



Lack of Refuge Space for LGBT people experiencing Domestic Violence

Broken Rainbow today highlighted the serious issue of the lack of refuge spaces available for lesbian, gay, bisexual and particularly trans victims of domestic violence.

Few refuges have adequate provisions in place to deal with LGBT people, and this leads to service users experiencing homophobia, transphobia, or in the worse case, can allow their abuser to gain access to the refuge to further assault their partner.

Jo Barringer, Chair of Broken Rainbow, emphasises the severity of the issue, "Lesbians often find that the services set in place for women have no understanding of their cultural needs. This leads to lesbian needs often being looked over, not taken seriously or grouped in with other heterosexual women where they might experience homophobia."

In the Trans community, the issues faced by victims of domestic violence and abuse can be yet more serious:

"Trans women often find that this situation is intensified, with some being turned away from refuges as they do not fit their criteria of a woman; or the refuge not having any concept of the multi-faceted issues that they are dealing with".

Denise Anderson of Spectrum London, further highlights the lack of service provision, "If a Trans woman was to turn up at a women's refuge they would have no procedures in place to deal with her or to be able to deal with other women's possible discomfort with her being there."

These problems stem from a continued lack of awareness of the prevalence of domestic abuse in LGBT relationships, outdated presumptions that only heterosexual women can be victims of domestic violence and ongoing institutionalised homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

"LGBT people deserve equal protection through refuge space," says Rita Hirani, LGBT domestic violence trainer, "And Broken Rainbow is seeking to achieve this by continuing to research and educate service providers and others on these issues, and by supporting victims via their helpline."

Broken Rainbow calls upon refuges to be fully inclusive of LGBT victims of domestic violence, and to ensure that they have adequate policies in place to protect victims while they reside in the refuges.

END

Editor's notes:

Broken Rainbow LGBT domestic violence service (UK) are a registered charity in the UK:

Charity no: 1103624

Broken Rainbow's helpline runs, Monday 2-8pm, Wed 10-1, Thursday, 2-8pm: 08452 60 44 60

Broken Rainbow: www.broken-rainbow.org.uk
mail@broken-rainbow.org.uk

Spectrum London: <http://www.spectrumlondon.org.uk/enquiries@spectrumlondon.org.uk>

Spectrum London is a peer support forum for all Trans people and those questioning their gender along with partners, family, friends and allies in a safe and comfortable space.