

Research into Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality in Adult Learning

August 2011

Of interest to all Agency staff, colleges and training organisations

Foreword



Two vital elements of the Skills Funding Agency's mission are:

- to ensure that Further Education efficiently meets the current and future needs of learners and employers; and
- to offer comprehensive advice to learners, enabling them to make more informed choices.

However, when we started developing our draft Single Equality Scheme, we discovered that we had an evidence gap when it came to understanding how well the FE sector is meeting the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGB and T) learners. We also did not have a good understanding of how learners' sexual orientations and gender identities might inform the choices they make. This research begins to fill that gap.

The last major piece of research undertaken on this subject, in 2006¹, painted a bleak picture of what it meant to be lesbian, gay or bisexual in FE. It suggested that the experience was characterised by widespread discrimination and harassment.

Although comparisons are problematic as that research had a different methodology and scope, our research paints a much more nuanced picture. It is an authoritative, rigorous and comprehensive research report, based on the views of nearly 450 LGB and T learners. It shows that there is much to celebrate as the experience of the majority is positive: when asked to rate how welcoming their college or provider is, the average score was 7.56 out of ten. However, it also shows that there is no room for complacency: a significant minority continue to report bullying, harassment or other barriers to achievement.

As well as the clear moral and legal cases for banishing discrimination, homophobia and transphobia from the FE sector, there is a strong business case too: learners are voting with their feet, based on both good and bad experiences. One trans woman told the researchers: 'This college feels like more of a safe space than 'AN other' new college would feel. I have signed up to do another course at this college, despite being able to get the course cheaper elsewhere... I feel comfortable with the college I

¹ Centre for Excellence in Leadership, Equality and sexual orientation: the leadership challenge for Further Education, 2006

know.’ A gay man told the researchers: ‘I have had a bad experience in the last few years, when a lecturer told anecdotes that were homophobic... I expected to stay at that college for a two-year course, but I was so uncomfortable... I moved to another college in the area and found it to be a totally different environment – excellent.’

These two examples illustrate the difference that can be made when colleges and providers take concerted action to turn equality policies- which are often well-meaning but poorly understood- into reality. And those that have understood this will be rewarded when, before long, learners over 24 studying for higher level FE qualifications begin paying their own fees. Creating a positive environment for these and all learners will be essential to attracting and retaining learners.

My own experience in growing a generation ago and not feeling able to be open about being gay left a scar that to this day means I cannot talk about it in public unemotionally. So I very much endorse the recommendations in this report as an important starting point towards realising the vision of a sector in which equality is fully embedded, and where all learners feel safe and comfortable to be open about their sexual orientations and gender identities.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this research, in particular:

- the researchers from Babcock, the Lesbian and Gay Foundation (LGF) and the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIREs);
- representatives from the Association of Colleges (AoC), Association of Learning Providers (ALP), Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), the Forum for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality in Post-School Education, Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), National Union of Students (NUS) and University and College Union (UCU), who all contributed invaluable expertise to the Steering Group;
- the colleges and providers which promoted the survey and gave up their classrooms for focus groups; and
- most importantly the learners who shared their experiences.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Russell', written in a cursive style.

Geoff Russell
Chief Executive
Skills Funding Agency



**Research into
Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
in Adult Learning**

for

Skills Funding Agency

by

Babcock Research

May 2011

Research into Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Adult Learning

Donna James and Clare Lambley

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to extend their thanks to the following groups of people, without which this national research would not have been able to reach out across the adult learning sector to gather such a comprehensive picture of the experiences and views of adult learners who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender.

- The project steering group for their enthusiasm and guidance: Dan Simons (Skills Funding Agency); Chris Hall (Equality Challenge Unit); Margaret Adjaye (Learning and Skills Improvement Service); Seth Atkin (Universities and Colleges Union, and Chair of the Forum for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality in Post-School Education); Joy Mercer (Association of College); Katie Shaw (National Union of Students); Terry Fennell (Association of Learning Providers); James Davison (BIS/Skills Funding Agency - research); and Jo Rowland-Stuart (Skills Funding Agency - Inclusion Advisor).
- All adult learning providers in England were provided with information about the research via the Skills Funding Agency's 'Update' and emails direct from the research team. A large number of providers subsequently distributed the web survey link and publicity to their students.
- Numerous current, past and potential future adult learners, who took the time to log onto the online survey to share their experiences and views anonymously.
- Forty adult LGB and/or T learners who volunteered to speak one-to-one with a researcher in more depth. Three colleges who gave freely of their time to arrange group discussion sessions, and the sixteen LGB and/or T learners who participated.

Babcock Research
Part of Babcock Education and Skills

Merchant House
11a Piccadilly
York, North Yorkshire
YO1 9WB

666 North Row
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 3AP

01904 656655
research@babcock.co.uk

CONTENTS

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8
2	INTRODUCTION	13
2.1	Aims and Objectives	13
2.2	Methodological Overview	14
2.3	About this Report	14
3	SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS	16
3.1	Area of Residence	16
3.2	Age Group	17
3.3	Ethnicity	17
3.4	Religion	17
3.5	Disability	18
3.6	Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation	19
3.6.1	<i>Gender</i>	19
3.6.2	<i>Trans History</i>	19
3.6.3	<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	20
3.6.4	<i>Openness about Sexual Orientation</i>	21
3.6.5	<i>Openness about Gender Identity</i>	23
4	LEARNING EXPERIENCES	25
4.1	Type of Learning Activity	25
4.2	Perception of Adult Learning	28
4.3	Safe Spaces	32
4.4	Bullying and Harassment	34
5	POLICIES, SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES IN FE	40
6	EXPERIENCES FROM ADULT LEARNING	47
7	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	51
	APPENDICES	53

Glossary

E&D	- Equality and Diversity
FE	- Further Education
GIRES	- Gender Identity Research and Education Society
LGB and/or T	- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender
LGB	- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (or other non-heterosexual sexual orientation)
LGF	- Lesbian and Gay Foundation
Trans	- Transgender (identifying own gender in some way other than that assigned at birth)
Non-binary gender	- Gender categorisation not restricted to Male or Female
WBL	- Work Based Learning

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Skills Funding Agency is committed to equal opportunities for all as set out in its draft Single Equality Scheme. There is currently limited evidence on the needs and experiences of learners who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender (LGB and/or T). The Skills Funding Agency therefore commissioned Babcock Research through competitive tender to undertake research into sexual orientation and gender identity in adult learning in November 2010.

Method

Research was undertaken with FE learners (or potential or past learners) through online survey, promoted through FE providers and through LGBT groups, and student unions (444 eligible responses); 40 qualitative interviews and 3 focus groups. Babcock Research undertook the research with the help of our research partners, Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) and the Lesbian and Gay Foundation (LGF).

Key Findings

- Almost one in three (30%) Trans learners had experienced bullying or harassment in adult learning due to their gender identity.
- Fewer than one in six (14.3%) LGB learners surveyed had experienced bullying and harassment in adult learning due to their sexual orientation.
- Only around a third of respondents stated that they thought that equality policies seemed to translate into reality in their FE provision. Lesbians and Trans learners were less likely to agree.
- The most commonly reported form of bullying and harassment was discrimination in practical work in the classroom or tasks within WBL.
- A significant proportion of LGB and especially Trans learners do not feel 'totally safe' in adult learning.
- A quarter of our respondents stated that there was an LGB and/or T friendly/specific welfare officer available at their learning provider.

However, Gay male learners are more likely to hold this view than Trans and Lesbian learners.

- Gay male learners are typically more likely to believe that support systems (all four types explored in the survey) are LGBT friendly/specific. Trans and Bisexual learners are least likely to believe they are LGBT friendly/specific.
- The greatest barrier reported for learning was 'insensitive curriculum content'.
- Qualitative respondents related how they were attracted to adult learning through proactive action by providers e.g. taking recruitment to LGBT events.
- There are still comparatively more problems and barriers for LGBT learners for gender stereotyped courses e.g. beauty; engineering etc.
- Around one in twenty LGB learners expressed concerns about remaining in adult learning, or achieving within adult learning due to their sexual orientation. However, around one in six Trans learners expressed similar concerns about their learning due to their gender identity.

Demographics

Across the survey as a whole, 86.5% identified as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual, and 13.5% as Transgender. Two thirds (64.6%) identified as Gay/Lesbian; and almost a quarter (22.5%) as Bisexual. Pansexual and queer were descriptions used more frequently by those identifying as Transgender. Other descriptions included Asexual; Androphilic; and Bisexual queer. Of those not identifying as Transgender, almost three quarters (72.9%) identified as Gay or Lesbian, 22.4% as Bisexual, and just 4.7% described their sexual orientation in another way. Those identifying as Transgender were much more varied in the way they described their sexual orientation. Just over a quarter (28.3%) considered themselves to be heterosexual, while almost another quarter (23.3%) described their sexual orientation

as Bisexual. Fewer than one in eight (11.7%) described themselves as Gay or Lesbian. One fifth (20%) identified themselves as 'other' with pansexual (8.6%) and queer accounting for the remainder.

A much higher proportion of Trans learners identified in the non-binary gender descriptions.

Openness about Sexual Orientation

LGB respondents were asked to state how 'out' they were in a range of different situations. Respondents were most open about their sexual orientation with close friends outside of learning (82.2% 'yes' plus 12.4% 'partially'). Almost three quarters (72.2%) stated that they were open to some degree within the learning environment generally, but only two in five (39.4%) indicated that they were fully open.

Typically, a smaller proportion of Trans learners are open about their gender identity than the proportion of LGB learners who are open about their sexual orientation in the same situation. Openness with tutors was much greater for Trans learners than for LGB learners.

Perceptions of and Barriers to Adult Learning

Using a scale of 1-10, where 1 meant 'not at all welcoming' and 10 meant 'extremely welcoming', to indicate how welcoming adult learning was in their experience, the average score was 7.56 out of 10. There was little variation between groups.

Fewer than one in five LGB and/or T learners responding to the survey stated that they had at some time encountered barriers to taking up an adult learning opportunity.

A smaller proportion of learners identifying as Bisexual or 'other sexual orientation' report having encountered barriers to starting adult learning than Lesbian or Gay learners, and a greater proportion of Lesbians compared to Gay men report this experience (15.1% compared to 11.4%). However, two fifths (43.3%) of Trans learners reported having encountered barriers to taking up adult learning due to their gender identity.

Fewer than one in twenty (4.2%) of LGB learners expressed concerns about remaining in adult learning, or achieving within adult learning (4.2%) due to their sexual orientation. However, 15.0% of Trans learners expressed similar concerns about their learning due to their gender identity.

Of the six potential barriers listed in the survey, the one that the greatest proportion agreed actually was a barrier, and that they had personally experienced, was 'insensitive curriculum content' (19.1% personal experience, plus 6.5% experienced by a friend).

Bullying/Harassment and Safe Spaces

Of six learning environments listed, between a quarter and half felt 'totally safe' and approximately a further third felt 'quite safe'. Almost all those interviewed said there were at least some areas of the learning environment where they did not feel fully safe. Trans learners were significantly less likely to state that they felt 'totally safe'.

Fewer than one in six (14.3%) LGB learners surveyed had experienced bullying and harassment in adult learning due to their sexual orientation, and almost one in three (30%) Trans learners had experienced bullying or harassment due to their gender identity. Of the 76 respondents reporting that they had been bullied or harassed within adult learning due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, almost two thirds said that it had occurred within the last year.

A wide range of types of bullying and harassment were reported by learners, the most commonly reported form being discrimination in practical work in the classroom or tasks within WBL. Around a third of those who have been bullied reported that this had included derogatory comments and verbal abuse. A third of Trans learners who experienced bullying and harassment reported having not been addressed in the gender role in which they had requested to be addressed.

Over half of learners who had experienced bullying or harassment said that other learners on their course had been involved

and almost half mentioned learners on other courses/other year groups. One in four said that they had been bullied or harassed by their tutor, and around one in eight by another member of staff.

Nearly half of those who revealed that they had been bullied/harassed had reported the matter with their learning setting, just under a quarter had reported the incident to someone outside of their learning provision (such as family or friends), but few had reported an incident to an authority outside of their learning provision (such as the police).

When asked whether there was anyone in authority within their learning provision to whom they can go with problems (see main report for a list of prompts), half (52.5%) indicated that they could take personal problems to their tutor, and a fifth (21.2%) indicated that they could turn to another member of staff.

Concerns were raised in the qualitative interviews regarding potential conflicts of interest between the religion/belief-sets of staff (especially Equality Officers) and supporting sexual orientation and/or gender identity equality.

Policies and Systems

Nearly two-thirds of respondents were aware that their learning provider had an Equal Opportunities policy mentioning sexual orientation. Trans learners and Lesbians were significantly less likely than other groups to be aware of a policy. Fewer respondents (less than half) were aware of an Equal Opportunities policy covering gender identity.

Only around a third of respondents stated that they thought that policies seemed to translate into reality in their FE provision. Lesbians (23.5%) and Trans people (26.7%) were less likely to agree.

Just over half of respondents reported that they were aware of a bullying/harassment reporting mechanism. Gay males were most likely to be aware of this, and Trans learners least likely.

A quarter of our respondents stated that there was an LGB and/or T friendly/specific welfare officer. However, a lower

proportion of Trans and Lesbian learners and a relatively high proportion of Gay male learners reported this.

Gay males were also more likely to state that the support systems available through the Student Union were LGB and/or T friendly/specific compared to other groups.

Nearly one quarter of respondents were unsure about the existence of clear rules and policies, with Lesbian females most likely to state they were unsure.

Trans respondents were more likely to state that the rules and policies were too generic compared to all learners. One tenth of respondents stated that there were no clear rules and policies.

Learning Experiences

When asked whether their curriculum reflected LGB issues or Trans issues (respectively), high proportions chose not to answer. Those LGB learners who did respond were divided in whether their curriculum had reflected an understanding of LGB issues. When considering the treatment of Trans issues within the curriculum, fewer Trans respondents agreed that Trans issues had been reflected fully or partially. Of note was the proportion of LGB and/or T learners who indicated that they would not expect the curriculum they studied to reflect LGB and/or T issues (18%).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Some positive results emerged from this piece of research. The majority of LGB and/or T respondents stated that adult learning is 'welcoming'. A third of respondents stated that they had positive experiences due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Providers who are confident that their provision is truly LGB and T-friendly could be pro-active and recruit through attending LGBT events.

However, with one in five learners who were aware of an equality policy also stating that their learning providers' equality policies do not translate into reality, it appears that a significant proportion of LGB and T learners feel that

their experience of FE may not be on a par with that of other learners.

Compared to the findings of the CEL (2006) research², the picture emerging here is a more complex one. This research shows both positive experiences perhaps demonstrating progress in the sector but also some engrained problems which need tackling, not only in the FE sector but in society as a whole.

Bisexual learners' experiences often differ from those of Gay men and Lesbian women. While a lower proportion of Bisexuals stated that they encountered barriers to learning, they are much less likely to be open in the learning environment (and elsewhere). Bisexual students are less visible, and are less likely to state that they have been invited onto a student council or have been able to play other active roles in student life compared to other LG and T students.

Bullying and harassment remains a problem with one in six LGB learners and nearly one in three Trans learners reporting it due to their sexual orientation and gender identity respectively. This problem combined with a relative lack of conviction about the existence or the utility of equal opportunities procedures; whether these policies translate into reality; and lack of knowledge of mechanisms for reporting bullying and harassment is a cocktail for continued inaction and suffering.

Examples of how bullying and harassment are not tolerated and the mechanisms through which they can be reported should be displayed prominently. The consequences of bullying behaviour should also be displayed. The rules and policies and consequences should also be spelt out at the beginning of courses.

Since one in ten LGB and T learners in our research state they felt that they had no-one to turn to if bullied, a mentoring system could be considered

² Undertaken with a different methodology so direct comparison is difficult.

There are still comparatively more problems and barriers for LGB and T learners in gender stereotyped courses e.g. beauty; engineering etc. and courses in work-based learning settings. Furthermore, many learners do not consider various spaces in the learning environment 'safe'. Travelling to learning is considered particularly unsafe.

Providers could consider sharing effective practice on how to combat these engrained problems, some of which are outside of their immediate control. Some central mechanism for the collation and distribution of evidence based practice might be useful.

Only two thirds of LGB and T learners were aware of equal opportunities policies incorporating sexual orientation; and less than half were aware of equal opportunities policies encompassing gender identity.

More work needs to be done to publicise the existence of equality policies (and their breadth of coverage). This should be done in the early stages of the course, targeting all learners, especially non LGB and T learners to ensure they are aware of expectations and potential consequences of actions.

Gay males typically seem happier with the support systems available from their providers; whether that be with policies or welfare officers, compared to other groups. As with other results from this research, the dangers of treating LGB and T learners as a homogenous group are evident, both in research and in the learning environment.

Opportunities for an active role in the learning environment should be encouraged. In addition, efforts should be made to ensure that if individuals represent LGB and T learners, they represent all sub-groups and have the requisite knowledge to do so.

Some LGB and T learners are wary of the conflict of interest between themselves

and some other equality strands – for example those with certain religious beliefs. Strong views on the eligibility of some groups to be welfare officers were expressed by some qualitative respondents.

All those in positions of welfare support, teaching and other pastoral or administrative care need to be aware of the rights of all equality strands through continuous professional development.

There was no consensus on equal opportunities monitoring amongst the qualitative research participants. Some respondents feel that it is inappropriate to monitor other strands and not include gender identity and sexual orientation. Others worry that this type of monitoring is invasive.

The introduction of equal opportunities monitoring for sexual orientation and gender identity must be accompanied by full consultation and information backed up by secure data systems and data handling processes. The exclusion of these equality strands from monitoring can be seen by some as a form of discrimination, while for most it remains a sensitive issue.

Although this research has told us much about the experience of LGB and/or T learners in FE, gaps still remain in the LGB&T learner evidence-base regarding transitions from compulsory to FE, and from FE to HE.

2 INTRODUCTION

The Skills Funding Agency's draft Single Equality Scheme sets out how it plans to meet the requirements of equalities legislation and place equality at the heart of what it does.

The Equality Act 2010 requires the Skills Funding Agency to identify the areas where it can have most impact on equality, and develop and publicly set out its equality objectives, based on evidence, consultation and involvement.

In contrast to the protected characteristics of sex, disability, race and age, (where the Agency has access to extensive data on participation, success and learner views) there is currently very limited evidence available on the experiences of learners with the protected characteristics of sexual orientation and gender identity. However, the Agency does not currently propose any systematic collection of data about learners' sexual orientation or gender identity as it does not consider the case for doing so is currently strong enough to outweigh the risks. Therefore, it has commissioned targeted research to quantify the issues faced by learners, as well as gather in-depth, qualitative views on solutions.

2.1 Aims and Objectives

The Agency invited tenders from research agencies on its Equality and Diversity themed research framework contract to meet the following aims:

- Provide evidence about the experiences and views of learners with the protected characteristics of sexual orientation and gender identity (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or T [LGB and/or T] learners), to inform the Skills Funding Agency's equality objectives.
- Provide evidence which could be helpful to other stakeholders, including colleges, providers and sector agencies.

Specific objectives of the research were to answer the following questions:

- What levels of discrimination, bullying and harassment do LGB and/or T learners experience within adult learning?
- What other barriers do LGB and/or T people face to participating and succeeding in adult education, as a result of their sexual orientation or Trans status?
- What support do they need to overcome these barriers? What are the gaps in the support currently available?
- Are there opportunities to take part in LGB and/or T groups/networks?
- Is the sector now more welcoming to LGB people than was indicated by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) research in 2006³?
- How do LGB and/or T learners' experiences compare with their experiences in other areas of learning, such as school, sixth-form college or university?
- Are LGB and T learners comfortable with being 'out' to other learners and provider staff?
- Would they be prepared to disclose information about their sexual orientation/Trans status to their learning provider? In what other ways could evidence about equality be collected?

³ Barnet, Phil, Gittens, Ian and Deane, Helen (2006) 'Equality and Sexual Orientation: The challenge for further education' Centre for Excellence in Learning, December

2.2 Methodological Overview

Babcock Research's detailed methodology is provided as an Appendix. The following methodological overview is provided to give a simple and accessible context for the data that will be discussed within this report.

The research design comprised:

- An online survey – open to all current adult learners (aged 19+) in further education, also open to those who have previously participated in adult learning or who are planning to do so in the next three years.
- In-depth interviews (telephone) with 40 adult learners who identify as LGB and/or T.
- Three focus group discussions with adult learners who identify as LGB and/or T.

Babcock Research worked with the Steering Group convened by the Skills Funding Agency, and with their own specialist partners (Lesbian and Gay Foundation [LGF] and Gender Identity Research and Education Society [GIRE]) to develop a self-completion (online) survey to address the core research questions (above). The bespoke online survey programme was tested extensively before being launched.

The web survey was launched on 13th December 2010, and remained open until 28th February 2011 (incorporating LGBT History Month). Survey publicity was conducted via the Agency's update bulletin for providers, and emails to in excess of 1500 providers on the Agency's database on the launch day, at the start of spring term and at the start of February. Fliers and posters for display/distribution to learners were included. A copy of the survey questions is provided as an Appendix.

The survey gave the opportunity for participants to volunteer to participate in further research (and a secure mechanism for providing contact details to the research team). From these volunteers, 40 depth interviews were secured and conducted: 27 with learners identifying as Lesbian or Gay; 4 with learners identifying as Bisexual; 2 identifying as Queer/Asexual and 7 with learners identifying as Transgender.

Additionally, three focus groups were held at Further Education colleges (convened with the assistance of their Student Support Service teams and/or LGBT groups). The discussion guide used for the qualitative research is attached as an Appendix.

2.3 About this Report

A number of conventions are employed within this report to assist with the concise presentation of numeric data, and with brevity within text.

The term 'trans history' is used within text when discussing individuals who have identified themselves as Transgender (as defined within the online survey – identifying their gender differently to the gender identity given to them at birth). This has been done to assist the reader and make a distinction between this group, and to non trans people who respond to questions concerning, for example, gender stereotyping and refer to their gender identity in their answer (e.g. non trans learners referring to their gender identity when studying a subject atypical to societal norms for their gender).

Whole numbers presented in brackets with Figures or Tables show the 'bases' for statistics.

All Figures and Tables present percentages (unless otherwise stated) calculated upon the bases shown. Where 'mean' averages are shown, these are calculated upon the stated base, minus any responses 'not stated' or choosing a 'don't know/not applicable' response.

Tables and graphs are all labelled with a simple sequential 'Figure Number' and title. All tables and graphs have clearly labelled base sizes (for all sub-groups) and textual definitions of bases. The total of percentages shown in a table may vary slightly from 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3 SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 1609 attempts were made to complete the online survey: 1065 completed the entire set of survey questions appropriate to the respondent's individual circumstances, and 544 dropped out (closed the survey window) before completing and submitting the survey.

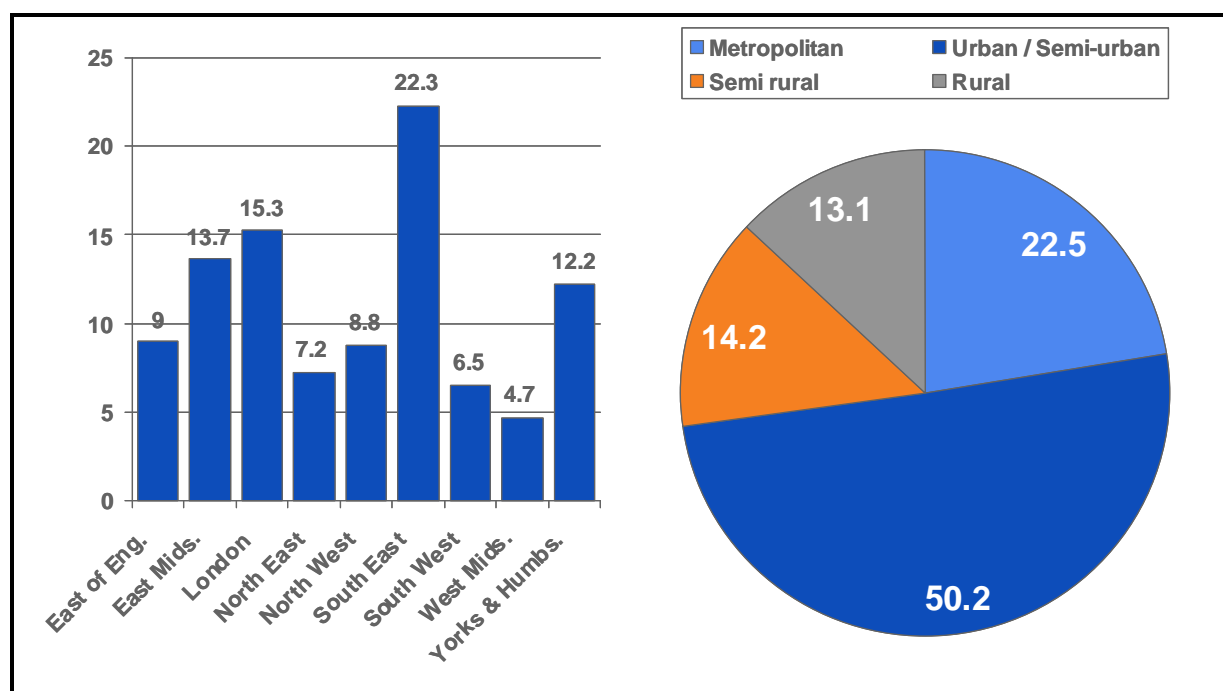
Due to the 'open' nature of the online survey access, it was not possible to control for the personal demographics of respondents. However, from the responses submitted, 444 were identified as sufficiently complete, and eligible for analysis (according to sexual orientation, gender identity/trans history, age, and area of residence)⁴.

3.1 Area of Residence

Survey responses were received from all regions of England, with each region representing at least five percent of the overall responses. Some more variations can be seen in the regional distribution of respondents within key sub-groups

Figure 1: Region and Character of Area of Residence

Base: All respondents (444)



The majority of LGB and/or T learners responding to the survey described the area they lived in as urban/sub-urban (50.2%) or metropolitan (22.5%). However, this leaves a substantial minority living in rural or semi-rural areas. Our analysis will monitor for any differences in attitudes or experiences between 'rural' and 'urban' respondents.

Also see Appendix Table 1 and Appendix Table 2.

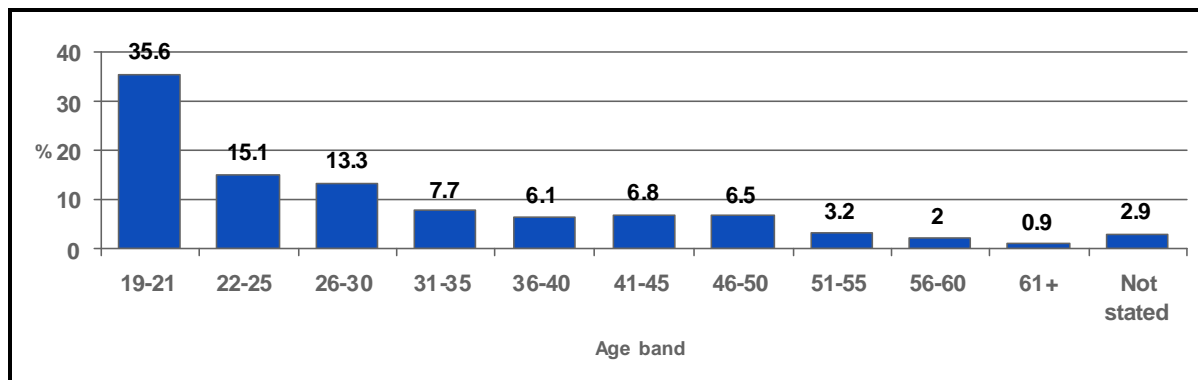
⁴ Responses were deemed ineligible largely due to the following three factors: lack of experience of FE (many responses were from learners with Higher Education experience) – the majority; responses from heterosexual learners; and others that did not pass quality checks for consistency (e.g. joke submissions).

3.2 Age Group

Just over a third (35.6%) of respondents were aged 19-21. Just under a third were aged between 22 and 30 years: 15.1% aged 22-25, and 13.3% aged 26-30. Very few respondents were aged over 50 years.

Figure 2: Age of Respondent

Base: All respondents (444)



Also see Appendix Table 3.

3.3 Ethnicity

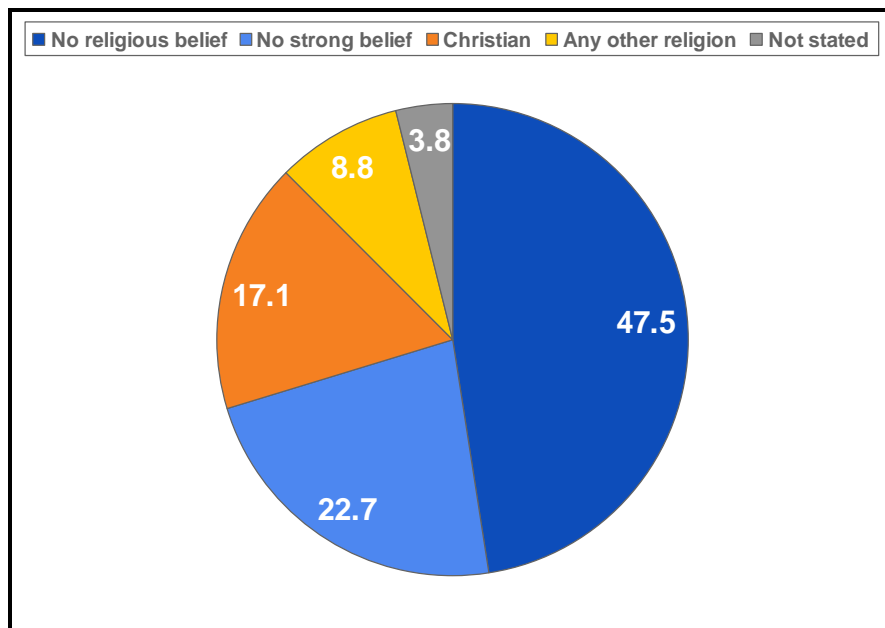
The vast majority (92.3%) of learners responding to this survey describe their ethnicity as 'white'. Just under one in twenty (4.3%) described themselves as being of mixed ethnicity. While 1.4% preferred not to state their ethnicity the proportions identifying themselves as Asian, Black and Chinese were less than 1% for each ethnic group. Further detail can be found in Appendix Table 4.

3.4 Religion

Almost half (47.5%) of the LGB and/or T learners who responded indicated that they had no religious belief, and a further 22.7% indicated that they did not have a strong religious belief. Fewer than one in five (17.1%) identified themselves as Christian, and just under one in ten identified themselves as a follower of any other religion. A full breakdown of the religions of participants overall, and for key sub-groups is provided in Appendix Table 5.

Figure 3: Religious Belief of Respondent

Base: All respondents (444)

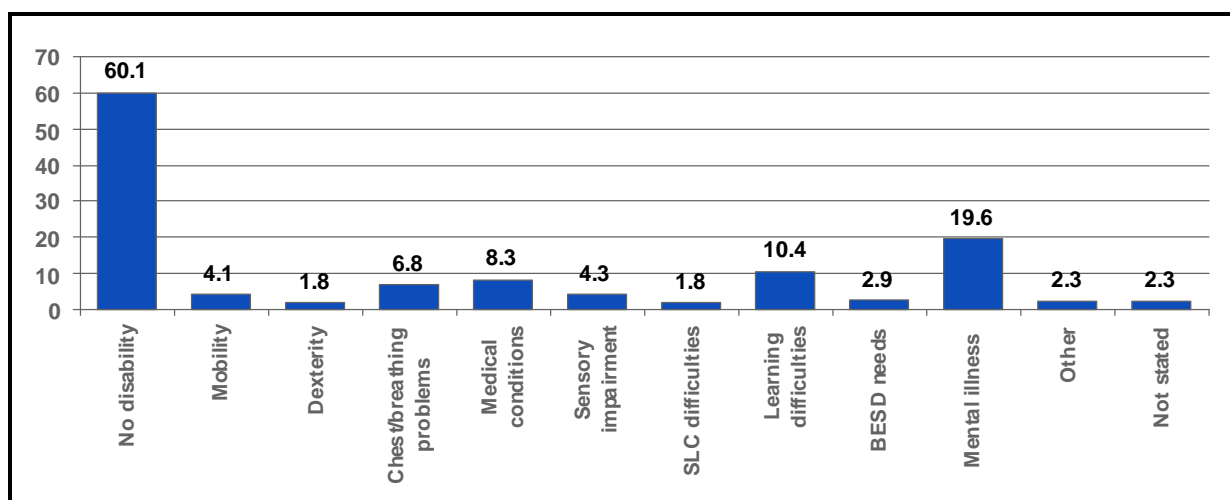


3.5 Disability

Three fifths (60.1%) of LGB and/or T respondents confirmed that they did not have any health problems, disabilities or learning difficulties (other than those related to any gender reassignment treatment) that they expected to last for more than one year. However, one in five (19.6%) indicated that they had some sort of mental illness. From the in-depth interviews that followed the survey, we believe that the majority of LGB and/or T learners mentioning mental illness referred (at least in part) to depression, often triggered or exacerbated by their feeling of difference or isolation, and incidents of bullying or harassment (in the learning environment or wider society). One in ten (10.4%) declared a learning difficulty: predominantly Dyslexia (accounting for 7.7% of all respondents). Full details of the types of disabilities and learning difficulties revealed by respondents are given in Appendix Table 6.

Figure 4: Disabilities and Learning Difficulties Disclosed by Respondents

Base: All respondents (444)



3.6 Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Central to this research are the issues of personal gender identity and sexual orientation. While the online survey included some options that respondents could 'tick', it was also important that respondents were able to provide their own personal descriptions and terminology as an alternative.

3.6.1 Gender

The online survey asked respondents:

How would YOU describe your gender? (We understand that you may not conform to the gender role expected of you either some of the time or all of the time).

Overall, 46.8% identified as male, 46.8% as female (Appendix Table 7), 1.1% as intersex, and 5.2% chose to provide their own description, including 'Genderqueer' and 'Androgyne'.

A greater proportion of respondents who defined their sexual orientation as Bisexual identified their gender as female than as male (65.4% compared with 31.7%).

Transgender respondents were less likely than LGB respondents to describe their gender as male or female, and accounted for the majority (22 out of 28) of the non-binary gender descriptions.

3.6.2 Trans History

Sixty online survey respondents (13.5%) identified themselves as Transgender, (with the additional explanation that this meant that 'you may not conform to the gender identity expected of you either some of the time or all of the time, or have in the past not conformed to the gender identity expected of you'). An additional number either initially identified as Transgender or indicated that they were unsure, but then subsequently retracted this when answering a follow-up question. The term is not widely understood by the population, and appears to have been selected initially by some Bisexual people and/or those who choose to present their gender ambiguously, but who have no desire to conform to a specific binary gender.

In order to understand the range of situations in which Transgender learners are living, the survey asked those identifying as Transgender to select as many descriptions as they felt appropriate from a list.

28 respondents stated that they were assigned male at birth but now identify themselves as female including 17 who now live as female, of whom 12 are undergoing or have undergone medical/surgical reassignment.

17 respondents stated that they were assigned female at birth but now identify themselves as male including 14 who now live as male, of whom 8 are undergoing or have undergone medical/surgical reassignment.

Nine respondents stated that they currently identify as both male and female, and eight respondents stated that they currently identify as neither gender.

Transgender respondents accounted for 10.1% of the 19-21 age group, 13.5% of the 22-30 age group, and 17.0% of the 31+ age group.

The survey also asked Transgender respondents about the permanency or fluidity of their new gender role:

- 31 Live in the new gender role full time
- 7 Live in the new gender role part time
- 11 Switch between gender roles
- 11 Deliberately present as 'ambiguous'.

"A wide range of categories should be available, should include all identities, including Transvestite, Transsexual/Transgender, Androgyne etc. and don't forget to allow someone to say that at this point in time, they are not sure about their gender identity, it can be a long journey."

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 60+

Much more detailed and informative data on Transgender learners in adult learning was obtained from seven depth interviews conducted by telephone with online survey respondents who volunteered to take part in further research and provided contact details to researchers. These in-depth discussions drew attention to the range of potential problems encountered by Trans learners, especially those associated with undergoing transition during a course of learning, and having their current or preferred gender identity acknowledged and used consistently.

"When I first started here, I often got the incorrect pronoun used, but nothing was meant by it, it was lack of knowledge or thought."

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 36-45

"There was a slight issue when I first changed my name. The college used last year's name on the register initially, but generally my gender identity change hasn't been a problem here."

Adult Learner, male with Trans history 19-25

"The college coped well with changing my name and title from Mr to Miss."

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 26-35

Some learners also discussed other practical aspects of spending time on a college campus, such as which toilets to use (for their own and other learners' comfort) and access to space for medical rooms following surgery.

"The college was happy for me to use the toilets upstairs which are individual rather than groups of stalls."

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 26-35

3.6.3 Sexual Orientation

The online survey asked respondents how they would describe their own sexual orientation, giving the option to select 'Heterosexual/straight'; 'Gay/Lesbian'; 'Bisexual' or 'Other' and provide their own description. The table below shows how respondents identified themselves, and also includes separate counts for 'Pansexual' and 'Queer', which were the 'Other' terms most commonly used by respondents.

Across the survey as a whole, two thirds of respondents (64.6%) identified as Gay/Lesbian; and almost a quarter (22.5%) as Bisexual.

Pansexual and queer were descriptions used more frequently by those identifying as Transgender. Other descriptions included Asexual; Androphilic; and Bisexual queer.

Figure 5 below shows how various sub-groups of respondents identified their sexual orientation. Of those not identifying as Transgender, almost three quarters (72.9%) identified as Gay or Lesbian, 22.4% as Bisexual, and just 4.7% described their sexual orientation in another way.

Figure 5: Sexual Orientation

Base: All respondents

	LGB - NOT TRANS	TRANS	In FE now	Not in FE now	L2 or lower	L3	L4 or higher
Base:	384 %	60 %	222 %	222 %	104 %	142 %	198 %
Heterosexual / straight	0.0	28.3	2.7	5.0	5.8	1.4	4.5
Gay / Lesbian	72.9	11.7	64.0	65.3	55.8	69.7	65.7
Bisexual	22.4	23.3	26.1	18.9	25.0	24.6	19.7
Pansexual	0.8	8.3	1.8	1.8	3.8	0.0	2.0
Queer	1.6	8.3	2.3	2.7	3.8	0.0	3.5
Other	2.3	20.0	3.2	6.3	5.8	4.2	4.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

However, those identifying as Transgender were much more varied in the way they described their sexual orientation, some expressing confusion about how their sexual orientation should be described during or post-transition. Just over a quarter (28.3%) considered themselves to be heterosexual/straight, while almost another quarter (23.3%) described their sexual orientation as Bisexual (in some cases, because during their life, they had been attracted to both genders, even though their attractions pre- and post- transition were for the opposite gender, not for both during the same period of their lives). Fewer than one in eight (11.7%) described themselves as Gay or Lesbian. More than a third of Transgender respondents chose to describe their sexual orientation in another way, including 8.3% as pansexual and another 8.3% as queer. The remaining Trans respondents' descriptions of their sexual orientation included Androphilic; Asexual; Fluctuating; Genderqueer; Gynephilic; and Homoflexible. In qualitative interviews, some Trans learners suggested that they would prefer not to be asked to define their sexual orientation, or not to define their sexual orientation in limited terms (e.g. Heterosexual, Gay, or Bisexual).

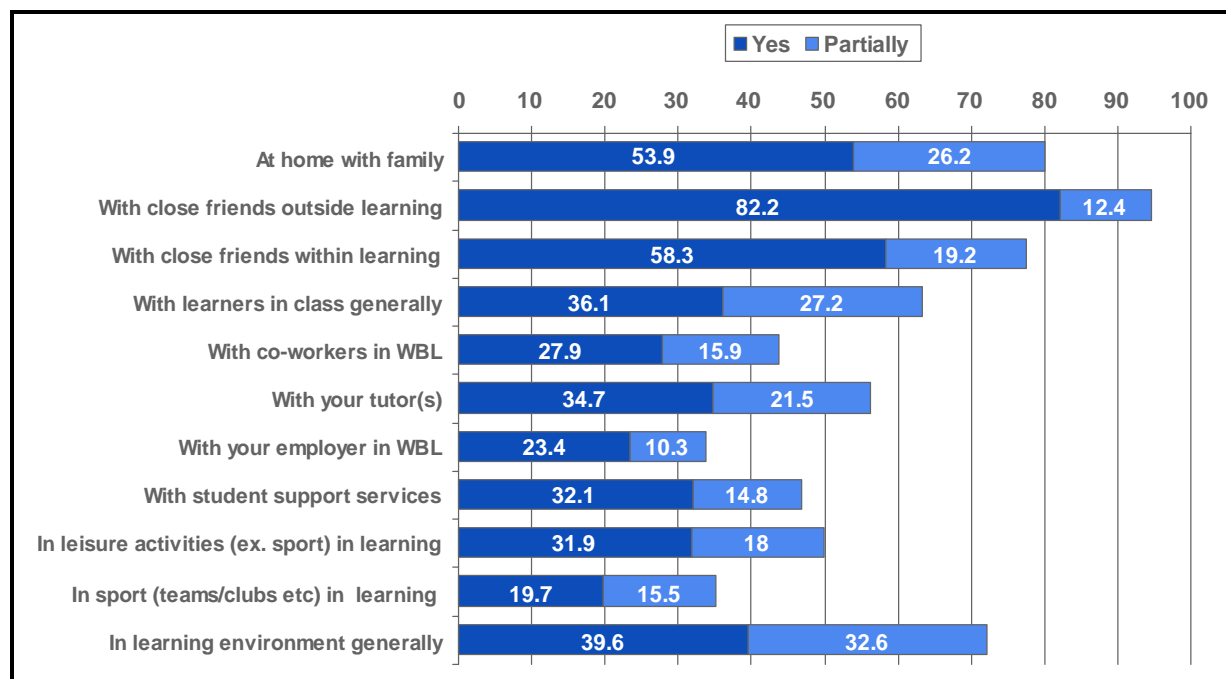
3.6.4 Openness about Sexual Orientation

The online survey asked all LGB learners to consider a range of different situations and indicate whether they would be open about their sexual orientation: 'yes'; 'partially' or 'no'.

Respondents were most commonly open about their sexual orientation with close friends outside of learning (82.2% 'yes' plus 12.4% 'partially'). While the proportions saying they were open fully or partially at home with family or with close friends within the learning environment were similar (80.0% and 77.5%) fewer indicated that they were only partially open with close friends in learning than did so for 'at home with family'. Almost three quarters (72.2%) stated that they were open to some degree within the learning environment generally, but only two in five (39.4%) indicated that they were fully open.

Figure 6: Openness about Sexual Orientation in Various Situations

Base: Those identifying their sexual orientation as other than heterosexual (427)



From the list of situations that the survey asked about, the situations with the lowest proportion stating that they were open fully/partially were related to WBL and to sport in the learning environment. While it would be easy to assume that this is evidence of limited confidence in the reception that openness about their sexual orientation would receive, it must be remembered that the survey did not extend to asking whether learners were engaged within these situations, or had chosen to avoid these situations for any reason. The data relating to WBL suggests that some learners have provided an assessment of how open they would be in WBL if they were participating in it, even if they are not, or only have brief periods of work experience within their course of learning.

However, the data clearly shows that LGB learners are making value judgements about the situations within which to be open about their sexual orientation, who to be open with, and to what degree. Setting aside the sometimes complicated politics of families, we see that a greater proportion of LGB learners are open outside of the learning environment than within it, and that a sort of grading of closeness is then operated. A clear difference can be seen between the proportions being open with close friends within learning and with other learners in the class, but also that tutors appear to be treated in much the same way as the wider class. Also see Appendix Table 8 for more detailed figures.

“I’ve not mentioned that I’m a Lesbian. I feel that I probably could be open there if I wanted to be, but I see no reason to discuss that with fellow learners on this course, even though I’m ‘out’ in most situations, including at work.”

Adult Learner, Gay female 31-35

“In a learning situation, it’s usually a bigger group of people, and I suppose I feel less comfortable, because I’m not sure of the response to my out-ness. I don’t know if it will go down well.”

Adult Learner, Gay female 56-60

“No, I definitely did not feel safe to come out. Because I didn’t have confidence in the staff, they weren’t challenging things and I felt that if I came out, some of them I felt weren’t supportive of me being Gay. I just felt it was unsupportive. Don’t get me wrong, there were some really good staff, but interestingly I performed really well in those assessments. Other subjects, I either made a point of not going because I couldn’t deal with it, or I would just sit there and not really take it in.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 19-22

“There’s only a few people who know about my orientation (at the college). The computer tutor and the support person, they know and welcome me into the course, they accept me and welcome me as me. I don’t feel comfortable at present to tell the other students. I don’t want to risk it.”

Adult Learner, Gay female 46-50

“For longer courses where there is time to build up relationship with tutors and other people on the course it becomes easier because you have a chance to work through things in a way. ... On a one day course you often sense that people can be quite embarrassed, even quite experienced teachers, or making an assumption that no one in the room is Gay.”

Adult Learner, Gay female 41-45

3.6.5 Openness about Gender Identity

The online survey also asked Transgender learners to consider the range of situations and indicate whether they would be open about their gender identity: ‘yes’; ‘partially’ or ‘no’. The resulting data showed similar patterns to those discussed for LGB learners’ openness about their sexual orientation.

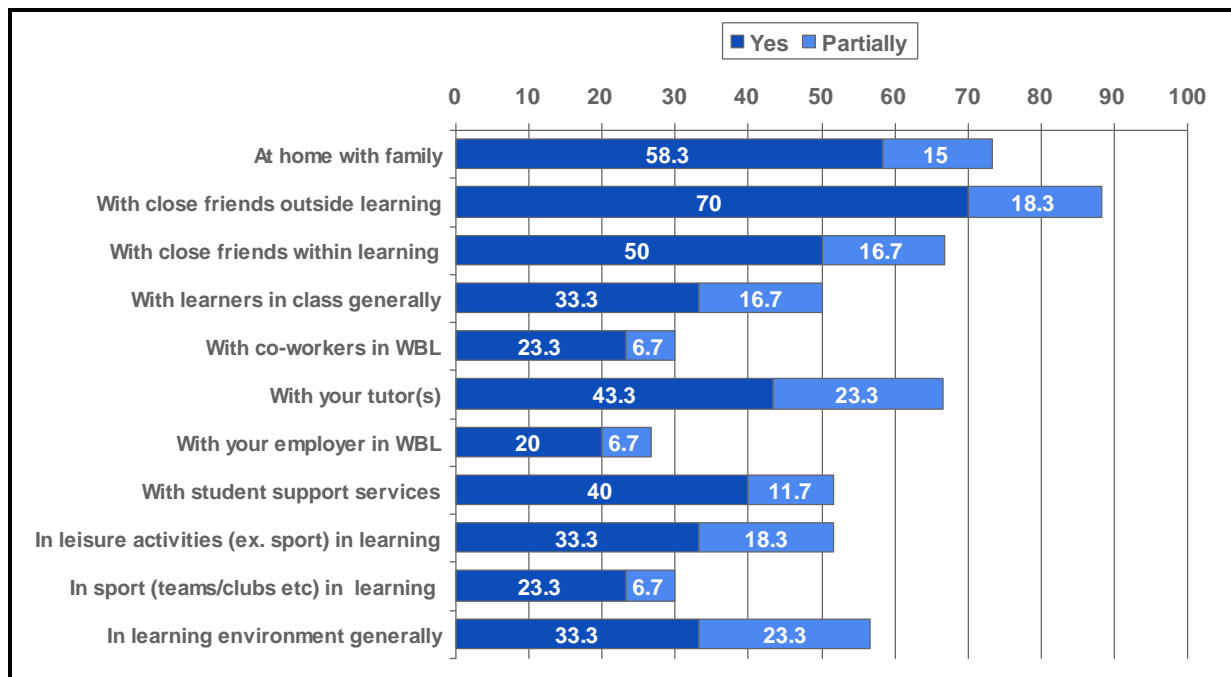
More than four out of five Trans learners were open to some extent about their gender identity with close friends outside of learning, but only three quarters were open with family. Notably, openness with tutors was much greater for Trans learners than for LGB learners (43.3% fully open and 23.3% partially, compared with 34.7% and 21.5% respectively for LGB). This put the proportion of Trans learners who were open to some extent with their tutor at the same level as being open to some extent with close friends within the learning environment.

“It must be an individual’s choice to reveal their gender identity. I’m OK about revealing it, but some people want to forget it... if they’ve had lots of plastic surgery, they may no longer want to reveal their Trans history. If someone in a group had identified themselves as Trans, it’s important that the college does not reveal who or their name. They must ask the student how far the info may be used/ shared. Any information a college holds about someone’s gender identity, and especially their past, should be kept locked in a safe place in the office.”

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 60+

Figure 7: Openness about Gender Identity in Various Situations

Base: Those identifying as Transgender (60)



Depth interviews with Trans learners highlighted how important it is for many people (especially during transition) to be able to talk to a course leader to explain their situation and any specific needs they have, and to build up a trusting relationship so that on-the-spot support is available for any issues arising within the class.

“I wasn’t very open at first, but then I talked to a tutor and teaching assistant about my situation, and they talked to the class. I felt more comfortable then.”

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 26-35

Generally, a smaller proportion of Trans learners are open about their gender identity than the proportion of LGB learners who are open about their sexual orientation in the same situation.

4 LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Very few adult learners participating in the survey had no formal qualifications (2.0%), or held qualifications all below Level 2 (5.6%). Almost one in six (15.8%) reported having Level 2 as their highest qualification, and one in three (32%) reported having Level 3. More than two fifths (44.6%) of respondents stated that they had qualifications at Level 4 or higher.

Figure 8: Highest Qualification Held

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
No formal qualifications	2.0	1.3	0.7	2.9	1.3	0.0	6.7
Entry level	1.6	1.8	1.4	2.9	0.6	2.5	0.0
Level 1	4.1	3.6	3.6	3.8	4.4	2.5	6.7
Level 2	15.8	15.4	14.3	18.3	16.5	10.9	18.3
Level 3	32.0	34.4	34.3	34.6	36.1	32.8	16.7
Level 4 or higher	44.6	43.5	45.7	37.5	41.1	51.3	51.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

However, when those who were undertaking adult further learning at the time of the survey (as opposed to those who had left FE within the last 5 years or who were considering joining FE in the near future) the qualification profile was slightly different. One in eight (12.6%) held no qualifications or qualifications below Level 2. Three in ten (29.3%) held qualifications at Level 2; 32.0% were qualified to Level 3, and 26.1% already held Level 4 qualifications.

4.1 Type of Learning Activity

Just over fourth fifths (81.3%) of respondents reported being engaged in some form of adult learning at the time of the survey. The survey asked for details of the respondent's current, most recent or planned future learning (the question wording was determined by the survey computer according to their stated relationship with further education).

When details of the type of course and learning provider of 'current' adult learners were analysed, some were found not actually to be current FE learners⁵. Therefore, after this further analysis we found that the respondent base was equally split between those who were currently engaged in adult further education (including Work-Based Learning and Adult and Community Learning) and those not currently engaged in further education.

While it was not possible to establish beyond all doubt whether respondents had engaged in further education (as opposed to sixth form studies and/or higher education) within the last 5 years, after data cleaning, the qualification profile of those not currently in further education was not so dramatically different from those currently engaged to raise concerns. See Appendix Tables 9 and 10 for detailed data.

Respondents' current/most recent learning included the full range of subject areas offered within further education (see Appendix Table 11 for detailed data), although those who had

⁵ For example some of these learners were undertaking CPD or HE courses. Those that had previously undertaken FE courses were kept in the sample whereas those respondents who were only engaged in HE without previous FE experience were removed from the sample.

also progressed on to higher education indicated current learning areas that may not be available in further education.

Although 'hair and beauty' courses accounted for just 2.7% of all respondents, it was the vocational area of study for almost one in ten (8.8%) of Transgender respondents, but only 0.8% of Lesbian respondents. It was also notable that study of hair and beauty courses was more common among older learners than younger (0.6% of 19-21 year olds; 3.2% of 22-30 year olds and 4.8% of those aged 31+).

A number of interviewees said that the type of course or topic made a difference to how they felt. Interviewees often mentioned traditionally male dominated subjects such as engineering, or plumbing as being less LGBT friendly and creative subjects being more friendly. Others felt that their own preconceptions of how people might react made a difference to how they felt about certain subjects.

"In plumbing or woodwork I might feel a little bit more conspicuous, out of place in a more straight male environment."
Adult Learner, Gay male 36-45

"The media courses are quite open and friendly as well as other courses. They are trying to break the stereotypes. Some vocational courses are a bit unfriendly from my experience before I was 19. Animal care and engineering - motor vehicle – were very male dominant. They tend to make fun of LGBT society."
Adult Learner, Gay male 19-21

"The style of queer writing was as important to me as the content – it was something I really wanted to explore. I was surprised that the people on the course took a really hetero normative view, and the teaching staff were not representing the queer position either. Assumptions were made about gender, gender roles, gendered writing (how women write and how men write etc). Consequently, I felt like I was different from everyone else. I didn't feel it was comfortable for me there..."
Adult Learner, gender queer (F) 26-35

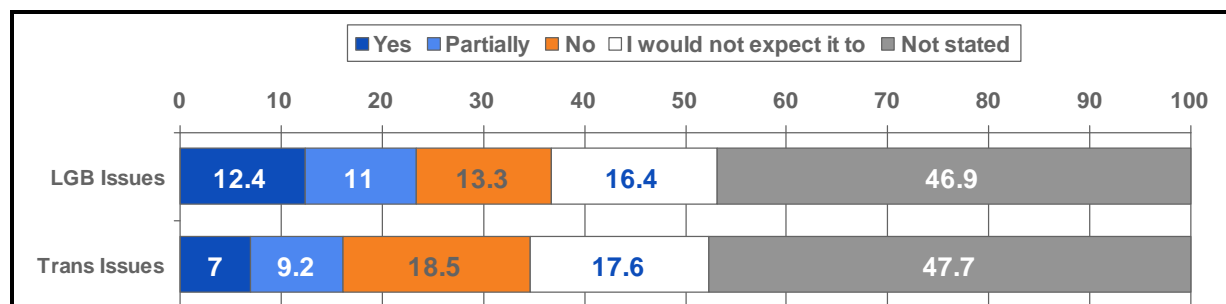
"Going into adult education courses didn't bother me at all by the time I started (though I would have found it daunting had I done it a year or two earlier). My personal confidence is OK now. I wanted to do these training courses, so I was motivated."
Adult Learner, Gay male 22-25

"I thought Beauty Therapy would be more accepting than some courses. Most tutors are accepting and some very helpful, but that hasn't been the case where the learners are concerned. I can't be sure that the 'clique' ignoring me is because of my Trans history or because I'm a lot older than most of them by about twenty years. When I first walked into class, people would move to the other side of the room and carry on their conversations. I sat alone on one side. I was not spoken to or involved."
Adult Learner, female with Trans history 36-45

The survey asked whether the syllabus they had been taught reflected an understanding of LGB issues, and separately, whether it had reflected an understanding of Trans issues. Responses were optional, and it should be noted that relatively high proportions chose not to provide answers. Figure 9 (over the page) and Appendix Table 12 show that those responding were quite equally divided in opinion on whether their curriculum had reflected an understanding of LGB issues: 'yes', 'partially', 'no' and 'I would not expect it to'. Fewer agreed that Trans issues had been reflected fully or partially.

Figure 9: Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity Issues in the Curriculum

Base: All respondents (444)



Some of those interviewed said the topics of sexual orientation and gender identity had arisen out of the course content, for example in a language course when talking about home life or a childcare course including content on same sex couples with children.

"My (childcare) course covers Gay parents and that sort of thing, how to deal with it, and how you should treat them. It covers all that sort of thing, which is really nice."
Adult Learner, Bisexual female 19-21

"I've just taken a media studies module. As part of that the tutor dedicated a section of one session to discuss gender and sexuality stereotypes and how that's portrayed in the media. There was quite an open discussion among a very broad spectrum of students."
Adult Learner part time, Gay male 41-45

Others said that it had been fully integrated into all aspects of the course.

"Gender and sexuality is handled very well, the tutor (and students) don't make assumptions about gender or sexuality. I've asked questions about gender and sexuality in context, and they've been received well, and well thought through responses have been given."
Adult Learner, queer female 31-35

Although some felt it was not necessary to raise the issue because of the nature of the course, some felt more could be done to include LGBT issues.

"We've talked about IVF as part of this science course – the assumption was made that IVF is for straight couples who are infertile for some reason, I suppose there could have been a mention of its use for LGB couples too. But it's a science course, I don't think it has much need for including LGBT issues – just cover the knowledge base that the exam board want to see."
Adult Learner, Gay female 31-35

It is interesting to note how many LGB and/or T learners indicated that they would not expect the curriculum they studied to reflect LGBT and/or T issues.

"You should not force E&D into courses, but if civil liberty issues etc are being discussed, gender identity should not be avoided, but should be given equal coverage as other E&D issues. I feel that more effort could be taken to using non-standard examples – not just nuclear families but Gay couples with kids, Trans parents etc."
Adult Learner, female with Trans history 60+

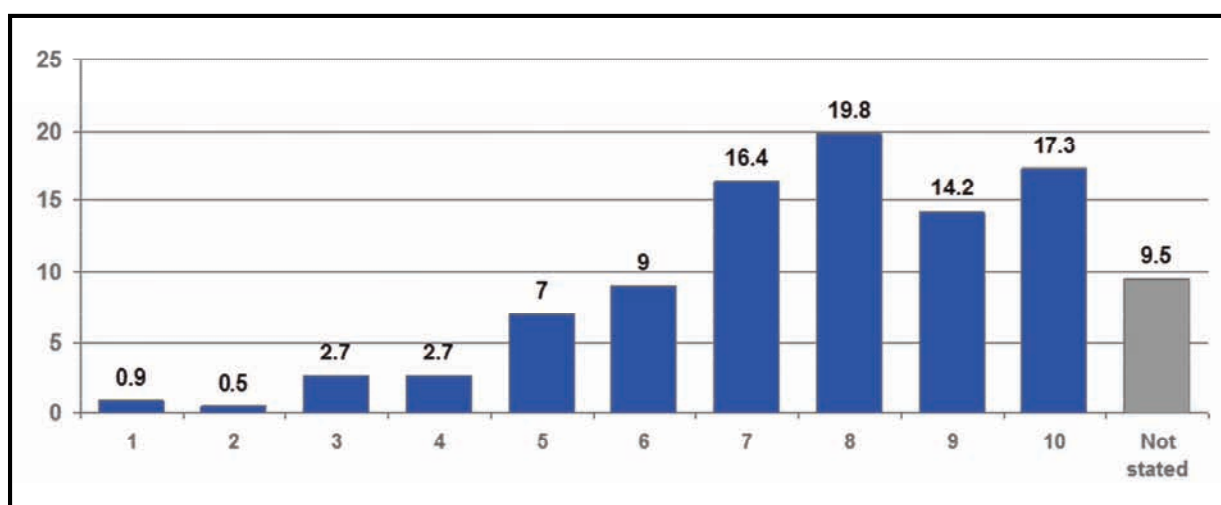
4.2 Perception of Adult Learning

When given a scale of 1-10 to indicate how welcoming adult learning was in their experience, the average score was 7.56 out of 10, where 1 meant 'not at all welcoming' and 10 meant 'extremely welcoming'. Fewer than one in seven (13.7%) gave a score below the mid-point (1-5). Half (51.4%) gave a score of at least 8 out of 10, including almost a third (31.5%) giving a score of 9 or 10.

Mean scores for how welcoming adult learning is varied very little between groups of learners according to their sexual orientation or gender identity. However, Appendix Table 13 does show that Gay men gave a higher score on average than Lesbian/Gay women (7.83 compared with 7.41). Unfortunately, it has been impossible to compare our results to the CEL (2006) results due to the difference in methodologies.

Figure 10: How Welcoming Adult Learning Is (Personal experience)

Base: All respondents (444)



Learners aged 22-30 years were more likely than 19-21 year olds or 31+ year olds to assess the welcome from adult learning as at least 9 out of 10 (38.9%).

Most of those who were interviewed said that they found the adult learning environment to be welcoming and mentioned that there had been positive steps taken to make it so.

“Further Education is a lot more welcoming than the school and sixth forms I went to. People come from a wide range of backgrounds. Big colleges are a lot more open than secondary schools can be.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 19-21

“I found it extremely welcoming. I was quite nervous about returning to education but I’m delighted with it to be quite honest. I didn’t do particularly well in school and I had a bit of a stigma about going into education. I’d got the opinion of myself that I wasn’t particularly bright, but that’s proved to be wrong.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 41-45

“Adult learning is neutral – because everybody’s just accepting now. Equality is promoted and any body who wants to make it a problem thinks twice because there is a poster or a leaflet that says everyone is equal.”

Adult Learner, Bisexual female 19-21

However, there were some who had found the environment unwelcoming, citing reasons ranging from the assumption of heterosexuality to experiencing harassment or bullying. Some others felt that their sexuality was not relevant to their learning and chose not to discuss it while on their course.

“If there is an assumption of heterosexuality, that can become wearing and there comes a point where you say, ‘Do I challenge this or don’t I?’ I’m sure a lot of Gay people will say, there is this coming out that you do every day, and every time you meet someone new in every situation, sometimes you don’t feel like doing it – I can’t be bothered.”

Adult Learner, Gay female 41-45

“There were a lot of positive experiences, but what sticks out for me is I wasn’t able to be who I wanted to be in FE. I think I didn’t feel that the environment was the right environment for me to say who I was. It wasn’t about saying from the beginning that I was Gay, it was more about I wasn’t able to be who I was in terms of my mannerisms and things like that because I wasn’t confident that poor attitudes towards that would be challenged.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 19-21

“[Adult learning felt] unfriendly, because of the indirect discrimination I’ve experienced and also because of my partner’s experiences which I’ve experienced second hand. She is in a different work situation to me and the training that she goes on through her work is not Lesbian friendly.”

Adult Learner, Gay female 56-60

“FE was not as comfortable an experience as the exclusively adult learning environment that I’m in now. The body language of learners in FE made me uncomfortable – I was always tense, worrying whether people at college would feel able to come and sit next to me, and if they did, whether they would turn and say anything aggressive to me.”

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 56-60

“Younger learners can be more difficult to mix with at college, but I have to accept that as I consider all of my class to be young women – certainly not beyond their early 20s. Beyond the class, the younger (16/17 year old) males can be a problem. Full of bravado.”

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 36-45

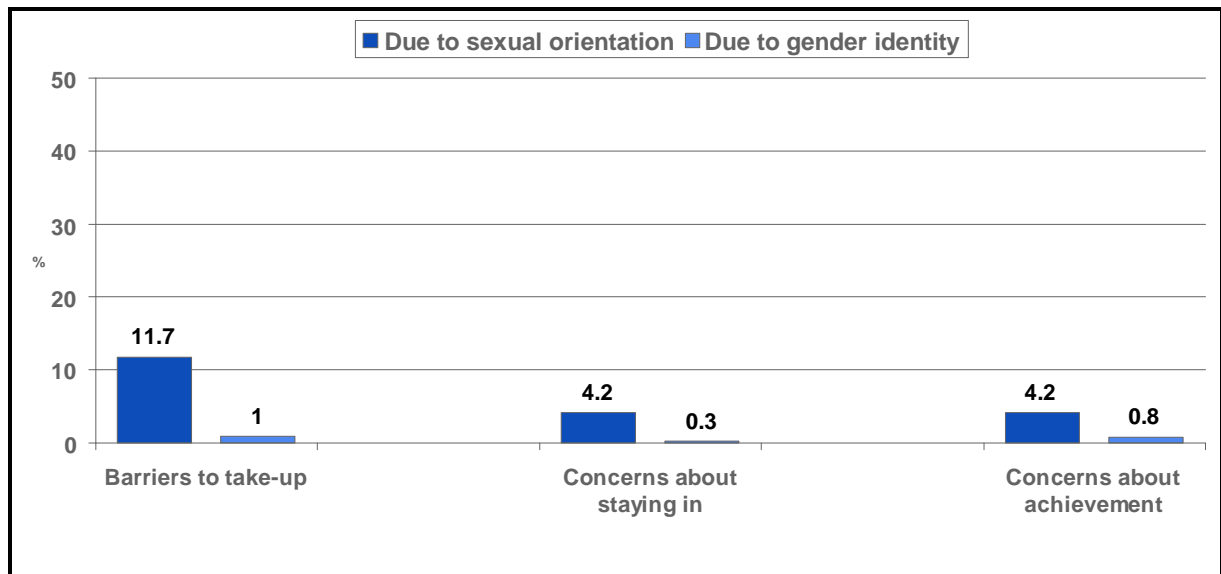
Fewer than one in five LGB and/or T learners responding to the survey stated that they had at some time encountered barriers to taking up an adult learning opportunity: 11.9% due to their sexual orientation, and 6.8% due to their gender identity. These figures mask differences in the impact of being either LGB or Trans (see Figures 11 and 12, over the page. Of great concern is that more than two fifths (43.3%) of Trans learners reported having encountered barriers to taking up adult learning due to their gender identity.

Appendix Table 14 shows that a smaller proportion of learners identifying as ‘Bisexual’ or ‘other sexual orientation’ have encountered barriers to starting adult learning than for Lesbian or Gay learners, and that a greater proportion of Lesbian than Gay men report this experience (15.1% compared with 11.4%). Interestingly, and perhaps counter-intuitively, a greater proportion of urban LGB and/or T learners than rural ones reported having encountered barriers to taking up adult learning due to their sexual orientation or their gender identity.

However, once in adult learning, fewer learners expressed concerns about staying in adult learning, or achieving within learning – suggesting that the environments that learners actually enter into, do not prove to be too challenging for most LGB and/or T learners.

Figure 11: Impact of Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity on Take-up, Retention and Achievement in Adult Learning

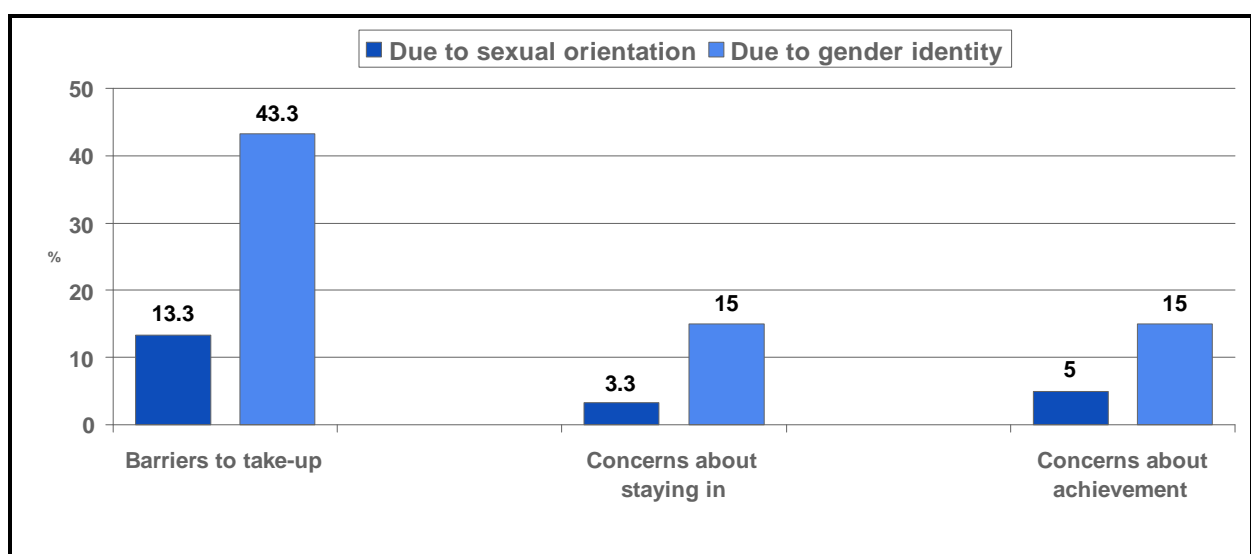
Base: LGB respondents (384)



Fewer than one in twenty (4.2%) LGB learners expressed concerns about remaining in adult learning, or achieving within adult learning (4.2%) due to their sexual orientation (see Figure 11). However, 15.0% of Trans learners expressed similar concerns about their learning due to their gender identity (see Figure 12 below).

Figure 12: Impact of Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity on Take-up, Retention and Achievement in Adult Learning

Base: Trans respondents (60)



The survey sought to explore systematically the scale of potential barriers (actual and perceived) to LGB and/or T people participating in or staying in adult learning, by presenting a series of potential barriers and asking respondents to indicate for each one whether they felt it was a barrier:

- a) through personal experience
- b) through the experience of a friend
- c) believed to be the case
- d) not believed to be a barrier.

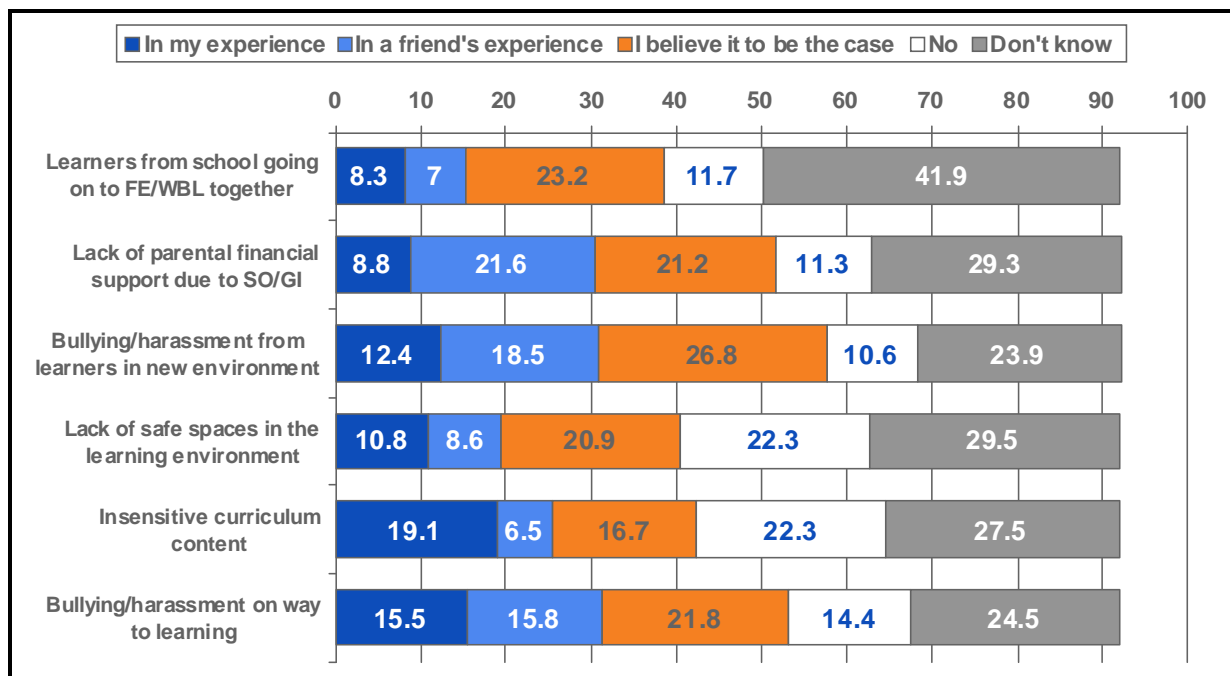
Of the six potential barriers listed in the survey, the one that the greatest proportion agreed actually was a barrier, and that they had personally experienced, was 'insensitive curriculum content' (19.1% personal experience, plus 6.5% experience by a friend). See Figure 13 and Appendix Table 15.

However, when personal experience, the experiences of friends, and belief that a barrier exists (but without experience of it either first or second hand) are combined, the most commonly recognised barrier was 'bullying and/or harassment from other learners' within the adult learning environment (57.7% in total), followed by 'bullying and/or harassment on the way to/from the learning environment' (53.2% in total).

"I find that the college is a totally safe space and have not experienced bullying or harassment. But 'outside' is a different matter. I travel to the course by car, but suspect it might be a different matter if I travelled by public transport."
 Adult Learner, female with Trans history 46-55

Figure 13: Barriers for LGB and/or T Learners Participating in / Staying in Adult Learning

Base: All respondents (444)



"Adults and recent school leavers together make a horrible environment for adult learners, as the youths tend to attend college in groups as though they were still at

school. This enables them to gang up on adult learners who are invariably at college on their own and vulnerable to a group.”

Adult Learner, Gay male, 36-40 years - web survey comment

“Heterosexism in the curriculum, assumptions about sexuality i.e. that everyone is heterosexual, lack of role models in relation to both teachers but also in the curriculum.”

Adult Learner, Gay female, 46-50 years - web survey comment

“I think issues with young people (late teens) figuring out their sexual orientation and gender identity is tough and not supported by schools and therefore, not only is being a teen hard anyway but with bullying and lack of support by teachers and potentially parents this can lead to a lack of confidence which may result in LGBT people feeling they cannot attend adult learning.”

Adult Learner, Gay female, 22-25 years – web survey comment

“It takes a great deal of effort to be treated as a third-class citizen every day.”

Adult Learner, Gay female, 51-55 years – web survey comment

“It would be difficult for a Trans person to attend the College and use the bathrooms/changing rooms which are gender segregated. The changing rooms are the only space I feel uncomfortable as a non-heterosexual person.”

Adult Learner, Gay female, 26-30 years– web survey comment

“Lack of tutors prepared to take the issue (homophobic / Trans bullying) seriously and those that do in the limited time that they are seen to challenge. I have a child in senior school and her experience is that homophobia - including the phrase ‘that’s so gay’ is completely in common use. My child can not understand why this is not tackled in the way racism / religious hatred is. It sends out a very poor message of ‘otherness’ and ‘2nd class citizens’.”

Adult Learner, Gay female, 41-45 years– web survey comment

“Reluctance - still! - among authority figures to take seriously ‘he-she/it’ jokes, derogatory use of the word ‘gay’, etc, creating an unhelpful environment. Rigid binary gender codes for clothing e.g. at graduation. Forms frequently requiring that one select either ‘male’ or ‘female’ as gender, even when there is no good reason for gender to be given.”

Adult Learner, Trans genderqueer, 19-21 years – web survey comment

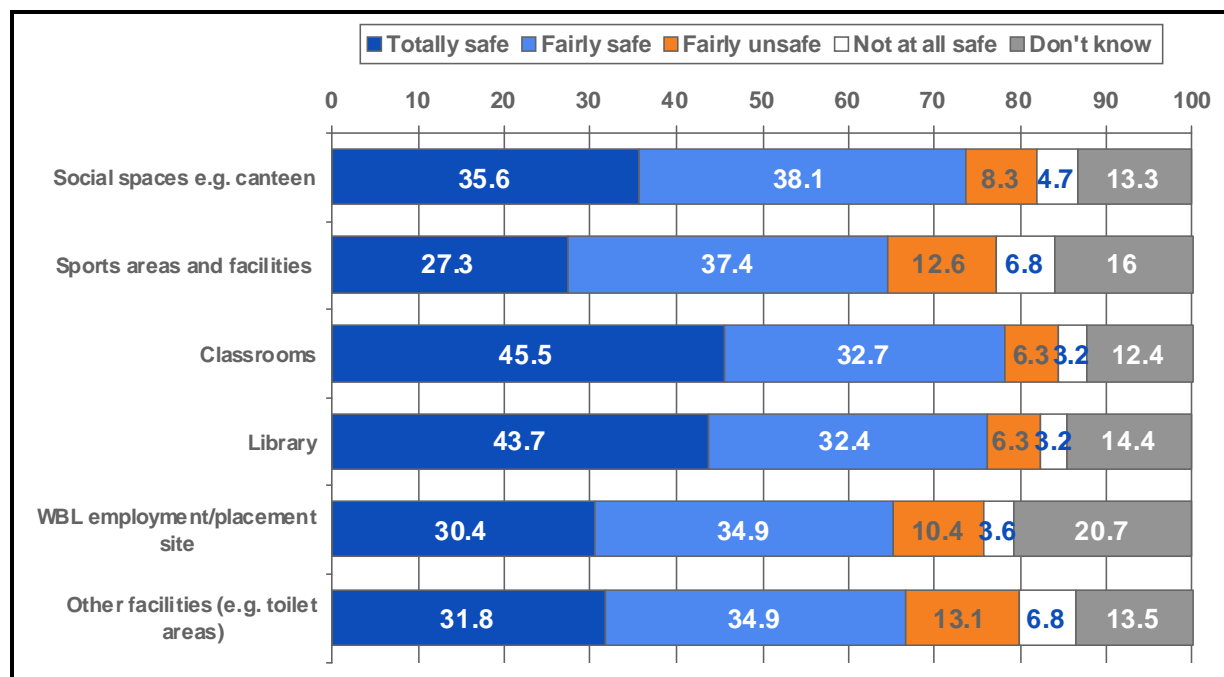
4.3 Safe Spaces

The online survey listed six types of area commonly found within adult learning environments, and asked respondents to indicate for each one the extent to which they feel that environment to be a 'safe space', regardless of whether or not they choose to be open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Response options were 'totally safe'; 'fairly safe'; 'fairly unsafe' and 'totally unsafe'.

For each area listed, between a quarter and half felt 'totally safe' and approximately a further third felt 'quite safe'. In all areas, Trans learners were far less likely to state that they felt totally safe, with between one fifth and one third stating that they felt 'totally safe' in the areas specified. Also see Appendix Table 16.

Figure 14: Perceived Safety Areas within the Adult Learning Environment

Base: All respondents (444)



Although many of those interviewed said they felt safe to be open and out with their fellow learners, almost all said there were at least some areas of the learning environment where they did not feel fully safe including: areas where male dominated courses took place; off-site workplace based learning venues; and toilets. These comments tended to come from those in FE learning rather than Adult and Community learners.

“I suppose that any area that is well away from staff may be ‘less safe’. I wouldn’t feel comfortable hanging around the sports hall. Sports students hang out there and act all macho, it puts off quite a lot of students, not just LGB.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 19-25

“I don’t feel particularly safe in college – either in the general areas or in the engineering department.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 19-25

“The college based part was fairly neutral. I suppose the worst bit about it, because you are preparing to assess, would be going into the workplace to do assessments as part of the course and you don’t know how open the workplace could be. My course was particularly to do with [land-based topic] so it was quite male dominated so it could be intimidating going to a yard to do an assessment. Especially going out to smaller businesses where they might not be geared up for diversity issues quite as much. We do get some quite extreme views from some of our smaller employers, because they don’t understand quite what the impact of what they are doing and saying is.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 26-35

“I don’t spend much time in the environment. I make a point of going home because it’s easier to be who you are when you are at home, or in the public library studying. So I tend to generally go home and just avoid anything.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 19-21

“I feel really strongly that colleges should provide gender neutral toilets. It’s a real problem for Trans people, but can also be difficult for Gay/Lesbian people too. In the evenings I sometimes do drag, and then I use the female toilets as I’m in my female persona. We shouldn’t be tied to other people’s perceptions of gender. Toilets can be dangerous places, we should make them equally safe as other areas of building.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 22-25

Whatever difficulties have been encountered within a learning environment as a result of the views and/or actions of individuals, the environment can still be perceived to be a safe one by dint of its familiarity and positive actions taken by staff/management in response to any problems that have been encountered.

“This college feels like more of a safe space than ‘A.N. Other’ new college would feel. I have signed up to do another course at this college, despite being able to get the course cheaper elsewhere. Finding the extra money will be hard, but I feel comfortable with the college I know.”

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 36-45

4.4 Bullying and Harassment

Almost one in three (30%) Trans learners had experienced bullying or harassment due to their gender identity. Fewer than one in six (14.3%) LGB learners had experienced bullying and harassment due to their sexual orientation. The data also suggests that Lesbian and Gay learners are more likely to be bullied or harassed than learners who are Bisexual or describe their sexual orientation in another way (but not heterosexual).

Three quarters (73.0%) of all respondents stated that they had not experienced any bullying or harassment within the adult learning environment.

Figure 15: Bullying and/or Harassment within the Adult Learning Environment

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Due to Sexual Orientation	14.6	14.3	15.7	10.6	15.2	15.1	16.7
Due to Gender Identity	5.2	1.3	0.7	2.9	0.6	0.8	30.0

A quarter (24.7%) of 19-21 year olds stated that they had experienced bullying and/or harassment in adult learning due to their sexual orientation, compared to just 9.5% of 22-30 year olds and 6.8% of the over 30s. However, current adult learners report less bullying and harassment than former adult learners, suggesting that there may have been some improvement in recent years.

Due to the relatively small numbers of respondents reporting bullying or harassment within the survey (76 individuals overall, but far fewer in specific sub-groups) great caution must be taken in interpreting the numeric data about the experience of bullying and/or harassment in adult learning. Consequently, data is presented as counts rather than percentages. Where possible, we include examples from one-to-one depth interviews to illustrate individual cases, but we cannot suggest that any example is ‘typical’.

Of the 76 respondents reporting that they had been bullied or harassed within adult learning due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, almost two thirds said that it had occurred within the last year, including one in five reporting that it was going on at the time of the survey.

Figure 16: Currency of Bullying and/or Harassment within Learning

Base: Those who have experienced bullying or harassment in learning

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
Base:	76	57	45	12	24	19	19
Currently	15	10	7	3	3	4	5
Within the past year	34	28	24	4	16	7	6
1-2 years ago	17	13	10	3	4	6	4
3-5 years ago	5	4	2	2	0	1	1
6 or more years ago	5	2	2	0	1	1	3

A wide range of types of bullying and harassment were reported by learners, the most commonly reported form being discrimination in practical work in the classroom or tasks within WBL. Around a third of those who have been bullied reported that this had included derogatory comment and verbal abuse.

“I have heard some disparaging comments, mostly from younger people, and I think it’s due to ignorance. My voice tends to let me down – I may not be identifiable as post-op visually, but my voice is deep.”

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 56-60

Half of the Trans learners who had been bullied or harassed within adult learning said that this had included not being addressed according to their present gender (See Appendix Table 17). A third reported having not been addressed in the gender role they had requested.

“During my 1st year, I received some verbal abuse from a group of young men on another course. Fortunately some girls from my course were around and stopped me from retaliating, but that could have been really nasty if I’d snapped as I used to be a very aggressive young man. Also, one girl on my course had a real problem with me and was goading me – I just went home for the rest of the day to avoid turning on her. It was really nice that a couple of the tutors emailed me to find out if I was OK or there was anything they could do. After that, I just kept away from the girl and nothing more was said.”

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 36-45

More than half of learners who had experienced bullying or harassment said that other learners on their course had been involved and almost half mentioned learners on other courses, or in other year groups. One in four said that they had been bullied or harassed by their tutor, and around one in eight by another member of staff (See Appendix Table 18).

Although caution needs to be exercised due to the small bases, there appears to be no correlation between the prevalence of bullying and harassment and openness about sexual orientation in the learning environment for LGB learners. Indeed, LGB learners who stated that they were not open in their learning environment were just as likely to state that they had been bullied or harassed in the learning environment due to their sexual orientation as LGB learners who say they are open or partially open about their sexual orientation.

For Trans learners, the picture seems slightly different and again extreme caution needs to be exercised due to very small base numbers. Trans learners who are open or partially open about their gender identity to their tutors are more likely to state that they have been bullied or harassed.

Just under half of those who revealed that they had been bullied or harassed said that they had reported the matter with their learning setting, just under a quarter had reported the incident to someone outside of their learning provision (such as family or friends), but few had reported an incident to an authority outside of their learning provision (such as the police).

Figure 17: Whether Reported Bullying and/or Harassment within Learning

Base: Those who have experienced bullying or harassment in learning

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
Base:	76	57	45	12	24	19	19
Within learning provision	35	27	22	5	14	7	8
Outside learning provision, to authorities e.g. police	5	3	2	1	2	0	2
Outside learning provision, e.g. to family and friends	16	14	8	6	2	6	2
No	21	17	14	3	8	5	4

Reasons given for not reporting bullying and harassment included:

- not wanting to come out /discuss personal matters such as sexual orientation with staff
- not believing that it would be taken seriously (sometimes due to previous experience)
- not believing
- not wanting to make a fuss
- not wanting to inflame the situation with the perpetrators any further.

Two out of three learners who reported an incident of bullying or harassment to their learning provider felt that they had received a satisfactory response, at least in part (see Appendix Table 19 for more details)

A small number of the telephone interviews were conducted with learners who had direct experience of bullying or harassment. Others said that they had personally experienced indirect discrimination or knew about others who had experienced bullying.

“The most recent incident was, with me being Class Rep I tend to add people who are in my class to my Friends page on Facebook, for communication purposes mainly while we’re talking about college work and so on. One person, a student, misused that and posted an indecent picture, of a naked man basically on my Facebook page and typed in ‘is this yours’. And he did it again. Unfortunately my page has also got my young cousins on it so it was a serious matter. Within six hours Facebook had removed it but I managed to get a print screen of it and showed it to my tutor who dealt with the situation after that.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 22-25

“Within the ‘social module’ we talked a bit about sexual orientation as well as ethnicity. There was some sniggering among the group. I remember a seminar in which some students were trying to guess who is Gay in the group, and talking about Gay people in a derogatory way. A member of teaching staff was there at the time, and didn’t say anything or attempt to stop it. I don’t want to complain, I don’t want to



formally come out to staff in order to complain. I would fear a breach of confidentiality. The module was supposed to minimise inequality and open minds, but didn't manage that."

Adult Learner, Gay female 36-40

"I haven't experienced direct bullying and harassment, but feel I've experienced indirect discrimination. I get the impression that people feel slightly uncomfortable and are worried about saying the wrong thing because I'm very 'out'. They feel perhaps that they are going to use the wrong language or might be interpreted in a negative way. You couldn't call it bullying but it's how prejudice manifests itself, in that sort of hidden way."

Adult Learner, Gay female 56-60

"Not since school personally, but through my role as LGBT Officer I have quite often come across people being harassed within the Adult Education setting – by fellow students. The main thing you get is people who aren't as open to it as others, they tease and pick on them, and name-calling, that sort of thing."

Adult Learner, Bisexual female 19-21

Some of the interviewees who had experienced bullying had followed through all of the levels of the provider's procedures and still felt they had not received a satisfactory response.

"I have had a bad experience in the last few years, when a lecturer told anecdotes that were homophobic. It certainly showed a lack of understanding of homosexuality and power relationships. I expected to stay at that college for a two-year course, but I was so uncomfortable there (because of my sexuality – which I felt I needed to try to hide, but didn't feel I should have to). I wrote to the college Principal when I left to explain the experiences I'd had, and had to chase to get a response. But it was just an apology for my experience, and said that they were now looking at the Equality Act and its requirements. There was no offer of an opportunity to talk to them. I moved to another college in the area and found it to be a totally different environment – excellent. There were clear policies about equality, stating that the college would not tolerate discriminatory or unequal behaviour."

Adult Learner, Gay male 46-55

"I have felt uncomfortable about some of the things that students on my course say, and have complained to my tutor. But my tutor suggested that I shouldn't be so 'in your face' about my sexuality. It really makes me feel that I am the problem. They suggest that I remove myself from the situations. That isn't backing me up. In a way, that's supporting the idiots that are being inappropriate. I wouldn't back down and continued to complain, so now they've removed me from the learning environment. I'm actually not going in to college any more – in theory they are setting me work to do at home. ... I'm getting migraines, and I'm sure it's down to the stress over this."

Adult Learner, Gay male 19-25

"Last term I was involved in an incident where a homophobic comment was made as I left a lift. I challenged the person and was then grabbed by the neck. I reported the incident, but it ended up being my word against his and his friends. It was alleged that I'd been abusive, swearing at them and so on – I just don't do that. There was no CCTV in the area, so nothing could back me up, while that guy had his friends backing up his story. I spoke to the head of department, but I was told to drop it."

Adult Learner, Gay male 22-25

Several of those interviewed said that young people in particular used 'gay' as a derogatory term. Some were very concerned that no action was taken by tutors to address this, whereas

if racist language was used by learners, staff would not tolerate it. However, others felt less concerned and saw this more as a low level irritation and not intended as a personal insult to Gay people.

“I was quite shocked at the attitude within colleges to Gay people. ‘It’s so gay’ is a very negative phrase used by many young people and that is tolerated by staff. There’s no mention of such phrases being discriminatory. It feels like tutors who are ignoring this type of talk is a concession to the younger learners, who think it’s OK. Tutors try to ‘run with’ the young learners’ attitudes rather than challenge them.”
Adult Learner, Gay male 46-55

“In FE it feels that homophobic bullying and comments that are made are acceptable and if a racist remark were made it would never be passed off as banter. You hear people say, it’s because of my religion I don’t have to respect you, and staff don’t know how to deal with that behaviour. The staff are worried about being racist and tend to side with that group of society.”
Adult Learner, Gay male 19-21

“A lot of young people nowadays say ‘that’s so gay’ and they don’t mean Gay people, it’s just general. It’s not meant in a horrible way. It’s one of those fads that will soon be over.”
Adult Learner, Gay male 36-45

“Some of the groups of young lads I work with use phrases like ‘It’s so gay’ – but not viciously. I like to try to challenge that sort of language. Few will use it when they work out or find out that I’m Gay myself.”
Adult Learner, Gay male 22-25

When asked whether there was anyone in authority within their learning provision that they can turn to with problems, with a list of descriptions (see below), half (52.5%) indicated that they could take personal problems to their tutor, and a fifth (21.2%) indicate that they could turn to another member of staff. Just over one in five (22.1%) felt they could turn to their learning provider’s Welfare Officer. Three in ten (30.6%) mentioned being able to turn to a peer if they had any problems.

Figure 18: People in Authority within the Learning Provider to whom Learners Feel they can go to with Problems

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
No-one	13.1	14.3	11.8	21.2	12.0	10.9	5.0
Tutor	52.5	53.4	57.1	43.3	60.1	52.9	46.7
Other teaching staff	21.6	22.7	24.6	17.3	27.8	21.0	15.0
Welfare officer	22.1	21.4	22.9	17.3	22.8	22.7	26.7
WBL manager/supervisor	6.5	7.3	8.6	3.8	10.8	5.9	1.7
Other workers in my WBL employment	5.9	6.3	7.9	1.9	10.1	5.0	3.3
Another learner (peer)	30.6	32.3	32.9	30.8	38.6	25.2	20.0
Other	7.0	7.0	7.9	4.8	5.1	11.8	6.7

Over one fifth (21.2%) of Bisexual learners stated that there was no-one in authority within the learning provider to whom they could turn with their problems, the group with the highest proportion stating this.

Almost one in seven (13.1%) learners said that there was no-one within their learning provision that they felt they could turn to with problems.

Many interviewees said they knew if they had problems they could talk to their tutor and if necessary go to more senior staff but only a few said their provider had specific LGBT support.

“I was made aware that if I had any problems I could talk directly with my personal tutor or I can speak to the course manager directly. I could also use various student support services and their staff I can speak with confidentially as well. I think it was fairly generic to deal with issues about any subject.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 41-45

“The Equality Manager here is great. It’s a real shame that when I had to make a complaint about a fellow student, the college didn’t involve the Equality Manager.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 22-25

“I’m not sure if there is a support office or anything, but the college does display lots of posters (especially now for LGBT history month). Thinking about it, I do think there must be a support officer, but I wouldn’t know how to report anything bad that might happen. I don’t really know what the learner support team do – maybe they would get involved.”

Adult Learner, Gay female 19-21

However, there were some concerns about potential conflicts of interest between the religion/belief-sets of staff (especially Equality Officers) and supporting sexual orientation and/or gender identity equality.

“It is important that E&D roles are not given to people who have strong knowledge/views on supporting one E&D strand at expense of others. Particularly not to people who are anti LGBT – strongly religious people can have less than open attitudes. There is a danger of conflict between different equality strands, not often, but it can happen.”

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 60+

“Many people who get equality jobs have strong faiths – this can be a problem. I understand that they are following their faith, but in some ways, this can make them into bigots who don’t want to know about other viewpoint. There are still a lot of the people in the closet, and I don’t think giving equality posts to people with strong beliefs (especially religious ones) is helpful to openness.”

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 56-60

5 POLICIES, SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES IN FE

This section reports on respondents' awareness and knowledge of policies and practices in adult learning. Respondents were asked whether they were aware of an Equal Opportunity Policy that included sexual orientation in their experience of adult learning. Nearly two-thirds (65.8%) of respondents were aware that their learning provider had an Equal Opportunities Policy mentioning sexual orientation. Trans learners and Lesbians were less likely than other groups to be aware of a policy (58.3% and 58.0% respectively).

Figure 19: Awareness of Equal Opportunity Policy – inc Sexual Orientation

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Yes	65.8	66.9	65.0	72.1	70.3	58.0	58.3
No	2.3	2.1	2.5	1.0	2.5	2.5	3.3
Don't know / Not stated	31.9	31	32.5	26.9	27.2	39.5	38.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The LGB qualitative interviewees had mixed awareness of learning provider equality policies and how they found out about them. Some interviewees said that equality policies were introduced at induction but said they did not specifically mention LGB and/or T issues. Some were unsure about whether there were equality policies and where to go if they had problems, others knew about them but felt they could be publicised and presented better. Several said that policies on LGBT issues and related bullying should be dealt with earlier in the year to establish the environment as welcoming to LGBT people and that anti-LGBT behaviour would not be tolerated. Those on short or very part time courses were often less clear than those on longer courses who spent more time in college.

"I think we are made aware, perhaps in the handbook but I probably didn't read it."
Adult Learner, Gay female 22-25

"I have never seen an E&D policy or bullying policy for any of the training I've been on. Tutors often discuss ground-rules for their class, or get the group to set their own, but nothing has been 'handed down' as a basis where I've been. No-one has mentioned how to report any problems."
Adult Learner, Gay male 22-25

"There is reference made to them in the welcome packs. Equality opportunities is throughout the college and there are notices on walls for student groups for the sixth form students during the day but nothing there for LGBT groups and I wonder where they would put those posters if they had them at all. I'm pretty sure there will be some form of society or club for LGBT students that are (during the day) there but I'm three times their age and wouldn't go anyway."
Adult Learner, Gay male 46-50

"We hear about the policies and our responsibilities right from the start. It's part of registration."
Adult Learner, Gay male 26-30

"There was one on race, one on age but there wasn't one on sexual orientation. The bullying policy that was in our hand books made no reference to homophobic bullying"

but made reference to racism which sent a clear signal that they weren't bothered about it."

Adult Learner, Gay male 19-22

"There have been no equality policies that I've been made aware of by training providers for short courses. Sometimes there has been a training contract that I've had to sign. But the college has had an Equal Opportunities statement (which certainly applies to enrolment). They also do an assessment or feedback form at the end of courses, so complaints can be raised through that."

Adult Learner, Bisexual female 26-30

"There are obvious and clear policies. I would think the policies are good, I was involved in writing them. But I now feel that that's all they are - written policies. They are not influencing what happens every day."

Adult Learner (also LGBT Student Officer), Gay male 22-25

When asked whether they were aware of an equal opportunity policy making reference to gender identity, less than half (47.1%) answered positively, lower than for awareness of a policy covering sexual orientation as shown in Figure 20. A slightly higher proportion of Trans respondents were aware of an equal opportunity policy including gender identity (51.7%) than LGB learners (46.4%) and particularly compared to Lesbians (41.2%).

Figure 20: Awareness of Equal Opportunity Policy – inc Gender Identity

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Yes	47.1	46.4	44.3	51.9	46.8	41.2	51.7
No	4.1	3.9	5.0	1.0	6.3	3.4	5.0
Don't know / Not stated	48.8	49.7	50.7	47.1	46.9	55.4	43.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

A slightly higher proportion of rural respondents were aware of such a policy (compared to urban respondents (49.6% compared with 46.1%).

"A handbook was given at the beginning of the course about the college promoting equality and setting out its discrimination procedures. I remember that the handbook mentions all the groups including Transgender, as well as religion etc. I would know what to do if there were a problem."

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 46-55

With the potential exception of Lesbians, it seems that people are more likely to be more aware of policies relating to their particular group. However, with only around half of Trans learners aware of an Equal Opportunity Policy including gender identity, it seems that more work needs to be done to publicise the existence of equality policies (and their breadth of coverage) to all learners, including non LGB and T learners.

"I don't doubt that Equality Policies are there – and can be found by students that want to see them, but they're not made overtly prominent. Generally there are logos and comments on brochures etc that say the college or company operates equal opps, but few people are interested in what that means, and I don't know that it should be pushed at you when you start a course, certainly not for short courses."

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 60+

While the existence of policies provides a necessary statement of intent, policies need to be used and translated into reality.

Only around a third of respondents stated that they thought that policies seemed to translate into reality in their FE provision. Lesbians (23.5%) and Trans people (26.7%) were less likely to agree that policies translated into reality. Conversely, slightly lower proportions of these two groups than others believe that policies do not translate to reality (9.2% and 11.7%). The majority of survey respondents were not asked this question as they had already reported that they were not aware of the policy.

Figure 21: Whether Policies Seem to Translate into Reality

Base: All respondents

	ALL	All	LGB - NOT TRANS				TRANS
	All		Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Yes	30.0	30.5	28.6	35.6	32.9	23.5	26.7
No	10.6	10.4	10.4	10.6	10.8	9.2	11.7
Only partially	6.5	5.5	5.4	5.8	3.2	8.4	13.3
Not aware of policy/ not sure	52.9	53.6	55.7	48.1	53.2	58.8	48.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

That one in ten respondents (one in five of those who were aware of an equality policy) stated that the learning providers' policies do not translate into reality is problematic. At the very best, this indicates dissatisfaction with FE, that equal opportunities policies have not provided these respondents (or their peers) with an FE experience that they feel to be on a par with other learners'. At worst, it indicates that some respondents have particular issues and/or problems concerning the intersection between their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and their FE learning experience that have not been addressed despite the equality policy in place.

The researchers and commissioners were particularly interested in the processes established by learning providers for reporting of bullying and harassment and whether these processes were felt to be effective by those who use them. Respondents were first asked about their awareness of a mechanism for reporting bullying and harassment within their learning environment.

Figure 22 (over the page) shows that only just over half (54.5%) of all respondents reported that they were aware of a bullying/harassment reporting mechanism. Again, a lower proportion of Trans learners were aware (45.0%). Gay males are most likely to be aware (60.1%).

Figure 22: Awareness of a Mechanism for Reporting Bullying/Harassment within Learning Environment

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Yes	54.5	56.0	56.4	54.8	60.1	52.1	45.0
No	9.2	9.1	8.2	11.5	7.0	8.4	10.0
Don't know / Not stated	36.3	34.9	35.4	33.7	32.9	39.5	45.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Around four-fifths said that they were aware that there is legal protection within the learning environment against discrimination due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Generally, respondents were more likely to be aware of legal protection in their learning environment than they were of the existence of their learning provider's equality policies and reporting mechanisms (Figures 19 and 20 above). Trans learners were slightly more likely to state that they were aware of legal protection (83.3% compared to LGB learners 78.6%). Learners who are Bisexual or other were least likely to report that they are aware of legal protection (74.0%).

Figure 23: Awareness of Legal Protection in the Learning Environment from Discrimination due to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Yes	79.3	78.6	80.4	74.0	82.9	76.5	83.3
No	16.2	17.2	15.4	22.1	12.7	19.3	10.0
Not answered	4.5	4.2	4.2	3.9	4.4	4.2	6.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Those who were interviewed occasionally mentioned the Equality Act but only rarely spoke of it as legal protection.

“Homophobia in college often comes from students in other curriculum areas. I’m fighting for there to be more/better staff training about homophobia and hate crime. Also to get the local hate crime team to come in to talk to students and make them realise that it’s actually a criminal offence – I don’t think many people realise how serious it is.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 22-25

However, Trans learners we interviewed revealed strong knowledge of the Gender Recognition Act, if not the Equality Act.

“I feel that learning providers (and many other organisations) are largely unaware of the Gender Recognition Act and its requirements for confidentiality over this issue. Section 22 of the Act must be upheld, yet some organisations think it is OK to reveal that someone is Trans. Disclosure of this information is a criminal offence. It is vital

that an individual's gender history cannot be found out from diversity monitoring. Anonymous monitoring is fine, but no names should be attached.
 Adult Learner, female with Trans history 60+

This same interviewee had clear views on monitoring, views which differed from other respondents' opinions on the topic:

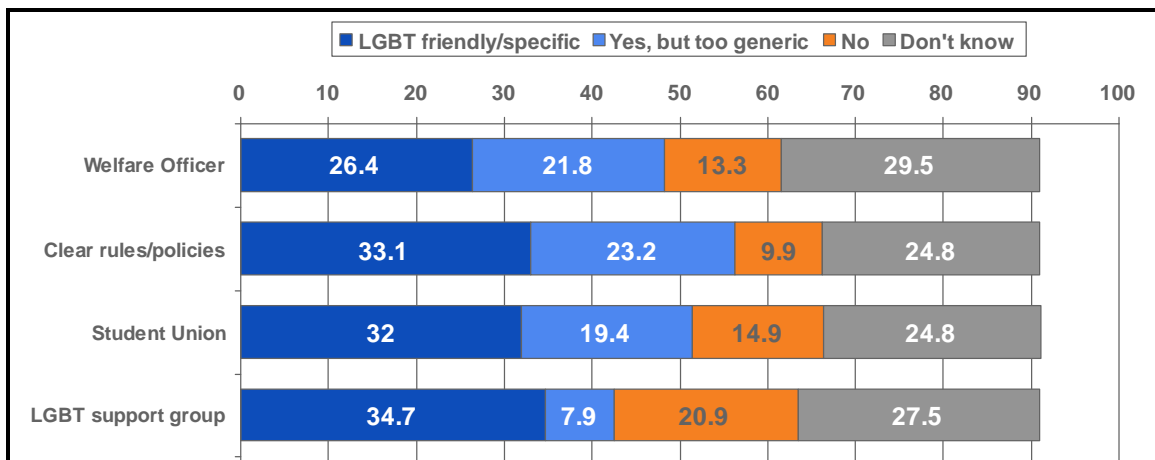
"Diversity monitoring forms should include ALL equality strands protected by the 2010 Act, or nothing. It is inappropriate to monitor gender (especially if only binary options are given), age, ethnicity and disability, but not to include gender identity, sexual orientation and religion. Gender and gender identity are different."
 Adult Learner, female with Trans history 60+

Learning providers offer a myriad of support services for learners, but do they offer the support wanted or required by LGB and/or T learners? We asked what support systems LGB and/or T learners were aware of and whether they were LGB and/or T specific or generic. Findings for specific sub-groups can be found in Appendix Table 20.

First, we asked respondents whether there was a welfare officer and whether the officer was generic or LGB and/or T specific. Only just over one quarter (26.4%) of our respondents stated that there was an LGB and/or T friendly/specific welfare officer. However, only one fifth (20%) of Trans learners indicated this. A relatively high proportion of Gay males thought that they had a LGB and/or T friendly/specific welfare officer (33.5%) whereas only 21.8% of Lesbians said the same.

Figure 24: Support Systems for LGB and/or T Learners

Base: All respondents (444)



Similarly, Gay males were more likely to state that the support systems available through the Student Union were LGB and/or T friendly/specific (41.1%) compared to other groups (Lesbian – 30.3%; Bisexual or other – 28.8%). Trans learners are also significantly less likely to state that their Student Union is LGB and/or T friendly/specific (28.8%).

Conversely nearly one quarter of Trans learners stated that there is no support offered through the Student Union (23.3%) compared to around 10% of Gay male and Lesbian respondents. Bisexuals and others are also less likely to feel that there is support offered by the Student Union.

Figure 25: Whether Any Support was Offered (regarding LGB and/or T status) as Part of Induction

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
A range of <u>general support services</u> but NOT LGB and/or Trans support services	14.4	14.3	14.6	13.5	17.1	10.1	15.0
A range of support including LGB but not Trans	5.0	4.2	2.5	8.7	1.9	3.4	10.0
A range of support including Trans but not LGB	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
A range of support including <u>both</u> LGB and Trans	11.7	12.2	11.4	14.4	13.9	8.4	8.3
Yes, because I sought it out	7.0	7.0	8.6	2.9	7.0	10.9	6.7
No, not offered any support	52.7	53.1	54.3	50.0	54.4	54.6	50.0

The clarity of rules and policies is vital, not only in responding to any breach of those rules and policies⁶ but also to spread an ethos about the desired conduct and preferred environment in any institution/provider. We asked respondents whether they felt there were clear rules and policies as part of the provider’s support system. Nearly one quarter (24.8%) of respondents were unsure about the existence of clear rules and policies, with Lesbian females most likely to state they were unsure (31.1%). Over two in five (40.5%) Gay males felt that there were clear rules/policies that were LGB and/or T specific, a much higher proportion than any other group compared to less than one third of Trans respondents (28.3%) and Lesbians (28.6%). Trans respondents were also more likely to state that the rules and policies were too generic (31.7%) compared to all learners (24.8%). One tenth (9.9%) of respondents stated that there were no clear rules and policies.

Support systems for LGB and/or T learners that interviewees had experienced varied widely. Some mentioned specific LGB and/or T groups and support workers or student officers, whereas others said support mechanisms were more generic. Several said that having a support person who is LGB and/or T themselves made a big difference to feeling they could turn to them for help.

“At the moment, the only Gay adult that we can get help from is at the [external advice agency] which is outside the college. The college has no support structure for us at all. They have religious groups funded by the college, sports groups and others and the only one that isn’t funded by college is the [external advice agency] one, it’s completely external.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 22-25

“The college has a Gay Student Service, and links into good networks to provide support, if they can’t help ‘in-house’ they can point out where to go.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 26-30

“There is student support (generic) but the equality officer was Muslim and that, wrongly or rightly, put a kind of barrier for me so I didn’t have any discussions with anybody. What would have benefited me would have been to have a dedicated LGBT

⁶ e.g. harassment case **Charlton v Orange PCS Ltd ET/2513166/09** in which the employer’s decision was upheld because of the clarity of the policy.

officer or support worker who was generic in their work but could signpost. That initial contact person is very important"

Adult Learner, Gay male 19-22

"In my 1st year I asked whether I could start an LGBT group, but I was told the college already has one, but however much I've asked, I've not been able to find out about it!"

Adult Learner, Asexual/Bisexual female 19-21

"There used to be an LGBT group at college, but the numbers taking part were low, so it's not funded any more. It would be nice to have the chance to talk to other students about things like coming out and not being straight."

Adult Learner, male with Trans history 19-25

However, it was sometimes suggested that student support services were of less importance to Trans learners, as however well meaning and well-read a student support officer is, they are unlikely to know much about Transgender issues, or support services available.

"I know they [LGBT Support Officers] were there, but I'm so far through my journey that I wouldn't be looking for help from a college – they would know far less about Trans than I do – I could train them!" Adult Learner, female with Trans history 60+

6 EXPERIENCES FROM ADULT LEARNING

A third (32.4%) of respondents felt that they had positive experiences or outcomes in learning due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Gay women were more likely to report positive experiences or outcomes than Gay men (39.5% compared with 34.2%), but Bisexual learners or those describing their sexual orientation in some other way were least likely to report positive outcomes due to their sexual orientation (21.2%).

Figure 26: Whether had any Positive Experiences / Outcomes in Learning Due to Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Yes	32.4	32.3	36.4	21.2	34.2	39.5	33.3
No	59.5	61.2	57.5	71.2	60.1	53.8	48.3
Not stated	8.1	6.5	6.1	7.6	5.7	6.7	18.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Almost one in five (17.8%) described their positive experience as being able to play an active part in student life (instead or in addition to the more formal outcomes listed in the question, and presented in Figure 26 below). Almost one in ten were invited to be an LGB and/or T representative on a student council, and a similar number reported being invited to join a student council (but not specifically as an LGB and/or T representative).

Figure 27: Positive Experiences / Outcomes in Learning Due to Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Invited to be a representative on student council	8.6	8.3	9.6	4.8	10.1	9.2	10.0
Invited to be LGB and/or T representative on student council	9.0	8.1	10.0	2.9	8.9	10.9	15.0
Offered training to be a welfare officer or other student officer	4.3	3.9	4.6	1.9	4.4	5.0	6.7
Offered training to be an LGB and/or T welfare officer or other student officer	5.0	4.4	5.7	1.0	4.4	7.6	8.3
Being offered training to volunteer in an LGB and/or T organisation	7.2	7.0	7.9	4.8	6.3	10.1	8.3
Being able to play other active role in student life	17.8	18.0	20.7	10.6	21.5	20.2	16.7

Learners who were interviewed described a number of good experiences and good practice by tutors. These included events organised by the provider such as fairs, as well as tutors

using inclusive language and including LGB and/or T issues in the course content. Some of the interviewees were the LGBT student officer for their college.

“Certainly the tutor is very inclusive when she talks about family relationships, going out for an evening. It’s making sure that you refer to partner by name and suchlike. I can’t rate her highly enough. Even giving out homework, if it’s a photocopied text she’ll make amendments in it where she’ll cross out spouse and put partner for everybody, so it’s not just for me, it’s across the board. It’s nice that she takes time to do that, it’s nice to be included ... but the literature, the books are very much geared to heterosexual relationships”

Adult Learner, Gay male 46-50

“The college did a LGB history fair and that was really good. That was a real good celebration. That was the best thing.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 19-22

“The college has good policies. Lots of awareness days and posters. They explain what Trans is. They ask a Trans learner what THEY want, and remember that needs can change over time.”

Adult Learner, female with Trans history 26-35

“Homophobia is treated as seriously as racism. I also had a really interesting seminar to explain what Transgender is – that’s really important for people’s understanding. One World Week is expanded here and used to explore all sorts of differences in others, not just differences between cultures.”

Adult Learner, Gay male, 19-21

Interviewees gave suggestions about how providers could encourage Gay people to start and remain in adult learning by presenting an LGB and/or T-friendly face including: advertising in the LGBT press, websites and venues; displaying posters around the college; including LGB and/or T overtly in presentations about equal opportunities policies alongside the other equality strands; ensuring that open days include mention of LGB and/or T specifically in displays and presentations; having specific LGBT support workers or student officers; making support more available by making sure learners know about it; encouraging the setting up of LGBT groups; presenting LGBT policies early at the beginning of courses; staff being more open about their own sexuality so learners would know about a Gay member of staff they could talk to; providing gender neutral toilets; offering women only courses; using up to date written materials that reflect modern life and issues; and finding out what courses the LGB and/or T community want that are not already provided.

“Gay people don’t know how welcoming the environment is nowadays. Providers should push themselves in places where Gay people go.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 36-45

“Making sure they know what support is there for them. That’s something we’ve done this year, making sure they know what support is there. We set up forums on the intranet that students could access and a college email system that is only used by me and the other LGBGT officer. So they know it’s just between us. We put posters up around the college. We’ve also got our Support Group and LGBT Group where we have regular meetings. You need to make sure you set up a way for people to talk about things.”

Adult Learner, Bisexual female 19-21

“Where there are known to be Gay students in a group, colleges should do the tutorial about homophobic bullying early in the year. I think it is important that colleges know whether they have LGBT learners, and on which courses.”
Adult Learner, Gay male 19-25

“The college could do a meeting for people who are LGBT to go to so they could get to know who else is so they’ll be able to ask them. Like a buddy project or something. In my course, I know who is what, but I don’t know outside my course because I don’t spend time with anyone.”
Adult Learner, Bisexual female 19-21

“Some sort of research into the culture and lifestyle to find out what they would like to do most. Something like a course to do with raising a child (same sex couples) would need to feel they’d be accepted. People might say, why do you want to know about raising a child, you’re never going to have one. Try to make courses based around them, their culture and style of living.”
Adult Learner, Bisexual female 19-21

“Courses I’d go on now: Same sex relationships and making wills; Same sex relationships in old age; Options around provision for old age, around housing, health facilities, partners who may want to live together in old age, social issues around all of that. Social events to prevent people being isolated, it might be music, it might just be fun things and outdoor things. Funding to have targeted outdoor activity groups for Lesbians, Gay men and Transgender people it would go some way to address the balance.”
Adult Learner, Gay female 56-60

“Staff and students should just be honest about their ignorance or lack of knowledge of LGBT issues. Ask an individual to explain as much as they would like to. Never assume anything – it’s easy to offend someone that way. Accept that people are what they say they are. Sexuality is about being part of a group.”
Adult Learner, Gay male 19-25

“If I knew a Gay tutor in college, I would have felt able to approach them more than another tutor.”
Adult Learner, Gay male 22-25

“The training that I’ve been involved in that has involved Lesbian and Gay staff has been more friendly than when, as far as I know, there haven’t been any Lesbian and Gay people involved.”
Adult Learner, Gay female 56-60

As those who volunteered to be interviewed were self-selecting they may well have been more confident than others. Several said that although they were themselves very confident and did not experience any difficulties in adult learning they were concerned about those who were less confident about being out in society.

“I didn’t want to tell people on my course that I was currently with a same sex partner. I talked about ‘my partner’ – my partner’s gender was discovered by accident. They saw my partner drop me off one day. They asked me quite a lot of questions for a few months – kept bringing the subject up. They kept apologising directly to me if any of them said something like ‘so gay’. It’s a new concept to them – they are inquisitive. The questions could be too invasive for some people in my position. I ignore it when I catch people looking at me funnily.”
Adult Learner, Asexual/Bisexual female 19-21

“Most Gay people I know have done night school or a course of one thing or another, there doesn’t seem to be a bar, but a lot of people I know wouldn’t come out in the classroom, there is still that reticence about being completely open. I’ve had no problems but I’m 6 foot 3 and build like a brick outhouse. I’ve been ‘out’ at work for the last 20 years, I just don’t have those sort of problems, people wouldn’t take me on. I know that other people are not in that position.”

Adult Learner, Gay male 46-50

7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some positive results emerged from this piece of research. The majority of LGB and T respondents stated that adult learning is 'welcoming' with more than half giving a score of 8 out of 10 or higher, and a third giving a score of 9 out of 10 on a 10 point scale.

Providers who are confident that their provision is truly LGB and T-friendly could be proactive and recruit through attending LGBT events. This type of outreach has been welcomed by respondents who have experienced it. Furthermore it has attracted learners who may not have considered FE without it.

The research explored whether learners had positive experiences in learning as a result of their gender identity or sexual orientation. A third of respondents stated that they had positive experiences including being invited to be a LGB and/or T representative on a student council, being offered training, and/or being able to play other active roles in student life.

While there is some good news from this research, the data reveals that LGB and T learners face problems in their learning environment that other learners do not encounter, leading us to believe that there is more work to be done to ensure equality of experience and outcome.

Bullying and harassment remains a problem with one in six LGB learners and nearly one in three Trans learners reporting it due to their sexual orientation and gender identity respectively. Discrimination in practical work in the classroom, tasks within work-based learning and derogatory comments and verbal abuse were the more common issues. This problem combined with a relative lack of conviction about the existence or the utility of equal opportunities procedures; whether these policies translate into reality; and lack of knowledge of mechanisms for reporting bullying and harassment is a cocktail for continued inaction and suffering.

Examples of how bullying and harassment are not tolerated and the mechanisms through which they can be reported should be displayed prominently. The consequences of bullying behaviour should also be displayed. The rules and policies and consequences should also be spelt out at the beginning of courses. Since one in ten LGB and T learners in our research state they felt that they had no-one to turn to, a mentoring system could be considered.

Around one in twenty LGB learners expressed concerns about remaining in adult learning, or achieving within adult learning due to their sexual orientation. However, around one in six Trans learners expressed similar concerns about their learning due to their gender identity. One of the greatest barriers to learning was 'insensitive curriculum content'.

Curricula should be checked for content that assumes the norm is heterosexuality and for other biases e.g. race, gender, gender identity.

Confirming anecdotal evidence, this research shows that there are still comparatively more problems and barriers for LGB and T learners in gender stereotyped courses e.g. beauty; engineering etc and courses in work-based learning settings. Furthermore, many learners do not consider various spaces in the learning environment 'safe'. This is particularly the case for travel to learning provision.

Unfortunately, only two thirds of LGB and T learners were aware of equal opportunities policies incorporating sexual orientation; and less than half were aware of equal opportunities policies encompassing gender identity. If this is the case for this targeted group of learners, it

would be interesting to find out what proportion of the rest of the FE learner population is aware of these policies.

With the potential exception of Lesbians, it seems that people are more likely to be aware of policies relating to their particular group. However, with only around half of Trans learners aware of an Equal Opportunity Policy including gender identity, it seems that more work needs to be done to publicise the existence of equality policies (and their breadth of coverage) to all learners, especially non LGB and T learners. This should be done in the early stages of the course.

Gay males typically seem happier with the support systems available from their providers; whether that be with policies or welfare officers, compared to other groups. As with other results from this research, the dangers of treating LGB and T learners as a homogenous group are evident, both in research and in the learning environment.

Opportunities for an active role in the learning environment should be encouraged. However, efforts should be made to ensure that if individuals represent LGB and T learners, that they represent all sub-groups and have the requisite knowledge to do so.

Supporting the outcomes of other research (ECU, 2009) this research found that LGB and T learners are wary of the conflict of interest between themselves and some other equality strands – for example those with certain religious beliefs. Strong views on the eligibility of some groups to be welfare officers were expressed by some qualitative respondents.

All those in positions of welfare support, teaching and other pastoral or administrative care need to be aware of the rights of all equality strands though continuous professional development.

There was no consensus on equal opportunities monitoring amongst the qualitative research participants. Some respondents feel that it is inappropriate to monitor other strands and not include gender identity and sexual orientation. Others worry that this type of monitoring is invasive.

The introduction of equal opportunities monitoring for sexual orientation and gender identity must be accompanied by full consultation and information backed up by secure data systems and data handling processes. The exclusion of these equality strands from monitoring can be seen by some as a form of discrimination, while for most it remains a sensitive issue.

There are perceptions within the LGB and T learner groups that some bullying and harassing behaviours and attitudes are tolerated by staff. While the institutional view is that there is no tolerance of these attitudes and behaviours, the reality is somewhat different.

CPD with staff should include a clear message that certain behaviours are not tolerated – e.g. use of ‘gay’ as a derogatory term; sniggering and giggling in class; and discrimination in tasks. Examples of how to deal with this and how to recognise such behaviours should be provided.

APPENDICES



Methodology

Aims and Objectives

The Skills Funding Agency invited tenders from research agencies on its Equality and Diversity theme research framework contract to meet the following aims:

- provide evidence about the experiences and views of learners with the protected characteristics of sexual orientation and gender identity (LGB and T learners), to inform the Skills Funding Agency's equality objectives
- provide evidence which could be helpful to other stakeholders, including colleges, providers and sector agencies.

Specific objectives of the research were to answer the following questions:

- What levels of discrimination, bullying and harassment do LGB and T learners experience within adult learning?
- What other barriers do LGB and T people face to participating and succeeding in adult education, as a result of their sexual orientation or Trans status?
- What support do they need to overcome these barriers? What are the gaps in the support currently available?
- Are there opportunities to take part in LGB and T groups/ networks?
- Is the sector now more welcoming to LGB people than was indicated by the CEL research in 2006?
- How do LGB and T learners' experiences compare with their experiences in other areas of learning, such as school, sixth-form college or university?
- Are LGB and T learners comfortable with being 'out' to other learners and provider staff?
- Would they be prepared to disclose information about their sexual orientation/ Trans status to their learning provider? In what other ways could evidence about equality be collected?

Design

A small scale literature review informed the design of both the quantitative and the qualitative research.

Babcock Research worked with the Steering Group convened by the Skills Funding Agency, and with their own specialist partners (Lesbian and Gay Foundation [LGF] and Gender Identity Research and Education Society [GIREs]) to develop a self completion (online) survey to address the core research questions (above).

The survey was designed 'on paper' before being programmed as a web survey, following comments from the Skills Funding Agency, steering group members and Babcock's specialist Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual and Gender Identity partner organisations. The web survey itself underwent extensive functional testing within Babcock, and by the Skills Funding Agency project manager, and Babcock's partner organisations.

Web Survey Distribution and Publicity

Without an appropriate sampling frame for the target group of learners, it was decided to make the survey open to learners in all adult learning settings in England. The Skills Funding Agency promoted pre-survey publicity to its staff and all funded providers via electronic bulletins/newsletters (including an invitation to contact the team at Babcock for further information). This mechanism was also used to distribute the web survey link.

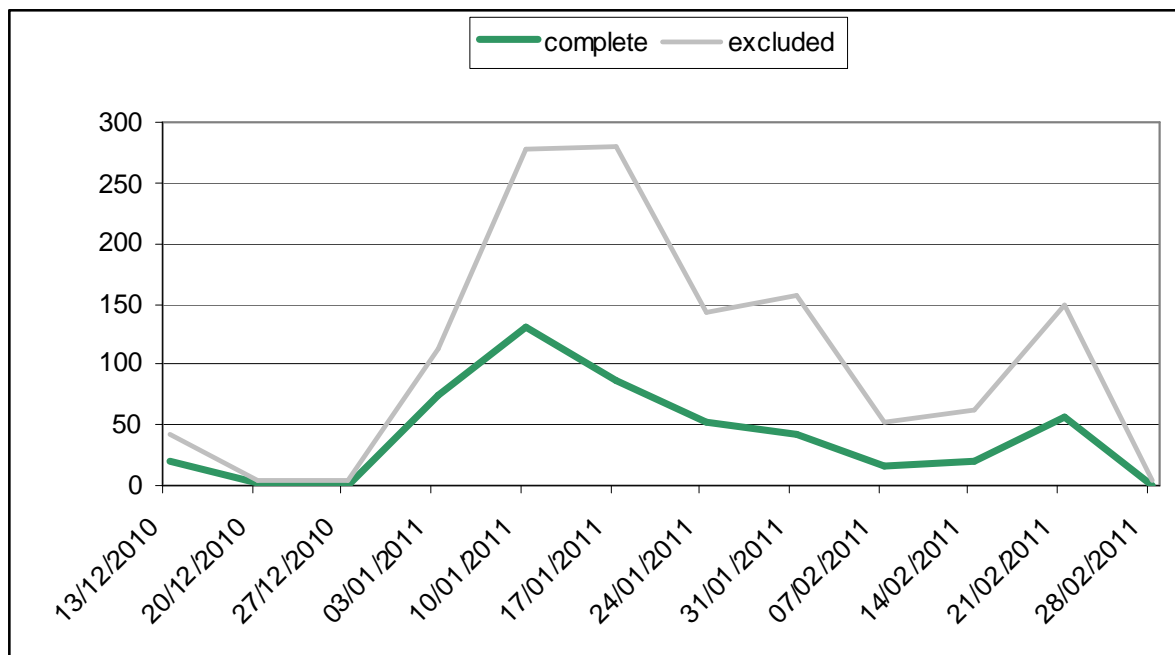
Skills Funding Agency provided its list of providers (including contact email addresses – generally the head of the organisation).

The web survey was launched on 13th December 2010, via an email sent to approximately 1500 learning providers, and inclusion of the link in the Skills Funding Agency's update bulletin for providers. Babcock monitored the delivery receipt and failure messages returned by providers' email servers. Alternative email addresses were sought for organisations where delivery was known to have failed.

Additional searches for providers' email addresses were conducted over the festive break, allowing the reminder at the start of the autumn term to be sent to an expanded list of providers on 10th January 2011. Again, delivery receipt and failure messages were monitored and remedial action taken where possible.

A further reminder email campaign was undertaken (including the survey link, fliers and posters) publicising a survey closing date of 14th February, sent to all providers on 31st January.

Response Profile over the 12 Week Fieldwork Period



Useful Sources and References

Barnet, Phil, Gittens, Ian and Deane, Helen (2006) 'Equality and Sexual Orientation: The challenge for further education' Centre for Excellence in Learning, December

Equality Challenge Unit (2009) 'The experience of Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff and students in higher education' ECU

Hall, Nicola and Panton, Demetrious (2009) 'Improving the region's knowledge base on the LGB&T population in the North West: Final Report to NWDA' Ecotec Consulting

Harwood-Browne, Mark (2009) 'LGB students' perception of the HE student experience in a dual HE/FE institution' MA dissertation, University of the West of England, Bristol, November.

Lesbian and Gay Foundation 'Breaking the cycle: Supporting the delivery of a sustainable LGB&T sector in the North West Region. A five year strategy underpinning the development of the LGB&T sector in the North West 2009-2014' LGF

Reed, Bernard; Rhodes, Stephenne; Schofield, Pieta' Wylie, Kevan (2009) 'Gender Variance in the UK: Prevalence, Incidence, Growth and Geographic Distribution' Gender Identity Research and Education Society.

Detailed Data Tables

App. Table 1: Region of Residence

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
East of England	9.0	9.1	8.6	10.6	11.4	5.0	8.3
East Midlands	13.7	14.6	15.0	13.5	15.8	14.3	8.3
London	15.3	14.6	13.2	18.3	13.9	11.8	20.0
North East	7.2	7.3	8.6	3.8	7.0	10.9	6.7
North West	8.8	8.3	10.4	2.9	10.1	10.9	11.7
South East	22.3	22.9	20.4	29.8	17.7	23.5	18.3
South West	6.5	7.0	6.4	8.7	8.2	3.4	3.3
West Midlands	4.7	4.2	5.0	1.9	1.9	9.2	8.3
Yorkshire and The Humber	12.2	12.0	12.5	10.6	13.9	10.9	13.3
Unclear	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

App. Table 2: Character of Area of Residence

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Rural (village)	13.1	13.0	13.2	12.5	12.0	15.1	13.3
Semi rural (e.g. market town)	14.2	15.1	15.4	14.4	15.8	15.1	8.3
Urban / Sub-urban	50.2	51.8	50.0	56.7	46.8	53.8	40.0
Metropolitan (large city)	22.5	20.1	21.4	16.3	25.3	16.0	38.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

App. Table 3: Age of Respondent

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
19-21 years	35.6	37.0	36.1	39.4	36.7	34.5	26.7
22-25 years	15.1	15.1	13.6	19.2	16.5	10.1	15.0
26-30 years	13.3	13.3	12.9	14.4	14.6	10.9	13.3
31-35 years	7.7	8.3	7.9	9.6	7.6	8.4	3.3
36-40 years	6.1	5.5	6.8	1.9	7.0	6.7	10.0
41-45 years	6.8	6.8	8.2	2.9	8.2	8.4	6.7
46-50 years	6.5	6.5	8.2	1.9	5.1	12.6	6.7
51-55 years	3.2	2.6	2.9	1.9	2.5	2.5	6.7
56-60 years	2.0	1.6	1.1	2.9	0.0	2.5	5.0
61+ years	0.9	0.5	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.7	3.3
Prefer not to say	2.9	2.9	1.8	5.8	1.9	1.7	3.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

App. Table 4: Ethnicity of Respondent

Base: All respondents

	ALL All	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS Trans
		All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
White	92.3	93.8	95.4	89.4	94.3	96.6	83.3
Mixed	4.3	3.1	2.5	4.8	3.2	1.7	11.7
Asian (inc Asian British)	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.6	0.0	0.0
Black (inc Black British)	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.8	0.0
Chinese	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
Prefer not to say	1.4	0.8	0.4	1.9	0.6	0.0	5.0
Other	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.8	0.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

App. Table 5: Religious Belief of Respondent

Base: All respondents

	ALL All	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS Trans
		All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
No religious belief	47.5	48.4	49.3	46.2	43.0	56.3	41.7
No strong belief (any religion)	22.7	23.4	23.2	24.0	29.7	15.1	18.3
Buddhist	0.9	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.0	1.7	1.7
Christian	17.1	16.4	17.1	14.4	15.8	19.3	21.7
Hindu	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Jewish	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
Muslim	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.7
Sikh	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0
Prefer not to say	3.8	3.4	2.5	5.8	3.8	0.8	6.7
Other	6.5	6.3	5.7	7.7	5.7	5.9	8.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

App. Table 6: Disabilities and Learning Difficulties Disclosed by Respondents

Base: All respondents

	ALL All	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS Trans
		All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
No long-term disability/illness	60.1	61.7	63.9	55.8	63.9	64.7	50.0
Mobility	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.8	1.9	6.7	5.0
Dexterity	1.8	1.8	1.1	3.8	1.3	0.0	1.7
Chest / breathing problems	6.8	6.3	6.1	6.7	8.2	3.4	10.0
Medical conditions	8.3	8.3	7.5	10.6	7.0	6.7	8.3
Sensory impairment	4.3	3.4	2.9	4.8	3.8	1.7	10.0
Speech, language and/or communications difficulties	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.9	1.9	0.8	3.3
Learning difficulties	10.4	9.1	9.3	8.7	9.5	8.4	18.3
Asperger's Syndrome	1.6	0.8	0.4	1.9	0.6	0.0	6.7
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Dyslexia	7.7	7.0	6.8	7.7	7.0	5.9	11.7
Dyscalculia	1.6	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.6	0.8	6.7
Dyspraxia	3.4	3.6	3.2	4.8	3.8	2.5	1.7
Moderate Learning Difficulty	1.1	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.6	0.8	3.3
Severe Learning Difficulty	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
Other	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0
Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs	2.9	2.6	1.8	4.8	1.9	1.7	5.0
Mental illness (inc. depression)	19.6	17.2	13.6	26.9	12.7	14.3	35.0
Prefer not to say	2.3	1.6	1.1	2.9	0.0	2.5	6.7
Other (please describe)	2.3	2.1	1.8	2.9	1.3	1.7	3.3

App. Table 7: Gender

Base: All respondents

	ALL All	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS Trans
		All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Male	46.8	49.7	56.4	31.7	100.0	0.0	28.3
Female	46.8	48.7	42.5	65.4	0.0	100.0	35.0
Intersex	1.1	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7
Other	5.2	1.3	0.7	2.9	0.0	0.0	30.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

App. Table 8: Openness about Sexual Orientation in Various Situations (those saying 'yes' as opposed to 'partially' or 'no')

Base: Those identifying their sexual orientation as other than heterosexual

	ALL All	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS Trans
		All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	
Base:	427 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	43 %
At home with family	53.9	54.2	66.4	21.2	62.7	72.3	51.2
With close friends outside your learning environment	82.2	82.6	90.0	62.5	89.2	91.6	79.1
With close friends within your learning environment	58.3	59.6	67.5	38.5	70.9	63.9	46.5
With learners in your class generally	36.1	36.7	43.2	19.2	46.8	38.7	30.2
With your co-workers in WBL employment	27.9	30.2	34.6	18.3	39.2	28.6	7.0
With your tutor(s)	34.7	34.4	41.1	16.3	44.3	37.0	37.2
With your employer in WBL	23.4	25.0	28.9	14.4	31.0	26.9	9.3
With student support services in your learning environment	32.1	30.7	35.7	17.3	39.9	30.3	44.2
In leisure activities/groups (excluding sport) in your learning environment	31.9	31.5	36.8	17.3	42.4	29.4	34.9
In sport (teams/clubs etc) in your learning environment	19.7	20.3	22.1	15.4	23.4	21.0	14.0
In your learning environment generally	39.6	40.4	46.1	25.0	49.4	42.0	32.6

App. Table 9: Current, Most Recent, Planned Future Type of Adult Learning Course

Base: All respondents

	ALL All	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS Trans
		All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Further Education course	45.0	45.8	43.2	52.9	43.7	42.9	40.0
Higher Education course	37.8	37.8	40.4	30.8	43.0	37.0	38.3
Work Based Learning course	7.7	8.3	8.9	6.7	8.2	9.2	3.3
Adult and Community Education course	8.6	7.8	7.5	8.7	5.1	10.9	13.3
Other	0.9	0.3	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

App. Table 10: Current, Most Recent, Planned Future Type of Learning Provision

Base: All respondents	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
A Further Education college course	43.5	44.5	43.6	47.1	43.7	43.7	36.7
Work-based learning based in college	2.0	2.1	1.8	2.9	2.5	0.8	1.7
Work-based learning based with an employer	4.5	4.9	5.4	3.8	4.4	5.9	1.7
Adult/community learning	7.7	7.0	6.1	9.6	3.2	10.1	11.7
Higher Education course at a Further Education provider	4.3	4.4	5.7	1.0	8.2	2.5	3.3
Higher Education course at a HE institution/university	35.1	34.6	35.7	31.7	35.4	36.1	38.3
Don't know / Not applicable	1.6	1.6	1.1	2.9	1.9	0.0	1.7
Other	1.4	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.6	0.8	5.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

App. Table 11: Current, Most Recent, Planned Future Type of Vocational or Academic Subject Area of Study

Base: All respondents	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
Base:	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Architecture, Building & Planning	2.7	2.6	1.4	5.8	1.9	0.8	3.3
Allied medical	6.3	7.0	7.1	6.7	7.0	6.7	1.7
Biological Sciences	3.4	3.9	3.2	5.8	4.4	1.7	0.0
Business and administration related studies	6.3	6.5	6.8	5.8	10.1	1.7	5.0
Communications and documentation studies	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.9	3.2	1.7	3.3
Creative & performing arts, graphics, and design	9.0	8.9	7.9	11.5	8.9	6.7	10.0
Education and related	11.7	11.7	12.9	8.7	14.6	10.9	11.7
Engineering and mechanics	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.5	3.4	3.3
Hair and/or beauty	2.7	1.8	1.4	2.9	1.9	0.8	8.3
Humanities - Languages and/or Literature	12.2	13.8	13.2	15.4	14.6	10.9	1.7
Mathematical, statistics and computer sciences	3.2	3.4	3.6	2.9	3.8	3.4	1.7
Physical Sciences	3.2	2.6	2.5	2.9	1.3	4.2	6.7
Other social care	1.1	1.3	1.8	0.0	0.6	3.4	0.0
Skills for life, employability skills, and related	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.9	1.3	0.8	0.0
Social sciences	7.2	7.3	7.5	6.7	4.4	11.8	6.7
Sport and related	0.9	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.6	0.8	1.7
Travel, tourism, hospitality, food & catering, and related	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.7	3.3
Veterinary sciences	0.7	0.8	1.1	0.0	1.3	0.8	0.0
Other	17.8	16.7	18.2	12.5	14.6	23.5	25.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

App. Table 12: Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity Issues in the Curriculum

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
LGB ISSUES							
Yes	12.4	12.5	12.9	11.5	15.2	10.1	11.7
Partially	11.0	11.2	11.4	10.6	11.4	11.8	10.0
No	13.3	14.6	16.4	9.6	17.7	14.3	5.0
I would not expect it to	16.4	16.4	14.3	22.1	14.6	14.3	16.7
Not stated	46.9	45.3	45	46.2	41.1	49.5	56.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
TRANS ISSUES							
Yes	7.0	7.3	8.6	3.8	9.5	7.6	5.0
Partially	9.2	9.4	9.3	9.6	11.4	6.7	8.3
No	18.5	19.3	19.6	18.3	18.4	21.0	13.3
I would not expect it to	17.6	17.7	16.4	21.2	17.7	15.1	16.7
Not stated	47.7	46.3	46.1	47.1	43	49.6	56.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

App. Table 13: How Welcoming Adult Learning Is (Personal experience)

Base: All respondents

	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
1 - Not at all welcoming	0.9	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.3	0.0	1.7
2	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0
3	2.7	2.9	3.2	1.9	2.5	3.4	1.7
4	2.7	1.8	2.1	1.0	1.9	2.5	8.3
5	7.0	7.3	7.9	5.8	6.3	10.1	5.0
6	9.0	9.1	8.6	10.6	8.9	7.6	8.3
7	16.4	18.0	13.9	28.8	12.7	15.1	6.7
8	19.8	20.6	20.0	22.1	20.9	19.3	15.0
9	14.2	14.1	16.1	8.7	17.7	14.3	15.0
10 - Extremely welcoming	17.3	17.2	18.9	12.5	22.2	15.1	18.3
Not stated	9.5	7.8	7.9	7.7	5.7	10.9	20.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Mean score out of ten	7.56	7.57	7.62	7.42	7.83	7.41	7.50

App. Table 14: Impact of Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity on Take-up, Retention and Achievement in Adult Learning

Base: All respondents	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
BARRIERS ENCOUNTERED TO TAKING UP LEARNING							
Due to sexual orientation	11.9	11.7	13.2	7.7	11.4	15.1	13.3
Due to gender identity	6.8	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.3	0.8	43.3
CONCERNS ABOUT STAYING IN LEARNING							
Due to sexual orientation	4.1	4.2	5.4	1.0	5.7	5.0	3.3
Due to gender identity	2.3	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.0	15.0
CONCERNS ABOUT ACHIEVING IN LEARNING							
Due to sexual orientation	4.3	4.2	5.0	1.9	3.8	6.7	5.0
Due to gender identity	2.7	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.6	0.8	15.0

App. Table 15: Barriers for LGB and/or T Learners Participating in / Staying in Adult Learning – From Personal Experience

Base: All respondents	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Same group of learners from school going on to FE/WBL	8.3	7.3	7.1	7.7	7.6	6.7	15.0
Lack of parental financial support due to SO or GI	8.8	8.1	7.1	10.6	7.6	5.9	13.3
Bullying or harassment from new group of learners in new learning environment	12.4	9.9	11.1	6.7	10.8	11.8	28.3
Lack of safe spaces in the learning environment	10.8	8.6	8.6	8.7	10.1	5.0	25.0
Insensitive curriculum content	19.1	17.2	18.6	13.5	14.6	21.8	31.7
Problems with bullying and harassment on way to learning	15.5	13.3	13.6	12.5	13.9	11.8	30.0

App. Table 16: 'Totally Safe' Areas within the Adult Learning Environment

Base: All respondents	ALL	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS
	All	All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	Trans
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
Social spaces within the learning site(s) e.g. canteen	35.6	38.0	39.3	34.6	44.3	33.6	20.0
Sports areas and facilities within the learning site(s)	27.3	28.6	30.0	25.0	32.3	27.7	18.3
Classrooms	45.5	47.4	50.0	40.4	57.6	41.2	33.3
Library	43.7	45.3	47.9	38.5	55.1	39.5	33.3
Work based learning employment/placement site	30.4	32.3	34.3	26.9	41.1	26.1	18.3
Other facilities (e.g. toilets)	31.8	33.6	36.8	25.0	38.6	35.3	20.0

App. Table 17: Type of Bullying and/or Harassment within Learning

Base: Those who have experienced bullying or harassment in learning

	ALL All	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS Trans
		All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	
Base:	76	57	45	12	24	19	19
Verbal abuse	16	12	8	4	3	5	4
Derogatory comments	4	1	1	0	0	1	3
Not being addressed according to present gender	40	37	30	7	16	12	3
Not addressed as requested	48	43	35	8	19	15	5
Physical abuse	57	45	37	8	19	16	12
Sexual abuse (unwanted contact over clothing)	54	42	34	8	16	16	12
Sexual abuse (interfering with/removing clothing)	62	49	40	9	20	18	13
Exclusion in the classroom/ learning environment	40	33	24	9	15	8	7
Exclusion in the learner social setting	34	28	22	6	13	9	6
Discrimination in practical work in classroom or WBL	44	34	27	7	16	10	10

App. Table 18: Perpetrators of Bullying and/or Harassment within Learning

Base: Those who have experienced bullying or harassment in learning

	ALL All	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS Trans
		All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	
Base:	76	57	45	12	24	19	19
Other learners on the course	46	33	24	9	11	12	13
Other learners (different course / year group)	33	24	19	5	11	7	9
Work colleagues in WBL	4	2	1	1	1	0	2
Tutor	19	13	11	2	5	5	6
Other staff	11	7	5	2	1	3	4
Manager/supervisor in WBL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
General public en route to place of learning/WBL	16	12	10	2	4	5	4
General public while on work placement	7	6	6	0	5	1	1
A person unknown - using electronic communications	8	5	2	3	1	1	3
Other	1	1	1	0	1	0	0

App. Table 19: Receipt of Satisfactory Response to Bullying and/or Harassment Report from Learning Provider

Base: Those who have experienced bullying or harassment in learning

	ALL All	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS Trans
		All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	
Base:	76	57	45	12	24	19	19
Yes totally	13	11	9	2	5	4	2
Yes partially	11	7	7	0	5	2	4
No not really	10	8	6	2	4	1	2
Not at all satisfactory	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Did not report to provider / not stated	41	30	23	7	10	12	11

App. Table 20: Support Systems for LGB and/or T Learners

Base: All respondents

	ALL All	LGB - NOT TRANS					TRANS Trans
		All	Lesbian or Gay	Bi or other	Gay Male	Lesbian Female	
	444 %	384 %	280 %	104 %	158 %	119 %	60 %
WELFARE OFFICER							
Yes, LGB and/or T friendly/specific	26.4	27.3	28.6	24.0	33.5	21.8	20.0
Yes, but too generic	21.8	20.3	18.2	26.0	17.7	19.3	31.7
No	13.3	13.0	11.4	17.3	10.1	13.4	15.0
Not sure	29.5	30.2	33.2	22.1	32.9	32.8	25.0
CLEAR RULES / POLICIES							
Yes, LGB and/or T friendly/specific	33.1	33.9	35.0	30.8	40.5	28.6	28.3
Yes, but too generic	23.2	21.9	20.4	26.0	19.6	21.0	31.7
No	9.9	9.9	8.6	13.5	10.1	6.7	10.0
Not sure	24.8	25.3	27.5	19.2	24.1	31.1	21.7
STUDENT UNION							
Yes, LGB and/or T friendly/specific	32.0	34.4	36.4	28.8	41.1	30.3	16.7
Yes, but too generic	19.4	19.0	18.6	20.2	17.1	21.0	21.7
No	14.9	13.5	10.4	22.1	10.8	10.1	23.3
Not sure	24.8	24.0	26.1	18.3	25.3	26.1	30.0
LGB/T SUPPORT GROUP							
Yes, LGB and/or T friendly/specific	34.7	35.7	38.2	28.8	41.1	34.5	28.3
Yes, but too generic	7.9	7.6	6.4	10.6	8.2	4.2	10.0
No	20.9	20.6	18.6	26.0	18.4	19.3	23.3
Not sure	27.5	27.1	28.2	24.0	26.6	29.4	30.0

Questionnaire (websurvey)

Q1 INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT 12

The Skills Funding Agency has commissioned Babcock Research, working with the Lesbian and Gay Foundation (LGF) and the Gender Identity Research and Education Society(GIRES), to undertake research with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans learners (and potential learners) about their experiences and views of adult learning. Adult learning funded by the Skills Funding Agency, includes Further Education, Work-Based Learning, and Adult and Community Education.

We are interested in the views of people who are participating in learning or who have participated in adult learning in the past, or who might participate in the future.

The results of the research will inform the Skills Funding Agency's equality objectives and will be used to provide evidence which could be helpful to other stakeholders, including colleges, providers and sector agencies to improve provision and help inform their equality processes. It should not take more than 15-20 minutes to complete the survey, and may be much quicker. Sometimes we use the abbreviation LGB and/or T learners for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Trans learners.

All responses are anonymous and results will be aggregated. If you have any questions about the research, or wish to participate in a different way (webchat; telephone etc.) please contact [email address / telephone number].

NEW SCREEN

Q2 ABOUT YOU

The first few questions of this survey will help us to get to know you and ask only questions that are appropriate to you. We will not use any of this information to identify you. In this section, we always give you the option to click a box to say that you prefer not to answer that question.

Q3	Which of the following age bands do you fit into?	Mandatory Single code
1	Under 19 years - THANK & CLOSE	7 41-45 years – Route to Q4
2	19-21 years – Route to Q4	8 46-50 years – Route to Q4
3	22-25 years – Route to Q4	9 51-55 years – Route to Q4
4	26-30 years– Route to Q4	10 56-60 years – Route to Q4
5	31-35 years– Route to Q4	11 61+ years – Route to Q4
6	36-40 years – Route to Q4	12 Prefer not to say – Route to Q4

NEW SCREEN

Q4	Which area of the country do you live in?	Mandatory Single code
1	East of England	All route to Q5
2	East Midlands	
3	London (Inner or Outer Boroughs)	
4	North East	
5	North West	
6	South East	
7	South West	
8	West Midlands	
9	Yorkshire and The Humber	
10	Other (please describe)	

Q5	Which of the following best described the character of the area you live in?	Mandatory Single code
1	Rural (village or smaller)	All route to Q6
2	Semi rural (small / market town)	
3	Urban / Sub-urban (town / suburb of a city)	
4	Metropolitan (large city)	

Questionnaire (websurvey)

Q6	To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong?	Mandatory Single code All route to Q7
1	White	
2	Mixed	
3	Asian (including Asian British)	
4	Black (including Black British)	
5	Chinese	
6	Prefer not to say	
7	Any other background (please describe)	

Q7	How would you describe your religion?	Mandatory Single code All route to Q8
1	No religious belief	
2	Not a strong believer in any religion	
3	Buddhist	
4	Christian	
5	Hindu	
6	Jewish	
7	Muslim	
8	Sikh	
9	Prefer not to say	
10	Other (please describe)	

NEW SCREEN

Q8	Do you have any health problems, disabilities or learning difficulties (unrelated to any gender reassignment treatment) that you expect will last for more than one year?	Mandatory Multi code
1	No disability or long-term limiting illness	Q10
2	Mobility (problems with back, neck, legs or feet)	Q10
3	Dexterity (problems with arms and/or hands)	Q10
4	Chest / breathing problems	Q10
5	Medical conditions (inc. heart, blood pressure, digestive, epilepsy, HIV)	Q10
6	Sensory impairment (sight / hearing)	Q10
7	Speech, language and/or communications difficulties	Q10
8	Learning difficulties (another question will allow you to tell us more details)	Q9
9	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs	Q10
10	Mental illness (inc. depression)	Q10
11	Prefer not to say	Q10
12	Other (please describe)	Q10

Q9	How would you describe your learning difficulty?	Optional Multi code Route to Q10
1	Dyslexia	
2	Dyscalculia	
3	Dyspraxia	
4	Moderate Learning Difficulty	
5	Severe Learning Difficulty	
6	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	
7	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	
8	Asperger's Syndrome	
9	Prefer not to say	
10	Other (please describe)	txt box

NEW SCREEN

Questionnaire (websurvey)

Q10	How would YOU describe your gender? We understand that you may not conform to the gender role expected of you either some of the time or all of the time.	Mandatory Single code
1	Male	Route to Q11
2	Female	
3	Intersex	
4	Other (please describe, e.g. both male and female / neither male nor female)	
5	Prefer not to say	

Q11	Do you consider yourself to be trans gender? (By this term we mean you may not conform to the gender identity expected of you either some of the time or all of the time, or have in the past not conformed to the gender identity expected of you).	Mandatory Single code
1	Yes (the next question will allow you to provide more explanation)	Route to Q12
2	No	Route to Q14
3	Not sure	Route to Q12
4	Prefer not to say	Route to Q14

NEW SCREEN

Q12	Which of the following best describes you? If you prefer a description that is not listed, please select 'other' and type in your own preferred description.	Mandatory - Multi code - all route to Q13
1	Assigned male at birth - now identify myself as female	
2	Assigned male at birth - now live as female	
3	Assigned male at birth - undergone/undergoing medical/surgical reassignment	
4	Assigned female at birth - now identify myself as male	
5	Assigned female at birth - now live as male	
6	Assigned female at birth - undergone/undergoing medical/surgical reassignment	
7	Currently identify as both male and female	
8	Currently identify as neither gender	
9	None of these - I identify myself as the gender assigned to me at birth	
10	Other (please describe)	

Q13	If applicable, please answer the following. Do you...?	Optional Multi code Route to Q14
1	Live in the new gender role full time	
2	Live in the new gender role part time	
3	Switch between gender roles	
4	Deliberately present as 'ambiguous'	

NEW SCREEN

Q14	How would you describe your sexual orientation?	Mandatory Single code Route to Q15
1	Heterosexual / straight	
2	Gay / Lesbian	
3	Bisexual	
4	Other (please describe, e.g. queer, asexual etc)	

NEW SCREEN

Questionnaire (websurvey)

<p>Q15 Which of the following best describes the highest formal qualification you hold?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 No formal qualifications 2 Entry level (includes Entry Levels 1-3) e.g Skills for Life 3 Level 1 (Up to 4 O Levels / GCSEs / CSEs / NVQ Level 1) 4 Level 2 (5 or more O Levels / GCSEs at grades A-C / 1 A Level / 2 AS Levels / NVQ Level 2) 5 Level 3 (2 or more A levels / 4 or more AS Levels / NVQ Level 3) 6 Level 4 or higher (Degree (e.g. BA, BSc, MA, MSc) / Degree Level Nursing or Teaching qualifications / NVQ Level 4) 7 Other (please describe) 	<p>Mandatory Single code Route to Q16</p>
--	---

NEW SCREEN

<p>Q16 Which of the following best describes your current involvement in any learning in Further Education, Work Based Learning or Adult and Community Learning ? The next question will explore your relationship to learning in more detail regardless of whether you are currently learning.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Not currently engaged in any learning 2 Currently engaged in some learning activity 	<p>Mandatory Single code</p> <p>Route to Q17 Route to Q19 if LGB ... else to Q22</p>
--	---

NEW SCREEN

<p>Q17 We understand that you are not currently undertaking any learning activity, but would like to understand a bit more about your past experience and possible future learning. Which of the following best describes your relationship with learning?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 I have not been engaged in Further Education, Work Based Learning or Adult Education, but plan to be within the next year. 2 I have not been engaged in Further Education, Work Based Learning or Adult Education, but plan to be within the next 3 years. 3 I have not been engaged in Further Education, Work Based Learning or Adult Education, and don't intend to be. 4 I left Further Education learning within the last 5 years 5 I left Further Education learning 6 years (or more) ago 	<p>Mandatory Single code</p> <p>Q21 if LGB ... Q24 else Q21 if LGB ... Q24 else Q18 Q20 if LGB ... Q23 else Q20 if LGB ... Q23 else</p>
--	--

NEW SCREEN

<p>Q18 Please briefly describe the reason(s) that you don't feel you would like to engage in Further Education, Work Based Learning or Adult Education in the future? Are there any particular barriers or concerns related to your sexual orientation and/or gender identity?</p>	<p>Optional open text</p> <p>CLOSE</p>
---	--

NEW SCREEN

<p>Q19 Are you open about your sexual orientation in the following environments? For each environment, please select one description of your openness.</p> <p>Q20 When you were engaged in adult learning, were you open about your sexual orientation in the following environments? For each environment, please select one description of your openness.</p> <p>Q21 For each environment listed below (including learning environments that you might enter in the future), please select one description how open you are/would be about your sexual orientation. <i>Scale: yes, partially, no, don't know, not applicable</i></p> <p>At home with family</p> <p>With close friends outside your learning environment</p> <p>With close friends within your learning environment</p> <p>With learners in your class generally</p>	<p>Route to Q22 if trans – else Q25</p> <p>Route to Q23 if trans – else Q25</p> <p>Route to Q24 if trans- else Q25</p> <p>Mandatory Each row</p>
--	---

Questionnaire (websurvey)

With your co-workers in Work Based Learning employment
 With your tutor(s)
 With your employer in Work Based Learning
 With student support services in your learning environment
 In leisure activities/groups (excluding sport) in your learning environment
 In sport (teams/clubs etc) in your learning environment
 In your learning environment generally

NEW SCREEN

Q22 Are you open about your gender identity in the following environments? For each environment, please select one description of your openness from the list.

Q23 When you were engaged in adult learning, were you open about your gender identity in the following environments? For each environment, please select one description of your openness.

Q24 For each environment listed below (including learning environments that you might enter in the future), please select one description how open you are/would be about your gender identity.

With close friends outside your learning environment **Route to Q25**
 With close friends within your learning environment
 With learners in your class generally
 With your co-workers in Work Based Learning employment
 With your tutor(s)
 With your employer in Work Based Learning
 With student support services in college/Work Based Learning
 In leisure activities/groups (excluding sport) in your college/Work Based Learning
 In sporting environment (teams/clubs etc) college / Work Based Learning
 In your learning environment generally

NEW SCREEN

Q25 Have you encountered any barriers so far to taking up adult learning opportunities because of your sexual orientation and/or gender identity? Please feel free to include any barriers that you think exist, that have influenced what you have done (e.g. fear of discrimination). **Mandatory**

No **Route to Q26**
 Yes, due to sexual orientation (please describe)
 Yes, due to gender identity (please describe)

Q26 Do you have any concerns about remaining in your current learning provision to complete your current learning aim(s) because of your sexual orientation and/or gender identity? **Mandatory**

No **Route to Q27**
 Yes, due to sexual orientation (please describe)
 Yes, due to gender identity (please describe)

Q27 Do you have any concerns about your ability to achieve your current learning aim(s) because of your sexual orientation and/or gender identity? **Mandatory**

No **Route to Q28**
 Yes, due to sexual orientation (please describe)
 Yes, due to gender identity (please describe)

NEW SCREEN

Q28 What type of course are you either taking/thinking of taking/did you take most recently? **Mandatory single code**

Further Education course **Route to Q29**
 Higher Education course
 Work Based Learning course
 Adult and Community Education course
 Other (please specify)

Questionnaire (websurvey)

Q29	With what type of provider are you learning with / thinking of learning with / or did you learn with?	Mandatory single code
	A Further Education College	Q30
	Work-based learning (e.g. apprenticeship) based in college	Q30
	Work-based learning (e.g. apprenticeship) based with an employer	Q30
	Adult/community learning	Q30
	Higher Education course at a Further Education provider	Q30
	Higher Education course at a Higher Education institution/university	Q30
	I am not in learning at the moment	Q30
	Other (please specify)	Route to Q40

NEW SCREEN

Q30	Please indicate the vocational or academic subject area that best fits the course you are studying	Mandatory Single code Route to Q32
	Architecture, Building and Planning.	
	Allied medical (e.g. nursing, sports therapy, psychology, counselling)	
	Biological Sciences	
	Business and administration related studies	
	Communications and documentation (library, journalism, media) studies	
	Creative & performing arts, graphics, and design	
	Education and related	
	Engineering and mechanics	
	Hair and/or beauty	
	Humanities - Languages and/or Literature	
	Mathematical, statistics and computer sciences	
	Physical Sciences	
	Other social care	
	Skills for life, employability skills, and related	
	Social sciences	
	Sport and related	
	Travel, tourism, hospitality, food & catering, and related	
	Veterinary sciences	
	Other (please describe)	

NEW SCREEN

Q31 EXPERIENCES IN LEARNING

Q32	How welcoming is adult learning in your experience? (and by adult learning we mean Further Education, Work Based Learning and Adult and Community Education) on a scale of 1-10 with one being not at all welcoming and 10 extremely welcoming.	Mandatory Scale 1-10 Route to Q33
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Don't know	

NEW SCREEN

Q33	Have you experienced bullying and/or harassment in learning relating to your sexual orientation or gender identity?	Mandatory Single code
	Yes, due to sexual orientation	Q34
	Yes, due to gender identity	Q34
	No	Q40

NEW SCREEN

Q34	When was the most recent incident of bullying and/or harassment in ADULT LEARNING relating to your sexual orientation or gender identity? Please select one from the list below	Mandatory Single code
	I am currently experiencing bullying and/or harassment	Route to Q35
	Within the past year	
	1-2 years ago	
	3-5 years ago	
	6 or more years ago	

Questionnaire (websurvey)

<p>Q35 This may be difficult to answer, but would you indicate what type(s) of bullying and/or harassment you have experienced IN ADULT LEARNING? Please indicate how often this occurs/occurred <i>Scale: Never; Infrequently; Sometimes; Often; Always</i></p> <p>Threatening behaviour Verbal abuse Derogatory comments Not being addressed in accordance with your present gender Not being addressed as you have requested (if you do not identify with either gender, or identify with both) Physical abuse Sexual abuse (unwanted contact over clothing) Sexual abuse (unwanted contact, interfering with/removing clothing) Exclusion in the classroom/learning environment Exclusion in the learner social setting Discrimination in practical work in classroom or tasks in Work Based Learning setting Other (please specify)</p>	<p>Mandatory</p> <p>Route to Q36</p>
---	--

<p>Q36 You may use this space to describe any other types of bullying or harassment that you have experienced within adult learning because of your sexual orientation and/or gender identity.</p>	<p>Optional text</p> <p>Route to Q37</p>
---	--

NEW SCREEN

<p>Q37 Who were/are the perpetrators of this bullying and/or harassment?</p> <p>Other learners on your course Other learners on other courses/different year groups Work colleagues in Work Based Learning Tutor Other staff Manager/supervisor in Work Based Learning General public en route to place of learning/Work Based Learning General public while on work placement A person unknown - using electronic communications Other (please specify)</p>	<p>Mandatory</p> <p>Multi code</p> <p>Route to Q38</p>
--	---

NEW SCREEN

<p>Q38 Did you feel able to report any problems that you encountered?</p> <p>Yes, within the learning environment/to learning provider Yes, outside the learning environment to external authorities e.g. police Yes, but outside the learning environment to family and friends No</p>	<p>Mandatory</p> <p>Single code</p> <p>Q39 Q40 Q40 Q40</p>
---	---

NEW SCREEN

<p>Q39 Was the response from your learning provider satisfactory?</p> <p>Yes totally Yes partially No not really Not at all satisfactory</p>	<p>Mandatory</p> <p>Single code</p> <p>Route to Q41</p>
--	--

NEW SCREEN

<p>Q40 Why did you not feel able to report the problems to your learning provider? Please describe.</p>	<p>Route to Q41</p>
--	----------------------------

NEW SCREEN

Questionnaire (websurvey)

<p>Q41 Is there / was there anyone in a position of authority in your learning environment that you can/could turn to to discuss any problems you have? Please select all that apply from the list below</p> <p>No – there's no-one I can/could turn to</p> <p>Yes – Tutor</p> <p>Yes – Other college/Work Based Learning teaching staff</p> <p>Yes – Welfare officer</p> <p>Yes – Work Based Learning manager/supervisor</p> <p>Yes – Other workers in my Work Based Learning employment</p> <p>Yes – Another learner (peer)</p> <p>Other (please specify)</p>	<p>Mandatory Multiple code</p> <p>Route to Q42</p>
--	---

NEW SCREEN

Q42 YOUR LEARNING PROVIDER AND EQUALITY

<p>Q43 Have you experienced any positive experiences/outcomes in your learning because of your sexual orientation and/or gender identity?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>Mandatory Single code</p> <p>Q44</p> <p>Q45</p>
---	--

NEW SCREEN

<p>Q44 What sort of positive experiences and/or outcomes in your learning did you have because of your sexual orientation and/or gender identity</p> <p><i>Scale: Yes, No, Not applicable</i></p> <p>Invited to be a representative on student council</p> <p>Invited to be LGB and/or T representative on student council</p> <p>Offered training to be a welfare officer or other student officer</p> <p>Offered training to be an LGB and/or T welfare officer or other student officer</p> <p>Being offered training to volunteer in an LGB and/or T organisation</p> <p>Being able to play other active role in student life</p> <p>Other (please specify)</p>	<p>Mandatory</p> <p>Route to Q45</p>
--	--

<p>Q45 To the best of your knowledge, does your learning provider have an equality policy relating to, or including, sexual orientation?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know</p>	<p>Mandatory Single code Route to Q46</p>
--	--

<p>Q46 To the best of your knowledge, does your learning provider have an equality policy relating to, or including, gender identity?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know</p>	<p>Mandatory Single code Route to Q47</p>
---	--

NEW SCREEN

<p>Q47 Do you feel that the policy translates into reality within the learning environment? i.e. that it is effective in preventing discrimination (and/or deals well with any incidents that occur beyond the provider's control).</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Only partially (please explain)</p>	<p>Mandatory Single code</p> <p>Route to Q47</p>
--	---

<p>Q48 To the best of your knowledge, does your learning environment have a clear reporting mechanism for bullying and harassment?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know</p>	<p>Mandatory Single code</p> <p>Q49</p> <p>Q50</p> <p>Q50</p>
--	---

Questionnaire (websurvey)

NEW SCREEN

Q49	Does/did the syllabus that you are/were taught reflect an understanding of ... <i>Scale: Yes; Partially; Not at all; Would not expect it to</i> LGB issues Trans issues	Mandatory Route to Q50
------------	---	---

Q50	Please type in any comments you wish to make about the syllabus reflecting an understanding of sexual orientation and/or gender identity	optional Route to Q51
------------	---	--

Q51	For each type of area within the learning environment, please indicate the extent to which you feel that environment is a 'safe space' for you, regardless of whether or not you choose to be open about your sexual orientation and/or gender identity. <i>Scale: Never; Seldom, Sometimes; Often; Always Not applicable</i> Social spaces within the learning site(s) e.g. canteen Sports areas and facilities within the learning site(s) Classrooms Library Work based learning employment/placement site Other facilities (e.g. toilet areas) Other areas (please specify)	Mandatory Route to Q52
------------	--	---

Q52	Are you aware that there is a legal protection from discrimination because of your sexual orientation and your gender identity in the learning environment? Yes No	Mandatory Single code Route to Q53
------------	---	---

NEW SCREEN

Q53	What barriers are you aware of for LGB and/or T learners participating in / staying in adult learning? <i>Scale : Yes in my experience, Yes in a friend's experience, I believe it to be the case, No, I have no knowledge of this;</i> Same group of learners from school going on to Further Education and Work Based Learning together Lack of parental financial support because of sexual orientation and/or gender identity Bullying or harassment from new group of learners in new learning environment Lack of safe spaces in the learning environment Insensitive curriculum content Problems with bullying and harassment on way to learning Other (please specify)	Mandatory Route to Q54
------------	---	---

Q54	You may use this space to describe any other barriers to participating in / staying in adult learning for LGB and/or T learners	Optional text - Route to Q55
------------	--	---

NEW SCREEN

Questionnaire (websurvey)

Q55	What support systems are you aware of for LGB and/or T learners in your adult learning provision? <i>Scale: Yes LGB and/or T specific/friendly; Yes, but generic; No; Not sure</i> Welfare officer Clear rules/policies Student union Access to LGB and/or T support group Other (please specify)	Mandatory Route to Q56
------------	--	---

NEW SCREEN

Q56	Were you offered any support regarding your LGB and/or T status as part of your induction into your learning provision? Yes, I was told about a range of general support services but NOT LGB and/or Trans support services Yes, I was told about a range of support including LGB but not Trans Yes, I was told about a range of support including Trans but not LGB Yes, I was told about a range of support including both LGB and Trans Yes, because I sought it out No, I was not offered any support	Mandatory Single code Route to Q57
------------	---	---

NEW SCREEN

Q57	Is there any good practice in your adult learning experience that you would like to share?	Open text Route to Q58
------------	---	---

NEW SCREEN

Q58	Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience in adult learning?	Open text Route to Q59
------------	--	---

Q59	In addition to this online survey, our research will include some more in-depth discussions with individuals and small groups of people in adult learning. Would you be willing to get involved in the next stage of our research by talking to a researcher (by telephone, in person or via a secure webchat)? This would take 30-60 minutes, and can be arranged for a time and communication method that suits you. Yes No	Mandatory Single-code Route to Q61 Route to end
------------	--	--

NEW SCREEN

Questionnaire (websurvey)

Q60 This research has been commissioned by the Skills Funding Agency, an agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, responsible for funding and regulating adult further education and skills training in England. Its work focuses on education and training for people aged 19+ in further education (excluding universities). Many thanks for your interest in this piece of research, but we do not need to take up your time to complete the full survey as we are currently looking to collect the views and experiences of people aged 19+ in further education, about whom less research has been conducted before.

When you click on from this page, you will be directed to the Project 12 website, which contains some links to other organisations supporting the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-gender communities, in education and training, and more generally.

Q61 Please write in any contact details, that we can use to make contact with you. We take confidentiality seriously. We promise that we will only talk directly with you, and will not leave messages with anyone else who may answer your telephone, and will not reveal the subject matter of our research. You may also 'volunteer' for the further research by contacting Project12 directly [contact details]

Your name

Telephone number (daytime)

Telephone number (evenings)

Email

Confirm email

Q62 **THANK YOU PAGE** - Many thanks for sparing the time to provide your views to this important research.

Once again, we would like to reassure you that all your views will be treated in the strictest confidence. You will not be identified in any reporting of this survey.

If you have given your permission for us to re-contact you, we will only do so in relation to this research project, and we will only talk directly to you (we will never leave messages with other people or reveal to a third party the purpose of any contact we attempt to make with you).

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

WELCOME

Thank the stakeholders/participants for taking the time to contribute to this consultation for the Skills Funding Agency – research into the barriers to and experiences of adult learning for LGB&T learners/potential learners. Babcock Research is an independent research agency that has been commissioned to conduct the research

Housekeeping - fire exits, tea/coffee, incentives, length of time for discussion.

Recap objectives of the research.

Ground rules – listen to each other, give everyone time, respect opinions.

Confidentiality – how information will be used and shared. Participants can choose to answer / talk off the record.

Check whether it is OK to audio record the discussion to back-up your note-taking, and ensure that a complete and accurate record is made of what was said.

Introductions / icebreaker:

Names

Introduce yourself to the group as you would in a social situation – free to include/exclude whatever information they wish

What words/phrases (up to 3) would they use to describe the experience of taking part in adult learning?

BACKGROUND

Give background - Conducted a websurvey and individual interviews. This focus group is to explore ideas in more depth and to suggest any recommendations for the sector.

EXPERIENCE OF ADULT LEARNING

Overall experience and perception:

Explore the types of provision have participated in – learning area/learning provider types.

How welcoming is adult learning (comparator question)?

(THEN PROBE)

In general is there a perception that some forms of adult learning are more LGB&T friendly than others? If so why? What forms are perceived as being LGB&T unfriendly – e.g. types of course etc.

THEN PROMPT: STEM subjects; gender stereotypical subjects; types of provision WBL etc.?

What can be done about this at the provider level? What can be done at a strategic level?

Experience of bullying and/or harassment:

Have you experienced bullying and/or harassment in adult learning (please reassure confidentiality – also probe for bullying and/or harassment that they are not comfortable talking about – yes/no and leave)

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

What, in your knowledge, are the forms of bullying/harassment that occur in adult learning – *probe for frequency and the type of person who perpetrates each*

DO NOT READ OUT

Verbal abuse

Derogatory comments

Not being addressed in accordance with your present gender

Not being addressed as you have requested (if you do not identify with either gender, or identify with both)

Physical abuse

Sexual abuse (unwanted contact over clothing)

Sexual abuse (unwanted contact, interfering with/removing clothing)

Exclusion in the classroom/learning environment

Exclusion in the learner social setting

Discrimination in practical work in classroom or tasks in Work Based Learning setting

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (time indication)

How do you find spending time in an adult learning environment? *This environment may include younger learners.*

Do you feel that the culture of your learning environment is LGB&T friendly, neutral or unfriendly – why?

Does your learning environment generally feel like a safe space in which you can (if you wish) be open about your sexual orientation and/or gender identity?

Are there areas within the learning environment where you feel it is particularly safe / less safe to be open?

NOTE : Those who are not open about their SO or GI may answer this in relation to how safe they feel to be accepted by others – whatever assumptions are made about them.

Probe for positive images of LGB/T or negative images (including graffiti etc)

Are any of the areas that feel less safe for you barriers to you participating fully in the learning experience?

Probe for transport, social, sport etc

Have you experienced any tensions with other groups of learners – e.g. ethnic or religious groups?

Curriculum / tuition

Have you had any positive/negative experiences of the curriculum reflecting sexual orientation and/or gender identity issues?

Do you have any recommendations for what the curriculum (for your subject area – or others) could reasonably include?

Do you have any positive/negative experiences of teaching staff's ways of including LGB and/or T issues within their tuition (in groups or one-to-one)?

Do you perceive any types of learning provision to be more or less sensitive to LGB and/or T than others?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

LEARNER SUPPORT

Are you aware of any equality policies that your learning providers has? Do they mention LGB and/or T issues?

How should learners be made aware of such policies?

Do you feel that any policies that exist are put into practice by their learning provider?

Do you know of any mechanisms for reporting incidents of LGB/T bullying or harassment, or unequal treatment?

What support officer(s), if any, are you aware of? Generic / LBG and/or T specific?

Have they made contact with any? How useful was that?

Any suggestions for making it easier for LGB and/or T learners to access support appropriate to them?

MONITORING

While providers wish to protect people's privacy, and do not want to move towards asking all learners to reveal their sexual orientation and/or trans status at registration or any other time, how can learning providers sensibly monitor their accessibility and support for LGB and/or T learners?

Probe – registration or later (when) - with what Data Protection/confidentiality commitments would they reveal?

e.g. would they be prepared to reveal SO / GI on a form IF it was not going to be passed to tutors etc?

e.g. reveal one-to-one to tutor IF it will not be passed to fellow learners

Do you have any recommendations for increasing recruitment of adult learners who are LGB and/or T ?

Do you have any recommendations for improving retention (and/or achievement) for adult learners who are LGB and/or T?

CLOSE

Can you give any examples of good practice in supporting LGB and/or T adults in learning?

What is the worst example well meant but mis-guided actions you have witnessed in adult learning relating to someone's LGB and/or T status?

Do you have any suggestions for making adult learning even more accessible to and productive for LGB and/or T learners?

Skills Funding Agency

Cheylesmore House

Quinton Road

Coventry CV1 2WT

T 0845 377 5000

F 024 7682 3675

www.bis.gov.uk/skillsfundingagency



© Skills Funding Agency

Published by the Skills Funding Agency

Extracts from this publication may be reproduced for non-commercial, educational or training purposes on condition that the source is acknowledged and the findings are not misrepresented.

This publication is available in electronic form on the Skills Funding Agency website:

www.bis.gov.uk/skillsfundingagency

If you require this publication in an alternative format or language, please contact the LSC

Help Desk: 0870 900 6800.

Skills Funding Agency – P– 110048