

Domestic Violence

A resource for
bisexual women in
Brighton and Hove



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Acknowledgements

This resource has been written to begin explicitly addressing the needs of bisexual women who experience domestic violence.

It is one of a series of five booklets about domestic violence as it affects lesbians, gay, bisexual men and women and trans people in Brighton and Hove.

The resource has been written and produced by the Brighton and Hove LGBT DV & A Working Group. We would like to thank and acknowledge work of AVA formerly the Greater London Domestic Violence Project and Barking and Dagenham PCT, who originally developed a leaflet for lesbian and bisexual women.

Thanks are particularly due to the Allsorts, Brighton Both Ways, Clare Project, DV Forum, Gender Trust, MindOut, DV Strategic Co-ordinator, Rise, Spectrum and Switchboard.

Most importantly of all, we want to acknowledge and express our gratitude to those who have contributed from their personal experience to help make this a useful resource.

'They love me, they love me not...'

Bisexual women experience domestic violence regardless of age, caring responsibility, class, disability, gender identity, immigration status, race or religion.

Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour characterised by the exercise of control by one person over another within the context of an intimate or family relationship.

Domestic violence can be difficult to identify, especially for the person experiencing it. People sometimes misunderstand domestic violence and think it is only physical violence when actually it can be emotional, financial and/or sexual abuse.

When domestic violence is happening in a bisexual woman's relationships, it may be even harder to name these behaviours as abusive. Talking about domestic violence in either intimate or family relationship is never easy.

People don't tend to talk about violence and abuse between women. So if you are a bisexual women in an abusive relationship with another woman it is often harder to talk about the abuse or violence that is happening because the idea of a current or former female partner being the 'abuser' can be difficult to accept; or it may be felt or feared that the abuse is somehow 'deserved' or caused by your bisexual lifestyle. – **NOT TRUE**

In this resource we refer to bisexual women, although we recognise that women will identify themselves in many ways including (but not limited to) bi, gay, queer, as women who have sex with women, or women who have sex with men, or women who have sex with men and women.

Bisexual women may be abused by a former or current heterosexual partner, a former or current same-sex partner or by other family members; perhaps after they have come out and go into their first bisexual relationship. In some cases, abusers will use the process of 'coming out' as an additional form of control. This can be particularly difficult where children are involved.

Regardless of the relationship, an abuser will often manipulate their victim so that they feel they are to blame for the abuse. An abusive partner may say, 'This is how it is in a bisexual woman's relationship'.

Other times, they may say that abuse only happens in 'real' heterosexual relationships and can't happen between two women or in a bisexual relationship.

If an abuser is a former or current heterosexual partner or family member, they may say the abuse is deserved because someone started a relationship with another woman or came out as a bisexual.

Abusers often promise to change their behaviour. Hoping for that positive change can keep a victim from identifying the pattern of abuse in the relationship. Abusers may also try to make their victim think they are responsible for any abusive behaviour (see 'What to expect' later in this leaflet).

Beware if someone is showing you this information to try and prove to you that you are an abuser. There is no checklist that can determine whether someone is an abuser; one needs to consider the entire relationship and individual incidents in context.

If you are unsure, talk it over with someone who you consider to be objective – or contact a domestic violence helpline or service (there are contacts at the end of this leaflet). If you are in immediate danger, call **999**.

Trans Women

While this leaflet may be useful for trans women who are also part of bisexual communities, we acknowledge that trans people may have specific needs and experiences that have not been addressed within the pages of this booklet. For more information on trans issues see the separate resource ‘Domestic Violence – A resource for trans people in Brighton and Hove’

For more information on trans issues contact the Gender Trust (www.gendertrust.org.uk), a UK organisation that supports anyone affected by gender identity issues.

Alternatively, the Survivor Project is an American non-profit organisation dedicated to addressing the needs of intersex and trans survivors of domestic and sexual violence; www.survivorproject.org.

Am I being abused?

How can you determine whether you're being abused? Every relationship is different and many relationships have rough patches with arguments and other turmoil.

But, a relationship becomes abusive when there is a pattern of behaviour that means one person is exerting power and control over another.

Abuse in an intimate relationship (regardless of the gender of the abuser or whether they are a current or former relationship) or from a family member takes many forms, including physical, emotional, financial and sexual abuse.

While everyone's experience is unique, some examples of behaviour that a former or current partner or family member might use to abuse you include:

- Keeping you from spending time with friends or family members;
- Making you account for your time when apart from them;
- Being excessively jealous and possessive;
- Threatening to out you at work, to your family or to others;
- Making unreasonable demands for your attention;
- Blaming you for all the arguments or problems in the relationship;
- Wanting to make all the decisions;
- Invading your privacy – opening and reading mail, e-mail or going through personal belongings;
- Getting angry for no apparent reason;
- Acting like two different people – one is charming or loving, the other is mean and hurtful;
- Lying in order to confuse you;
- Criticising, ridiculing, humiliating or belittling you;
- Controlling your finances or acting like they are entitled to your financial support;
- Damaging your property;
- Harassing you at work or school;

Am I being abused?

- Criticising your body and appearance.
- Preventing you from practicing safer sex.
- Forcing or coercing you to have sex or hurting you during sex.
- Becoming angry if you don't go along with their sexual demands.
- Blaming their behaviour on alcohol, drugs or their own history of abuse.
- Pressuring you to use alcohol or other drugs.
- Threatening you with physical harm or makes you feel afraid.
- Pushing, shoving, grabbing, punching, hitting or striking you with hands or fists.
- Threatening or assaulting you with weapons, such as household objects or knives.
- Manipulating you with the constant threat of mood changes and impending rage.
- Leaving you feeling like you're 'walking on egg shells' or living with constant stress, anxiety or fear.

If you are experiencing abuse from a former heterosexual partner or family member, the types of abusive behaviour may include those listed above but the context will change.

For example, you are less likely to be spending as much time with a former heterosexual partner. But the intention remains the same - to exert power and control.

Abusive behaviour in this situation may be particularly focused around stalking and harassment; attempts to make you behave in a certain way; to stop you accessing bisexual or other LGBT spaces or efforts to stop you seeing a current partner.

Threats or actual sexual violence may also be something that a former heterosexual partner uses, with these potentially directed towards you and any current partner.

Using someone's sexuality to abuse

While much of the abuse described above is similar to that experienced by heterosexual women, bisexual women can also experience unique forms of abuse based on their sexuality.

An abuser can use the fact that their victim is a bisexual women. These can include:

- Threatening to 'out' i.e. to disclose your bisexuality or gender identity without their consent, for example to their employer, family or community;
- Becoming abusive if you have not disclosed your bisexuality to them.
- Criticising you for not being a 'real bisexual woman', for example if you have only recently come out or on the basis of your previous relationships;
- Play on fears that no-one will help because you 'deserve' the abuse; or
- Play on the belief that agencies (like the Police) are either homophobic or biphobic.

There are also a number of myths about domestic violence that can prevent people getting help. Sometimes an abuser will use these myths to try and stop someone reporting their experiences (e.g. to the Police):

- Abuse between people of the same-sex is ‘mutual’, so both are equally responsible for any abuse; or the abuse is ‘deserved’ or caused by a bisexual lifestyle – **NOT TRUE**
- Abuse is a ‘normal’ part of a bisexual relationship – **NOT TRUE**
- No one will help someone who is experiencing domestic violence because they are bisexual – **NOT TRUE**
- A bisexual women is more able to leave an abusive relationship, perhaps because there are no children or where there are children because they may not be the ‘real’ or biological parent – **NOT TRUE**
- Domestic violence does not happen to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people – **NOT TRUE**

All these myths are based on misconceptions. Where someone is experiencing domestic violence it is because one person (their former or current partner, or a family member) is attempting to exert power and control over them. It is important to remember that nobody should have to live with violence or the fear of abuse.

Bisexual women and children

Many bisexual women have children. Some women may have children from a previous relationship with a man, some may have children with a female partner, or some may have adopted or fostered children.

Sometimes former or current partners or extended families can be abusive towards a bisexual woman and her children.

It is also worth noting that for women, domestic violence can start or become worse during pregnancy.

At the best of times, bisexual mothers/carers experience judgmental attitudes about their parental choices and abilities. This knowledge can be used against bisexual mothers/carers as part of the abusive pattern of behaviour from former or current partners and/or extended families.

Parents who experience domestic violence can experience:

- Threats of isolating children from extended family or community;
- Encouraging children to continue verbally/physically abusing their mother/carers in their absence;
- Falsely accusing parent/carers of child neglect/abuse;
- Fear of stopping contact with children using the court process;
- Fear of having children taken away by local authorities;
- Physical, emotional, psychological, sexual harm to their children;
- Threats of child abduction; and
- Threats of physical harm to new partners who share parental responsibility.

All these activities may be used as methods of controlling women to remain in contact with abusers. The police and civil and criminal courts have wide ranging powers to protect children from abuse.

Children living in households where domestic violence is happening are now identified as 'at risk' under the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

From 31 January 2005, Section 120 of this Act extended the legal definition of harming children to include harm suffered by seeing or hearing ill treatment of others. This would include witnessing domestic violence.

There are many ways of protecting your children from witnessing and experiencing abuse. In all instances where children are involved, speak to a solicitor who specialises in family law and who is bisexual friendly.

A good first stop is Rights of Women or Women's Aid who both publish information about parenting and domestic violence. For more information go to:

www.rightsofwomen.org.uk or
www.womensaid.org.uk

What to expect?

An abuser has two goals: one, to hold someone in a relationship and two, to control someone's behaviour so they meet the abuser's needs. Abusers can be very devious in creating tactics to meet these goals, but there are some common manoeuvres:

It's more than physical

Most people think of abuse as physical but there are other types of abuse including emotional, financial and sexual abuse. Even if s/he's not hitting you, s/he could be abusing you.

For example, verbal or emotional abuse is almost always used in abusive bisexual relationships, even if physical abuse is not. Abusers can be extremely creative in the types of abuse that they use.

It's normal

Abusers will try to convince their partners that their abusive behaviour is 'normal' or 'normal for a bisexual relationship'. This tactic is especially effective with people who have not been in a bisexual relationship before.

Abuse is not normal in any relationship and has no part in a healthy relationship.

You're the abuser, I'm the victim

Partners may defend themselves against abuse, such as physical violence. An abuser may assert that this self-defence is abuse and that the partner is the abuser. Or the abuser may claim that the partner is 'mutually violent or abusive'.

A common characteristic of abusers is the lack of responsibility they take for their own behaviour. They may accuse their partners of being the 'abuser' and, sometimes, genuinely believe that they are the 'abused' party. They may use this claim to manipulate friends, service providers and law enforcement. An abuser, for example, may seek a restraining order against her/his partner, claiming the partner is the abuser.

You're to blame

Another ploy is to blame the partner for 'making' the abuser abuse or be violent. The abuser will claim that s/he would not abuse if only the partner did X or if the partner didn't do Y. Again, the abuser is trying to shift the responsibility from her/himself to their partner.

They may also try and make their partner feel responsible for the relationship as a whole. The reality is that the partner cannot stop the abuser from abusing.

If the abuser is a former partner or family member, they may well use these manoeuvres or others to try and control their partner. They may say that their partner is not really bisexual, or that any relationships they have are wrong or immoral because they are with another woman or identify as bisexual.

Sometimes abusive former heterosexual partners will threaten someone with sexual violence, saying that they 'need a man'. As with any abusive behaviour, these are attempts to justify their abusive behaviour.

It's the stress, the drugs...

Abusers sometimes claim that circumstances force them to abuse and if only the circumstances were to change, they would stop.

They blame their abusive behaviour on such circumstances as stress, lack of a job or the use of drugs or alcohol. Violence is a choice they make. There is a common misconception that drugs and alcohol cause domestic violence because s/he loses control. This is not true. While it can act to exacerbate the incident, research shows us that even if s/he is drunk or high s/he is still in control and making a choice whether or not to be abusive.

They may also blame their abusive behaviour on their partner's substance use. These are only excuses. There always will be some circumstance that in an abuser's mind, justifies their abusive behaviour.

Promises, promises

Abusers commonly promise to change – to stop abusing, to stop using drugs or alcohol, to stop whatever. These promises often follow an abusive incident. The motivation behind these promises is to win back the partner and to hold them in the relationship.

Abusers may believe their own promises but their goal is to keep their partner, not to reform their behaviour. Once the partner indicates that they are staying in the relationship, the promise is forgotten. Try to focus on what the abuser does rather than what s/he says.

No legal protection

Abusers may attempt to convince their partners that no one will help them and that they are not entitled to legal protection from abuse, either from a female partner or from a former or current heterosexual partner or family members. This is not true.

The UK Government defines domestic violence as:

‘Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality’.

Both civil and criminal legal options are available.

No help for bisexual women

There is help available. Not only does the definition of domestic violence recognise the needs of bisexual women, but Rise the Brighton and Hove domestic violence service is proactive in working with bisexual women.

At a national level there are also specific services such as Broken Rainbow to support bisexual women who are in abusive relationships.

Information about women's refuges and the housing options for bisexual women in abusive relationships is also available. Go to www.womensaid.org.uk/azrefuges.asp?section=00010001000800060002®ion_code=01SS

Domestic violence affecting bisexual people from diverse communities

BLACK, ASIAN, MINORITY ETHNIC AND REFUGEE (BAMER) WOMEN

A BAMER bisexual woman may find that they are also dealing with issues of racism.

Within BAMER communities, as elsewhere, bisexual women may be subject to biphobic, homophobic and transphobic responses or abuse.

BAMER bisexual women may put a high value on having partners of their own ethnicity and find it hard to let go of them if they are abusive. The contacts section at the end of this booklet includes links to BAMER organisations.

FORCED MARRIAGE

Bisexual women can also experience a particular kind of domestic violence; forced marriage. The Forced Marriage Unit has produced a 'Guide to Forced Marriage for LGBT people' and is written for LGBT people who are being forced into marriage either in the UK or abroad.

WHAT IS A FORCED MARRIAGE?

A forced marriage is one where people are coerced into a marriage against their will and under duress. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is an abuse of human rights and cannot be justified on any religious or cultural basis. It is, of course, very different from arranged marriage, where the consent of both parties is present. The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and many countries for a very long time.

The FMU is able to help and advise people who are being forced into marriage.

If you are a bisexual woman with insecure immigration status experiencing domestic violence, there are provisions within UK law to afford you some protection and assistance. This is a very complicated area of law and you should seek specialist advice (see contacts section).

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you fear you may be forced into marriage overseas, or know someone else who may be, there is help. Call the Forced Marriage Unit as soon as possible on 020 7008 0151 (or 0044 20 7008 0151 if you are overseas).

Go to:

www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/forced-marriage-lgbt
or the contacts section at the end of this booklet.

Chronic illnesses, disability and domestic violence

Chronic illnesses (e.g. Alzheimer's, Cancer, HIV/AIDS, Multiple Sclerosis, etc) can cause tension, stress and a range of other problems within a relationship but they do not cause domestic violence.

Abusive current or former intimate partners choose the weapons of abuse and control that they use, and their health or their partners' health can be used as one of these weapons.

In some abusive relationships, domestic violence begins at or around the time that an illness or disability is diagnosed. In some cases of domestic violence the abuser is the one with the illness or disability while in others it is the person without the illness that is abusive.

Within an abusive relationship where either or both of the partners (or family member) has a chronic illness many of the forms of abusive or controlling behaviour discussed earlier may exist.

However there are a number of forms of domestic violence that are specific to relationships where either or both partners have a chronic illness.

If the abusive partner does not have a chronic illness they may:

- Threaten to, or actually, disclose their partner's health status to friends, family or colleagues;
- Withhold medication, treatments or access to other medical services;
- Threaten to cut off support or to leave;
- Verbally abuse their partner by saying they are 'diseased, sick, unclean: or other inappropriate comments about their illness: or otherwise undermine their partner's confidence.

If the abusive partner does have a chronic illness (e.g. has Multiple Sclerosis) they may:

- Use guilt or other psychological abuse to manipulate their partner;
- Refuse to take medication or seek medical services;
- Use their illness to manipulate services, e.g. saying 'I'm weak and sick, how could I control her?' or
- Where an abusive partner has an illness that is transmittable, e.g. a sexually transmissible infection they may threaten to, or actually, infect their partner to prevent them leaving.

As well as the domestic violence services listed in this resource, there is a range of support services that someone with a chronic illness can contact.

Ending the abuse

Evidence suggests that once abuse begins it is very likely to continue and become more frequent and more severe over time.

Where violence and abuse is coming from a former heterosexual partner or from family members, this is also likely to become worse over time.

If you are experiencing domestic violence, making a decision about the relationship (particularly whether to stay or leave) can be really difficult, involving both emotional and practical considerations. If a former partner or family members is the abuser, you may also fear losing family or friends if you leave.

Often, leaving a violent partner only signifies the end of the relationship - not the end of the violence or abuse.

A non-abusive partner is trying to make this decision within the context of an abuser who begs them to stay and promises to change.

Research suggests that abusers are also very unlikely to end the relationship because in most cases they psychologically need the partner more than the partner needs them.

Abusers can be quite successful at hiding their dependency on the partner and their fear of losing her, and they often work to convince the partner that she would be lost without the abuser.

Whether a partner stays or leaves, it is wise to have a safety or crisis plan to maximise safety. If you are experiencing any form of domestic violence you might consider making a safety plan. The plan sets out what you could do under certain circumstances to help reduce the risk of emotional or physical injury to yourself (and your children).

Your plan can include strategies for reducing risk to yourself from your abuser, or it may outline how you could get away. You can make a safety plan on your own or speak with a trusted friend or a domestic violence worker (contact details are available at the end of this leaflet).

What you can do

Reach out for help! Support is available.

If your abuser has assaulted you or you are afraid for your own or for others' safety you can call the police.

The police have the power to provide you with immediate protection at any time of the day or night.

Call **999**.

Report a domestic violence incident to the police straight away.

In a non-emergency you can contact the police on **0845 6070 999**.

You can also email the police on:
contactcentre@sussex.pnn.police.uk

Sussex Police regard domestic violence as serious crime and will respond as soon as possible. If you need an interpreter, the police will be able to provide you with one.

The Police should:

- Respond promptly;
- Ensure your safety;
- Stop the violence;
- Thoroughly investigate what has happened;
- Speak to you and your partner separately;
- Get a statement from you and any witnesses;
- Collect evidence – take photos of any injuries and the scene;
- arrest the violent person if they have committed a criminal offence; and,
- Carry out a risk assessment.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Bisexual women often do not reach out for help because they believe there is no help out there for them. Services specifically for lesbian and bisexual women are limited but they do exist.

Alternatively, bisexual women may well know that there are services available for women experiencing domestic violence but be fearful that these will be homo or biphobic, or will not understand any specific needs they may have.

Generic domestic violence services should offer support to bisexual women regardless of the gender of their abuser. There are also lesbian and gay-friendly services of all types such as mental and physical health care providers, counsellors, social service agencies and support groups.

The Equality Act (2006) gave the government powers to introduce regulations outlawing discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in regards to access to goods, facilities and services.

This means that service providers from hotels to GPs, shops to local authorities cannot refuse to serve LGB people or offer them a service of lesser quality than that provided to heterosexuals.

For more information go to:
www.equalityhumanrights.com or
www.stonewall.org.uk

The contact details for a range of organisations are included at the end of this leaflet.

Computer safety warning

For your own safety – when you search for information or communicate about partner abuse – try not to use any computer to which your abuser has access. Your Internet, e-mail and document use activities leave traces on your computer that can be found by your abuser.

Ideally, use a computer to which he/she does not have access, such as at work, in a library, or a friend's or family member's computer.

If you do use your own computer, there are some basic steps that can provide some measure of protection and to remove most traces of your computer activities. Guidance on how to clear your computer of information can regularly change.

For advice on how to clear computer of cookies, temporary website files, browser and search engine history go to the Women's Aid website at: www.womensaid.org.uk and click on the 'cover your tracks online' tab in the top right-hand corner.

About abusers

The most frequently reported reason why partners stay in abusive relationships is 'hope for change'. Partners believe the abuser's promises to get help or to change.

For someone experiencing abuse from a former partner, they may feel an obligation not to report their experiences because of children, for fear of people finding out about their new relationship or because they still have feelings for a former partner.

They may also fear that they will not be believed or will be blamed for the abuse. This may be particularly important if an abuser, particularly a former heterosexual partner, blames their abusive behaviour on their partner's new same-sex relationship or their identity as a bisexual woman.

Whatever an abuser says, experience shows that once a person begins to abuse, the problem is likely to get worse.

Review the examples of abusive tactics to get a perspective on your own experience in the section of 'types of abuse'.

Abusers may feel guilty and apologetic after an abusive incident and promise themselves and their partner that they will change. Unfortunately, even with the best intentions, most abusers do not stop being abusive without support.

Respect Phonenumber

0845 122 8609

www.respectphonenumber.org.uk/phonenumber.php

A national organisation working with men who are using violence in their relationships. The Respect phone line, however, offers information and advice to both male and female domestic violence perpetrators, their partners, friends and family and to frontline workers who come into contact with perpetrators in their work. Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 10am to 1pm & 2pm to 5pm

Useful contacts

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

BRIGHTON & HOVE AND SUSSEX

Rise LGBT Domestic Violence Advisor

07581 466 438

This service provides a proactive service to support, advise and advocate for LGBT people whose lives have been impacted by domestic violence. For telephone and one to one support please use the above telephone number. If you are not able to speak to someone straight away please leave a message and the advisor will call you back as soon as they can. You can also text using the same number or email mark.sole@riseuk.org.uk

Rise

01273 622822 or www.riseuk.org.uk

Provides practical advice, support and information for women, children and young people living with the effects of domestic violence and abuse. They are also part of the Women's Aid Network of Refuges. They are active members of the Brighton and Hove local Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Domestic Violence and Abuse (B&H LGBT DV&A) Working Group and have worked in partnership with Broken Rainbow to develop LGBT services in Brighton and Hove.

The National Domestic Violence Helpline

0808 2000 247

For women this 24 hour free phone national domestic violence helpline operated in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge.

Broken Rainbow

08452 60 44 60 or www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

National helpline offering confidential listening support for LGBT people experiencing domestic violence. Helpline open Monday: 2pm to 8pm, Wednesday 10am to 1pm , Thursday 2pm to 8pm, All LGBT operators are trained and experienced in the specifics of LGBT domestic violence and available to listen, signpost to other services and provide safety planning information. Information is also available via the website.

Respect

0845 122 8609 or www.respect.uk.net

For people who are abusive to their partners and want to stop.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

BRIGHTON & HOVE AND SUSSEX

Survivors Network

01273 720110 or help@survivorsnetwork.org.uk or www.survivorsnetwork.org.uk

They offer essential 1:1 emotional support, practical information, advice and advocacy to all women within the city who have experienced sexual violence. They also offer an Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service for women and men over the age of 14 years of age. The helpline, text service and email service for women and girls open Wednesday and Friday evenings 7pm to midnight.

The text service number is **07797 804020**

The Saturn Centre

01293 600469 or www.saturncentre.org

The Saturn Centre, Crawley Hospital, West Green Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 7DH

Available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. They also provide an out of hours emergency service.

Men, women and children who have just been raped or experienced a sexual assault can choose to go to the Saturn Centre in Crawley. This is a specialist sexual assault referral centre. Here staff specifically trained in sexual assaults can medically examine you, check you for STIs, provide emergency contraception (should you wish it). They can also collect forensic evidence. This doesn't mean that you have to report to the police, it can be frozen to give you time to decide if you want to report to the police or it can be passed anonymously to the police.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

BRIGHTON & HOVE

OASIS

E-mail: info@brightonoasisproject.co.uk or
01273 697762.

www.oasisproject.org.uk

Women only organisation offers information, support and services that aim to reduce the drug and alcohol related harm to women and their children. Along with a Structured Program for female drug users, our services include an Outreach service for female Sex Workers and women who may be homeless or otherwise vulnerable to exchanging sex for drugs or money. A service for children of substance misusers and a service for young women under 19 with problematic substance misuse. All services are supported by a crèche. Services include structured group work, keywork, complementary therapies, acupuncture, and a range of sports and crafts activities.

HOUSING

B&H City Council Housing Options Team

The Housing Options Services are on the First Floor, Bartholomew House, Bartholomew Square, Brighton, BN1 1JP

The Housing Options telephone service is open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday on **01273 294400** or email: housing.advice@brighton-hove.gov.uk The team offer a range of services to help people of all ages and circumstances. Where possible, they aim to make sure nobody actually becomes homeless and do this by providing advice at an early stage about what housing options are available. They have a dedicated LGBT officer and DV officers.

NATIONAL

Shelter

0808 800 4444 or www.shelter.org.uk

A free, national telephone advice line staffed by trained housing advisers. We have helped thousands of people, from finding them a place to sleep to suggesting how to handle mortgage arrears.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

BRIGHTON AND HOVE

Claude Nicol Centre Sexual health and HIV centre

www.brightonsexualhealth.com

Range of services including sexual health screening, management of patients with HIV, including a young persons clinic and a gay & bisexual men's clinic.

Terrence Higgins Trust

Tel: 01273 764 200 Fax: 01273 764 201

Email: info.brighton@tht.org.uk or visit www.tht.org.uk

61 Ship Street, Brighton BN1 1AE.

HIV and sexual health charity with range of services and resources.

Mind Out

01273 739847 or www.lgbtmind.com

LGBT Advocacy, information, advice, and support for people with mental health problems

DISABILITY

GLAMS

0208 438 0959 or www.mssociety.org.uk/support_and_services/support_groups/gay_and_lesbian.html

GLAMS is a national self-help support group for lesbians, gay men, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people affected by MS.

Regard – LGBT (Disability Group)

020 7688 4111 or 020 7688 0709 (Minicom)

For the contact details of other generic and LGBT organisations consult

www.stonewall.org.uk/information%5Fbank/disability/

BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Somalian Gay Community

info@somaligaycommunity.org

www.somaligaycommunity.org

An online space and medium for Somalian gay and lesbians to access information, share experiences and develop support networks.

Southall Black Sisters

020 8571 9595 or www.southallblacksisters.org.uk

Manage a resource centre in West London that provides a comprehensive service to black (Asian and African-Caribbean) women experiencing violence and abuse.

YOUNG PEOPLE

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Allsorts

01273 721211

www.allsortsyouth.org.uk

info@allsortsyouth.org.uk

Allsorts Youth Project, 69 Ship St,
Brighton, BN1 1AE

Drop in for LGBT young people under 26
on Tuesday evening

OLDER PEOPLE

Age concern

0800 00 99 66 (helpline)

www.ageconcern.org.uk

The UK's largest charity working with and for older people.

TRANS PEOPLE

The Gender Trust

0845 231 0505 (national helpline)

www.gendertrust.org.uk

The Gender Trust is a registered charity. Their web site carries details of the regional support organisation and affiliated groups around the UK and across the world. They also run a confidential service offering help and support to anyone with queries about all aspects of gender identity issues. The national helpline operates 7 days a week from Monday to Friday 10am to 10pm and Saturday & Sunday 1pm to 10pm.

The Clare Project

www.clareproject.org.uk

Community Base, 113 Queens Road,
Brighton, BN1 3XG

Safe and confidential place for people to explore issues surrounding their Gender identity

OTHER LGBT ORGANISATIONS

Brighton Lesbian and Gay Switchboard

01273 204050 daily from 5pm or

www.switchboard.org.uk

Offers a range of services to members of the LGBT community, their families, friends and others who would like to discuss issues surrounding sexual identity or gender:

- Telephone Helpline
- Face to Face Low Cost Counselling
- Relationship/Couples Counselling
- E-Mail Queries
- Hate Crime Reporting

FOR PRACTITIONERS

Brighton and Hove LGBT Domestic Violence & Abuse Working Group

This is an inter-agency network of practitioners, activists and researchers working around the issue of LGBT domestic violence. It is a development group co-hosted by the Domestic Violence Forum and Spectrum and meets on a monthly basis and aims to provide leadership on LGBT Domestic Violence; identify needs and solutions; influence local policy and strategies; inform research; work towards making local services LGBT-aware; and developing models for service delivery. For further information contact the co-chairs via bhdvalgbt@googlemail.com

SpectrumLGBT Community Forum

www.spectrum-lgbt.org

Provides infrastructure and community development support for the LGBT community. Also co-hosts LGBT DV&A working group.

NATIONAL**Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA)**

www.caada.org.uk

A charity established to encourage the use of independent advocacy as a way to increase the safety of domestic violence survivors. CAADA has an extensive library of resources, including information relating to LGBT people, available at:

www.caada.org.uk/library_resources.html#11

For guidance relating to LGBT and MARACs (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) go to:

www.caada.org.uk/toolkits.html

LGBT Domestic Abuse Forum

<http://lgbtdaf.org/> Or

The LGBT Domestic Abuse Forum is a national network of practitioners, activists and researchers working around the issue of LGBT domestic abuse. It exists to provide a forum in which to meet, network and exchange good practice. Email contact:

info@lgbtdaf.org

As well as Brighton and Hove organisations we have tried to give information about national organisations as well. There is also more information relating to other national/London-based services available at

www.avaproject.org.uk

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NHS
Barking and Dagenham