

telling it like it is

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth
Speak Out on Homophobic Violence



Foreward

In these days of Lifestyle politics and the so-called pink pound it is both refreshing and heartening to find groups like GALOP telling it like it still is. Not that I am a supporter of victim politics, it is just that violence against young people from their families, friends and school colleagues is still happening because they come out.

This report is therefore a welcome contribution to the current realities of being lesbian or gay at the turn of the 21st Century. Of course we have made progress and we enjoy the opportunities to celebrate our right to be different, but the reality remains that many of us, young and old and even middle aged like me still have to deal with the reality of violence and discrimination that are part of what it means to live in hypocritical and repressed Britain today.

What is particularly refreshing is that here are young people speaking for themselves about their experiences, rather than others doing it on their behalf. Perhaps the most shocking but inevitable aspect of this research is that the highest proportion of harassment and violence comes from within the school setting. Those of us who campaigned against Clause 28 in the 1980s predicted that this might happen. The case has now been made of irrefutable facts that Clause 28 causes harm to real people, real lesbians and gay young people.

The demand amongst the many contained in this excellent report that must be taken up at once by the Labour Government is the repeal of Clause 28, it is something that can and should be done and it will not cost a single penny, it would make Britain a slightly more just and equal place.

Linda Bellos
(Political activist, broadcaster, writer, former leader of Lambeth Council)



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Introduction

telling it like it is



GALOP'S WORK

GALOP is a voluntary sector community organisation which offers assistance to lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in dealing with homophobic violence and the police.

GALOP seeks to represent lesbians, gay men and bisexuals to London's various police and other crime prevention authorities and lobbies for changes and improvements in police services/practices in relation to lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. GALOP is also involved with developing community safety and crime prevention issues, including community education. GALOP provides a telephone advice service to individuals concerned with policing or violence, undertakes limited advocacy work on behalf of clients in specific need, co-ordinates community representation to the police service, initiates research and activates projects around policing and community safety issues, contributes a lesbian and gay perspective to public debates on policing and community safety and continually monitors the needs of clients. GALOP also works in partnership with complimentary campaigning, lobbying, advice, support and other organisations providing related and relevant services.

Since GALOP's inception many improvements have been made in policing practices. Homophobic /lesbian-hating violence and harassment is now monitored in every police division in London. The Metropolitan Police have appointed a lesbian/gay Contact Officer in each division to act as a first point of contact for lesbian and gay victims of crime. Police operations in public sex environments and raids on lesbian/gay venues are less frequent and often follow guidelines agreed between the police and the community. GALOP has also provided awareness training around lesbian and gay issues to some divisions, most recently Islington, and





centrally, at Scotland Yard to the Lesbian and Gay Contact Officers. GALOP is generally acknowledged as having played a key role in obtaining these improvements, although recognises that there is still much to be achieved.

BACKGROUND TO GALOP

GALOP was established in the mid 1980's to provide a service for London's gay men. Another organisation, LESPOP, provided related services for lesbians. Both organisations were funded by the Greater London Council until its abolition transferred voluntary sector funding to the London Borough Grants Committee. LBGC funding was withdrawn from LESPOP in 1989. After this time GALOP had the stated aims of providing services for lesbians and gay men, although in practice it continued to concentrate on policing issues for gay men. GALOP also failed to involve or consult with the black lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

THE CURRENT ORGANISATION

GALOP underwent an extensive restructuring process in 1995, overseen by a new management committee. In April of that year two new workers were appointed and soon after this, the GALOP helpline was re-launched. Since its re-constitution GALOP's intention has been two-fold:

- to begin the process of re-establishing GALOP with lesbian and gay communities in London
- to facilitate a community response to lesbian and gay policing issues.



As a result of this process, GALOP aims to prioritise its development and relevance to lesbians and the black lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. In January and February of 1996 GALOP, in conjunction with several other lesbian and gay organisations, held four community consultations, one of which was for lesbians only and another for black lesbian, gay and bisexual people. A report was produced which made recommendations for GALOP's service provision.

Since 1995 GALOP has built solid foundations both in terms of developing its internal procedures as well as through considerable networking and liaison which has resulted in some positive working relationships with a wide number of organisations and agencies.

THE YOUTH PROJECT

The needs of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people was an issue raised by the four community consultations that GALOP held in 1996. That young people had specific issues around violence and dealing with the police was accepted, how to provide a service to this difficult to reach group was less obvious.

In 1996 GALOP decided to make a bid to the National Lotteries Charities Board for funding for a Youth Project Worker who could consult with young lesbian, gay and bisexual people to find out what their experience of violence and policing issues actually was, what needs they had for support around these issues and how GALOP could meet these needs through its service provision.

The application was successful despite a tabloid outcry and John Major's comments in the House of Commons that money to lesbian and gay organisations was 'ill-judged and ill-advised'.





Kelly Alexander was appointed as the Youth Worker for GALOP in December 1996 and was tasked with researching the needs of young lesbians, gay men and bisexual people with a view to making recommendations to the GALOP management committee about ways of enhancing the existing service provision.



VIOLENCE AND YOUNG PEOPLE

According to the 1996 Stonewall Survey, “Queerbashing”, 48% of all young people under 18, who responded to the survey, had experienced violence.

This statistic and the experience of working with young people suggested to GALOP that young people are disproportionately vulnerable to abuse and harassment because of the prolific homophobia ingrained in Institutions like the ‘traditional family’ and schools.

The homophobia that young people experience can range from name calling to sexual assault. This may sound like the Hate Crimes that affect Queers in general, but many of us have been able to leave behind the intense everyday harassment from family members and school bullies.

Although isolation is not exclusive to younger lesbian, gay and bisexual people, their age, lack of resources and limited social and support networks can make coping with homophobic harassment and lesbian-hating violence a formidable task.

For young people in general, adolescence is a time of anxiety and uncertainty, as they struggle to express their individuality. For lesbian, gay and bisexual young people this is also often the time that they are



attempting to come to terms with a stigmatised sexuality. It is expected that young people find support, advice and affirmation from families, friends, teachers, youth workers and mainstream agencies such as health services. The institutions that this support comes from however are often where homophobia is most rife.

So where is the support if you are young, have been beaten up because you are not straight and your family and friends don't want to know?

This is what the GALOP Youth Survey attempted to find out.

THE YOUTH SURVEY

The Youth Survey was a questionnaire based piece of research aimed at young lesbian, gay and bisexual people living, working or playing in the London area. The definition of young for the purposes of the research was under 25.

The survey posed a series of questions about the respondents' experience of

- verbal abuse (shouted at/called names/threatened)
- physical abuse (pushed/spat at/things thrown/beaten up)
- sexual abuse (groped/flashed at/indecently assaulted/raped)
- other harassment (hate mail/property stolen or damaged/abusive phone calls)

focusing on the respondents' perception of the abuse.

Young people were asked to identify the type of incident, its location, whether the incident was isolated (ie: occurred once) or repeated





(ie: occurred more than once) and why they perceived themselves to be the target of the incident. Respondents were then asked about police involvement, that is, did they report, what was the police response, would they report again e.t.c. Finally the questionnaire asked respondents to identify what support they actually received and what services they felt they would have liked to have been available.

GALOP recognised that young lesbian, gay and bisexual people were a difficult to reach group and so in order to facilitate as many young people as possible in participating in the survey a number of agencies, with diverse remits, were contacted, including:-

Visited

- lesbian, gay and bisexual youth groups
- lesbian and gay organisations that may be accessed by the under 25's, including those with specific remits to work with black lesbian, gay and bisexual people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people with disabilities and bisexual groups.

Contacted by Post

- youth counselling services that may be accessed by young lesbian, gay and bisexual people
- the National Union of Students
- housing associations that provide targeted bed space to young lesbian, gay and bisexual people
- lesbian and gay organisations that may be accessed by the under 25's, including those with specific remits to work with



black lesbian, gay and bisexual people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people with disabilities and bisexual groups.

- lesbian and gay venues in London
- sexual health services, particularly those focusing on lesbian and gay issues

Various articles and press releases also appeared in: Metro News (the news letter of the South London lesbian, gay and bisexual centre), Thud and Time Out. Attempts to utilise other press sources where not successful.

The result over 7 months was a response of 202 surveys. Most success, in terms of responses, was gained from actual visits to lesbian, gay and bisexual youth groups where it was possible to explain the purpose of the survey, be on hand while young people completed them and offer advice/support on the spot to any concerns that the young people raised. Unfortunately, due to the limitations of the post, this was not possible for all the targeted organisations listed.

THIS REPORT

The aim of this report is to pull together all of the data collected during the youth survey and to present in a useful form with analysis to, primarily, the GALOP management committee but also other voluntary and statutory agencies, both lesbian / gay and mainstream, who have an interest in looking at their service provision to young lesbians, gay men and bisexuals and exploring how these services can be enhanced to meet the very specific needs of young lesbians, gay and bisexual people experiencing violence.





In addition to an analysis of the types of violence, the motivation for attack and the location and perpetrators involved in attacks the report will highlight:-

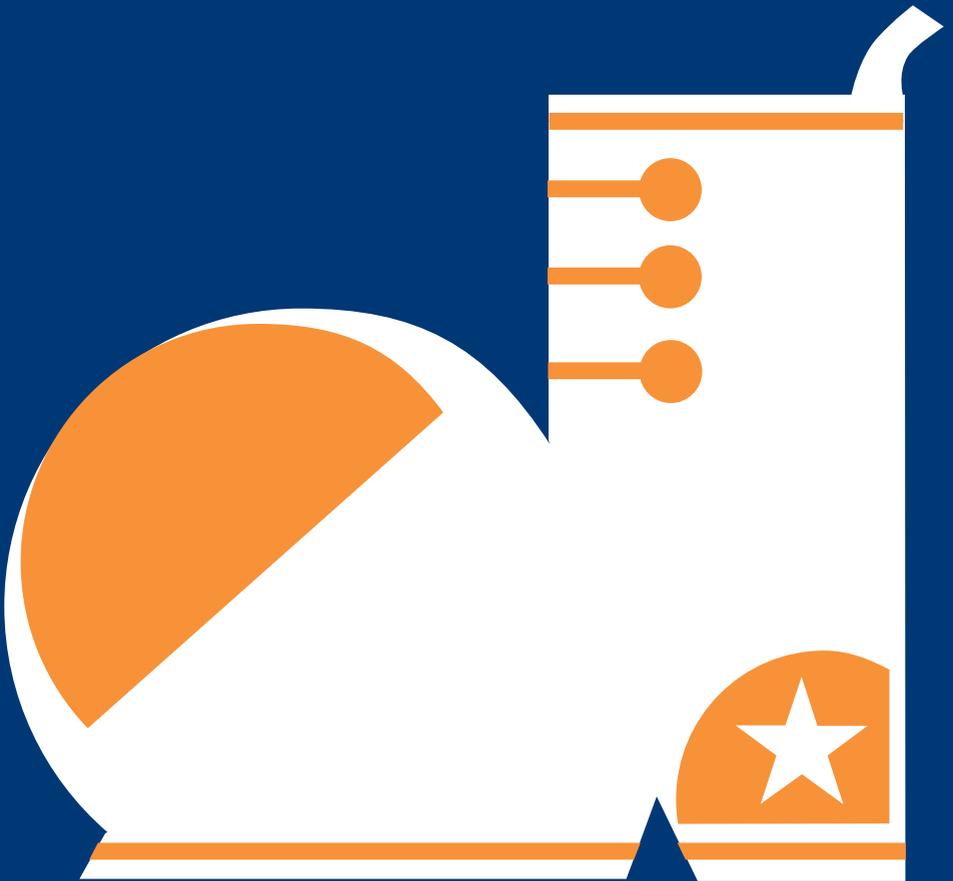


- the experience of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people in schools
- the experience of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people in families
- the difference in experience of lesbians and bisexual women compared to gay and bisexual men
- the experience of young lesbians, gay men and bisexuals who are Black, Asian or from other marginalised ethnic groups

Summaries of policing issues and support issues will also be offered and these will inform the recommendations that will form the conclusion to the report.



types and effects of violence





To re-cap, the definitions of the types of violence that the survey used are:-

- **verbal abuse**
which included being: shouted at, called names, threatened
- **physical abuse**
which included being: pushed, spat at, beaten up or having things thrown at you
- **sexual abuse**
which included being: groped, flashed at, indecently assaulted, raped
- **other harassment**
which included: receiving hate mail or abusive calls, having property stolen or damaged e.g. graffiti

v e r b a l a b u s e

54% Repeated

29% Isolated

83% RESPONDED



physical abuse

The definitions of physical abuse were defined further to include:-

- **Intimidation** e.g. having things thrown at you or being spat at
- **Attack** e.g. being pushed, kicked or beaten up
- **Intimidation and Attack** i.e. a combination of the two on one or more occasions

9%

Repeated Attack

13%

Isolated Attack

8%

Repeated Intimidation

9%

Isolated Intimidation

8%

Intimidation and Attack

47% RESPONDED





sexual abuse

Again the definitions were further defined to obtain the statistics below :

- **Intimidation** included being groped or flashed at
- **Attack** included being indecently assaulted or raped
- **Intimidation and Attack** included a combination of these on one or more occasions

| | |
|-----|-------------------------|
| 6% | Repeated Attack |
| 8% | Isolated Attack |
| 5% | Repeated Intimidation |
| 14% | Isolated Intimidation |
| 8% | Intimidation and Attack |

41% RESPONDED



h a r a s s m e n t

To elaborate further:-

- **Hate Communications** was defined as abusive letters, calls e.t.c.
- **Property Damage/ Theft** included graffiti on or destruction of personal property as well as its theft

| | |
|-----|---|
| 9% | Repeated Hate Communications |
| 10% | Isolated Hate Communications |
| 3% | Repeated Property Damage/Theft |
| 5% | Isolated Property Damage/Theft |
| 4% | Hate Communications & Property Damage/Theft |

31% RESPONDED





COMMENT

- Over two thirds of young lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents had experienced verbal abuse and over half of this sample had experienced repeated abuse.
- Just under one half of all respondents had experienced physical abuse, although again half of the sample had experienced repeated attack.
- In terms of sexual violence a significant proportion of the respondents reported experiencing sexual abuse, although noticeably, and these figures will be available later in this report, most of the respondents suggested that their age or their gender were the target of the abuse as opposed to their sexuality.
- Nearly a third of respondents had experienced other forms of harassment, most frequently Hate Communications (defined above).
- The statistics around this violence are put into context further in subsequent chapters, particularly around the differences in experience based on race and gender and the incidences and frequency of abuse in schools.



Although the survey did not focus on the effects of homophobic violence on young people in favour of looking at types and locations of violence and how young people related these to the police, GALOP would see the effects of violence on young people as being similar to those of victims of homophobic attacks in general. The following is a list of these effects, albeit not an exhaustive one;

- fear of retaliation
- feeling of being disempowered
- feeling guilty or responsible for the attack
- shock - immediate, delayed and long term
- minimising i.e. the belief that this kind of violence is their 'lot'
- changes in sleeping and eating patterns (e.g. nightmares, loss of appetite, anorexia e.t.c.)
- flashbacks
- self-harm, suicidal thoughts or actual suicide attempts
- fear of not being believed
- mental health issues e.g. depression, panic attacks
- increased drug and alcohol consumption
- isolation
- fear of going out
- modifying behaviour e.g. changing dress, feeling forced to hide sexuality in future
- internalised oppression e.g. self-hatred, hatred of lesbians or gay men, accepting the myths
- crisis of faith or belief system
- relationship breakdown

All of the above list could apply regardless of the type or frequency of abuse. And whilst young people will often react in similar ways to other survivors in the face of homophobic abuse, these effects may be especially damaging to young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Indeed, such





effects may be exacerbated if, as our statistics suggest, the violence and abuse is coming from the very institutions that would be available as forms of support to other young people experiencing violence. For example the effects of abuse from a parent figure or teacher who attacks a young person's identity may have far-reaching consequences, particularly in terms of; a fear of being believed, fear of reporting, fear or retaliation, internalising oppression, feeling responsible for the abuse e.t.c.

Many young lesbians, gay men and bisexuals do in fact resort to the more extreme coping mechanisms to escape an abusive situation. For example, running away, drug and alcohol use, self-harm or suicide attempts.

Factors which may lead a young person to consider suicide can include isolation, abuse and bullying (recently in the UK there has been a great deal of press coverage of teenagers who have killed themselves as a result of on-going harassment in school). For young lesbians and gay men, trying to come to terms with a stigmatised sexuality can be a difficult and isolating experience. This report will show, later, the high numbers of young lesbian, gay and bisexual teenagers who experience homophobic bullying in schools. Combine these experiences and the likelihood of a lesbian, gay or bisexual young person self-harming or attempting suicide increases dramatically. The Lesbian and Gay Teenage Project conducted a piece of research which found that one in five teenagers had attempted suicide *1. In 1992, a survey by the Lesbian Youth Support and Information Service concluded that 70% of young lesbians questioned had attempted suicide*2. Finally, outside of the UK, a study by Paul Gibson, an American Sociologist, stated that up to 30% of all successful suicide attempts are made by lesbian, gay and bisexual youth *3.



For many people alcohol and drug use is a socially acceptable way of coping with the every day stresses and strains of life. For young lesbians, gay men and bisexuals this use can become abuse in the face of the levels of harassment that this survey reports. Dealing with this abuse in isolation will only increase the risk of a young person turning to destructive means. The Lesbian Information Service has asserted that lesbians are more likely than heterosexual women to report alcohol problems due to the impact of oppression on their self-esteem. So in terms of young lesbians, the likelihood of abusing alcohol before the age of 25 is high. The Lesbian Information Service's own statistics reveal that 50% of a sample group reported serious drink related problems, including blackouts and suicide attempts whilst inebriated *4.

The issues around support for young victims of homophobic violence are explored in later chapters as are recommendations for filling the gaps in service provision for this specific client group.

*1 'Something To Tell You', London Gay Teenage Group, 1984

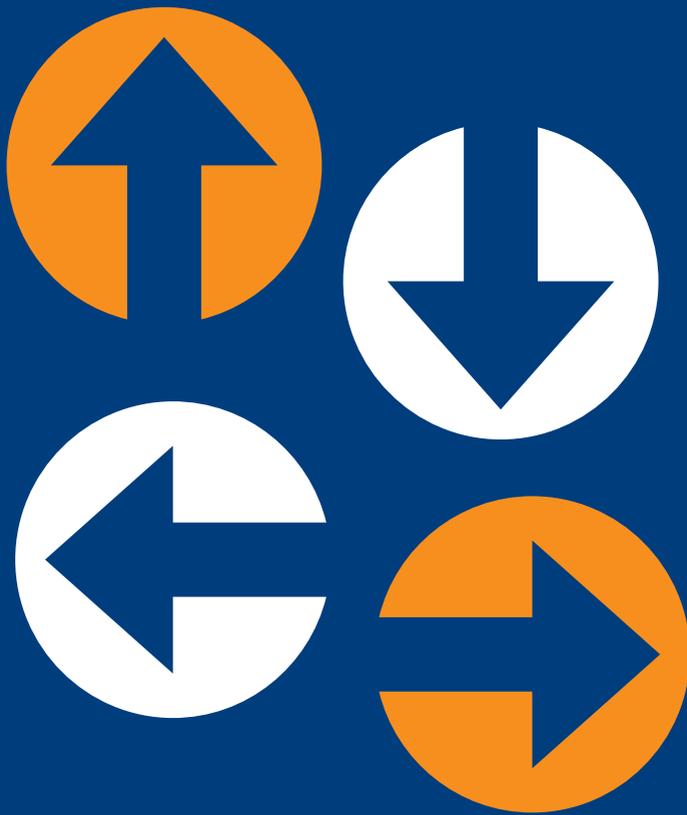
*2 'LYSIS', 1992

*3 'Gay Male and Lesbian Youth Suicide', in Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide, Washington, Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1989.

*4 'LYSIS', 1992



comparisons



t y p e o f v i o l e n c e

% of female respondents

| | |
|-----|----------------|
| 89% | Verbal Abuse |
| 44% | Physical Abuse |
| 66% | Sexual Abuse |
| 34% | Harassment |

% of male respondents

| | |
|-----|----------------|
| 82% | Verbal Abuse |
| 49% | Physical Abuse |
| 31% | Sexual Abuse |
| 29% | Harassment |

COMMENT

- Overall:- in marked contrast to previous research of this kind (with the exception of a very slight difference in the physical abuse category), our results suggest that young lesbian and bisexual women are targeted **more** frequently overall than young gay and bisexual men.
- Physical Abuse:- the common assumption is that gay and bisexual men are more prone to physical attacks than lesbian and bisexual women. This assumption has been supported by earlier surveys, most recently Stonewall's 'Queerbashing' survey (1996) which summarised that 1 in 4 women as





opposed to 1 in 3 men had been the victims of a homophobic attack.



We would suggest that one of the reasons for such conclusions being drawn by earlier surveys is that past research has often focused on public attacks by strangers. In contrast to this our questionnaire encouraged respondents to highlight attacks within the home and incidents where the perpetrator was known to the victim. We believe that the very different focus of our survey has significantly altered the gender discrepancy which is usually associated with homophobic physical abuse.

Our experience, gained from the GALOP helpline, is that in contrast to gay and bisexual men, lesbian and bisexual women are more often attacked in 'domestic spaces' (by cohabitants or by perpetrators coming into the home, residential areas e.t.c.) and by people known to them (eg: family, ex male lovers, tenants e.t.c.) *1.

The target group of the GALOP survey has of course also impacted on the research outcomes in that respondents were under 25.

Our own conclusion is that young people, particularly young women, are more likely to be subjected to physical violence from family members because of their age and the fact that many of the respondents were still living with their parents.

In summary our statistics prove that young lesbian and bisexual women are just as likely as young gay and bisexual men to experience homophobic violence, including physical attacks, harassment and verbal abuse.



- **Sexual Abuse:-** the survey's statistics referring to men and women's experience of sexual violence show significant differences. Two thirds of women respondents compared to one third of men had experienced some form of sexual abuse. This finding would seem to reflect the statistics*2 which appear in the latest Zero Tolerance publicity. These state that "1 in 2 girls will experience some form of sexual abuse before their eighteenth birthday, one third before they are twelve." The figures make a 'logical' conclusion that as young women get older they are more likely to have experienced sexual violence.

Our findings show that of the lesbian and bisexual women who responded to our survey (under 25), two thirds had experienced sexual violence, tying in with the pattern suggested by Zero Tolerance regarding young women irrespective of sexuality.

The higher incidence of young lesbian and bisexual women that have experienced sexual violence in our survey may also be accounted for by the fact that many of them were specifically targeted, by male family members (or at their encouragement) and other male adults, because of their sexuality. In many instances the sexual violence seems to have been perpetrated as a means of controlling, punishing and 'converting' young lesbian and bisexual women.

*1 For further information on this, see GALOP's publication, 'Getting Lesbians Onto The Agenda' (1997).

*2 Taken from 'An Exploratory Study of the Prevalence of Sexual Abuse in a Sample of 16-21 year olds', Child Abuse Studies Unit, North London Polytechnic, 1991.





t y p e o f v i o l e n c e

% of Black, Asian & Mixed Race respondents

% of Irish respondents

% of White respondents

86% Verbal Abuse

86% Verbal Abuse

83% Verbal Abuse

57% Physical Abuse

29% Physical Abuse

44% Physical Abuse

35% Sexual Abuse

71% Sexual Abuse

41% Sexual Abuse

24% Harassment

29% Harassment

30% Harassment

COMMENT

- Overall:- There are no significant differences in the statistics referring to the experiences of Black, Asian and Mixed Race respondents compared to White respondents with the exception of physical abuse. This is explained in part once racism is taken into account as a motivating factor as significant differences do then emerge (see section in this Chapter entitled 'Motivations').
- Physical Abuse:- As many other surveys have suggested lesbian, gay and bisexual people who identify as Black, Asian



and Mixed Race are more often targeted for physical abuse. Exposed to societal racism, their identity leads to additional levels of discrimination, manifested most overtly in physical attacks. A similar point could be made about the slightly higher incidents of verbal abuse experienced amongst the Black, Asian and Mixed Race respondents.

- **Harassment:-** We were surprised that our survey suggested that Black, Asian and Mixed Race respondents were less likely to experience harassment than White respondents. Given the well documented levels of harassment which the black lesbian, gay and bisexual communities experience, particularly in and around residential areas, our findings do seem to be out of synch.
- **Irish Respondents:-** It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the high proportion of Irish respondents reporting sexual violence. It is worth noting that 5 of the 7 Irish respondents were women and as such are more likely to experience sexual violence because of their gender. In addition, while anti-Irish discrimination will obviously be a factor in any violence experienced by the Irish communities, the fact that the number of Irish respondents was significantly low means that we have to be tentative in drawing any final conclusions about this sample.





BY GENDER

- **Gender/Verbal Abuse:-** 89% of female respondents had experienced verbal abuse. Of this 55% said that they were targeted because of their sexuality. However, significantly, 45% specified a combination of factors. The majority of these respondents said that the other factors were their race and their gender.
- **Gender/Physical Abuse:-** 44% of the female respondents had experienced physical abuse. Of this, 52 % said that they were targeted because of their sexuality. Again, significantly, 48% specified a combination of factors and again a majority of respondents said that the other factors were their race and their gender.
- **Gender/Sexual Abuse:-** 66% of the female respondents had experienced sexual abuse. Of this, 15 % said that they were targeted because of their sexuality. 34% said that they were targeted because of their gender and 51% said that there were a combination of factors which included gender and race.
- **Gender/Harassment:-** 34 % of the female respondents had experienced harassment. Of this, 71% said they were targeted because of their sexuality. 29% said that they were targeted for a combination of factors, again most notably naming gender and race as compounding factors.

COMMENT

- It is evident that a large number of female respondents experiencing violence cited motivating factors other than



sexuality. The questionnaires were especially designed to illicit these more complex responses. Often research looking at homophobic violence fails to acknowledge the prevalence of misogyny within homophobic attacks on lesbians and bisexual women. We tried to do something different and we believe we have been successful in this.

Our research demonstrates that is not always possible for lesbians and bisexual women to separate out their experiences of anti-lesbian and anti-women discrimination. Nor should they be expected to.

BY RACE/ETHNICITY

- **Race & Ethnicity/ Verbal Abuse:-** 86% of Black, Mixed Race and Asian respondents had experienced verbal abuse. Of these, 32% said that they were targeted because of their sexuality, 2% said that gender was the motivating factor while 11% specified race. 55% referred to a combination of factors which included race and gender most notably. 86% of Irish respondents had experienced verbal abuse, 33% believed their sexuality was the target. 17% mentioned that the target was their race and 50% suggested that it was a combination of race, gender and sexuality.
- **Race & Ethnicity/Physical Abuse:-** 57% of Black, Asian and Mixed Race respondents had experienced physical abuse. Of these, 41% referred to their sexuality as the target. 3% highlighted their gender whilst 18% suggested that their race was the target. 38% believed it was a combination of these factors. Again 57% of Irish respondents had been the survivors of physical attacks. 25% saw their sexuality as the target. 25%





believed that that their race was the target whilst 50% suggested that it was a combination of race, sexuality and gender.

- **Race & Ethnicity/Sexual Abuse:-** 35% of all Black, Asian and Mixed Race respondents had experienced sexual abuse. Of these 17% said they were the target because of their sexuality. 22% specified their gender, whilst 61% cited other reasons, most notably their age (most of the abuse referred to was sexual abuse as a child). Of the Irish respondents 71% had experienced sexual abuse, 80% of whom specified gender as the target with just 20% giving other reasons, again such as age.
- **Race & Ethnicity/Harassment:-** 24% of Black, Asian and Mixed Race respondents had experienced harassment. 56% specified their sexuality as the target of these attacks with a significant 44% citing a combination of factors, primarily race, gender and sexuality. 43% of Irish respondents had experienced harassment. 100% said their sexuality was the motivating factor for the attacks.

COMMENT

- **Verbal and Physical Abuse:-** The statistics for these two types of abuse relating to Black, Asian and Mixed Race respondents confirmed GALOP's expectation with regard to the motivation for the abuse. In both cases, a significant number of respondents have cited sexuality as the reason they perceived to be behind the incidents. This was not unexpected as the questionnaire was framed in a way that made it apparent that the focus was homophobic attacks. A percentage also cited race as the sole motivating factor. However 55% with verbal abuse and 38% with physical abuse cited a combination which was most often race and sexuality, and in a few cases gender.



We would see this as confirming our assertion that young Black Asian and Mixed Race lesbian, gay and bisexual people are more likely to experience abuse and attack by virtue of both their race and their sexuality, and (in the same way as young women) will find it hard to separate these parts of their identity in order to report the attack as either racially motivated or homophobically motivated, possible leading to, at least, no police report, but also in the victim not accessing services that may be able to support them due to this difficulty in fitting their experience in to the 'compartments' that many services have created.

- **Sexual Abuse:-** The most significant statistic in relation to the sexual abuse category is the high proportion of respondents who said that gender was the motivating factor in the abuse. Given that Black, Asian and Mixed Race women were the smallest group of respondents this figure takes on a new significance and asks the question what services are there for young lesbian and bisexual women who are Black or Asian or Mixed Race who can meet their needs in the face of sexual violence that has targeted their race, their gender and their sexuality. Would the young woman need to choose which part of her identity was, either most important, or most attacked in order to pick a support service? It is also significant that, although Irish respondents formed a small percentage overall, 80% of those Irish respondents had experienced sexual violence for which they saw gender as the target.
- It would seem that the statistics for Black, Asian, Mixed Race and Irish female respondents back up our previous assertion that young lesbians and bisexual women are more likely to experience violence because of both their gender and sexuality, and, their race.





who and where



v e r b a l a b u s e

- 83% of all respondents reported verbal abuse.
- 47% of all respondents had experienced physical abuse.
- 41% of all respondents reported sexual abuse and finally,
- 31% had experienced harassment.

The following tables give a breakdown of the locations of these incidents

% of respondents

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------|
| 3% | College | 1% | Public transport |
| 14% | Combination | 33% | School |
| 5% | Home | 31% | Street |
| 7% | Other | 2% | Work |
| 4% | Park/Public place | | |

COMMENT

- Of the respondents who reported a combination of locations for experiencing verbal abuse, 100% included school in this, effectively increasing the figure for the school category to 47%.





physical abuse

% of respondents

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------|
| 6% | Combination | 4% | Public transport |
| 18% | Home | 35% | School |
| 4% | Other | 23% | Street |
| 8% | Park/Public place | 2% | Work |

COMMENT

- Again of the 6% who named a combination of locations, all included school in this combination, which increases the figure relating to schools to 41%.

sexual abuse

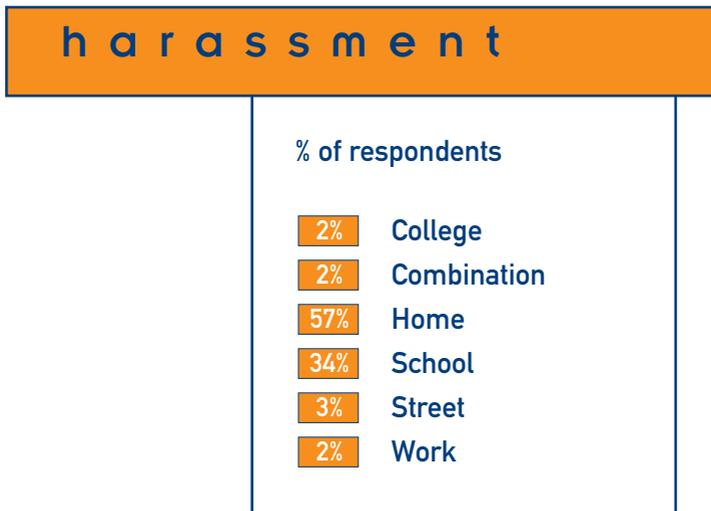
% of respondents

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|----|------------------|
| 5% | Combination | 4% | Public transport |
| 4% | Cottage/cruising ground | 7% | School |
| 26% | Home | 9% | Street |
| 27% | Other | 2% | Work |
| 16% | Park/Public place | | |



COMMENT

- The figure for 'Other' locations here is considerable. This often included abuse in a neighbour's house, residential children's home or in a car (often of a family friend) so, in effect, increasing the figure relating to abuse in the home. This also suggests that a proportion of those responding by using the 'Other' category are referring to sexual abuse as children.



COMMENT

- Although the biggest category responded to here is 'Home' the next section on perpetrators will highlight that many of the respondents experienced harassment in their home from friends/school peers.





N.B: Statistics relating to the perpetrators of verbal abuse were not collected within the survey. The following tables, then, relate to physical and sexual abuse and harassment.

physical abuse

% of respondents

| | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----|-----------------|
| 12% | Family | 2% | Partner/pick up |
| 6% | Friends | 39% | Pupils/students |
| 1% | Neighbour | 31% | Stranger |
| 9% | Other | | |

sexual abuse

% of respondents

| | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----|-----------------|
| 12% | Family | 9% | Partner/pick up |
| 7% | Friends | 5% | Pupils/students |
| 4% | Neighbour | 46% | Stranger |
| 17% | Other | | |



h a r a s s m e n t

% of respondents

| | |
|-----|-----------------|
| 2% | Family |
| 5% | Friends |
| 11% | Neighbour |
| 26% | Other |
| 5% | Partner/pick up |
| 40% | Pupils/students |
| 11% | Stranger |

COMMENT

- In the 'Harassment' and 'Physical Abuse' categories, the highest figure related to pupils/students. These statistics will be explored further in Chapter 4.
- The figure for physical abuse by strangers is low compared to other surveys which have addressed homophobic violence. In fact in this survey 60% of perpetrators were known to the victim. We would suggest that our different result is based on the proportionally higher level of lesbians and bisexual women responding to this survey as well as the focus of the questionnaire.



chapter 4

schools



Various pieces of legislation and policy have served to create a culture of homophobia in society in general and particularly, by its nature, in schools. These include the 1986 Education Act which states that sex education lessons must “have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life”. A follow up circular in 1987 states that sex education lessons must “be set within a moral framework. There is no place in schools in any circumstances for teaching which advocates homosexual behaviour, which presents it as the ‘norm’, or which encourages homosexual experimentation by pupils”. Curriculums are also in part determined by school governors who will often, although not always, hold conservative values.

Clause 28 of the Local Government Act has been criticised for its vagueness and no precedent has been established relating to its implementation. And yet this clause has been powerful in (a) creating a climate which has made those teachers willing to address sexuality too fearful to do so and (b) ‘condoning’ the attitudes of homophobic staff who overuse this clause to silence the slightest reference to lesbian/gay sexuality.

All of these factors have effectively placed a ban on addressing issues of sexuality other than heterosexuality in the classroom.

Although the age of consent for young gay men has recently been reduced to 18, there remains a fundamental inequality within the law. In addition the age of consent for lesbians is not stated in a legal context. These two factors combined have led to anxiety and confusion for young lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in seeking out information and/or support in schools for fear of criminalisation.





It is now known but not generally acknowledged that lesbian, gay and bisexual people are frequently subjected to bullying in schools on the basis of their sexuality. The Stonewall 'Queer Bashing' survey estimates that 1 in 2 lesbians, gay men and bisexuals under 18 have experienced a physical attack on account of their sexuality. 40% of these attacks took place in school. Strategies designed to combat Bullying as an issue in schools fails to acknowledge this frightening statistic.

The Terence Higgins Trust and Stonewall have just conducted a survey of more than 300 schools in England and Wales ^{*1}. The survey found that 82% were aware of verbal homophobic bullying taking place in their schools and 26% knew of physical homophobic bullying. However, whilst 99% of these schools had an anti-bullying scheme in place, only 6% specifically recognised homophobic bullying within their policies.

^{*1} 'Playing It Safe', Terence Higgins Trust / Stonewall, 1998
(commissioned by the Institute of Education)



The statistics from the previous chapter show that a significant proportion of the verbal abuse, physical abuse and harassment reported by the respondents took place in schools.

v i o l e n c e i n s c h o o l s

% of incidents in schools

47% Verbal Abuse *

41% Physical Abuse *

7% Sexual Abuse

34% Harassment

* As previously referred to, these two statistics are calculated from adding those referring to 'School' and 'Combination' together. See the 'Comments' paragraphs under 'Verbal Abuse' and 'Physical Abuse' in section one in the previous chapter.

COMMENT

- **Physical Abuse:-** the statistics relating to perpetrators mirror the table in that of the 41% of respondents who had experienced physical assault in schools, 90% named other students as the perpetrators. 6% had chosen the category 'Other' which primarily cited teachers as the perpetrators of the abuse and 3% named their own friends when they had found out that they were gay.
- **Harassment:-** of the 31% who overall had experienced harassment, 34% said that this took place in schools and 95% said that the perpetrators were other students. This is exacerbated further by the statistic for harassment in the home with 15% of the 57% who reported being harassed in the home saying that the perpetrators were pupils, students or friends. Added to this is the 'Other' category- two-thirds of those who chose this category said that local 'kids' or 'gangs' were responsible.



police reporting



GALOP's experience of working with survivors of homophobic violence meant that we anticipated the low levels of police reports that the survey highlighted from respondents.

POLICE REPORT?

Of the 202 respondents to the survey 66% said they had not reported any incidents of homophobia to the police. 19% said that they had and for 13% this question was not applicable. 2% did not respond.

POLICE RESPONSE?

Of the 19% who had reported to the police, 33% said that the police had been supportive in their response, 13% said that they had been hostile and 51% said that the police had been indifferent. 3% of the sample did not respond.

REASON FOR NOT REPORTING?

Of the 66% who did not report incidents against them 51% did not specify why they had not reported. 5% said it was because of a distrust of the police. 5% said that it was because they were scared of reporting. 26% feared that the police would minimise their experience, 7% felt that their experience was not appropriate for a police report, 2% cited a combination of these factors and 4% said that it was for other reasons.

REPEAT REPORTS?

Of the total sample, 41% did not respond when asked if they would report to the police in the future. 23% said that they would not, 22% said yes they would and 14% said maybe.

COMMENT

- The figures above have a further significance in relation to those in the final chapter regarding support issues. Here 36.5% of respondents suggested, as part of the question, 'What services would you like available to you in the future?', a more supportive and sensitive response from the police.



support



who you told?

% of respondents

| | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| 9% | Family | 15% | Combination |
| 19% | Friend(s) | 12% | No-one |
| 1% | Lesbian & gay switchboard | 8% | Other |
| 6% | Partner/lover | 25% | Did not respond |
| 5% | Youth worker | | |

COMMENT

- The 'Other' category most notably included teachers.
- It is significant that only 1% had gone to Switchboard to access support. The wider implication of this statistic is that many lesbian, gay and bisexual young people do not know what organisations and agencies are able to support them or where to find them. Of course this applied to more community groups than just Switchboard. Many of the respondents were also unaware of the support that GALOP can offer.
- To combine the 'No-one' with the 'Did not respond' - ie: 37% - category suggests that many lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are coping with high levels of serious harassment on their own. The impact that this can have on a young person's self-esteem and positive self image is enormous.





types of support

% of respondents

| | | | |
|-----|--|-----|-----------------|
| 2% | Acknowledgement | 8% | Advocacy |
| 42% | Counselling (someone to talk to) | 4% | Not sure |
| 12% | Information/support around legal rights | 3% | None |
| 1% | Gay/specially trained officers | 44% | Did not respond |
| 5% | Support/education in schools around lesbian & gay issues | | |

* These percentages do not total 100% as respondents often mentioned more than one form of support.

COMMENT

- A significant proportion of the respondents reported that they would have simply liked to be listened to and empathised with around their experience.
- Over half of the respondents either said 'None', 'Not Sure' or did not respond at all. This led us to the assumption that many of the young people who responded perceived their experience of violence, especially verbal, to be an 'expected' part of their everyday experience as a lesbian, gay man or bisexual and for this reason support was not a concept that they applied to those situations.



What support would you have liked?

- The very small number of respondents who asked for support from school or the police suggested that the respondents did not perceive these institutions as existing to support or protect them.
- The number of respondents specifying 'information on legal rights' indicates that lesbian and gay youth are unsure as to which legislation is there to support them and which legislation serves to criminalise them. Public debate on the Age of Consent and Section 28 may provide young people with a sense of uncertainty about where they stand legally and it is not always possible to get information on these issues from the support services that are supposed to be there for young people e.g. schools, mainstream youth agencies.



What services do you think should be available?

types of support

% of respondents

| | | | |
|------|---|------|----------------------|
| 0.5% | Information for lesbians | 13% | Advocacy |
| 7% | Advice services (face to face) | 15% | 24 hour helpline |
| 14% | Specialised support groups | 2% | Self-defence courses |
| 6% | Public awareness campaigns | 2% | Community forums |
| 13% | Gay & lesbian police officers | 11% | Legal information |
| 9% | Campaigns/support in schools | 0.5% | Police monitoring |
| 5% | More publicity about services | 12% | Counselling |
| 23% | Supportive/specially trained police | 3% | Changes in the law |
| 2% | Services for black lesbians.gay & bisexual people | | |

* Again, these percentages do not total 100% as many respondents cited more than one service area.

COMMENT

- **Police Support:-**36.5% of respondents mentioned support issues relating to the police. The most common request was for a more sensitive and supportive response from police officers. Of these respondents most felt that the officers would have to be specially trained or lesbian and gay themselves to be able to provide such a service.
- **Support Services:-** a high level of respondents felt that current service provision was inadequate, either because those available were not specialised or because of an absence of appropriate services. If we combine the statistics relating to: Advocacy, Police Monitoring, Gay and Lesbian Officers, Counselling, Specially Trained Officers, Advice Services, Services for Black Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual People, 24 Hour Helpline and Specialised Support Groups the total comes to 99.5%.



recommendations





LEGISLATION

- The repeal of Section 28
- A thorough review of policies and legislation informing sex education in schools
- An equal age of consent for young gay men and a named age of consent for young lesbians
- The introduction of 'Hate Crimes' legislation which recognises homophobic violence as a specific category as well as the multiple discrimination experienced by women/girls, black people, Irish people and people with disabilities
- An equivalent to the Race Relations and Sex Discrimination Acts
- Statutory legislation re: discrimination on the grounds of sexuality

POLICE PRACTICE

- Extending current liaison with the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities to focus specifically on the compounded experience of young people within these communities
- Training for all probationary officers in lesbian, gay and bisexual issues
- Training on issues particular to young lesbians, gay men and bisexuals

EDUCATION

- The inclusion of lesbian, gay and bisexual issues in sex education curriculums and the curriculum in general
- The inclusion of homophobic bullying in anti-bullying strategies
- Support for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff, enabling them to 'come out' without fear of prejudice and therefore to serve as important role models for lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils



- Training for teachers in lesbian and gay issues and homophobia/heterosexism awareness, empowering them not only to support lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils but also to challenge discrimination in the classroom
- Support for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in schools, including internal support groups, positive images in the classrooms, positive literature which reflects their experience in the library

STATUTORY AGENCY SERVICE PROVISION

- Home Office Guidelines to statutory organisations such as social services, youth services, health services e.t.c. that ensure equality of provision for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. For example, Youth Service to provide specialised service provision to this client group, Social Services required to recognise the specific fostering/adoption needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

- Community organisations to consider their remit as to whether they offer a service specific and therefore accessible to young people e.g. dedicated advice sessions, targeted publicity, appointed youth workers e.t.c.
- Ensuring that services which could be relevant to young people are widely publicised
- Understanding that young lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not a homogenous group and that specific provisions should be made for young lesbians/bisexual women, young black lesbian, gay and bisexual people e.t.c.





GALOP SERVICE PROVISION

- Appointment of a full time youth worker
- Dedicated helpline session for young people
- Targeted publicity
- Advocacy service, including recruitment of volunteers to undertake advocacy case work on a face to face basis
- Establishment of a black working group and / or black caseworker to facilitate specific service provision for young black lesbians, gay men and bisexual people
- Consideration to be given to the establishment of a young people's steering group which would inform ongoing service delivery
- Taking the lead in co-ordinating a forum to lobby for changes in legislation and policy affecting young lesbian, gay and bisexual people with specific reference to education
- Raising awareness of the experience of young people within existing police liaison networks
- Offering specialised support groups to young survivors of homophobic violence
- Production of comprehensive information on legal rights for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people
- Sustained networking with current lesbian, gay and bisexual youth groups



summary of respondents



A total of 202 lesbian, gay and bisexual youth completed the survey. The following is a profile of these respondents.

by sexuality

% of respondents

| | |
|-----|----------------|
| 26% | Lesbians |
| 5% | Bisexual women |
| 58% | Gay men |
| 10% | Bisexual men |
| 1% | Did not define |

by race / ethnicity

male respondents

female respondents

total

| | | | | |
|-----|----------------|-----|----------------|-----|
| 7% | Asian | 4% | Asian | 11% |
| 8% | Black | 2% | Black | 10% |
| 3% | Mixed race | 2% | Mixed race | 5% |
| 1% | Irish | 2% | Irish | 3% |
| 48% | White | 20% | White | 68% |
| 1% | Other | 0% | Other | 1% |
| 1% | Did not define | 1% | Did not define | 2% |



by disability

8% of respondents, 6% of men and 2% of women, identified themselves as having a disability.

by accommodation

% of respondents

| | |
|-----|--------------------|
| 21% | Lives alone |
| 25% | Flat/house share |
| 43% | Lives with parents |
| 7% | Homeless/hostel |
| 3% | Other |
| 1% | Did not respond |





by borough

| | | | |
|-------|----------------------|------|-----------------------|
| 1.5% | Barnet | 5% | Islington |
| 1.5% | Bexley | 0.5% | Kensington & Chelsea |
| 1% | Bromley | 4.5% | Lambeth |
| 7% | Camden | 4% | Lewisham |
| 3% | Croydon | 0.5% | Merton |
| 2.5% | Ealing | 17% | Neighbouring Counties |
| 2% | Enfield | 3% | Newham |
| 3% | Greenwich | 0.5% | Redbridge |
| 13.5% | Hackney | 6% | Southwark |
| 2.5% | Hammersmith & Fulham | 6% | Tower Hamlets |
| 1.5% | Haringey | 1.5% | Waltham Forest |
| 1% | Harrow | 2% | Wandsworth |
| 1% | Havering | 3.5% | Westminster |
| 1.5% | Hounslow | 3.5% | Did not respond |

N.B: No responses were received from the boroughs of Barking & Dagenham, Brent, City of London, Hillingdon, Kingston Upon Thames, Richmond Upon Thames, Sutton.



GALOP **youth project** **survey**



Everybody knows that lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are often the targets of harassment and violence because of their sexuality. GALOP are trying to find out what younger people do when this happens to them. This survey will hopefully provide us with some ideas about how young people cope when they are the targets and how GALOP can ensure that they are supported.

FIRSTLY, ABOUT YOU

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| ● How old are you? | <input type="text"/> |
| ● Are you male or female? | <input type="text"/> |
| ● How would you describe your racial or ethnic origin? e.g. Black/Asian/White e.t.c. | <input type="text"/> |
| ● How would you describe your sexuality? e.g. Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Woman/Bisexual Man e.t.c. | <input type="text"/> |
| ● Do you consider yourself to have any disabilities? | <input type="text"/> |
| ● Where do you live? e.g. Camden/Greenwich/Hackney/Southwark e.t.c | <input type="text"/> |
| ● Who do you live with? e.g. Alone/With Parents/Flatshare/Homeless e.t.c. | <input type="text"/> |
| ● What do you do? e.g. Student/Working Full Time/Working Part Time/Not Working e.t.c. | <input type="text"/> |
| ● Who knows that you are lesbian, gay or bisexual? e.g. everyone/no -one/familyfriends/employers e.t.c. | <input type="text"/> |

Which of the following describes you most accurately?

(please tick as many as you want)

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Out Gay | <input type="checkbox"/> | Out Lesbian | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Queer | <input type="checkbox"/> | On the scene | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Non-Scene | <input type="checkbox"/> | Straight - looking | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dyke - looking | <input type="checkbox"/> | Camp | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Into cruising | <input type="checkbox"/> | In a relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Political | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not Political | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Discreet | <input type="checkbox"/> | Visible | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) | <input type="text"/> | | |

SECONDLY, ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| <p>Have you ever been verbally abused? e.g. shouted at/threatened/called names e.t.c</p> | <input type="text"/> |
| <p>Why do you think you were the target of this abuse? e.g. because of your sexuality/ your racial origin/ your disability/your gender/the way you were dressed e.t.c</p> | <input type="text"/> |
| <p>Where did this abuse take place? home/street/school e.t.c</p> | <input type="text"/> |
| <p>Was this abuse an isolated or repeated experience?</p> | <input type="text"/> |
| <p>Have you ever been physically abused? e.g. things thrown at you/pushed/hit/kicked/beaten up e.t.c.</p> | <input type="text"/> |

GALOP YOUTH PROJECT SURVEY

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Who was responsible for this abuse? | <input type="text"/> |
| Why do you think you were the target of this abuse? | <input type="text"/> |
| Where did the abuse take place? | <input type="text"/> |
| Was it an isolated or repeated incident? | <input type="text"/> |
| Have you ever been sexually abused? e.g. groped flashed at/touched when you didn't want to be/indecently assaulted/raped e.t.c. | <input type="text"/> |
| Who was responsible for this abuse? | <input type="text"/> |
| Why do you think you were the target of this abuse? | <input type="text"/> |
| Where did this abuse take place? | <input type="text"/> |
| Was this an isolated or repeated incident? | <input type="text"/> |
| Have you ever been harassed in other ways? e.g. abusive letters or calls/graffiti about you/property vandalised e.t.c. | <input type="text"/> |
| Do you know who is responsible for this abuse? | <input type="text"/> |
| Why do you think you were the target of this abuse? | <input type="text"/> |

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| <p>Where did this abuse take place?</p> | <input type="text"/> |
| <p>Was it an isolated or repeated incident?</p> | <input type="text"/> |

NEXT, YOU AND THE POLICE

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Did you report any of this abuse to the Police?</p> <p>If Yes, what was the response you got from them? e.g. Supportive/Indifferent/Sensitive/Insulting/Efficient/Hostile e.t.c.</p> <p>Would you go to the Police if you had a similar experience again?</p> <p>If No, why did you decide not to go to the Police? e.g. scared/mistrust them/didn't think it was serious enough e.t.c</p> | <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> |
|---|--|

AND FINALLY YOU AND YOUR SUPPORT

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Did you tell anyone about this abuse? Family Member/Friend/Lover or Partner/ Lesbian & Gay Switchboard/Youth Worker e.t.c.</p> <p>What support would you have liked? e.g. someone to talk it over with/someone to go to the police station with you/information about your legal rights e.t.c</p> | <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> |
|--|--|

What services do you think should be available to young lesbian, gay and bisexual people who are targets of homophobic crime, violence and harassment?



This survey is anonymous. The information you have given me will be used to write a report for GALOP on what services young lesbian, gay and bisexual people would like to be available to them if they experience homophobic crime, violence or harassment. None of the information will identify individuals as we are committed to keeping your contribution confidential. However, if you would like a copy of the report you can leave your name and address with Kelly Alexander. No-one else will have access to this information.

Thanks for participating in this survey.

THANK YOU...

We would like to thank all those groups who participated in the research - thank you for your time, energy and your enthusiasm! Particular thanks go out to Croydon Gay Youth, Diaspora, Holloway Young Lesbians, Camden Young Women's Group, London Connection, London Gay Teenage Group, MaleOut, The Naz Project, Newham New Dykes, North 7 Social, Notting Hill LGB Group, NRG, OutLinks, Out On Thursdays, OutZone, Staying Out, Sutton Gay Youth, Youth Out, North London Line, Identity, Freedom Youth, BLAG, Rainbow.

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