

Report on new estimates of the size of the lesbian, gay and bisexual population of England

February 3 2017, by Andrew Gould



Credit: University of Plymouth

Public Health England (PHE) has published a report, compiled by researchers from the Health Services Research team at Plymouth

University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry (PUPSMD), estimating the size of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) population in England.

The report estimates that 2.5 per cent of the population of England have self-identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual, but this is likely to be an underestimate.

There is evidence to suggest that minority sexual orientation groups can experience high prevalence of [poor mental health](#) and low wellbeing. In order to assess health outcomes by sexual orientation, there is a need for a widely accepted national estimate of the size of the LGB population in England. The analysis will help: address the current major gaps in existing data and analysis relating to health outcomes and patient experience for LGB populations, and; understand inequalities in health and care outcomes for different populations in England.

This would support targeted preventative and early intervention work to address health inequalities and demonstrate the provision of equitable access for LGB individuals.

Professor John Newton, Chief Knowledge Officer at PHE, said:

"We have used the best available evidence to produce a robust estimate of the size of England's LGB population. Using this figure, health and social care organisations can better assess health outcomes by [sexual orientation](#) and demonstrate how they provide equal access for LGB individuals to their services."

The PUPSMD team was led by Dr Kerry Kusk, Research Fellow in Health Services Research at PUPSMD and supported by the National Institute for Health Research Collaboration for Applied Health Research and Care South West Peninsula. He added:

"This was an interesting project for us and we hope that our findings will help PHE in its thinking around the provision of services for this group."

Background:

Sexual orientation is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, meaning that public sector organisations have a duty to consider the specific needs of LGB people in the design and delivery of services.

This analysis provides a robust estimate of the size of the LGB population and will support health and social care organisations to:

- Address the current gaps in existing data and analysis relating to [health outcomes](#) and patient experience for LGB populations.
- Understand inequalities in health and care outcomes for different populations in England. This would support targeted preventative and early intervention work to address [health](#) inequalities.
- Demonstrate the provision of equitable access for LGB individuals.

The population estimates should be interpreted with caution. The 2.5 per cent figure is likely to be an underestimate as it is derived from general social surveys that did not have the specific aim of counting the LGB [population](#). The upper limit of 5.89 per cent is almost certainly an overestimate of the included sources as it is unlikely that all non-responders are LGB.

Provided by University of Plymouth

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