

Dimensions of inequality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the South West



**Pride, Progress
and Transformation**

Safety and Security

January 2012



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Safety and Security

Preface to the report

This survey was designed by the South West Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (LGB) and Transgender (Trans) Equality Networks, supported by Equality South West (ESW).

The purpose of the survey was to identify the real issues for LGB and Trans people living, working and visiting the South West region. Its planning and launch coincided with the final stages of the drafting of the Equality Act, 2010. This harmonised the Public Sector Equality Duties, which had previously applied to disability, gender and race, and extended a new single duty to include LGB and Trans people.

The report has taken very much longer to appear than was envisaged when the survey was first launched. Like so many other organisations in the public and voluntary sector, Equality South West has been profoundly affected by the economic climate and the public spending cuts.

The survey sponsored by goodwill donations from: Dorset County Council, East Dorset, West Dorset, Sedgemoor, and Teignbridge District Councils, UNISON South West, and the Rivers of Life church, Dorset.

We also had early support with qualitative data analysis from Poole Council. We are extremely grateful for theirs and for our sponsors' support and interest.

The analysis and report writing was nevertheless substantially funded by Equality South West through Big Lottery BASIS project funding, and from reserves.

Now that we have reached the launch phase of this section of the report we would like to offer our sincere thanks to all those who participated in the survey for the time and trouble taken to record their thoughtful, honest, often moving responses as well as the uplifting, inspiring and humorous observations.

An additional thank you is due also, for your patience, and that of our survey advisory group, during the long enforced delay.

An overarching message from this survey is the need for all public bodies to ensure that they are fully engaged with and implementing the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

This means ensuring that the services they provide directly, and those that they commission or outsource to organisations to deliver on their behalf in the voluntary or private sector, are delivering on the spirit as well as the letter of Public Sector Equality Duty.

Background: how we approached the research

In the autumn of 2009 the South West Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Equality Network, and the South West Transgender Equality Network, supported by Equality South West, decided to work together to undertake a survey to investigate a range of issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB and Trans) people who live in or are visitors to the South West Region.

An advisory group was formed of volunteer representatives from both networks, supported by three Equality Development Officers (EDOs). The Steering Group agreed to use the 'Ten Dimensions of Equality', developed for the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Measurement Framework (EMF), as a basis for the topic areas to be covered.

The EMF was primarily designed as a framework for gathering equality statistics that would form the basis of the EHRC's triennial review of equality at a national level across each of the equality strands (or protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act)¹. The Discrimination Law Review recommended that the EMF should be used by public bodies at local level as the tool by which they should measure and monitor equality across all strands and across each of the ten dimensions within their own catchment areas.

In developing the EMF, the EHRC and the Government Equality Office recognise that the statistical evidence available to them with regard to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people across key areas of their lives and experiences is sparse in comparison to most other equality groups. Data are even less available or reliable at local level, and what data there are need to be supplemented by experiential, qualitative evidence.

The advisory group members were particularly concerned to ensure that, as far as possible, issues affecting the 'sub groups' that make up the 'LGB and Trans group' should be identified in the final report. They also wanted the term 'LGB and Trans' to be used in order to underline the fact that there are fundamentally different issues relating to sexual and gender identities. The group agreed to include specific questions which were considered to be consistent with the aims of the survey and which some of its sponsors wanted incorporated into the questionnaire.

The 'identity groups' provided on the questionnaire were included on the advice of the survey's LGB and Trans advisory group. GIRES were also consulted, and kindly provided useful comments on this. Nevertheless, not everyone was able to fit

¹ The first of these reports 'How Fair is Britain?' was published in late 2010. The full report and a summary can be found on the EHRC website <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/key-projects/how-fair-is-britain/>

themselves into these groups and some contributors provided highly individual responses under the 'other' option.

The questionnaire was drafted and redrafted following initial feedback from the advisory group. It was then piloted by colleagues in ten partner organisations to test for 'usability'. Nevertheless, when it came to analysing the data that resulted, difficulties emerged in gathering all the detail hoped for.

Once responses began to arrive it became evident that the questionnaire took longer to complete than some contributors were able to commit. We also learned of a number of technical snags that arose for some people who completed the online version of the questionnaire².

Some contributors were not convinced of the value of the detailed profile that it sought from its contributors. The rationale behind these questions was a recognition that people's sexual and transgender identities are part of a much wider set of characteristics that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB and Trans) people possess. Self-evidently, LGB and Trans people's experiences are shaped by society's responses to their race, sex, disabilities, age and religious or other beliefs. In addition, Professor John Hills' ground breaking report³, published in early 2010, clearly showed that socio-economic status is a key determinant of people's quality of life and life chances, which applies across all the 'protected characteristics' covered by the 2010 Equality Act. Published almost simultaneously was a report by Professor Michael Marmot that identified future trends in health and their relationship to socio-economic status.⁴ The profile data that contributors did provide has helped develop a more rounded picture of life for the LGB and Trans population in different parts of the South West.

In addition, our agreement to incorporate some questions on behalf of several external stakeholders added to the complexities involved in analysing the data.

In spite of this hindsight learning, we believe the exercise has been well worth while in providing some rich evidence about LGB and Trans people's lives and experiences in the South West of England.

By the end of June 2010 Equality South West had received 362 survey responses and a total of 276 (76.2%) were completed in full. The remainder of the questionnaires contained one or more questions that were not answered, so the

² Hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed to a number of key locations around the region as well.

³ An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK: Report of the National Equality Panel Published by Government Equalities Office and London School of Economics, January 2010

⁴ Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities, in England post 2010. Published by The Marmot Review, February 2010

figures presented in this report may vary question by question.⁵

⁵ The contributors include a small number who described their sexual identity as heterosexual. Among these were individuals whose participation was clearly mischievous in intent, and care has been taken not to allow such responses to skew the analysis of the survey, or affect any conclusions.

Part 1: Contributors' profile and lifestyles

a. Equality and diversity characteristics

Some contributors clearly found the survey questionnaire to be laborious in terms of the detailed profile that it sought from its contributors, and some left parts of this section, which came at the end of the questionnaire, incomplete.

Clearly, LGBT people's experiences are shaped by society's responses to their race, sex, disabilities, age and religious or other beliefs as well as their sexual or gender identity. Indeed, a number of contributors emphasised that discrimination was more often shown towards them because of their more visible characteristics – specifically their age, disability, racial or ethnic background and sex.

In addition, Professor John Hills' ground breaking report⁶, published in early 2010, clearly showed that socio-economic status is a key determinant of people's quality of life and life chances, which applies across all the 'protected characteristics' covered by the 2010 Equality Act. Published almost simultaneously was a report by Professor Michael Marmot that identified future trends in health and their relationship to socio-economic status.⁷

The rationale behind the PP&T profile questions lies in the recognition that people's sexual and transgender identities are a part of a much wider set of characteristics that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people possess. The questions also sought information about the socio-economic circumstances of contributors, and where possible, to compare any trends with the general population. Not only do such factors affect people's experiences, but it was considered important to recognise the diversity between, as well as the commonalities shared by LGB and Transgender people.

Some additional details of the profile responses can be found in the Appendix to this section of the report. The main area of disaggregation that has been carried out in relation to these data is in relation to sexual and gender identities. However, the data regarding the diversity of contributors in terms of the other 'protected characteristics' which they own demonstrates the need for LGBT support organisations to ensure they are taking fully into account these diverse circumstances and needs.

⁶ An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK: Report of the National Equality Panel Published by Government Equalities Office and London School of Economics, January 2010

⁷ Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities, in England post 2010. Published by The Marmot Review, February 2010

Gender and sexual identity

It was important to members of the advisory group that the survey should gain a picture of the transgender and sexual identities of contributors, and that responses should be capable of disaggregation according to these identities.

The identity groups provided on the questionnaire were included on the advice of the survey's LGBT advisory group. GIRES were also consulted, and kindly provided useful comments on this. Nevertheless, not everyone was able to fit themselves into these groups and some contributors provided highly individual responses under the 'other' option. This makes a straightforward disaggregation more complicated than at first envisaged, but does illustrate the complexities around identity. We have endeavoured to maximise the understanding gained from each contribution.

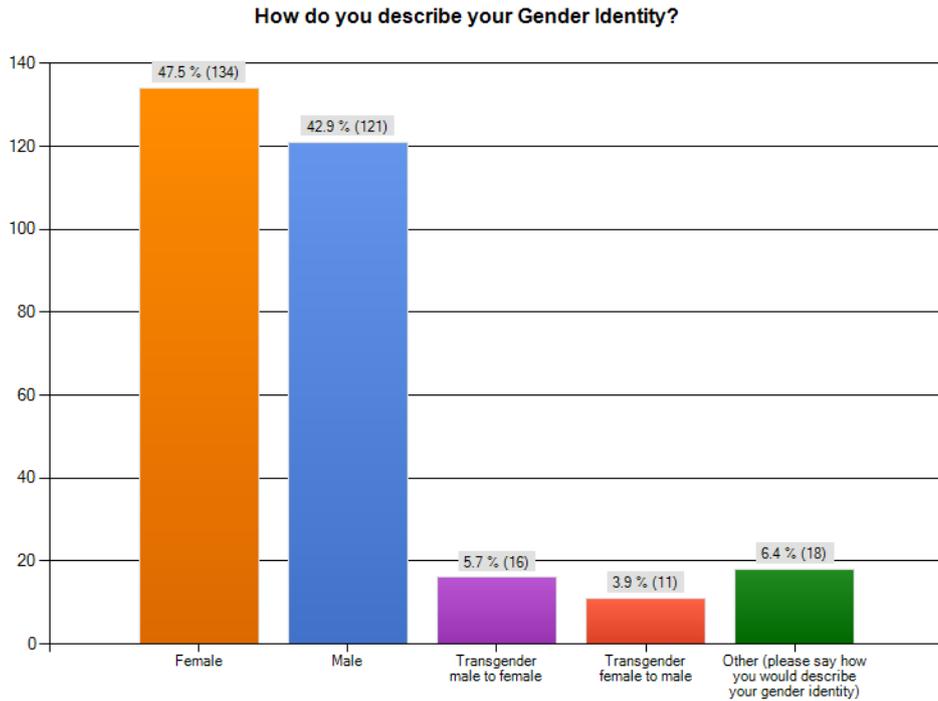
Contributors were firstly asked how they would describe their identity, and then whether their current gender was the same as that assigned to them at birth⁸.

The graphs below show the breakdown of contributors who considered themselves to fit within the identity groups supplied. However, a number of contributors ticked themselves as 'other' and/or provided details related to their identities.

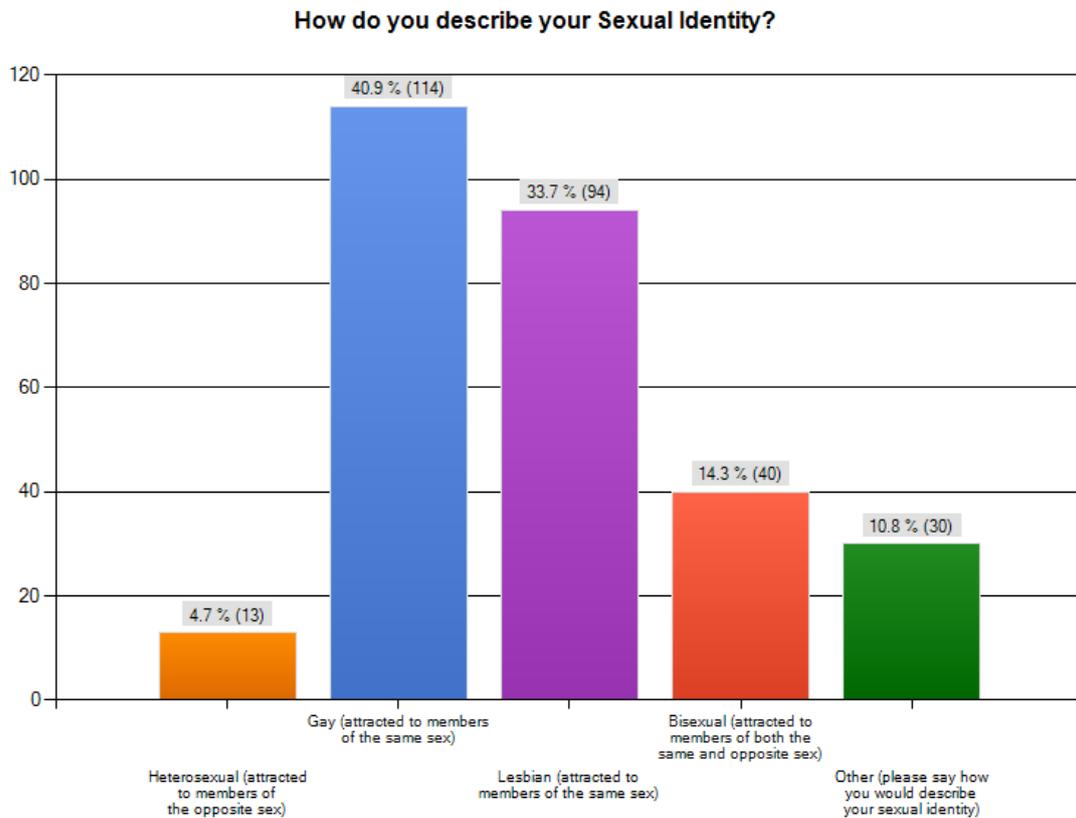
In response to the question about gender identities, marginally more people identified as women than men, including more male to female than female to male transgendered contributors.

18.1% of those who replied to the question (49 individuals) said that their gender was different from that assigned to them at birth, compared to 222 who said it was the same.

⁸ While the latter question was considered to be acceptable in the context of an anonymous survey, it would be inadvisable for it to be used in staff monitoring questionnaires.



In terms of contributors’ sexual identity, the largest group were gay, with just over one third of contributors identifying as lesbian, and 14% as bisexual. Some women preferred to identify a gay rather than lesbian. Thirteen contributors described themselves as heterosexual, some of whom were Transgender.



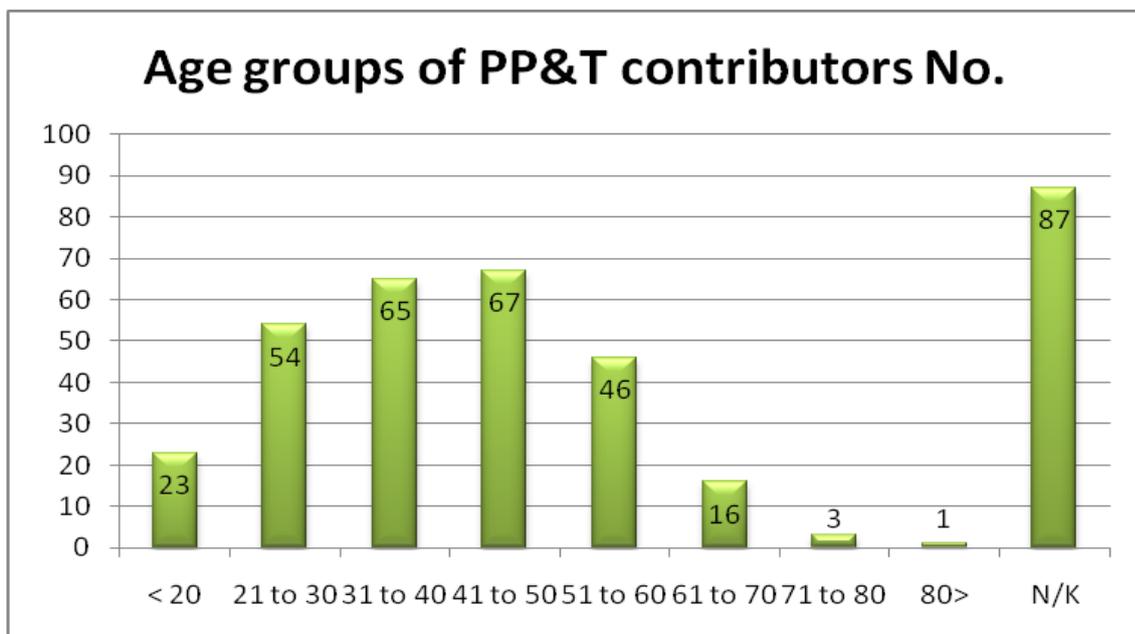
The information provided by people who ticked 'other' gender or sexual identities, gives an insight into the range and complexity of the spectrum of identities that people own. Additional detail about these 'other' identities is provided in Appendix 1.

These responses challenge clear-cut notions of gender and sexual identities, illustrating how difficult it is for many people to define themselves using 'mainstream' terms and concepts. Some show the internal confusion and conflicts that individuals can experience around aspects of their identity, whilst also dealing with external reactions from people around them.

Six people described themselves as 'pansexual' and three described themselves as gay women in preference to using the term lesbian. (Additional detailed responses are set out in Appendix 2.)

Age groups

The survey benefits from the views and experiences of contributors who vary widely in terms of age and other characteristics and circumstances. Of those who replied to this question, the youngest contributor was 14, and the oldest was aged 87. Four were aged 16 and under and four were over 70. The largest group was aged between 41 and 50, with the majority aged 46 – 50. Eighty seven contributors withheld their ages. The graph shows the breakdown by age deciles.



Disabilities

Whilst disability and health issues are not necessarily connected there are areas of overlap, for example where long term and limiting illnesses can be disabling.

Two hundred and eighty three contributors to the Pride Progress and Transformation (PP&T) survey responded to a question about whether they considered themselves to have any disabilities. The responses did show a considerable degree of overlap between answers to this and to the health question.

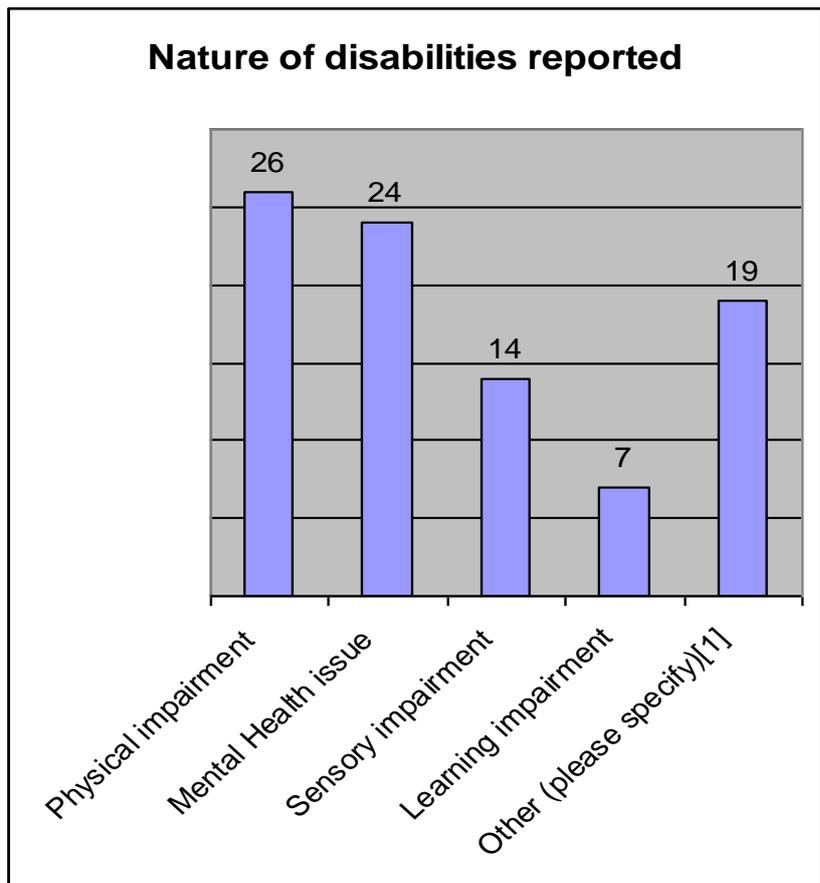
Of the 283 people who responded 65 (23%) said they did consider themselves to have a disability, and a further 9 (3.2%) were not sure. By comparison, the Annual Population Survey (Apr 2008 – Mar 2009), shows that just over 18% of working age people in the South West are disabled.

An additional question asked about the broad nature of any disability. It invited people to tick all of the categories that applied and to state any 'other' forms of self-identified disability that were not included.

The figures in the table below relate to the 65 contributors who self-identified as having a disability.

Among those who ticked 'other', four were HIV positive, two had ME/CFS and two had epilepsy, with associated memory and other problems.

A further three people referred to medical problems, including diabetes and serious back problems, and one had 'multiple disabilities'.



Religion and belief

Contributors were asked to describe their religion or belief, or to say if they have none. Of 257 people who responded, 143 said they had no religious or other specific beliefs. 18 of these described themselves as agnostic. An additional two said they were 'not sure' whether they had any specific beliefs. One hundred and thirty four contributors described their beliefs in a variety of ways which are difficult to categorise. The responses under the 'other' heading can be found in Appendix 2.

The figures for the more widely recognised religions or beliefs are adjacent.

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| No beliefs | 143 |
| Christian ⁹ | 57 |
| Atheist | 16 |
| Buddhist ¹⁰ | 6 |
| Pagan ¹¹ | 6 |
| Jewish | 3 |
| Humanist | 2 |
| Spiritualist | 2 |

Racial identity

275 people provided replies to this question indicating their race¹². From the information given, 21 contributors are from a BME background.

| What is your race? | Number |
|---|--------|
| White British | 220 |
| Any other White background | 34 |
| Irish | 4 |
| White & Asian | 3 |
| Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background | 3 |
| Black Caribbean | 2 |
| Gypsy | 2 |
| Traveller | 2 |
| White & Black Caribbean | 2 |
| Asian British | 1 |
| Black African | 1 |
| Celtic | 1 |

⁹ Those who described themselves as Christian included Anglican, Catholic, Church of Scotland, Methodist, Baptist and Lutheran and ranged from 'practising' to 'liberal'.

¹⁰ Includes Theravada Buddhist/Mahayana Buddhist

¹¹ Includes Witch /Wicca/Greek Neopagan

¹² Some who described themselves as 'other' included: White English, White Welsh, White non-British, White European and White African. These are included in the 'Other White Background' figures.

b. Occupation, location, relationships and incomes

Main occupation

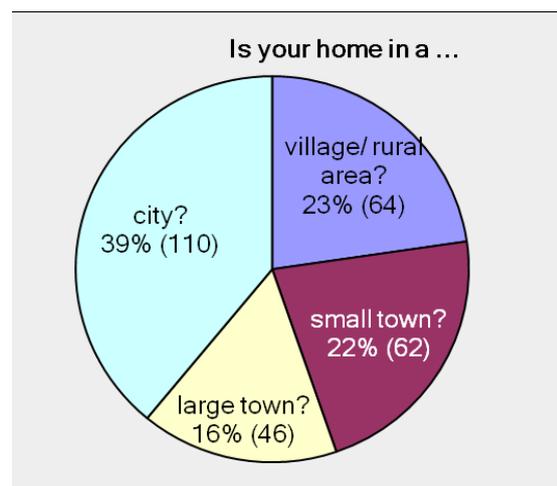
In total 281 people responded to a multiple choice question about their main occupations. In total there were 350 responses, indicating that some respondents are working or retired as well as undertaking study and/or caring responsibilities. The table below shows these responses in order of frequency, and indicates that 229 individuals were in full or part time employment.

| Occupations | % | Number |
|--------------------|----------|---------------|
| Working full time | 65.5% | 184 |
| Working part time | 16.0% | 45 |
| University student | 10.7% | 30 |
| Retired | 6.8% | 19 |
| Carer | 6.4% | 18 |
| Seeking work | 4.6% | 13 |
| College student | 3.6% | 10 |
| Not seeking work | 2.5% | 7 |
| School student | 1.8% | 5 |
| Other | 6.8% | 19 |

Location: Urban or rural

Of the 282 responses to this question, the largest group of contributors are based in cities, although a substantial percentage (45%) live in more rural areas, including villages or small towns. This variation may well account for the diversity of experiences recorded in response to questions posed in the survey.

Two hundred and fifty people who live in the South West provided postcode information. An analysis by local authority areas is shown in Appendix 1.



Location: By Local Authority

| | | | |
|--------------------|----|-----------------------|-----|
| Bath & NE Somerset | 6 | Purbeck | 1 |
| Bournemouth | 26 | Sedgemoor | 4 |
| Bristol City | 67 | South Devon | 7 |
| Cornwall | 22 | South Gloucestershire | 5 |
| East Devon | 1 | South Hams | 2 |
| East Dorset | 1 | South Somerset | 10 |
| Exeter | 15 | Stroud | 1 |
| Gloucester | 7 | Taunton Deane | 5 |
| Mendip | 8 | Teignbridge | 1 |
| Mid Devon | 7 | Torbay | 3 |
| North Devon | 4 | West Devon | 1 |
| North Dorset | 2 | West Dorset | 6 |
| North Somerset | 9 | West Somerset | 5 |
| Plymouth | 7 | Weymouth and Portland | 8 |
| Poole | 1 | Wiltshire | 8 |
| All | | | 250 |

Housing tenure

People’s position within the housing market is routinely used as a proxy indicator for their general socio-economic status. However, the responses regarding contributors’ housing tenure inevitably provides only a snapshot, since it is not unusual for people to rent in the private sector as a temporary stop-gap before a more permanent home is secured, and some tenants do either move out of, or purchase social housing.

Official statistics for 2007, provided by Shelter, show that 70% of people in England were outright home owners, or buying their homes. 18% were in social rented accommodation and 13 per cent were renting privately. Home ownership in the South West is higher than the national figure, and in 2007 it stood at 73%. The statistics for renting in both the private and social housing sectors were equal at 14%, although these figures may change in the current economic climate.

There were two hundred and eighty responses to this question, but some ticked more than one option so the total number of respondents was 195 (54%).

A number of responses suggested that the contributors were in a rather precarious situation with regard to their housing and living arrangements, which may or may not have been connected with their sexual or gender identity.

The fourth column in the table contains figures for the South West from 2009 published in *Regional Trends*, produced by the Office of National Statistics. These provide a means of comparison with the figures obtained through the survey. The fourth columns shows the % gap, plus or minus, between these two sets of figures where they are comparable. It shows a smaller percentage of PP&T contributors living alone than the regional figure, and a significantly higher proportion sharing with unrelated adults, predominantly friends.

Some of the ‘other’ responses are likely to be further clarification of previous answers, and it is possible that some have ticked the question about ‘sharing’ as well as one of the specific tenure types (private rented, etc).

| Housing tenure | PP&T % | No. | SW % | PPT % gap |
|---|--------|-----|------|-----------|
| Homeowner/ buyer | 51.8% | 145 | 73% | -21.2% |
| Tenant: private | 28.9% | 81 | 14% | +14.9% |
| Sharing a home owned or rented by other/s | 15.0% | 42 | - | - |
| Tenant: social housing | 6.1% | 17 | 14% | -7.9% |
| Homeless | 0.4% | 1 | - | - |
| Other | 3.2% | 9 | | - |

Nevertheless, it is clear that over half of those who responded are home owners or buyers, while between

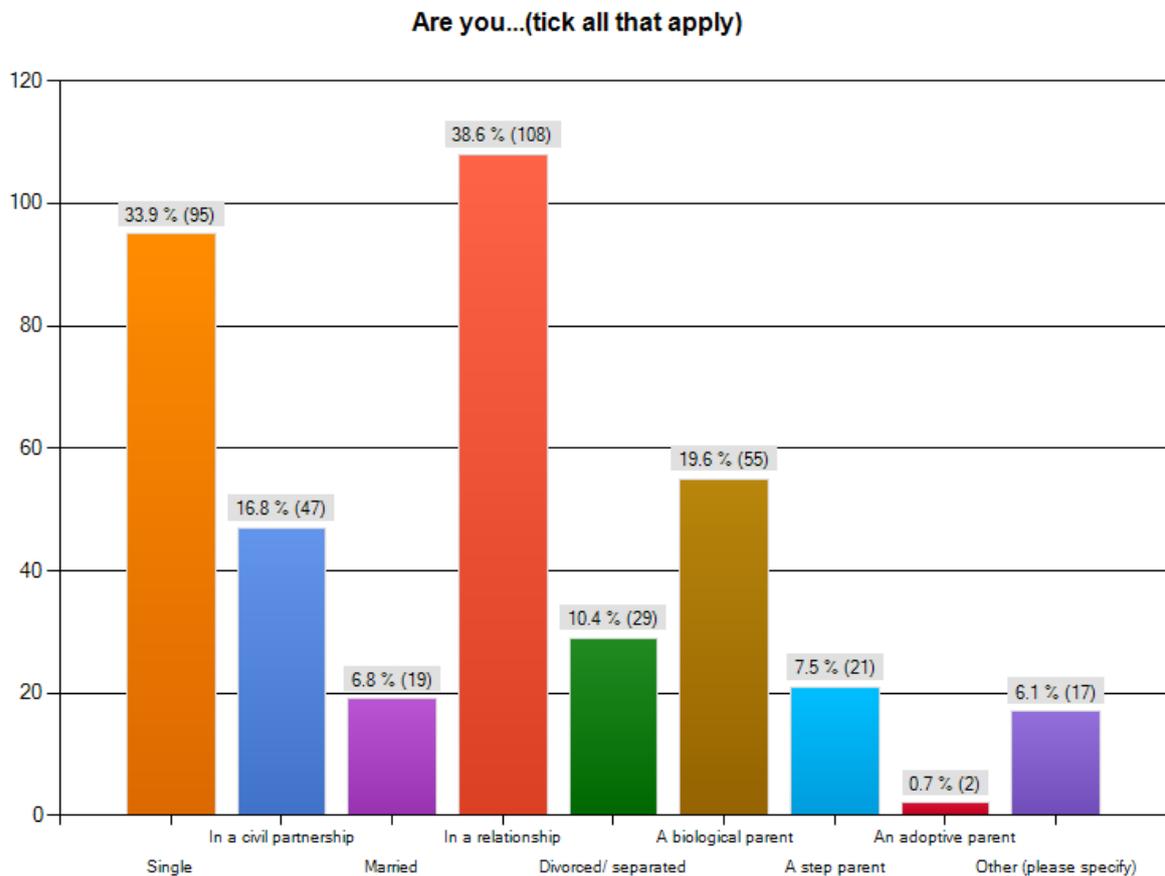
one quarter and one third are in private rented accommodation, most being the legal tenants. This compares with just 6% of respondents living in social housing, some of whom are sharing with others who hold the tenancy - for example with parents or partners.

Those who described 'Other' tenures were living in a variety of circumstances. Two were living with parents, and one lived in live in flat provided by partner's parents. Another lives with their civil partner, who owns the house, while a contributor who lives in rented accommodation is also a private landlord. Two contributors live in caravan. Among the least permanent arrangements, in very different ways, were university dorms and emergency bed and breakfast accommodation because of homelessness.

Household composition and significant relationships

There are many fanciful myths about 'gay lifestyles' which belie the commonalities that exist between gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people and the rest of society.

The survey sought insights into household and significant relationships of contributors, and the table below shows the distribution of responses to the options included in the questionnaire.



The survey also aimed to map the kinds of close relationships that contributors shared at the time of the survey, and a number of options were provided, of which contributors were asked to tick all that applied. There were 280 responses to this multiple-answer question.

A significant number of contributors were in close relationships with partners and in parental roles that included foster parenting and informal caring arrangements.

One younger respondent was living in temporary accommodation as a homeless person, and another was a student in a flat share. One shared a privately rented home with others. Three respondents switch between two living arrangements, one lives with a partner some of the time, and alone for the remainder, another lives with a partner in the USA some of the time and remainder in the UK with their mother, while the third sometimes lives at their mother's house, and at other times at a friend's house.

A disabled respondent has an employee 'living in', another respondent has lodgers, while two other respondents are lodgers themselves.

Other respondents live with: a sibling; an ex-partner and their partners' parents. One who lives alone also has shared custody of their child.

The ONS has a category that includes 'two or more unrelated adults, and some of the 'other' arrangements would fall into this category.

Unfortunately the information about households with children is not precise enough for comparison with ONS categories (which break these down into dependant/non-dependant children and lone and two parent families). However, from the figures we do have we know that almost 12% of respondents were in households with children.

Some respondents were widowed, and several said they were living with their partners. One was about to enter into a civil partnership, and two contributors were 'non-biological mothers'.

Another told us

"... my partner and I chose to have children together - she is the biological parent - I define myself as a parent ... I have court awarded parental responsibility."

One contributor had found that the marriage legally contracted elsewhere was effectively downgraded on reaching the UK:

"I married my partner in Canada, however, it is only recognised as a civil partnership in the UK (regrettably!)"

"I married my partner in Canada, however, it is only recognised as a civil partnership in the UK (regrettably!)"

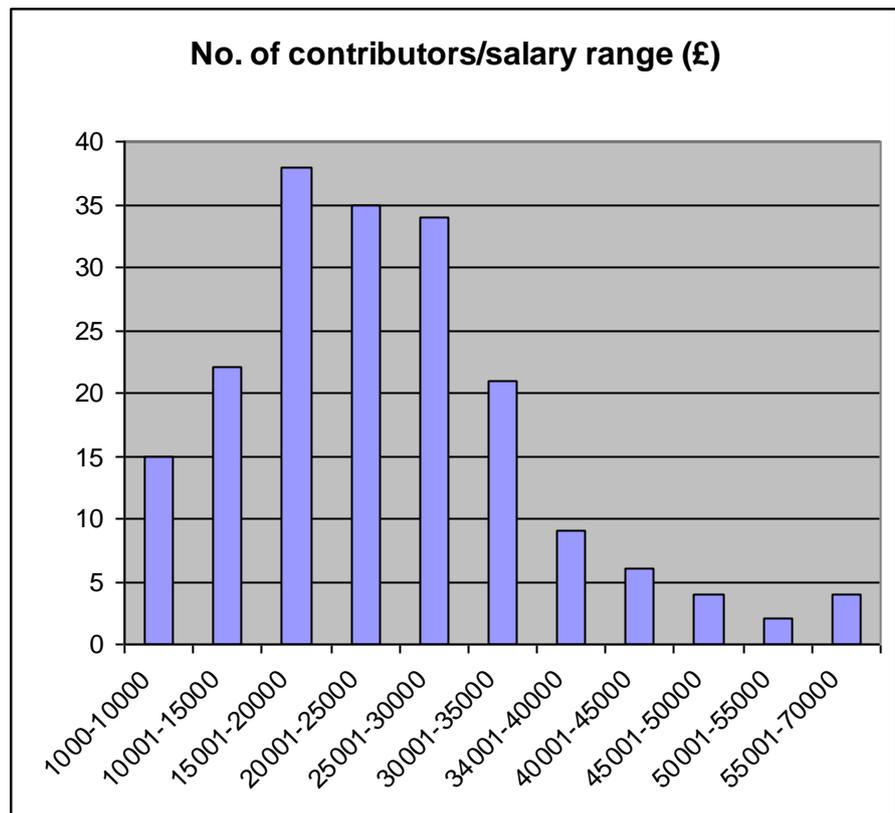
Some expanded on difficult circumstances that they, and people close to them have faced as a result of prejudice, and grey areas in respect of familial and social relationships and rights. For example, one contributor described a situation in which they had been separated from, and denied access to, a former partner’s child following that partner’s death, in spite of having played an important role in the child’s life up until that point. This was clearly a source of grief to the contributor, and suggests a child bereft of important sources of comfort and love.

Annual salaries/income

A number of contributors were either retired, students, on benefits or their earnings were unpredictable. Their annual salaries are included wherever stated, and these make up the majority of salaries below £5000.

Figures from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings for 2009 showed that median weekly pay for full-time employees is £25,123. The median is the mid-point for all employees in the UK. By comparison, the salary mid-point for PP&T contributors in 2010 was £24,000 according to the responses.

PP&T salary figures are translated, except for at the very top and bottom, into bands £5000, however. The majority of contributors earn less than £25,000 per year.



Appendix 1 to 'Contributors' profiles and lifestyles'

1. Sexual and Gender identities: responses of contributors identifying as 'other'

Gender identity:

- Androgyne (electively "hermaphroditic")
- Physically evidently female, identity fluid
- Closet (transgender) diagnosed, but not acted upon
- Post-operative M2F transsexual woman...
- Don't know
- Male stuck in a female body but totally CONFUSED - cross dress
- I am a female who has a transsexual history
- Gender neutral
- M to F transgender, but not transsexual.
- Living as male but Transgendered
- I'm happy being female on the outside but feel male inside

Sexual identity: responses of contributors identifying as 'other'

- "Pansexual (Neither gender or sex specifically affects my attraction) I'm SO glad you had this option on here! :)"
- "Gay boy stuck in a female body but like girls when I feel female.....CONFUSED."
- "Femme inside a male body, with a boyfriend. logically I am Gay... inside I am Hetero... you figure it out, I can't."
- "I am attracted to boys even though i was born a 'boy' but i believe i was meant to be a girl so i identify as straight..."
- Another contributor explained her identity as
- "Queer. Lesbian dating genderqueer boi. Into anyone not bio-male (for lack of a better word, no offence meant)."
- "Pre Transition ftm (female to male transgendered) attracted to women - still member of lesbian community."
- "MTF (male to female transgendered) attracted to other women - but celibate for 12 yrs."
- "Attracted to my fem partner - I'm TG."
- "Queer. In terms of the spectrum, at the gay end of bi, but I don't identify as either gay or bi."
- "Heterosexual cross dresser."

- “Neutral and Celibate (now)”
- “Asexual (3)”
- “Post-gay, in a same-sex relationship.”

2. Religion or belief – other

- “Spiritual - non specific”
- “Yes - spiritual but not religious.”
- “Holistic”
- “Earth based, druid, spiritual”
- “I have some spiritual beliefs of my own but not attached to an organised religion.”
- “My own, non organised.”
- “Theist - non-organised religion.”
- “I was baptised a Catholic but have not practiced since I was 15. I consider myself agnostic.”
- “Lapsed CofE/ Disillusioned Anglican.”
- C.E/Spiritualist/Humanitarian
- Trade unionism - everyone should belong to one.
- Jedi
- Science of Mind
- Non Duality
- Universal
- Eclectic
- Gaia Hypothesis

Pride, Progress and Transformation

Safety and security?

"My employer did not feel that the homophobic abuse I was subject to (including derogatory homophobic language, exclusion from social activities, open expression of homophobic attitudes etc) was homophobia".

"I am ok...but am aware that others may not be."

"Attack was in Bristol City Centre a number of years ago. Did not tell police at the time as did not trust them. However I think things have changed and I would tell them now."

"They just could not imagine or really deal with how I could be feeling as they were uneducated in Trans issues. I felt unheard, pacified and patronised."

"Teachers would not take me seriously, and no idea how to report..."

"I was hospitalised following a severe assault, which included sexual assault, in a park on my way home from work."

Safety and security: introduction

There are evident parallels between the issues encapsulated within the ten dimensions and Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs'¹³. The second most basic need, according to Maslow, is security and safety. People want to control, and have order in their lives, so this need for safety and security contributes largely to their behaviour. Some of the basic security and safety needs include: Financial security; Health and wellness, and safety against accidents and injury. Finding a steady job, obtaining health insurance, contributing money to a savings account and moving into a safer neighbourhood are all examples of actions motivated by the security and safety needs.

Two of the ten 'dimensions of equality' that form part of the Equality Measurement Framework are 'physical security' and 'legal security'.

Physical security covers questions about how safe people feel and are from the threat of physical danger or assault.

Legal security includes questions concerning how effectively people feel that their interests and well being are protected by legislation, its enforcement and the agencies concerned with the administration of justice.

The Pride Progress and Transformation survey questionnaire encompassed both of these areas. It explored the extent to which LGB and Trans people feel safe and secure in a range of social situations, as well as within their own homes, and asked them to describe any experiences they have had that underpin any concerns.

What is well illustrated by responses to open-ended questions is the extent to which people's freedom to express their lesbian, gay bisexual or transgender identity in public is circumscribed by the need to protect themselves from homophobic/transphobic abuse – verbal and physical. This is exemplified in some contributors expressing a very basic wish that they could show their affection for their partners in public – as other couples do – by holding hands.

There is encouragement to be drawn from many of the responses, and in particular it is clear that some key agencies across the region have made significant progress in trying to create a safer environment in which to be a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender person.

However, there is still much to be done towards achieving the kind of environment in which homophobia and transphobia do not blight the lives, freedoms and safety of LGB and Trans people in the South West.

¹³ Go to http://psychology.about.com/lr/hierarchy_of_needs/15248/2/ for more about Maslow's Hierarchy of needs

Summary of key findings

1. Sixteen in every 100 (16%) contributors had experienced homophobic or transphobic harassment, abuse or physical violence in the previous two years in their local area after dark. Twelve in every 100 (12%) had had such experiences in their local area or in other parts of the South West during the day time, and 11 in 100 (11%) had had such experiences while in school, college, university or at work.
2. The numbers who said they had experienced physical violence were comparatively low, but ongoing, low-level verbal abuse, harassment and casual homophobic and transphobic remarks create a climate in which feelings of fear and insecurity persist for many.
3. Over two thirds (68%) of contributors who had experienced harassment, abuse or physical violence in the previous two years had not reported this to anyone. The police were by far the most common agency to receive reports, followed by specialist support groups and organisations.
4. More than a quarter of all contributors had experienced some form of domestic abuse from an intimate partner, and just under one fifth had experienced abuse at the hands of a parent or guardian.
5. The decision not to report was most commonly due to a belief that the issue would not be taken seriously or dealt with effectively, and there were fears that reporting would actually make matters considerably worse for the target.
6. Another significant reason for non-reporting was that people were not aware of who they could report to and how. Younger people were most acutely affected by this, particularly where abuse had taken place within the home.
7. A large majority of people affected by domestic abuse had not sought help from anyone. Beside fear of disclosure and/or worsening the situation, there was a lack of knowledge of or access to relevant support.
8. In the main, LGB and Trans contributors support general safety improvements in public spaces, such as more visible policing, better street lighting and more effective action in dealing with anti-social behaviour, often linked to alcohol misuse.
9. Many LGB and Trans people take 'common sense' precautions in order to protect their personal safety when out after dark, although many do feel that their sexual or gender identity makes them more vulnerable to attack.
10. Harassment and abuse at the hands of younger people was frequently mentioned.

11. Contributors who shared any of the more visible protected characteristics - gender, age and disability were mentioned - found they were more likely to experience abuse on these grounds, as were same sex couples who showed affection towards one another.
12. People who live in social or privately rented housing have less opportunity to choose the area where they live and can therefore be seriously affected by neighbour harassment.
13. Neighbourhood Watch schemes are potentially very helpful mechanisms which could help improve LGB and Trans people's feelings of safety and security.
14. The treatment of sexuality and Transgender issues by the media – both in reporting and in the portrayal of LGB and Trans people – is strongly felt to contribute to a climate of insecurity, according to many contributors. This is set against the valuable educational and awareness raising role that the mass media could alternatively perform.

How safe and secure do lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people feel in the South West?

All contributors to the survey were asked the following questions about situations in which they feel safe or otherwise. For purposes of comparison, local authority partners who were consulted during the development stage of the survey were keen to see questions that reflect, where possible, those that they would be asking the general population in surveys that helped them to identify overall community safety priorities for their areas.

The table below included all responses. A separate table shows responses for transgender people only. The final column shows total responses to each part of the question. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

All responses: How safe or unsafe do you feel when...

| | Very safe | Safe | Neither safe nor unsafe | Unsafe | Very unsafe | Not sure | All Responses (LGB and Trans) |
|--|------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| In your home | 60% (174) | 35% (101) | 2% (6) | 2% (5) | 1% (2) | 1% (2) | 290 |
| In your main place of occupation/education | 51% (144) | 35% (97) | 9% (24) | 2% (6) | 2% (6) | 1% (3) | 280 |
| Outside in the area where you live during the day | 45% (129) | 42% (123) | 9% (27) | 3% (9) | 1% (2) | 0% (0) | 290 |
| Outside in the area where you live after dark | 19% (54) | 39% (114) | 26% (75) | 11% (31) | 5% (14) | 1% (3) | 291 |

The figures are not surprising in terms of the situations in which people in general feel most and least safe and secure. The safest place is in contributors' own homes. However, it would be interesting to have figures from the general population with which to compare these. Intuitively, the figure of 60% for contributors who feel 'very safe' in their own homes seems lower than might be expected for the average person. The total number who feel 'very safe' or 'safe' in their own homes is just under 95% of all contributors.

The figures for those who feel 'very safe' in their main place of occupation or education are worrying, given the proportion of waking time that most people spend in work or educational settings. The other figures also appear to be below what might be expected for most people in similar situations.

These figures, and those below which relate only to Transgender contributors, are illuminated by the responses that many people provided to the open-ended questions that followed.

Responses from transgender contributors: How safe or unsafe do you feel when ...

| | outside in the area where you live after dark? | | outside in the area where you live during the day? | | in your home | | in your main place of occupation or education? | |
|-------------------------|--|------------|--|------------|--------------|------------|--|------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Very safe | 6 | 12% | 19 | 21% | 32 | 67% | 20 | 48% |
| Safe | 15 | 31% | 20 | 42% | 12 | 25% | 8 | 19% |
| Neither safe nor unsafe | 16 | 33% | 5 | 10% | 2 | 4% | 8 | 19% |
| Unsafe | 6 | 12% | 3 | 6% | 2 | 4% | 2 | 5% |
| Very unsafe | 5 | 10% | 1 | 2% | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7% |
| Not sure | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2% |
| Total response | 48 | | 48 | | 48 | | 42 | |

What if anything, do you think could be done to increase your feeling of safety in any of these situations?

The majority of the suggestions in this section supported general safety improvements, rather than LGB and Trans specific issues, although in a number of cases these were related to improving contributors' sense of safety as an LGB or Transgender person.

Contributors referred to measures commonly cited in community safety surveys, such as more visible policing, particularly during the hours of darkness, better street lighting, and more effective action in dealing with drunken and anti-social behaviour.

Some contributors commented that their feelings of safety were in their own hands. They would actively avoid risks, take self defence classes, or in more extreme circumstances, move home, in order to feel safer if the option was available to them.

Many contributors recognised that the fear of hate crime, abuse or harassment is often more real than the actual threat itself, and many were explicit that their concerns and suggested remedies were unrelated to their sexual or transgender identity.

“The feeling of safety comes from you. Anything can happen at any time - I lead a 'normal' life with my partner and so I feel safe.”

A number were mostly concerned about the actions of local youths, so felt that more could be done to address this. Several referred to experiencing homophobic or transphobic harassment at the hands of groups of young people.

Expressed frequently, and in broad terms, was the view that feelings of safety related to LGB and or Trans identity would be increased if there was greater awareness, acceptance and attitudinal change in society, and if Police were more responsive to homophobic/transphobic incidents and fed back on the actions taken.

Some contributors commented that they feel very safe and have no fears for their safety in any of the situations.

One contributor highlighted a point that was made by a number of people who responded to the survey, which was that there are other, more visible characteristics on the grounds of which people are discriminated against or experience adverse treatment. Most commonly mentioned is gender, but visible physical disabilities were also identified in this context.

“I experience antagonism for being a Disabled person and/or for challenging being discriminated against on at least a weekly basis. This tends to happen long before anyone notices/hears I am a lesbian. Therefore, no I haven't experienced any of the above in the past 2 yrs.”

At home and in the area where you live

Fundamental to people's feelings of safety and security is having a safe place in which to live.

Many connected their general feeling of safety to living in a 'nice' neighbourhood by chance or because they deliberately chose a location in which they did feel safe. Good relationships with neighbours are important.

“I feel very safe with lovely straight neighbours... We are also lucky to have a lot of LGBT people living nearby and as a community (LGBT and straight) we all get on. The old straight couple next door have actively brought up

conversations about us as 'lesbian neighbours' to tell us that we have changed their lives for the better."

For some, their sense of security and safety in the home and in their local area was undermined by anti social behaviour in general.

"I live in an area where there is a lot of anti social behaviour - frequent fights outside our home as people leave a nearby pub, my car has been damaged, and my housemate's car was burnt by a fire bomb... My neighbours are lovely - nothing to do with them - I wish the pub would be a little bit more responsible for fights which happen when their customers leave in the morning. Nothing here particularly relates to my sexuality."

"I live in a struggling inner city area so would feel unsafe regardless of my sexuality."

For many there was recognition of the provisional nature of their own feelings of safety, and that other LGB and Trans people may be less fortunate in the places where they lived.

"I live in a very safe and quiet area - people are very tolerant generally."

"I am ok...but am aware that others may not be."

"We moved to the middle of nowhere to resolve these issues!"

"I live in a quiet part of the world. I have never felt threatened yet. If I lived on a rundown council estate it might be different."

Other contributors referred to actual or anticipated threats related to their identity from people living in their own neighbourhoods. Some of these were clearly in less affluent areas, and there was a sense that more 'middle class' areas were safer for LGB and Trans people.

"I could move somewhere slightly more middle class...I (rightly or wrongly) always imagine that middle class people are less likely to punch you or shout at you than working class people."

"I do not think that there is anything that can be done about homophobic drunken neighbours, but if any incident were to occur then I would hope that the Police and/or Council (they are Council tenants) would take action."

"I think the arrest and conviction of (neighbour) for harassment and hate crime and the removal of his tenancy ... MIGHT increase my feeling of safety."

"(It would help) Not feeling you may be discriminated against. In my case it could be because I am a lesbian, older or disabled. (It would help) Knowing other gay people in the area to feel supported."

“Not sure what could be done ... the local youths are the ones I fear most.”

“... this is because of harassment by youths.”

“Some residents are very hostile and I have experienced bullying from them.”

One contributor who lives in an urban area described a distressing attack he had suffered on the way home from work. Others who live in villages described incidents of verbal abuse and harassment, which can be exacerbated by a sense of isolation.

“Local teenagers/20-somethings find it funny to shout abuse at people they believe to be LGBT and can make people feel very uncomfortable. I always try to walk around the village with at least one other person.”

The ability to trust in support from the police and other agencies which have the authority to intervene was brought to the fore time and again. One fortunate contributor felt quite safe because she was a personal friend of a local beat officer, but this is not a situation that most people are able to enjoy.

In the context of social housing, some of contributors flag up important issues for housing providers to grapple with, including ensuring tenancy agreements spell out a clear prohibition against prejudice-based harassment or abuse against a neighbour, and that non-compliance is properly dealt with.

Several references to the role of Neighbourhood Watch schemes suggest that their members should be made more aware of the nature and prevalence of homophobic and transphobic targeting. One contributor suggested “Neighbourhood Watch for LGBT people.”

This raises questions about the levels of awareness and support that such groups are able to demonstrate in the conduct of their activities, and the importance of police co-ordinators highlighting the importance of an inclusive culture among members. If such schemes receive financial or in-kind support from public bodies the protections provided by equality legislation ought to apply to their conduct.

Outside, in the area where you live – night or day

Many contributors consciously avoid taking risks when they are out and about. Some feel the need to be extra cautious due to the additional threat posed by homophobic and transphobic reactions, while others equate their behaviour to that of the wider public.

“Like EVERYONE-avoid dark unpopulated places and never go alone. The risk of violence etc is actually very small. Almost all confined to young males attacking young males. However no one knows in the dark, or cares if you are not 'standard gender'. They seek other things. Attacks on both pre and post

op TS people and all who are dressed in clothes that are generally not those commonly worn by one's birth sex, are very few. But taking care as described above is the only way to be virtually certain of safety."

"This feeling (of insecurity) is as a result of being attacked when out with my partner at night and several instances of verbal abuse in the same situation. Police presence in my local area is generally strong at night and so I don't know what more could be done other than them moving on groups of young people."

"Having been attacked in the street in the past, I am on red alert walking around town. I put on my "F*** Off face" that keeps trouble away. You have to be streetwise."

A number of people commented that the way in which homophobic and transphobic incidents were dealt with did little to inspire, or actively undermined people's confidence in the justice system and in the police and enforcement agencies. Some contributors suggested that more visible and direct action on complaints, and more targeted sentencing would help.

"... tackle HONESTLY complaints regarding homophobic attitudes and practises within authorities in Cornwall instead of bullying complainants and trying to cover up the abuses carried out against gay persons."

"... stronger legal action against homophobic attack and abuse; more police prosecutions; longer sentencing for hate crime."

"By tackling homophobia more - it would be great to think that it was ok to hug my partner in public like other couples can."

While suggesting that more could be done to prevent homophobic/transphobic attacks in 'trouble spots', one contributor paid tribute to actions already taken by his local police.

"To be fair the Police in Plymouth have done a lot of work to reduce the amount of homophobic harassment..."

A number of female contributors commented that their own sense of insecurity was primarily related to their sex rather than their sexuality. However, for some this is compounded by homophobic/transphobic harassment or the fear of this happening if their sexuality was known.

"Discouragement of teenage gangs loitering about on the street and men who have been drinking congregating in groups outside pubs to smoke - both are a constant problem in our area, and both have had cause to make us very scared. It's no fun, being two women alone and having abuse screamed at you by drunk men or teenagers."

“My feelings of being unsafe after dark are connected to being a woman on her own and vulnerability that comes with that. Also, for my partner and I to be openly displaying affection such as holding hands in any public space day or night would cause feelings of increased vulnerability.”

“This is more of a Reclaim the Night feminist issue. Women don't feel safe out at night, and we're also made to feel like we're foolish if we try to go out by ourselves (unless in a car).”

“I think any female outside on their own after dark does and should feel nervous. Though CCTV does alleviate this to an extent, I personally would like to see more police 'on the beat'. They are still the best deterrent.”

Safer and better public transport was one of the concerns that LGB and Transpeople share with the wider public, as was the suggestion that greater use of town centres at night by a more diverse population.

“People should be out and about more which in turn makes everyone feel safer - safety in numbers!”

In the workplace or place of education

Some contributors work in risky environments and referred to security measures which were either already installed or would be helpful. Among these were self defence classes, and security checks on customers.

“In work I take appropriate precautions of myself lately but due to the nature of the work (risk) of harm always remains.”

“We currently use security guards in my place of work, and this lessens the risk of assault from clients. Not sure how it would be without them as we have had several serious incidents over the years...”

Other contributors referred to working in a homophobic/transphobic atmosphere, where repeated abusive comments were made at meetings, and even during supervision sessions. These were not necessarily aimed at the contributors themselves but created a difficult working environment. Some wanted to see stronger measures to tackle “covert bullying and discrimination in the workplace”, and support from management in eliminating the behaviours.

This contributor is among a minority who feel able to report, and eventually to achieve success in challenging, discrimination in the workplace.

“I once suffered discrimination in my previous workplace, but fought it and (eventually) won.”

Experiences of homophobic or transphobic harassment, abuse and/ or physical violence in the previous two years

The questionnaire asked “Have you personally experienced homophobic or transphobic harassment, abuse and/ or physical violence in the past two years” and listed a variety of situations, similar to those used in earlier questions, as well as inviting examples of other circumstances in which such incidents had occurred.

The responses in relation to the type of incident, and the location, are shown in separate tables. Contributors were free to define their own experiences within the categories of homophobic or transphobic, and of harassment, abuse and physical violence.

The numbers of responses to each question varied and the percentages are calculated against these different total responses. The percentages are presented in descending order of frequency, and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

| Location | Total Responses |
|---|------------------------|
| In local area after dark | 276 |
| In local area during the day | 277 |
| In own home | 259 |
| At school, college, university or work | 260 |
| Elsewhere in the South West | 260 |

Have you personally experienced homophobic harassment

| Location | Response |
|--|-----------------|
| In your local area after dark? | 16% (44) |
| In your local area during the day? | 12% (33) |
| Elsewhere in the South West? | 12% (31) |
| At school, college, university or at work? | 11% (29) |
| In your home? | 5% (13) |

Have you personally experienced homophobic abuse

| Location | Response |
|--|----------|
| In your local area after dark? | 14% (38) |
| At school, college, university or at work? | 13% (33) |
| Elsewhere in the South West? | 12% (30) |
| In your local area during the day? | 9% (25) |
| In your home? | 2% (5) |

Have you personally experienced homophobic physical violence

| Location | Response |
|--|----------|
| In your local area after dark? | 3% (9) |
| Elsewhere in the South West? | 2% (6) |
| At school, college, university or at work? | 2% (5) |
| In your local area during the day? | 2% (5) |
| In your home? | 1% (3) |

It needs to be borne in mind that the number of Trans contributors is much smaller than that of LG and B contributors.

Have you personally experienced transphobic harassment

| Location | Response |
|--|----------|
| Elsewhere in the South West? | 5% (13) |
| In your local area after dark? | 4.% (11) |
| At school, college, university or at work? | 4% (9) |
| In your local area during the day? | 3% (9) |
| In your home? | 2% (5) |

Have you personally experienced transphobic abuse

| | |
|--|---------|
| Elsewhere in the South West? | 4% (10) |
| In your local area during the day? | 3% (9) |
| In your local area after dark? | 3% (7) |
| At school, college, university or at work? | 2% (6) |
| In your home? | 1% (2) |

Have you personally experienced transphobic physical violence

| | |
|--|--------|
| In your local area after dark? | 1% (2) |
| In your local area during the day? | 0% (1) |
| At school, college, university or at work? | 0% (1) |
| Elsewhere in the South West? | 0% (1) |
| In your home? | 0% (0) |

Have you personally experienced **none of these**

| | |
|--|-----------|
| In your home? | 92% (237) |
| In your local area during the day? | 77% (213) |
| At school, college, university or at work? | 76% (197) |
| Elsewhere in the South West? | 74% (193) |
| In your local area after dark? | 72% (198) |

Where else have you experienced harassment/abuse/violence in the past two years?

Most other experiences had occurred in town or city centres. Some people mentioned Manchester, London, Southampton and Worcestershire.

Others spoke of receiving abusive material in the post, of experiences in pubs, restaurants, at Pride events and on public transport. One had changed churches because of experiences there and one mentioned a specialist LGB and T organisation. One person said they had been abused through a web forum. Those places named in the South West were:

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Bath | Melksham |
| Bristol (5) | Plymouth (5) |
| Chippenham | Portland |
| Cornwall (2) | Totnes |
| Dartmouth | Torquay |
| Devizes | Trowbridge |
| Dorset | Truro |
| Exeter (4) | |

Reporting of homophobic or transphobic harassment, abuse or violence in the past two years

It is well recognised that there is a considerable gap between the numbers of homophobic or transphobic incidents which people experience and those which are reported and recorded as such by the relevant authorities. The survey sought to provide some measure of the scale of this gap, to identify who people were most likely to report such incidents to, and the reasons why people decided not to report.

One hundred and twenty seven people responded to these questions.

If you have experienced homophobic or transphobic harassment, abuse or physical violence in the past two years, did you report this to any of the following?

| | Percent | Number |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Police | 20% | 25 |
| A specialist L, G, B or Transgender support group | 9% | 12 |
| GP | 5% | 6 |
| Other health worker | 4% | 5 |
| Youth worker | 4% | 5 |
| Council officer | 3% | 4 |
| Councillor | 2% | 3 |
| School staff | 2% | 3 |
| College staff | 2% | 3 |
| University staff | 2% | 3 |
| Trade union rep | 2% | 3 |
| No-one | 68% | 86 |
| | Other | 25 |

Contributors were asked to give details of other people or agencies they reported such incidents to.

In the majority of cases (11) the incidents had occurred in the workplace and these were reported to employers, managers, other appropriate staff, such as HR managers, or work colleagues. In one case, the target had not reported it him/herself but colleagues had reported it because of the discomfort it had caused them. In another the report had been ignored.

For some, the existence of equality teams, personnel or policies and procedures within the organisation in which they were employed had provided the necessary encouragement, and a clear procedure for them to follow.

Other incidents involved staff working for public bodies, and reports were made to these – apparently with little action resulting. In some cases private sector providers

were involved and complaints were made to them. In one instance a solicitor had been consulted, and in a situation involving the church a Bishop had been approached. Some people were able to call on friends, family and colleagues as a source of support.

One contributor had their own well-worked out approach to any homophobic/transphobic incidents, and showed substantial reserves of courage and self-confidence.

“When I experience any issue from companies or public bodies, I ALWAYS take the issue to the top - no point in talking to first line 'support' - I go to Chief Exec level, and I always require a written resolution, and I always make it known that I WILL reserve the right to publish.”

If you did not report to anyone, what made you decide not to?

Many contributors who had not reported incidents against them stated that this was because they felt that the incident had not been serious enough to warrant a complaint. Others had considered reporting but were put off because they doubted that the matter would be taken seriously or dealt with properly. This was particularly the case with regard to verbal or subtle abuse that they felt was difficult to take action against.

Some comments indicated that people often made a mental calculation, weighing the seriousness of the incident against the potential repercussions that may follow. Many of these responses reflected a world-weary resignation to the idea that verbal abuse and insults were too common and insignificant to make a fuss about (“we put up with a lot of low level crap”; “not worth the hassle”). Some were from drunks, youths, and casual drivers-by and in one case a pub landlord.

Others had experienced sustained abuse.

“the abuse was verbal and had been continual for ... about 8 years, from a neighbour. He died.”

While the message was repeated by different contributors that ‘it wasn’t serious enough’ or it ‘wouldn’t have been worth it’ the fact that these incidents were recorded for this survey suggests that there is a likely cumulative impact on many people’s sense of security from incidents which, individually, are dismissed as minor.

“Though it's not acceptable, homophobic abuse becomes part of your life, so one off comments seem too insignificant to report to anyone. Would not know who to tell for a one off comment.”

“I didn't see the point. The incidents I have experienced are usually young men yelling as they pass by in the street or from a car. Sometimes they will

follow for a short time as I walk up the street. I couldn't identify them, so I didn't see the point in troubling services. Another time, it was an older woman who expressed her disgust at me and my partner, again who would you alert in such circumstances?"

"What's the point, most people use homophobic language of some sort or make fun of gay men or/and lesbians, so this is embedded in culture so any complaints seem just to be wasting people's time."

The following comment is one of a number which indicate the extent to which people's freedom of self-expression is curtailed because of the hostile attention that ordinary displays of affection can result in.

"The incident did not warrant reporting - one-off name calling to which I responded & tackled the situation. It related to reaction against me & partner holding hands in public."

Even where incidents were clearly significant, they were not always reported.

"I should have reported an assault to the Police - but at the time, I was too shocked and distressed to want to make a fuss."

Some contributors had reported incidents in the past, but had been put off doing so again because no outcome had been achieved. There was also a view that there was a lack of specialist support and understanding from those to whom incidents were reported.

"... I did not feel that there was any point, there has been no positive outcome in the past from reporting, despite the two incidences when I reported it to the police and (although) they were positive and helpful at the time, there was no outcome."

"Because it has never made any difference in the past, and if i reported every time i experienced this i would be constantly complaining, just dont see the point."

"I stopped reporting incidents to the Police after the Crown Prosecution Service dropped the case against my neighbour for his harrassment of me, as I felt that they were not doing anything to help me, protect me or support me"

A number of people were fearful of repercussions, believing that reporting would make matters worse for themselves. Among these were some who were afraid of being outed if they were to report, or of disclosing their sexuality to strangers who might be hostile.

"Probably too scared in case it makes it worse, usually much much worse..."

"In work ... would have been bad politics to challenge.."

“More a sense of fear as a woman, and an older woman. But then, as an old dyke, one has learnt to be careful...”

“Was not out at the time.”

“... at home - in a close knit community - it doesn't fare well to report ... especially when they have family with influence.”

“Concerned that it would make things worse.”

Some people felt that they would report today things that they did not report in the past. Others, who had chosen not to report the more casual incidents were clear that they would report if they were to experience anything more serious.

Such comments suggest that there are people whose confidence in the police has increased over time and, others who believe that the police will deal with such complaints appropriately.

“Attack was in Bristol City Centre a number of years ago. Did not tell police at the time as did not trust them. However I think things have changed and I would tell them now.”

“If I was ever violently attacked I would report this, but verbal abuse seems difficult to take any action against.”

“... If this was continuous threats for example, I feel I would be able to turn to the police or someone.”

A number of contributors were not aware of anyone they could or should report to, and some felt that those to whom they would be expected to report would lack the necessary understanding to provide appropriate support.

“I attempted to, using a telephone number I picked up on a card in a gay venue, which stated was a reporting line for Homophobic abuse, however the number was no longer in use for the help-line and instead was a residential number. After getting the courage to phone that line, I felt disempowered to inform anyone else.”

“I didn't know who I could report this too.”

In some cases those who did not report were still at school, where they clearly felt that the incidents concerned would not be treated with the seriousness that they should, leaving the contributors feeling exposed.

“The feeling that no-one would take it seriously, and that it would be seen as ‘an unfortunate incident’ or ‘playground bullying’ rather than hate-crime.”

“Teachers would not take me seriously, and no idea how to go to the police”.

In many ways the next comment summarises a combination of reasons why people did not report.

“Didn't think it was significant enough, and didn't think a complaint would be followed up. Also thought reporting it might lead to more harassment; easier to just laugh it off and ignore it.”

In all the responses indicate that there remains a considerable proportion of LGB and Transpeople who, in spite of protective legislation and regulations governing behaviour in schools, workplaces and public spaces, feel that they have little power to challenge homophobic/transphobic behaviour. The desire not to put themselves through long and unrewarding bureaucratic processes in order to confront lower-level abuse is understandable, but the fact that people have to make such choices so routinely is a matter of serious concern.

If you did report, were you satisfied with the action taken?

| | Yes | No | Response |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Police | 66.7% (18) | 33.3% (9) | 27 |
| A specialist LGB or Trans support group | 84.6% (11) | 15.4% (2) | 13 |
| Council officer | 28.6% (2) | 71.4% (5) | 7 |
| University staff | 33.3% (2) | 66.7% (4) | 6 |
| GP | 50.0% (3) | 50.0% (3) | 6 |
| Other health worker | 50.0% (3) | 50.0% (3) | 6 |
| Youth worker | 66.7% (4) | 33.3% (2) | 6 |
| College staff | 20.0% (1) | 80.0% (4) | 5 |
| Trade union rep | 40.0% (2) | 60.0% (3) | 5 |
| School staff | 25.0% (1) | 75.0% (3) | 4 |
| Councillor | 50.0% (2) | 50.0% (2) | 4 |
| Total individual respondents | | | 40 |

If you were not satisfied with the action taken what help was missing and how it could be improved?

The primary focus of people’s dissatisfaction with the reporting process was the fact that complaints were not followed through. For example, some contributors noted that although the initial response from the police force had been swift, nothing had resulted from the report that was made.

“The police responded very quickly to a call when I was attacked with my girlfriend but did not arrest the perpetrators who were allowed to walk away and then could not be identified. There was no further action taken.”

Contributors also commented on a lack of support from their employer, where the incident had happened at work. Sometimes the abuse was simply not recognised as such.

The absence of workplace policies and procedures clearly makes it more difficult, both for managers and those targeted, to know how to deal with homophobic/transphobic incidents at work, however, some managers fail to use procedures to ensure that incidents are dealt with effectively.

“My employer did not feel that the homophobic abuse I was subject to (including derogatory homophobic language, exclusion from social activities, open expression of homophobic attitudes etc) was homophobia”.

“Manager made a big fuss, big investigation but the person involved was just given a warning, but found out he had been given warnings before including written warnings.”

“... lack of support to deal with an intimidating process by employer.”

“The promise was given to talk with the people responsible and make sure it didn't happen again. At my appraisal, not only did it emerge that this in fact never happened, but it was used against me to censor me as ‘overly sensitive’.”

The following observation demonstrates the importance of the ‘third party harassment’ clause in the Equality Act 2010, which, although passed as part of the legislation may not be implemented.

“Public bodies do not seem to accept that they are responsible for tackling harassment of contractors as well as their own directly employed staff.”

One contributor had clearly reached the end of their tether in seeking help with abuse from a neighbour, having approached a large number of agencies

“I asked for help from the Council (and) despite the written promise of the then Director of Housing... that I could be re-housed away from my neighbour ... neither has happened... I asked for help from the mental health services ... and their supportive letters and recommendations to the re-housing manager have been ignored...”

There appear to be a number of agencies that do not have procedures to deal with homophobic or transphobic incidents, or where the procedures that they follow are not meeting the needs of its targets. A church member who had complained to the Bishop found that this had come to nothing, while another victim had raised their complaint with the police, only to be signposted to an "outside agency".

One despairing contributor had concluded that

“Honesty, integrity, impartiality, transparency of conduct and accountability (are) ALL MISSING from within investigative bodies...” only interested in covering up the depth of the homophobic problem of ... staff within Cornwall's organisations

Some of the most worrying responses described situations where contributors who had been victims were blamed, by responsible personnel, for the abuse that had occurred.

“The ... reaction to my wig being pulled off (and mutilated) and my nose being broken, bloodily, was to ask how I had provoked it They allowed the assailant to leave without hindrance. I now believe they should have held my assailant and called the police.”

“Lack of knowledge/interest. ‘It was my choice to be gay, therefore my problem’.”

“A ‘what do you expect, you are gay’ response from the officer who added that it would be impossible to do anything!”

Most shockingly, among these examples was one in which the victim-blaming had come from a teacher.

“you’re different, you’re the (only) one, so why worry about you and that you’re being bullied?”

Have you personally experienced any form of domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse remains an extremely difficult and sensitive issue in heterosexual relationships, and women’s organisations have fought long and hard for accessible specialist help for its victims.

For LGB and Trans people verbal, if not physical abuse from parents, siblings and other household members is not uncommon in their early years, and some contributors also referred to childhood sexual abuse which had left emotional scars.

Violence between same-sex partners can be even more difficult to talk about than that between heterosexual partners, and there can be formidable barriers to seeking and finding specialist support and understanding in such circumstances.

279 people responded to one or more parts of a question that asked about the nature of the relationship between the respondent and the perpetrator. Those who had experienced domestic violence were asked whether this was related to their gender or sexual identity. A number of respondents indicated that both sexual and gender identity were factors involved and some recorded having experienced violence from more than one source.

Have you personally experienced any form of domestic abuse?

| | Yes - related to my Gender identity | Yes - related to my Sexual identity | Total related to G and/or S identity | Yes: not related to Gender or Sexual identity | Total "Yes" | Total "No" | | Individual resp'nd'ts |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| An intimate partner? | 12 | 18 | 30 | 46 | 76 | 74% | 198 | 269 |
| A parent or guardian? | 9 | 21 | 30 | 30 | 60 | 81% | 211 | 262 |
| Another family member? | 7 | 9 | 16 | 9 | 25 | 92% | 226 | 246 |
| Your own child or one for whom you share a parenting role? | 2 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 98% | 237 | 243 |

76 occurrences of domestic violence at the hands of an intimate partner were reported, 30 (39%) of which were related to the person's gender and/or sexual identity. Of the 60 occurrences of violence at the hands of a parent or guardian, 30 (50%) were related to their gender and/or sexual identity. Of the 25 occurrences involving other family members, 16 (64%) were related to the respondent's identity, and of the 7 involving their biological or other child for whom they had a parental role, 5 (71%) related the violence to their sexual or gender identity.

A number of the responses to these questions demonstrate the degree to which young LGB and Transpeople in particular are vulnerable to abuse within the home, whether from parents or other family members. The dependence on 'significant others', and the fear of reporting or disclosing their sexual or Transgender identity to outside agencies, coupled with a lack of information about sources of support, makes their plight particularly poignant.

Have you ever looked for help in dealing with domestic abuse?

One hundred and seventy eight people responded to this question. Of these, 35 (20%) said 'Yes', they had looked for help. The majority, 143 (80%) said 'No', they had not looked for help.

If no, what prevented you from seeking help with domestic abuse?

Seventy seven people - just under half of those who had never sought help – gave their reasons. These comments revealed a variety of circumstances as well as responses to what they had experienced. However, three common reasons emerged: fear; the matter had been resolved; and a lack of knowledge about help available.

Among those who were fearful, a number explained that this was either because they did not want to make the situation worse, they did not think they would be believed, there were concerns about confidentiality, or they blamed themselves for the abuse – often because they had felt ashamed of their own sexuality.

“I only looked for help from friends...too scared to look for help officially ... scared what my partner or parent would do to me if they found out.”

“The situation was so complicated that I was just trying to keep a roof over my head.”

“I blamed myself. I 'came out' at 16 and just thought that it's what I deserved, I didn't know any different.”

“Fear and love of the abuser.”

“Feeling ashamed of my sexuality at the time - several years ago...”

“It was personal...”

Where people had resolved the issue themselves this had either resulted through discussions and an agreement that the abuse had to stop, or through ending the relationship or moving out of the home.

“Once the incident had passed, we discussed the situation and agreed what would be acceptable behaviour in the future. This sounds overly simplistic ... but neither of us were keen to lose what was for the most part a committed and loving relationship because we couldn't compromise or act like adults...”

“No need, I understood the reasons behind their tirades, and eventually we sorted it out and are now friends again.”

“If I had stayed in the relationship I am 99% sure I would of found help, however I chose to end the relationship as soon as possible as i believed as she had done it once she was capable of doing it again.”

It must be a matter of concern that a number of people did not know where or how to seek help, or did not feel they would be taken seriously.

“I have no-one to go to and no-one would take it seriously.”

“The lack of places to start to look for help and not knowing who to turn to for help.”

“I didn't know about any service in the rural area where I was living at the time.”

“The hassle of making a complaint and the fear of what would happen if I did, plus wasn't fully aware of who to talk to.”

A contributor who had experienced domestic violence from a former male partner, and had not known who to report to, had not even thought about seeking help when a female partner had become violent.

Some contributors reported abuse they had experienced as a child – at which stage they felt they had no choice other than to put up with the situation.

“I was too young and did not understand the system at the time.”

“Lack of knowledge or empowerment as a child.”

“I was a kid...what was I to do?”

“Because the "abuse" stemmed from utter sadness when I came out to my parents”

“I was a child and thought it was normal.”

“I moved out of my parents' home.”

One Trans contributor who had experienced physical violence within the family did not necessarily attribute this to their gender identity, however, there were difficult emotional repercussions that arose from parental and other family attitudes and behaviour for this person and other Trans people.

“My other parent was affected by my gender issues and in denying them caused me a lot of emotional and mental anguish.”

“Brother in law refuses to address me by my proper name but I haven't made an issue yet out of concern for my sister who has been so supportive.”

Some people dismissed violent incidents, concluding, for various reasons, that it would not be worth seeking help. A number of these felt the incident was minor or that they were able to end the relationship without it having any serious repercussions.

“Impact was minimal.”

“Long time ago things are different now...”

“Did not seem worthwhile seeking help.”

One contributor highlighted a very common reaction to experiencing violence at the hands of a partner, and a reason why many people do not report it.

“as a victim of DV you don't want to talk about it - still feel loyal to your partner.”

If you have accessed help, and were not satisfied with the action taken, what help was missing and how it could be improved?

Nineteen people responded to this question, some of whom reported that they had been satisfied with the action taken by the police and others, such as friends, counsellors and neighbours.

"I was satisfied with the action taken - my neighbours called the police and they came!"

"I had help from student services and the police to resolve the situation, which lasted only 6 months."

"The police were excellent in terms of their support and in their handling of the issue. Our sexuality didn't seem to phase them at all and the language and approach that they used seemed to ensure that equal opportunities was embedded into their operational model."

Previous quotes have alluded to people's dissatisfaction with the action taken, and this was most frequently due to inadequate responses on the part of the police. Claims were reported as not having been taken seriously or followed through. However, in a number of these cases the situations had occurred some years previously, and although they had clearly left their mark on the victims, some did recognise that matters had, or were likely to have improved since.

"I was quite disappointed by the police lack of help - being LGBT is a minority group and should be treated the same as ... Race, Religion, Age, etc."

"This was many years ago, police at the time were reluctant to accept female to female aggression and violence. There was little support for young people at the time regarding this and so I "coped" until it became so serious that I eventually left the relationship."

"No, we were certainly not happy. Since then (one of) the police officers ... was put on a course and the other retired."

"Was removed from home. Told I was going to be adopted then dumped back into my house with a day's notice. Very traumatising."

"Police attended and viewed incident as mutual / provoked. Left partner in the home."

In one incident - again, some years before - failures on the part of both professionals and approved foster carers left this contributor exposed to physical and emotional abuse, all of which had been witnessed by other family members.

"... I was told to go home by the youth worker I went to see. I was distressed and in tears ...I was (a teenager) at the time ... my foster mum's boyfriend ...smashed my head into the floor and pinned me up against the wall by my

throat shouting 'you are not who you think you are'. My foster mum ... denied it all and ignored my screams for help."

Additional comments

Twenty eight people offered 'other comments' in this section, most of which emphasised issues raised in earlier responses.

Transgender contributors in particular highlighted the subtle nature of some kinds of abuse and the many forms it can take.

"depends what you want to use as a definition of abuse - for example, I legally changed my name some years back, but wife insists on always using my old name - I view that as unacceptable & unkind & etc. Can I change her view & would it cause bigger issues - no I can't & yes it would."

"...despite the fact that my name is (female), and all my documents say it is, and I was dressed at all times very formally in business skirt suit, etc etc, (my parents) kept referring to me as son, he, old name, etc to visitors, in public, etc- I view that as abuse (in their case I don't think it's malicious, just thoughtless habit) - is it difficult to get them to change - yes - so that's why I don't do anything about it."

Others commented that education around discrimination and domestic violence should be improved, so that young people can recognise and seek help for their issues, in order to help break the cycle that they themselves had experienced.

"When I experienced this I was too young to realise what was going on."

"Domestic abuse awareness should be improved in children as part of sex education, so that they avoid allowing themselves to stay in unhealthy relationships and know where to find support."

"People need to want to care or be interested, I don't know how we 'teach' this. The Catholic and C of E church teaches a bad message and this needs to be challenged. Anti - Discrimination classes in schools need to have a higher and more positive profile."

One contributor was keen to emphasise that "fear of transphobic harassment is very real" and another considered that more should be done to recognise and address homophobic/transphobic hate crime in particular, and keep perpetrators under scrutiny.

"I have been the victim of several crimes that are in regards to my sexuality and no other reason. Gay hate crime should be recognised in a category all of its own, people who commit gay hate crimes should be made a public example of,

receive harsh custodial sentence. Also they should be put onto a database not unlike the sexual register so people are aware where and who may be a threat to them.”

Parts of the media are seen as actively promulgating inaccurate and negative images of LGB and Trans people and are thereby major contributors to the problem.

“More understanding of our problems and less people learning from the TV and media when they portray us completely wrong most of the time!!”

One contributor had some specific suggestions regarding the role of the police.

“...perhaps posters by the Police advertising homophobia ... will not be tolerated and will result in punishment etc... I think also having police officers visiting youth centres and doing a talk on LGBT would help make it 'real' for the young people especially in (Cornish town). As a youth work volunteer on my first night I experienced homophobia by a group of lads...my first night...”

It is important to point out that a number of contributors recognise that things had moved forward, particularly in terms of the work public services are doing to tackle prejudice and discrimination, and that the initial response of the police was now often good.

“Very satisfied with support and action taken by local police in particular an LGBT community officer.”

“Police helped me with domestic abuse and were brilliant.”

“My greatest challenge was gaining acceptance from my parents - I now have that. In my former employment ... my sexuality used to be an issue. I think that the Services have made great inroads into resolving their equalities issues. Now as a civilian both my partner and I simply enjoy living! We don't announce our sexuality, but neither do we hide it. Life is pretty good!”

“BT are very good and helpful and sympathetic at dealing with abusive telephone calls. They came to my rescue very effectively.”

Conclusions and suggestions for action

A number of more senior contributors to the PP&T survey helped to highlight the shift in public attitudes that has occurred over time.

While laws alone do not change attitudes, the fact that basic rights for people to express their sexual or transgender identities are enshrined in equality and human rights legislation has undoubtedly brought improvements. At the minimum they provide a platform for LGB and Trans people to insist that their rights be respected should this be necessary.

Several contributors paid tribute to the police in various parts of the region, and improvements were noticed in the ways in which some forces at least were dealing with homophobic and transphobic incidents. Nevertheless there were conflicting accounts of some forces, which suggests a lack of consistency across the force area.

In spite of noticeable improvements on a broader societal level, homophobic and transphobic social attitudes, which still persist in many parts of the South West, are responsible for an underlying sense of insecurity amongst many LGB and Trans people, as well as for actual discrimination and abuse and its consequences. Frequent references to self-censorship regarding public shows of affection illustrate the extent to which an invisible tightrope is walked by many.

Contributors are clear about the need for better education and awareness-raising to promote a more enlightened climate of acceptance. This is particularly important in relation to trans issues, and to an extent, lesbian/gay/bisexual women's issues, about which awareness and understanding are comparatively less well developed than is the case for gay and bisexual men.

The media, the police and schools have key contributions to make in helping to change negative attitudes. Employers also bear a responsibility for ensuring that workplaces are free of homophobic or transphobic behaviour, including directed and general verbal abuse.

The serious underreporting of homophobic and transphobic incidents is largely due a widespread belief (often based on experience) that no effective action would follow, and, for a number of people, that there might instead be repercussions for themselves. This is a significant barrier, both to reducing incidents and to gaining an accurate picture of their frequency. Another barrier which needs to be addressed is a lack of awareness about how and where to report or make a complaint.

In consequence, a majority of such incidents go unreported, creating a false understanding of their nature and prevalence among LGB and Trans people themselves as well as among public bodies, employers and the wider public. This in turn may serve to undermine people's confidence in reporting, and encourage

complacency among agencies responsible for addressing and preventing such incidents.

Such incidents occur in many environments where it is possible, or legally required that they are prevented and/or firmly and appropriately dealt with, yet clearly the procedures for reporting are less than clear and accessible.

More and better prevention and enforcement actions are particularly important in relation to public spaces and commercial premises, but especially in workplaces, schools, colleges, universities. Clear procedures need to be developed, disseminated and acted upon. Any attempts to foster an inclusive ethos are undermined if there is failure to challenge routine homophobic/transphobic remarks on the part of teachers, managers and others in authority.

Community safety measures such as more visible policing during the hours of darkness, better street lighting, and more effective action in dealing with drunken and anti-social behaviour are all important to LGB and Trans people.

However, prejudice-based harassment and abuse at the hands of younger people underlines the importance of schools in teaching respect for others, raising awareness about diversity, and adopting consistent and effective enforcement measures where necessary.

Security in one's neighbourhood and in the home is key, and the sense of powerlessness experienced by those who are persistently harassed or abused by neighbours can be acute and harmful to an individual's health and well-being. Those on lower incomes with less choice in terms of their location and accommodation are particularly reliant on help from responsible agencies to ensure they are not exposed to persistent and harmful prejudicial from neighbours.

Those who live in social rented accommodation have a right to expect social landlords to take preventive and remedial action to address prejudice-based neighbour harassment. The police and neighbourhood watch groups also need to ensure they are responsive to homophobic or transphobic offences where appropriate, and the police need feedback on actions taken.

Domestic abuse related to sexual or transgender identity affected a number of contributors. This involved parents and siblings as well partners, and is an area where informed support is often needed but often lacking.

Suggestions for action

The police and all public bodies with responsibility for community safety should:

- Publicise their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty and invite those who use their services to suggest ways in which they could better fulfil them.
- Ensure that equality awareness training is part of their mandatory staff training programme from front-line staff to line managers, and policy and procurement officers.
- Ensure that they have clear accessible procedures (preferably a common report form) for recording homophobic and transphobic incidents, and encourage reporting of them.
- Seek to agree, with specialist voluntary organisations, common definitions of homophobic and transphobic harassment, abuse and violence in order to ensure maximum consistency in recording and addressing these incidents.
- Make the statistics available to the public on a regular basis, along with other crime and anti-social behaviour data.

The police should also ensure that

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators are aware of the particular risks for local residents who may be the target of prejudice-based harassment, abuse, criminal damage or violence and are prepared to work in a wholly inclusive and non-discriminatory way with all households within their NW area.

Specialist LGB and Trans support organisations

Youth work organisations

Other voluntary sector advice and support organisations should

- Ensure that they are aware of and compliant with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and fulfil the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty in providing services on behalf of public bodies.
- Ensure that they are recognisable as a safe and welcoming environment for all LGB and Trans people.
- Encourage reporting of homophobic and transphobic harassment, abuse and violence to the police and any other agencies involved
- Ensure that they have clear accessible and confidential procedures for anonymously recording such incidents, should LGB and Trans people prefer not to report to the police or other public bodies
- Offer support to individuals who agree to report incidents.

School and college governors, boards and head teachers, universities

- Publicise their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty and invite parents, staff and students to suggest ways in which they could better fulfil them.
- Ensure that equality awareness training is part of their mandatory governors' and staff training programme, including non-teaching staff, line managers, and classroom staff, tutors and lecturers.
- Ensure that the school/college/university is recognisable as a safe and welcoming environment for LGB and Trans pupils
- Ensure that they have clear accessible and confidential procedures for recording any homophobic and transphobic incidents that occur within the school/college/university or at the hands of other pupils/students by social media or directly
- Encourage reporting of homophobic and transphobic harassment, abuse and violence to teachers/tutors or a named teacher/tutor with specialist training

Housing landlords need to ensure that:

- Tenancy agreements and tenant handbooks specifically forbid prejudice-based harassment or abuse and are clear about the consequences of failing to comply
- Clear and accessible complaints and investigation procedures are set out for victims and perpetrators
- Appropriate sanctions are consistently applied when complaints are upheld

Trade union local branches need to ensure

- They provide a safe and welcoming environment for LGB and Trans people
- They have appropriate mechanisms for recording, and representing members in dealing with, homophobic and transphobic incidents in the workplace.

Employers need to

- Be aware of their legal duties to protect employees under equality legislation regarding prejudice-based harassment, abuse or violence within the workplace
- Ensure they have clear and accessible procedures for dealing with prejudice-based harassment, abuse or violence
- Ensure that all employees understand that prejudice-based abuse is neither legal, nor tolerated in the workplace and will be firmly dealt with
- Provide appropriate support for employees who are victims of prejudice based harassment, abuse or violence
- Properly investigate any claim of prejudice-based harassment, abuse or violence and ensure that appropriate action is taken.

Resources

Guidance for schools can be obtained at: <http://www.schools-out.org.uk/classroom/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/DCSF-Homophobic-Bullying.pdf>¹

<http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/Schools/TransphobicBullying.pdf> (contains information that would be useful for colleges and universities also)

Latest guidance:

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/p/preventing%20and%20tackling%20bullying%20advice%20for%20school%20leaders%20and%20governing%20bodies.pdf>

Evaluation of effectiveness of strategies to prevent bullying in schools:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR098.pdf>

Guidance for colleges, which covers homophobic/transphobic and other forms of 'hate' bullying: http://www.abatoolsforschools.org.uk/pdf/Safe_from_Bullying-FE.pdf

Sexuality and learning disabilities, helpful research for people with learning disabilities and people supporting them

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/norahfry/research/completed-projects/challenging.pdf>

Universities - Stonewall checklist

<http://www.gaybydegree.org.uk/index.php?dir=university&task=view-detail&uniId=20>