest in contributing to taking ME/LGBT work forward. The event was also an example of how cross sector partnership work between the ME and LGBT strands is possible and can be fruitful.

THE WAY FORWARD

Throughout all the conversations, a number of key themes emerged. Firstly at the heart of any service development or policy initiatives should be the voice of ME/LGBT people themselves. Secondly there is a need for more concrete information, data and for further community based research. There was a consensus however that such research should be carried out alongside, and not instead of, the development of services and policies. Linked to this gap in data is the need for greater consistency in the way that Scottish equality organisations carry out monitoring and capturing data in relation to race, sexual orientation and, where appropriate, gender identity. This is related to the need for training to equip staff members in both frontline and second tier agencies with the skills and confidence to better address the needs of ME/LGBT service users.

What is needed is a boost to the capacity and confidence of existing services in Scotland rather than the creation of a whole new sector just for ME/LGBT people and the need for greater work across and between sectors, and in particular for stronger partnerships between ME and LGBT organisations. Such partnerships are needed not only to break down barriers and increase understanding, but in order to pool limited resources and be able to offer more holistic and inclusive services to all members of ME and LGBT communities.

There is also a need to also work both with and beyond commonalities between ME and LGBT single strand issues to wholly engage with the intersection so that issues and experiences specific to the intersection are not excluded.

Another often repeated finding is that people who are ME/LGBT are at risk of discrimination on more than one equality ground and that due to the intersectional nature of this discrimination, it can have damaging and long-lasting effects.

There was widely felt to be an absence of safe spaces in Scotland where people can come forward to openly discuss their experiences of discrimination or harassment and a shortage of advice which was accessible, expert and able to tackle all aspects of a person's discriminatory experiences. There was agreement across all the different parts of our research of the value of

creating safe spaces in Scotland where ME/LGBT people could just be themselves; where they could find peer support as well as celebrate the different aspects of their identities and behaviours.

All of the above is more easily facilitated and coordinated with commitment and leadership at both a national policy level and at organisational level.

The actual process of carrying out this research has sown the seeds for future ME/LGBT work. By talking openly about an issue that has long been ignored, the research has already succeeded in getting issues around the ME/LGBT intersection higher up organisations' agendas and talking about how organisations with little history of joint working can start working together.

It is important that this momentum is maintained, and for such small progress steps turn into bigger strides. It is equally important that there remains a focal point to help coordinate, inspire and inform such future progress.

We have identified ten guiding principles which should remain at the core of future ME/LGBT work in Scotland. These are:

Leadership	Involvement
Research	Coordination
Partnership	Information
Development	Access to Justice
Social Support	Celebration

The research is very much the start of a conversation and the beginning of a process. This work is not just the responsibility of ME or LGBT organisations. It is not just the responsibility of equality organisations or the eighteen Scottish organisations we visited. For equality to be achieved, it has to be seen as the responsibility of all sectors and services.

At the time of writing, the Everyone IN Project has secured extension funding until September 2009 from the Scottish Government to enable the dissemination of our research findings and to help us draw up an action plan of how to take forward ME/LGBT work in Scotland. This plan will be underpinned by the ten guiding principles above.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIMS

This report is the conclusion of a nine month research project carried out by the Equality Network in partnership with Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS) and funded by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The research aims to promote greater recognition within the Scottish equalities environment of the needs of Minority Ethnic people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (or ME/LGBT people).

We recognise that if the needs and aspirations of minority ethnic LBGT people in Scotland are to be met, long term work is needed. This project is intended to inform future joint work between the Equality Network and BEMIS and provide learning to key stakeholder organisations that are committed to reducing multiple discrimination, including the EHRC and Scottish Government Equality Unit.

This research had two main objectives:

1. To develop a knowledge and theoretical base for future work in Scotland to promote the equality and rights of Minority Ethnic people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (ME/LGBT people).

and

2. To map the level of recognition and understanding of the needs of ME/LGBT people within national Scottish equality and rights organisations and those organisations' approaches to promoting intersectional working.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the above objectives the following activities were undertaken and this report has been structured around these:

1. Carrying out a literature review; consisting of: UK research into the needs of ME/LGBT people; UK and international analysis, research and theory on intersectional approaches to equality, multiple discrimination

and intersectionality; and specific UK and international studies on race and sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

2. Visiting eight UK organisations and groups specifically or significantly representing ME/LGBT people to investigate best practice approaches.

3. Interviewing eighteen leading Scottish national organisations promoting equality and rights on their understanding of and specific approaches to promoting the equality of ME/LGBT people.

4. Organising a roundtable discussion between representative Scottish national LGBT organisations, ME organisations, organisations with a generic equality and or rights remit, and other relevant national bodies, for example, those representing migrants and asylum seekers or minority faith communities, which will explore their awareness of and approach to meeting the needs of ME/LGBT people.

1.3 CONTEXT: THE NATIONAL EQUALITIES SECTOR IN SCOTLAND

Both the Equality Network and BEMIS have long been committed to reflecting and celebrating the diversity of the communities we represent and this particular project is part of our broader approach to examining and addressing multiple discrimination as experienced by LGBT and ME communities respectively.

This project also exists within the particular context of an equalities environment which is fundamentally changing. As Judith Squires has noted:

> "The pursuit of equality has become a central policy priority, with a commitment to promoting diversity and eliminating multiple discriminations requiring widespread reviews of equality institutions across Europe. States are now under pressure to address not only multiple forms of discrimination, but also to consider the interaction between these strands." [Squires 2008: 251]

The 'Renewed Social Agenda' and the proposed harmonisation of equality law at a European level[1]; the creation of the single Equality and Human Rights Commission; the development of the Single Equality Bill at a UK level; and the

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[1] 'Renewed Social Agenda Opportunities, Access and Solidarity in 21st Century Europe' http://ec.europa.au/social/main.jsp?catId=547.lang=en

concordat at a Scottish level; have all created at least a greater potential for more effective measures to tackle multiple and intersectional discrimination than existed under the previous segregated 'silo approach' to equality.

There are however, threats as well as opportunities within the new diversity environment. There is the danger that a 'false universalism' of equality and fairness can obscure the ongoing prioritisation of certain constituencies, issues or approaches within equality discourse and practice, or that the specific needs of people facing multiple discrimination can be lost within a confused and strategically unfocused diversity agenda. In contrast we believe that universal rights and values are best achieved through attention to the particular forms that discrimination takes, and that to bring about a significant reduction in the experience of multiple discrimination in Scotland overall, there must be focused work on specific intersections of equality strands.

The extent to which intersectional identities are recognised and supported should be recognised as a vital measure of whether the new equality measures, discourse and structures are able to deliver real improvements in practice.

Some strands, such as race and religion, or gender and sexual orientation, have historically been seen as closely related and there is already a well-established history of partnership and dialogue. Other intersections however, have been marginalized and under-explored. We strongly believe that focused activity is needed to close these equality gaps, and doing so can only strengthen the overall approach to multiple discrimination.

CHAPTER 2

IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE

We all identify ourselves and are identified by others in a myriad of different ways. While many of the descriptors used correspond to the equality strands recognised in anti-discrimination law and policy, of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age and religion and belief, there are a wide range of other markers such as relationship status, cultural identities and appearance and body image. Other factors, such as socio-economic background, place of birth and of residence and educational history, can act both as a basis for social identity and an influence on how we develop and articulate our self-identity more generally.

Given this complexity it is not surprising that there have been long standing and vigorous debates around: the validity of these descriptors; the nature and processes of identity formation; and what language is most appropriately used. These are not simply debates of terminology and taxonomy but go to the heart of how people want to be perceived and treated in the social sphere, and are integral to our sense of self and right to self expression.

Within equality discourse there has been considerable and increasing questioning whether the "silo approach" to equality, where social identities based upon such factors as race and gender are treated as distinctive and coherent "categories" or "labels", is able to capture the fluidity, complexity and contingency of any individual's sense of self. This debate has been particularly marked when exploring the issue of multiple discrimination and intersectionality, and we describe this in more depth in the literature review section of this report. It is important at this stage to flag up some of the specific arguments that have centred on the ME/LGBT intersection.

Questions of identity and language arose from the beginning of this project and continued through each stage of the research. Throughout this report we usually refer to 'the ME/LGBT intersection' or 'ME/LGBT people'; using this acronym as a shorthand to facilitate easier reading. We must, however, acknowledge that this 'ME/LGBT' category was contested throughout the project and we neither wish to minimise this debate nor impose our pragmatic choice of terminology for this specific project onto others.

Firstly there is a wide range of opinions as to whether it is best to use the term 'Black and Minority Ethnic' (BME), 'Minority Ethnic' (ME) or develop a new term that more explicitly refers to Asian communities in Britain, such as BAME. It is also understood that some people may not consider themselves to be from an ethnic minority no matter which term is used. For example, while

equalities discourse in Scotland includes Eastern Europeans as ethnic minorities, some Eastern Europeans will not self identify as such if they believe that the category refers solely to race or skin colour and therefore see themselves as part of a 'European' or 'white' majority. The full range of these views was represented on the project Steering Group and after some debate the group consented to the use of 'Minority Ethnic', for the purpose of this research.

There are also debates around LGBT terminology. In Scotland, as in a number of other European countries, there has been a formal linkage between equality and rights work addressing sexual orientation and that addressing transgender identity. The LGBT acronym is therefore the term most commonly used nationally to reflect the particular remits of the major organisations and their history of trans-inclusive activism. However, in England and other parts of the UK and Europe there has been a different history of related but separate campaigning around sexual orientation on the one hand and transgender identity on the other. Similarly, in European and UK equality law there is an absolute distinction made between discrimination based upon sexual orientation and that based upon gender and gender identity and the use of the LGBT acronym is rarely adopted. In this report we will therefore usually refer to LGBT to reflect the Scottish policy and organisational context, but use LGB or transgender distinctively where that was the terminology originally used.

For the purposes of this report we use the term transgender, as it is commonly used in Scottish equality discourse, to be an umbrella term inclusive of a wide range of gender identities and forms of gender expression. Within Scottish discourse the use of transgender would routinely include people who identify as transsexual, androgyne or "gender queer" and intersex. Again this definition is not used throughout the UK or Europe, and there is an increasing use of the LGBTI acronym to reflect the distinctive intersex political and social agenda.

For the purposes of this report, the reader need not be very well versed in the details of transgender discourse; however one should be aware of a couple of points regarding this equality strand. Firstly, gender identity is separate from,

although related to, sexual orientation[2]. Gender identity is about our relationship with our own sex and gender, not about who we may or may not be attracted to. Both the Scottish Government and the EHRC acknowledge gender identity as an equality strand in its own right and this has also been reflected in the new Equality Bill. Secondly, there is less information and research around gender identity, and fewer organisations dedicated to its equality, than there are in any other strand. So while we have tried to be as trans-inclusive as possible, some of the reports that we have reviewed and the organisations we met with did not cover gender identity. It has been challenging to incorporate as much focus on transgender identities and issues as these rightly deserve.

In terms of lesbian, gay and bisexual identity, the reader needs to be aware that there has been a debate whether the language of sexual orientation and sexuality as currently used in UK equality discourse can be appropriately applied to minority ethnic communities at all. This debate originated in the HIV and AIDS sector during the early 1990s, and centred on the appropriate naming of same-sex relationships and encounters amongst firstly South Asian and latterly African men. The argument draws on the social constructionist model that lesbian, gay and bisexual identity is historically and geographically specific, at heart a Western concept originating in Europe and North America during the early modern period. It was therefore argued that to apply the language of gay and lesbian identity to same-sex behaviour within Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities is, at best, culturally inappropriate, and at worst an act of cultural imperialism. Organisations supporting this argument have tended to use terminology that is supposedly more culturally neutral, such as "men who have sex with men" (MSM or MWHSWM) or "women who have sex with women" (WSW or WWHSWW).

Bhatt and Lee have been particularly critical of this approach. While acknowledging that "there are important issues in homosexual relations in black (and white) communities that cannot be contained in the unfractured categories of gay identity" [Bhatt and Lee, 1997:229] they point to three dangers in the MSM/WSW nomenclature. Firstly, it fails to "register and celebrate the traditions of black lesbian and gay affiliations that do exist" [ibid] traditions that the predominately white mainstream LGBT organisations have

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[2] As race/ethnicity is separate but related to faith/belief, and some work and funding streams address both strands for the benefit of both; work on equality for sexual orientation and gender identity can sometimes be done simultaneously.

also historically under-acknowledged. Secondly by supporting and maintaining cultural sensitivities around the use of terms such as gay, lesbian and bisexual it comes dangerously close to being an "apologia for homophobia" within minority ethnic communities [ibid]. Finally it denies the "validity and importance of gay identity as such, or of the necessity of developing strong, proud and confident lesbian and gay identities, whatever one's ethnicity." [ibid, 228]

In summary, there are a number of reasons why individuals may not classify themselves as ME/LGBT, and therefore we have prefaced the term with 'who may identify as ME/LGBT' when possible. We hope that the reader will read the term in the broadest possible sense to include as wide a range of people and views as possible. This is important as the people to whom we are referring to as 'ME/LGBT' are not one homogeneous group but come in an infinite array of races, ethnicities, sexual orientations and gender identities. They are also from all ages, religions and classes and therefore conceptualise their identities differently, as do we all.

CHAPTER 3

STRANDED

A review of literature on the intersection of race with sexual orientation and gender identity and on minority ethnic people that may identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender

"Imagine that oppression and relative disadvantage in society is a line. Challenging oppression related to only one identity marker, such as sexual orientation, could then be represented as an attempt to get to the other side of the line. However, challenging oppression more generally, along all or several of the axes upon which it operates, would be represented as an attempt to erase the line altogether."

[Meide, 2001: 8]

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In common with any other social category, people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and from a Minority Ethnic background do not form an undifferentiated, homogenous group. Their experiences, how they choose to identify themselves and how they are defined and treated by others can be varied and complex, contingent upon circumstances and fluid over time and place. In a similar way the experience of multiple discrimination can vary enormously from individual to individual. Underlying these diverse individual experiences, however, is the common issue of negotiating a social identity that intersect across at least two of the equality strands, including the interactions of race with sexual orientation and gender identity. To understand the needs of people who are ME/LGBT and the value of different approaches to meeting their needs, it is necessary consider this interaction in detail.

The nature of LGBT or minority ethnic identity, models of intersectional or multiple discrimination and the merits of single or multi-strand approaches to equalities are all contested and much debated issues within the broader equalities sector. It is beyond the remit of this literature review to present a comprehensive and exhaustive critique of these topics. It is, however, necessary that any work that is developed for people who are ME/LGBT has a sound theoretical as well as practical focus.

The majority of the literature we have reviewed comes from the UK, with some additional materials examining the European context and a limited number of studies from Canada and America. We were unable to identify any Scottish work specific to discrimination against ME/LGBT people. Most of the references in this chapter are either academic or journal articles. To ensure that our research takes on board recent major changes to the equalities framework within the UK, we have also examined a number of key papers from the Scottish Government, the new Scottish Human Rights Commission as well as the Great Britain wide Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

The literature pertaining to this intersection was most easily divided into three sections: Theoretical, Academic and Legal Literature (Section 3.2); Strand Specific Literature (Section 3.3) and Intersectional Literature (Section 3.4). As each area serves different purposes and covers different topics, each includes its own introductions and conclusions to facilitate easier use.

3.2 THEORETICAL, ACADEMIC AND LEGAL LITERATURE

3.2.1 Introduction

"It is no longer sufficient to develop policies and strategies that promote greater access to and benefit from society's resources for homogeneous groupings of 'disabled people', 'women', 'young people' or 'Black and minority ethnic people'… To accommodate the diversity of everyone goes deeper than that, requiring a more complex understanding of people's identities. A one-dimensional analysis .. is no longer adequate. Acknowledgement of differences between social groups must be complemented with recognition of diversity within social groups."

[Zappone, 2003: 132]

This first part of the literature review looks at a number of key legal and theoretical issues that will impact on the way that services aimed at achieving equality for people who are ME/LGBT are developed. It is divided into the following sections:

1 Understanding multiple and intersectional discrimination (Section 3.2.2)
- what is the difference between multiple and intersectional discrimination, how are they commonly defined and what is the relevance of these terms for people who are ME/LGBT

2   Race, sexual orientation and gender identity:
                              the forgotten intersections (Section 3.2.3)
- revealing how the intersection between sexual orientation/gender identity and race is often ignored

3 One ground approach: compounding inequality (Section 3.2.4)
- examines the ineffectiveness of having to pursue anti-discrimination cases on a single ground

4 Alternative approaches (Section 3.2.5)
- considers different ways of tackling multiple discrimination cases

3.2.2 Understanding multiple and intersectional discrimination

Within the literature we reviewed there was a broad consensus as to the basic definition of multiple discrimination. Typical of the definitions used is that adopted by the European Commission:

> "Multiple Discrimination shall be understood as consisting in any combination of discrimination on the grounds of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation." [European Commission, 2007: 5]

Multiple discrimination is therefore seen as where discrimination occurs on more than one ground, usually but not always, those strands recognised within equality legislation. Some authors have acknowledged that this is somewhat a simplistic definition, with the EU Commission concluding that other factors such as class and socio-economic status also play a major part in determining someone's vulnerability to discrimination. [European Commission, 2007: 9]. Discrimination on grounds of transgender status has, however, been rarely mentioned within most definitions of multiple discrimination, though in some literature is added in as a nominal seventh strand.

Many studies have stressed the "profound impacts" on individuals who experience discrimination on more than one ground [European Commission, 2007: 17] and "the immense personal suffering of individuals who do not fit the prescribed norms of a society on a number of fronts." [Zappone, 2003: 132]

Waddington and Bell highlighted the "cumulative effects" [Waddington and Bell, 2003: 352] of multiple discrimination, where it is necessary to examine not just the latest instance of discrimination but how this has more impact because of what has gone before. This brings to mind the phrase "the straw which broke the camel's back"; where for example, an instance of being abused for being gay may also trigger previous traumas caused through being abused for being black.

This is neatly illustrated by the following quote:

"I was called a "Paki" in public school, called a faggot/queer in high school, gay bashed due to wearing a pink triangle on my jacket. I am questioned, searched and escorted in airports due to my Arab name and brown skin. I am denied access to spousal specials/benefits offered by corporations."

South Asian gay man, quoted in [Meide, 2001: 17]

A more detailed definition of multiple discrimination is provided by Moon, who highlights how multiple discrimination can occur in three different ways:

"Firstly, it can occur when someone experiences discrimination on different grounds but each type of discrimination occurs on separate occasions.

Secondly, it can be additive, so that a series of attributes are required and if you lack one you lose one point but if you lack two you will lose two points thus increasing your chance of failure in achieving this objective.

The third type occurs when the discrimination involves more than one ground and the grounds interact with each other in such a way that they are completely inseparable." [Moon, 2007: 1-2]

The third part of her definition, leads us to the definition of intersectional discrimination.

Intersectional discrimination and multiple discrimination are terms that have often been acknowledged as being interchangeable, however intersectional discrimination has been described as being "a special kind of multiple discrimination that cannot be separated out for separate consideration." [Equality and Diversity Forum, 2007: 1]

In the 1980s and 1990s the concept of intersectional discrimination was explored mainly by African American feminist scholars in the USA who highlighted how African American women suffered specific forms of discrimination not suffered by African American men or white women in general. Kimberley Crenshaw written in 1989 is widely acknowledged as being

the first and most influential writer to describe this concept. See for example [Meide, 2001] and [Fredman, 2005].

Examining Crenshaw's work from the context of an expanding EU, Sandra Fredman singles out Crenshaw's argument that "multiple discrimination does not simply consist in the addition of two sources of discrimination; the result is qualitatively different, or synergeistic." [Fredman, 2005: 13]

In the context of ME/LGBT people, to understand their experiences of multiple discrimination, their experiences of being discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity cannot just be added to any discrimination they face because they are from an ethnic minority. Similarly, the two cannot be separated out. They must be understood as a synergistic combination. In other words, it needs to be recognised that, when combined, the two grounds make each other stronger.

A recent Scottish example can illustrate this. A few years ago there were accusations that a prominent gay commercial venue in Scotland was consistently refusing admission to young Asian men. Assuming for argument's sake that the accusations were true, such a practice would clearly be racial discrimination, denying a service based entirely upon the ethnicity of the user; however, the impact of that discrimination would be to deny to young Asian gay and bisexual men the right to associate with other LGBT people and in practice restrict their ability to establish same-sex relationships. It would be inadequate to use the usual model of multiple discrimination to analyse this case, because the men in question did not face discrimination on multiple grounds; at no stage were they discriminated against on the grounds of their sexual orientation. As it was their freedoms and identity as gay and bisexual men that were being restricted without reference to the men's sexual orientation the full extent and harm of the discrimination cannot be understood. Only an intersectional analysis would give a complete picture of the harm that was occurring.

The early models of intersectionality, such as that developed by Crenshaw, have not been without their critics. In the early models, because the "individual is treated as a composition of (discrete) identity elements" there was a danger of "fragmenting subjectivity" [Vakulenko, 2007: 185]. Brown, in particular was critical that a challenge of categorisation for social and legal theorists was being imposed and projected onto individual subjects, erroneously implying that they had a fractured and fragmented sense of self.

"[A Black woman] is not an intersection, nor is she intersectional; rather she lives at an intersection of naming in the law, as do most people" [Brown, 2005: 154].

Makkonen examined in detail the potential pitfalls and advantages of the intersectional approach. For example, he highlighted the risk of creating "new essentialist and exclusionary categories of *presumed victims*, in the sense that the new "intersectional" stereotypes are created, such as "all Muslim women are subordinated". " [Makkonen, 2002: 34]

Vakulenko notes, however, that these criticisms have largely been incorporated into the model itself, and the current understanding is both more holistic and less likely to build in stereotypes and assumptions.

> "Many, if not most, contemporary feminist or queer scholars that engage with intersectionality directly or indirectly do so because they consider it helps to capture the uniqueness and 'messiness' of human experience better than, for example, the more doctrinal term 'multiple discrimination'. " [Vakulenko, 2007: 185]

This sense of the complexity and yet holism of intersectional identities was well captured in one of the most comprehensive of all UK studies.   Zappone explored disabled minority ethnic people, minority ethnic women, lesbian, gay and bisexual people with disabilities, women with disabilities, and young lesbian, gay and bisexual people in a UK and Irish context.   The report asserted that:

> "In every case … a more complex picture of how …individuals struggle for equality and recognition of their human rights [emerged]... [T]hey experience considerable discrimination and exclusion because there is little recognition of their multiple characteristics… When inviting people to define themselves, it became quickly apparent in all the studies that people offer explanations that encompass multiple attributes. Even though the research focused on two categories common to a group of individuals, such as ethnicity and gender, research participants talked about additional factors that influence their experience of the world… There is a sense of movement in these (their) words. They evoke the notion of fluidity, which is a term often used to describe the shifting and changing character of how people identify themselves." [Zappone, 2003: 132-3]

The current holistic model of intersectionality, therefore

> "appreciates that various identity grounds, and various power relationships corresponding to them, are mutually constitutive and intertwined. It thus respects the individual as a whole at any point of intersection, without breaking into fragments of race, gender, religion, sexuality, and so on. In other words, intersectionality aims to provide an account of a whole person whose subjectivity is shaped by different discourses, always in a particular social historical context." [Vakulenko, 2007: 186]

Several key writers have also written on how different forms of discrimination and prejudice tend to interact and cluster, thus placing people whose identities intersect at a greater vulnerability to encounter prejudicial attitudes and at more at risk of discrimination.

Stonewall's 'Profiles of Prejudice' [Stonewall, 2003] found that people who are prejudiced against any ethnic minority are twice as likely as the population as whole to be prejudiced against gay or lesbian people. Moon sees Stonewall's finding as representing "a very strong basis to infer that when someone is the subject of discrimination on the ground of one aspect of their individuality they may also be subjected to discrimination on another aspect" [Moon, 2006: 4]. She refers to this as "intersectional prejudice". Van der Meide, a Canadian barrister, concurs that hate motivated crimes are often based on the intersection of multiple grounds of discrimination [Van der Meide, 2001: 7]. In a similar way, Makkonen has talked of a "trigger effect" [Makkonen, 2002: 14] where a person may not discriminate against women or immigrants, but when the two are conjoined they may trigger discriminatory behaviour.

No one definition of discrimination will be able to fully capture the unique and personalised ways in which ME/LGBT individuals from diverse backgrounds both experience and react to being discriminated against. Although the phrase "intersectional discrimination" has its flaws, it goes beyond "multiple discrimination" in that it more explicitly sets out the complex and varied nature of people's identities and experiences. Yet multiple discrimination retains the advantage of being more easily understood by the lay person and more explicitly delineates the cumulative impact of discrimination happening on more than one ground.

Throughout this literature review and report we will make therefore make reference to both multiple and intersectional discrimination, as distinctive and equally useful and valid models. However, when describing the individual subject, we prefer the more holistic concept of "intersectional identity" to the seemingly fragmented idea of "multiple identities"; similarly we will refer throughout to the ME/LGBT intersection.

3.2.3 Race, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: the forgotten intersections?

Many authors offer examples or case studies to further illustrate their definitions of multiple discrimination or intersectionality. What is notable is the absence of illustrative examples that feature both race and sexual orientation[3]. This tendency to highlight some strands and intersections more frequently than others can be seen as reflecting a "hierarchy", with some intersection of grounds more worthy of action than others.

In part due to its origins, much of the literature around intersectional discrimination remains focused on the interaction between race and gender. In a detailed analysis, Makkonen has traced the development of the concept of intersectional discrimination and concluded that although it has "evolved into an understanding that all grounds of discrimination may interact with each other and produce specific experiences of discrimination" [Makkonen, 2002: 1] he believes that the concept "has not yet anywhere even nearly used up all of its potential" [ibid].

One way that the concept of intersectional discrimination has not reached its potential is in relation to the intersection between race and sexual orientation. This intersection is seldom or never mentioned in the bulk of the literature we have reviewed; the intersection is either forgotten or appears way down the pecking order of what is considered important. This is true both for the academic or legal journals we reviewed, as well as in policy statements made by key equality organisations such as the Scottish Government and EHRC.

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[3] Typical is the London based Equality and Diversity Forum which defined multiple discrimination as occurring "when someone experiences discrimination on more than one ground, for instance by being treated less favourably not only on grounds of age but also because of disability" [EDF, 2007: 1].

Similarly, there is a lack of any mention of the intersection between race and gender identity.

In some cases, multiple discrimination and intersectionality are discussed in general terms, with limited reference to any specific intersection, concrete examples or targeted guidance.

In their legal strategy for 2008-9, the EHRC highlights the need to "explore and challenge" [EHRC, 2008b: 5] multiple/intersectional discrimination as one of their six key legal issues. The legal strategy makes it clear that tackling multiple/intersectional discrimination and working across strands is a key priority in relation to legal policy, enforcement and litigation [ibid: 11]. However, in the sections setting out their "detailed priorities" for gender identity and sexual orientation there is no reference to race, and in the section on race there is no mention of sexual orientation or gender identity.

In a similar vein, the UK Government's 'Framework for a Fairer Future' paper that sets the context for the new Single Equality Bill, is very positive in setting out key principles in relation to tackling multiple discrimination, but remains somewhat vague on the detail:

> "We want to allow discrimination claims to be brought on combined multiple grounds. This is a very complex area and we are exploring this further, including how the legislation would work in practice and what the costs and benefits would be" [Government Equalities Office, 2008: 31].

Only the single example of a black woman is used to illustrate what is meant by multiple discrimination.

At a European wide level, it has been stated that a "reinvigorated and consolidated approach is necessary" [European Union, 2008: 5]. Yet European moves towards harmonisation of equality systems, although offering some hope of a more consistent approach to each equality strand, have also fallen short of providing any detail as to how intersectional discrimination is to be tackled in practice [EU Commission 2008a and b].

Also worrying are the cases where a number of specific intersections are detailed but the ME/LGBT intersection remains notable by its absence. The

following quote from an EU conference report on multiple discrimination illustrates this:

> "It seems that when you have cases of discrimination they are very likely to be in fact cases of multiple discrimination. Not only because of the gender dimension but also because of other elements such as ethnicity, disability, age etc… as well as other grounds of discrimination such as poverty, unemployment , residence permit etc..."
> [Social Platform, 2005: 1]

Sexual orientation and gender identity were merely hinted by the phrase "etc", suggesting that these are less significant than discrimination on other grounds.

Similarly, the Scottish Government's guidance on mainstreaming equality provides an almost comprehensive list of grounds with which race may intersect, but remains silent on the issues of sexual orientation and gender identity.

> "We should also consider the needs of minority ethnic communities with reference to rural areas, both living in and access to as well as the issue of multiple discrimination. By multiple discrimination we refer to the diverse needs of minority ethnic people as women, older people, disabled people, members of particular faith groups **and so on**… The issues relevant to people from minority ethnic groups in Scotland will also overlap with Gypsies/Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers as well as faith groups." [Scottish Government, 2009 emphasis added]

The European Commission study into multiple discrimination features two prominent quotes from a blind gay man and a lesbian Christian on its front cover, and within the body of the report singles out "young Muslim homosexual men" [European Commission, 2007:19] as being an intersectional group whose needs and existence have specifically not been properly acknowledged. However in the crucial executive summary once again no reference is made to sexual orientation and gender identity except for under the undefined catch all phrase "etc" [ibid: 5] at the end of a list of disadvantaged groups.

Given this repeated obscuring and exclusion of the ME/LGBT intersection, it is disappointing that one of the most significant equality documents of recent

years should treat this particular issue in a manner that was arguably flippant and dismissive. The final report of the Equalities Review, when briefly discussing the concept of multiple disadvantage, stated that;

> "[t]he idea [of multiple disadvantage] has even been lampooned with some media competing to find the most 'oppressed' person – the fabled Black disabled lesbian, for example."
> [The Equalities Review 2007: 64]

It is not surprising that, given the historical tendency towards single strand research, multiple discrimination, when referred to, is discussed only in the most general terms. Nor is it problematic that where a single example of intersectionality is given then it is likely to refer to gender and race; after all it has been largely Black women who have raised the importance and pushed for the recognition of multiple discrimination as a concept. However the continuing absence of the intersection of race and sexual orientation or gender identity from the bulk of literature reviewed, and the repeated use of the "etc" and "and so on" addenda when almost every cross strand issue other than ME/LGBT has been raised, supports arguments that there is a hierarchy not just of strands, but of intersections[4].

There have been limited exceptions to the trend of illustrating intersectionality without reference to the ME/LGBT intersection. For example, Fredman cites the cumulative effect of gender as being the "most prominent" when it intersects with other grounds and gives examples such as black women and disabled women but goes on to say that "similar multiple or intersectional discrimination is experienced by gay or lesbian members of ethnic minorities." [Fredman, 2005: 13]

Makkonen [Makkonen, 2002] also makes regular reference throughout his sixty five page analysis to both ME and LGBT; however the detailed examples he uses to illustrate his arguments tend to come from different intersections. He concludes his analysis by saying that "the establishment of new "official" and "recognized" categories of victims would render other types of discrimination invisible" [Makkonen, 2002: 34]. When considering the lack of

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[4] Waddington and Bell draw on this point in their analysis of European equality law. They are quite explicit in their criticisms and highlight how "discrimination on some grounds are being addressed more thoroughly and aggressively than other forms of discrimination" [Waddington and Bell, 2003: 349].

attention to people who are ME/LGBT, Makkonen's warning of some categories of discrimination being rendered invisible appears particularly apt.

3.2.4 One ground approach – compounding inequality

We have seen in previous sections how people who are ME/LGBT have an identity which cannot be easily categorised or put into rigid boxes. We have also seen how, because their identities involve an intersection across at least two 'strands', they become more vulnerable to discrimination. We now go on to consider how the current legal approach of bringing discrimination on single grounds is compounding inequalities and preventing true recognition of the level, type and complexity of the discrimination faced by people with intersectional identities, such as people who are ME/LGBT.

In a major review carried out by the European Commission, the main criticism of anti-discrimination law was "the fact that it is pursued on a single ground basis" [European Commission, 2007: 17].

This report also acknowledged a consensus amongst academic writers when it came to criticizing the effectiveness of tackling multiple discrimination one ground at a time.

> "They [academics] consider that this approach ignores the profound impact which multiple discrimination has, the depth of vulnerability some individuals experience, and disregards those situated at the intersection of several grounds." [ibid]

A briefing paper from the Equality and Diversity Forum sets out how the shortcomings of the current one ground approach, go beyond just equality concerns: "under the current law, a victim of multi-dimensional discrimination frequently cannot have the reality of his or her experience recognised. This is not just an equality issue it is a fundamental human rights issue" [EDF,2007: 3].

Waddington and Bell also criticise the one ground approach as having "no particular means of considering whether the cumulative effects of multiple discrimination are different in nature to the sum of each individual form of discrimination" [Waddington and Bell, 2003: 352]. Or, as EDF's briefing paper

puts it, "under our current laws the totality of their experience cannot be adequately described by a single aspect of their identity" [EDF, 2007: 1].

Moon has highlighted recent changes in political thinking and approaches to tackling multiple discrimination [Moon, 2006: 3]. Moon quotes a Department of Trade and Industry Press release, from Patricia Hewitt in 2004, who was then Secretary for Trade and Industry, and said "as individuals, our identities are diverse, complex and multi layered. People don't see themselves as solely a woman, or black, or gay and neither should our equality organisations" [ibid].

However Moon goes on to illustrate neatly the limitations of the current legal approach, and concludes that "while multiple discrimination is now widely recognised by those working in the equality field as a serious problem, little has been done to create coherent legal rights to address it" [ibid: 3].

Many authors have also highlighted the lack of helpful case law in relation to multiple discrimination cases.

For example, a European conference on the role of NGOs in tackling multiple discrimination concluded that "the case law in this field is nearly nonexistent as lawyers are usually encouraged to make a choice between the different grounds of discrimination that could be invoked in order to develop a more effective strategy" [Social Platform, 2005: 2]. Respondents to the European Commission's research also commented that "it is not appropriate for a complainant with multiple identity characteristics to be forced to choose which ground of discrimination has been violated" [European Commission, 2007: 22].

Moon, amongst others, cites the significance of the case of Bahl v Law Society. This concerned an Asian woman who claimed she had experienced discrimination on the grounds she was Asian and also on the grounds that she was a woman [Moon, 2006: 5]. Despite an initial tribunal judgment that held that the combined effect of her race and sex could be considered, the Employment Appeal Tribunal and Court of Appeal judgment "made it clear that each ground had to be disaggregated, separately considered, and a ruling made on it, even if the claimant had experienced them as inextricably linked" [ibid: 6].

The inadequacies of the one ground approach and the absence of helpful case law are compounded by practical difficulties individuals have in enforcing discrimination law.

Waddington and Bell neatly summarise such difficulties: "evidence gathering and proof, the financial and emotional costs of litigating, the need to identify an appropriate comparator, and the fear of victimisation and future disadvantage in the labour market" [Waddington and Bell, 2003: 351-2]. Indeed they are critical of what they term the "individual justice model" [ibid] and its reliance on individual litigation to achieve equality.

The difficulties in bringing cases are widely seen as being exacerbated by the current system of finding an actual person to compare your experiences with, in order to prove that you have suffered discrimination. Finding a comparator is acknowledged as being more difficult in multiple discrimination cases and hampered further by the lack of meaningful data.

The "difficult and somewhat unreal task" of a person having to find a suitable "comparator" in multiple discrimination cases is explored in detail by Moon [Moon, 2006: 6-9]. Fredman also highlights how "the synergestic nature of multiple discrimination makes it difficult to monitor" [Fredman, 2005: 14], citing an Irish study into ethnicity and disability which revealed a total absence of this group in national statistics [Pierce, 2003 quoted in Fredman, 2005].

Waddington and Bell have commented on the importance of reliable statistical data in shaping perceptions and attitudes to disadvantage and discrimination and on the particular difficulties of gathering evidence on grounds of sexual orientation:

> "The incidence of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation is particularly difficult to determine given the dearth of empirical research in this area, combined with the barriers to finding a representative sample of lesbians and gay men. Moreover, the capacity of individuals to conceal their sexual orientation permits discrimination avoidance strategies less available to persons with visible characteristics, such as certain disabilities or racial origins." [Waddington and Bell, 2003: 363]

Similarly, a recent EU study on multiple discrimination concluded that:

"it is imperative to monitor and track the unique ways in which people experience Multiple Discrimination through numerous tools and strategies: research, legislation, awareness-raising, training and education, data collection, collection and dissemination of good practice and the promotion of multiple-ground NGOs" [European Commission, 2007: 6].

Therefore, whether it has been concerned with protection from, redress for, or the monitoring of, discrimination, the single strand equality framework has been as much a part of the problem of as a source of a solution to effectively dealing with multiple discrimination. Fredman argues "the more a person differs from the norm, the more she is likely to experience multiple discrimination, the less likely she is to gain protection" [Fredman, 2005: p14]. Brown states "we appear not only in the law but in the Courts and public policy either as (undifferentiated) women, or as economically deprived, or as lesbians, or as racially stigmatized, but never as the complex, compound, internally diverse and divided subjects that we are" [Brown, 2000: 129]. As Zappone concludes, multiple discrimination requires not merely an extension or tinkering with the single strand framework, but a fundamental reform and "deeper attitudinal and institutional change if people are to encounter more fairness, equality and justice in their day-to-day lives" [Zappone, 2003: 132].

3.2.5 Alternative approaches

Several authors have examined different approaches to tackling discrimination that occurs on more than ground. Amongst these there is a consensus that the tackling of intersectional discrimination is still in its infancy.

The European Commission found in their study of multiple discrimination, that the intersectional approach to tackling discrimination was underdeveloped in most EU countries [European Commission, 2007: 17]. Of the countries they studied, only Austria, Germany, Spain and Romania were found to have specific provisions on how to handle multiple discrimination, with for example, the Romanian Equal Treatment Act providing that discrimination on two or more grounds be treated as "an aggravating circumstance" [European Commission, 2007: 20].

The study concluded by calling for action in seven areas: research, legislation, awareness raising, promotion of good practice, data collection, training and

education and the development of funding sources for multiple ground NGOs. It also recommended "a more holistic and integrated approach to anti-discrimination in general" [European Commission, 2007: 53-56].

Moon [2006] examines three possible alternative ways of addressing multiple discrimination:

- opening up the list of grounds on which discrimination is prohibited, a view supported by [Fredman, 2005]
- extend the concept of harassment already present in European law relating to racial harassment. Here the key issues are violation of dignity and/or the creating of a hostile environment and there is not the need for "a comparison test"
- create courts that expressly permit multiple comparisons

The Equality and Diversity Forum have also called for courts to be allowed to consider two or more grounds. They call for a greater emphasis on the reasons why discrimination occurred and a reduction in the need for a hypothetical comparator. They also suggest that levels of damages awarded in multiple discrimination cases should be increased to reflect injury on more than one ground [EDF, 2007].

Moon also contrasts the UK approach to that in Canada which "depends less on a comparison of the treatment of complainant and another as on the effect on the complainant" and concludes that "the inclusion of a provision similar to that in the Canadian Human Rights Act, clearly permitting action to be taken in respect of discrimination based on several grounds, should be introduced" [Moon, 2006: 18].

Moon favours the UK adopting provisions similar to that found within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The charter "has an open list of grounds making it easier to adapt the law to encompass multiple grounds for discrimination. A combined ground has been simply proposed as a possible new ground" [Moon, 2006: 11]. This approach results in many more cases being brought on more than one ground, with 48% of cases during 1997-2000 being on more than one ground [Moon, 2006: 12].

The European Commission also describes how Canada has led the way in developing an intersectional approach, but also point out that "the Canadian court's understanding of a proper intersectional approach and analysis is still in its infancy" [European Commission, 2007: 26].

Fredman has commented upon some "promising" decisions in American courts. However she goes on to explain how courts, in an attempt to prevent a flood of claims by numerous subgroups have restricted multiple discrimination to only two of the grounds.

> "On this analysis, only race and gender can be addressed; the impact of sexual orientation, religion, disability or age are ignored. The result is both artificial and paradoxical. The more a person differs from the norm, the more likely she is to experience multiple discrimination, the less likely she is to gain protection." [Fredman, 2005: 14]

At the time of writing, the UK Government had recently announced a new consultation on a proposed clause to the Equality Bill to include multiple discrimination on two grounds[5].

3.2.6 Conclusion

People who are ME/LGBT remain vulnerable to multiple discrimination. Such discrimination can relate to their race and sexual orientation and/or gender identity, or the intersection of these.

Despite there being a mass of literature relating to both multiple and intersectional discrimination, the specific experiences of people whose identities intersect across race and sexual orientation or gender identity have been largely neglected. There is also a marked absence of any literature that is specific to Scotland.

The absence of reference to ME/LGBT in the bulk of literature reviewed adds weight to those authors who believe that there is a hierarchy of 'grounds' for discrimination, and some grounds or intersections are taken more seriously than others.

The current legal approach in the UK, of the applicant having to choose one ground to bring a discrimination case is widely and correctly criticised for

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[5] See Government Equalities Office, 'Equality Bill: Assessing the impact of a multiple discrimination provision. A discussion Document' April 2009 (www.equalities.gov.uk)

failing to meet the needs of people whose identities intersect across strands. Such difficulties in bringing actions on multiple grounds have been compounded by a lack of helpful case law and the failure of equality legislation to provide adequate remedies.

Several key authors would like to see the UK adopt the Canadian model of tackling multiple discrimination. Although some EU countries have adopted a more progressive approach to tackle intersectional discrimination than the UK, their efforts to achieve equality for people whose identities intersect across strands are seen as being very much in their infancy.

3.3 STRAND SPECIFIC LITERATURE

> "So I am stuck in lots of different places, with my sexuality, colour, ...So lots of issues. ...I think, to be anywhere, they say, in council buildings no smoking in any of them, it should be no it should be no harassment of gays or lesbians, or no racial in any building. That should just apply we shouldn't have to go out and fight for that, it should just apply."
>
> (Research Participant 'Susan' in John and Patrick, 1999: 38)

3.3.1 Introduction

This section reviews eleven reports on race and ethnicity in order to identify any references to ME/LGBT people and/or their needs; and similarly, twelve reports focusing on LGBT issues to identify any references to the same intersection. The aim of this section was not to review all reports available, but to select a representative sample that could point to trends and common practice in how ethnicity is included in work on sexual orientation and gender identity and vice versa.

Four areas are reviewed in order to track how the intersection is acknowledged:

- sampling and monitoring (Section 3.3.3)
  to note whether and how sexual orientation and gender identity are monitored in race reports and ethnicity is monitored in LGBT focused reports
- general findings around common issues (Section 3.3.4)
  to highlight what single strand issues are common under both strands
- findings specific to the ME/LGBT intersection (Section 3.3.5)
  to note what kinds of findings are likely to include the ME/LGBT intersection
- recommendations (Section 3.3.6)
  to note what recommendations are made around the intersection

3.3.2 Scope

"We have not been able to identify any specific studies that examine discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual orientation."

[Netto et al, 2001: 68]

This section reviews recent British reports that focus on race and ethnicity OR sexual orientation and gender identity. Examples are drawn from papers produced between 1999 and 2008 with Scottish, English and UK wide focuses.

Reports were selected to represent a range of different kinds of remit, and include reports specific to health, safety, family life, poverty and general research investigating a number of different areas of interest. The reports also range in purpose and methodology from participatory research to scoping exercises, reviews and analysis. The aim was to include a representative sample of work in order to try to identify any trends in the treatment of the intersection of ethnicity and sexual orientation.

3.3.3 Sampling and Monitoring: Are ME/LGBT people being acknowledged?

The reader may want to note that, at the time of compiling this review, and when the examples included were written, legal duties regarding the monitoring of public service users differed across the equality strands. While there was a specific legal duty to monitor race, there was only guidance and therefore less compulsion to monitor sexual orientation and gender identity. Therefore comparing how reports monitor these different strands is not a like for like comparison.

Reports on race and ethnicity

Many of the reports on race and ethnicity in this sample did not include any information on the intersectionality of ethnicity and sexual orientation or gender identity. Sometimes this is because the study was based on

information from the census and therefore the inclusion of LGBT specific information was made impossible by the lack of data from the census[6] or the report focused solely on race and ethnicity and did not make any major references to any of the other equality strands[7].

Some reports, while focused on race, also made detailed reference to and /or collected data on the intersection between race and the other equality strands but did not include sexual orientation or gender identity. For example, de Lima, 2001 and GARA, 2008 make references to gender and age. Hickman et al, 2008 makes reference to all the equality strands except for sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.

The sexual health studies were the only ethnicity focused reports that gathered information on sexual orientation (but not gender identity). Both the reports reviewed here [Mayisha, 2005 and Dodds et al, 2007] included such information in terms of 'behaviour' rather than 'identity'. Terms such as 'men who have sex with men' and 'women who have sex with women' were used in preference to 'gay', 'lesbian' or 'bisexual'. This is common practice in sexual health research. Findings specific to the ME/LGBT intersection were included as behaviours rather than the profile of respondents.

'Bass Line 2007' [Dodds et al, 2007] was the only research report reviewed published after 2005 that asked respondents if they have a civil partner.

Due to the nature of HIV, the focus of the work in both cases is on men. No reports asked about transgender identity or made any reference to the needs of transgender people or communities. And none of these reports made reference to LGBT asylum seekers and refugees.

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[6] for example, [Office of the Chief Statistician, 2004] and [GARA, 2008]
[7] for example, [Scottish Executive, 1999] and [Fair Enough 2003]

Reports on sexual orientation and gender identity

> "Qualitative samples may be purposively selected to ensure sufficient diversity across variables such as gender, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation, but not all studies are transparent about their criteria, or even whether any selection criteria were used.   There seems to be an assumption that because a qualitative sample does not need to be 'representative' of the population as a whole that it also does not need to be systematic and deliberate."
>
> [McManus, 2003: 24]

The quote above is taken from "an international review of existing data sources and research, focusing specifically on research methods used to gather data on LGBT communities." [McManus, 2003: 24] The problems noted seem to have improved since this review was published. Only one report in our selection did not make any references to race or ethnicity [Laird, 2004]. All of the other LGBT reports reviewed here have made efforts to include ME/LGBT people in their participatory research and are transparent about their monitoring processes[8]. However, they have not found it easy nor have their efforts always resulted in recruiting enough respondents to make their observations generally statistically relevant [Coia et al, 2002 and Plant et al, 1999].

In many of these reports references are made to transgender people, but not in great detail. Many of these references are simply references to "LGBT" as an acronym and do not seem to truly refer to transgender people. No mention is made of minority ethnic transgender people or their needs.

All of the papers, besides Laird 2004, also make reference to other equality strands, possibly indicating a greater focus on a cross strand approach than in the race reports reviewed. Similarly to the race reports, the LGBT reports seem to prioritise the intersection with gender and age, possibly as there is more information available on these strands and their intersections.

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[8] for example, in [Beyond Barriers, 2003] and [John and Patrick, 1999]

Concern is also voiced that targeted recruiting through LGBT organisations, events and venues results in "an over sampling of those who are white, male, young, middle class, "out" , and most educated, literate, politically motivated and articulate" [McManus, 2003: 9].

In both race and LGBT focused research, where the number of participants is small, they should not simply be disregarded or their intersectional identities ignored. Information from these subjects can be incorporated in different ways, for example, qualitatively rather than quantitatively. An example of where this is done well is John and Patrick 1999 where the information detailed from ME lesbian and gay individuals paints vivid pictures of personal experiences of multiple discrimination in people's own words. This is an important step in increasing our knowledge and awareness on the ME/LGBT intersection.

3.3.4 General Findings: Are there common single strand issues?

Both reports that focused on ethnicity and those that focused on LGBT referred to some very similar issues and findings. There are a few notable exceptions to this trend in the sexual orientation strand. Many reports note how research findings can be skewed by debates around defining identify [McLean and O'Connor, 2003], the "invisibility" of LGBT populations [Stonewall, 2007] and difficulties in accessing the views of people who do not wish to disclose their sexual orientation [McLean and O'Connor, 2003].

Any ideological or structural differences between the strands (and between their sectors) do not impact on the prevalence of prejudice across all areas of life. Therefore despite any ideological or structural differences, the race and LGBT sectors could, if willing, work together on challenging prejudice and facilitating opportunities for ME/LGBT and other people around the themes detailed below. These common issues and findings can be divided into two categories; issues and gaps around research and policy and the experiences of people from these minority groups.

Issues and gaps around research and policy

There is a general consensus throughout the literature reviewed that there are many research gaps in both strands, particularly in Scotland. In particular de Lima highlights the lack of research and information on ethnicity [de Lima

2001: 1] and McLean and O'Connor lament a similar status for LGBT [McLean and O'Connor, 2003 and Fyfe et al, 2006]. This lack of information is reflected in the "invisibility of minority ethnic people in statistical data and policy documents." [Office of the Chief Statistician, 2004: 154]; and similarly of LGBT people [McLean and O'Connor, 2003].

Reports from both strands also point to concerns that mainstreaming of all services will lead to poorer services for ME or LGBT people [Office of the Chief Statistician, 2004: 154 and Fyfe et al, 2006].

Both sets of reports express multiple serious concerns around under-reporting and poor recording of discrimination and harassment because of ethnicity [GARA, 2008: 89 and Law at Work, 2005: 85] and sexual orientation [Plant et al, 1999 and John and Patrick, 1999] including lack of infrastructure, under-reporting and lack of consistency in reporting systems. They also note a lack of monitoring of race, ethnicity [de Lima, 2001: 2 and Law at Work, 2005: 85], sexual orientation and gender identity [Fyfe et al, 2006] by public and other service providers. This contributes to "no profile of minority ethnic groups in rural areas" [de Lima, 2001: 2 and Law at Work, 2005: 85] and a similar lack of information about LGBT people in rural areas [Beyond Barriers, 2003]. These gaps in knowledge tend to be used by public and other service providers to maintain that minority groups in their areas do not exist or are too small to prioritise or take into account.

Personal experiences of ME/LGBT people

Both ME [GARA, 2008: 64] and LGBT [John and Patrick, 1999] people are more likely to experience poverty than white Scottish and heterosexual people. And both ME [GARA, 2008: 68 and de Lima, 2001] and LGBT [Plant et al, 1999] people experience a variety of discrimination and harassment in the workplace, from public services and in their neighborhoods. For both strands verbal abuse is the most common form of harassment.

ME people [de Lima 2001: 2] and LGBT people [John and Patrick 1999] tend to be at greater risk of unemployment than majority groups and experience discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

In both strands there are concerns around access to education for ME people [GARA, 2008: 33 and de Lima, 2001: 30] and LGBT people [John and Patrick

1999] and discrimination and harassment in educational institutions. However, references to multiple discrimination in education are rare.

Reports on both strands call for the needs of ethnic [de Lima, 2001: 44] and sexual [Beyond Barriers, 2003] minorities to be taken into by service providers in order to make services more accessible.

Issues around access to housing, quality of housing and discrimination and harassment by neighbours are issues raised under both strands [GARA, 2008: 68] and [John and Patrick 1999].

While the intersection of race and ethnicity with sexual orientation and gender identity is underrepresented throughout, many reports make references to other intersections. Faith [Dodds et al, 2008: 57 and LGBT Hearts and Minds, 2008], gender [Law at Work, 2005: 28 and Plant et al, 1999] and age [Law at Work, 2005: 28 and Plant et al, 1999] top the list, with fewer and less in depth references to disability in a smaller number of reports. This also bodes well for a good basis for a horizontal or thematic approach to intersectional work.

3.3.5 Findings specific to the ME/LGBT intersection

Reports on race and ethnicity

> "Multiple discrimination was evidenced to a varying extent in a number of areas: in the interaction between racial discrimination, age, gender and disability. At the level of service planning and delivery, lack of information and understanding about the circumstances of minority ethnic people is compounded by even less understanding and knowledge of the extent to which requirements for services might be influenced by disability, gender, age and sexual orientation."
>
> [Netto et al, 2001: 159]

Few of the race focused reports have any specific finding with regards to ME/LGBT people or issues. This reflects the trend of the majority of these reports in not including sexual orientation or gender identity in their focus or sampling.

However, some reports made specific reference to the dearth of information on multiple discrimination [Netto et al, 2001: 141; Law at Work, 2005: 28 and Fair Enough, 2003].

The reports that do highlight specific findings are those that focus on sexual health [Mayisha, 2005 and Dodds et al, 2007]. On the whole the findings include detailed references to sexual attraction to and behaviour with people of the same sex. However, sometimes only selected points make reference to LGBT people or issues or MSM[9]. For example, Mayisha, 2005 investigates trends in condom use by African men, but does not note if condoms are more, less or similarly regularly used by men who have sex with men and men who do not have sex with men [Mayisha, 2005: 30]. This may be a by-product of not including sexual orientation as part of the profile of the respondents.

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[9] Men who have sex with Men

Reports on sexual orientation and gender identity

"….lesbian and gay people can also come from BME backgrounds, from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, can be disabled, old or young, have a religion or belief, and be male, female or transgender. The lesbian or gay person with a multiple identity, has a different relationship with the broad lesbian and gay community, than someone who does not have this multiple identity. … Policy makers at the Commission for Equality and Human Rights will need to recognize the diversity of the lesbian and gay community (and other minority communities) in order to deliver effective policy recommendations."

[Stonewall, 2007: 37]

Despite the under representation of ME/LGBT participants in LGBT research and the wide remit of many of the reports, a very large majority of the sexual orientation papers reviewed were able to signpost the reader to some ME/LGBT issues. These are mostly drawn with very board strokes and mainly refer to problems around researching (for example, recruiting ME/LGBT participants) and invisibility in policy rather than the experiences of ME/LGBT people. Only four first hand testimonies are included in the reports reviewed; three in John and Patrick 1999 and one in Coia et al 2008.

Most commonly noted is a lack of information on and expertise in the ME LGBT intersection [McLean and O'Connor, 2003: 16 and LGBT Hearts and Minds, 2008] a status quo that is maintained by a severe lack of research [Stonewall, 2007: 38], especially in Scotland. Stonewall notes that "there is a general assumption that gay people are white, middle-class, male and have a high disposable income" [Stonewall, 2007: 29] in British research.

Discrimination and harassment are often referred to in different contexts and in different forms. Stonewall 2007 explores multiple discrimination and identity, as quoted above [Stonewall, 2007: 37]. Discrimination and harassment because of ethnic identity in the LGBT community [Beyond Barriers, 2003: 18 and John and Patrick, 1999] and vice versa [Stonewall, 2007: 7] are also highlighted. Beyond Barriers [Beyond Barriers, 2003] draws attention to youth

experiencing "stress-related experiences… reconciling sexual orientation and ethnic racial identity, facing discrimination among gays and lesbians, and having difficulties coming out to family members" [Beyond Barriers, 2003: 63]. Coia et al, 2002 details the experiences of a young man who suffered a combination of racism and homophobic bullying. He describes how teachers would take action against the perpetrators of racial harassment towards him, but not those of homophobic bullying, resulting in him leaving school [Coia et al, 2002: 47].

Even though most of the findings have depressing connotations, there is a note of hope. Stonewall praises the work of voluntary organisations in England that specialise in ME/LGBT clientele, especially with regard to the use of websites and web based services [Stonewall, 2007: 39].

3.3.6 Intersectionality in Strand Specific Report Recommendations

Very few race reports make any recommendations with regards to the intersection of ethnicity and sexual orientation. No references are made to gender identity. This is not surprising as it reflects the common pattern of lack of monitoring of sexual orientation and gender identity in the methodology and scope of work that focuses on a single stand approach. Those race focused reports reviewed that do make specific recommendations are those that focus on sexual health, i.e.: Mayisha, 2005 and Dodds et al, 2007. These recommendations were detailed and integrated within the general findings.

In LGBT focused reports, most of the recommendations made that include references to race and/or ethnicity do so as a parallel and separate strand to LGBT, rather than crossing the strands. For example,

> "Councils should identify gaps in information on take-up of services and employment particularly in relation to gender, race/ethnicity and disability and prepare an action plan over a realistic timescale to fill those gaps proposals." [Fyfe et al, 2006: 12]

In LGBT reports, references are also made with regards to the race relations sector, policy and funding, as a comparator to the LGBT sector, policy and funding. Mostly, the work done on race is set up as an example of the kind of initiatives that the LGBT sector could benefit from. Some funding streams specifically for race focused work and capacity building programmes [Review

of Funding, 2004: 17 and 40] noting that "the needs of LGBT organisations are quite similar to those facing ethnic minority organisations" [Review of Funding, 2004: 40]. A couple of references to work on race are made to illustrate the sidelining of sexual orientation and gender identity [Fyfe et al, 2006: 34].

Nonetheless, a couple of specific recommendations regarding the intersection of race and sexual orientation[10] were put forward in LGBT focused works. These included a call for cross strand work in primary schools [Beyond Barriers 2003; 66] and the collation of "comparable data on all equality groups" [McManus, 2003: 10]. Not surprisingly, the main recommendation made is for greater understanding of 'multiple disadvantage':

> "Multiple disadvantage was an issue that attracted relatively less discussion than other policy areas. Consequently, there were also fewer research priorities generated. What discussion occurred underlined the paucity of research or information on the particular circumstances and experiences of older, minority ethnic and disabled members of the LGBT communities, and the need for greater understanding of their needs and circumstances" [McLean and O'Connor, 2003: 26].

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[10] These may refer to 'LGBT' but do not necessarily detail transgender specific points.

3.3.7 CONCLUSION

"Further research on the experiences of ethnic minority and Black lesbians and gay men in all areas addressed by this study and in further fields, such as the migration of Black and ethnic minority lesbians and gay men, is critical. The identification of research priorities in this field should be subject to relevant consultation with representatives of ethnic minority and Black groups and activists. The lack of visibility of ethnic minority and Black lesbians and gay men from both mainstream and lesbian and gay publications and media (e.g. no black or ethnic minority gay men were cited as role models, only Black (Afro-American) lesbian.) is a further concern to be addressed."

[John and Patrick, 1999: 36]

The review of strand specific reports has thrown up four main trends:

- In both ME reports and those focused on sexual orientation, few references are made to the intersection of these strands. And when mention is made, references are seldom in depth or seen as a priority.

- This under representation not only results in a lack of knowledge on the ME/LGBT intersection, but results in the intersection not being included in policy, funding priorities and ultimately services.

- Reports on ethnicity tend to be less likely to make any reference to the ME/LGBT intersection or multiple discrimination than those focused on sexual orientation. These references also tend to be in less detail.

- The minority groups within both the ME and LGBT focused reports are often underrepresented, even within their own strands. The complex and specific identities and issues of transgender people, asylum seekers and refugees tend to be either watered down or ignored in many general ME or LGBT reports.

- Many of the issues that were raised in the race and LGBT focused reports mirror each other. Therefore there is scope for cross and multi strand work based on a thematic approach. This hold true for areas in policy and research and with regards to life experiences of ME/LGBT people like discrimination and harassment in the workplace, from services and in neighbourhoods.

3.4 INTERSECTIONAL RESEARCH

3.4.1 Introduction

In this section we focus on literature that has focused specifically on ME people from LGBT backgrounds. There was no such literature which we were able to find from Scotland. The majority of the research we sourced was from England, with a minority being from outside the UK. As the number of research reports was low, we have also made reference to a number of conference and other reports.

The literature reviewed also includes a small number of research reports which are solely LGBT based. This occurred when such reports were quoted prominently in ME/LGBT studies and we wanted to examine the original source material ourselves (eg: Gay Men Sex Surveys).

Due to the absence of Scottish literature we have also reviewed a number of key papers from the Scottish Government and examined recent literature from the EHRC.

There was much more literature concerning gay men and MSM from minority ethnic backgrounds than there was regarding lesbians or bisexual women. We were not able to find any research specific to transgender people who are from ME backgrounds.

Within all the research there was much overlap and common findings – we have grouped the findings according to the most common themes which the research explores. These include experiences of coming out, family, faith/religion as well as sections on the need for community support and safe spaces. We have prioritised findings which we think are most applicable to the Scottish context.

There were also a number of gaps within the research. It should be remembered that some areas are more researched than others, in part due to available funding streams, for example, in regard to the sexual health of MSM. Given the diverse nature of both LGBT and ME communities, our analysis of the most common findings of ME/LGBT research does not necessarily fully represent the entire spectrum of needs and issues faced by people of ME

background who are LGBT. Particular gaps in research are highlighted in our conclusion.

3.4.2 Being Open

One of the most commonly explored themes throughout the literature reviewed is the experiences of coming out or being open about sexual orientation or gender identity.

There are different levels of being open, ranging from self identifying as LGBT, informing a close circle of trusted friends/family about being LGBT, to being open in workplace/community/public settings. In reality this is a fluid and highly personalised process; there not normally being a single "eureka" moment when a person suddenly becomes out. It is beyond the scope of this literature review either to examine this process in great detail or to enter into a debate about terminology about whether it is right to talk about a person who is LGBT "coming out" when people who are heterosexual do not have to out their sexuality. Instead we have reviewed literature that specifically looks at how the experiences of being open about being LGBT for people from ME backgrounds may differ from those from non ME backgrounds.

Keogh has been critical that LGBT organisations have promoted a notion of coming out that involves the taking on of an overarching and defining gay identity. While recognising the value of this position, he argues that it fails to acknowledge the "complex, fragmentary and contingent" nature of identity formation, or to provide LGBT people with the skills needed to cope with the inevitable contradictions arising out of this. He asserts that taking on and maintaining a lesbian or gay identity is a complex learning process that involves:

> "learning how to resolve competing social imperatives (what you family expects of you versus what the reality of what your life is likely to be) or learning how to manage information (who to disclose to and in what ways). It involves learning how to conduct yourself in very different cultural and social frameworks. It also involves which aspects of gay culture one wants to accept and which to reject. Most importantly, it involves surmounting the biographical rupture involved in taking on a gay identity and maintaining some personal continuity through this

disruption. That is, crossing the bridge from a heterosexual identity to a gay one without burning it behind you." [Keogh, 1999: Section 4.1]

Keogh's arguments apply to all lesbians and gay men, but we can see that they have particular resonance for ME/LGBT people, especially those from faith-based communities. The vital emotional task of maintaining continuity between an ethnic and a sexual /gender identity is not an easy one, and may well need additional support.

The research highlights great variety in experiences for ME/LGBT people in being open, both positive and negative. It is important to remember the variety of experiences and not slip into the temptation of stereotyping; not all Asian lesbians are trapped in arranged marriages and not all black gay men are leading double lives.

The research shows that in many ways the experiences of coming out for ME/LGBT people are similar to the LGBT population as a whole, but that there are a number of additional vulnerabilities or risk factors that they may face.

The experience of coming out for the Asian women who attended a social support group are highlighted in Kiss and Tell [Kiss, 2005]. The report tells of how some women chose not to come out, others had positive experiences, whilst others had endured "long term battles" with their families [Kiss, 2005: 28].

Keogh et al, 2004a found that common to all accounts given by the Black Caribbean men they interviewed, was the tendency to maintain privacy around their sexual identity. This is typified by the following quote:

"There's no way I'd tell my Dad. I wouldn't leave his place alive. I think he's had his suspicions. But it's one thing thinking about it but to actually come out and say it. No way! And I haven't told my younger brothers either. No way! The one that follows me, he has a position in the church." *Black Caribbean, aged 37, unemployed* quoted in [Keogh et al, 2004a: 27]

Keogh also compared the experiences of Irish men coming out to those of Black Caribbean men, and identified differences between Irish gay men who tended to "migrate" away from their family in order to be open about their sexual orientation to avoid confrontation, and Black Caribbean gay men

whose coming out tended to be "highly mediated and gradual" [Keogh et al, 2004a: 39]. However the sample size in this research was relatively small (twenty) and it cannot be assumed that the findings can be applied to all Irish/Black Caribbean men.

In a study carried out in London in [GALOP, 2001] found that Asian people are far less likely to be open about their sexuality to anyone but their close friends; with for example, only 27% of Asian respondents being open to their mothers about their sexuality compared to 60% of black respondents.

The Safra Project [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b] has drawn attention to the difficulties that many Muslim LBT women have in coming out, and how women often "go through a (prolonged) process of denying and suppressing their sexual orientation or gender identity" [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b: 9] which can impact on women's mental wellbeing and sense of self worth. They also examine how coming out can result in the sudden loss of all support systems.

Not all women's experiences of coming out were the same, and reactions of family members including (ex) husbands to a Muslim LBT woman coming out were said to be "diverse".

GALOP's study [GALOP, 2001] of the experiences and needs of Black lesbians, bisexual people and gay men found that women from ethnic minorities are more likely to come out to family, friends and work colleagues than men are. For example, 63% of female respondents were open about their sexuality to their mothers compared to just 35% of men. The sample size of this London study was 145, with a fairly even gender split (55% men, 45% women). GALOP also cites a study carried out in Manchester that was consistent with their findings [Greater Manchester Lesbian and Gay Policing Initiative, 1999].

For some, the process of coming out was made more difficult because of homophobic attitudes, both within their ethnic communities and within the wider community.

One woman spoke of how homophobia in schools made it impossible for her to come out to her children:

> "My children equate homosexuality with promiscuity because of the way they are being taught and because of the homophobia in their

schools. This makes it so hard for me to come out to them" [Muslim LB woman quoted in de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b].

GALOP [GALOP, 2001] found that a high proportion (57%) of people had experienced homophobia from the Asian, African and Caribbean communities. One in five people said that homosexuality was taboo in their ethnic community.

The Safra Project has criticised homophobic and patriarchal attitudes within its members' communities and explained how such attitudes can "reinforce the misconception that Muslim LBT women need to choose between an LGB identity and a cultural or religious identity" [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b: 9].

However in one Canadian study: "the opinions of participants of this survey indicated that accurate generalizations about the levels of homophobia within entire ethno-racial communities are impossible" [Meide, 2001: 10]. This reminds us of the importance of not falling into the trap of making broad generalisations about attitudes within communities or in mistakenly assuming that one person's experiences are typical of all.

3.4.3 Safe Spaces

"As I grew up and felt more kind of gay I felt this drifting apart from my culture because I felt I couldn't be as expressive with my friends, my social circle, and I felt that being gay meant there were no Asian spaces that I could go to and I kind of felt distant, I felt a loss of my culture."

[Kiss, 2005: 24]

The need for a safe space was identified in several reports as being a key factor for many ME/LGBT people; not just in relation to helping them to come out, but in their ability to feel comfortable abut their identity. This was consistent with a Scottish study that looked at the needs of people who are LGBT and have a disability [Equality Network/Disability Rights Commission, 2006].

Such safe spaces also enable people to meet others from the same background as themselves and feel part of a community. Although reports give details of a number of such support groups or spaces across the UK, none are to be found in Scotland.

In a Canadian study one person describes how "there is no safe place" and describes how:

> "the most painful oppression I have experienced has come from feminists and human rights orgs, partly because it can be extreme and partly because it is a place where you (naively) expect not to encounter these types of attitudes" Ros, who identifies as a bi-racial, androgynous lesbian and lives in Canada, quoted in [Meide, 2001: 17].

In 'Kiss and Tell', the author describes her motivations in setting up a support group:

> "There's racism in the white LGBT scene and homophobia in the Asian scene, and I wanted to create an environment for women who were excluded from those sorts of scenes" [Kiss, 2005: 13].

> "The rationale behind setting up KISS was that while several sexual and mental health projects were being set up (many of which included a social support element) they mainly catered for men. There were no projects in London (or Britain) that provided support specifically for women who identified as lesbian or bisexual or were questioning their sexuality and also identified as South Asian, Middle Eastern or North African." [ibid]

Women attending the group described its benefits:

> "It gives members one time a month where they can hang out with people like themselves… There is just something that you get from being in that space that is different from what you get during the rest of your month." [ibid: 12]

Attending Kiss's social support group increased women's confidence reduced their isolation and created a sense of solidarity.

In contrast there was a strong consensus throughout the literature that the commercial gay scene fails to provide such a safe environment for people who are ME/LGBT.

Asian women attending KISS explained why they felt uncomfortable going into gay bars:

> "It's intimidating when you walk in to a bar and everybody turns to look at you because you're Asian not because you've just walked in…. That's why some Asian women feel quite afraid of gay bars….There are so many gay bars in London now and you could argue that there's more choice, but because they're mostly white you could also argue that we don't really have much choice" [ibid: 35].

As well as feeling unwelcoming, it was not uncommon to encounter racial stereotyping on the scene. For example, BGMAG highlight how the "commodification of the gay scene almost supports racial stereotyping" [BGMAG, 2007: 7]. This was also described by one of the women attending Kiss:

> "I've experienced a lot of racial stereotyping on the London gay scene. It's these little comments and questions about whether my parents are going to arrange my marriage that I get from white lesbians. It's not overt racist stuff like 'Fuck off Paki', it's quite subtle which makes it difficult to challenge." [Kiss, 2005: 36]

As well as racism, ME/LGBT people are seen to be at risk of sexual exploitation. Keogh highlighted how the LGBT community in London particularly fails to meet the needs of migrant gay men, and the "commodification" of the London gay scene placed people who lacked family or social support at risk of sexual exploitation:

> "What often passes as 'community' (the commercial gay scene) is effectively a market economy based on sexual commodification. Men without language skills, whose qualifications cannot be capitalised upon and who are without social capital, come to rely on their sexual capital to make their way. This is often personally disastrous" [Keogh et al, 2004b :12].

As well as the failure of the commercial gay scene to provide safe spaces for ME/LGBT people, several authors have highlighted the particular vulnerability of young people who are ME/LGBT. For example, BGMAG identified the needs of younger black gay men as one of four key issues affecting black gay men [BGMAG, 2007: 8].

Similarly, The Safra Project has identified the particular vulnerability of young LGBT Muslims. Interestingly, Safra also believed that the problems faced by young Muslim women are made worse by difficulties in dealing with social workers who "didn't feel able to talk to Muslim parents about the sexual orientation issues of their children because they would be acting in a culturally insensitive manner" [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b: 12].

GALOP's 2001 study also emphasised the need for making spaces where people could feel safe; documenting three reasons why some people chose to access dedicated black LGB services rather than mainstream organisations: "because it gives one a sense of community... because it supports one's sense of identity… because of racism/discrimination" [GALOP, 2001 : 30 -33].

The following quotes from their study echo those from Kiss, giving strong voice to the value of having safe spaces, where people can find understanding and be themselves:

> "It is useful to share thoughts with other like minded individuals. The Asian community not only has the social phobia associated with being gay, but also I have to deal with peer pressure, which in most cases is harder to deal with. Some other communities may not understand what kind of pressure it is." [GALOP, 2001:30]

> "I feel more comfortable with a group or service that understands my sexuality and my culture/colour" [ibid].

3.4.4 Community

The literature we reviewed shows that people who are LGBT and from a ME background may often feel apart from, rather than a part of both their LGBT and ethnic communities. This can lead to feelings of isolation, low esteem as well as confusion over identity. Some, but by no means all, people who are ME/LGBT are put in a position where they feel that they do not belong to

either the LGBT community or the ME community and are forced to express one part of their identity at the expense of the other.

BGMAG highlights how "racism operates across society in the UK and it would be naive to expect gay communities to be automatically free of these pressures or to side-step structural inequalities" [BGMAG, 2007: 7]. They go on to say how "the crucial issue is the expressed need that Black gay men have for community and the inability of the scene to provide for this need" [ibid].

This point was explained by American academic Richard Telfer:

> "As a consequence, many black gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals do not feel fully accepted in either community. Moreover, the conflict between their identities is often intensified by a lack of overlap or sometimes by an overt antagonism between 'mostly white lesbigay cultures' and 'mostly heterosexual black cultures' " Telfer, 1999 quoted in [Meide, 2001[11]].

In the case of ME/LGBT people who have recently arrived in the UK (eg: asylum seekers, A8 nationals)[12] the isolation can be even more marked.

In a study of migrant gay men, Keogh found that although "they faced all the difficulties common to most migrants including the need to find employment, to upgrade skills and education, to find accommodation, to find a sense of place, to counter loneliness etc. However he also found their sexuality burdened them with a number of additional disadvantages" [Keogh et al, 2004b: 12].

He highlights that their sexuality proved a barrier to accessing communities of people from their own country or region in the UK. In effect, unlike other migrants, they had no initial cultural link between their home country and the host city and no structures to make the transition easier.

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[11] There is no page number for this reference as the whole report is published as one web page, which is noted in the bibliography.

[12] A8 nationals are people from: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

Keogh also highlighted how newly arrived migrants who lacked any community support are at risk of sexual exploitation from within the commercial gay London scene [Keogh, 2004a: 23].

Much of the research includes testimony from individuals who have spoken of the importance of being able to meet up with other LGBT people from the same ethnic background, as revealed in the following quote:

> "I grew up in a very white environment, studied in a very white environment and then worked in a very white environment and I met some very nice people but I wanted something else that those folk couldn't give me. For a long time, I had lesbian friends and I had Asian friends and never the two shall mix if you like. You can't expect to get on with all Asian lesbians but in my experience when I have got on with them it has been really brilliant because it means that you relate on all sorts of levels" [Kiss, 2005:12].

The importance of community is not confined to UK based literature. The American writer Audre Lorde is quoted prominently in a number of articles, and Crenshaw highlights the following quote:

> "As a Black lesbian feminist comfortable with the many different ingredients of my identity, and a woman committed to racial and sexual freedom from oppression, I find I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out some one aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self" [Crenshaw, 1991: 1243]

Makkonen has used Lorde's writing to highlight how LGBT people from ME backgrounds may face rejection from both their LGBT and ethnic communities:

> "In the experience of Lorde, she was welcomed and accepted neither by the feminist community, which was predominantly white, nor by the gay community, which also was predominantly white, nor by the African American community, which was predominantly straight. Lorde realized she did not fit into any defined category, but that she fit into multiple categories and there didn't seem to be a definition to

accommodate that position. She did not feel that she belonged to these communities and movements, because they did not recognize the intersectionality of her identity, but tried to see her only through one particular trait understood as superior to the others." [Makkonen, 2002: 22][13]

Lorde's comments are also echoed in the findings of a European Commission study into multiple discrimination; with respondents highlighting that for persons belonging to the intersections of identity, the risk prevails that they might not be accepted by any group or be forced to choose one aspect of their identity over the other [European Commission, 2007]. They may not be able to find a community, organisation or movement which embraces their full identity.

However Keogh has also highlighted how being out was not necessarily linked to feelings of contentment and self esteem, concluding that some Black Caribbean gay men can still feel recognised or validated in spite of few close friends or family members acknowledging their sexuality.

The impact of the way that services have developed on specific grounds such as gender, race and sexual orientation, rather than across strands, and how this "stranded" approach has affected ME/LGBT people is something we shall return to later.

Keogh [Keogh et al, 2004a] identified community, alongside family, religion and church, and education as the "especially important" factors in the personal development of both Irish and Black Caribbean gay men. If the role of family in the day to day life of respondents diminished, then there was an increased need to maintain a sense of community and to build a network of friendships with other people of same ethnicity. The next two sections look at the role of family and religion in the lives of LGBT people from ME backgrounds.

3.4.5 Family

People who may identify as ME/LGBT have described the ways they interact with their family in several research reports. In common with LGBT people as a whole, people's relationships with their family vary from the entirely positive to the downright awful. Many ME/LGBT people have strained relations with

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[13] See also May and Chandra, 2000

their families or lead a double life where they are only out to a close and trusted circle. Relations with a mother may be different to that of a sibling, or a father. Geographical distance from different family members also affects how necessary people may feel it is, or is not, to be open about their sexual orientation; this is particularly true of families spread across different regions and/or countries.

We were not able to source any large scale qualitative studies which directly compared the family experiences of ME/LGBT people with non ME LGBT people. However Keogh has produced three linked studies looking at the experiences of working class, black Caribbean /Irish and migrant gay men.

Although the sample sizes in this report are fairly small, there are plenty of detailed personal testimonies which illustrate the depth of family problems people may face.

Keogh concluded that in the case of Black Caribbean Gay Men "although biological families were often dispersed and dislocated, the symbolic role of the concept 'family' was central in creating a sense of cohesion and personal security." [Keogh, 2004a: 8] Keogh emphasizes the importance of the family as part of a wider community that helped shape a person's identity.

> "Concerns about disclosure to family animated many of the accounts of coming out. Like other gay men they feared rejection. However, for these men, loss of familial support represented not only loss of the support of parents or siblings, but also the loss of an extended community which provided support and a basis for their identity as Black Caribbean men." [Keogh, 2004a: 26]

Gupta had made similar arguments in relation to Asian gay men. He argued that within gay political activism of the period, the late 1980s, the idea of the family was frequently presented as "the site of oppression and self hatred" [Gupta,1989: 176]. He argued that, given the centrality of family structures and bonds to Asian cultural identity, "the source of both material and communal well-being" [ibid], this blanket rejection of "family" as beneficial concept was profoundly alienating, to both Asian LGB people and Asian equality organisations that were potential allies. Although LGB politics has changed considerably since the incredibly charged atmosphere of the late eighties, his argument that a LGB activism that is inclusive of Black and Asian

identities would necessitate a "returning to the family and bringing enlightenment to the community" [ibid: 177] remains valid.

In these and other similar cases, people are at risk of losing the structures that support them when they experience racism and other forms of discrimination. So, similarly to the previous example of how racism in white LGBT clubs impacts on people's LGBT identity, homophobia in ethnic communities also impacts on ME/LGBT people's ethnic identities and expression of these identities. This can be an extra consideration for ME/LGBT people that LGBT people from ethnic majorities do not have to consider.

Negative attitudes towards same sex relationships in parents' countries of origin, was also seen as a factor which created a greater distance between British Black Caribbean gay men and family back in the Caribbean.

For Irish gay men, the main motivating factor behind them migrating to the UK was the need to "escape the negative attitudes of family and society at large" [Keogh, 2004a: 32]. Many Irish gay men were worried about bringing "shame" to their family and had kept their sexuality private so as to avoid confrontation; it was common to adopt what the author called "a don't ask don't tell policy" [Keogh, 2004a: 34] with families.

In 'Kiss and Tell', women described the conflicts that arose with their families as a result of their sexuality and as a result of expectations of the roles they should adopt: "I was acutely aware that my sexuality would conflict with the importance placed on marriage and family in Asian culture, ideals to which my family subscribe" [Kiss, 2005: 25].

The Safra Project has highlighted additional pressures that many Muslim LBT women may face, including the pressure or expectation that they marry at a young age and fear of losing custody of their children [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b].

This can be further compounded when ME/LGBT people have disabilities. In research examining the intersection between disability, race and sexual orientation, it was found that being disabled can make it more difficult for parents and families to accept and deal with their disabled relative being lesbian or gay:

"being lesbian or gay was felt to be harder because of society's attitudes towards disability and sexuality. In particular those with visible disabilities felt it was hard for society to accept the idea of lesbian and gay sexuality among disabled people" [Malloy et al, 2003: 3].

3.4.6 Faith/religion

"There is no typical 'gay Christian' or 'lesbian Muslim' … different religions have differing levels of tolerance of non-heterosexualities … the level of tolerance varies across denominations and within Christianity itself."

[Yip, 2008: 14]

The religious backgrounds of people who may identify as ME/LGBT are varied but the available research and reports do not adequately reflect such diversity. There is within ME/LGBT research a certain emphasis on the relationship between Islam and homosexuality, and there is a wider tranche of research which looks at Christianity and homosexuality: some specific to the intersection with race/ethnicity and others much wider. However we were not able to source any UK based research that looked at other religions that are common amongst ME communities such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism or Buddhism. We were also not able to identify any research that focused on issues facing recent LGBT migrants from countries such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia (A8/A2 Nationals)[14]; for many of whom religion plays a central part in their lives. There was also an absence of detailed comparative studies, comparing attitudes with one faith to another.

From the research we were able to source it is clear that there are mixed reactions from, and within, faith organisations, and in many, but definitely not all cases, reactions from faith organisations are deemed to be negative rather than positive.

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[14] A2 nationals are people from Bulgaria and Romania. Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union on 1st January 2007.

Many reports focus on qualitative data rather than quantitative. To find a really large sample we needed to turn to an American survey of 2645 LGBT people from ethnic minorities. This found very mixed attitudes from churches to gay people. Whilst "more than half" of those surveyed said that their church or religion viewed homosexuality as "wrong and sinful", a quarter said their church was "accepting of homosexuality". The vast majority of people surveyed practiced a Christian religion [Battle et al, 2002: 6].

The Safra Project is a voluntary resource project for lesbian, bisexual and transgender women who identify as Muslim either religiously or culturally. Although they acknowledge that "to be a Muslim gay man or Muslim lesbian is often perceived as a contradiction in terms", their "main focus is the modern and feminist scholars that concentrate on the concept of compassion, so central to the Quran" [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b: 2]. Safra does not adopt or promote any one particular interpretation of Islam but aims to provide resources and information to assist lesbian, bisexual and transgender women in forming their own opinions.

The Safra Project also highlighted how attitudes within families will often reinforce the view that being LBT is against Muslim cultural and religious values and that to come out would bring shame on the family [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b]. In some cases this has led to domestic violence.

However not everyone's experiences have been negative:

> "I'm a Muslim but my religion has not stopped me from going to gay places and meeting other gay people. I practice my faith very, very strongly even though the Quran states that homosexuality isn't the best thing in the world." [Kiss, 2005: 26]

Keogh [Keogh et al, 2004a] found that in the case of Black Caribbean Gay Men that in addition to spiritual belief, "the church played an important social function both in the upbringing and ongoing lives of respondents" [Keogh et al, 2004a: 9]. He contrasted this with the role that the Catholic Church played in the lives of Irish gay migrants believing that because of its "all pervasive" and "regulatory" nature, many Irish gay men were forced to turn their backs on the Catholic Church [ibid: 44].

"With the emergence of an awareness of their homosexuality, all men questioned Catholic teaching and all but four had moved away from the church. This process usually started in teenage years and continued into adulthood. This was not necessarily related to a loss of faith or spirituality, but a growing perception that the Catholic Church could have a pernicious or illiberal influence." [Keogh et al, 2004a: 16]

In a paper that examines issues that arose from two empirical research projects on the intersection of sexual orientation and faith, Dr Andrew Yip comments upon the negative reaction within the Anglican Church to the appointment of a gay priest in England and a gay bishop in the USA. He also criticises the Vatican, for continuing to "issue statements that pathologise LGB people" [Yip, 2008: 4] and highlights attacks made by some Muslim religious leaders have made on the LGB community.

He believes that there is a "comparative lack of acceptance" [ibid: 5] within both Christian and Muslim communities to people who are LGB and that this can increase their invisibility and the difficulty of carrying out research in this area. Yip summarises the position for Muslim LGB people in the following way:

"The Muslim's community's position as religious and ethnic minorities further complicates the lives of LGB Muslims. Often, cultural and social factors (eg close-knit family and kin network, emphasis on marriage, preservation of izzat [family honour], the pervasive perception of homosexuality as a 'Western disease') make the construction and maintenance of a LGB identity extremely difficult, further compounded by other socio-political issues such as Islamaphobia and racism." [ibid: 4]

Yip's research was not specific to people from ME backgrounds, but provides us with a valuable insight. He is critical of what he terms the "monolithic perception of religion being anti-LGB" clearly explaining the need for a "more nuanced understanding" [ibid: 13]. As well as highlighting how there are different levels of tolerance both between different religions, and across different denominations he believes "that there is often a gap between official or institutional stance and grassroots experience" [ibid: 11]. He concludes his paper on a positive note by explaining that many Christians who took part in his research were experiencing increasing acceptance of their sexuality within their faith community.

3.4.7 Violence and Harassment

"Names like battyman and faggot have been shouted at me in the streets, in face-to-face settings it's a lot more middle class and insidious – are you married yet? Look at my son's wedding pictures, he has a baby daughter you know!"

[GALOP, 2001: 23]

People who are ME/LGBT are exposed to racism, homophobia and transphobia. For many people this is an every day occurrence.

One of the main reference points concerning homophobia and violence is GALOP's study carried out in London during 2001. The study examines people's experiences of dealing with the police as well as analyzing experiences of crime and harassment by both gender and ethnic origin.

GALOP found that 88% of all questioned had experienced racist or homophobic abuse. Most commonly abuse was verbal with a high proportion of people experiencing verbal abuse on more than five occasions (48% in case of verbal racist abuse, 30%homophobic). Women were more likely to have experienced repeated verbal abuse than men.

The majority of incidents took place on the street, but a high number of respondents had also experienced abuse in the workplace (23% homophobic abuse at work, 29% racist abuse at work). Work colleagues represented 17% of those perpetrating crime and harassment.

GALOP also found that 10% of those interviewed had experienced physical homophobic abuse or violence and 24% had experienced racist physical abuse or violence. Just under a third of people had experienced racist harassment (phone calls, damage to property etc), whilst a quarter had experienced homophobic harassment.

Levels of racist abuse were consistently slightly higher than homophobic abuse, perhaps because some people can more easily hide their sexuality than they can their racial background.

Only 12% of people had reported the last incident of abuse or harassment to the police. Of those not reporting incidents, a quarter did not do so because they felt that it was not serious enough, but 26% felt that the police would not take the incident seriously or would not do anything [GALOP, 2001].

The Safra Project has commented that Muslim LBT women are reluctant to approach the police, including in domestic violence cases. They also discuss the difficulties that many LBT women have in accessing refuges and how "the invisibility of LBT women in refuges, both in terms of caseworkers and clients" [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b: 20] makes it more difficult for women to feel confident and welcome.

The UK Government Equalities Office has highlighted how six out of ten lesbian and gay children have experienced homophobic bullying and half of those have contemplated killing themselves as a result [Government Equalities Office, 2008: 7] but we were unable to source any findings specific to the homophobic bullying of young ME/LGBT.

Overall we were disappointed not to find more research that examined the experiences of violence or harassment for people who are ME/LGBT and feel that this should be a priority for future research.

3.4.8 Health

> "Many women have faced the dilemma of not only questioning their sexuality, but subsequently questioning their ethnic, racial, religious and cultural identities. This dilemma has often led to experiences of anxiety, insecurity, loneliness and isolation, separation from family, loss of confidence and self-esteem, loss of a sense of self, self-harm and depression"
>
> [Kiss, 2005: 23]

Three key themes relating to health emerged from the literature: HIV, sexual health and mental health. Findings relating to HIV and sexual health were exclusively focused on gay men and MSM. References to mental health were found across the literature, commonly in sections on the difficulties of coming out and in dealing with breakdown in family relationships. There was no

research that we found that was solely focused on the mental health needs of ME/LGBT people and this would be a valuable area of further research.

In relation to HIV, Keogh's research showed that "there is evidence to suggest that gay homosexually active men from certain ethnic minorities are at heightened risk of HIV infection and access health promotion interventions differentially compared to other gay men" [Keogh et al, 2004a: 5].

Results from the 2003 Gay Men's sex survey, showed that "black men had the greatest proximity to the HIV epidemic… being most likely to have been diagnosed with HIV and least likely not to know anyone with HIV" [Reid et al, 2004: 21]. Men from non-British White backgrounds had the next greatest proximity, and were most likely to know someone with HIV. Asian men had the least proximity to the HIV epidemic.

The risk of HIV infection for black gay men is increased by what was described by BGMAG as "risky" sexual behaviour [BGMAG, 2007: 5]. This is backed up by the Gay Mens Sex Surveys of 2001 and 2003 which found that black men were more likely to have had insertive unprotected anal intercourse with a partner they knew to be HIV positive or whose HIV status they did not know [Reid et al, 2004: 21].

The Gay Men Sex Survey of 2005, in which 18.7% of respondents were from ethnic minorities, a "slight increase" on previous surveys [Hickson et al, 2007: 7], also found that black men were more likely to have tested HIV positive than other ethnic groups. However their findings contradicted earlier surveys, suggesting that HIV negative Black gay men were not more likely to be involved in risky sexual behaviour [ibid: 39].

Whereas literature on the health needs of gay men from ethnic minorities remained centred on HIV/sexual health, much of the lesbian based literature focused on mental health.

The Safra Project has highlighted how Muslim LBT women are likely to encounter mental health problems such as anxiety, fearfulness and depression, and fear of bringing shame on their family can lead to feelings of unworthiness and uselessness [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b]. They also highlighted how some Muslim LBT women have experienced homophobia or transphobia whilst using mental health services [ibid].

Kiss highlighted the vulnerability of women's mental health as a prime motivating factor behind setting up their social support group:

> "Several of these women reported experiences of sexual abuse and sexual assault, eating disorders, self-harm and suicide, homelessness, and alcohol and other substance misuse, all of which were related in part to their sexuality and lack of related support." [Kiss, 2005: 10]

Unfortunately, we were unable to source any material specifically relating to the health needs of transgender people from ME backgrounds.

3.4.9 Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Glasgow has the largest proportion of refugees and asylum seekers compared to population size, of any UK city. It was recently estimated that there are around 5000 asylum seekers living in Scotland, the vast bulk of these being in Glasgow. No accurate figures currently exist for the number of refugees in Scotland, though it is likely to be a comparable if not higher figure than that for asylum seekers [Cosla Strategic Migration Partnership]. However there has been no research at all into the numbers of asylum seekers/refugees who are LGBT, and what literature we were able to source was English based.

Some of the literature on asylum relates to the issue of gay identity so as to qualify for protection. LGBT asylum seekers are likely to have to prove that they fear persecution on the basis of their membership of a particular social group. There has been much legal debate as to how to define 'particular social group'.

According to the Asylum Policy Instructions 2006 the key legal case is the House of Lords Judgment in Shah and Islam (1999 UKHL20):

> "Since then it has been commonly accepted that members of a particular social group share an immutable (or innate) characteristic and that recognition of the group by the surrounding society might *help* to identify it as a distinct identity." [The Asylum Policy Instructions, 2006: 22 para 8.7.1]

In 'Shah and Islam' an "immutable characteristic" was defined as being "beyond the power of the individual to change or so fundamental to individual

identity or conscience that it ought not to be required to change" [ibid: 23 para 8.7.2].

The Asylum Policy Instructions also make it clear that as well as needing to have a common immutable characteristic, to be accepted as being a member of a particular social group, the group must also have a "distinct entity in the relevant country" and decisions on this should be made on a case by case basis and by reference to the situation for LGBT people in each country.

The Information Centre for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (ICAR) neatly summarise the position: "the main debate in lesbian and gay cases centre on the question of whether sexual orientation is an innate and/or unchangeable characteristic so that it would qualify 'homosexuals' as members of a particular social group" [ICAR, 2008: 1]. They also highlight how LGBT asylum cases often now depend on whether immigration officials accept an LGBT asylum seeker's account as credible and whether they can prove that the treatment they fear in their country of origin would either amount to persecution or fall within the Article 3 of Convention on Human Rights' definition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment [ICAR, 2008: 2]. They also highlight how about eighty states criminalize same-sex relations with punishments varying from death, imprisonment, hard labour, lashings or fines [ICAR, 2008: 3].

The situation facing LGBT asylum seekers is complex and the chances of them getting protection will vary from case to case and according to available evidence.

A recent high profile case in Scotland concerned a Syrian asylum seeker. Despite accepting that he is gay and that Syria criminalises and represses homosexuality, an immigration tribunal turned down his request to stay in the UK, saying that he was unlikely to come to any harm if he kept his sexuality hidden.

The following extract from Scotland on Sunday summarises the case:

> "Yakob, a Christian member of the repressed Kurdish minority in the Arab state, fled to the UK two years ago after being arrested, shot and beaten. He left his home country after surviving a harrowing ordeal at the hands of Syrian police and prison guards. He had been arrested for distributing anti-government leaflets.

When prison guards discovered that he identified himself as a gay man, he suffered horrific beatings and was assaulted so badly that he fell into a coma.

The ruling by the Asylum Immigration Tribunal, sitting in Glasgow, states: "Syria criminalises and represses homosexuality. Homosexuals have to modify their behaviour and lifestyle accordingly. We find no evidence that in Syria [Yakob] would conduct himself other than discreetly to avoid repercussions." [Bayer, 2008[15]]

A second case concerning a gay Iranian asylum seeker threatened with deportation, led to a national campaign for better protection for gay asylum seekers and a last minute change of heart from the UK Border and Immigration Authority:

"Mehdi Kazemi is a gay teenager from Iran who sought sanctuary in Britain after his boyfriend was hanged for homosexuality and was finally granted asylum after a high profile media campaign." [Verkaik, Independent Newspaper 21 May 2008]

ICAR have also highlighted how the way that asylum claims are treated raises interesting questions concerning attitudes towards the oppression of homosexuality and whether sexual orientation is "a morality and sexual freedom issue rather than an identity and human rights issue" [ICAR, 2008: 4].

In an article focusing on the experiences of gay refugees from Muslim countries, Anisa de Jong and Suhraiya Jivraj highlight how many Muslim gay men and lesbians have faced persecution in their country of origin. They also acknowledge "upsetting" experiences that asylum seekers have encountered with Immigration officials and interpreters [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002a].

In a separate report it was also highlighted how "those making decisions on asylum claims often do not believe that an asylum seeker is really LGBT" [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002a: 26] and how they wouldn't face any persecution in their home country if they "stayed in the closet" [ibid]. They also comment that if a LBT Muslim woman has an interpreter who was male or Muslim during

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[15] No page number as article was accessed on the web. Full web page reference is available in the bibliography.

their asylum claim then this could deter them from being open about their sexuality or gender identity and how coming out later could negatively impact on the chances of their asylum claim succeeding.

The Safra Project have highlighted the particular difficulties in accessing refuges for asylum seekers and others with limited rights to claim housing benefits and the particular vulnerability of LBT asylum seekers who have experienced rape or sexual violence [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b].

3.4.10 Stranded?

"I don't mind what type of service it is
so long as the environment and service provided is inclusive."

[GALOP, 2001: 30]

Throughout the literature many ME/LGBT people have commented upon feeling stranded; in the sense that they don't know where to turn for support. Such feelings are affected by what can be called the single ground or single strand approach to service delivery by many voluntary sector organisations.

For example, The Safra Project has commented upon how the "compartmentalised approach" of many service providers has meant the overlooking of the needs of Muslim LBT women whose experience is the result of "multiple interrelated factors" [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b: 5].

The way that services have developed are undoubtedly constrained by funding and the short nature or very specific focus of many projects. At a recent EU conference there was expressed a need to think bigger and adopt a different approach:

> "When the issue of multiple discrimination is addressed it is usually through specific NGOs projects… These projects are often extremely interesting but very specialized and therefore do not have the ambition to give a holistic contribution to the fight against multiple discrimination ..." [Social Platform, 2005:1]

The Chief Executive of the Irish Equality Authority highlighted at a recent conference in London that:

> "non governmental organisations need to enhance the spaces where people organise around identity. We need to see solidarity across organisations representing the interests of groups. So for example it is not left up to lesbian and gay people to speak about partnership rights for same sex couples." [Crowley, 2007: 3]

This call for greater solidarity between organisations and a more universalist or holistic approach, was consistent with an earlier analysis of the HIV/AIDS sector carried out by Bhatt and Lee in which a commissioning process that emphasised targeting of resources at distinct communities was seen as enhancing rather than removing division: "The emphasis on targeting does not remove conflicts involving race, ethnicity and gender and sexuality but may well deepen them." [Bhatt and Lee, 2000: 230]

Bhatt and Lee concluded their analysis by calling for an approach that "stresses the more universal ethics of rights, diversity and solidarity, challenge, support and care, rather than those of market aggression, competitiveness, difference, separation and self-seeking" [ibid: 231]. Although written nine years ago, their conclusions have a depressing familiarity and resonance today.

A more recent change in the demographics of ME communities has been the recent influx of a large number of migrant workers, from EU accession countries such as Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia. There is no research specific to LGBT migrant workers but Keogh has highlighted how the particular needs of migrant gay men are not being met by existing LGBT services:

> "… gay and lesbian social service networks are not geared up to meeting the needs of gay and lesbian migrants. That is, the practical needs to find a job, improve one's language skills, negotiate welfare benefits, find accommodation are not met by any existing service." [Keogh, 2004a: 12]

One of the questions raised within the literature concerned the most appropriate type of service or support that could be developed. This includes whether it would be more appropriate to develop ME/LGBT services as part of mainstream, LGBT or ME services, or as stand alone services.

In 2005 a London Regional Consortium report highlighted that although "there is an increasing and welcome visibility of BME and other marginalised LGBT communities across London… these are largely unfunded and extremely fragile" [London Regional Consortium, 2005: 2].

A report of a conference specifically for ME/LGBT people held in Nottingham in March 2005 highlighted the importance of safe meeting places for support groups: "community buildings need to be anonymous" [The Nottingham Lesbian and Gay Switchboard, 2005: 8].

GALOP asked 145 London based black lesbians, gay men and bisexuals about their experiences of using both mainstream, LGBT services and services aimed specifically at minority ethnic LGBT service users [GALOP, 2001]. They found that more people had used mainstream services than LGBT services. Much smaller numbers had used ME/LGBT services, but those who had used them expressed high levels of satisfaction.

Views were fairly evenly split as to whether people preferred services specifically targeted at ME/LGBT people, 41% preferring targeted with 48% saying they didn't prefer them. Typical comments made included:

"It is useful to share thoughts with other like-minded individuals…

Because you feel that you are not the only one with the same problem…

I feel more comfortable with a group or service that understands my colour/culture and sexuality"

Because I don't have to explain obvious things and I don't have to deal with racism." [ibid: 30]

Those who did not prefer or had not used targeted ME/LGBT services commented on the need to make mainstream services more accessible and appropriate and how a lack of funding for ME/LGBT services meant they were often badly resourced compared to other services. Others hadn't used them because they were not aware of their existence.

In relation to counselling and mental health services for LBT women the Safra Project found that most women preferred to seek appropriate counselling within a gender and/or race specific centre rather than in a LGBT identified centre [de Jong and Jivraj, 2002b]. The Safra Project has also repeatedly highlighted a lack of understanding in mainstream service providers of the needs of Muslim LBT women.

3.4.11 Conclusion

> "Neither the complex oppression that LGBT people of colour …face, nor its effects are hypothetical or academic. They are very real."
>
> [Meide, 2001: 20]

The above quote reminds us of the need to remain focused on the real live experiences of ME/LGBT people and to find real solutions to issues of multiple discrimination, isolation, harassment and violence that undoubtedly occur on a daily basis for many ME/LGBT individuals.

Despite the absence of any Scottish specific research, there are many lessons which we can learn from reading literature from elsewhere. Common themes are repeated from research conducted in different places, at different times and on different subjects: the need for finding a place of safety; the pressure of having to choose between two different facets of an identity; the fear of being open about sexual orientation/gender identity; harassment, rejection or conflict and the absence of support from within both ME and LGBT communities.

In many ways these conclusions are not surprising and are somewhat depressing in their familiarity. The research reports reviewed in this section paint a picture that will have resonance not just for ME/LGBT people, but also for ME people, LGBT people and for many people whose identities are complex or intersect across different strands.

Yet the research reviewed can tell only part of the story of people who are ME/LGBT and living in Scotland. To find out the whole story it will be necessary to talk to Scottish based ME/LGBT people themselves.

As the above quote has highlighted, neither ME/LGBT discrimination nor its effects are merely hypothetical and so it is important that practical action and not just further research is taken to address the needs of ME/LGBT people. We do still need to increase our understanding of the full spectrum of experiences, issues, ambitions and support needs of Scotland's diverse ME/LGBT community, but there is sufficient information, knowledge and evidence already available for us to take the first steps to ensure ME/LGBT people feel safer, better included and less at risk of discrimination. Without such action many ME/LGBT individuals will remain, as they have already done so for too long: **stranded.**

CHAPTER 4

LISTENING and LEARNING

Visits to ME/LGBT Projects in England

4.1 OVERVIEW

4.1.1 Context

There are no dedicated Scottish services or organisations for people who are ME/LGBT, but this is not the case in other parts of the UK. A crucial stage to our work was finding out what has already been established in other parts of the UK and what lessons could be learned for Scotland from the experiences of those working with and for people who are ME/LGBT.

We identified twenty to twenty-five organisations across the UK which are specifically working in the area of ME/LGBT. These organisations are all based in England; our research did not identify any projects in Wales and due to time constraints were not able to explore the situation in Northern Ireland.

Visits were carried out to eight organisations during October 2008: six in London, one in Bradford and one in Manchester. The findings from these visits are reported in detail in this chapter. The organisations we visited were chosen in part because what they are doing is of relevance to Scotland, but also because they were able and willing to meet with us within the limited period of time we had available. There are undoubtedly other organisations who we did not visit who are carrying out excellent work which would also be of relevance to future ME/LGBT work in Scotland.[16]

Although there are many differences between the situation for ME/LGBT people in Scotland and those in England, there is also a lot of common ground. Our findings illustrate some possible ways forward, but it is important that any future developments within Scotland remain focused on the Scottish context. We need to learn from experiences from organisations in other parts of the UK, not merely replicate them.

There are more stand-alone organisations working with people from transgender backgrounds in England than Scotland, and it is more common that organisations that do work around sexual orientation in England do not do work around gender identity. Therefore throughout this chapter we have referred where appropriate to LGB rather than LGBT.

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[16] See Appendix 3 for list of organisations

4.1.2 Finding Out Which Organisations Are Working With ME/LGBT People

We sought to identify any organisations working specifically with people from ME/LGBT in other parts of the UK. Putting ourselves in the position of a service user who was looking for help, our initial research was web based, trawling a large number of websites from LGBT organisations and ME organisations, and generic information websites. As web information was somewhat patchy, follow up telephone calls and e-mails were needed to find out exactly who was doing what. Dozens of phone calls were made over a six week period. Some organisations responded quickly, providing us with helpful contact lists whilst we were unable to contact others. It was suggested by some of the organisations we did contact that some of the factors that limited capacity of volunteer organisers and/or a need to remain discreet to protect members from homophobia and transphobia may have contributed to our lack of success.

The actual process of researching who did what, led us to the following conclusions:

Location of organisations
The majority of groups we came across are London-based. Outside of London the main work being done was by LGB(T) organisations that had projects for people who are from ME backgrounds. Within London there are also projects that are specifically and exclusively set up to address needs of people who are ME/LGBT.

Information on websites
Not all groups doing work with people who are ME/LGBT had a web presence, and not everything listed on websites was current. LGBT websites were likely to display work with ME communities more prominently than ME websites would prominently display information on LGBT.

ME websites rarely displayed anything relating to LGBT people or issues, even if this work was being done. There was some indication from interviewees that one possible explanation for this may be that ME groups were fearful of a backlash from members of the community if they were seen as being too openly working with LGBT people.

UK wide coordination

At the time we carried out our research (August and September 2008), there was a lack of UK wide coordination and no single or central point of information, which people could turn to. Whilst our research was being undertaken, the LGBT Consortium in London was in the process of setting up a ME/LGBT network. An initial meeting was held in November 2008 and follow up meetings have been scheduled during 2009.

Limited capacity and accessibility

It was often difficult to get people or organisations to return calls; suggesting that organisations had limited capacity, were no longer fully functioning or were wary of speaking to people they did not know. Many groups are volunteer led and if the key organiser moves on, the group may no longer be fully functional. Overall, the ME/LGBT sector in England remains fragile and fluid. This coupled with the suggestion that some organisations may not wish to take cold calls, could possibly make it difficult for some potential users to access some services without a referral.

Informal networks

Once we started carrying out our visits, we were told of other organisations and projects that we did not come across on any of our web-based research. Most, but not all, of the organisations knew of each other's work, and much networking was carried out on a more informal or ad hoc basis. Due to the fluid nature of the sector, word of mouth and personal recommendations were seen as the best way of finding out about these informal networks and smaller support organisations.

Gaps

Despite there being many examples of good practice, there were also marked gaps in the types and level of service provision. For example, there were no projects primarily focused on the intersection of ethnicity and gender identity. Also, the geographical spread of services was patchy. This point was backed up in the discussions we had at our visits. Several interviewees noted that people who are ME/LGBT have to travel long distances to find support.

4.1.3 Quality Visits

Visits were arranged with eight organisations during October 2008. The purposes of these visits were to:
- discuss different models of service delivery
- examine in detail examples of good practice
- identify key issues for people in England who are ME/LGBT
- identify priority groups for whom services should be targeted
- discuss ways of overcoming barriers to developing services
- examine potential future partnerships
- and discover what lessons could be learnt in Scotland

Both during and after our visits a number of other contacts and organisations were suggested to us as people we should speak to. Should future ME/LGBT work in Scotland be developed after the completion of this research then it would be beneficial to establish further links with these organisations in the future.

A summary of who we visited is given below:[17]

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[17] A visit scheduled with a representative of UK Black Pride had unfortunately to be cancelled at the last minute due circumstances beyond the control of either ourselves or UK Black Pride. We also carried out a telephone interview with the LGBT Consortium in London who were seeking to set up a national network of ME/LGBT organisations. We had also hoped to meet with Iraqi LGBT, but unfortunately this was not possible.

Sector	Date	Organisation	Description
LGBT	2.10.08	Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation www.lgf.org.uk	run social support group for people who are ME/LGBT
LGBT	3.10.08	Bradford Equity Partnership www.equitypartnership.org.uk	run social support group for ME/LGBT and starting new ME women's project
Arts	8.10.08	Rukus! Federation London www.rukus.co.uk	create, celebrate and promote black gay art and heritage projects
LGBT Housing	13.10.08	Stonewall Housing London www.stonewallhousing.org	specialist housing advice and provision of short term housing for LGB people who from ME backgrounds
Asylum / refugee	14.10.08	UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group London www.uklgig.org.uk	training, policy work and representation on asylum claims for LGBT asylum seekers
Faith	14.10.08	Imaan London www.imaan.org.uk	support, information and advocacy for Muslim LGBT people
Trans	14.10.08	volunteer from FTM[18] London www.ftmlondon.org.uk	experience of supporting some trans individuals from ME background
HIV/ Health	15.10.08	NAZ Project London www.naz.org.uk	projects include health promotion work with young African men who have sex with men, social support group for SE Asian lesbians, plus range of advocacy, support and training re sexual health/HIV

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[18] Acronym for Female to Male

4.2 FINDINGS

4.2.1 Models of Service Delivery

The organisations we visited varied both in terms of their size, the length of time they had been running and in the nature and type of work.

The services we visited started in one of three main ways:
- organisations directly responding to evidence of need or gaps in their service delivery
- through the development of social support groups, often with little or no funding, sometimes entirely unfunded
- through a critical mass of people who are ME/LGBT taking a lead themselves and creating their own projects

In all three cases, there was a need for commitment and leadership both from workers and managers in organisations or from individual ME/LGBT people who took matters into their own hands to create services.

There was also substantial overlap between organisations in terms of the ways in which services were delivered. The main services provided to people who are ME/LGBT fall into the following categories:

Advice and advocacy services
Many of the projects we visited provided specialist advice or representation to people who are ME/LGBT. These services were provided in response to the additional problems that ME/LGBT individuals may encounter, e.g. in relation to multiple discrimination or problems relating to asylum and immigration. Services were filling in gaps left by mainstream advice provision.

Examples of this included: Stonewall Housing who provided specialist housing advice for people who are ME/LGBT, including a range of outreach advice surgeries and UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group (UKLGIG) who provided detailed advice to LGBT asylum seekers, and helped prepare their asylum claims before referring on to solicitors for representation, including doing work which could not normally be met by legal aid. On a more informal level: volunteers from Imaan provided advocacy and support to individuals on a wide range of topics, including in relation to forced marriages, homelessness

and accessing mental health support services; and FTM London had advocated for a small number of individuals who are ME/LGBT, including issues such as inappropriate detention of FTM asylum seekers in women only detention centres.

Celebration or arts events

Several projects organised or contributed to celebration events as a way of promoting diversity and reaching out to people who would not otherwise access their services. Events ranged from Black Pride events, to art exhibitions and heritage projects as well as smaller social gatherings around food. Bradford Equity Partnership had used Bollywood dance lessons as a way of making Bradford Pride more multicultural. Of the organisations we visited Rukus! Federation was the most prominent advocate for the importance of using arts as a way of giving voice to people who are ME/LGBT.

> "The black gay voice is missing, sidelined, its invisible. For example, a book on black footballers left out Justin Fashanu - Britain's first millionaire black footballer - because he was gay. And LGBT books rarely feature black gay people or people from other ethnic minorities."
> (Rukus! Federation)

Counselling and support

The need to address mental health issues and reduce isolation was often addressed through the provision of counselling. Formal counselling and informal peer support provided both one to one and group based work. Examples of this included NAZ project which had a range of monthly support groups and Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundations whose volunteer staffed helpline was often the initial access point for ME/LGBT individuals who later accessed their social support group.

Documenting and sharing experiences

Organisations used a variety of forms to document their users' experiences and promote awareness of the needs and diversity of people who are ME/LGBT. These ranged from the provision of information on websites (eg NAZ, UKLGIG, Imaan), to the special editions of LGB magazines (Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation) to the collation of oral testimonies (Rukus! Federation – sharing tongues).

Health promotion work

Of the projects we visited, the NAZ Project was the most focused around health – primarily (but not exclusively) carrying out activities relating to HIV and sexual health, with for example, one of their projects relating to young African men who had sex with men. The two LGB organisations we visited (Manchester, Bradford) also carried out health promotion work, but these were generic rather than ME specific. Advocacy in relation to accessing mental health support services was also a feature of several organisations we visited (eg UKLGIG, Imaan, FTM).

Helpline and Outreach

Services made themselves more accessible through the provision of advice, information, and counselling over the telephone with such support available both within and outwith office hours. For example, Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation helpline was open from 6pm – 10pm, every day of the year whilst volunteers from Imaan often took calls throughout the night from individuals in need.

All organisations we visited used a variety of outreach methods to access service users. These ranged from leafleting clubs (NAZ), delivering outreach advice surgeries (Stonewall Housing) and going to asylum detention centres (UKLGIG, FTM). This was seen as a vital part of organisations activities.

Peer support/volunteering

None the services we visited could operate without volunteers and were either spearheaded by ME/LGBT individuals or directly involved ME/LGBT volunteers in running their projects. Volunteers fulfilled a wide range of roles: running social support groups (Bradford, Manchester); carrying out health promotion work (NAZ), organising arts activities (Rukus); increasing capacity of advice work services (UKLGIG); informing future work though participating in service user forums (Stonewall Housing) and providing individual advocacy and advice (FTM, Imaan).

Social support groups

One of the most common methods that services was delivered was through the provision of a safe space for people to meet. Social support groups usually met on a monthly basis either in evenings or at weekends. Food played an important role in getting people along to meetings. Group sizes varied, with some being mixed gender, and others targeted specifically at men or women. Most, but not all of the groups were run by members of the groups themselves

with organisations providing the venue, meeting costs of refreshments and arranging for publicity. Some groups included a facilitator and/or regular outside speakers; others were more informal and social in nature.

Training

Of the organisations we visited, only a couple had developed formal training programmes in relation to raising awareness of needs of people who are ME/LGBT. For example, UKLGIG provided two training courses looking at issues relating to LGBT asylum seekers/refugees. One was aimed specifically at solicitors, the other at other organisations working with asylum seekers and refugees. Most other organisations raised awareness in a more opportunistic way, responding to requests for information, talks or workshops on an ad hoc basis rather than marketing more formal training courses.

Web and Internet

Several organisations enabled people to come together in cyberspace, through the provision of web forums, discussion groups or e-news services. These included: UKLGIG whose forum acted as a means of finding out information about the asylum process, as well as "making contact with others who are going through the immigration process"; Bradford Equity Partnership, whose members received e-bulletins and access to a restricted area on their website; and Imaan whose forum provides "a safe space… to address issues of common concern, share individual experiences and institutional resources".

4.2.2 Examples of Good Practice

As can be seen from the previous section, there were many examples of innovation amongst the organisations we visited. In order to narrow down examples of good practice, during all our visits we asked organisations what they felt their proudest achievement was in relation to people who are ME/LGBT. This section illustrates some of the examples of good practice which are most relevant to Scotland. These have been listed in alphabetical order rather than any order of priority.

Commitment

It took the passion, energy and commitment of both individuals and organisations in order to get services off the ground.

ME/LGBT projects often started with no funding or were subsidised from other budgets within larger organisations. For example, Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation's social support group gets no specific funding; the costs of venue, refreshments and publicity are all met out from their own resources. Similarly, Bradford Equity's social support group was started with just a small grant from the local Primary Care Trust but has carried on even after the funding had run out. Often almost everything was done on a voluntary basis, with no funding; people donating their time, energy and skills for free in order to develop or sustain services. For example, Imaan rely entirely on volunteers, with only their annual conference receiving any funding.

Involving and listening to ME/LGBT people

All the organisations we visited emphasised the importance of listening to people who are ME/LGBT and involving them at all stages of their work.

The importance of listening to people can be illustrated by the experiences of Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation in relation to the coverage of ME/LGB issues in their magazine Out Northwest.

Members of their Black Northwest social support group had not been happy with a previous edition of the magazine which featured a stock photo image of a black couple on the front page, but had no content which related to the experiences of people from Manchester's ME/LGB community. Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation responded by listening to these service users and involving them in planning of a special issue of magazine. Published in October 2008, under the strap line, "*fear of colour on the gay scene: I often feel invisible in this town*", it contributed to Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation and Black Northwest in winning recognition at Pink Papers 2009 Awards.

Other examples of good practice in involving service users in service planning were found. Stonewall Housing facilitated a service user forum to help come up with ideas for future service development. NAZ Project has a long history of involving their service users in their service delivery and planning. They also involve users in service delivery; when we visited them were rolling out a peer support programme, that was reaching out to young black men who have sex with men and training them up as peer support workers, to enable them to carry out a programme of community based health interventions.

Management

For bigger organisations, leadership from management as well as staff was seen as crucial to successful working with people who are ME/LGBT. Having management which was both responsive and representative was seen as important in enabling services to develop and keep in touch with the service user they were helping.

Examples of good practice included: Bradford Equity Partnership who had just recruited their first Asian trustee; FTM and Imaan, who ensure that they had service user representatives on their management board; Rukus Federation which was entirely led by ME/LGBT individuals; and UKLGIG whose management board includes "three lawyers, one barrister, an IT guy, a banker who does the finances, a trustee who runs the website and two refugees" (UKLGIG).

Monitoring

Without having some way of identifying or evidencing need, it would not have been possible for many of the services we visited to have developed; such data enabled people both to plan services, but also to attract funding. Good monitoring systems enabled organisations to identify and respond to need.

Stonewall Housing set up specialist services once they realized that 25% of calls were from LGB people from ME backgrounds, and have gone on to provide dedicated accommodation for people who are ME/LGB. Conversely, Bradford Equity Partnership set up a women's project after statistics showed that much lower numbers of ME women were using the LGB centre, compared to ME men.

These examples show how data gathered through diversity monitoring can lead to services by both showing a growing critical mass of users that require attention and highlighting where gaps in services result in low numbers of users. Both sets of data are evidence that can be used to campaign for funding, should organisations utilise monitoring to its full potential.

Partnership work

A key to success for the organisations we visited was not working in isolation. There were examples of successful partnership work with both the voluntary sector and statutory sector, with for example, Imaan working closely with the Forced Marriage Unit in Social Services and UKLGIG developing formal referral criteria and training for solicitors.

We were also impressed by NAZ, which housed projects both for ME people who are both LGB and non-LGB, how these projects worked in tandem and how they shared their knowledge and resources.

There was also a second, but equally important tier of networking, which took place at a more informal or social level between LGBT/ME activists. This led to the regular sharing of ideas, knowledge and experiences and it was from these informal networks that the seeds of services and events were often sown.

Reaching out

The message we received was clear: do not just sit back, but reach out and be willing to use both traditional and less traditional methods of publicising services to potential service users. Methods used included using internet chat sites to get to people not on the scene, as well as using adverts and flyers in all kinds of venues including straight venues, gyms, sports centres and record shops.

> "We have been getting more Lesbian asylum seekers in the last year. We put in special effort to access them: went to female detention centres and made links with women's organisations. Around 20% of our clients are now women."
>
> (UKLGIG)

Social Support Groups

As highlighted above social support groups were provided by many of the organisations we visited. These usually took place on a monthly basis, in a safe setting with food and refreshments provided. The costs of running these groups was small (eg: venue, food and publicity materials) but organisations often had to subsidise their groups from other budgets as they had found it difficult to get funding to keep the groups going.

The flexible nature of these groups enabled them to respond to the particular needs of ME/LGBT individuals in their areas. Giving ownership of the group to individuals enabled them to agree their own format and agenda whilst getting individuals to become more actively involved in the organisation as a whole. In

turn this enabled organisations to get volunteers from more varied backgrounds and remain more in touch with a wider client base.

Organisations with more than one social support group often provided opportunities for the different groups to mix.

Bradford Equity Partnership helped break down barriers by enabling people from their ME/LGB support group to meet people from other backgrounds through their regular getting together of all their social support groups.

> "We celebrated our group work with a photo competition, winning group got £100. Groups came together and cooked lunch, whilst there got people to write why come to group, used as evidence to back need for groups. All groups run by volunteers from groups so they retain ownership."
>
> (Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation)

Speaking out

The projects we visited had not come about overnight, but had usually taken many months if not years to get to where they had got to. Throughout this time, ME/LGBT activists had shown not only commitment, but a willingness to keep on speaking out and sticking up for people who are ME/LGBT.

> "I've had to be tenacious, mischievous, playful and plain speaking. I've built up a track record over 20 years of being out in black LGBT Community, Black community and wider gay community"
>
> (Rukus! Federation)

4.2.3 Issues for ME/LGBT Individuals

During our meetings we discussed the main issues that faced people who are ME/LGBT. It is important to remember that these were issues facing people in England, and that these will not always be exactly the same as those faced by individuals in Scotland. What organisations told us were the main issues on our visits were, however, very consistent with the findings from our literature review and there was substantial overlap between what we were told by different organisations.

The findings from our English visits, can therefore inform, but not dictate how future services in Scotland are shaped.

We have highlighted one key finding from each of our eight visits:[19]

Long distances travelled to find support
A key issue highlighted on our visit to Manchester was the long distances that people often had to travel to find support. Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation's remit spreads across NW England, though most of their work is carried out in Manchester or Greater Manchester. They had found that people were travelling from as far away as Yorkshire to access their monthly social support group, indicating both a lack of support in other regions and a desire from many people to access support away from their home area.

Racism on the gay scene
Bradford Equity Partnership was by no means the only organisation which raised concerns about racism on the gay scene; the need to tackle such attitudes was seen as a major priority by more organisations. Bradford has a very high ME population (around 45% overall population), and the BNP is active in many of its outlying areas.

The irony of LGBT people, who have long campaigned against intolerance and discrimination, themselves being guilty of such intolerance was commented upon, as was the difference in attitudes on the gay scene in different parts of the country. One of the organisations that we visited noted:

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[19] These are listed in the order of visits were carried out.

"There are huge issues with racism. Parts of the gay scene can be very racist, and at times drag queens can be venomous. I've known Black or Asian bar staff who have suffered from racist name calling and been made to feel uncomfortable. At the same time it's important that we don't just label the whole scene as being racist, but continue to work with venues to raise awareness and challenge attitudes."

(Anonymous)

The need for safe spaces

A recurring theme from our visits was the need for safe spaces and there was also much discussion as to what amounts to a safe space. In the case of Rukus! Federation, these discussions also led to a discussion about the importance of having a venue which is not only accessible, but trusted. Creating safe spaces was seen as complex and involving a lot more than just declaring a venue to be inclusive. Official council buildings or LGBT centres were not felt to be automatically the best places for people to meet:

"Just because the town hall says it's a safe space does not mean it's a safe space; it is still an institution. A very obviously branded street level LGBT organisation may be intimidating for someone trying to remain discreet and access services."

(Rukus! Federation)

Isolation: not being able to be yourself

All of the organisations we visited commented on the difficulties people may face in being able to themselves; having to present a different facet of their personality or identity, depending if they were with people who are ME or people who are LGBT but rarely being able to mix the two. This point was raised by Stonewall Housing, in relation to the housing pressures often faced by young ME/LGBT people:

> "Young ME people who are lesbian or gay often lead double lives, experiencing homophobia and racism in both sectors, causing great isolation."
>
> (Stonewall Housing)

Mental health support

A recurring theme throughout our visits was the need for mental health needs of ME/LGBT people to be addressed. At UKLGIG this was raised in relation to the particular needs of LGBT asylum seekers and refugees. UKLGIG referred a high proportion of their service users for counselling and befriending support. The main mental health needs related not just to those arising from the social isolation of their service users, but from the traumatic experiences they had endured in their own country. Many of their service users had been tortured or experienced sexual violence. Over recent months the numbers of lesbian asylum seekers they had seen had increased and every one of these service users had survived rape.

Cultural and religious issues

Not surprisingly issues over culture and religion were frequently mentioned. One of the organisations we visited, Imaan, worked solely with people who are of Muslim faith and spoke eloquently about both the need for gaining understanding and the dangers of making assumptions about people's beliefs, customs or identity. They also spoke of the importance of peer support, particularly in relation to when someone first comes out:

> "You need to understand cultures properly – people presume to understand and then get it wrong. It's important that when coming out a person has someone who understands."
>
> (Imaan)

Gender identity

It was only really at our meeting with a volunteer and service user from FTM that issues over gender identity were discussed in detail, although they were

touched upon at several other visits. Some specific issues affecting transgender asylum seekers were raised, including the inappropriateness of detaining FTM asylum seekers in female detention centres and the general lack of awareness amongst staff in both Home Office and refugee agencies of issues to do with gender identity. Another common message was that of isolation, as explained by a transgender asylum seeker themselves:

"Everything gets separated along gender lines so very isolating and there's no social life."

(Individual service user from FTM)

Gender stereotyping
Another way that gender was mentioned as an issue was in relation to the pressures faced by individuals who are ME/LGBT to conform to community expectations about how they should behave. This was neatly summed up on our visit to NAZ, who highlighted the pressures that young black men could face if they did not have a girlfriend or did not get married:

"An another important issue is that of masculinity – not just in terms of camp/feminine and hyper masculinity, but in relation to stereotypes and the pressure to have a girlfriend, get married – which is see as an important confirmation of your manhood."

(NAZ Project)

4.2.4 Priority Groups

During our visits, organisations fed back as to any groups of ME/LGBT people who were seen as more at risk or who could be seen as a priority for intervention. In reporting back on what they said, it is again important to remember that the demographics of the communities served by the organisations we visited are not necessarily the same as in Scotland. The

groups identified appear in alphabetical order, rather than in any order of importance or need.

Asylum seekers

The particular needs of LGBT asylum seekers were highlighted at several of our visits. Issues raised included: the need for mental health support due to trauma and sexual violence; poor quality legal advice and poor quality decision making by UK Border Agency; shortage of suitable housing; and the inappropriate detention of transgender asylum seekers in women only detention centres. Both UKLGIG and Imaan received regular calls from LGBT asylum seekers in Scotland but were not aware of anywhere to refer them to. It was also reported that LGBT asylum seekers were forced into 'choosing' to become destitute in London so that they could access advice and peer support, rather than accept accommodation in other regions.

Family and friends

Working with family members and friends of people who are ME/LGBT was seen as a priority. For example, a person's well being was linked to how their family and friends reacted to them and supporting families rather than just the individuals was seen as important.

Stonewall Housing highlighted counselling for ME families as "a very bold step" and cited an example of a Nigerian family "beating the lesbian out of their daughter."

"I do not know any support groups or services for families and friends within the black gay community. Such support is needed because family and friends also experience homophobia as well and don't necessarily understand what gay means because their frame of reference of 'gay' is all white. It is also important to include family in events."

(Rukus! Federation)

Gender and health

Particular issues for women were highlighted at several our visits. The argument was made that HIV/sexual health funding had skewed the sector, so that there was more emphasis on the sexual health needs of ME gay men/MSM. Not only did this exclude other groups such as women or

transgender people, it meant that the non sexual health needs were often neglected, with mental health needs in particular being under addressed.

There was some indication that ME women found it more difficult to present at LGB services than ME men. For example, in Bradford we were told how ME men were using the LGB centre but not ME women. They had received funding for a one day per week post to help in setting up a women's group, but even in securing that limited funding, had to argue strongly how the needs of ME lesbians could not be met by pre-existing ME women's groups. The organisation was committed to underwriting the post at end of the initial twelve month period if they could not get the funding continued.

For organisations supporting ME transgender people, (such as FTM) difficulties were compounded by funders being reluctant to support work when numbers of service users was low and available data limited.

Language barrier
The language barrier was identified as an extra complication and concerns were expressed both about the variable quality of interpreters (UKLGIG, Imaan) and the lack of translation of written information (Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation). Issues of trust, confidentiality and community attitudes were highlighted as was the need for better training for interpreters. Imaan used only gay volunteers as interpreters as others interpreters had been found to be homophobic. UKLGIG had adopted a system of signals/checks which enabled service users to remain anonymous when interpreters were used on the phone and meant that workers could be given an early warning if the service user did not feel comfortable with the interpreter.

NAZ project had developed a number of projects that focused on specific communities, such as Portuguese speaking or Spanish speaking, and had workers from those communities running the projects, recognising the importance of language as well as culture to successful project development.

Migrant workers who are LGBT, such as those from the Polish community, were mentioned as one of the groups who are often not fluent in English. It was broadly acknowledged that more work needed to be done to understand and respond to their needs.

Rural areas, outside of major cities

The importance of reaching out to people outside of main cities was emphasized at many of our visits. For example, in both Bradford and Manchester the extra isolation for people living in small towns was discussed. For ME/LGBT people without their own transport, fear of not feeling safe travelling on public transport late at night was seen as important.

On our London visits, there were regular discussions about how people often migrated to London in order to access community support. This was elaborated upon at our visit to the Rukus! Federation:

"London has become very active around ME/LGBT because many people move to London because they are seeking out a gay friendly environment and trying to get away from homophobia. In terms of clubs and social spaces London is the most comfortable place to be out as both black and gay, then Birmingham, then Liverpool, then Manchester."

(Rukus! Federation)

Young people

It was often commented on how young people lacked support, were often forced into leading double lives and were at risk of violence. There was some evidence that young ME/LGBT people in Scotland were turning to organisations in London for support. For example, most of the calls Imaan got from Scotland came from under eighteens. Rukus! Federation commented on how "project workers may not keep up with young groups/ cultural changes in communities"; re-emphasising the need to involve service users in both the planning and delivery of services.

4.3 OVERCOMING BARRIERS: DEVELOPING SERVICES

We were keen to learn how projects for ME/LGBT people had developed, what challenges organisations faced in both setting up and sustaining their services. It is important that organisations in Scotland tap into the ideas and experiences of those in England who have been working longer, harder and better to address and represent people who are ME/LGBT.

This section feeds back on the conversations we had relating to funding, staffing and leadership and offers some insights into the hurdles that organisations in England have had to overcome to get to where they are today.

4.3.1 Funding
The most important barrier to services being able to thrive was a lack of sustainable funding.

There was a wide range of funding for the organisations we visited. The two main categories of funding were charitable trusts and Primary Care Trusts (or other health funding). Funding from local authorities was less common. For example, a local council paid for one day per week of a BME women's project in Bradford Equity Partnership.

Not surprisingly, as it is a common concern across the whole voluntary sector, it was seen as easier to get funding for short term projects than it was for ongoing core costs. Organisations relied on a real hot-potch of funding sources and were constantly under threat of having to reduce or discontinue services. Fundraising and filling in endless monitoring reports in itself became a time consuming activity which mitigated against actual delivery of services/projects.

Funding was not adequate to meet full cost recovery, leading to staff putting in extra unpaid hours to get work done, an increased reliance on volunteers, and in some cases having to subsidise work done with ME people from funding received for other services.

Also important for services' survival was support from a range of partners, and the donation of "in kind" help. For example, Unison met the costs of printing

leaflets for UKLGIG, and solicitors often donated their time on a pro-bono basis.

Charging for the provision of training or the development of social enterprise activity sometimes brought in extra income, but was not sufficient to meet core costs.

"Sustainability is a big problem in ME/LGBT as usually groups rely on one person – these people are prone to burn out and short term funding means that the organisations cannot plan further than two years ahead at a time."

(Rukus! Federation)

4.3.2 Sustainability

Many services relied on volunteers and the challenges and difficulties in retaining volunteers were frequently mentioned. Very often services just could not function without volunteers, and if a particularly active volunteer could no longer commit to the project (for whatever reason), then this could cause real problems.

Social support groups, were in the main volunteer lead; giving the advantage of people who are ME/LGBT retaining ownership of the group. However this made them vulnerable to changes in the lives of the volunteers and without becoming formally constituted, they struggled to find any independent funding. This meant that to continue they relied on workers from the organisations themselves donating their time on a voluntary basis. One worker from Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation summed things up neatly: "if something needs doing do it yourself".

4.3.3 Leadership and political support

There was widely felt to be a lack of political support or leadership for people who are ME/LGBT. For example, UKLGIG commented upon how the EHRC were not adequately addressing LGBT asylum issues.

Bradford Equity Partnership had succeeded in getting Trevor Phillips from EHRC to visit members of their ME/LGBT social support group in their centre;

they also had a visit from Lord Rees Mogg, who came to listen to individual ME/LGBT service users. The same organisation also spoke of the importance of having inside support within their local authority; having a supportive councillor who had persuaded their local council to fly the rainbow flag from Bradford Town Hall.

Other organisations commented on the difficulties of bringing about change, or persuading political leaders to take note, without having more people who were prepared to put their head above the parapet and speak up on behalf of people who are ME/LGBT. Also mentioned was the need for higher profile and representation by the media of people who are ME/LGBT.

Rukus! Federation commented on how leadership at a local community level was seen as more important than what took place at a UK wide level, as this could bring about more immediate change. It was felt important to develop activists at a grassroots level and not to downplay the importance or value of informal (unconstituted) and organic networks of black gay activists. FTM concurred, commenting that without such a "critical mass" it is "very difficult" for any changes to be brought about.

4.3.4 Evidencing need
Comments were also made about difficulties in accessing funding due to the way funding streams are pigeon-holed as either "LGBT" or "ME" and by a lack of understanding about the diversity of identities within both communities. For some this led to possible barriers by becoming identified either as a LGBT or a ME organisation, and not one who was there to meet the needs of people who are ME/LGBT.

A volunteer from FTM commented that the main challenge to overcome was the perception that services were not needed because numbers of transgender from ME community were small and there was a lack of available data about their whereabouts.

Across the board funders were seen reluctant to fund work without a strong evidence base, making it difficult for things to get off the ground.

4.3.5 Trust

There was consensus that a service which was not trusted would not succeed. Having good systems of confidentiality, welcoming premises and staff/volunteers who understand cultural, religious and social pressure were just some of the ways in which organisations could establish trust amongst their users. Involving users in the running of projects/services increased the credibility of the organisation at a community level. Both UKLGIG and Rukus! also commented on the importance of retaining their independence and this meant that they were careful in deciding who to accept funding from. Trust was something which took a long time to build up, but could be easily undermined if services got it wrong.

4.4 CONCLUSION: KEY MESSAGES FOR SCOTLAND

At all our visits we asked if there were key messages or lessons that people who are developing services in Scotland for people who are ME/LGBT should take note of. Many of these messages have already been explored in the previous sections. By way of conclusion we have highlighted seven of the most commonly repeated or important messages.

Listen
There was a strong consensus that in developing services for people who are ME/LGBT in Scotland it was vital to listen to people who are themselves ME/LGBT in planning your services. This gave services credibility, and helped them to establish trust amongst the service users they were seeking to help. Without listening, it was not possible to understand, and services which were imposed upon people rather than developed in consultation with people, were less likely to succeed or be sustained.

Involve
Equally important as listening, was involving people at all stages of service planning and development. Giving social groups ownership of their own agenda enabled them to flourish, whereas having volunteers from the same background as service users increased understanding and accessibility. Having service users represented within management structures also ensured that larger services kept in touch with their service user base and could be more responsive to changing needs.

Be creative in raising funds and starting services
In order to survive or flourish, services had become expert in obtaining funding from a wide variety of sources, but also in keeping services going with little or no funding. We were often told that you do not need lots of funding to begin offering support, with one organisation emphasizing how a £5,000 grant from Awards for All could meet the costs of running a social support group. Help in kind, such as persuading solicitors to donate time for free advice surgeries or getting costs of printing met by local Trade Unions, is a creative way of increasing an organisation's impact.

Do not work alone
A very strong and recurring message was the importance of working in partnership with a range of organisations. Partnerships were needed across

sectors, with ME organisations, LGBT organisations and with more mainstream organisations. As well as more formal working partnerships, it was also important to create informal networks; it was at grassroots or community level that the seeds of many projects were sown. It was also seen as important to remember that one size does not fit all; no one organisation could do everything. It was also seen as important to develop partnerships between English and Scottish organisations working with ME/LGBT people.

Reach out

Another strong message was the importance of reaching out to people and not just waiting for them to come to you. There was no single preferred method for doing this; what was needed was a whole range of publicity tactics and substantial legwork. It was about getting yourself known, getting resources out into the community and establishing trust with people who would not otherwise feel comfortable coming forward for help. The internet, chat rooms, gay dating sites, facebook were all frequently mentioned as ways of reaching out to service users.

Do not forget people outside cities

All the organisations we visited were based in large cities. Yet many acknowledged that more could be done to meet the needs of people who are ME/LGBT outside the immediate areas where they were based. When asked about messages that should be taken back to Scotland, we were frequently told the importance of reaching out to people who lived outside major cities, who lacked any support organisations where they lived. This would also have a bearing on what model of delivery future services should adapt; with telephone, web and e-mail again seen as playing an important role in reaching people in more isolated locations.

Celebrate diversity

Finally it was seen as important to remember that not all people who are ME/LGBT are the same. It was important to celebrate diversity, through a wide variety of arts, culture and heritage projects. This would reduce isolation by feeding people into positive experiences, breaking down barriers between different communities and help promote positive role models for people who are ME/LGBT.

CHAPTER 5

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Visits to National Scottish Equality Organisations

"Not everyone gets it right all the time. We need to stop being scared and just try and learn from mistakes."

(Rights/Advice Organisation)

5.1 OVERVIEW

5.1.1 Purpose of Visits

In Scotland, it is uncertain whether there exists the critical mass of ME/LGBT people, based within particular locations, that has enabled the development of dedicated ME/LGBT projects as they exist in some of the major English cities. Ultimately, support for ME/LGBT people in Scotland is most likely to develop through greater inclusion within, and partnership between, existing ME and LGBT community groups.

We are concerned, however, whether the broader equality environment in Scotland is supportive or encouraging of such developments at a community level, or indeed whether there is sufficient recognition of the intersection between race, sexual orientation and gender identity at a national strategic level. In this research we were therefore interested in whether national organisations were offering leadership towards the recognition of ME/LGBT issues, both within their own work and policies, and in there support of community developments.

This section details our visits with single strand focused services and organisations that promote equality for people from ME backgrounds, and similarly for people who are LGBT, at a national level. We also visited generic equality organisations that promote equality and rights across some or all of the seven equality strands.

We set out to meet with at least ten of these organisations in order to examine their understanding of and approaches to promoting the equality of ME/LGBT people. Our target of ten was soon exceeded, and between November 2008 and early February 2009 we carried out interviews with eighteen different organisations.

The purpose of these visits was to:

- map any existing national work or services relating to ME/LGBT people
- discuss levels and evidence of need, plus barriers to accessing support
- identify current or potential future partnerships
- review existing training provision and priorities for future training
- discuss organisations' equality policies and systems for monitoring ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity (where appropriate)

- discuss priorities and ideas for future service development

This chapter presents the findings from these visits and some potential ways in which organisations in Scotland can become more ME/LGBT friendly.

5.1.2 Context

As outlined in the introduction, this research took place at a time of great change within the equalities landscape of Scotland. There is also no established track record of delivering services, carrying out research or dedicated policy work on the ME/LGBT intersection in Scotland and only anecdotal evidence about small pockets of existing ME/LGBT work, these visits were in many ways starting with a blank page. Add to that an equalities sector that has long spoken of their struggles to meet multiple and competing demands on their time, energies and resources; it was important to approach these visits in a spirit of collaboration rather than of judgement.

This research did need to identify gaps, but also opportunities. We not only sought to find answers to specific research questions, but wanted the process of engaging organisations to help identify or initiate possible new partnerships between organisations from sectors with very little experience of having worked together.

We were impressed with the willingness and openness of all the organisations visited to engage with the research and encouraged by the energy and enthusiasm expressed for improving the way that services respond to the needs of people who are ME/LGBT. Although the enthusiasm for this work was genuine, it remains important to match this rhetoric with reality and that this research is seen as a beginning of a process of change and not an end in itself.

Thus it is important that this chapter is read with its intention in mind: to map where things are at, and not a critique of who has or has not done what. It is not about showing that X is doing a better job than Y, but about identifying how existing services could best move forward together. It is the start of a conversation.

5.1.3 Organisations Visited

Visits were undertaken to organisations which are:
- national organisations, i.e. work across Scotland
- already working with people who are ME or LGBT and/or have a key strategic role in relation to equalities
- service delivery (**frontline**) and/or policy based (**second tier**) organisations

A list of twenty organisations we wanted to visit was drawn up in consultation with our Steering Group. Only two organisations from this list, (the Scottish Inter Faith Council and Age Concern) did not participate in the research, both citing heavy work loads as the reason that they were unable to take part. We also identified a number of other possible organisations, who were put on our reserve list. We are very conscious that within the time constraints of our research it was not possible to visit all national Scottish equality organisations, nor could we visit all national organisations that are doing work with people who are either ME or LGBT people.

In particular, we are conscious of the need to examine experiences of organisations outside of the Central Belt, as although all the organisations we visited all had national remits, only one visit took place outside Glasgow or Edinburgh.

To allow for easier analysis of our findings, we have categorised the organisations into five broad categories: **Equalities, LGBT, ME, HIV** and **Rights/Advice**, though we are conscious that some organisations could fit within more than one of these headings.

We have also distinguished between those organisations that directly provide services to individuals (**frontline**) and those that provide support to organisations rather than individuals and/or work primarily at a policy level (**second tier**). A full list of the organisations visited and how we have categorised them is given in the following table: [20]

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[20] Additional notes for this table:
*Both STUC and Citizens Advice Scotland are national membership bodies who work as second tier organisations. However their members are frontline organisations (i.e. Trade Unions and CABx). During our interviews we talked both about work done by STUC/CAS and their frontline members.

Sector	Organisation	Date Visited	Type of service
Equalities	Engender www.engender.org.uk	December 2008	second tier
	Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) www.equalityhumanrights.com	December 2008	second tier
	Scottish Government Equality Unit www.scotland.gov.uk	December 2008	second tier
	Scottish Trades Union Congress www.stuc.org.uk www.oneworkplace.org.uk	December 2008	second tier + frontline *
LGBT	Equality Network www.equality-network.org	December 2008	second tier
	LGBT Youth Scotland www.lgbtyouth.org.uk	December 2008	Frontline
	Scottish Transgender Alliance www.scottishtrans.org	December 2008	Second tier + frontline
	Stonewall Scotland www.stonewallscotland.org.uk	December 2008	second tier
ME	Black Ethnic Minority Infrastructure Scotland (BEMIS) www.bemis.org.uk	December 2008	second tier
	Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO) www.cemvo.org.uk	January 2009	second tier
	Scottish Alliance of Racial Equality Councils (SAREC)** www.wsrec.co.uk www.elrec.org.uk www.centralscotlandrec.org.uk www.grec.co.uk	February 2009	second tier
Rights/ Advice	Citizens Advice Scotland www.cas.org.uk	December 2008	second tier + frontline *
	Ethnic Minority Law Centre www.emlc.org.uk	January 2009	Frontline
	Positive Action in Housing www.paih.org	January 2009	Frontline
	Scottish Refugee Council www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk	November 2008	Frontline
HIV	Terrence Higgins Trust www.tht.org.uk	December 2008	Frontline
	Waverley Care www.waverleycare.org	January 2009	Frontline
	HIV Scotland www.hivscotland.org	January 2009	second tier

**The Scottish Alliance of Racial Equality Councils is an alliance of the four Scottish regional equality councils (CSREC, ELREC, GREC and WSREC). Our meeting with their four CEOs was short and so could not cover all points discussed in other interviews. They were given the full discussion outline and, like all interviewees, encouraged to submit any further information by phone or e-mail.

5.1.4 The Interview Process

The interviewees included chief executives, operations, development and training managers; legal, policy and case work officers and HR managers. Two-thirds of the interviews were held with more than one member of staff, often requiring more than one visit to ensure that the different parts of an organisation could feed into the process.

On average interviews lasted around ninety minutes. The remainder of this chapter is similarly structured to the interviews:

- Services: evidence and level of needs, gaps, barriers
                                          (Sections 5.2 and 5.3)

- Training: what is being accessed and what is needed   (Section 5.5)

- Partnerships: work being done across sectors (Section 5.6)

- Equalities Policies and Practices:
  policies and practices within organisations   (Section 5.7)

- Recommendations: ideas and priorities for future development
                          (incorporated into all the above sections and Chapter 7)

These interviews were not intended to be an audit but an opportunity to find out what work (if any) has already been done and to discuss ideas and priorities for future developments in both services and policies.

In order to encourage as honest and frank a dialogue as possible, it was agreed that comments from individual organisations would not be attributed within this chapter, except when necessary for examples of good practice to make sense. The organisations visited have all had the opportunity to add to and comment both on the notes taken from our meetings and encouraged to submit any further thoughts by phone or e-mail. A draft version of this chapter was also circulated for consultation and suggestions included as appropriate. It should also be noted that the information in this chapter is based solely on the interviews and any follow up information provided by the interviewees and not any further research into the policies and practices of the organisations.

5.2 EVIDENCING NEED

5.2.1 Introduction

> "We have people contacting us about asylum, immigration and grounds to remain in the UK. We forward them on to UKGLIG."
>
> (LGBT Organisation)

A key aim of the research was to map what work (if any) was being done in relation to the ME/LGBT intersection. Therefore interviewees were asked about what information, evidence or data they had about the needs of people who may be ME/LGBT and what work (if any) they had done to address these needs.

When talking about services in this chapter, we are referring not just to services that are provided directly to individuals (frontline), but also second tier services; for example:
- support provided to ME or LGBT community groups
- advice, information and training provided to local advice agencies/trade unions
- policy work which is linked to ME and/or LGBT people

This section examines:

- what systems frontline organisations have in place to monitor the number and types of enquiries they had from people who are ME, LGBT and ME/LGBT

- what systems second tier organisations have in place to encourage the monitoring of such data amongst the organisations they support

> "There is a major gap in information, evidence and research."
> (HIV organisation)

With the absence of any previous research in Scotland that examined issues for people who are ME/LGBT, one starting point for examining what evidence exists was to look at what data organisations have collected about their own activities. The most common way of collecting such data is through statistical diversity monitoring. Therefore we asked what monitoring systems organisations had in place to gather information on ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity.

It was important to gather this information not just from frontline organisations, but those working more strategically at second tier level. In the case of second tier organisations, we asked about both the practices of the national organisation we visited and the local offices/members/community organisations they represented or supported. We also asked how they monitored people attending their events and training courses.

5.2.2 Monitoring of Ethnicity

"Our current funding contract does not include monitoring of ethnicity or sexual orientation and our data systems make it difficult to capture such data. We are aware that this is a shortcoming in our current contract and hope to improve monitoring when the new contract is negotiated."

(Rights/Advice Organisation)

Only around two-thirds of the organisations we visited routinely monitored the ethnicity of their service users or beneficiaries.

Amongst frontline services, those not monitoring ethnicity acknowledged that this meant there were gaps in their data and expressed a willingness to improve their monitoring systems.

Two organisations which supported local branches in their client work, told us that there were variations in practice amongst their members which meant that it was difficult to collate information nationally.

A common reason given as to why ethnicity was not monitored was that it wasn't required by funders. Another reason was that staff did not feel comfortable having to ask service users to fill in monitoring forms.

One organisation explained that their board had been resistant to diversity monitoring as they had concerns around the aims and methods of monitoring. They wanted to actively avoid putting people into boxes, which they described as an 'apartheid' type philosophy.

In relation to the HIV sector, it was noted by two organisations that data relating to HIV infection focused on the country where infection was acquired rather than the ethnicity of the individual – although the responsibility for collecting this data lay with health services rather than the organisations we visited.

5.2.3 Monitoring of Sexual Orientation

"We don't know an estimate for LGBT service users. For many advice enquiries it wouldn't be relevant to disclose their sexual orientation so we wouldn't know. Even if they did disclose we wouldn't necessarily have stats."

(Rights/Advice Organisation)

Not surprisingly all organisations in the LGBT sector routinely monitored the sexual orientation of their service users and beneficiaries. Of the other organisations who we asked only one was able to confidently say that they routinely asked about service users' sexual orientation.

Some national organisations were not able to speak with confidence about practices in local member organisations, but felt it very likely that data about sexual orientation was rarely being gathered by their members/local branches.

By far the most common reason why organisations did not ask about sexual orientation was that they felt it was too sensitive an area:

"Individual member organisations monitor gender and ethnicity but not normally sexual orientation. It is seen as a sensitive issue and data is sometimes not collected as people don't want to offend by asking about personal information. To overcome this we need to give information to people to explain why such information is important."

(Equalities Organisation)

Concerns were also raised, especially by ME organisations, around how the majority of their service users would react to monitoring questions related to their sexual orientation. Similar concerns were expressed by three second tier organisations who were doing work with ME community groups, and felt that such groups would not all feel comfortable having to collect data on their service users' sexual orientation.

One organisation who worked with people who are LGBT as well as those who are ME, said that they monitored both ethnicity and sexual orientation. However many of their service users from ME backgrounds ticked the box on the monitoring form which said "I don't want to disclose my sexual orientation" so they were not able to gather much data about ME/LGBT service users.

5.2.4 Monitoring of Gender Identity

The only organisations that routinely monitored the gender identity of their service users/beneficiaries were those in the LGBT sector.

One HIV organisation reported that they did work with a number of transgender people, but due to their database being updated were not able to provide any precise data about numbers.

One LGBT organisation, expert in transgender, explained that the transgender groups that they support often do not monitor the diversity of their members on any strand, as their members are often asked too many questions regarding their identity and highly value privacy and anonymity. Diversity monitoring could create barriers to accessing these groups and so was not seen as appropriate for their members:

"Some trans community groups don't monitor race, or anything else, because they do not collect *any* personal data on their members. Ensuring the complete anonymity of their members is often the highest priority and therefore they don't dare ask their members for any personal information. Sometimes people are so terrified of being outed as transgender that when they contact a transgender group they will not reveal their first name or their age or even the city they live in. When they are so scared then the risk is high that giving them a monitoring form to complete will lead to them ceasing contact with the group or them making up fake monitoring information answers to ensure they are untraceable."

(LGBT Organisation)

A lot of awareness raising and training is needed across all sectors around transgender identities. Monitoring of transgender identities is not always apt and organisations need to be absolutely sure that they are posing such questions correctly and for the right reasons.

5.2.5 Monitoring of Other Equality Strands

Although it was perhaps not a great surprise that some organisations did not routinely monitor either sexual orientation or transgender identity, we were surprised about the level of variation in monitoring of the other equality strands.

Information gathered about other strands was somewhat patchy. There was variation both within the organisations we visited and often within the members/organisations they supported. So although some organisations monitored the number of disabled service users, they may not monitor age or religion. There was no consistent practice, with the type of monitoring carried out often being influenced by the requirements of funders.

In the case of national organisations supporting local members/organisations there was variation in practice within the local organisations, which made it difficult to gather information at a national level.

In the case of second tier organisations who did work with community organisations around equality issues, little work had been done in ensuring organisations systematically collected data across all seven equality strands.

5.2.6 Monitoring of the ME/LGBT Intersection

> "There is a problem over invisibility and people not feeling confident being out. People who are LGBT are often reluctant to come out …, even when not from ME backgrounds. For people who are ME/LGBT there are additional barriers, such as family, religion and cultural expectations – it is very difficult for people to feel safe being out."
>
> (Equality Organisation)

The lack of systematic monitoring of ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity means that very little formal data exists about the numbers of ME/LGBT people in Scotland who are accessing existing services.

Even where organisations are monitoring both ethnicity and sexual orientation, it was often not possible for data to be extrapolated about people who are ME/LGBT, so it was not possible to know about the quantities of ME/LGBT service users.

Only one frontline organisation was actually able to tell us accurately how many ME/LGBT service users they had seen and three organisations were able to give an estimate[21].

In addition to the lack of data, there was a very strong consensus amongst all the organisations we visited that many ME/LGBT people would not be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity[22]. This means that even if data

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[21] Based on service users who have been open about their LGBT status and/or assumptions made by staff members based on characteristics or behaviour that staff considered "obvious" LGBT indicators.
[22] Very few organisations acknowledged the impact of cultural differences around how people develop express their identities. Conversations with individuals who

was available it would likely under-report the true number of ME/LGBT service users.

Issues over identity, cultural expectations and the expectations of family and faith were discussed at many of our visits. These issues were explored in depth at our meeting with an African Health Project within one of the HIV organisations we visited:

"When clients mention a gay sexual experience, they would often say "I was subject to..." or "I found I had to for economic reasons" they don't want to be open or judged, especially when talking to a fellow African. It is easier for people to admit that they had a gay sexual experience if they can say it was forced upon them or not through choice."

"We don't have any meaningful data available in connection with numbers. There is however a sizeable cohort, including people who identify themselves as straight. In relation to sexual health and HIV then this group is important."

(HIV Organisation)

It remains difficult to gauge whether people who are ME/LGBT are accessing services but not being open about their sexual orientation and gender identity; or whether they are simply not accessing services. Therefore it is important for organisations to realise that they very well may already have service users and beneficiaries who may identify as ME/LGBT. *Not being open about their status should indicate to us all that they may have more complex needs; not that they do not exist.*

5.2.7 Anecdotal Evidence

Organisations were quite frank about the shortcomings in their monitoring systems and often indicated how their systems were being updated "as a matter of priority".

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may identify as ME/LGBT people living in Scotland would be needed to more fully map this aspect.

"We are developing a new electronic case recording system, to be rolled out from April 2009. Once this is fully implemented it will allow for better collection of statistics about different strands of discrimination."

 (Rights/Advice Organisation)

Despite not being able to provide accurate or detailed data, over half of the frontline services we visited were able to offer anecdotal evidence about service users who identified as ME/LGBT.

For example, one LGBT organisation had regularly seen small numbers of lesbian gay and transgender asylum seekers (approx 5 case per year) – and shortly after our visit helped their first bisexual service user.

Both the frontline HIV organisations we visited had done work with service users who are ME and with service users who are LGBT and were making efforts to increase the overlap between ME and LGBT work. However current numbers of ME service users who were openly LGBT remained low. One organisation had just seen an African service user who identified as being a lesbian, and knew of other service users who have had same sex relationships but did not identify as being gay.

"The numbers of people we have who are ME/LGBT is low, but this is due to people not being open, rather than the clients not being out there. Most African clients leave questions about their sexual orientation blank or tick the box on our monitoring form which says 'I don't want to disclose'. "

(HIV Organisation)

5.2.8 An Incomplete Picture

> "There is a difficulty in capturing data, evidencing need. For example, if presenting issue may have nothing to do with a client's sexual orientation or in cases where family members don't know about the person's sexuality. The numbers of LGBT asylum seekers/ refugees coming through our door could be bigger than we think because of challenges in capturing the data."
>
> (Rights/Advice Organisation)

Due to the lack of data from monitoring it is difficult to build a picture at this stage about who is and who is not accessing existing services and which services are being preferred. However one group which was anecdotally mentioned the most often was young ME/LGBT people, principally young LGBT asylum seekers/refugees.

One frontline LGBT organisation in particular had noticed a marked increase during 2008 in the young ME/LGBT people accessing their social support groups:

> "If we do not help a young ME person they *can't* signpost to anyone else. Especially asylum seekers and refugees as services are all focused on the legal aspects and not on other needs (eg: social support groups). This shows a disregard for the mental health of asylum seekers. All other groups have other organisations and services to which people can be signposted."
>
> (LGBT Organisation)

It cannot be assumed that those who have presented in the largest numbers to services are those in the greatest need. The converse may be true: people not presenting may have greater barriers to coming forward, may be more afraid to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity or have needs that existing services are failing to even begin to pick up on. This is particularly true for transgender people. Women were also often highlighted as

requiring particular attention as much work on sexual orientation focuses on the sexual health of men and women are often more invisible to service providers.

It was mentioned by at least four different second tier organisations that the reason why they had not developed services was because their members/groups they were supporting had not fed back to them that there was a need for them to develop services.

It was also noticeable that although few organisations had any direct experience of providing support around the ME/LGBT intersection, there was a strong consensus that people who are ME/LGBT had needs that were different to people who are ME or LGBT, and that these needs are not currently being met.

Other groups mentioned as being possible priorities for targeting services were young people, those experiencing mental health problems, people at risk of domestic violence, family members of ME/LGBT people, those experiencing multiple discrimination in the workplace and people who were isolated in rural areas.

> "People who are ME/LGBT are likely to face multiple discrimination. ME people who are straight or LGBT people who are not from ME background won't face the same issues. The suspicion is that if people came out at work then they would suffer harassment and face discrimination."
>
> (Equality Organisation)

One organisation voiced concerns that the absence of accurate data could lead to what they termed a "chatterbox" effect, whereby anecdotal evidence from a small number of cases, could end up distorting the real picture, and lead to over simplistic assumptions about the demographics of Scotland's ME/LGBT community.

5.2.9 Further Research Is Needed

> "There are data and research gaps. We need more research and a stronger evidence base."
>
> (HIV Organisation)

> "Data gaps are key. They are caused by difficulties in disaggregating data and by the lack of monitoring by organisations and in national surveys."
>
> (Equality Organisation)

A recurring theme from all the visits was the absence of existing data and that the limited information that was available was anecdotal.

The need for better data was highlighted both by the EHRC and the Scottish Government Equality Unit, and by over three quarters of all the other organisations.

Specific data gaps that were mentioned included those relating to HIV infection rates, asylum seekers, migrant workers and women. Gathering data relating to ME/transgender was simply not something most organisations had even began to think about or were aware of as different to sexual orientation.

For many second tier organisations there is something of a chicken and egg situation. As organisations have not always been asked by funders to monitor race, sexual orientation and gender identity, and their members do not feedback the ME/LGBT intersection as being an issue, then they have no data available, either at a local or national level. As they have no data available it is not seen as a priority area for their development, they do not have the evidence needed to attract the resources to do more work around the ME/LGBT intersection and so the cycle continues.

For some the absence of concrete information relating to the ME/LGBT intersection is not surprising as there are already considered to be data and

research gaps in relation to ethnic minorities, sexual orientation and gender identity; let alone their intersections.

"There is an absence of data. For example, relating to the experiences of ME women in the labour market. Scottish data on this is almost impossible, let alone data on lesbian ME women in Scots workplace. There is also a gender gap in terms of data on sexual orientation. Work is focused on the sexual health of men who have sex with men so there's no real data on gay women."

 (Equality Organisation)

There was a very strong consensus from interviewees that further and more sophisticated research is needed, including participatory research focused on diverse ME/LGBT people and experiences[23]. Such work would also need to explore how people who may identify as ME/LGBT develop and express their identities in the Scottish context and how this may affect their relationships with services.

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[23] Research needs are also discussed in the final chapter.

5.3 EXPERIENCES OF ME/LGBT WORK IN SCOTLAND

"We have worked with ME clients who are lesbian, gay, trans and bisexual. However clients may not always disclose their sexual orientation to us so is not possible for us to know accurately regarding numbers. Only evidence we have is anecdotal and from clients spoken to. We know that there are more people out there who we don't know about."

(Rights/Advice Organisation)

5.3.1 Introduction

During our visits we asked organisations both if they had done any work around the ME/LGBT intersection in the past and if they were currently doing any work. We found that there were not any existing projects that were dedicated to people who are ME/LGBT, but there were small pockets of work being done. Such work lacked dedicated funding, was done on an ad hoc or informal basis and without any prominent advertising.

Apart from this partnership project, we were told of just one previous attempt by organisations from ME and LGBT sectors to formally come together to do joint work.

Around four years ago conversations were had between the Ethnic Minority Law Centre (EMLC) and Stonewall Scotland about developing joint work, posters were printed to try and increase take up of ME service users in Stonewall and LGBT service users at EMLC. A funding bid was submitted, but this was unsuccessful. Due to this lack of funding and a turnover in staff, nothing further was developed.

We were also told about informal conversations between ME and LGBT organisations about doing more work together, but these had not led to anything concrete.

The actual process of undertaking our research, coupled with bringing together organisations from different sectors on to our Steering Group has

increased the links across sectors and is already sowing the seeds for future joint work.

 This section also examines:

- what services (if any) frontline organisations are providing to ME/LGBT people

- what work (if any) second tier organisations have already undertaken to promote equality for people who are ME/LGBT

- the main barriers for frontline organisations in developing services for people who are ME/LGBT and the main barriers for second tier organisations in supporting other groups to do likewise

- the main barriers to openly accessing existing services for individual ME/LGBT service users

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

The Equality Network was conscious that its work was not sufficiently addressing the needs of people from ethnic minorities. Likewise, Black and Ethnic Minorities Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS) wanted to ensure that the inequalities faced by people from ME backgrounds who are LGBT were better addressed.

Both organisations had attempted in the past to engage other organisations in doing joint work in this area, but had not received a favourable response. Then when staff from the two organisations met, they discovered both had an interest in doing this work. Follow up meetings were arranged and a joint funding bid was submitted. The result was this nine month research project; the first of its kind in Scotland.

5.3.2 Existing Frontline Work

Our research found that more work had been done by frontline agencies than by second tier organisations.

Two rights/advice organisations had helped a number of ME/LGBT service users; one HIV organisation had worked with a small number of individuals

and one LGBT organisation was seeing a growing number of young ME/LGBT people accessing their support groups.

- The Ethnic Minority Law Centre has helped around twenty-five ME/LGBT service users in relation to either immigration/asylum law or discrimination casework.

- The Scottish Refugee Council estimates that they have five open cases at any one time for LGBT asylum seekers/refugees.

- LGBT Youth Scotland has identified a large increase in ME/LGBT service users during 2008 and has had referrals from a number of different agencies.

- Waverley Care has seen a number of ME service users who had same sex encounters but did not identify as being gay and recently helped a ME lesbian cope with multiple issues.

One area where some work was already being done was in relation to young people who are ME/LGBT; in particular in relation to young LGBT asylum seekers/refugees.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

During 2008 LGBT Youth Scotland had, for the first time, a small number of young LGBT asylum seekers coming to its support groups. Staff members were not sure how to deal with all the issues raised by this new group of service users, so meetings were held with Scottish Refugee Council to discuss the best ways of exchanging skills and information. The organisation also noted the increase in the number of ME service users and organised racial diversity workshops for service users to increase awareness and understanding in its social support groups.

Ethnic Minority Law Centre Youth Discrimination Project was conscious that it should not forget about young people who are discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation. The project collaborated with LGBT Youth Scotland and delivered workshops to LGBT Youth Scotland's service users.

5.3.3 Existing Second Tier Work

"Our current work with ME groups focuses more on race equality policies. Most groups will have equal opportunity policies, but it is uncertain if these pay any attention to sexual orientation or other strands. There is a gap in work here, and opportunities for groups to adopt a more standardised approach."

(ME Organisation)

Although we were able to find only limited examples of some work being done for ME/LGBT service users, apart from the partnership between BEMIS and Equality Network there were no real examples of any ME/LGBT intersectional work being done in relation to training, policy, community development or tackling inequalities in employment practices in the equalities sector itself.

For example, although the provision of general equalities training often covered most equality strands, this did not specifically look at the ME/LGBT intersection.

In relation to work with ME community groups, it was disappointing that work around organisations developing equal opportunity policies often neglected any mention of sexual orientation or gender identity.

On a more positive note, it was widely acknowledged that more second tier work is needed and the organisations we visited did express an appetite for taking this work forward.

"ME/LGBT work shouldn't just be seen as responsibility of one or two organisations. A collaborative approach is needed, with different organisations taking responsibility for specific initiatives."

(ME Organisation)

5.3.4 Barriers to Services Developing

This research also asked why more services had not been developed in Scotland that focused on issues for people who are ME/LGBT and explored what barriers organisations faced in trying to develop such work.

Often conversations were steered back to two things; a lack of funding and/or a lack of evidence that there is a need for this work to take place. Organisations do not have the flexibility or capacity to carry out work which is not funded and yet it was difficult to attract funding without being able to evidence that there are additional needs that are not being met. It was also felt difficult to attract funding for a group whose numbers are relatively low.

> "The real problem is capacity. We struggling to meet demands and it is difficult to take on any new work."
>
> (Rights/Advice Organisation)

For frontline services, it is already difficult to meet demands for people already coming through the door; and organisations lack the time or space to stand back and look at people who were not coming forward or being open about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

For second tier organisations, there is a reliance on information passed back to them by member organisations or community groups about what are priorities for new services, and the ME/LGBT intersection has not been raised as an issue. Similarly, one frontline service told of how they regularly ask for feedback from their service users about any gaps or ideas for improvement in their service, and the ME/LGBT intersection has never been raised.

One LGBT organisation explained that all its services are developed based on the needs expressed by service users. To do otherwise is not logical or practical as a critical mass is crucial to the success of services. Therefore they could not prioritise the ME/LGBT intersections before. Now that they are attracting a critical mass they are prioritising the intersection.

The lack of overlap in the day to day work of ME and LGBT sectors was also highlighted as a barrier to this work having been developed. Both ME and

LGBT organisations commented on how in the past they had tried to have conversations with the other sector, but had found it difficult to even get calls returned or meetings arranged, let alone joint initiatives off the ground.

> "We need to break out of the silo mentality and end the segregation into different sectors."
>
> (HIV Organisation)

A lack of information or understanding across sectors was also highlighted. Both a rights/advice organisation and an HIV organisation commented upon how there was a lack of clarity within the LGBT sector as to who was doing what, and so found it difficult to know who the most appropriate people were to approach to discuss working together. One equalities organisation and an LGBT organisation explained how competition and divisions within the ME sector had hampered the development of this work.

Around a third of our interviewees commented that "this is a sensitive area" and felt that one of the reasons why services had not been developed was because of a lack of confidence amongst staff to know how best to approach complex issues around culture, faith and identity.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Black and Ethnic Minorities Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS): taking risks

"Some community groups who we support have been unhappy that we have developed a partnership with Equality Network and that we are openly talking about addressing the needs of ME people who are LGBT. We believe in equality for all and are committed to this work, even if it means that some ME organisations may criticise us."

5.3.5 Barriers in Accessing Existing Services

Without talking directly to a proper sample of people who may identify as ME/LGBT, we can only make some guesses and assumptions as to what

possible barriers may be preventing ME/LGBT people from openly accessing existing services.

Issues around faith, culture, racism, community and family pressures, homophobia and differences in how people identify themselves were all touched upon at several of our visits.

There was a strong consensus amongst interviewees, that community level research is needed in order to increase our understanding of these issues. It was felt that all these contribute to the difficulties ME/LGBT people may have in openly presenting themselves to existing services. It was also agreed that such research should address the possible added difficulties faced by ME/LGBT people living in rural areas.

Some barriers do exist which can be explored by looking at how services are set up or delivered, without having to wait for additional community based research.

One commonly mentioned barrier was that of language. Half of the frontline services indicated the added complication of having to speak through an interpreter made it more difficult for people to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. Two rights organisations raised particular concerns about the variable standards of interpreters and were keen that there was greater accreditation and training.

One LGBT organisation expressed concern that their only ME/LGBT service users were English speakers, that all their materials were only printed in English and that they lacked information about how to assess translation needs, access translation or interpreting services, and also that they would struggle to be able to afford this. English LGBT terminology also does not necessarily easily translate into other languages:

"The terminology we use around gender identity have been relatively recently created even in the English language and the definitions are still under discussion and debate within different English-speaking communities. Therefore translation becomes particularly problematic as equivalent terms don't necessarily even exist in other languages. Terms also don't translate well because concepts of identity options don't necessarily translate."

(LGBT Organisation)

The same can also be said for sexual orientation. Even translation into other British languages is difficult. For example, a translation service once used a slag Welsh term for 'gay' which has negative connotations in a poster campaign, resulting in complaints to their service user.

One rights organisation and a HIV organisation commented on how first impressions made by reception staff were crucial to making a ME/LGBT service user feel safe. They both raised concerns about how reception staff may not always have sufficient training to deal sensitively with all enquiries. Things could be made worse by the physical constraints in the layout of reception areas which meant that people may be asked inappropriate questions within earshot of other service users.

Another rights organisation admitted that their practice of not having dedicated caseworkers allocated to specific service users, meant that people may have to speak to different staff each time they came for advice, making it more difficult for people to be fully open. Yet demands on their services were so high it was logistically very difficult to have any other system in place.

This organisation was also conscious of how having family members present during interviews may also deter some service users from being open.

Around half of frontline organisations commented that they were concerned that by asking service users about their sexual orientation they may upset their wider clientele. There was a general lack of confidence in non LGBT/HIV organisations about the best way of asking for such information. Such nervousness is likely to be picked up by service users and could be a factor in people not being more open.

As mentioned previously, many interviewees indicated that they did not fully know who was doing what in sectors other than their own. Therefore if people who are working in national organisations who have ready access to information and resources are not familiar with who is best to refer ME/LGBT service users to, it can be safely assumed that individuals who are ME/LGBT are likely to find it even more difficult to know where to turn to for support. This can be exacerbated by marketing materials for LGBT services not including racial diversity and those for ME and other services being heterocentric.

5.4 LEADERSHIP

"It is difficult for people to get their heads around new legislation and duties and commissions. People are not sure what to do."

(LGBT Organisation)

One of the main reasons given as to why no real ME/LGBT work had been developed in Scotland was a lack of leadership. Interviewees commented both on a lack of leadership from national bodies such as the EHRC and Scottish Government, as well as from organisations from across both ME and LGBT sectors.

The Equality Network and Black and Ethnic Minorities Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS) received praise for taking a lead by establishing this research project. One interviewee expressed surprise that BEMIS would risk upsetting some of the faith groups they worked with, by developing a ME/LGBT project.

This fits in with our findings from our research visits to existing ME/LGBT projects in England, where it was often leadership from ME/LGBT individuals as well as organisations and policy makers that brought about changes and helped to establish ME/LGBT services.

Our interviews with the Scottish Government and EHRC were both very positive. Both organisations showed an active interest in the progress of this research and also recognised the potential of this work in developing ideas around intersectionality more generally. They both admitted that too little work had been done in the past and were keen that this research would lead to concrete changes in policy, service delivery and attitudes.

However just under half of interviewees indicated that they would welcome stronger and clearer messages from either the Scottish Government or EHRC on how they should be developing policy and practice on intersectionality. Three also referred to the need for, or a lack of, a common language or terminology around intersectionality.

"The EHRC is not clearly indicating how we all want to move forward in terms of multi-strand and intersectional work."

(ME Organisation)

One LGBT organisation said that opportunities for bolder leadership around LGBT issues are being missed as there is fear that saying something good about one group will be negatively perceived by another. They called for bold leadership starting with the Scottish Government, which would then be able to filter down. Another noted that a desire not to offend ME communities has been used as a reason not to look at LGBT issues and that the side stepping and lip service that this results in is difficult to get around:

"We need bold leadership. We miss leadership opportunities. The government could do more on LGBT equality; asylum and refugees around policy….We need outward focused leadership and looking at good relations between groups. For example, leaders fear saying something good about one group will be negatively perceived by another group. This leads to just low level focus. If bold leadership starts at Scottish Government it will translate down. There is no culture of that at the minute."

(LGBT Organisation)

"…also, the "liberal" not wanting to offend ME communities so don't want to look at LGBT. There is too much side stepping and lip service. It is difficult to get behind this."

(LGBT Organisation)

Leadership in this area is not solely the responsibility of the EHRC and Scottish Government. Second tier membership organisations also have a responsibility to proactively provide guidance about priorities for their members. Several second tier organisations acknowledged that there are gaps in their work and that more could be done to ensure that their members are following good practices in relation to ME/LGBT work. Similarly, one interviewee also called for leaders of trade unions to do more work in prominently promoting work to tackle discrimination of ME/LGBT people in the workplace.

5.5 TRAINING

5.5.1 Introduction

Within this section our research examines both what training was already being accessed by members of the organisations we visited as well as what training was provided by them to external agencies. Gaps in training provision were explored as well as the challenges in filling these gaps. Finally we consider what organisations' future training needs are in order to make them better equipped to fully address issues around the ME/LGBT intersection.

Our research revealed that a lack of confidence played a key part in organisations not responding more to the needs of ME/LGBT people and that there was a strong consensus that the development of a skills based training programme would be of great benefit.

When discussing training, a broad view of training was used in order to include formal training and the skills gained through practical work experience and work shadowing.

"Training is also not always relevant to our jobs. We need to humanise the content of training and make it relevant. The challenge is making it 'real'."

(Equalities Organisation)

5.5.2 Existing Training

Most existing training that is being accessed is being delivered internally, unless the skills required refer to a strand where there is an internal knowledge gap and a clear case can be made for paying an external trainer. All training discussed either focused on single strands or Human Rights. No training currently being accessed in Scotland focuses on intersectionality and intersectional identities. Even where training does refer to different strands, the vast majority does not go so far as to look at intersectionality, but is usually done so as parallel strands. Some training makes some reference to intersectionality, but not in depth.

> "We can't challenge discrimination without looking at the details; the types of discrimination. It's not good to blanket all issues under 'diversity' when analysing discrimination. Black Asian gay men are different from Caribbean lesbians. We need to NAME the different types of discrimination. 'Fairness with everybody' doesn't cut it. It is not a vigorous critique, analysis or challenge."
>
> (LGBT Organisation)

In general equalities organisations, the trend seems to be that staff members are accessing equalities training as part of their induction. This training tends to cover equality as a general principle with some focus on each strand. Training primarily focuses on the legal and duty aspects, rather than skills as this is more relevant to second tier organisations with a general equalities remit. However, this focus on law and duties, rather than face to face skills with diverse service users also held for rights organisations that do provide frontline services.

Twelve organisations said they had training on sexual orientation, ten said that they have had training on race and ethnicity and seven said that they have had training on transgender identities. Twelve organisations referred to accessing general equalities training.

Frontline and second tier organisations with a single strand focus tended to place emphasis on training around their primary strand of focus, either through formal training or gaining experience on the job. One ME sector interviewee

said that they have accessed training on sexual orientation. All LGBT sector interviewees reported that they had accessed training on race and ethnicity at some level. In all cases training focused on different strands rather than intersectionality with their strand of primary focus.

Within the HIV sector, the focus of training being accessed reflects the division of services. Staff working with mainly LGBT people accessed more LGBT training and staff focusing on ME service users accessed mostly training on race and ethnicity. However it was encouraging that one organisation referred to moves to closer working across different strands, with for example, the volunteers from an African focused project being trained by the organisation's volunteer co-ordinator, who also managed their Gay Men's project.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

STUC / One Workplace Equal Rights

The STUC's One Workplace Equal Rights Project has piloted a model of training for diversity champions with Inverclyde Council and SAMH. They have trained 50 equality champions in equality issues, covering all seven equality strands plus human rights. After the initial training course is completed there are opportunities for updates as well as networking. Equality awards for Trade Union reps are also presented at their annual conference.

One Workplace have also used live theatre performance to highlight issues re race, sexual orientation and mental health. This was filmed and made into DVD which was used as training resource. Showcased in 2007, the DVD featured the experiences of a gay woman working in the construction industry.

Conversations have started about how future training can more fully incorporate issues around intersectionality

Levels of training accessed and how training is accessed varied greatly across all categories. Twelve of the eighteen organisations interviewed provided some kind of general equalities training, most often provided internally and informally. Most of these included some form of equal opportunities or general equalities training as part of the induction of new staff and volunteers. Others provided training "as required" or "when possible" within timeframes and budgets. One organisation has a monthly training slot that is used for all training needs and included equalities training as part of its training

programme. Only a small minority of organisations made it mandatory for staff to attend equalities training.

> "There should be more mandatory training to help raise awareness of the issues for people who are ME/LGBT."
>
> (Equalities Organisation)

Out of all the interviewees, twelve of the eighteen referred to specific plans for accessing future training. In all cases, intersectionality, intersectional identities and multiple discrimination was either not covered by existing training or alluded to briefly as part of more general or strand specific training. No interviewees had received any training that focused on the ME/LGBT intersection, though there was a strong consensus that such training is needed.

5.5.3 Gaps and Challenges

No matter what the organisation or what the training need, there are always a variety of challenges around accessing training. In this research, participants were very aware of the importance and effectiveness of good training and were honest and open about the challenges they face in utilising and accessing training to its full potential.

Interviewees spoke about a variety of challenges to accessing equalities training. The most common of these are a lack of financial recourses and time. Most organisations referred to either restricted training budgets and/or a lack of time for training around heavy workloads creating difficulties in accessing training.

One interviewee said that when viewed in the light of these challenges, they would find it difficult to lobby for the prioritising of training on the ME/LGBT intersection; especially as they would not know what arguments to make or how the training would benefit their work.

When these barriers are overcome and training is accessed, some organisations are frustrated by the poor quality of training. Interviewees

referred to difficulties around quality and relevance of available training. Two national equality organisations noted that equalities training for equalities organisations is often pitched too low and needs to be more advanced and specific to be more relevant to equality specialists. Two other interviewees noted that trainers who are expert across all strands are exceptionally rare.

> "There are lots of good trainers but not good equalities trainers. People need a sound knowledge of equalities across the board and this is rare."
>
> (Rights/Advice Organisation)

At least three organisations referred to the debate and challenges around creating quality standards for equalities training. It was noted that creating such standards needs to be carefully done so as not to exclude or discourage developing trainers that identify as individuals from minority identities, but simultaneously set an acceptable benchmark.

Organisations that provide service user services commonly told us that current available training is too focused on legal duties and frameworks and does not focus enough on what practical skills are required to meet the diverse needs and identities of their service users.

While most interviewees expressed at least some interest in looking at intersectional identities and the ME/LGBT intersection in the future, some admitted that there are barriers around the will of equalities organisations to prioritise this. Equalities organisations were seen to have many competing priorities and it was felt difficult to push for more focus on the ME/LGBT training when the numbers of ME/LGBT service users presenting to services remained small.

It is clear that a lot of work needs to be done in raising awareness within organisations on the need for and benefits of ME/LGBT specific training, before such training is actually delivered. If this preparatory work is not done, and suitable training is not provided, the capacity of organisations within Scotland to meet the multiple and complex needs of ME/LGBT people will remain limited.

5.5.4 Future Training

> "There is a need for training programmes that raise awareness. Training should be developed at two levels. Firstly at grassroots level for people delivering frontline services; secondly, at an organisational/Intermediary level, in relation to service planning and sector building. Developing training for trainers would also enable the training to be cascaded."
>
> (ME Organisation)

What ME/LGBT specific training is needed by an organisation depends on a number of variables. These include the roles the organisation plays, the range of staff members' attitudes, and the contribution the organisation would like to make to the development of ME/LGBT work in future. Therefore it is important that future training needs are investigated on a case by case basis and unique solutions developed for each.

Two organisations highlighted the role that skills swaps can play in helping to make services more ME/LGBT friendly. This is when expertise and knowledge are shared between organisations. However, such swaps alone are not enough, as they focus on each strand separately. This may be a good first step but does need to be supplemented with a focus on the particular nuances and complexities of how the strands intersect.

One HIV organisation emphasised that clinicians within HIV services needed training on both cultural issues as well as how to work more sensitively with people from ME backgrounds who may be LGBT and HIV+.

"HIV clinicians often make assumptions about clients who are African. They assume that they are straight and do not ask enough questions about possible same sex relations. For example, if a non-African man mentioned that they had problems with itchiness around the back-passage, then the clinician would pick up on this and carry out an examination. If an African man mentioned it the clinician may sub-consciously assume ("pigeonhole") that he is heterosexual and not ask as many questions about anal sex or carry out an examination."

(HIV Organisation)

This reminds us that training is not just needed across the equality or voluntary sector, but within mainstream organisations such as health services, local authorities and police. It also serves to remind us of the importance of involving people from the frontline in developing the content of training programmes.

Another example of how such stereotyping can affect people with intersectional identities, service provision and training needs was provided by an LGBT organisation:

"Stereotypes are a big problem for transgender people when accessing services, especially around health. So many judgements and case decisions are made by service providers based simply upon their stereotypical assumptions of how men and women ought to look and behave. This can lead to transgender people being misunderstood and refused the services they actually need. It is likely to be even worse for transgender people who are not white as service providers may have even more bizarre stereotypes about their possible needs."

(LGBT Organisation)

There was a broad consensus that specific training programmes that focus on the ME/LGBT intersection are needed. These should cover a variety of topics including equalities terminology, the debate on how identities are expressed, recognising multiple and complex needs, incorporating intersectionality into policy and practice, debates for and against monitoring of service users and staff, ensuring confidentiality and guidance on how be more ME/LGBT friendly. This all needs to be underpinned by views from people who may identify as ME/LGBT from a variety of different backgrounds.

Such training will play a vital role in facilitating the changes needed to stop the ME/LGBT intersection from falling through the gaps between the ME and LGBT equality strands and services.

"We need to tell stories to make people connect with equalities work. Real life stories that humanise our messages will make training much more effective."

(Equalities Organisation)

5.6 PARTNERSHIPS

"We need to break out of the silo mentality."

(HIV Organisation)

5.6.1 Introduction

This work was a result of a partnership between organisations from different sectors; one from the ME sector and one from the LGBT sector. Our research explored whether similar partnerships across sectors have existed in the past, and are currently been developed. It also examined the challenges in getting successful partnerships across sectors off the ground and discussed ideas for future joint working that could help fill in some of the current gaps in service provision.

5.6.2 Existing Joint Working

All of the eighteen organisations that participated noted that they work jointly with other organisations in their own sectors. In other words; with other organisations that focus primarily on the same equality strand or area like HIV or equalities in general. Thirteen of these said that they worked jointly with general equality organisations. Eleven organisations said that they do at least some joint working with organisations from other sectors, and three of these referred to unsuccessful attempts at developing work across the ME and LGBT sectors. Most organisations said that they would welcome more joint working with organisations from other sectors. Three said that they only actively pursued joint working within their own sector.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES: ME/LGBT partnerships

BEMIS and Equality Network:
This research project, the first on the intersection in Scotland.

LGBT Youth Scotland and Scottish Refugee Council:
During the time frame of this work, these two organisations have been discussing skills exchanges and referral criteria.

Ethnic Minority Law Centre and LGBT Youth Scotland:
These organisations are now doing joint work tackling youth discrimination.

5.6.3 Gaps and Challenge*s*

As within individual services, the development of partnerships between organisations is often focused on what will benefit the majority of the organisations' beneficiaries. Therefore partnerships that focus on minority groups, especially if these are within minority groups already, are seen as a low priority. This is exacerbated if there is little awareness around, lack of data on, and no collated evidence of need for, a particular focus of area such as the ME/LGBT intersection.

This is all currently taking place in an environment in which, as noted at the outset of this chapter, major changes are happening in how the equalities sector is structured. One LGBT organisation highlighted that the way in which the three previous equalities commissions operated and granted funding continues to pose challenges for cross sector partnerships today. For example, there are a lot more small community groups in the race sector so possible partners from outside the sector need to either deal with umbrella bodies or try to seek out individual small groups. The disability sector has clearer leadership bodies but not many community groups. These structural differences make it difficult for organisations to find parallels across strands and bring similar groups together. If there are not parallel groups, as in the above example, than they cannot be brought together:

"The different equality sectors are differently organised and funding bases are different so much cross strand pieces of work find it difficult to find a parallel. This is a difficulty from a commissioning level. For example, black organisations not asked about the sexual orientation of users or have any view around it but not vice versa."

(LGBT Organisation)

Simultaneously, people are trying to assimilate the implications of new duties and a new equality commission. So it is not surprising that equalities organisations and stakeholders on all levels are grappling with a variety of questions and not yet certain as to how best to move forward.

Organisations that have explored cross sector partnerships indicated a number of challenges to joint work within this climate. Firstly, they found it difficult to know who is best to build a partnership with if they are unfamiliar with the sector. A lack of previous partnerships or formal referral systems results in cross sector work being viewed as high risk. People are more likely to develop working relationships with individuals that they have had some previous contact with.

"We would like closer links with the LGBT Sector. We aren't sure who is doing what so don't know who the right people are to contact."

(Rights/Advice Organisation)

Secondly, organisations need the capacity to take on new work. If organisations are setting up partnerships across sectors, they not only need to free up staff time, but increase knowledge, skills and confidence in new areas. While some organisations feel comfortable with this in some strands, others noted that they need guidance on intersectionality.

Thirdly, issues around funding can pose different challenges. Dependence on funding creates a culture of competition between organisations that potential

partners need to turn into a focus on collaboration. Once this is overcome the partners have to convince funders as to the value of their proposed intersectional work. This can be challenging as some funding streams are strand specific and therefore can view single strand work as more attractive, lower risk or beneficial to more people.

Finally, if a champion for intersectional work within an organisation is successful in overcoming all of the above, their work is at a very high risk of being abandoned should they leave or complete their post. As many staff members are project based, this is a real risk.

5.6.4 Future Joint Working

"Gaps are for when people fall into both ME and LGBT; their needs tend to be looked at separately and organisations aren't switched on to addressing their needs when they overlap."

(HIV Organisation)

The challenges noted above are serious but not insurmountable. Most can be overcome with practical and simple measures. As long as there is the real will to adequately address intersectionality, none of these challenges should prevent effective joint working in the future.

Most of the challenges above stem from a lack of awareness and understanding around the ME/LGBT intersection, and intersectionality in general coupled with a lack of information and personal contact across sectors. This can be partially remedied with platforms for networking and information exchange. Opportunities for multi-strand conversations are quickly becoming more frequent, both nationally and regionally, through one off events and multi-strand forums. It is important that these valuable opportunities are taken up by all sectors and that organisers include intersectionality on their agendas. It is also important that these opportunities include both decision makers and frontline staff otherwise the dialogue is fractured. Good will must also be backed up by systematic support for this to happen.

These meetings allow for the development of contacts and conversations that can be developed into relationships where organisations can collaborate in promoting each other's services, developing cross strand referral systems and co-ordinate skills swaps, joint training and staff exchanges.

All of these will increase confidence and trust across sectors paving the way for more joint and intersectional work.

> "It's hard to pass on your vulnerable service users if you don't know the organisation or how good they are. You don't want people to have a bad experience. And we don't always know who we are supposed to send those types of people to."
>
> (Rights/Advice Organisation)

5.7 EQUALITIES POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Policies and practices in equalities organisations should be a good starting point for uncovering examples of best practice in employment. Therefore participating organisations were asked about their own equality policies and practices. It was hoped that this would help to identify whether the ME/LGBT intersection and/or intersectionality in general is being highlighted in employment, and if not, if there were any challenges in doing so.

In order to answer this, we asked:

- Are organisations' internal recruitment and equality policies sufficiently addressing this intersection? If not, how can they be developed?

5.7.1 Monitoring and Promoting Staff Diversity

> "We are very open about…
> you know…we would never tolerate any discrimination."
>
> (Advice/Rights Organisation)

Internal policies differ greatly as to what strands are being mentioned. Much of this variation depends on what data is required by funders, as this is often used as a guide by organisations. Not all interviewees could say if sexual orientation and/or gender identity are mentioned in their policies. In many cases sexual orientation was noted but not gender identity. Most of the non-LGBT organisations interviewed did not refer explicitly to both sexual orientation and gender identity but all LGBT organisations mentioned race and/or ethnicity.

This is not to say that LGBT organisations are any better at inclusion in their internal policies, but more an illustration of how the longer history of race equality and legislation has filtered into the common consciousness in a way that LGBT equality has not yet had time to. Despite this, a few organisations are still unsure as to what or how to monitor race and ethnicity. At least one

organisation interviewed is not including people from white minority ethnic backgrounds as ethnic minorities in their statistics.

In general, organisations that have a remit to cover multiple strands, and organisations with a higher percentage of diverse service users seem to be more confident in asking staff members diversity monitoring questions on sexual orientation. However, much more work and focus is still required around awareness and confidence around gender identity.

Three larger organisations interviewed all had internal social groups for ME and LGBT members of staff. These groups do not necessarily communicate regularly or overlap their activities.

5.7.2 Gaps and Challenges in Monitoring and Internal Policies

The case for diversity monitoring of staff (and service users) is not fully understood and/or believed by all. Most organisations are only monitoring in line with what is required by particular funders and only use the information for funding reports. Where monitoring information is being gathered, it is not always being used effectively and no organisations are processing monitoring data in a way that can highlight different intersections. Before diversity monitoring, and the use of monitoring data, can be improved, but doing so needs to be 'sold' more. Organisations need to be persuaded as to its necessity and benefits, what is best practice and how to explain all this to their staff members and service users.

Membership organisations face a further challenge in that the variations in the monitoring systems of their member organisations can make it impossible to collate accurate data on a national level.

Current policies and monitoring systems are focused on multiple, but parallel strands. Therefore individual strands and intersectionality are at risk of being left out. In fact, none of the interviewees said that their policies explicitly mentioned intersectionality and no organisations are extracting data on the intersectional identities of their staff from monitoring information. Ways to make both of these more practical and viable need to be explored.

5.7.3 Ideas for Future Policy Development

> "Our Board is currently reviewing our equal opportunity policies, for example it doesn't refer to sexual orientation, disability or age and we are conscious it needs updating."
>
> (Rights/Advice Organisation)

The gaps noted above in specific references to sexual orientation in policies may close as policies are reviewed, as sexual orientation becomes more recognised as an equality strand. However, more awareness is needed to be developed on the inclusion of transgender identities as some may still mistakenly believe that transgender identities are a part of, or covered by references to, sexual orientation. In both cases, some organisations said they would have to tackle fears and concerns from individual board and/or staff members before they could focus on the practicalities of policy change. Training and skill swaps may have a role to play in facilitating this.

No internal policies referred directly to intersectionality. A very large majority of organisations said that they were reviewing their policies. Some of these said that the interview had made them think about how to better include sexual orientation, gender identity and intersectionality in their next policy review.

5.8 CONCLUSION:
MAKING SERVICES MORE ME/LGBT FRIENDLY

Raising levels of awareness, stronger leadership on intersectionality, more inclusive training and effective partnerships will all automatically have knock on effects in making services more inclusive of intersectional identities and more ME/LGBT friendly.

However, interviewees also referred to a few specific interventions that are required to meet some of the particular needs of service users that may identify as ME/LGBT.

No organisations called for the creation of new separate services particularly for ME/LGBT people, but rather talked about expanding the awareness and capacity of existing services to address the ME/LGBT intersection and service users that may identify as being from this group. Doing so, will not only result in better and more inclusive service provision for ME/LGBT service users, but will promote a more individual, personal and sensitive approach to all service users.

Services that are assured that becoming more ME/LGBT friendly is possible and viable, will be better able to look at building capacity through accessing training and developing partnerships through some of the ways outlined above. These developments could close most of the current gaps in service provision, however further work is needed in relation to social support groups and case work.

> "We have heard from individuals that [in Scotland] there is no way of accessing a social network. We are finding loads of Scots in London – a "brain drain" of white Scots and Eastern European LGBT people."
>
> (LGBT Organisation)

According to at least one interviewee from an LGBT organisation, why ME/LGBT social support groups have not developed in Scotland needs to be investigated further. Questions need to be asked around why such groups do

not currently exist and if changes in the current environment need to be facilitated to allow such groups to develop. This may be best done through service user focused research and could be extended to include investigating support for friends and families of ME/LGBT people. If this is having an impact on where people choose to live also needs to be addressed in this. In relation to case work, if individuals are not currently presenting multiple discrimination cases, case workers can prepare for this eventuality by unpacking the issues around hypothetical cases in order to be better prepared for such situations.

Ideally, all of this will become easier with time if we collectively campaign our leaders and funders for the inclusion of intersectionality in national and funding policy, continue to tackle racism, homophobia and transphobia in our organisations and communities and endeavour to archive and record information on the ME/LGBT service users that we encounter. The proper involvement of people who may identify as ME/LGBT in this process will be key to its success.

Services need to take stock of how they may be perceived by possible users as discriminatory or difficult to access and decide what practical steps can be taken that would suit their particular situation and user profile. Organisations that participated in this research said that they would welcome guidance on how to make their services more ME/LGBT friendly. A toolkit, ideally as a complement to a face to face session, needs to be developed to offer suggestions on how to assess how ME/LGBT friendly a service is, what options can be taken to make a service more ME/LGBT friendly and different ways to signal to service users that the service is ME/LGBT friendly. Such a toolkit also needs to include ideas on how to raise awareness of intersectionality within the organisation and how to deal with any backlash from within the organisation and from service users.

Ultimately, the truly effective changes that will create more inclusive services will not be individual adjustments made in isolation, but systematic approaches that strive to tackle intersectionality holistically through both policy and practice. In other words, we need to look at how we can link up best practice in monitoring, employment and service provision so that they can work together to facilitate inclusivity and quality across the board.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Scottish Refugee Council: Action

Scottish Refugee Council identified the needs of LGBT people as being an example of intersectionality and people as experiencing multiple discrimination. Referrals were being made to LGBT agencies but it was found that very often they were inexperienced in working with service users from this background and wider minority ethnic issues. Capacity building was conducted in this area by mutual presentations and meetings to develop referral protocols, and in some instances joint case work meetings being held. The need to provide translated materials was also identified however this ambition was not realised due to the difficulties in securing funding in this area.

CHAPTER 6:

WE ARE NOT ALONE

Reflections on a roundtable discussion

6.1 OVERVIEW

"I loved hearing other people's stories that were so similar to mine it was scary. It reaffirmed that I'm not alone and I'm not a freak. It was so great to meet other people."

(Individual Delegate)

In order to explore in more detail what changes are needed to address the needs of people who may identify as ME/LGBT in Scotland, a half day roundtable discussion event was held in Glasgow in February 2009. This day built on the information gleaned from the literature review and interviews with both Scottish and English organisations. The roundtable was important in informing our ideas and suggestions for future developments, both in relation to policy and services.

The roundtable was attended by thirty six people – bringing together LGBT and ME organisations; equality, rights and advice organisations, statutory and voluntary sector bodies as well as half a dozen individuals who may identify as ME/LGBT.

It was the first event of its kind in Scotland. It represented an important milestone in itself, as it brought people together from diverse backgrounds to openly discuss the ME/LGBT intersection; a topic that for too long had not been openly discussed.

This chapter documents some of the key conversations from the roundtable, setting out the issues and ideas that were seen as the most important in taking ME/LGBT work forward in Scotland. [24]

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[24] Feedback from the roundtable participants is summarised in Appendix 6

Programme

The half day (3.5 hours) roundtable programme was preceded by a lunch which provided a networking opportunity. The formal programme began with short introductions from the Equality Network (Patrick Stoakes[25]) and BEMIS (Tanveer Parnez[26]). They both explained how and why their pioneering partnership had come about as well as how their commitment to equality for all was the motivation behind setting up this research project. Patrick Stoakes also acknowledged the important historical role that activists from ME backgrounds had played in the struggle for LGBT rights as well as the links between the anti-racist and LGBT movements.

Delegates were then addressed by Morag Alexander, Scotland Commissioner of the EHRC and Hilary Third from the Scottish Government Equality Unit. Both highlighted the importance of doing work across equality strands and how pleased they were that work around the ME/LGBT intersection is finally taking place in Scotland.

Tim Cowen[27] then gave an overview of the preliminary findings from the research already carried out, concluding his talk by emphasising the importance of this research not just being another research report that ends up on the shelf, but acting as a springboard for future work. Sam Rankin[28] facilitated a question and answer session that focused on the content of all the above presentations.

This led on to two round table discussions – both lasting around 30 minutes. Delegates were arranged into four groups, with a seating plan ensuring that each table contained people from different backgrounds and organisations. Each group had a facilitator and note-taker.

The discussions focused on two questions:

1) What would we like to see change in Scotland regarding the ME/LGBT intersection?

2) What can we, as organisations, do to make these changes happen?

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[25] CEO
[26] Director of National Development
[27] ME/LGBT Project Worker
[28] ME/LGBT Project Worker

The discussions were interspersed with short presentations from Fletcher Phiri[29] of the NAZ Project and Ajamu X[30] of Rukus! Federation, illustrating their experiences of and approaches to developing projects for ME/LGBT people in England.

The event concluded with a presentation from BEMIS on how they and the Equality Network hoped to help take ME/LGBT work forward in the future.

The full event programme is located in Appendix 5.

The following two sections are based on the notes taken during the discussion sessions.

"The contents were fascinating and there was so much more potential learning and discussion than time allowed. The English experience in particular deserved more exploration."

(Delegate Feedback)

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[29] Training Manager
[30] Co-Founder

6.2 CHANGES NEEDED

"I came out in Scotland seven or eight years ago, in a Sikh family and married at the time. There were no organisations that could help me. No one was aware of anything."

(Individual Delegate)

6.2.1 Focus

The first of the two discussions focused on the question **"What would we like to see change in Scotland regarding the ME/LGBT intersection?"**

The discussion sought to establish what areas are most important to tackle and what the priorities are in taking ME/LGBT work in Scotland forward.

Five key common themes emerged from the different discussion groups:

- the need to change attitudes
- the need for service development
- the need for better information
- the need to promote and celebrate intersectional identities
- the need to address discrimination within the workplace

6.2.2 Changing Attitudes

"We need to be able to talk to our families about our sexual orientation and gender identities."

(Individual Delegate)

Many delegates highlighted the importance of bringing about changes in attitudes, not just in relation to race, sexual orientation and gender identity as separate concepts, but also on the ME/LGBT intersection. There were calls for both racism on the LGBT scene to be examined and animosity towards LGBT people in ME communities to be addressed. An example cited of this was a backlash when LGBT specific information was included in an information pack for new migrants. The importance of dialogue around religion, race and LGBT identities in order to promote understanding was also raised.

It was noted by one delegate that LGBT representatives are all currently white and that the invisibility of ME/LGBT people could be combated through visible ME/LGBT role models. It should be noted that some people who identify as ME/LGBT are white. However the spirit of the point, that racially diverse LGBT representatives are needed, is no less important because of this.

Another delegate called for more publicity around LGBT people and this to be better integrated into mainstream media. They also noted that images of LGBT people in the media should not be scrapped under pressure from homophobic complaints like in the case of the Heinz mayonnaise advertisement[31].

Delegates were also keen to see a greater focus on and improved engagement with young people, especially by ME organisations. A concern was raised that ME organisations are not addressing many of the issues experienced by young people as they are not as active in the community organisations as the older generations are. At least two delegates called for programmes in secondary schools to tell young people that it is alright to be LGBT.

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[31] This advertisement, due to run for five weeks from June 2008, was pulled after one week following 200 complaints from the public. Complainants mainly said that two men kissing was inappropriate for children to see.

6.2.3 Service Development

> "The public sector always sees things as black and white,
> but cannot do grey."
>
> (Public Sector Delegate)

Services not understanding the issues affecting individuals who are ME/LGBT was cited as the biggest barrier for those individuals accessing services, particularly mainstream/public sector services. There was a strong consensus that further community based research is needed to increase understanding.

The need for proper consultation with individual ME/LGBT people was mentioned more than any other point. It was noted down at least six times across the groups. Delegates also emphasised the need for people from all different communities to participate in dialogue around the ME/LGBT intersection and in planning future services. It was important that this happens from the outset of any work carried out. This is important so that the work is informed by as many different and diverse ME/LGBT voices as possible and will allow more people to feel that they have a stake in the outcome of the work.

There was consensus that both existing statutory and voluntary services needed to do more to cater for people with multiple and complex needs. There were no calls for developing a full array of separate ME/LGBT specific services.

Many further points raised could apply to ME, LGBT, the intersection or just as easily to equality in general, and have been raised in many other arenas before. They include the need for changes in policy to feed down to service delivery level; and services remembering that one size doesn't fit all and that people come with layers of issues that should be reflected in the type of services delivered and how they are delivered. Delegates also noted the need for more funding; funding that moves beyond short term projects; and competition for funding not to negatively affect work and relationships between equality organisations.

There were repeated calls for more staff members to participate in awareness raising training. This was mentioned both in relation to service delivery and policy formulation.

Special mention was also made of the need to address crimes against people who may identify as ME/LGBT; more co-operation and promotion of LGBT rights within the Home Office; and supporting mainstream service providers such as Citizens Advice Bureaux to be able to advise everyone. One delegate also raised the need for better harmonisation of policing practices between England and Scotland.

There were strong and repeated calls for more collaboration between organisations and between sectors. Similarly, there were calls for better referral systems, shared approaches to training and improved communication between the ME and LGBT sectors.

Delegates highlighted the benefits of working from comprehensive holistic perspectives but also recognised the need for all sectors to understand the contexts and concerns of ME/LGBT people.

Although not the explicit focus of the first discussion, some groups also moved on to discuss specific ideas for future ME/LGBT work. There was strong support that this research be shared with mainstream providers and that the momentum that we are now building up be kept going. There were calls for a project or access point which can help people to access ME/LGBT resources and a safe environment in which ME/LGBT people (especially women) can be open.

It was suggested that development be taken one step at a time and a first step would be to tackle community attitudes by training people from the community to act as diversity champions. Others called for the development of tools for organisations on what to do and how to do it and research around what interventions make a difference.

6.2.4 Information

It was often highlighted that the key to facilitating changes in attitudes and services is increased quality information that is distributed more widely. There were requests for better access to information on religion, race, gender and

sexual orientation. The lack of a request for more information on gender identity could be an indication that there is a particularly large gap in awareness for information in this area.

Not surprisingly the internet was seen as playing a crucial role in distributing information. Its importance was also valued because it enables people to anonymously access information and communicate with people and services without having to reveal any aspect of their identity. One delegate highlighted the problems caused by LGBT sites and e-mails being blocked by internet service providers and firewalls because they are presumed to be pornographic. This was seen as a particular problem for public sector employees trying to research LGBT issues or contact LGBT groups. It was also suggested that more services should have Gaydar pages to use as a way of engagement. The Police Gaydar page was cited as a good example of how this can be done.

In order to make services more accessible, delegates noted that both services and service users need to know how to find each other. Some suggested that this could be better achieved through using a wider variety of media and venues to advertise. At least one delegate noted that advertising of LGBT and LGBT friendly services needs to move beyond LGBT venues and publications. This is because many people do not go to those venues or read those publications, especially ME/LGBT people because these venues and publications are very 'white'.

At least one discussion group explored the roles that language, terminology and definitions play in making information accessible. For one delegate, the leaving out of the B in BME made them feel like they were not represented, while another wanted to know why Black should get special mention and not Asian. Others said that they were unsure what "ME/LGBT" really encompasses and highlighted the importance of fully mapping out what it means and who it covered. Another delegate felt that it is more important to put time and energy into the delivery of outcomes rather than worrying over terminology. Overall there was a feeling that more clarity, explanation and consistency in the use of equalities terminology are needed, for example, the meanings of and differences between 'intersectionality', 'cross-strand' and 'multi-strand'.

6.2.5 Recognising and Celebrating Intersectional identities

The importance of recognising and celebrating different identities was discussed in detail in at least one group. Delegates emphasised how collecting and sharing ME/LGBT stories and linking ME and LGBT events (eg: Glasgay and Black History Month) could create positive multiracial role models, increase awareness of the intersection and promote cross sector communication. Equality organisations were urged to link up with cultural organisations to exhibit and debate a wider variety of ME identities. These debates need not necessarily be restricted just around the ME/LGBT intersection, but may also encompass what it means to be ME, notions of 'Scottishness' and 'Britishness' for ME people, and how different generations define their ethnicity and nationality.

6.2.6 Employment Practices

Delegates commented that policies in the workplace need to be more inclusive of the ME/LGBT intersection. Others called specifically for effective monitoring of sexual orientation by employers and addressing fears of and barriers to people being open about their sexual orientation in monitoring at work[32]. The Stonewall employers guide was highlighted as a useful tool; however it was noted that this does not help people who are too scared to come forward about their sexual orientation. It was suggested that something to complement this be created.

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[32] While not discussed by delegates, the authors would like to note that more specific work on the monitoring of gender identity is required.

6.3 MAKING CHANGES HAPPEN

6.3.1 Focus

The second discussion centred on the question **"What can we, as organisations, do to make these changes happen?"**

This session aimed to move the focus of the earlier discussion about what changes are needed, to exploring ideas for future service development and policy changes. It sought practical ideas as to how work can be taken forward by asking what organisations can do to contribute to this process.

The many points raised may sometimes lack detail. It is hoped that the reader will keep in mind that this part of the discussion was the very start of a conversation on seeking solutions and ideas for increasing capacity to better cater for ME/LGBT people in many different areas. The aim was not for organisations to make concrete commitments or detail how these ideas could be implemented, but to brainstorm possibilities.

The following common themes emerged:

- the importance of developing services across sectors
- the need for further research
- the importance of addressing issues for young ME/LGBT people
- ideas on promoting and celebrating intersectional identities
- ideas for future ME/LGBT specific work

6.3.2 Developing Services Across Sectors

Delegates were very aware that ME and LGBT people can largely be invisible to service providers. This invisibility is in regards to both service policy and delivery and therefore minorities are at high risk of not being catered for or taken into account. Two particular examples cited were young LGBT women and ME/LGBT men experiencing domestic abuse. Specific mention was also made with regards to health issues and safety, with delegates seeing people

who are ME/LGBT as being at high risk of physical harm or being taken to the doctors to be 'cured'.

Services were asked to stop believing that there are no ME and/or LGBT service users in particular areas as this unfairly restricts political will to provide inclusive services and information. Services were also asked to understand how mistreatment of ME people in one service leads to people mistrusting other services. For example, unsympathetic treatment of ME people by immigration officials can be misconstrued as police behaviour, which means that people may not consider entering the police force, or may be nervous of using police services.

Delegates also raised a number of points with regards to training, including the need for confidentiality training for reception staff and the need for skills based training that is focused around the needs of service users rather than just legal duties.

There was discussion around how and if community projects should link up with the Police and NHS. Some felt that bringing in respectable organisations gives smaller projects gravitas while others said that public institutions should be avoided as there may be issues with how they are perceived in communities. However, there seemed to be agreement that working across all strands keeps work more sustainable and that forums are a good way to build up links and share information. It was suggested that opportunities be developed for organisations to learn from each other.

6.3.3 Further Research

As detailed in the previous section, there was a strong consensus that further community based research was needed to hear directly from ME/LGBT people about their needs, aspirations and priorities for services. Ideas were shared about how to go about doing such research. At least one delegate warned against consulting only through unelected, self-appointed community leaders and suggested that meeting in community-based environments or venues could aid in avoiding this trap.

There was a call for research to be made accessible by it being delivered through voluntary sector organisations. One delegate suggested that services ask people "do you experience racism" and "do you experience homophobia"

rather than "are you gay". This way the focus is not on how people identify or classify themselves but on what they experience.

One delegate highlighted the importance of LGBT organisations participating in forced marriage consultations as ME/LGBT people may be at high risk of being forced into marriages as a 'cure'.

6.3.4 Young People

The importance of engaging with young people was again emphasised. One delegate suggested creating an LGBT Youth Charter so that LGBT issues can be included when dealing with young people while others reiterated that LGBT programmes in schools should be addressing the ME/LGBT intersection. Some suggested reaching out to young people via youth culture, eg: via DJs and club promoters. It was acknowledge that this would target mostly young people from the central belt. Another delegate suggested going through mainstream youth services, not just LGBT services to access young people.

6.3.5 Celebrating Intersectional identities

Ideas were exchanged as to how the diversity of people who may identify as ME/LGBT could be both acknowledged and celebrated. It was agreed that work is needed in order to develop a ME/LGBT history and archive, for example, by collecting oral histories. Delegates suggested raising the awareness of ME and LGBT history and linking in with ME/LGBT work happening in England. For example, the Black LGBT archive 'Sharing Tongues' devised by the Rukus! Federation.

Delegates also want to try to get beyond the "public face" for LGBT which is very white and stereotyped by holding events that celebrate ME/LGBT identities and running ME/LGBT events at pre-existing festivals. Events mentioned that could link up with each other and/or provide a platform for ME/LGBT events included Black History Month, LGBT History Month, Glasgay, and Refugee Week (for specifically LGBT asylum seekers and refugees).

It was also suggested that information be distributed via a range of cultural venues, not just LGBT clubs and that dialogue and information sharing with the Rukus! Federation continues.

It was also noted that the current youth cultures/clubbing cultures do not fit with all ME/LGBT identities so the LGBT club scene cannot be used as the only method to engage with people, especially people from ME backgrounds as these spaces are often very white. A multi-strand, multi-pronged approach is required.

6.3.6 Ideas For Future ME/LGBT Specific Work

Delegates recognised that further work is needed to be developed and sustained after this research project. It was suggested that a steering group of different organisations continues to lead work in this area and that further roundtable discussions be held to facilitate networking and communicating across and between different sectors.

Delegates suggested a wide range of activities for future work on the ME/LGBT intersection. There was a consensus that more community based initiatives are needed and that these should be developed through direct consultation with ME/LGBT individuals.

Several delegates expressed concern around a possible lack of resources, or a lack of political will to fund such work, limiting the capacity of any future intersectional work. Others expressed concerns that services remain constrained by a lack of funding. For example, it is difficult for services to overhaul their reception areas or make their buildings more welcoming without funds to do so.

Delegates suggested that the message be sent to funders that they have to match their rhetoric with reality. At the same time they suggested using the social enterprise model as an alternative way of raising funds as well as exploring actions that do not require funding to change. For example, putting in links to LGBT organisations on ME websites (and vice versa) and encouraging staff swaps between organisations to gain insights into each other's work.

Finally it was suggested that Scotland learn from best practice examples in England and review past successes within the LGBT and ME Sector. For example, looking at how people were accessed in less LGBT friendly communities in the past and how attitudes in these communities were changed.

6.4 CONCLUSION

"This research will be an integral starting point, we just can't stop.
To break down the myths and stereotypes we need the resources."

(Feedback from Delegate)

This exercise was productive in that it provided a preliminary platform for the exchange of ideas and concerns. It brought diverse organisations and people together in a safe space for the first time and achieved as much as one could expect from a very first discussion. This is reflected in the event satisfaction survey in which 94% of respondents rated the event as 'excellent' or 'good' overall and the same percentage said that the event enhanced their understanding of the issues affecting people who may identify as ME/LGBT. Full survey results are available in Appendix 6.

From the wide range of suggestions offered by delegates it is clear that work on this intersection in Scotland is possible. It is not the case that we do not have any thoughts on what we can do, and nobody is claiming that we are not able to tackle ME/LGBT related challenges or that 'nothing can be done'. Throughout the exercise there was a strong spirit of collaboration and some expressed a keen interest in contributing to taking ME/LGBT work forward. The event was also an example of how cross sector partnership work between the ME and LGBT strands is possible and can be fruitful.

As this was the first such event held around the ME/LGBT intersection in Scotland, it is not surprising that both discussions tended to focus on points relating to either the ME or LGBT strands and raised few points or suggestions aimed directly at the ME/LGBT intersection.

It is interesting to note the contrast of this with the direct focus on the intersection evident in our discussions with English organisations that had existing ME/LGBT projects and resulting differences in how intersectionality is recognised and conceptualised.

Of course this is in no way a like for like comparison, but is useful in highlighting how engagement with the ME/LGBT intersection is much more

that just talking about ME and LGBT as parallel strands. Noting that 'x is true for ME' and 'y is true for LGBT' therefore 'x + y must be true for ME/LGBT' does not always result in correct assumptions or address all ME/LGBT issues[33]. Thinking in this way is tempting but it does not address the complexities of multiple discrimination or acknowledge the intricacies of the infinite variations of the experiences of people who are ME/LGBT.

If we look at the language and focus of the ME/LGBT activists and professionals in England we note that their experiences (and personal identities) have resulted in a much richer understanding and discourse. One of our first steps in Scotland may therefore be to build an awareness and understanding of intersectional identities and start to work beyond ideas of focusing on 'primary identities'. This would be more in line with developing a holistic approach to policy and service development for multifaceted individuals, which in fact we all are.

It is difficult to clearly prioritise the many points raised by the roundtable or map out a single way forward from all these points. As little outward facing work[34] has been done on the intersection to date, there is a lot of groundwork and to be done before we can do this effectively. That noted, these conversations have highlighted some central messages for us all to keep in mind as we move forward.

The most unanimous of these is that individuals who may identify as ME/LGBT need to be consulted. The calls for creating of safe spaces or support groups were also popular with delegates and the gaps in training, data and information outlined above also need to be looked at. However, all the points that were raised by the delegates need to be explored in greater detail to access their practicality and applicability in Scotland. It was also acknowledged that in order to move this work forward, further resources and support need to be secured to ensure sustainability.

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[33] For example, having to 'choose' between aspects of identity or single strand services; current western concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity and behaviour not translating; and the complexities of multiple discrimination case.
[34] Initiatives that directly affect target beneficiaries as apposed to 'inward facing work' which directly develops the organisation itself.

"Attending the roundtable event was very worthwhile and beneficial, not just in terms of being motivational and a good networking opportunity, but it also highlighted the need for further research into this intersection and for that research to be put into action. The continuation of this project is needed to ensure this."

(Delegate from an organisation for minority ethnic women)

CHAPTER 7

THE WAY FORWARD

Conclusions

"For this research to mean anything, it has to be seen as the beginning of something, not just an end in itself. It has to be a springboard to change, and not just another research report that sits on a shelf."

(Everyone IN Project Worker)

7.1 OVERVIEW

Over a nine month period, our research has examined the level of understanding of the needs of and issues faced by people in Scotland who may identify as ME/LGBT. We have reviewed how key Scottish organisations have so far responded to these needs, both in terms of service provision, policy development and equalities monitoring. We have discussed their ideas for future work as well as their future training needs.

Our work has been informed by a major review of literature on issues ranging from the difference between intersectional and multiple discrimination; how previous research did or did not monitor both race and sexual orientation/gender identity and evidence of the specific needs of people who are ME/LGBT, for example, in relation to safety and community support. We have learnt from and been inspired by our visits to existing ME\LGBT Projects in England and discussed our early findings at a roundtable event which broke new ground by bringing together ME and LGBT organisations along with ME/LGBT individuals.

This research process has started many conversations, instigated possible new partnerships and has identified many gaps both in data and service provision.

This chapter brings together the different elements of our research and draws together the most important messages and key conclusions. It highlights not just the most important common themes to emerge from the different stages of this research, but some early or unexpected outcomes from actually carrying out the research. It also explains how equality for ME/LGBT people will not be achieved unless encouraging words of support are turned into concrete actions. Finally, it sets out ten guiding principles that need to be at the heart of any future ME/LGBT work and offers some initial recommendations as to how to build on such principles.

7.2 ANALYSIS

7.2.1 Key Themes

The literature review (Chapter 3); the research visits to both English (Chapter 4) and Scottish (Chapter 5) organisations; and the discussions at the roundtable (Chapter 6); generated many different ideas as to how best to promote equality for ME/LGBT people in Scotland. Some ideas are simple can be achieved with little or no extra resources, while others are more involved and require dedicated funding and support.

Throughout all the conversations, a number of key themes emerged.

Firstly at the heart of any service development or policy initiatives should be the **voice of ME/LGBT people themselves**. Chapter 4 documented how ME/LGBT projects in England had succeeded because they had actively involved individuals who are ME/LGBT in their planning, delivery and evaluation. Similarly, Chapter 6 revealed a strong consensus about the importance of involving ME/LGBT people and of not making assumptions or generalisations.

The constraints of our funding meant that all our research interviews took place with organisations rather than individual ME/LGBT people. Therefore the voices we heard were not those of the people for whom this report is ultimately seeking to help. This shortcoming perhaps influences the second key theme to emerge across all parts of the research: the need for **more concrete information, data and** the need for further community based **research**.

In Chapter 3 it was highlighted how there had been no previous research carried out in Scotland that examined the intersection of race with sexual orientation or gender identity. It was also shown that research reports that focused on ME or LGBT as individual strands had also failed to adequately address this intersection. In Chapter 5 specific data gaps were highlighted as a difficulty in extrapolating information relating to the ME/LGBT intersection. Even where there are separate data sets about race, sexual orientation and gender identity, it is difficult to fully analyse this in relation to the intersection. For example, there is some data available around health, but none of the

single strand data sets flag up the issue of "curative" measures as much as this intersectional discussion did.

Yet despite the gaps in knowledge and data, this was not seen by most as the main barrier to services actually being developed. The needs of people who are ME/LGBT cannot be addressed by research alone, and there are many lessons we can learn from both the findings of the literature review as well as our visits to existing projects in England. The consensus was that research should be carried out alongside, and not instead of, the **development of services and policies**.

Linked to this gap in data is another key emerging theme: the need for greater consistency in the way that Scottish equality organisations carry out **monitoring** and capturing data in relation to race, sexual orientation and, where appropriate, gender identity. Practice on this was very mixed, and there were repeated calls for clearer guidance. The most common reason given as to why such data has not been gathered was a lack of confidence amongst workers to tackle what was seen as a "sensitive" subject.

This leads us to another common theme: the **need for training** to equip staff members in both frontline and second tier agencies with the skills and confidence to better address the needs of ME/LGBT service users. Chapters 5 and 6 both reported a strong need for such training, delivered across all sectors and available equally to frontline staff, equality workers and senior managers/policy makers.

A consensus emerged from the research that what is needed is a boost to the **capacity and confidence of existing services** in Scotland rather than the creation of a whole new sector just for ME/LGBT people. This draws us into our next key theme; the need for **greater work across and between sectors**, and in particular for stronger partnerships between ME and LGBT organisations. Such partnerships are needed not only to break down barriers and increase understanding, but in order to pool limited resources and be able to offer more holistic and inclusive services to all members of ME and LGBT communities.

Within Chapter 3, the single strand research showed that ME and LGBT people often experience similar problems. For example, there were common findings relating to discrimination, poor housing and mental health. It is these

commonalities, together with shared agendas of working towards equality for all, that should inform and inspire such partnerships across sectors.

At the same time there is also a need to also work beyond these to **wholly engage with the intersection** so that issues and experiences specific to the intersection are not excluded. The primary examples of these being the complexities of multiple discrimination and the barriers experienced by ME/LGBT people when accessing single strand services.

The often repeated finding that people who are ME/LGBT are at risk of **discrimination** on more than one equality ground and that due to the intersectional nature of this discrimination, it can have damaging and long-lasting effects. There was widely felt to be an absence of safe spaces in Scotland where people can come forward to openly discuss their experiences of discrimination or harassment and a shortage of advice which was accessible, expert and able to tackle all aspects of a person's discriminatory experiences.

There was agreement across all the different parts of our research of the value of creating **safe spaces** in Scotland where ME/LGBT people could just be themselves; where they could find peer support as well as celebrate the different aspects of their identities and behaviours. Chapter 4 explained how such spaces could be created with very little funding, if organisations had commitment and a little creativity.

All of the above is more easily facilitated and coordinated with **commitment and leadership** at both a national policy level and at organisational level. This theme is examined in more detail in sections 7.2.3 and 7.3.

7.2.2 Early Progress

The actual process of carrying out this research has sown the seeds for future ME/LGBT work. This progress goes further than just having a report to act as a knowledge base for future work. By talking openly about an issue that has long been ignored, the research has already succeeded in getting issues around the ME/LGBT intersection higher up organisations' agendas.

By bringing together people from ME, LGBT and mainstream equality organisations, the research has already got people talking, not just about the

issues faced by individual service users, but about how organisations with little history of joint working can start working together.

This is very much the beginning of a process but it is encouraging to see small signs of change, even before this report has been completed.

Examples of early progress

- LGBT Youth Scotland and Scottish Refugee Council meeting to discuss closer working, staff exchanges and skills swaps, through their membership on this project's steering group.

- Ethnic Minority Law Centre developing links with UKLGIG, following on from our visit to EMLC where they said they were keen to have more LGBT cases referred to them and a request for help in accessing Scottish lawyers from UKLGIG.

- Citizens Advice Scotland contacting Equality Network to help them check that their LGBT information was up to date and correct following on from our research visit.

- Morag Alexander (EHRC Scotland Commissioner) asking researchers to deliver a presentation on the ME/LGBT intersection to EHRC staff.

- Researchers being invited by the UK Border Agency to spend a day with staff looking at how LGBT asylum cases are processed.

- Police representative attending roundtable, agreeing to bring ME and LGBT equality officers together to better understand crimes against people who may identify as ME/LGBT and researchers subsequently being invited to speak at LGBT Community Safety Forum.

- Two ME/LGBT women who came to the roundtable and stayed on at the social networking indicated interest in a ME/LGBT book club for women. They have also kept in touch and have become friends.

- Mental health users group seeing publicity about research, and agreeing to join our Steering Group to ensure mental health needs of ME/LGBT people can be better addressed.

In many ways, this shows that interventions to start to address the needs of people who are ME/LGBT can be simple and still have an impact. Work towards greater inclusion, equality and openness is as much about attitudes and the confidence and willingness to do more, as it is about resources, research and legislative changes.

All the above examples show the value of talking openly about the ME/LGBT intersection. It has not been as difficult as we first envisaged to get people to talk about issues that before the research started we were warned were "controversial", "taboo" and "going to ruffle a few feathers". Organisations have shown a willingness to explore gaps in their service delivery, to discuss ways their policies are falling short and to identify their future training needs as well as discuss the need to form new partnerships.

It is important that the momentum generated by this research is maintained, and for such small progress steps turn into bigger strides. It is equally important that there remains a focal point to help coordinate, inspire and inform such future progress. It is hoped that the continuing partnership between BEMIS and Equality Network will act as such a coordinating hub.

However, for equality for ME/LGBT people to be taken seriously it should be seen as the responsibility of the many, rather than the few and that the encouraging words of support are turned into concrete actions.

7.2.3 Moving from rhetoric to reality

Equality organisations, like those working with ME or LGBT communities, face a number of competing voices for their attention. They are constantly juggling priorities, struggling to meet demands and looking for funding to just keep existing services alive. They may often lack the time to stop and examine issues that are not seen as central to their core work. Such pressures have increased as moves to transform the way equalities work is done, coincide with a major economic recession that threatens to dry up many traditional sources of funding.

There is therefore a note of caution to be sounded within our conclusions. As much as were impressed by the willingness of organisations we visited to

engage with our work it is vital that people now match their positive rhetoric with productive action.

This research has provided organisations with a small window of time, in which the issues affecting ME/LGBT people have been explored. It led not just to a number of encouraging words, but some concrete ideas and promises.

These ranged from simple steps such as getting separate ME and LGBT staff networks to have shared events to promises to update equality policies that mentioned neither sexual orientation nor gender identity; from a willingness to participate in future ME/LGBT awareness raising training to reviewing how marketing can be made more ME/LGBT friendly.

The visits to Scottish organisations also uncovered as many examples of good work and good ideas as there were gaps and possible ways of doing things better.

It is important for the many positive statements made about moving forward are used to take the next step; putting them into action and thereby maintaining this momentum. It would be interesting to return to the organisations visited in twelve or eighteen months time to see what changes, if any had occurred.

At the same time, there remains both a real opportunity and a real need for leadership at a higher level. Without strong messages of support from both the EHRC and Scottish Government; without there being both a carrot (in terms of providing sufficient resources) and a stick (in there being some way of ensuring improvements or changes in service delivery) it is likely that ME/LGBT work may not be prioritised in all but a few of the organisations we visited.

7.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our research has enabled us to identify a number of key areas where future work is needed to bring about greater equality for people who are ME/LGBT in Scotland. Given the previous absence of any sustained or meaningful ME/LGBT work in Scotland, it can be difficult to know where to start in filling the gaps, both in service provision and knowledge.

Yet to have such a blank page to start from offers as many opportunities as is does challenges. It is clear that such work needs to be informed by the successes of existing ME/LGBT projects in England, the views of the Scottish organisations we visited and the evidence gathered during our literature review. The way that future ME/LGBT work is approached and delivered is crucial to its success. To enable the process of bringing this about seem more manageable, we have identified ten guiding principles which should remain at the core of future ME/LGBT work in Scotland.

Leadership
Involvement
Research
Coordination
Partnership
Information
Development
Access to Justice
Social Support
Celebration

7.3.1 Leadership

There is a clear role for both the EHRC and Scottish Government take a strong leadership role in future ME/LGBT work in Scotland. This could be done at a variety of levels including:
- promoting best practice in relation to monitoring, use of language, development of equal opportunities policies amongst both frontline and second tier organisations
- contributing to the dissemination of the findings from this research

- consider directly commissioning or funding future initiatives that are aimed at promoting ME/LGBT inclusion and equality
- offering guidance to other cross-strand research projects about how best to approach issues relating to intersectionality

There is also a need for leadership from national second tier ME, LGBT and rights organisations. They have a responsibility to lead by example and inspire change not just within their own organisations, but throughout the smaller community based organisations they serve and represent.

7.3.2 Involvement

It is vital that future ME/LGBT work in Scotland is directly informed by the views and experiences of ME/LGBT individuals. This could be achieved in a number of ways, including through:
- the commissioning of further research carried out at a community level
- support being provided to individual ME/LGBT users of existing mainstream, ME or LGBT services, to ensure that they feel confident, safe and able to contribute directly to the development of future ME/LGBT services

In order to encourage a greater involvement of ME/LGBT individuals it is also important that:
- there is greater consistency in the use of language around equalities by organisations in all sectors, and that this language be made more accessible and meaningful to lay-people
- there is an increase use of real life stories, case-studies and testimonies as methods for illustrating the damaging effects of intersectional discrimination
- a strategy is formed to encourage greater representation of ME/LGBT individuals in media reporting of issues relating to equalities and discrimination.

7.3.3 Research

To increase our understanding of the full range of issues that affect ME/LGBT individuals in Scotland, it is clear that further research is needed. This should

carried out a community level and be based around speaking directly to ME/LGBT individuals. Research should be carried out alongside, and not instead of, the development of services and policies. Although there are gaps in data and knowledge, this should not be used as an excuse for doing nothing.

- In the first instance it is important that this research is as inclusive as possible and acknowledges the diverse backgrounds of ME/LGBT people. For example, in terms of ethnic background, age, gender and gender identity, religion and geographical location.

- However it is also necessary to carry out further more targeted research to look in depth at the particular experiences of groups of ME/LGBT people who are seen at greatest risk of discrimination, exclusion or harassment. This could, for example, include studies that focus on women, on asylum seekers/refugees, on young people and on ME/LGBT people in rural areas.

- Similarly, it is important that broader studies that focus on issues such as mental health, hate-crimes, domestic violence adequately include reference to people who are ME/LGBT.

7.3.4 Coordination

There is a need for a central point of contact in order to ensure that information relating to the ME/LGBT intersection is disseminated and any future initiatives that take place are coordinated. This is also needed to ensure that supportive words from organisations can be turned into real commitments and definite actions.

- With the absence of anyone else taking a prominent lead on ME/LGBT issues, it is important that the partnership between the Equality Network and BEMIS continues, and that the Everyone IN Project (or an equivalent) continues to act as such a coordinating hub.

- At the same time the responsibility for actual delivery of ME/LGBT work must be seen as the responsibility of all organisations and sectors and not just that of a coordinating body.

7.3.5 Partnership

In order for equality to be achieved for people who are ME/LGBT it is necessary to unite people from different backgrounds and organisations from different sectors. A broad partnership of agencies, individuals and activists is needed in order to ensure that this work is done. This multi partner approach is crucial and should encompass mainstream organisations, statutory services as well as organisations working in the voluntary and equalities sectors.

The voices of ME/LGBT individuals should remain prominent within this partnership, which must work across faiths and cultures and not be confined to Scotland's central belt or major cities.

In order to encourage work across sectors, creative ways need to be found to break down barriers and encourage more joint working. Initial steps to bring this about could include:

- facilitation of staff swaps, whereby staff from ME organisations spend time shadowing work of LGBT organisations and vice versa
- encouragement of reciprocal training arrangements, whereby places on ME training courses are provided free of charge in return for a place on LGBT training and vice versa
- placing of links to ME and LGBT organisations on each other's websites
- that larger organisations who already have both ME and LGBT staff networks be encouraged to bring these two networks together at shared events
- Forums and networks can play key roles in developing contacts, trust and partnerships

7.3.6 Information

It is clear that more information is needed to be made available to both ME/LGBT individuals about services available and to organisations about

issues faced by such individuals. In order to achieve this it is recommended that:

- a web resource be developed as a central point of contact for any projects supporting people who are ME/LGBT and for any individuals wishing to access such services
- a series of information resources be developed in consultation with ME/LGBT individuals which could be used as part of campaigns to tackle both homophobia and racism
- information resources also be developed that are aimed at members of the public, equality organisations and legal representatives, which can act as a guide as to how to seek redress if a person has experienced multiple discrimination and on how people can best access legal help.
- that the specific needs of people who do not have English as a first language are taken account of and information resources including web content are translated into appropriate languages

7.3.7 Development

Our research revealed a consensus about the need to boost the capacity of existing services rather than to create brand new services. Progress towards this could be achieved through:

- the development of a toolkit highlighting good practice in relation to issues such as monitoring and intersectionality
- the availability of expert advice to organisations wishing to make their services more ME/LGBT friendly
- funding being made available for organisations wishing to do more work in relation to the ME/LGBT intersection
- public recognition of ME/LGBT work via an annual ME/LGBT award similar to that already operating in England

In order to boost the confidence and capacity of existing services to better meet and include people who are ME/LGBT in both their service provision and policy development, a skills-based training programme is also needed. An initial training programme should:

- be piloted amongst ME, LGBT and mainstream organisations
- available to frontline workers, managers and senior policy makers
- include topics such as confidentiality, appropriate use of language, interview skills and cultural awareness

There is also a vital need to address barriers to accessing existing services caused by a shortage of provision of high quality interpreting services. Consideration should be given to developing a pool of specialist or accredited interpreters, who are provided with training in order that they are confident to cope with sensitive issues around culture, sexual orientation, gender identity and confidentiality.

7.3.8 Social Support

There was strong evidence from both our literature review and our visits to organisations in England, about the important role that social support groups can play in reducing isolation amongst ME/LGBT individuals. No such support groups openly exist in Scotland. The potential value and options for locating safe spaces/social support groups should be further explored. This could be done through:

- the piloting a social support group either in Edinburgh or Glasgow, to run for a twelve month period along similar lines to those already operating in Manchester or Bradford
- existing ME and LGBT organisations to be encouraged to run similar, more targeted social support groups, targeting for example, asylum seekers/refugees, young people or women

7.3.9 Access to Justice

It is important that the difficulties of the current "one ground" approach of bringing discrimination cases are tackled, both in legislation, policy and legal test cases. As a first step we recommend that a series of information resources be developed that are aimed at members of the public, equality organisations and legal representatives. These resources could act as a guide as to how to seek redress if a person has experienced multiple discrimination and on how people can best access legal help.

Such resources are needed not just on the intersection of race with sexual orientation and gender identity; but could also be used as part of a wider

campaign to highlight the inadequacies of current legal protection offered to people whose identities do not easily fit into a single strand.[35]

There is also a real need for the voices and real life experiences of people who are ME/LGBT to be heard by policy makers, lawyers, funders, rights and advice organisations and the equalities sector as a whole. The promotion of good practice through schemes such as STUC diversity champions, should continue alongside a much more determined and visible campaign to challenge multiple and intersectional discrimination.

7.3.10 Celebration

Finally it is also important that the diversity of Scotland's ME/LGBT community is celebrated. Greater recognition is needed to be given to their multi-faceted cultural identities and heritages. This can be achieved in many ways, including through greater collaboration between ME and LGBT focused arts projects and exploiting the opportunities presented through Black History Month, Refugee Week, LGBT History Month and Pride.

There also needs to be an acknowledgement of ME/LGBT people in their own right and not just as a subset of ME and/or LGBT people. It is important that further links are developed with existing ME/LGBT arts projects in England and consideration should be given to the practicality and impact of Scotland creating its own ME/LGBT social archive.

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[35] As noted in Chapter 3; in April 2009, the UK government published a discussion paper on a proposal to change the law to give better protection from direct discrimination on two grounds together. See Government Equalities Office, 'Equality Bill: Assessing the impact of a multiple discrimination provision. A discussion Document' April 2009 (www.equalities.gov.uk) Accessed in April 2009

7.4 CONCLUSION

This research has broken new ground by getting people talking about issues that for too long have gone unexplored. The research is very much the start of a conversation and the beginning of a process.

Both Equality Network and BEMIS remain committed to taking a lead on this process, but they alone cannot bring about the changes needed to help achieve full equality for people in Scotland who may identify as ME/LGBT.

This work is not just the responsibility of ME or LGBT organisations. It is not just the responsibility of equality organisations or the eighteen Scottish organisations we visited.

For equality to be achieved, it has to be seen as the responsibility of all sectors and services. How an ME/LGBT individual is made to feel welcome at a police station, a GP surgery or a council office is every bit as vital as how they are welcomed at an ME or LGBT voluntary organisation.

At the time of writing, the Everyone IN Project has secured extension funding until September 2009 from the Scottish Government to enable the dissemination of our research findings and to help us draw up an action plan of how to take forward ME/LGBT work in Scotland. This plan will be underpinned by the ten guiding principles set out above.

Over the coming months we will be reaching out to as many organisations as possible to see how they can help to take forward the momentum of this report. Although the Equality Network and BEMIS can continue to act as the stimulus for change, for that change to be achieved there needs to be collaboration and commitment across all sectors.

Without such a broad partnership and without actions as well as words, ME/LGBT people in Scotland will continue to remain **stranded.**

"This work is long overdue."

(Rights/Advice Organisation)

APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

BEMIS: Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland

BME: Black and Minority Ethnic / **ME:** Minority Ethnic
"In recent years, attempts have been made to acknowledge that ethnicity is a characteristic of all individuals and groups, majorities and minorities alike. In the past the term 'ethnic minority' tended to suggest that the minority or marginalised status of such a group arose from its 'possession' of ethnicity itself, rather than to the low value ascribed to its particular ethnicity in the wider, 'majority' cultural/ethnic environment. The use of 'minority ethnic' as an alternative term goes only some way to improving matters. It draws attention to the commonality of ethnicity and indicates that it is the non-inclusion of particular types of ethnicity which results in minority (i.e. relatively powerless) status. However, it remains a code for 'visible minorities' rather than minorities in general (e.g. Gaelic speakers or adherents to the Catholic faith)." (http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/03/mepess/4)

CAB: Citizens Advice Bureau

EHRC: Equality and Human Rights Commission

LGBT: Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender.

Androgyne / Bigender / Polygender People: refers to people who identify their gender as not conforming to the traditional western model of gender as binary. They may identify their non-binary gender as a combination of aspects of men and women or alternatively as being neither men nor women.

Asylum Seeker: An asylum seeker is someone who has lodged an application for protection on the basis of the Refugee Convention or Article 3 of the ECHR. An asylum-seeker is someone of any age who has fled his or her home country to find a safe place elsewhere. Under the 1951 Convention on Refugees, an asylum applicant must be able to demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin for reasons of political

opinion, religion, ethnicity, race/nationality, or membership of a particular social group. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that they are unable to obtain any protection or assistance from their own national authorities.

Bisexual: refers to someone who is emotionally and sexually attracted to women and men.

Crossdressing / Transvestite People: refers to people who dress, either occasionally or more regularly, in clothes associated with the opposite gender, as defined by socially accepted norms. Cross-dressing people are generally happy with the gender they were labelled at birth and usually do not want to permanently alter the physical characteristics of their bodies or change their legal gender.

Gay: refers to someone who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of the same gender. Some women prefer to refer to themselves as gay women, but lesbian is the word more often preferred by women, and the word gay is sometimes used just to refer to men.

Illegal Immigrant: refers to immigration across national borders in a way that violates the immigration laws of the destination country.

Intersex People: refers to people born with external genitals, internal reproductive systems or chromosomes that are not considered clearly either male or female. There are lots of different intersex conditions.

Lesbian: refers to a woman who is emotionally and sexually attracted to other women.

ME/LGBT: Abbreviation for Minority Ethnic Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender. Used in reference to both the intersection of race with sexual orientation and gender identity and to people who may identify or think of themselves as from being from an minority ethnic and sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

MEP: Member of the European Parliament

Migrants: move from one country or region to another and settle there.

MP: Member of the UK Parliament

MSP: Member of the Scottish Parliament

Straight: refers to someone who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of a different gender.

Transgender or Trans People: refers to a whole range of people who find their gender identity or gender expression differs in some way from the gender assumptions made by others about them when they were born. The umbrella terms transgender people and transgender people can include: transsexual people, intersex people, crossdressing/transvestite people and androgyne/polygender people.

Transsexual People: refers to people who consistently self-identify as the opposite gender from the gender they were labelled at birth. Depending on the range of options available to them during their lives, most transsexual people try to find a way to transition to live fully as their self-identified gender. Most, but not all, transsexual people will take hormones and some also undergo surgery to make their physical body match their gender identity better.
A female-to-male (FTM) **trans man** is someone who was labelled female at birth but has a male gender identity and therefore transitions to live permanently as a man.
A male-to-female (MTF) **trans woman** is someone who was labelled male at birth but has a female gender identity and therefore transitions to live permanently as a woman.

Refugee: A refugee is a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country…' (Definition quoted from the 1951 Refugee Convention) A refugee is someone whose asylum application is successful.

UKBA: UK Border Agency

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APPENDIX 3: DETAILS OF ME/LGBT PROJECTS VISITED IN ENGLAND

Sector	Organisation	Description
LGBT	Manchester Lesbian and Gay Foundation www.lgf.org.uk	run social support group for people who are ME/LGBT
LGBT	Bradford Equity Partnership www.equitypartnership.org.uk	run social support group for ME/LGBT and starting new ME women's project
Arts	Rukus! Federation London www.rukus.co.uk	create, celebrate and promote black gay art and heritage projects
LGBT Housing	Stonewall Housing London www.stonewallhousing.org	specialist housing advice and provision of short term housing for LGB people who from ME backgrounds
Asylum / refugee	UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group London www.uklgig.org.uk	training, policy work and representation on asylum claims for LGBT asylum seekers
Faith	Imaan London www.imaan.org.uk	support, information and advocacy for Muslim LGBT people
Trans	volunteer from FTM[36] London www.ftmlondon.org.uk	experience of supporting some trans individuals from ME background
HIV/ Health	NAZ Project London www.naz.org.uk	projects include health promotion work with young African men who have sex with men, social support group for SE Asian lesbians, plus range of advocacy, support and training re sexual health/HIV

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[36] Acronym for Female to Male

APPENDIX 4:
DETAILS OF SCOTTISH ORGANISATIONS VISITED

Sector	Organisation	Type of service
Equalities	Engender www.engender.org.uk	second tier
	Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) www.equalityhumanrights.com	second tier
	Scottish Government Equality Unit www.scotland.gov.uk	second tier
	Scottish Trades Union Congress www.stuc.org.uk www.oneworkplace.org.uk	second tier + frontline
LGBT	Equality Network www.equality-network.org	second tier
	LGBT Youth Scotland www.lgbtyouth.org.uk	frontline
	Scottish Transgender Alliance www.scottishtrans.org	Second tier + frontline
	Stonewall Scotland www.stonewallscotland.org.uk	second tier
ME	Black Ethnic Minority Infrastructure Scotland (BEMIS) www.bemis.org.uk	second tier
	Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO) www.cemvo.org.uk	second tier
	Scottish Alliance of Racial Equality Councils (SAREC) www.wsrec.co.uk www.grec.co.uk www.centralscotlandrec.org.uk www.elrec.org.uk	second tier
Rights/ Advice	Citizens Advice Scotland www.cas.org.uk	second tier + frontline
	Ethnic Minority Law Centre www.emlc.org.uk	Frontline
	Positive Action in Housing www.paih.org	Frontline
	Scottish Refugee Council www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk	Frontline
HIV	Terrence Higgins Trust www.tht.org.uk	Frontline
	Waverley Care www.waverleycare.org	Frontline
	HIV Scotland www.hivscotland.org	second tier

APPENDIX 5: ROUNDTABLE PROGRAMME

1:30 – 1:40	Welcome
1:40 – 2:00	Opening Speeches
	Morag Alexander, EHRC
	Hilary Third, Scottish Government Equality Unit
2:00 – 2:20	Research Presentation
2:20 – 2:30	Questions
2:30 – 3:00	Roundtable Discussion in Groups
3:00 – 3:20	Tea Break
3:20 – 3:30	The English Experience Presentations
3:30 – 4:00	Roundtable Discussion in Groups
4:00 – 4:20	Questions and Comments
4:20 – 4:30	Taking the Work Forward
4:30 – 4:35	Thank you and Close

APPENDIX 6: ROUNDTABLE EVALUATION AND DIVERSITY MONITORING

Event Evaluation

A satisfaction survey was conducted at the end of the roundtable. Sixteen responses (45%) were submitted. Feedback from this survey indicated that:

- 94% (15/16) of respondents rated the event as 'excellent' or 'good' overall[37]
- 94% (15/16) of respondents said that the event enhanced their understanding of the issues affecting people who may identify as ME/LGBT
- 81% (14/16) of respondents indicated that they felt their views were fairly and accurately represented and rated the discussion sessions as 'excellent' or 'good'
- 81% (14/16) of respondents said that the event provided them with opportunities to identify new potential partnerships or new ways of accessing support
- 38% (6/16) of respondents said that they had never before attended an event organised by the Equality Network.
- 81% (13/16) of respondents said that they had never before attended an event organised by BEMIS.

The survey respondents identified themselves as representing:
1 – LGBT Charity
2 - ME Charity
2 – Equalities Charity
1 – Other Charity
5 – Individual
0 – ME/LGBT individual
4 – Public Body
1 - Other

It is interesting to note that while the event was attended by some brave individuals who were eager and willing to discuss their personal experiences with strangers, none of the survey respondents identified themselves as

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[37] 15/16 participants so rated the event overall, the speakers and presentation, the event organisation and the venue and refreshments. 14/16 said that the event met their expectations.

ME/LGBT individuals. The reasons behind this should be looked into further to ascertain if this was because those individuals did not complete the survey; if the term 'ME/LGBT' is too loaded or not appropriate; if respondents preferred to identify as 'individual' for some other reason (maybe because it seemed too formal or people didn't know the reason why the question was being asked) or if the question could have been better designed.

After the roundtable all delegates were invited for an informal social session. About a third of all delegates attended this session, mainly individuals who may identify as ME/LGBT but also representatives from both the ME and LGBT sectors. This session lasted for three hours; indicating just how much people have to talk about and how rare such opportunities to do so are.

After the event the organisers received much positive verbal feedback. However, it should also be noted that at least one delegate found the Rukus! Federation logo offensive and at least one delegate found the satisfaction survey and diversity monitoring forms too long.

Diversity Monitoring

About a third of delegates (twelve) submitted their diversity monitoring forms. Data collected from these indicated that these respondents identified themselves as follows:

Ethnic Identity[38]:

Asian, Asian Scottish, Asian British, or any other Asian background:
Indian – 2
Black, Black Scottish, Black British, or any other Black background:
Black African – 1
Mixed – 1
White Scottish[39] – 7
Other White Background – 1 (not specified)

Sexual Orientation:
Bisexual – 2[40]

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[38] Ethnic categories used were based on the Scottish Census 2001 and listed alphabetically
[39] No respondents identified themselves as White British

Gay Man – 4
Gay Women/ Lesbian – 3
Heterosexual/Straight – 3
Other – 0

Gender Identity:
Men (including FTM[41] trans men) – 3
Women (including MTF[42] trans women) – 7
Other gender identity - 1
Have you ever identified as a transgender person?
No – 8
Yes – 3

Age:
16 – 24 years – 2 people   25 – 34 years – 4 people
35 – 44 years – 5 people   45 – 54 years – 0 people
55 – 64 years – 1 person   65 – 74 years – 0 people
75+ years - 0 people

Religious Identity:
No Religion – 7
Atheist – 1
Christian – 2
Hindu – 2

Location:
Postcodes:
EH1; EH4; EH7; EH9; EH18; EH49
G2; G3; G4; G44
ML4
PA19

Disability:
1 person considered themselves to have a learning disability
11 people considered themselves not to have a disability

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[40] One respondent noted "I consider myself bisexual yet still cannot be open about it"
[41] Female to Male
[42] Male to Female

APPENDIX 7: STEERING GROUP MEMBERS

Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service
Sitki Nalci, Minority Communities Service Development Project

Engender
Marion Lacey, Member

LGBT Youth Scotland
Mhairi Logan, Head of Policy and Mainstreaming
(previously Nico Juetten, Policy Manager)

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
Nuzhat Mirza, Health Improvement Officer

Royal Mail, West of Scotland
Shaheen A Safdar, Operational Diversity Manager

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisation (SCVO)
Linda Anderson, Development Officer

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
Leah Granat, Public Affairs Officer

Scottish Government
Kelly Abel, Equality Unit division

Scottish Refugee Council
Joe Brady, Operations Manager

Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)
Zaffir Hakim, Development Manager, One Workplace Equal Rights

Waverley Care, African Health Project
Tarsisio Nyatsanza, Training and Development Worker

For more information

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www.bemis.org.uk

EHRC
The Optima Building
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Glasgow
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Tel 0845 604 5510
www.equalityhumanrights.com