

Support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller LGBT+ people and their families

WHAT DOES BEING LGBT MEAN?

Similar to other communities many Gypsy Roma and Traveller LGBT+ people sadly experience homophobia. Many hide their sexual identity because of fear or rejection by family and their community, others because of family pressure and their religious beliefs. There is no empirical research or statistics to refer to in evidencing the hidden problem of homophobia within the Gypsy Roma Traveller communities against their own LGBT+ community.

However the fact that there is no data suggests in itself how taboo and hidden the problem is. From case work to date and engagement with the wider Gypsy Roma Traveller NGO sector and various other stakeholder groups the Traveller Movement are acutely aware this is a real but hidden issue within the Gypsy Roma Traveller community. The shame and guilt inflicted on LGTB+ community members has and can force many to live their lives in total denial, in secret and fearing for their health and wellbeing.

The following information is by no means definitive or comprehensive. It is intended as a basic information guide, identifying support services and highlighting safeguarding awareness for Gypsy Roma and Traveller people that are LGBT+, their family and friends. The important thing is to be safe and do things at your own pace.

Sometimes people may struggle with identifying their sexual identity for many and varied reasons. This is not uncommon. If you are confused or struggling with this issue, what is important to remember and know is being gay or lesbian

is ok! While times are changing there is still homophobia in all communities. Homophobia is the fear or dislike of homosexual people, and it can be encountered anywhere, much like prejudices against Travellers or Gypsies in general. Being LGBT doesn't change who you are; it is only one small thing about you, though it may feel big at the moment.

Always make sure your safety is a priority. If you feel unsafe at any point due to this, remove yourself from the situation and seek help. If you need to speak to someone about your safety contact us or Galop (contact details at the rear of this document).

LGBT+ – SOME HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

Lesbian – a woman who is attracted to another woman is known as a lesbian, though some people also use the word ‘gay’ to describe homosexual men and women.

Gay – a popular term for homosexual, usually used to describe male homosexuals.

Bisexual, or Bi – used to describe a person attracted to both sexes. People who are attracted to the opposite sex are known as heterosexual or straight.

Transgender, or Trans – a term used by people whose gender differs from the one they were given when they were born. Transgender people may identify as male or female, or they may feel neither label fits them.

Intersex – a term used to describe a person who may have biological attributes of both sexes or whose attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary.

For more information please visit <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/glossary-terms>

Coming out

Telling people about your sexuality or gender identity is often referred to as coming out. In relation to sexual orientation and gender identity, this means sharing with others that you are lesbian, gay, bi or trans.

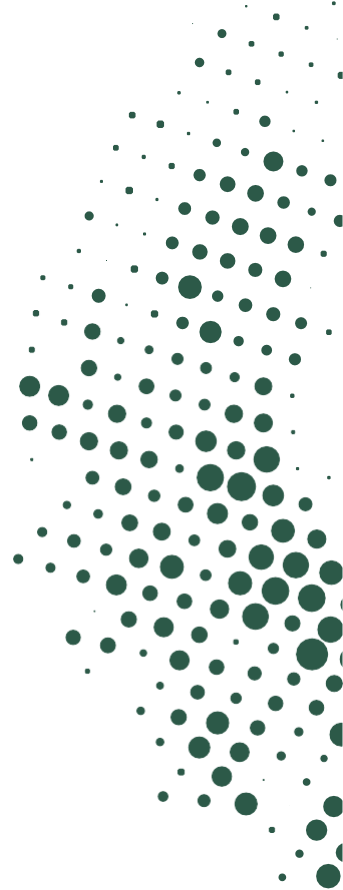
The process of coming out can be very different for everyone and it can take some time to get to a point where you feel comfortable and confident enough to have those conversations with people.

Coming out to your family

While families can be a source of great strength and support there can also be family pressures to hide your sexual identity. This can put a lot of stress and pressure on gay and lesbian Gypsies Roma and Travellers people, discouraging the person to come out fully for fear of, intimidation, bullying, rejection or violence. If you decide to come out, but are unsure how others might react, you could consider making contact with a support group first.

It is important not to feel under pressure to come out – take your time. Only you will know when you feel comfortable and ready to do it.

If you are gay, lesbian or bisexual and are fearful of ‘coming out’, there are people you can talk to. There are specialist helplines, community groups, social media forums, and agencies across the country who are there to support and advise you.



WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT

For advice on 'coming out' safely, visit Stonewall or Galop Stonewall:

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/coming-out-0> Read Galop's 'Safety Tips' booklet:

<http://www.galop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Safety-Tips-A7-Booklet.pdf>

For peer support from other Gypsy Roma Traveller LGBT+ people

<https://www.facebook.com/Lgbttraveller/>

For advice and support on LGBT+ issues

GALOP: GALOP are an LGBT and anti-violence charity. Galop advice line on 0207 704 2040

LGBT Switchboard – a charity that provides confidential advice to members of the LGBT community.

Call: 0300 330 0630 <https://switchboard.lgbt/>

Gendered Intelligence – work with the trans community and those who impact on trans lives; we particularly specialise in supporting young trans people under the age of 21.

<http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>

For mental health support

LGBT Foundation: a national charity delivering a wide range of services to lesbian, gay and bisexual and trans (LGBT) communities.

Call: 0345 3 30 30 30 or visit <http://lgbt.foundation/>

Samaritans: the Samaritans are a charity that provide emotional support to anyone in distress.

Call: 116 123 (UK) to speak with a trained advisor.

For housing and accommodation

Stonewall Housing: A specialist lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT) housing advice and support provider in England.

Call: 020 7359 6242

Shelter: A national housing and homelessness charity <http://www.shelter.org.uk/>

Other

LGBT Catholics Westminster: run support groups for members of the LGBT community.

Email: lgbtcatholicswestminster@gmail.com

For Friends and Families

Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (FFLAG)

A national charity dedicated to supporting parents and their lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans sons and daughters <http://www.fflag.org.uk/>

The Gender Trust

This charity helps and supports Trans People and all those affected by gender identity issues. <http://gendertrust.org.uk/>

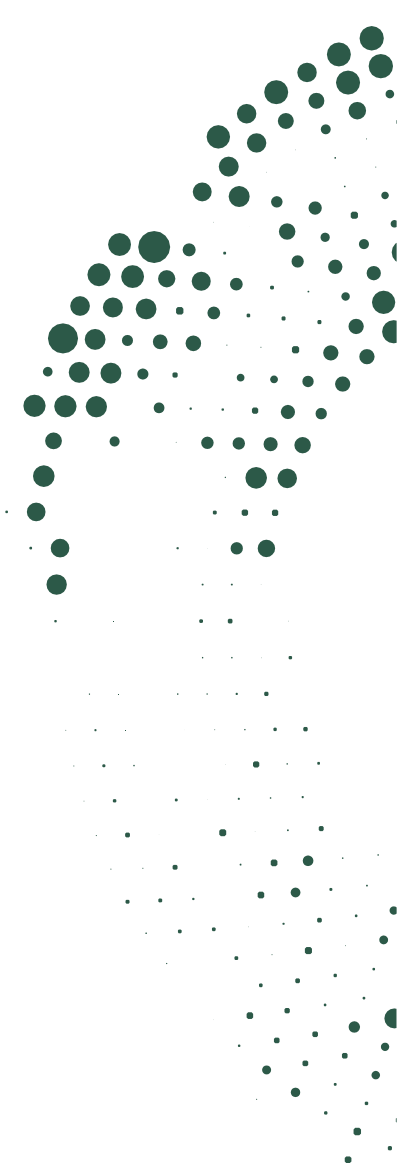
Proud 2 B Parents

Proud 2 B Parents group are a service for LGBT parents to be, LGBT parents and their children across Greater Manchester and its surrounding boroughs. Their services include: a monthly drop-in, a youth group for children of LGBT parents, activities and events and much more <http://www.proud2bparents.co.uk/>

For information on GRT services that may be able to offer advice and support: The Traveller

Movement

Visit <http://travellermovement.org.uk/> for a list of Gypsy Roma Traveller NGOs and groups or call 0207 607 2002



The information in this information guide refers to the law in England & Wales. It summarises the main points and is intended for guidance only. While every effort is made to ensure it is correct at time of publication it should not be used as a substitute for legal advice or for individual advice about your case. If you have any specific questions about any legal matter you should consult a solicitor.

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