

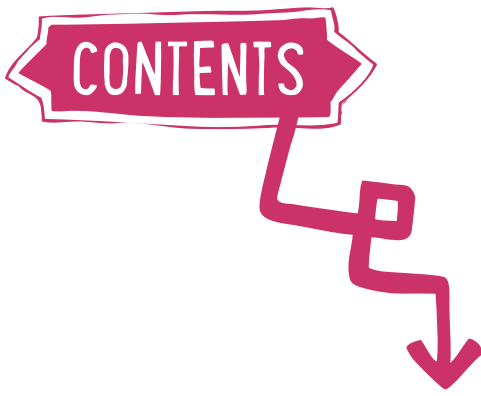
Getting It Right: What Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) Young People in Greater Manchester Want and Need



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Based on participatory research led by The Proud Trust in partnership with 42nd Street, Albert Kennedy Trust, and LGBT Foundation





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GLOSSARY

LGBT/ LGBT+ / LGBTQ/ LGBTQ+ means lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and related identities such as people who are intersex, asexual, have a gender which is non-binary, or are questioning their gender identity or sexuality. LGBT describes types of sexualities. The T stands for trans, which means people who cross gender barriers, permanently or temporarily. This may or may not involve surgery or hormone treatment.

Heterosexual/ Straight means a person who is attracted to people of a different gender to their own e.g. a woman who is attracted to men.

Cis/ Cisgender means a person whose gender aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth e.g. a person who was assigned female at birth and who identifies as a woman.

Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia means discrimination against and/ or fear or dislike of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people (including those perceived to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans). This also includes the perpetuation of negative myths and stereotypes through jokes and/ or through personal thoughts about LGBT people.

Institutional Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia means discrimination through omission/ lack of support or systems which include LGBT people, as well as active negative discrimination of such people.

Heterosexism/ Heteronormativity/ Cisnormativity means the assumption that everyone is heterosexual and/ or cisgender, and that heterosexuality/ being cisgender is superior. It is an emphasis on heterosexual/ cis being 'the norm', and being valued positions in society. Organisations often reinforce this through the imagery and language they use.

Ally means a person who fights for, and supports others in their fight for, equality, despite not necessarily being affected by such struggle themselves. This could mean a straight and/ or cisgender person who believes in, and fights for, equality for LGBT people, and fights to end heteronormativity, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

For more terms please visit www.theproudtrust.org/resources/glossary/



FOREWORD



Councillor Carl Austin-Behan
(City of Manchester Mayor 2016-7)

Manchester and Greater Manchester are well known for being great places for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people to live. This research shows us that the city-region has a lot to be proud of, but also that we have some key work to do around education, housing, healthcare (including mental health) and other services. We hope that all services and commissioners in all sectors take note of the report and its recommendations to ensure that Greater Manchester continues to be such a wonderful, inclusive and diverse place to live, work and play.



INTRODUCTION

All organisations and professionals who work with children and young people need to know more about LGBT young people in order to be able to do their job well.

Greater Manchester-based charity The Proud Trust has worked with 42nd Street, Albert Kennedy Trust and LGBT Foundation to undertake focus groups and a survey, to find out more about the perspectives and experiences of a sample of young LGBT people in Greater Manchester.

This research aims to equip commissioners, policy makers and professionals with a better understanding of the experiences of LGBT young people, so they can create and maintain inclusive, useful services for young LGBT people in Greater Manchester.

Devolution Manchester, Our Manchester and the Thrive Model all point to integrated, person-centred and needs-led models of support. These ensure people get help and support at the right time, and participate as part of the solution, rather than being seen as a problem (this is also known as the asset-based approach).

The respondents of this research set out a clear vision: that LGBT young people should be able to help design and access support from both general and specialist services, and a standard level of service quality should be received that is not dependent upon which organisation or person is their first point of entry into support. We hope you find this research informative and a good lever for changes and improvements.



My life changed drastically when I turned 13. All these unknown feelings came to me so quickly and so unexpectedly that the only outcome was panic.

The main feeling was the attraction to genders and overall sadness. So many questions were swimming around in my mind, “Do I like girls? Do I like boys? Both?”

I was overwhelmed and confused to the point of non-stop helplessness. It was all new to me.

I started to self-harm and hide my feelings from people around me, even my family and even the few friends I had.

I didn't like labelling myself; I hated calling myself a “lesbian”. I hated the word and I still didn't accept myself enough to come out. At some points, I felt like I wanted to crawl into a hole and never come out, I didn't want to be gay or have feelings for women.

But I did.

I eventually came out at 16; to myself, my family and the friends I had at that time. They were all very accepting. I felt happy, ecstatic even. Finally, there is clarity in my life.

I'm a gay woman and proud.

By Maya



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research aims to better understand the needs of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people in Manchester and the surrounding boroughs, to help improve services and access to services. It has been carried out through a partnership coordinated by The Proud Trust which included 42nd Street, The Albert Kennedy Trust and LGBT Foundation. 118 LGBT young people took part in this research.

Five themes were established as important to young LGBT people in and around Manchester:

1. LGBT young people enhance the city-region with diversity, colour, fun, culture and visibility. This should be valued, celebrated and built upon for everyone's benefit.
2. Safe, supportive, and non-judgemental spaces are needed, that recognise the identities and needs of LGBT young people.
3. LGBT young people need access to help and advice.
4. Negative impacts of social adversity and discriminations affect LGBT young people. These often impact on mental health.
5. Education and training for professionals and young people is essential in ensuring services meet the needs of LGBT young people.

Respondents wanted:

- ✳ Adults to 'respect their identity', and who 'actively challenge' all forms of discrimination and prejudice systematically. This includes challenging racism, ableism, sexism and homo/ bi/ trans-phobias.
- ✳ LGBT specific youth groups and online support.
- ✳ Space for trans young people to explore their gender identities e.g. in youth provisions and online.
- ✳ Access to LGBT-inclusive, unbiased sex and relationship information, and sexual health education in schools.
- ✳ LGBT professionals who are open about this element of their identity.
- ✳ Training on LGBT issues for people who give support to young people.
- ✳ LGBT awareness raising work within different, diverse communities, to make services more understanding of them and their LGBT identity.

AIM

AND

METHOD

Our aim was to conduct research into the perspectives and experiences of Greater Manchester-based LGBT people aged twenty five years and younger.

The four partner organisations co-designed a series of questions about the needs of LGBT people. The Proud Trust designed an interactive focus group/ activity session to gather the responses to these questions.

Three focus groups were conducted with young LGBT people in Greater Manchester. The focus groups had an average duration of 60 minutes. They were conducted at three different sites with 42nd Street ('Inside Out' group), The Albert Kennedy Trust and The Proud Trust ('LYGM' group).

Based on the themes that emerged from the focus groups, an online survey was developed using Survey Monkey and was distributed through the organisations' groups, 1-2-1 sessions and online through Facebook and Twitter. The survey was online from July until December 2016.

Dr. Vanessa Fay analysed the survey responses in further detail, including thematic analyses of those survey items containing qualitative components. Dr. Fay also conducted a thematic analysis of the focus group transcripts.



I use they/ them pronouns. I'm bi, I'm non-binary, and I'm autistic.

I've known I was slightly gay since I was 4 years old. I didn't really think much of it at the time – I just really wanted to marry my best friend Megan. I also knew that being a 'girl' wasn't quite for me at the age of 4 – as I also cut off all my hair with kitchen scissors so that I'd look like a boy (much to my mother's surprise!) The haircut backfired quite quickly as when I went back to school the next day, everyone just chanted 'Chrissie is a bo-oy! Chrissie is a bo-oy!' And that was when I learnt that how I felt wasn't 'normal', and it wasn't okay.

The word 'lesbian' came around in year 5! But of course it was an insult, because girls who like girls are icky. And of course I joined in while screaming internally.

I was diagnosed with autism at 14 after having had counselling for depression for several months. It fit. Things started making sense after my diagnosis. As I was becoming more confident in talking about how I was feeling, I decided to broach the subject of gender identity with my counsellor, which I feel was difficult for both of us. I said to her that I didn't necessarily feel like a girl or a boy all the time and I'd heard about people being bi-gender and I thought maybe I was something to do with that? She told me that 'autistic girls naturally feel androgynous'. I'd like to emphasise that she was legit the best counsellor I've ever had, but just that one sentence caused me a whole lot of pain. It's a common myth that 'autistic girls feel naturally androgynous' but it all comes from autism having always been viewed as a boys' issue (look at campaigns like Light It Up Blue and the lack of research into the symptoms of ASD in girls until the 1980/ 90s).

So, during those 2 years, I went through a hell hole of telling myself I wasn't trans that I was just autistic- and dressing more feminine and experimenting with makeup.

But then I started cross dressing and doing beards with make-up. I've been 'out' as bi for over 4 years, non-binary for nearly 3 and a proud autistic person for just under 4. If there's anything I want you to take away from my story, it is that:

- a) Those who work with young people should have training on LGBT+ issues and how to address them with an LGBT+ young person. and
- b) Don't shy away from what you think and how you feel like I did because it doesn't lead you anywhere good. You've got to love yourself, because you're the best you've got.

By Chris



FINDINGS

- * 118 young people took part in the research in total.
- * 73 young LGBT people completed the survey.
- * Survey respondents were aged between 13 and 25, with most young people being 18 years old.
- * There were 4 focus groups, with an average 15 people in each. Participants were aged between 15 and 25.
- * Respondents represented all 10 Local Authorities of Greater Manchester.

Five themes were established as important to young LGBT people in and around Manchester:

1. LGBT young people enhance the city-region with diversity, colour, fun, culture and visibility. This should be valued, celebrated and built upon for everyone's benefit.
2. Safe, supportive, and non-judgemental spaces are needed, that recognise the identities and needs of LGBT young people.
3. LGBT young people need access to help and advice.
4. Negative impacts of social adversity and discriminations affect LGBT young people. These often impact on mental health.
5. Education and training for professionals and young people is essential in ensuring services meet the needs of LGBT young people.

Young LGBT people's active consultation/ participation in designing services is vital in providing good services. It will also help facilitate a sense of safety and trust in services, and a sense for LGBT young people that they are understood by professionals who work with them.

The following pages take each theme in turn, and provide recommendations to adults and services in Greater Manchester.

RECOMMENDATIONS ACROSS THE FIVE THEMES



1. LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE ENHANCE THE CITY-REGION WITH DIVERSITY, COLOUR, FUN, CULTURE AND VISIBILITY. THIS SHOULD BE VALUED, CELEBRATED AND BUILT UPON FOR EVERYONE'S BENEFIT.

Young LGBT people value the vibrant diversity of Greater Manchester, including how this is represented in the culture and art offer that the city-region provides. They recognise the significant role LGBT people play in creating a vibrant culture in Manchester.

'The life and presence of LGBT people in Manchester is something that is absolutely unique and is what makes Manchester an incredible place to live... I think having a city where everybody feels accepted increases happiness for all **Young LGBT research participant**

'We are not all one thing. We want to be able to take part in art, music, dance and sport. Don't assume we all want to do one thing.' **Young LGBT research participant**

- * Services should actively use a number of ways to embrace and celebrate the vibrancy of the diversity of LGBT people and culture e.g. through visible images of diverse gender expressions and sub-cultures on leaflets, websites and posters.
- * Avoid words such as ‘tolerance’ and instead use the term ‘celebrate diversity’.
- * Promote positive and inspiring stories of LGBT people in the public eye, along with more local stories of resilience and success.
- * Professionals can increase visibility and awareness of LGBT people’s lives through: anti-discriminatory posters; rainbow flags and trans flags; visits and talks from LGBT groups; partnership work and events centred on important LGBT calendar dates, such as February’s LGBT History Month.
- * All children and young people’s services have LGBT young people in them, but largely these young people are invisible in consultations. Services need to ensure they undertake targeted consult work with LGBT young people on design, commissioning, delivery and evaluation of services.
- * Young people want LGBT specific youth provisions and creative forms of service delivery.
- * Young LGBT people want to participate in a wider cultural and arts opportunities tailored to them including LGBT+ drama, art, music, dance and sport.



2. SAFE, SUPPORTIVE, AND NON-JUDGEMENTAL SPACES ARE NEEDED, THAT RECOGNISE THE IDENTITIES AND NEEDS OF LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE.

The highest priority for young LGBT people is that services and spaces feel safe and are not places of discrimination or judgement. They trust professionals that do not 'out them' to other people, within or outside the service.

“Safe spaces ... in general where you can relax and have fun for a couple of hours while being yourself, and where extra caution is given to you as a person, and your struggles.”

Young LGBT research participant

”

“

“For young people, things are just not safe, the streets. There should be more than just safe spaces where you can just sit. Instead you need to feel safe walking about at night, but also safe walking around in daylight in your own neighbourhood.”

”

- * Especially when home is not a safe space, LGBT young people need to feel that other spaces accept them for who they are.
- * Young people want spaces that are alcohol-free, and affordable or free.
- * Clear service standards such as following 'You're Welcome Quality Criteria', 'The Rainbow Flag Award', 'NAVAJO' and 'Pride in Practice' would help services become more welcoming.
- * Following 'strengths-based', emancipatory and participatory models of working will help services better support LGBT young people.
- * The children and young people's workforce should pro actively mention lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans identities in everyday contexts, to avoid these words and identities being seen as 'taboo' or shameful.
- * Staff in services should ask what people's chosen pronoun is (e.g. she/ he/ they), and could put their own pronoun on their staff name badge.
- * Resources need to be invested into training professionals and volunteers who work with children and young people, so they can confidently address and challenge stigmatising practices, prejudice and discrimination.
- * LGBT specific youth support is a priority for young people. Services should ensure that they refer to these services, and/ or seek advice from existing specialist services in order to set up LGBT youth services.
- * Safe, online spaces was highlighted as important to young LGBT people, but shouldn't be over-emphasised. Young people highly value face-to-face support, so online services should be complementary to these.
- * Young people want intergenerational spaces where people from a variety of LGBT identities can interact and mix.



3. LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE NEED ACCESS TO HELP AND ADVICE.

Young people wanted services across health, education and extra-curricular activities to be more inclusive of LGBT young people. Many young people were not aware of the support available and felt anxious about accessing it. Some faced barriers such as not understanding the detailed administration required to access services. People who didn't 'look' LGBT were not pro-actively given LGBT information. Some young people found staff to be ill-informed about LGBT issues, and as a result, these professionals did not know how to work with these young people.

“Young people want a mixture of emotional and practical support from services. The young people noted that at certain points in their life they may require more emotional or practical support from a service dependant on their circumstances. However one should not be seen as a priority where a service only focuses on one of these areas.” **Focus group facilitator**

”

“Adults, like teachers and GPs, should advertise LGBT support and the specific LGBT services. Otherwise it's like a secret network that you need a secret handshake to get into.”
Young LGBT research participant

- * All professionals should be aware of their role as a potential ‘gate keeper’ of information. They should make sure they know about local support services and share this information with young people they work with.
- * Professionals should reflect on their own assumptions including through engaging in training and development opportunities. Staff should understand basic things they can do to tailor support to the specific needs of LGBT young people.
- * All professionals need a basic understanding of trans and non-binary identities, (e.g. through training), in order to be better able to support children and young people.
- * LGBT young people want better support from adults and services regarding: homelessness/ housing advice, drug and alcohol use, family tension, accessing health care, unemployment, finances, sexual exploitation, and lost friendships.
- * Supporting young people means trying to help them as a whole person. Young people want support which helps them across a number of areas in their life, with different organisations working together seamlessly e.g. addressing mental health, education, housing, sexual health, unemployment, homelessness, abuse, sexual exploitation, and navigating multiple aspects of identity such as religious affiliation and socio-economic status.
- * Young people need both mainstream services and LGBT-specialist services/ provisions.
- * Most services should monitor LGBT identities, especially those who monitor other equality identities. This should be used to help build up an evidence base to enhance and refine support for LGBT young people.



4. NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL ADVERSITY AND DISCRIMINATIONS AFFECT LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE. THESE OFTEN IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH.

The young people in the focus groups discussed a need to recognise mental health needs both in the sense of mental health issues resulting specifically from difficulties around identifying as LGBT in a homophobic and transphobic society, but also difficulties that might exist separate to their LGBT identity. They wanted professionals to recognise and talk about LGBT identity but not over-focus on it.

‘Being Roma, it’s just hard. I could never tell my family about being bisexual. It’s too big a risk. I would get cut off by them and the whole community.’ **Young LGBT research participant**

‘You have to come out about different things. I have to come out about my mental health problems, about my religion and about my gender. People judge you, and you are rarely accepted for all those parts of your identity.’
Young LGBT research participant



‘Sexuality is like one piece of your mental health pie. But if it is not looked after, then it gets crumbled over the top of the rest of the pie.’ **Young LGBT research participant**

- * Young people wanted a sense of belonging and of association. They want to feel part of the LGBT community and also part of other communities, without feeling that being part of one compromises the other.
- * Services need to be set up to work with multiple approaches, e.g. social, clinical, spiritual, political; instead of a default position which pathologises LGBT identities.
- * Professionals should sensitively consider the stigmatised, ‘shame-based’ context and culture LGBT young people often grow up in, and the resulting impacts of isolation, mental health difficulties, suicidal thoughts and self-destructive behaviours that are often prevalent amongst LGBT young people.
- * Services should ensure their messages are balanced, and recognise institutional issues rather than individualising problems e.g. someone is not experiencing mental health difficulties ‘because they are gay’. They are experiencing them because we have a heterosexist society that does not consider gay identity to be as valid or as healthy as heterosexual (straight) identity. Validating young people in this way helps bolster their resilience, and channel negative feelings into positive activism.
- * Services should actively redress homophobic, transphobic and heterosexist messages (along with considering how these connect with other oppression such as sexism, misogyny, racism, ableism, ageism etc).
- * Services should be aware that all communities have LGBT young people in them. Young LGBT people in Roma Traveller communities and strict faith communities often experience more fear around coming out, or feel entirely unable to be out. Services need to ensure that they work sensitively and confidentially to support such young people.



5. EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS AND YOUNG PEOPLE IS ESSENTIAL IN ENSURING SERVICES MEET THE NEEDS OF LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE.

Young people involved in the research felt strongly that school and education providers should do more to be LGBT inclusive, but also felt that this was the job for all professionals who work with children and young people. They recognised that training was vital in enabling this to happen, but training on its own was not enough. They also felt that LGBT education of young people would equip them with the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed for adulthood.

‘My college had someone in to do LGBT training with them. I’ve now got the confidence to be myself; I’ve told my friends at college and I’ve now got more friends who are LGBT too.’ **Young LGBT research participant**

‘Homophobic language is still used widely in school. I got told I can’t come out, for my own safety.’
Young LGBT research participant

- * Young people want to see openly LGBT professionals in education.
- * Young people want to have LGBT-inclusive, unbiased sex and relationship information, and sexual health education.
- * There was consensus that raising awareness of LGBT diversity and healthy LGBT relationships within an educational setting (starting at primary school) would likely prevent harm and reduce discrimination in future years.
- * Young people feel adults need educating about LGBT identities, and should be both more familiar with sexuality/ gender terminology, as well as having a wider attitude and understanding about LGBT lives.
- * Young people feel a priority for professionals should be training on trans identities.
- * Schools need to do more to ensure PE is inclusive, and address bullying (hate crime) which young people felt was more prominent in the PE environment. Young people want access to sports, including trans friendly sport.



‘Nobody is educated on trans stuff and staff always get pronouns wrong despite not knowing me before I transitioned. **Young LGBT research participant**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Definitions and prevalence of LGBT people

- ✦ According to a recent YouGov poll (2015) 49% of young people do not identify as exclusively heterosexual.
- ✦ The Office for National Statistics (2013) has a more conservative estimate of 2.7% of young people aged 16 to 24 in England identifying as L, G or B. This contrasts with only 0.5% in those aged 65 years and over.
- ✦ Given that sexual orientation information is not asked for on the national census and is not regularly captured in organisational and employment monitoring, this is likely to be an under-estimation of the true figures. A figure of 7% of the population being LGBT is regularly suggested and is the more likely and accurate figure (Ecotec, 2009; Mercer, Tanton, Prah, Erens, Sonnenberg & Clifton et al. 2013; Salford CAMHS Transformation Plan, 2015, LGBT Foundation, 2016).
- ✦ There are no current official estimates regarding the percentage of trans people in the UK population. However, Reed, Rhodes, Schofield and Wylie (2009) in their Home Office-commissioned study estimated the number to be around 0.8 per cent of the population. Moreover, according to the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES, 2011), 650,000 people in the UK ‘experience some degree of gender nonconformity’, which equates to 1% of the population. Once again, these estimates are likely to be conservative as there are still few means by which sexuality and gender identity data are collected, with the last national census (conducted in 2011) not having collected data on trans prevalence.

These percentages equate to approximately 175,000 LGB people and 25,000 trans people living in Greater Manchester. The city-region, with Manchester at its heart, is well known as a centre for LGBT life and culture in the UK, so the figure may even be higher still.

2. Health and Wellbeing of LGBT People

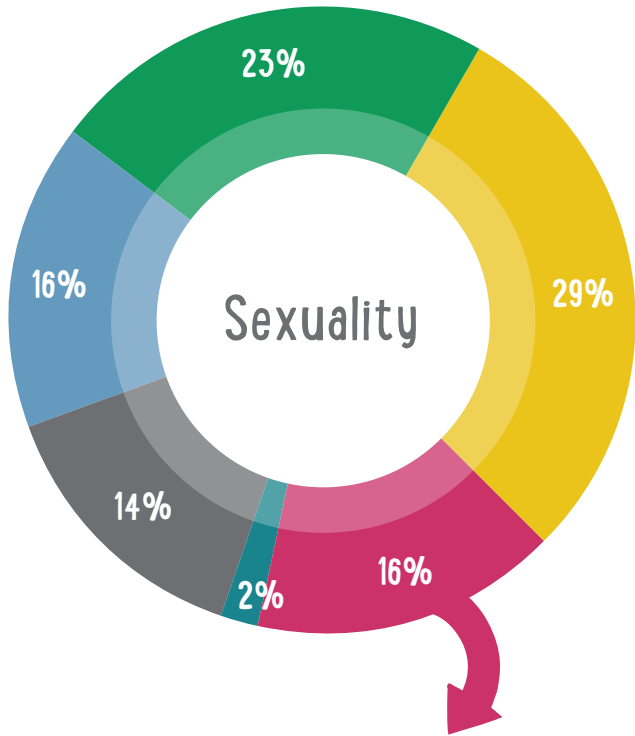


The LGBT population is still disproportionately affected by inequalities across health and wellbeing spheres.

Research has shown:

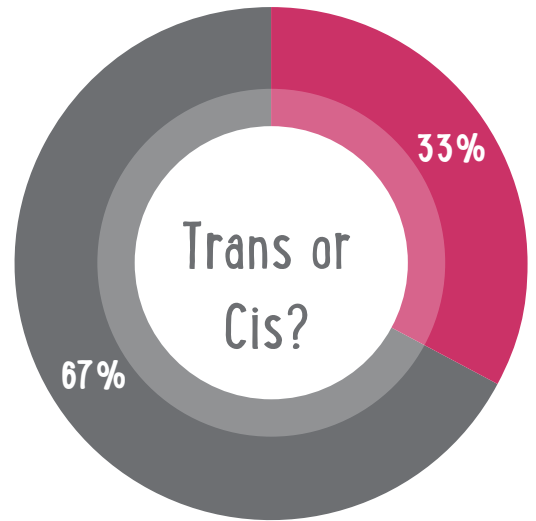
- * Compared with heterosexual people, LGB people are at higher risk of misusing substances, experiencing mental health problems and expressing suicidal thoughts and behaviours (National Institute for Mental Health in England, 2007; Rethink Mental Illness, 2013).
- * Higher levels of mental health difficulties and substance misuse reported by trans people in health surveys, and these problems appear to be due to lack of social and emotional support (Public Health England, 2015).
- * Lesbian and gay young people in the UK are twice as likely to smoke, and also drink alcohol more frequently than their heterosexual peers (Hagger-Johnson, Taibjee, Semlyen, Fitchie, Fish, Meads and Varney, 2013).
- * 50% of LGBT young people in the UK report self-harming (currently or in the past), and 44 per cent had thought about suicide (Youth Chances, 2014-5).
- * LGBT young people are at a greater risk when compared with their heterosexual counterparts for depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation, often resulting from homophobia at home or school (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar & Azrael, 2009).
- * 99% of LGB young people had heard the word 'gay' being used negatively and 55% reported homophobic bullying / hate crime (Stonewall, 2012).

*Research into youth suicide highlights the importance of supporting young people during the adolescent years as it is a particularly vulnerable period as young people form their identity in the world (According to Public Health England, 2015).

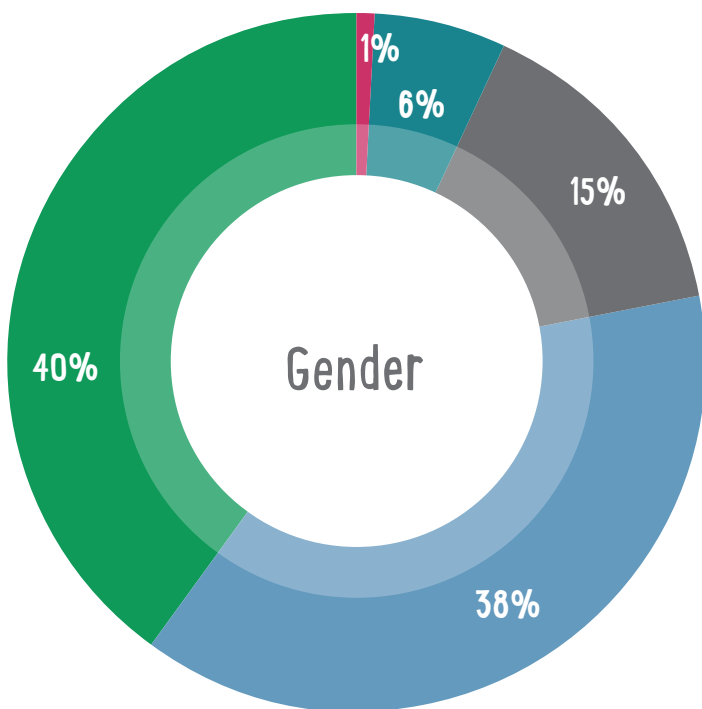


- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Questioning/ not sure
- Other

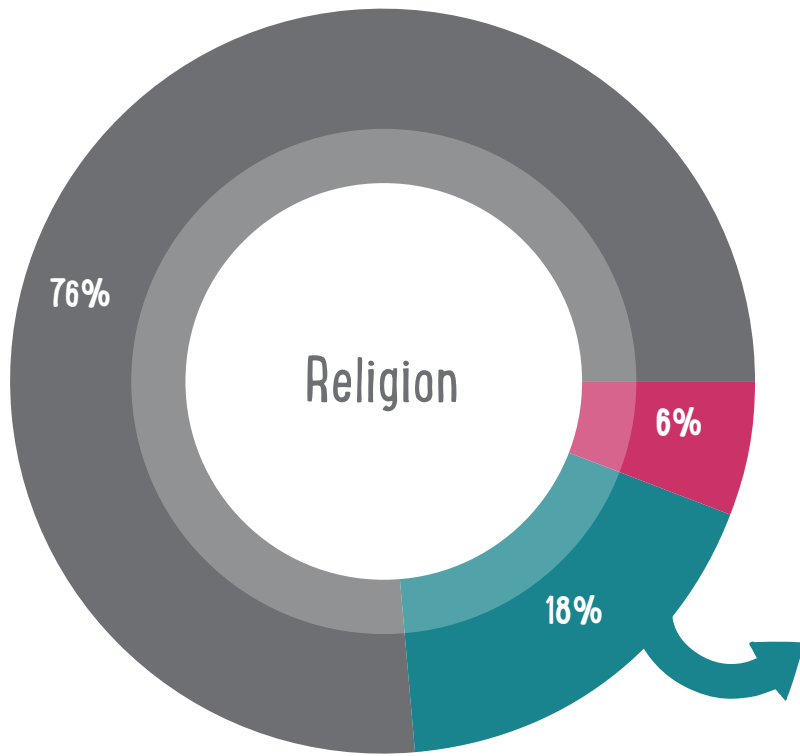
Of the 16% who identified as the category 'other', people used terms to describe themselves such as asexual, aromantic, greysexual or demisexual.



- Cis-gendered
- Trans

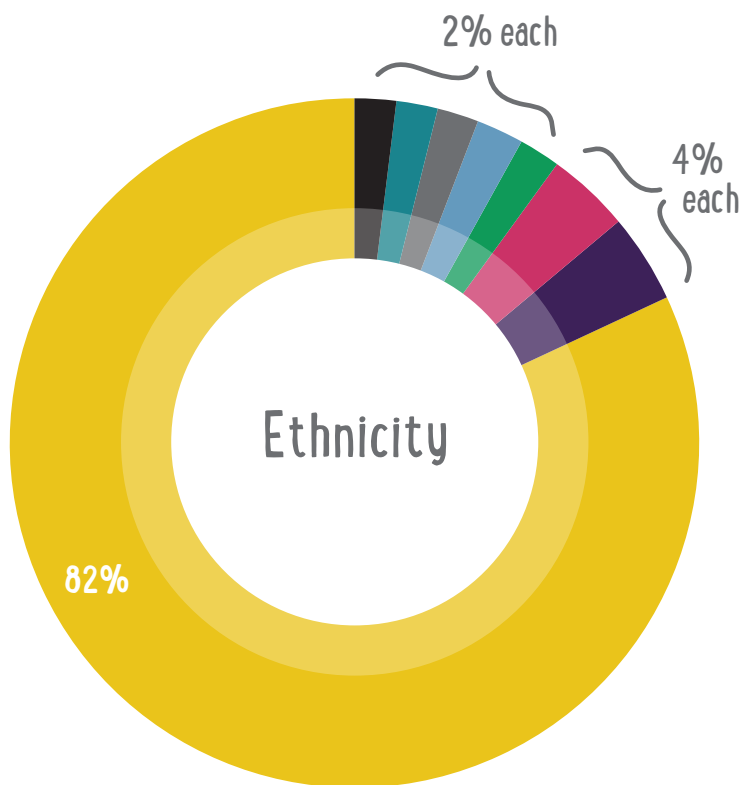


- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Agender
- Unsure



- Have no religion
- Have a religion
- Unsure

Of the eight who specified their religion in the optional comment box, four were Roman Catholic, one was Pagan, one was Buddhist, one was Muslim, and one was Jewish.



- White British
- White Other
- White Irish
- White Traveller / Gypsy
- Asian British
- Asian Pakistani
- Dual - white & black Caribbean
- Other mixed

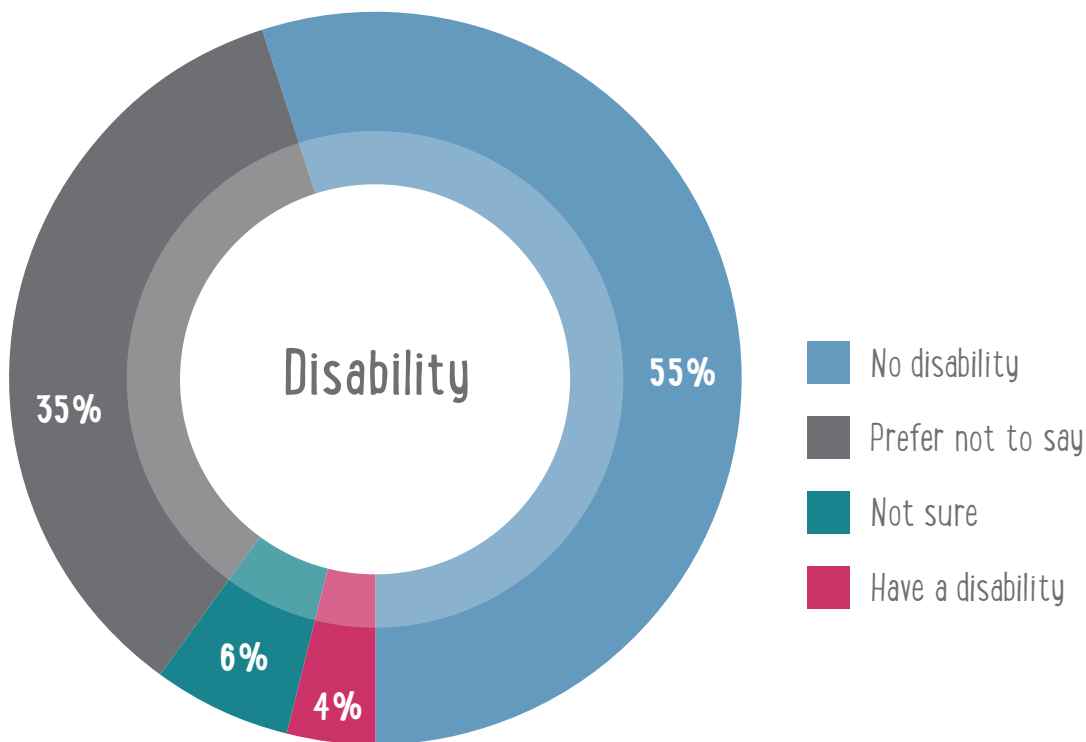
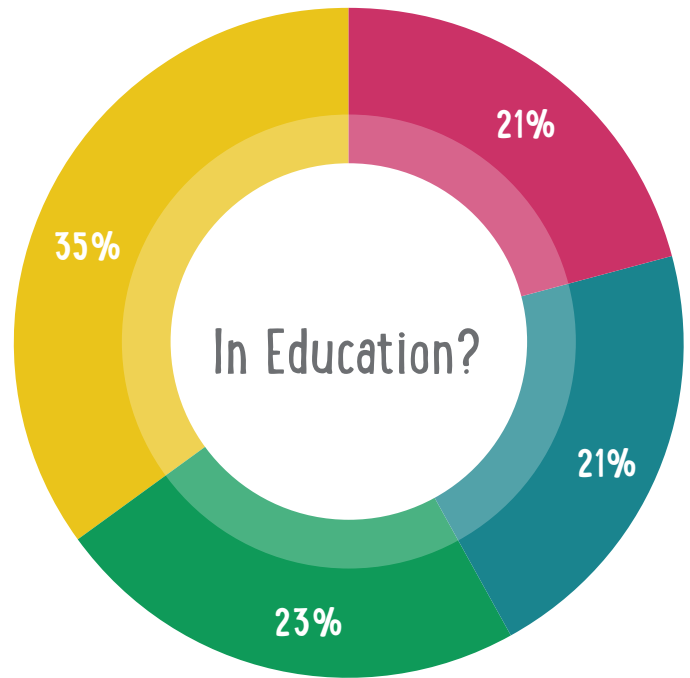
90% of respondents were from Greater Manchester, with the majority coming from the City of Manchester, and all 10 boroughs represented by respondents.

RESULTS

Demographics (continued)

Four people identified themselves as a carer for someone else, e.g. a parent or sibling, two were parents themselves, one was living in care.

- At college ■
- At university ■
- In school ■
- Not in education ■



Of thirteen people who specified their disabilities in the optional comments box, eleven described mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, along with autistic spectrum disorders and selective mutism. Physical disabilities named included cerebral palsy and dyspraxia.



1. What does having LGBT people in the city add to Manchester life?

Of the 48 people who responded to this question, only one stated that they felt nothing was added. Thematic analysis revealed two themes across the other responses. These were:

1. It adds diversity, colour, fun and culture.
2. It makes Manchester feel like a safer place to be.



Respondents said LGBT people bring ‘colourfulness’, ‘diversity of role models’, ‘colour, happiness’, ‘a lot of culture, clubs and fun’, ‘it adds more fun and happiness’, ‘diversity, brightness, joy’, ‘it makes it more fun and exciting’, ‘...Alan Turing’, ‘...a new history to learn’, ‘...ability to tell different stories’.

“I feel part of a supportive community...inclusive and accepting.” **Young LGBT research participant**

“[It’s about] feeling “normal” when you’re walking around town...having LGBT people in the city provides a sense of community, decreases isolation and adds a sense of normalcy to young LGBT people’s lives.” **Young LGBT research participant**



Hence, there was a desire expressed for visibility of the lives of LGBT people as a way to reduce discrimination and stigma, and mitigate isolation.

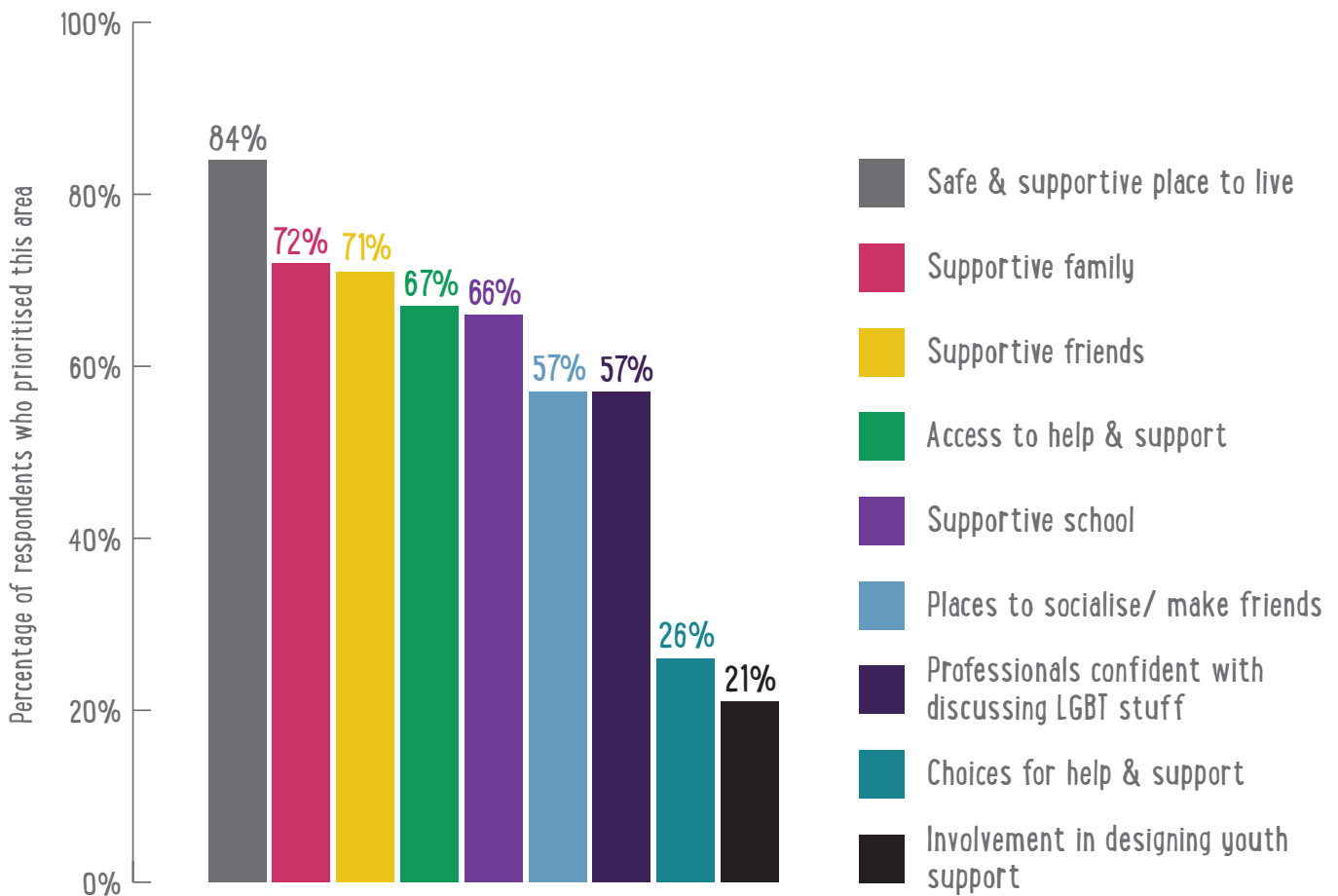
The visibility and support of a community helped some of the people surveyed to ‘feel at home’ in Manchester and one participant described such conditions as ones which ‘allow me to be myself’.

“...the life and presence of LGBT people in Manchester is something that is absolutely unique and is what makes Manchester an incredible place to live...I think having a city where everybody feels accepted increases happiness for all, also for people not in the minority group. I like that G-A-Y [a nightclub] has a huge sign, so the taboo and stigma (that still is around) gets broken down little by little, because it is not hidden.”

Young LGBT research participant

2. What do you think matters most to LGBT young people in Manchester?

Young people prioritised the following areas:



3. What are the main reasons that LGBT young people might access support?

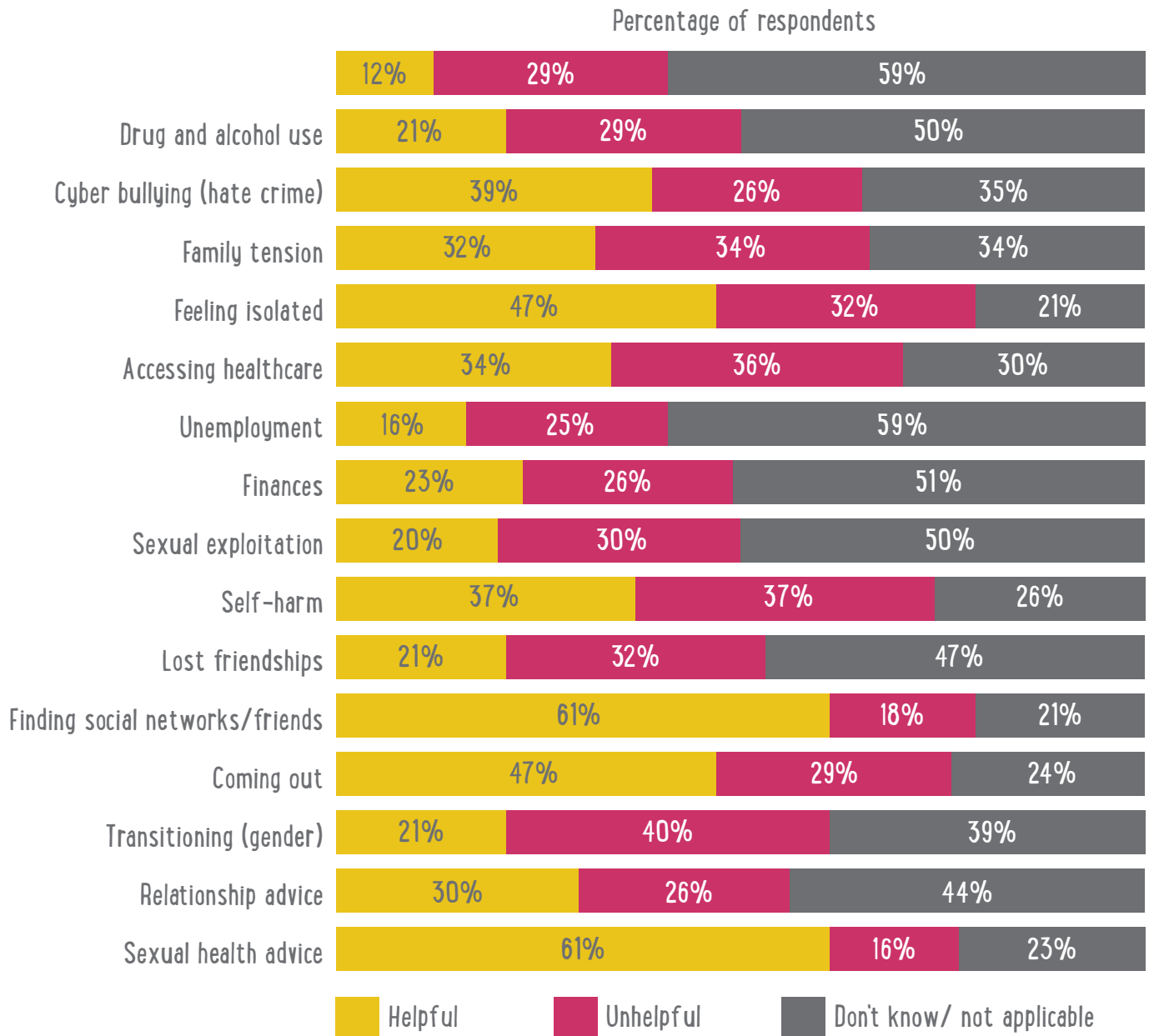
The following themes emerged in responses to this question:

- * Advice and coming out
- * Meeting other people who are supportive
- * Breaking down isolation to reduce the negative effects of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia (such as bullying/ hate crime and abuse), including the effects on mental health and suicide.

Respondents said that LGBT young people access support 'because they might be facing problems with coming out', '...they are unsafe or scared to come out', '[for] help navigating health and sex education', '[for] a place to feel safe if home isn't a safe space to express themselves', 'if they feel isolated or feel they need someone to talk to or to relate to', 'to meet people like me', 'to make friends'.

'LGBT people are at greater risk of suicide, mental "illness" etc for which they may need support', '...to prevent such high suicide rates they need awareness', '...they may be questioning gender or sexuality, want to meet people like them, may not have a safe place to live, or want to access information'. **Young LGBT research participants**

4. How good are services at helping with the following things?



Services are more likely to be helpful, rather than not helpful, in supporting young LGBT people around sexual health advice, finding social networks and friends, coming out, feeling isolated, and cyber bullying (hate crime).

Relationship advice and self-harm issues were areas where only marginally more people had found services to be helpful rather than unhelpful.

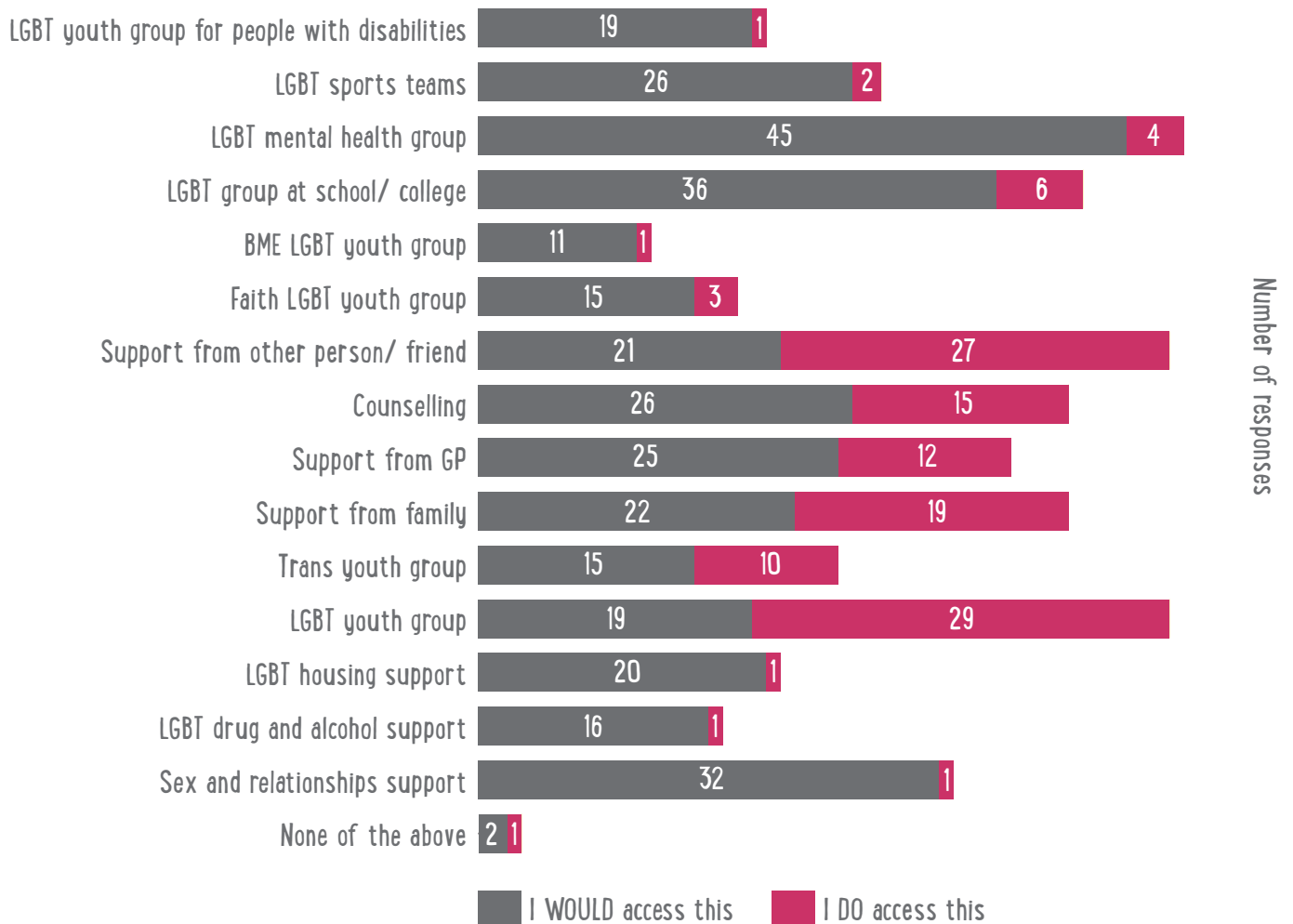
More young people rated services as unhelpful rather than helpful in addressing the remaining areas: transitioning (gender), homelessness/ housing advice, drug and alcohol use, family tension, accessing health care, unemployment, finances, sexual exploitation and lost friendships.

5. Services you want to access and services you have accessed

Respondents were given a list of services (some that exist, some that don't currently exist). For most of the young people, they said they would access the services we suggested, but often they were not currently accessing them.

A LGBT mental health group attracted the highest number of responses for the 'I would access' option, and only four reported that they did access this support. There were also many who stated they would access a LGBT youth group for people with disabilities, but only one person stated they did access such a service. LGBT housing support, LGBT drug and alcohol support, and sex and relationship support appear particularly desired by the LGBT young people surveyed.

Respondents were given the option to select 'not relevant to me' for each service but none selected this option.





5. Services you want to access and services you have accessed (continued)

Other services people would like to access: ‘LGBT+ drama, art, music, dance – we don’t all like sports. Stop appealing to one group of activities; ‘LGBTQ+ cancer support; ‘Coming out support; ‘LGBTQ+ sexual abuse/ domestic abuse support’.



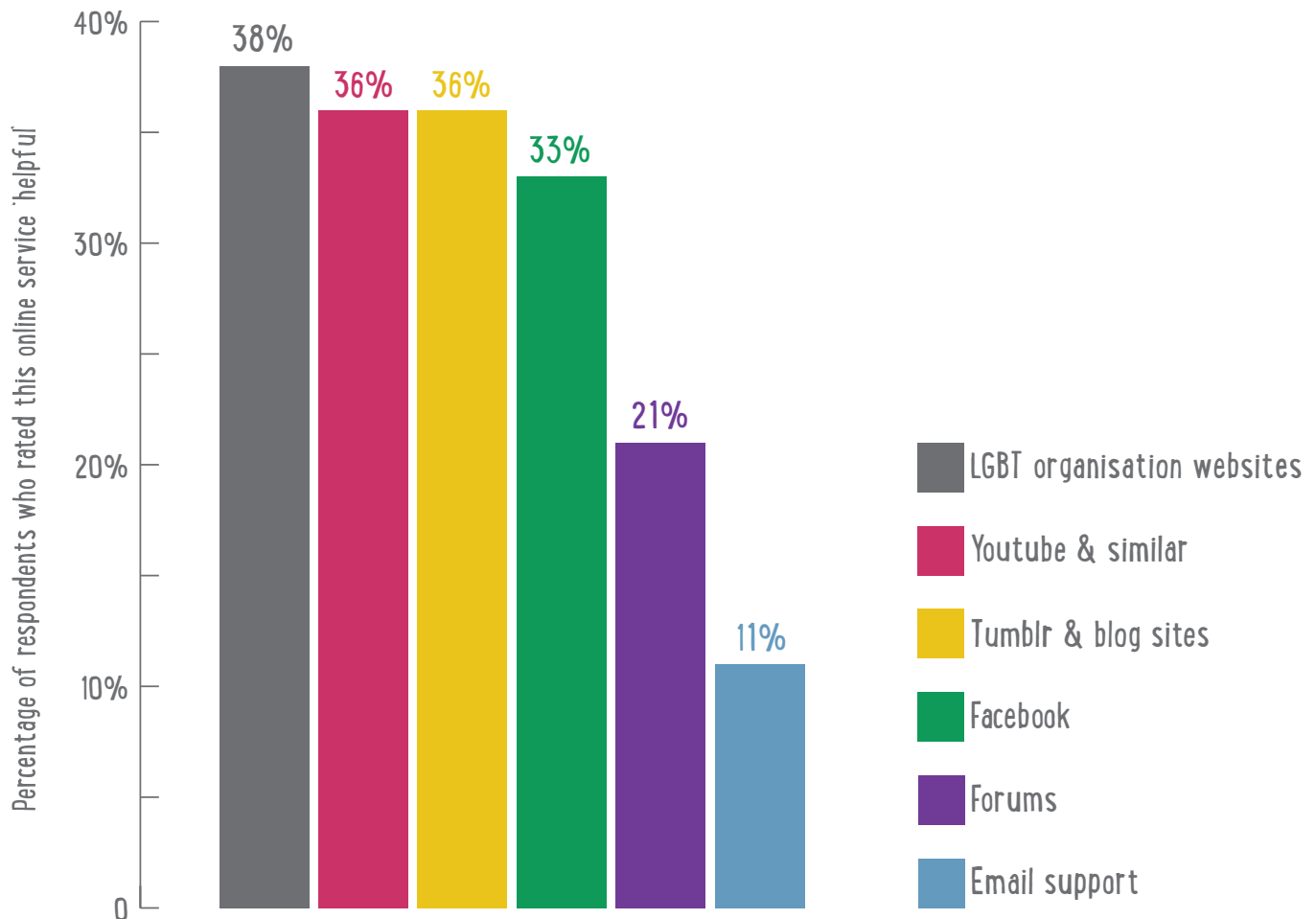
‘Child sexual exploitation support, particularly for young gay men and young trans people who are, in a significant number of cases, exploited and pushed into prostitution as a result of their sexuality or gender identity.’ **Young LGBT research participant**



‘Specific support tailored to young assigned female at birth (AFAB) people as we are socialised in a specific way and have the right to spaces to deal with the issues and the complications that those experiences bring.’ **Young LGBT research participant**

6. Which types of online support do you currently access and how helpful are they?

When asked about online support the young people currently access and how helpful they find it, no one rated any of the online support sites detailed as 'very helpful'.



These ratings suggest improvements are needed in the helpfulness of online support for young LGBT people. In the comments section, several specific online services were recommended:

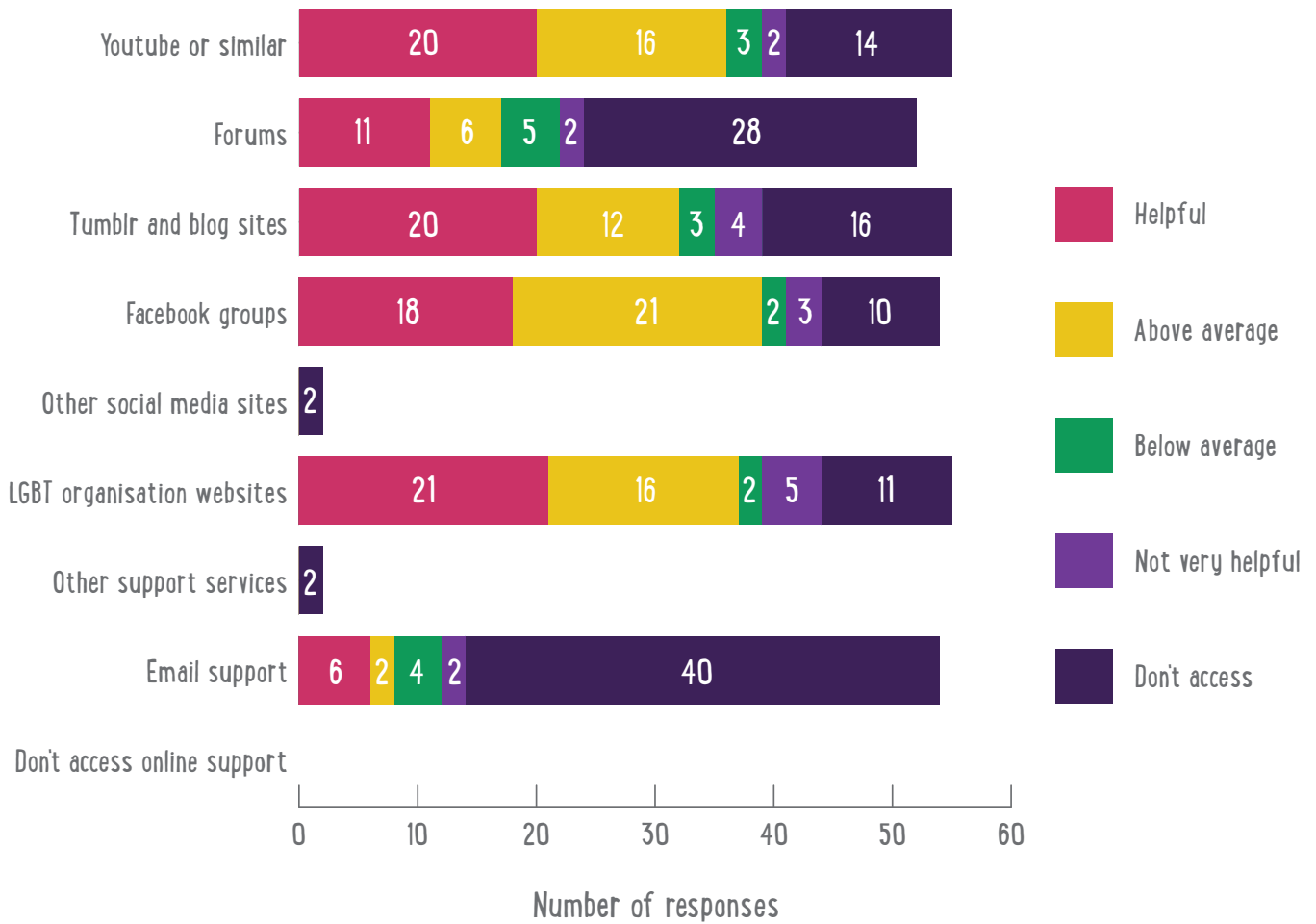
- * the quiet place – ‘for when things get a bit much and you just need to vent or rant’
- * kooth.com ‘confidential online counselling’.
- * Start2 ‘online mental health help which is helpful’.



‘More individualised, direct messaging and Facebook groups would be helpful’



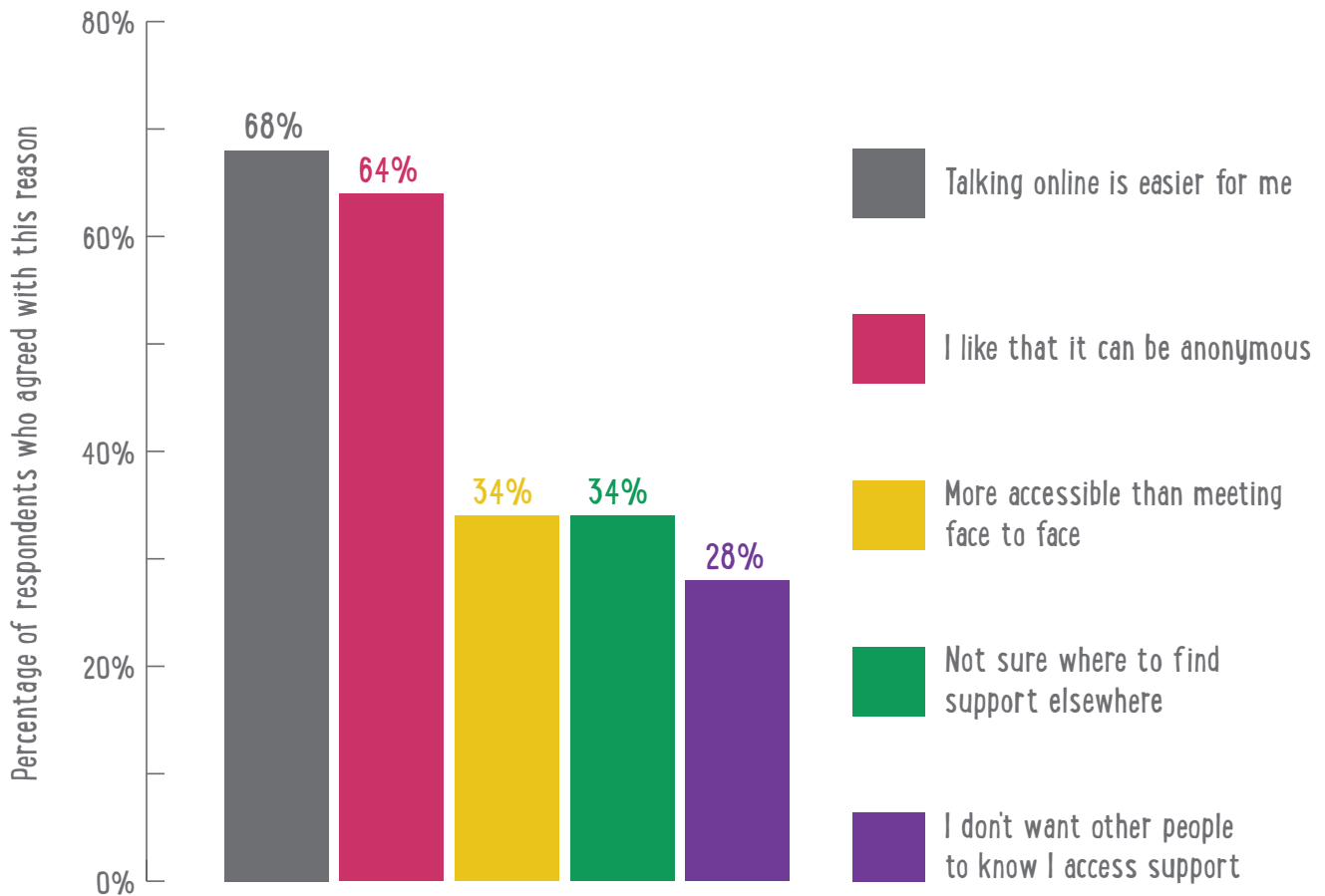
6. Which types of online support do you currently access and how helpful are they? (continued)



Respondents were also given the option to rate the above types of online support as ‘very helpful’ or ‘really unhelpful’, in addition to the options shown, but those ratings were not selected for any category.

7. What are the reasons why you access online support?

The young LGBT people were asked their reasons for accessing online support. The graph shows the most common choices:



Qualitative comments provided by a small number of the sample pointed to the shorter waiting time than when accessing face-to-face support, and the variety of experiences and perspectives.

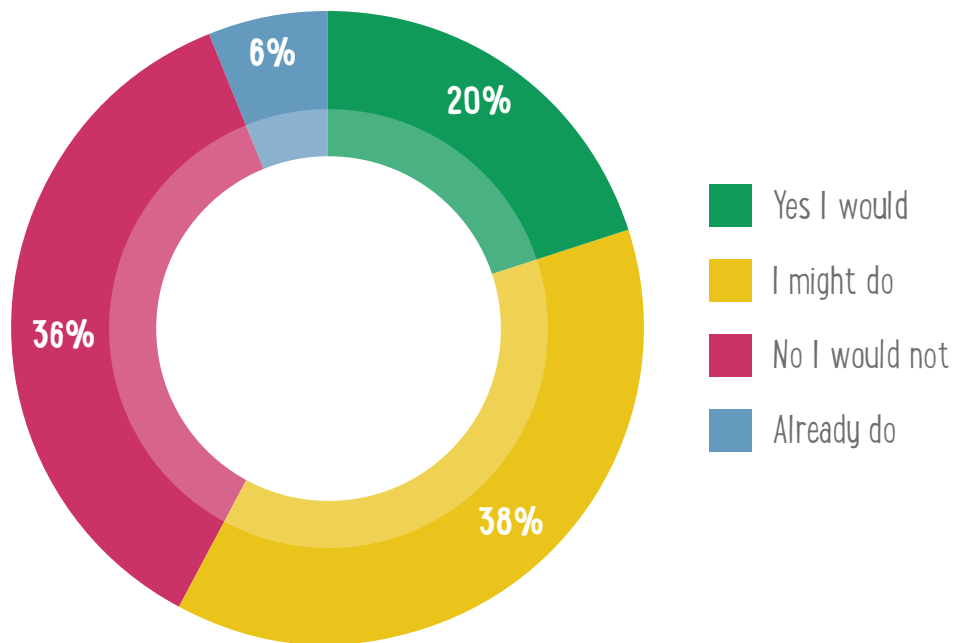


'[Online spaces have] more LGBT people in one place and different experiences and different marginalisations intersecting.' **Young LGBT research participant**

'[You get] chances to speak to older members of the community that we might not always have access to face-to-face.' **Young LGBT research participant**



8. If you wanted to talk about something related to LGBT identity, would you feel able to access support that was not specifically for LGBT people?

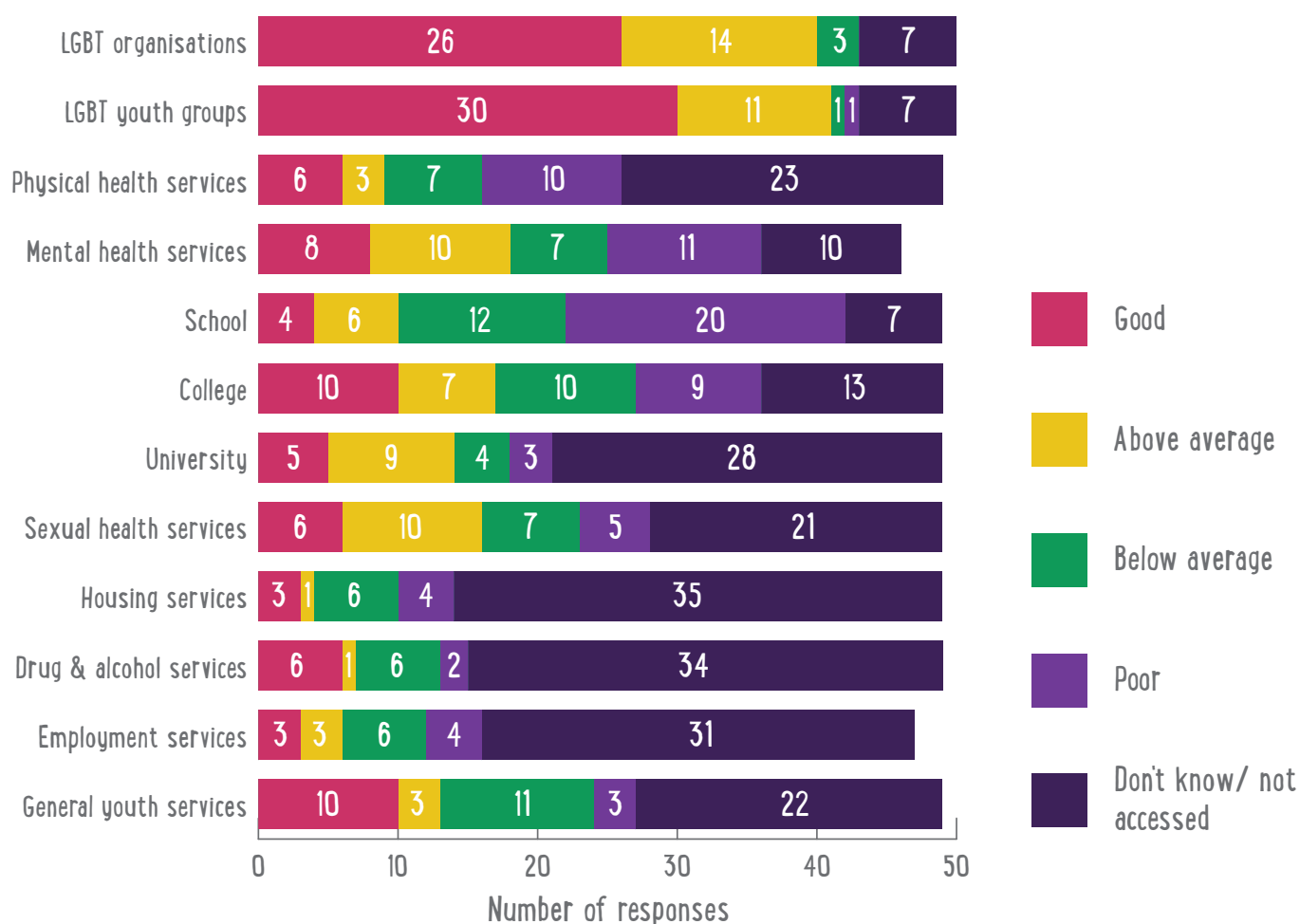


36% said they would not access support that was not specifically for LGBT people.

'I already have tried this with CAMHS, a counsellor at my secondary school, and my therapist, and failed all three times because they are in no way as informed or experienced with matters to do with the LGBT+ communities or identity as they should be.'
Young LGBT research participant

'High levels of homophobia and more specifically lesbophobia as well as experiences of complete dismissal and ignorance. I've been refused access to and help from services before. Also a complete lack of understanding of the lives of LGBT people, even with training.'
Young LGBT research participant

9. How inclusive of LGBT young people are the following groups and services?



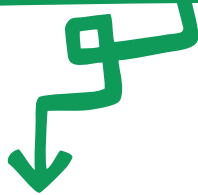
Young people rated most services as in need of improvement in terms of inclusivity for LGBT young people. The highest rated services for inclusivity were LGBT youth groups and LGBT organisations.

The services most often rated poor for their inclusivity of LGBT young people were schools, mental health services, physical health services and colleges. No young person rated any of the services ‘excellent’ or ‘really bad’, despite these being offered as options.



“The group and the youth workers at the Proud Trust are very sensitive to people’s circumstances. They don’t out you to others; it’s a lovely, safe space. I would definitely recommend other young LGBT people attend a Proud Trust youth group. Everyone is welcome regardless of how you identify and what pronoun you use! It doesn’t matter if you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans or questioning; no one is excluded. It’s great that Manchester has a dedicated LGBT Centre. My heart soared when I found out!” **By Emma**

10. What would make you trust general services more?



- * Young people felt trust was best built by good staff attitudes and awareness, along with staff who are themselves LGBT.
- * The second priority was visibility and awareness more generally, such as anti-discriminatory posters, rainbow and trans flags, visits and talks from LGBT groups and partnerships and events centred on important LGBT calendar dates.
- * Monitoring of sexual orientation and gender identity was viewed as important by 52% of the respondents.

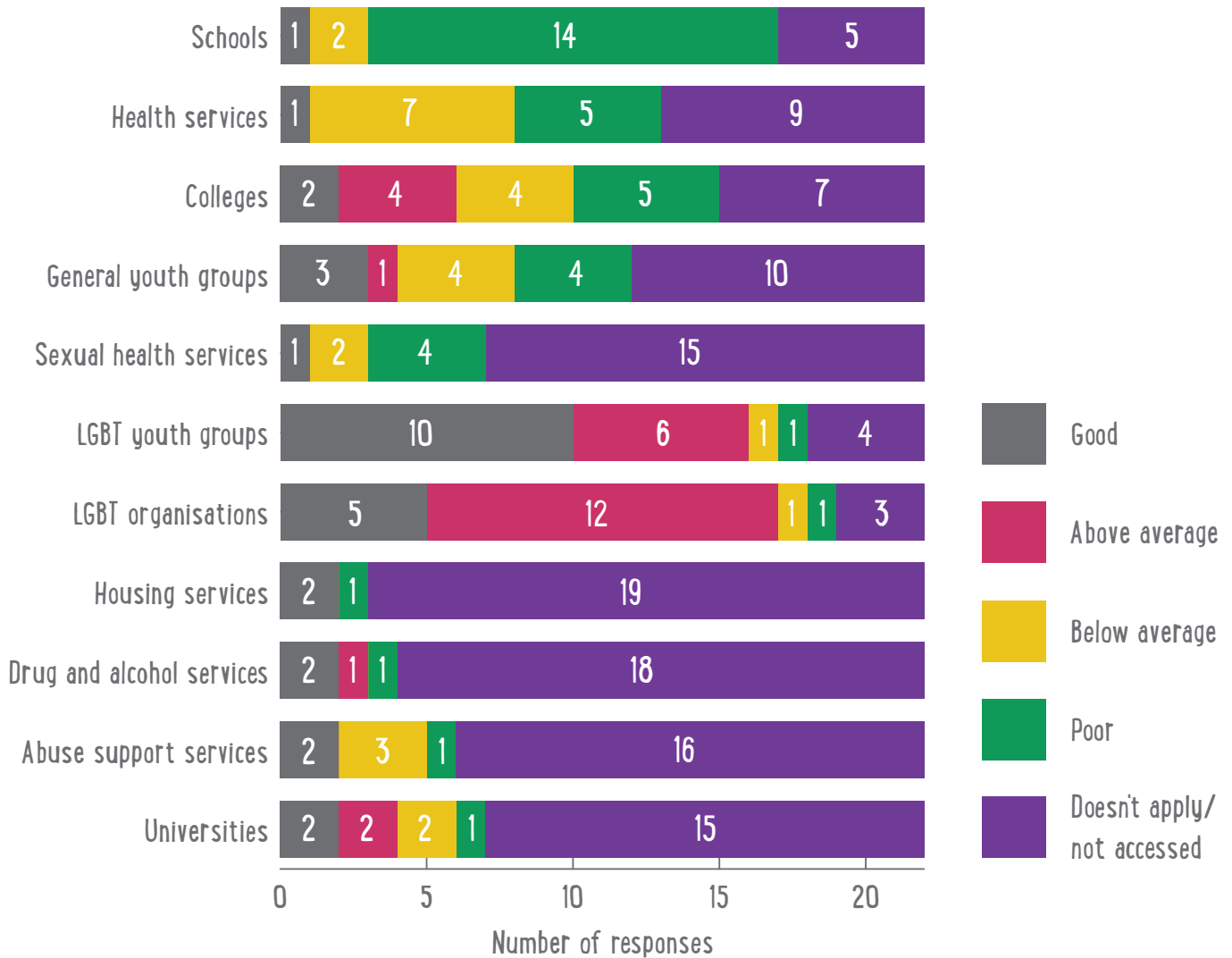
Have pronouns on staff name badges/ email signatures

Young LGBT research participant

Specifically it would be having LGBT staff, as a lot of the other things sound like a nod to inclusiveness, and can so easily fall flat and not actually reflect the level of understanding and empathy from staff.

Young LGBT research participant

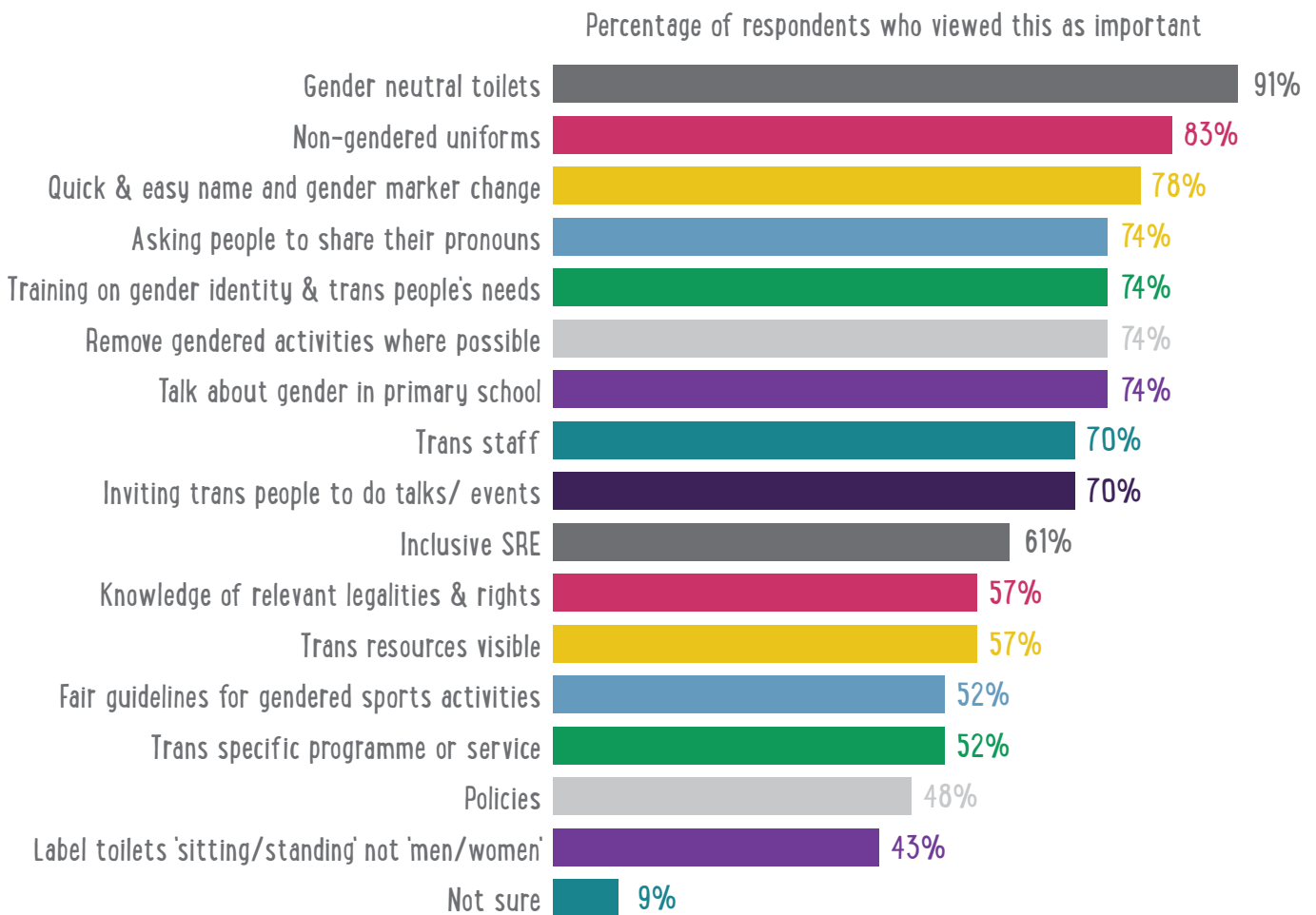
11. How trans inclusive are the following groups and services?



Schools were rated as 'poor' more than any other service. However, LGBT youth groups were most commonly ranked 'good' for trans inclusivity.

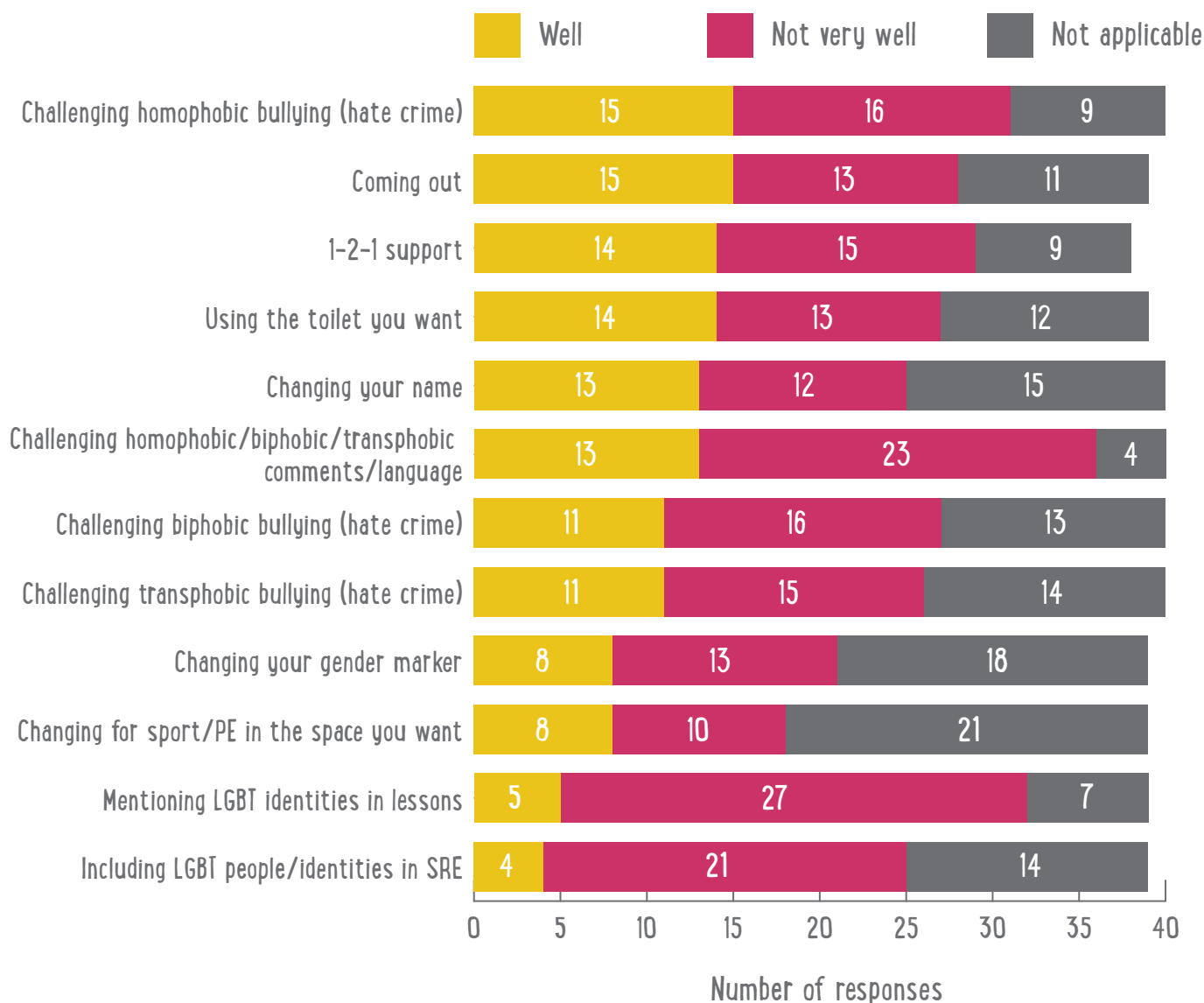
12. Which of these would make services more trans inclusive?

The multiple choice options given on this question were designed by the trans youth group Afternoon TEA (which stands for Trans Education and Action, a Greater Manchester trans youth group based at The Proud Trust). Gender neutral toilets, non-gendered school uniforms, and quick and easy 'name and gender marker change' processes were the options most often seen as important by the respondents.



13. How well does your school, college or university deal with the following?

The responses to this question were very mixed, revealing that there is a range of experiences in education establishments in the city-region, and that not enough of these are doing well at supporting LGBT pupils.



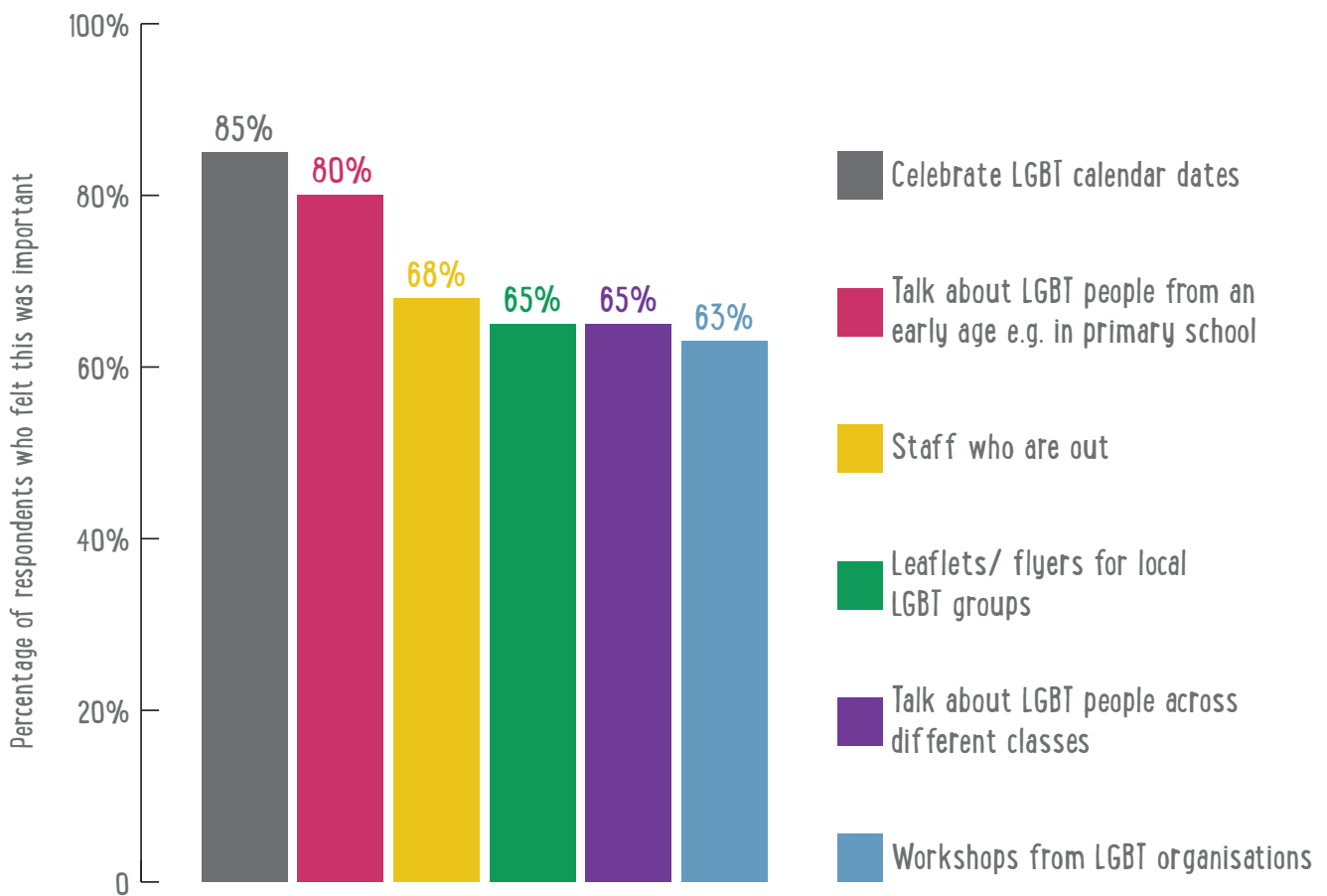
My school doesn't do anything about homophobia **Young LGBT research participant**

My college is being pretty good at dealing with some of my anxieties related to being trans so it's pretty good, like they even got my name changed on the registers.

Young LGBT research participant



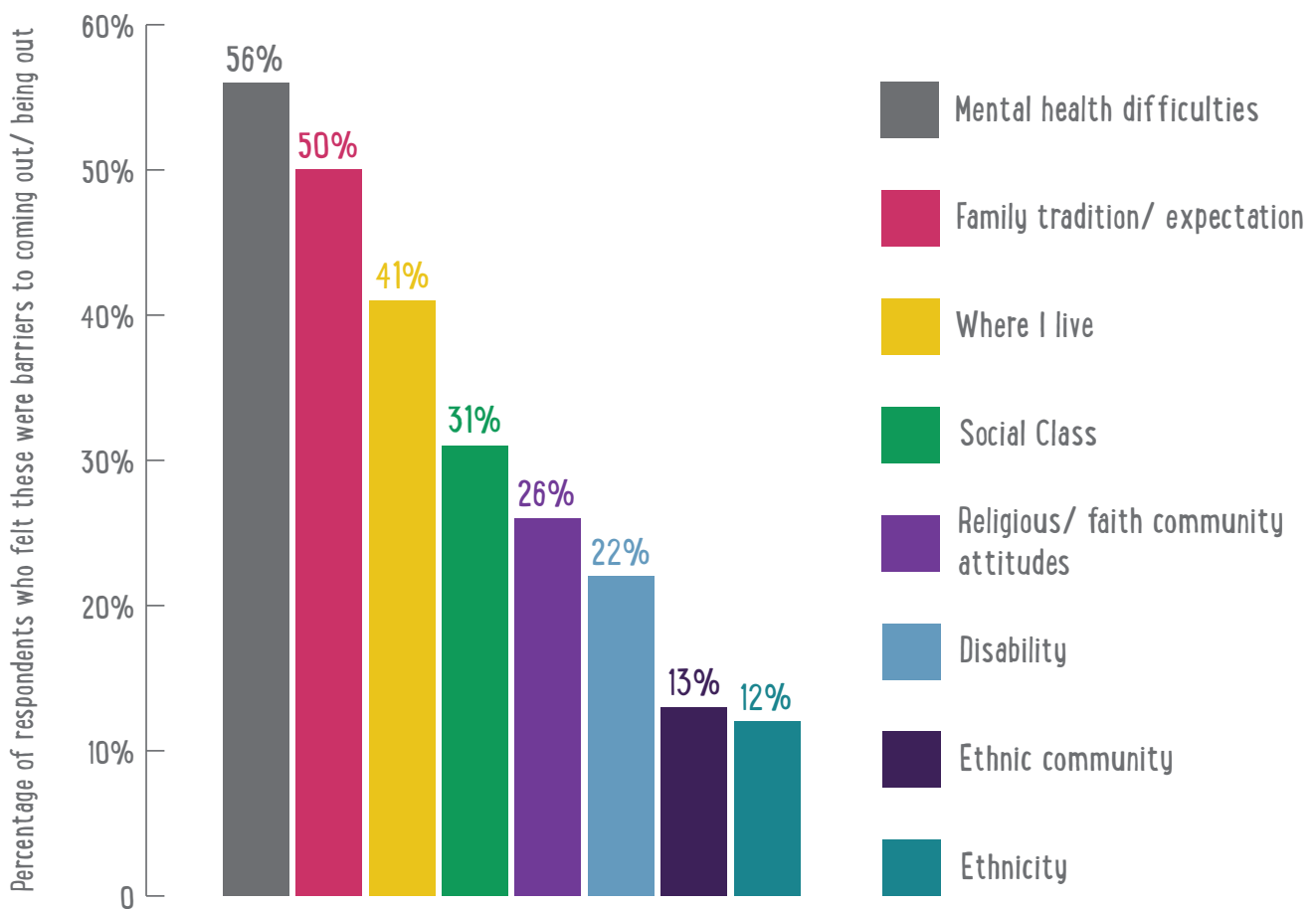
14. What could schools, colleges and universities do to be more LGBT inclusive?



85% of the young LGBT people felt it important that education establishments celebrate LGBT calendar dates (e.g. LGBT History Month, Pride, IDAHO) and have staff trained on LGBT topics. 80% of the young LGBT people would value it for LGBT people to be talked about from an early age, e.g. at primary school. Many of the young people also indicated that they would value inclusive sex and relationships education. There was a desire in 68% of respondents for staff who were ‘out’.

There was also a desire for education institutions to take an active, visible stance in challenging phobic comments and demonstrating an anti-discriminatory stance by clearly displaying such policies and using information posters.

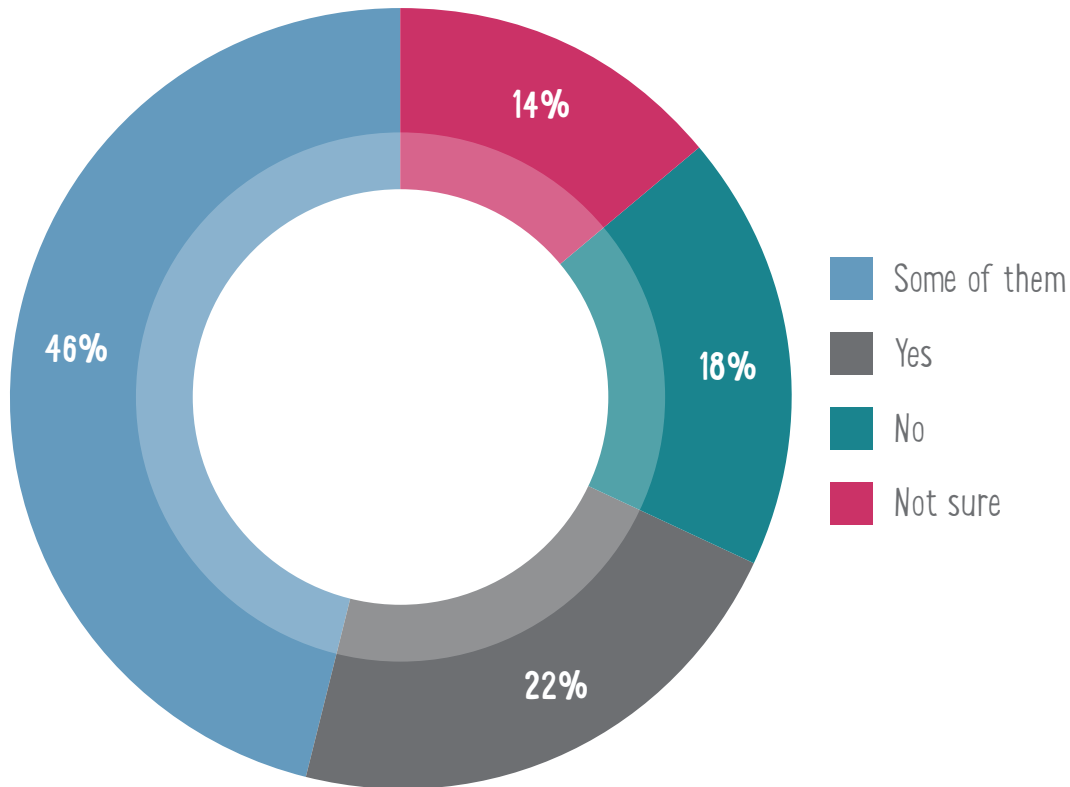
15. How do other identity elements impact on your LGBT identity?



The issues that gained the most votes as relevant in making it harder for them to come out or to be out were mental health difficulties, and family tradition or expectations.

In terms of factors that made it easier for young LGBT people to come out and be out, there were low reports of useful factors generally. However, 20% stated that 'where I live' makes it easier. This was reflected in focus groups where people highlighted positives about where they live when it provided access to transport links to get in to the city, or when they lived in close proximity to LGBT groups or when they reported the 'feel' of their area as more liberal. This area warrants further exploration into how services can support those facing multiple oppressions.

16. Do you feel services are aware of and understand the elements of your already identity mentioned?



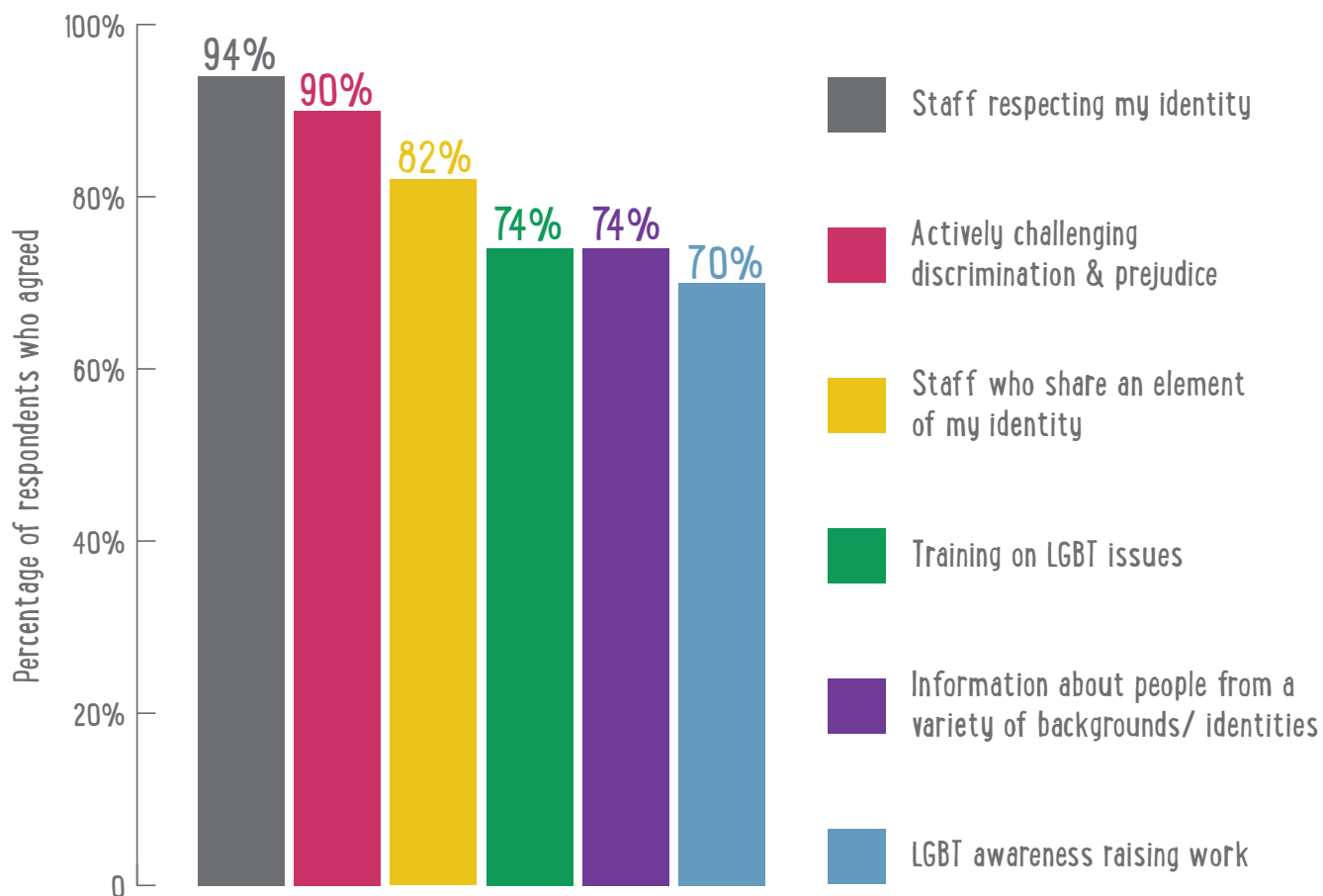
On the whole, most people thought that services understood some, but not all elements of their identity. Through focus groups this was explored and participants talked about sometimes feeling that their religion, mental health or ethnicity was not always understood in LGBT settings, and that their LGBT identity was not always understood in mental health settings. For some people they felt they couldn't share their LGBT identity in their family, faith or race community.



“In the focus group some young people of faith faced confusion and said they don't feel welcome to speak about their faith in LGBT+ spaces and at times would not feel comfortable speaking about their LGBT identities in faith/ religious spaces. One young person reported having to find a new place of worship because of conflict with their religious community. **Focus group facilitator**



17. Which of these things would make you feel a service understands you?



94% of the young LGBT people voted for staff ‘respecting their identity’ as something that helped them to feel a service understood them, followed by ‘actively challenging’ discrimination and prejudice.



The service is really friendly and I feel my voice is being heard about the things I'm passionate about. I know that people are listening to me.

By Maxwell



Some of the young LGBT people provided qualitative responses to the question about what services could do to help them feel understood. These involved the desire to have safe and quiet spaces where mental health presentations are recognised and respected, as well as practical welfare support from staff e.g. being reminded to eat, or given help with personal hygiene and help with sleeping patterns.

ADDITIONAL FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

The focus groups revealed themes which supported and reiterated those found by the survey data whilst adding nuance and detail:

A desire to feel safe

For some, this involved having access to spaces which were free from the provision or consumption of alcohol, free or affordable to access, and/ or specifically designed or exclusively for young people rather than tailored to adults. Young people in one focus group used the word ‘safety’ as an umbrella to include freedom to be ‘out’, to have access to sports, and to be free from bullying (hate crime) and harassment and transphobia – which they felt needed to be more directly challenged and recognised in organisations.

‘I’m bisexual but attending the groups has taught me lots more about the LGBT community, especially what it means to be trans. I found the different pronoun use hard at first but it’s been a good learning experience. Since coming to the groups I’ve found it easier to deal with people in society generally. It’s great to have somewhere to come and be myself. Everyone gets on with each other.’ **By Tom**

Access to support

The focus groups revealed thoughts around the fact that not all young LGBT people have awareness of what services exist and are available to them. Other potential difficulties for some included understanding and completing paperwork to access services, and facing assumptions in staff members, such as stereotypes about LGBT people.

Mental health

The young people in the focus groups discussed a need to recognise mental health needs, both in the sense of mental health issues resulting specifically from difficulties around identifying as LGBT in a homophobic and transphobic society, but also difficulties that might exist separate to their LGBT identity. As such, the young people wanted services to be clued up and to consider their LGBT status as part of their identities, but not to unnecessarily focus on it or view it as somehow causal of their negative mental health outcomes, per se. The young people also wanted to feel more able to discuss mental health issues openly within the LGBT community itself without stigma, and ways to ‘come out’ to partners or prospective partners about their existing mental health issues.

Focus group participants also discussed statistics such as the fact that LGBT young people are three times more likely to have poor mental health outcomes than heterosexual counterparts. They discussed the relationship between this and homophobic/ transphobic bullying (hate crime), abuse and fear of, or actual abandonment by family or friends. They also considered the pressures that come with the potential of getting involuntarily 'outed' and/ or prevented from coming out. They said that this affected future access to opportunities in education, employment and to achieving happiness, such as in relationships. Self-harm and drug and alcohol abuse were referred to as pertinent issues in the population, and need of more services delivered by staff informed about LGBT lives.

What already exists that works/ helps?

The people in the focus groups reiterated the findings that they valued and wanted more: LGBT specific youth groups, useful sex and relationships education, space for trans youth to explore their gender identities e.g. in youth provisions, and online support/ forums to discuss issues affecting the young LGBT people.

What needs improvement?

On the whole, the young people rated services as mostly in need of improvement in terms of inclusivity of LGBT young people. They also wanted more up to date and accurate online information and advice linked to identifying as LGBT and associated issues such as health and wellbeing.

Better informed mainstream services were desired whilst still preserving LGBT specialist services/ provisions. They also desired services which met their practical, physical, emotional, and social needs holistically. They wanted services which recognised the general and heteronormative/ cisnormative disadvantage they face, such as with unemployment, homelessness, vulnerability to abuse and sexual exploitation, and navigating multiple aspects of identity (such as religious affiliation), socio-economic status, and gender identity. They expressed a need for better awareness and resources in working with people identifying with/ as trans and non-binary.

SUMMARY

The young people point towards a number of things that they believe is wanted and needed by LGBT young people by services:

- * Offer support to and for LGBT young people specifically
- * Have a knowledge and understanding of LGBT issues and types of support required
- * Work together and have links within the community, and signpost LGBT young people when necessary/ desired.
- * Do not discriminate against LGBT people, and actively challenge discrimination wherever it is witnessed
- * Ensure staff members are trained on key health and wellbeing areas with young LGBT people, such as mental health, identity formation, sexual and relationships education, and education more generally
- * Be inclusive to all individuals, and consider ways of reaching out to young people specifically, including through, but not limited to, online methods
- * Services that reduce abuse or support those LGBT young people affected by abuse
- * The young LGBT people's active consultation/ participation in designing services, which in turn would help facilitate a sense of safety and trust in services
- * Services that attempt to actively reduce stigma and negative media imagery
- * Education and LGBT awareness to be provided not just to professionals but also to young people's friends, families and support networks, to help reduce stigma.

LGBT CALENDAR OF KEY DATES

January

Holocaust Memorial Day

February

LGBT History Month

March

International Women's Day

International Transgender
Day of Visibility

May

International Day against
homophobia, transphobia and
biphobia

June, July, August

LGBT Pride events across the ten
boroughs

September

Bisexual visibility day

October

Black History Month

World Mental Health Day

National Coming Out day

Spirit Day

November

Trans Awareness Week

December

World Aids Day

Disability History Month

The Proud Trust is a life-saving and life enhancing organisation that helps young people empower themselves to make a positive change for themselves and their communities. We do this through youth groups, peer support, managing the LGBT centre for Manchester, delivering of training and events, campaigns, undertaking research and creating resources.

theproudtrust.org



42nd Street is a Greater Manchester mental health charity that supports young people aged 11-25 with their emotional wellbeing and mental health, promoting choice and creativity.

The charity champions young person-centred approaches that demonstrate local impact and have national significance.

42ndstreet.org.uk



AKT - The Albert Kennedy Trust aims to prevent LGBT youth homelessness through safe homes and advocacy. The charity works to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans young people are able to live in accepting, supportive and caring homes, by providing a range of services to meet the individual needs of those who would otherwise be homeless or living in a hostile environment.

AKT work towards this mission by:

- Providing appropriate homes through supported lodgings, fostering and other specialist housing schemes.
- Enabling young people to manage independent living successfully.
- Improving attitudes within society towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans young people.

AKT.org.uk



LGBT Foundation is a national charity delivering a wide range of services to lesbian, gay and bisexual and trans (LGBT) communities.

lgbt.foundation



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