

Chapter 4

Methodology

Prior to this study, there was a lack of systematic evidence concerning the incidence of homophobia and homophobic crime locally. As discussed earlier, this encouraged the perception that these were not important and significant local issues.

To remedy this, the Berkshire Anti-Homophobia Group decided to conduct a survey across the county. The survey method was chosen because it was deemed the most effective and efficient way of collecting the large amount of data desired. A tick box design was used, and the survey was anonymous and confidential. This was important given the sensitive nature of the subject and the worries some respondents had about the use and destination of the information. The survey was designed in a holistic way, giving respondents the opportunity to reveal the wide range of possible cases of abuse, harassment and violence, including those perpetrated by other bisexuals, gays and lesbians.

The surveys were distributed through the four commercial scene venues in Berkshire and nine community-based organisations. 314 surveys were completed representing 1.6% of the estimated gay and lesbian population locally (see section 2.1).

Anecdotal evidence of cases of homophobia and homophobic crime were collected from community-based organisations, and an in-depth interview with a young gay man was conducted for this study.

The results were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and the Microsoft Excel systems.