

Understanding the travel needs of London's diverse communities

The Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual
(LGB) community

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Report prepared by SPA Future Thinking.

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Key findings

- 2.2% of Londoners classify themselves as being lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). Other reported figures tend to be higher (up to 10%) though an exact figure is difficult to source due to the sensitivity of the subject area and the variety of definitions used
- A higher proportion of the LGB population are men compared to the heterosexual population. The LGB community tends to also have a younger age profile
- Similar proportions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people and all Londoners mention concerns over crime and anti-social behaviour as potential barriers to increased Tube use. LGBT Londoners are more likely to mention issues of overcrowding, cost and unreliability (potentially due to a greater proportion being of working-age and therefore more likely to be commuting through London)
- For some LGBT people, fears over intimidation and/or abuse affect travel behaviour

Summary

A small proportion (2.2%) of Londoners identifies themselves as being lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB)¹[3]. This is marginally higher than in the UK where 1.5% of people identify themselves as LGB. Note that approximately five per cent of people interviewed did not give a response to this question. The majority of Londoners (92.3%) claim to be heterosexual with the equivalent figure for the UK being 94.8% [3]. Other figures for the proportion of people in London who are LGB tend to be higher (at about ten per cent) though these figures are approximated and reflect the broader definition of sexual orientation (how people act) as opposed to how they define their own identity [82].

Demographics

- 55% of the LGB (UK)² population are men compared to 49% of the heterosexual population [3]
- The age profile of the LGB community in the UK is younger than the heterosexual population [3]
- LGB people are more likely to be in managerial and professional occupations compared to heterosexual people[3]

¹ Note that in this survey, 'transgender' was not listed as a pre-coded answer

² Figure is unknown for London

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Barriers

Very few differences exist between heterosexual and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT)³ people regarding spontaneously mentioned barriers to increased Tube use. Some differences exist when people are prompted with a list of potential barriers. LGBT people are more likely to cite overcrowded services (73% compared to 60% of all Londoners), the cost of tickets (54% vs. 43%) and unreliable services (50% vs. 33%) as potential barriers to increased Tube use [83].

Fears of intimidation and/or abuse are sometimes mentioned by people from LGBT communities. The extent to which these fears affect travel behaviour depends on people's personalities, previous experiences and the degree to which they perceive themselves as being visibly LGBT [84].

Much of the research conducted by TfL and other organisations does not ask about an individual's sexual orientation so this chapter is largely based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Integrated Household Survey and TfL's own research into barriers to increased Tube use.

Although not held by TfL, there are a number of reports available on more generic research issues concerning sexual orientation published by Stonewall. These can be found at http://www.stonewall.org.uk/what_we_do/research_and_policy/default.asp

³ Data in this survey is based on the broader definition of LGBT rather than LGB, and looks specifically at barriers to Tube travel rather than travel on public transport in general

1. Introduction

London is home to the largest lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) population in the UK [3]. London's LGB population is diverse though it has a younger age profile than many other communities within London.

Surveys rarely collect data on, and analyse data by, sexual orientation. Therefore the data in this chapter predominantly come from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Integrated Household Survey and TfL's own research into barriers to increased Tube use. As such, this chapter focuses on the demographics of LGB Londoners and the transport barriers they potentially face.

It should be noted that the differences highlighted between groups of individuals in this chapter may well be influenced by a number of factors other than sexual orientation, with age, gender, income and education all affecting perceptions towards travel in London and travel behaviour.

Any unfamiliar terminology can be found in the glossary at the end of this report.

2. Characteristics

Just over two per cent (2.2%) of the London population identify themselves as being LGB⁴. This is marginally higher than the UK average with 1.5% of people identifying themselves as LGB. Just under five per cent (4.8%) of Londoners declined to reveal their sexual identity or said they did not know, with the remaining 92.3% of Londoners claiming to be heterosexual [3].

Sexual identity in London and the UK (2009-2010) [3]

%	London	UK
Base	-	(238,206)
Heterosexual	92.3	94.8
Lesbian/gay/bisexual	2.2	1.5
Other	0.6	0.5
Don't know/refusal/non-response	4.8	3.3

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this is due to rounding

⁴ Note that in this survey, 'transgender' was not listed as a pre-coded answer

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These data are taken from the ONS Integrated Household Survey. In a bid to improve the reliability of equality statistics, a question on sexuality was introduced to the survey in 2009 following extensive testing [3]. The question focuses on sexual identity (how people perceive themselves) as opposed to sexual attraction, behaviour and/or orientation⁵.

Other sources quote that ten per cent of Londoners consider themselves to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered (LGBT)[82]. This figure tends to be an approximation and is not obtained through the same rigorous methodology used in the ONS Integrated Household Survey. Higher reported proportions of LGBT Londoners may also reflect the use of definitions broader than 'sexual identity'.

According to TfL research conducted in 2007, three per cent of Londoners are LGBT⁶ [83] (in line with estimates from the ONS Integrated Household Survey).

The following demographic data on heterosexual and LGB people are taken from the ONS Integrated Household Survey as this represents the most recent and most robust data collected to date on this topic [3]. However, it should be noted that the data are based on UK residents as opposed to London residents. Whilst the patterns shown are indicative of the demographic profile of LGB Londoners, Londoners as a whole have a slightly different profile to the rest of the UK. Where this is of relevance it is noted below.

See table on next page.

⁵ Those completing the survey face-to-face are asked, 'which of the options on this card best describes how you think of yourself?'. Those completing the survey over the telephone are asked, 'I will now read out a list of terms people sometimes use to describe how they think of themselves...as I read the list again please say 'yes' when you hear the option that best describes how you think of yourself'

⁶In response to the question, 'as part of this survey, we are interested in collecting basic information about sexual orientation. So would you say that you are...'

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Looking at the gender split between heterosexual and LGB people in the UK, 55% of the LGB population are men compared to 49% of the heterosexual population [3].

The age profile of people who identify themselves as LGB is younger than those who identify themselves as being heterosexual. Of LGB people in the UK, 65% are under the age of 45, compared to 49% of heterosexual people [3]. The age profile of Londoners is younger than that of the UK as a whole. It is likely that these differences in age profile are still maintained between heterosexual and LGB people in London, but at a younger profile overall.

A marginally higher proportion (94%) of LGB people are white compared to 91% of heterosexual people [3]. This finding should be interpreted with caution since the proportion of Londoners who are from a BAME group is much higher than for the UK as a whole.

LGB people are more likely to be in managerial and professional occupations (42%) compared to heterosexual people (31%) [3].

Demographic profile according to sexual identity (2009-2010) (UK) [3]

%	Heterosexual	LGB
Base	(225,819)	(3,574)
Gender		
Men	49	55
Women	51	45
Age		
16-24	15	18
25-44	34	47
45-64	32	27
65+	20	8
Ethnicity		
White	91	94
BAME	9	7
Social grade		
Managerial and professional occupations	31	42
Intermediate occupations	16	15
Routine and manual occupations	29	23
Never worked and long term unemployed	6	5
Not classified	18	15

3. Barriers

In 2007, TfL conducted research into the barriers that prevent people from using the Tube more. Over 2,500 people participated in this research, of which 90 identified themselves as being LGBT and a further 216 declined to answer the question regarding their sexuality [83].

The most common barrier to increased Tube use, given spontaneously both by all respondents and those self-identified as LGBT, is 'no need to [use the Tube]'. This is mentioned by 40% of all respondents and 37% of LGBT respondents. The second most common reason given spontaneously also concerns there being no need to travel by Tube with 16% of all respondents (and 13% of LGBT respondents) saying they do not travel to or within London much [83].

The barriers spontaneously mentioned by LGBT Londoners and all Londoners do not differ between the two groups, with the exception of 'no local station/too far away' (six per cent of all Londoners say this compared to two per cent of LGBT Londoners) [83].

Barriers to using the Underground more frequently (unprompted) (2007) [83]

%	All respondents	All LGBT	Refused LGBT question
Base	(2,683)	(90)	(216)
No need to [use the Tube]	40	37	34
Don't travel to/in London much	16	13	18
Prefer other modes	14	19	17
Too overcrowded/busy	10	13	8
Too expensive/other modes cheaper	8	13	7
Inconvenient/other modes are more convenient	7	8	11
No local station/too far away	6	2	6
Couldn't use it more	5	3	1
Unreliable/other modes are more reliable	4	5	7
Unsafe/feels more safe on other modes	4	4	4
Health/mobility impairments/old age	4	4	6
Dirty/smelly	3	3	5
Dislike/hate the tube	3	2	6

Responses greater than 2% for all respondents shown

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There are some differences between all Londoners and LGBT Londoners when prompted with a list of possible barriers to increased Tube use. LGBT Londoners are more likely to agree that overcrowded services (73% compared to 60% of all Londoners), the cost of tickets (54% vs. 43%) and unreliable services (50% vs. 33%) stop them using the Tube more [83]. This may reflect a higher proportion of LGBT Londoners being of working-age and therefore commuting in London (compared to heterosexual people).

Other possible barriers (such as concerns over anti-social behaviour and fears of crime) are mentioned by similar proportions of all Londoners and LGBT Londoners.

Barriers to using the Underground more frequently (prompted) (2007) [83]

%	All respondents	All LGBT	Refused LGBT question
Base	(2,683)	(90)	(216)
Overcrowded services	60	73	57
Cost of tickets	43	54	48
Unreliable services	33	50	35
Concern about anti-social behaviour	32	31	33
Dirty environment on the Tube	28	33	32
Slow journey times	27	36	34
Fear of crime on the Tube	27	28	28
Fear of crime getting to the Tube	22	22	27
Fear of terrorist attacks	22	19	26
Dirty environment getting to Tube	20	24	24
Risk of accidents	12	9	13
Lack of info on how to services	8	12	12
Don't understand how to use system	3	5	4
Don't understand how to buy bus tickets	2	7	4
None of these	17	14	17

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Only nine per cent of LGBT Londoners agree that they 'feel excluded from the Underground'. This is in line with 11% of all Londoners. Again no differences are discernible between all Londoners and LGBT Londoners for those disagreeing they 'feel welcome on the Underground' (17% and 19% respectively) [83].

However, a smaller proportion of LGBT Londoners (33%) agree that they feel welcome on the Underground, compared to 44% of all Londoners [83].

Feelings of exclusion and inclusion on the Underground (2007) [83]

%	All respondents	All LGBT	Refused LGBT question
Base	(2,683)	(90)	(216)
I feel excluded from the Underground			
Agree	11	9	10
Disagree	67	66	64
I feel welcome on the Underground			
Agree	44	33	35
Disagree	17	19	25

In research looking at the travel barriers faced by LGBT people, fear of intimidation and/or abuse emerged as a potential barrier. Modifications to travel behaviour as a result of such fears are thought to depend on many factors including people's personalities, previous experiences and the degree to which they perceive themselves visibly LGBT [84].

