Stonewall

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource is produced by Stonewall, a UK-based charity that stands for the freedom, equity and potential of all lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people.

At Stonewall, we imagine a world where LGBTQ+ people everywhere can live our lives to the full.

Founded in London in 1989, we now work in each nation of the UK and have established partnerships across the globe. Over the last three decades, we have created transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people in the UK, helping win equal rights around marriage, having children and inclusive education.

Our campaigns drive positive change for our communities, and our sustained change and empowerment programmes ensure that LGBTQ+ people can thrive throughout our lives. We make sure that the world hears and learns from our communities, and our work is grounded in evidence and expertise.

To find out more about our work, visit us at www.stonewall.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1101255 (England and Wales) and SC039681 (Scotland)

SHUT OUT

The experiences of
LGBT young people not
in education, training or
work

Britain**thinks**
Insight & Strategy

Stonewall
Acceptance without exception

SHUT OUT

The experiences of LGBT young people not in education, training or work

Josh Bradlow and April Guasp
Stonewall

Viki Cooke, Holly Wicks, Lucy Bush, Rowan
Douglas, Eleanor Langdale, Chantal Aberdeen
BritainThinks

Britainthinks
Insight & Strategy

Stonewall
Acceptance without exception

FOREWORD

Despite the progress we've made in recent years, growing up can still be incredibly tough for many young people who are lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT).

In 2017, *School Report,* Cambridge University research for Stonewall, found that nearly half of LGBT young people are still bullied at school simply for being who they are.

If we want every single young person to grow up free to be themselves, we need to work harder to remove the barriers that hold young people back from reaching their full potential.

This is especially relevant to LGBT young people not in education, training and work. In 2016, the Government commissioned a review of all existing research into LGBT inequalities and found this was the only policy area for which no research existed whatsoever.

That's why we commissioned BritainThinks to interview LGBT young people across Britain who are not currently in education, training or work to hear what life is like for them.

For the first time, this research uncovers the profound impact that LGBT-specific factors (including family rejection and anti-LGBT bullying), on top of wider challenges (such as limited career support, caring responsibilities and managing disabilities), can have on LGBT young people's mental health and their engagement with education, training and employment – and how these can limit their life chances.

Alongside this, we heard what had been helpful – and what would have been helpful – for the LGBT young people we spoke to. This includes improved mental health, careers and peer support, and inclusive learning and working environments where LGBT people can be themselves.

The report also sets out the key steps that national and local Governments across England, Scotland and Wales, and relevant agencies, must take to better support LGBT young people, and tackle the discrimination they face at its root.

Only together can we dismantle the barriers that hold young people back because of where they are born, who they are, and who they love. Until every young person is supported to be themselves and reach their full potential, our work continues.

Paul Twocock
Chief Executive (Interim)
Stonewall

THE STUDY

According to Government figures, 12 per cent of all young people in Britain aged 16-24 – 800,000 in total – are not in education, training or work. While we know from previous Stonewall research *(School Report 2017)* that LGBT young people are affected by many of the known risk factors that lead to a young person becoming disengaged from education, training and work, according to the Government's own review, no research exists into the specific experiences of LGBT young people who are faced with these circumstances.

In order to understand their experiences, Stonewall commissioned researchers at BritainThinks to conduct in-depth qualitative research with 30 LGBT young people not in education, training or work. This approach allowed researchers to develop a detailed understanding of participants' lives and experiences.

Between April and June 2019, BritainThinks conducted in-depth interviews with 18 LGBT young people (and, for comparison, four non-LGBT young people) aged 16-24 who were not in education, training or work. A further 12 LGBT young people who were also not in education, training or work then participated in a workshop to explore how some of the challenges they faced could be addressed. For the first time, this study uncovers their specific experiences, including:

- The factors and events that lead some LGBT young people to become disengaged from education, training and work.

- The barriers faced by LGBT young people seeking to enter or re-enter education, training and work.

- How relevant services and agencies can address these challenges.

Please note, participant names have been changed for those featured in the report.

BritainThinks is a leading independent insight and strategy consultancy. For more information, visit **www.britainthinks.com**

CONTENTS

KEY FINDINGS

Growing up, LGBT young people face specific challenges in addition to wider factors that lead young people in general to be shut out of education, training and work. These include homophobic, biphobic and transphobic discrimination, and a lack of support and inclusion in education, training and work. This research found that:

At home, LGBT-specific challenges combine with wider obstacles to negatively impact LGBT young people's mental health and engagement with education, training and work.

- LGBT participants' experiences of rejection and strained family relationships relating to being LGBT, alongside the struggles of accepting their own LGBT identity, negatively impacted their mental health and ability to engage with education, training and work. These difficulties were increased by wider challenges including caring responsibilities, bereavement and time spent in care.

Anti-LGBT bullying and non-inclusive school environments limit engagement with school and can lead LGBT young people to change their future plans.

- In school, isolation resulting from a non-LGBT inclusive learning environment, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and a lack of LGBT-specific support, had a negative impact on participants' mental health, their ability to engage in education, and their plans to continue in post-16 education.

Starting college can be a tipping point for some LGBT young people becoming disengaged from education altogether.

- The transition from school to college posed a particular challenge for some of the LGBT young people we heard from, with some feeling forced to go back into the closet, and others struggling in a sometimes non-inclusive environment. This, combined with reduced accountability for their attendance and engagement, led some LGBT young people to leave education altogether.

At university, experiences of discrimination and a lack of support impact on LGBT students' ability to complete their studies.

- University presented specific challenges for some of the young people we heard from, including experiences of anti-LGBT abuse and a lack of inclusive pastoral support. These had a direct negative impact on young people's mental health and ability to complete their degree.

In work and apprenticeships, experienced and expected discrimination compound wider barriers to prevent many LGBT young people from starting, and staying, in employment.

○ At work, some LGBT young people felt forced to leave employment because of negative workplace experiences, including anti-LGBT bullying and harassment. LGBT young people's assumptions about how safe or inclusive a workplace is significantly narrowed the employment and career paths they felt were open to them. Some felt they were limited to low-wage and insecure sectors characterised by a lack of employer investment or lack of opportunities for development and progression.

○ Most of the LGBT young people we heard from weren't aware of how to access suitable apprenticeships. The small number of participants who had accessed apprenticeships faced LGBT-specific challenges during their time there, or struggled to find suitable work after completing them.

Once out of education, employment and training, LGBT young people face significant barriers to re-entry.

○ Once they had left education, training or work, several barriers held the LGBT young people we spoke to back from re-entering it. These included poor mental and physical health, a lack of practical support and knowledge about how to access opportunities, a feeling that limited opportunities were available, and a lack of confidence in taking the 'next step'.

We also heard from LGBT young people who are not in education, training or work about their positive experiences, including receiving inclusive support at school and college, and supportive relationships with family and friends. Together with LGBT young people who were not in education, training or work, we explored a range of possible interventions to address the barriers they faced, including improved LGBT-inclusive mental health and careers support, and peer support from other LGBT young people.

'He was a dodgy boss. He made me feel unsafe. He was anti-LGBT, and said that if any employees were gay, he'd fire them. So I left… I felt unsafe as an LGBT person.'

Jamie, non-binary person, 19, England

BACKGROUND

In the third quarter of 2019, 11.6 per cent of all 16-24 year olds in the UK – 800,000 young people – were not in education, training or work (*ONS, 2019*).

The percentage of young people who are not in education, training or work in the UK fell every year between 2011 and 2017 from a peak of 16.9 per cent, and has remained roughly constant since 2017.

Some groups of young people have already been identified as more likely to not be in education, training and work than others. For example:

• Three in ten disabled 16-24 year olds (29 per cent) are not in education, training or work, compared to nine per cent of those without disabilities.

• One in four 16-24 year olds without any qualifications at GCSE level or above (23 per cent) are not in education, training or work, compared to nine per cent of those qualified to GCSE level and above.

• The proportion of 16-24 year olds who are not in education, training or work is highest in the North East (14.0 per cent) and the West Midlands (13.1 per cent), and lowest in the South East (9.7 per cent) and the South West (9.4 per cent).

• Twelve per cent of 16-24 year olds from a Pakistani/Bangladeshi background, and 12 per cent from a mixed background are not in education, training or work, compared to 11 per cent of white 16-24 year olds, 11 per cent of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British 16-24 year olds, and seven per cent of 16-24 year olds from Indian and Chinese backgrounds.

ONS and House of Commons Library, 2018

• Eighteen per cent of 16-24 year olds who are from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background are currently unemployed, compared to 11 per cent of white 16-24 year olds.

ONS, 2019

A qualitative study by the *Institute of Education (2014)* cited the following personal risk factors for becoming disengaged with education, training and work:

- Physical and mental health difficulties, which particularly impacted on participants' ability to complete their studies, and whose 'influence… on [education, training or work] status cannot be overstated'.

- Caring responsibilities, such as becoming a young parent or looking after family members, which disrupted some participants' education and career plans.

- Difficult family circumstances, such as experiencing a breakdown in relationship with parents or carers, or being in local authority care.

The *Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (DfE, 2011)* also found young people were significantly more likely to have experienced time outside of education, training or work if they were eligible for free school meals, or had been suspended or permanently excluded from school.

However, no research currently exists into the experiences of LGBT young people who are not in education, training or work. An analysis of all existing research into LGBT inequalities in the UK found that this was the only area of policy for which there was no research on LGBT people (*National Institute of Economic and Social Research, 2016*).

Data on the sexual orientation and trans status of young people who are not in education, training or work is not routinely collected at national or local levels. This means that there is no accurate figure or estimate of the number of LGBT young people who are not in education, training or work in the UK today.

1. LIFE FOR LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO AREN'T IN EDUCATION, TRAINING OR WORK

We heard from LGBT young people living in a range of circumstances. At time of interview, the length of time for which participants had not been in education, training or work ranged from several months to two years. For some participants, this was their first experience of not being in education, training or work, while others had experienced this before.

The LGBT young people we heard from became disengaged from education, training and work at different points. This includes after:

- Leaving secondary school, sometimes before the mandatory leaving age, or leaving sixth form/ further education college before completing their studies.

- Finishing a college course and not being able to find employment afterwards.

- Taking time out of university without plans to return, or with no fixed date of return.

- Completing a training course or apprenticeship, and finding that the relevant career was not suitable for them, or that their course did not lead to employment in the same field.

- Working for brief periods in precarious or fixed-term employment which did not turn into long-term employment.

- Leaving employment due to mental health challenges.

Some of the LGBT young people we heard from lived alone, while others lived with housemates, friends, partners or family. Some participants had previously experienced homelessness, including living in hostel accommodation. Research by the Albert Kennedy Trust in 2015 found that a quarter of young people at risk of homelessness identify as LGBT.

Many participants struggled with the lack of routine in their lives. Many described their days as 'boring', and usually spent most of their time at home. They often missed their past routine when they were in education or work, including working and studying with friends, and working on things they cared about.

'I miss being busy and going out and always having something to do.'
Oliver, trans man, 20, white, England

'I don't like doing nothing.'
Jamie, non-binary person, 19, white, England

While several participants socialised with their friends (particularly at weekends), a similar number had a quiet social life and fewer opportunities to meet new people. Many of the LGBT young people we heard from relied on income from benefits or money from their parents or carers, which they often described as limiting and difficult.

Most of the LGBT young people we spoke to were currently experiencing mental health challenges, which often predated their experience of not being in education, training or work. Many said the current lack of structure in their lives was negatively impacting their mental health and their motivation to pursue opportunities to re-enter education, training or work.

Conversely, some LGBT young people said their lives were currently relaxed. They felt it was important to have time to address their mental health challenges, and appreciated the time they had to focus on their hobbies and interests.

Some of the LGBT young people we heard from felt they were nearer a point of re-entering education, training and work than others. Participants who had not been in education, training and work for a shorter amount of time (for example, several months) were often more optimistic that they would be able to re-enter it. One participant who had been unemployed for several months and was experiencing depression (partly relating to delays in her transition) felt confident that she would re-enter employment shortly.

'I've almost got a job, I've got an interview next week for a job with a call centre.'
Federica, trans woman, 22, white, Scotland

LGBT young people who had not been in education, training and work for a longer period often felt less hopeful about re-entering it, and less sure about what steps they could take to do so. One participant who had not been in education, training and work for two years, after being signed off from work by his doctor because of challenges with his mental health, felt he could only look for employment once his mental health had improved. He hoped to train as a drama teacher in the long term, or to pursue a career in fashion.

'I'd like there to be a course tailored for fashion. Maybe styling and stuff, either here or in training… I don't know how I'd get a job in this though.'
Aidan, gay man, 21, white, Scotland

'I'd describe my life at the minute as complicated. People see me and think I'm doing all right, but in my head, that's not really the situation.'
Bobby, bi man, 22, BAME, England

2. WHAT LEADS LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE TO BECOME DISENGAGED FROM EDUCATION, TRAINING OR WORK

Growing up, many LGBT young people face specific challenges relating to their LGBT identity, including rejection and strained relationships with family, and isolation and bullying in education and work settings.

AT HOME

OVERVIEW

LGBT young people can face LGBT-specific challenges in their personal lives and at home, which can significantly impact their ability to stay in education, training and work. These challenges include family members rejecting them or not accepting their LGBT identity, and a lack of peer support.

Participants also experienced wider challenges, including bereavement, caring responsibilities, managing their physical health and disabilities, and negative experiences in care, which compounded these LGBT-specific difficulties.

These experiences often had a negative impact on participants' mental health, and made it harder for them to remain in education and work.

'My mum didn't want me to transition, so I ended up moving into a hostel for a while.'

Sean, trans man, 24, BAME, England

LGBT-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AT HOME

Several of the LGBT young people we heard from had experienced strained relationships with family members, linked to their LGBT identity, before and after coming out.

Those who had not come out to their family or friends at the time of interview felt anxious about how people would react, and some feared rejection. One young lesbian, Aisha, lived with her older siblings and mother. While she was confident she wouldn't be rejected if she came out to them, she also felt there was a risk of it straining their close relationship, or upsetting her wider family.

'A few of my friends know but I haven't told my family [that I'm a lesbian or about my girlfriend]. I've been out since I was about 13/14. I've thought about telling my parents about it but I'm really not sure how to.'
Aisha, lesbian, 16, BAME, Scotland

A bi participant, Bobby, was not out to his wider family or many of his friends. Having been popular at school, with a 'masculine' gender presentation, he felt that friends and family may perceive him differently if they knew he was bi, and so did not feel able to be open about his identity.

'I don't shout about it to the world but I know Mum knows, I don't know if the rest of the family do…I think it would just be awkward if I told everyone I know about it…I wouldn't say I'm out about it at all. Most people just see me with girls so they don't really think about it. I'm pretty masculine too so no one really questions me about it.'
Bobby, bi man, 22, BAME, England

For both participants, coming out risked jeopardising their close relationships with family and friends, and the essential support network they provided.

Among those who had come out, some had experienced significant problems at home which had disrupted their education and personal development. In some instances, participants' family (or certain family members) had rejected or bullied them because they were LGBT, and in the most serious cases they were forced to leave home.

'My uncle has old values. He said that I bring bad vibes and bad spirits into the house when we have family events. It's annoying because my mum is fairly fine with it, but my uncle makes it harder.'
Katharine, lesbian, 19, white, Wales

'My older brother told me he wouldn't call me by my name until I grew facial hair.'
Jamie, non-binary person, 19, white, England

These experiences often profoundly impacted their mental health and self-esteem, which in turn affected their ability to engage with school and their subsequent career opportunities.

ISOLATION FROM PEERS AS AN LGBT YOUNG PERSON

Some of the LGBT young people who are not in education, training or work that we heard from lacked support from their peers. They said this had a significant impact on their wellbeing and mental health.

Some of the LGBT young people we heard from were rejected by friends after they came out, particularly if they had come out at a young age.

'When I told my friends about it, some of them didn't accept it.'
Aisha, lesbian, 16, BAME, Scotland

'I told my parents I was gay and everything was great, I was more happy than I'd ever been. I told my friends expecting that it would go the same way, but when I least expected it, everything went downhill. People just faded away. People who used to be my friend just wouldn't talk to me anymore. I'm always nervous now, and was so anxious at school. My experience had told me that, at any time, everything could go downhill.'
Sam, gay man, 17, white, England

Some participants also said they found it hard to meet other LGBT people, and so they lacked a network of friends who could understand and support them from an LGBT perspective.

'I don't know anyone personally who is open about being homosexual. I've only seen people in passing – I just feel like "good for them, and how they can just accept who they are and crack on with it". I would love to be open and accept my own sexuality.'
Sam, gay man, 17, white, England

'I found the [LGBT] community around here at the time [I came out as trans] quite toxic and it was like 'if you're white, male and gay it's OK, but pretty much anything else was 'sub' in a way.'
Dylan, trans man, 23, white, Wales

Some LGBT young people said they had been separated from their friends not because of rejection, but because their friends who are in education or employment didn't have time to spend with them, or now lived far away. A number of LGBT young people said their social groups shrank as a result of no longer being in education or work.

Peer networks are a significant source of information for young people. As a result, the contraction of a social group has real consequences for young people's motivation and inspiration in looking for new education or employment opportunities.

CONTENDING WITH BROADER CHALLENGES AT HOME

LGBT young people who are not in education, training or work also contend with wider challenges in their home lives – similar to their non-LGBT peers – including experiences of care and homelessness, caring responsibilities, and bereavement. In some instances, we heard how LGBT-specific challenges further exacerbated these issues. For many, these negative experiences compounded existing mental health challenges and contributed to practical barriers restricting their ability to engage in education, training and work.

We spoke to one woman who'd had difficult experiences in local authority care. Adela had lived in both a children's residential home and with several foster families as a child – one of which was actively neglectful. During this time, she described feeling that she had nowhere to 'call home', and lacked meaningful support and family networks. In her group home at the age of 14, she developed feelings for another girl for the first time. Without support from those around her, she struggled to cope with these feelings and developed ongoing mental health challenges.

Having been in care as a child, she was also at increased risk of homelessness, as she did not have a 'family home' to fall back on. At 16, she moved out of the care system to move in with a girlfriend. However, a few years later she was made homeless after their relationship ended.

> *'At 16, I went to live with my partner. That was good for a while, but we split up when I was 19 so I didn't have anywhere to live, then was sacked in the same week. So basically: fired, made homeless, and broken up with all in one week.'*
> Adela, bi/pan woman, 23, white, Wales

As her focus was on finding her next meal and a bed to sleep in, looking for a job was not a priority. She also felt that her job options were limited and worried that she would be discriminated against because she did not have a fixed address.

> *'No, I wasn't working or looking for a job at that point. It's not really what your main focus is, is it?*
> Adela, bi/pan woman, 23, white, Wales

Another young person, Matthew, was caring for their mother at the time of interview. They left school with few qualifications, and because of their mental health challenges felt unable to look for jobs. They reported having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which had made it difficult for them to learn at school. They had also been bullied, which had led to severe depression and anxiety.

'The first time I experienced depression was when I was 14. I was young and in care, and I got feelings for a girl.'
Adela, bi/pan woman, 23, white, Wales

> *'I spend a lot of time with my mum and looking after her to be honest. It's enough for now.'*
> *Matthew, gender-questioning, 21, white, Scotland*

We spoke to a young trans woman, Federica, whose mother had died when she was 15. After this, she moved into a flat by herself and found herself facing bereavement and loneliness with little support. At this critical point in her education, she became depressed and her school attendance dropped. Her school refused to let her repeat the year, and so she left school without being able to take her final exams.

> *'In school I didn't do my sixth year because of my depression… I didn't go in as often as I should've and they just didn't let me finish.'*
> *Federica, trans woman, 22, white, Scotland*

Among those with more stable and supportive home lives, some LGBT young people reflected on the importance of their parents and carers being able to engage with their education.

> *'I reckon they could have been harsher. Stricter maybe. I needed discipline. A-Levels were hard because I didn't have the self-discipline I needed.'*
> *Sean, trans man, 24, BAME, England*

MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Most of the LGBT young people we spoke to said that mental health challenges had impacted their time in education and work. These included instances of anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder, which were often compounded by difficulties at home and with peers.

Stonewall's *School Report 2017* found that rates of mental health challenges among LGBT young people are alarmingly high. More than two in five trans young people, and one in five non-trans lesbian, gay and bi young people, have tried to take their own life at some point.

Some participants who struggled with their LGBT identity before or after coming out said this was a key driver of their mental health challenges or low self-esteem. This was a particular issue for participants who grew up in areas with few LGBT role models, and who lacked a support network of other LGBT people. For others, experiences of bullying and isolation at school led to new challenges with their mental health, or made their existing mental health challenges worse.

> *'A lot of people don't like [me being transgender] and I'm always trying to please everyone.'*
> *Oliver, trans man, 20, white, England*

Many participants said their mental health had affected their ability to engage in education, and had often driven their decision to leave education and not go to college. These mental health challenges also prevented some participants from staying in employment, some of whom were asked or chose to leave work because of frequent absences relating to their mental health.

'I knew I was not going to continue in education and that I wouldn't be able to. It made me feel better to know that if I don't feel comfortable staying in school then I don't have to stay in education. I can't deal with the negative energy tied to my sexuality.'

Sam, gay man, 17, white, England

PHYSICAL HEALTH CONDITIONS AND DISABILITIES

Mental health challenges were significantly more prevalent than physical health challenges as a factor impacting young people's ability to engage in education, training and work. However, some of the LGBT and non-LGBT young people we spoke to are disabled or have experienced physical health conditions, and they revealed how this affected their experiences of education, training and work.

One young lesbian, Katharine, described how the combination of her physical health condition and anti-LGBT bullying negatively impacted her time at school. Her visual impairment meant that she could not see the board at school, which made it difficult for her to keep up with her lessons. She felt unable to raise this with teachers because of her experiences of anti-LGBT bullying and subsequent anxiety, and she always chose to sit at the back of class (far from the board) because she felt ashamed of her 'masculine' gender presentation. Partly as a result, she did not sit most of her GCSEs and subsequently left school with very few qualifications. While she views college as the 'next step', when interviewed she had been out of education for over 18 months and was reluctant to apply, partly because of her lack of GCSEs and visual impairment.

'I would have headaches… I couldn't see what was on the board and would also always sit at the back. The teachers could have taken a bit more notice, but I didn't want to say anything. I was nervous and don't like being a burden.'
Katharine, lesbian, 19, white, Wales

Several participants said that a physical health condition had led them to leave education, training or work. For some this was because they were too unwell to be in education or work, for others historic issues meant they did not achieve the qualifications or experience they needed to continue, and in some cases both factors came into play.

'I didn't get the same grades as I would've because I missed half the year [due to recovery from an operation]. I was predicted A and B and I got C and D.'
Akaash, non-LGBT man, 19, BAME, England

SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Some of the LGBT young people we spoke to said that substance misuse was a key driver behind them becoming disengaged from education, training or work. These young people said their substance use was primarily driven by mental health challenges, which in some cases had resulted from the difficulties they faced as an LGBT young person. They described how their substance misuse had both emotional and practical impacts on their ability to stay in, or re-enter, education and employment.

'My attendance was bad – I stopped going to things, was always drinking, going on little day trips instead of school.'
Robert, gay man, 23, white, England

One trans woman, Rachel, said she was driven to substance misuse at school to numb the distress of her challenges with her mental health, and experiences of abuse. This made her feel like her life was spiralling out of control. Because she was excelling at school, no one picked up on her substance use, which became increasingly frequent when she went to university.

'I had the student loan and I could drink whenever I want, I could use whenever I want, I could get high whenever I want. I don't remember much. Self-harming as well.'
Rachel, trans woman, 23, white, nation excluded for anonymity

Another LGBT young person we heard from, Adela, struggled with alcohol dependency when she was homeless, which limited her ability to find somewhere stable to live.

'I was at my uncle's for a while, but he didn't let me stay for long. I don't blame him, I was a nightmare. Just drinking and partying. He didn't want me around his kids and I understand that now, but I was so angry at the time.'
Adela, bi/pan woman, 23, white, Wales

IN EDUCATION: SCHOOL

OVERVIEW

Many of the LGBT young people we spoke to encountered LGBT-specific challenges at school that contributed to them eventually being unable to engage in education, training or work, including:

- Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

- Feeling isolated because LGBT people were invisible in the school environment (among staff, other pupils, and in the curriculum).

- Fearing, and experiencing, rejection and isolation when exploring their LGBT identity and upon coming out.

For many, these factors significantly exacerbated or caused mental health challenges.

More broadly, both LGBT and non-LGBT participants said they encountered challenges in the learning environment, including limited careers guidance, and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)/Additional Support Needs (ASN)/Additional Learning Needs (ALN) that were not diagnosed or managed well.

Many of the LGBT young people we spoke to who are not in education, training or work had experienced significant difficulties at school, which were compounded by a perception that there was nowhere for them to turn for support or advice.

ANTI-LGBT BULLYING

Many of the LGBT young people we spoke to had been bullied at school because they were LGBT. We know from Stonewall's *School Report 2017* that nearly half of lesbian, gay, bi and trans pupils (45 per cent) – including 64 per cent of trans pupils – are bullied for being LGBT at school.

All of these young people described the damaging impact this bullying had on their ability to thrive at school, and on their self-esteem in the long-term. Day-to-day, it often discouraged LGBT young people from attending school, leading them to fall behind with their studies.

One participant in Scotland said they had attempted suicide after severe bullying, and that other LGBT young people at their school had made similar attempts. Bullying also affected LGBT young people's desire to move on to further education, with at least two members of the sample choosing not to continue to sixth form or college for this reason.

> *'I was nervous about [leaving the house] because of the amount of times I've been bullied as a kid. I sometimes couldn't bring myself to leave my front door.'*
> Matthew, gender-questioning, 21, white, Scotland

'I always got verbal abuse at school that was particularly targeted by one girl. I didn't want to go to school and even told my mum to ring the school about it, and it never got dealt with.'
Aisha, lesbian, 16, BAME, Scotland

'At school, the bullying was really related to me being gay…I had to have a lot of time off when I was in school because of this discrimination. When I turned 18, I just stopped going full time as I felt I had free rule.'
Aidan, gay man, 21, white, Scotland

While many of the LGBT young people we spoke to had experienced homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, those who had not yet come out at school were often bullied for being different in another way. Many said their schools did not handle bullying well, or offer enough support to those who experienced it.

'I didn't enjoy school very much at all. I was bullied, people called me a lesbian and, although I didn't realise I was trans, I knew that I was different and not a lesbian.'
Sean, trans man, 24, BAME, England

COMING OUT AT SCHOOL

The coming out process posed problems at school for nearly all of the LGBT young people we spoke to. Very few of the young people we spoke to had an existing support network of other LGBT people when they came out.

Some LGBT young people experienced severe social rejection after coming out, which made their school experience extremely distressing. Even those who said that coming out was ultimately positive feared beforehand that they would be rejected, and this negatively impacted their wellbeing.

'One of the friends that I told didn't accept me for who I was, and he told a lot of people in the school. People just didn't really want to talk to me anymore.'
Sam, gay man, 17, white, England

'My close friends knew…one time I was with my girlfriend in town and some girls from school in town saw us, and then it spread across the whole school really quickly which wasn't really fun…it was like the "on topic" thing to talk about for a year.'
Dylan, trans man, 23, white, Wales

'Friends at school were fine, but the rest of the school were a bit tricky – people would sometimes get up and walk away when I came to sit down.'
Robert, gay man, 23, white, England

LACK OF LGBT INCLUSION AT SCHOOL

The young people we heard from said that LGBT people were rarely visible in their school environment. Some said there were no openly LGBT teachers at their school, and others felt they were the only LGBT pupil in their school. This made them feel isolated, and that there was no one they could turn to who might understand them, which deterred some from coming out.

'There was nothing for inclusion when I was there. Now there's a transgender teacher who's started an inclusion group, but when I was there, there was nothing like that. Not a thing. I would've liked to see an active presence.'
Aisha, lesbian, 16, BAME, Scotland

Some participants explained how internalised shame about being LGBT led to self-destructive behaviour. One trans woman explained that her substance misuse problems stemmed from her internal conflict about her trans identity, as she wasn't able to come out at that time.

LGBT people were also absent from the curriculum. No participants said they had been taught about LGBT people, families or relationships in Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), or in the wider curriculum. This invisibility made some participants feel excluded, compounding their already significant sense of isolation at school. Participants also described instances where debates in class had been held about whether it was 'OK to be gay'.

One bi participant, Alison, explained that she wasn't aware of bisexuality while at school. She felt that if she had learned about this at school, she would have realised she was bi sooner and been able to make healthier relationship choices – which would have had a positive effect on her well-being.

'I think more understanding of LGBT people would've been good – we never got told anything about gender or sexuality.'
Alison, bi woman, 24, white, Scotland

INADEQUATE LGBT-SPECIFIC SUPPORT

Very few participants said their schools offered support to anyone struggling with their LGBT identity, mental health, or homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. This increased their feelings of isolation and a sense that students had to deal with everything on their own.

Some of the LGBT young people we spoke to said that teachers had offered them informal support, but they had not felt able to accept this. Their existing feelings of a lack of support and isolation were so deep-seated that they did not feel the teachers would be able to help them. Some participants, whose LGBT identities were not widely known at school, feared that accepting support might lead to them being 'outed' among other pupils.

'There was a gay maths teacher who asked me a couple of times if I was OK. I said yes even though I very much wasn't. I didn't want to talk about anything…If I'd come out, I would have been even more judged and bullied.'
Katharine, lesbian, 19, white, Wales

Single-sex schools were a particular challenge for trans young people whose gender didn't match the school, and who felt it heightened their dysphoria.

'I went to a girls' school when I was a junior and I didn't really fit in there as I wasn't a girl and didn't have the same experiences. It was difficult...I didn't have any friends, so schooling wasn't fun at all. I didn't really connect with anyone.'
Kennedy, non-binary person, 24, white, nation excluded for anonymity

WIDER CHALLENGES IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The LGBT young people we heard from discussed wider issues in their learning environment that prevented them from engaging with their learning, some of which were shared by the non-LGBT young people we spoke with.

In line with national figures on young people who are not in education, training or work, many of the young people we spoke to had Special Educational Needs and Disabilities/Additional Support Needs/Additional Learning Needs, including ADHD, autism spectrum conditions and dyslexia. These had often only been identified later on in their schooling.

These young people said the lack of support they received for these conditions profoundly impacted their ability to reach their full potential at school. Many struggled to concentrate in large classes, and most did not receive the personalised support they required, even when their needs had been identified. As a result, many said they were unable to engage and were consequently sent out of class, or started skipping classes.

'Even after I was officially diagnosed with Asperger's, they never did anything about it… I had a card that gave me extra time to leave the classroom but that was all the support I'd get.'
Aidan, gay man, 21, white, Scotland

Some of the young people we spoke to felt teachers were not on their side, particularly if they were unable to engage in class or their attendance dropped. These young people felt their inability to engage in class was usually a result of other issues, including problems at home, relationship difficulties, bullying, or trying to manage their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities/Additional Support Needs/Additional Learning Needs.

'At school, they often told me I wouldn't get into any of the courses I would want to apply for like hairdressing. They always put me down.'
Alison, bi woman, 24, white, Scotland

'Because of my dyslexia, I struggled to do work and then I just ended up messing around. The teachers didn't help me and just punished me instead. My mum was so angry that they didn't give me the help I needed with reading and things like that. I ended up avoiding schoolwork because it was challenging. I'd rather sit in detention than get homework.'
Bobby, bi man, 22, BAME, England

'With my Asperger's, I didn't understand a lot of the things that were going on… There was one teacher that spent the time to go over the work and explain it to me, but she was the only teacher that did that.'

Aisha, lesbian, 16, BAME, Scotland

'If I had told them I was struggling they could have helped me but they probably just thought I had a temper.'

Oliver, trans man, 20, white, England

Many young people told us that large class sizes compounded these issues, as they lacked the personalised support they needed to fulfil their potential. Some said that large classes made it easier for them to be distracted by their friends, and harder for teachers to manage behavioural issues.

Several of the LGBT people we heard from were moved to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) because of poor behaviour or their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities/Additional Support Needs/Additional Learning Needs. Those who were moved said the smaller class sizes and attention they received from educational specialists greatly improved their ability to learn.

'When I moved school and started in smaller classes, I felt I could learn better and I got a lot more from it.'

Alison, bi woman, 24, white, Scotland

LACK OF GOOD QUALITY CAREERS GUIDANCE

The LGBT young people we heard from said they received little formal careers guidance. Those who had received it said it was typically sporadic, and general rather than tailored to individuals. This guidance was rarely delivered by a staff member with specific careers expertise. Without good-quality, personalised careers guidance, participants said their opportunities were largely limited to jobs they knew of, or knew people working in. Consequently, some felt the only jobs available to them were low-wage, 'easy to find' and often precarious – for many, this meant retail or bar work.

'There was careers advice, but I never went to them. I don't think anyone did. No one thought they'd be helpful.'

Oliver, trans man, 20, white, England

None of the young people we spoke to said they had received careers guidance showing that various careers and workplaces could be LGBT-inclusive. Many of the LGBT young people we heard from said they had developed expectations about which career routes would be welcoming to them as LGBT people – with many believing that certain workplaces and careers would not be 'for them' as LGBT people.

IN EDUCATION: COLLEGE

OVERVIEW

College presented the LGBT young people we heard from with many of the same challenges as school, on top of the change of moving to a new environment with less accountability and structure. This transition was often a pivotal point where engagement with education decreased for LGBT young people who went on to leave education, training and work.

Some of the LGBT young people we heard from felt they had to go back into the closet when they started college, or otherwise struggled in a new environment that wasn't LGBT-inclusive.

FAILING TO PROVIDE LGBT-INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Some of the LGBT young people we spoke to found the transition between school and college difficult. Several LGBT young people went back into the closet when they started college, while others struggled to navigate their identity in a new environment without the support network they had built up at school.

'When I went to college, I thought I was going to be happy to be there and it would've made my life so much easier. But there were people who I didn't see eye to eye with there, who made my life difficult.'
Dylan, trans man, 23, white, Wales

Some participants felt their college environment was not LGBT inclusive, particularly where the lack of structure meant teachers were less aware of students' behaviour, which led homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language to go unchecked.

'There were more comments like "that's a girl". There were all these examples of teachers thinking I was joking when I answered to my birth name on registers. It was very isolating.'
Sean, trans man, 24, BAME, England

Some trans young people said this period was particularly difficult. One participant, Sean, described being frequently 'deadnamed' (being called the name he was given at birth) and having to repeatedly ask for peers and staff to use his correct pronouns, which made him feel unsupported at college.

'I went to college but I hated it. I dropped out after two months. There were loads of trans-related things. There were less rules so it's easier to pick on someone, so there were more comments like "that's a girl". There were all these examples of teachers thinking I was joking when I answered to my birth name on registers. It was very isolating.'

Sean, trans man, 24, BAME, England

WIDER CHALLENGES IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

More widely, many of the LGBT young people we heard from said that the lack of formal structure in college compared to school meant they felt less held to account for their learning and attendance.

As a result, many participants said they were often able to 'fly under the radar' with extremely low or no attendance. Rather than leaving suddenly, participants described how they slowly increased their levels of absence until they stopped attending entirely.

Both LGBT and non-LGBT participants also became disengaged from college because of issues such as unmet expectations around what their course would be, or struggles they faced when trying to complete their qualifications. None of the young people we spoke to said they had received useful guidance from their college on how to resolve these challenges.

'The issue was that I couldn't progress in college without improving my English level. I had to simply be good at English, which I wasn't.'

Bobby, bi man, 22, BAME, England

Many participants left college without a clear idea of what they wanted to do, or what they could do. As at school, the LGBT and non-LGBT young people we spoke with had received very limited careers guidance. Any guidance that was available was typically considered very low quality.

'At that point I didn't have any ideas about a job. I went to college to get a trade so I could get a job… then my OCD kicked in and I realised I couldn't fix toilets for the rest of my life.'

Joe, non-LGBT man, 20, white, England

IN EDUCATION: UNIVERSITY

OVERVIEW

A small number of the young people we spoke to attended university, the majority of whom were trans. These young people had taken an indefinite leave of absence from university, left university mid-way through their degree, or completed university, but not found a job since graduating.

These participants described the negative impact of their university environment not being LGBT-inclusive, and the limited support that was available for LGBT students. These challenges exacerbated their mental health challenges, and impacted their attendance and ability to complete their degree.

Further research on LGBT young people's experiences of attending university can be found in *LGBT in Britain: University Report* (2018), Stonewall research with YouGov.

FAILING TO PROVIDE LGBT-INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

The participants we spoke to said they had felt isolated and unsupported as LGBT people at university. Stonewall research with YouGov in 2018, *LGBT in Britain: University Report,* found that two in five LGBT students had hidden their identity at university for fear of discrimination.

One non-binary young person, Kennedy, who had started a university course they were passionate about, told us that transphobic comments they had received from their personal tutor were a significant factor in them leaving university.

'The last conversation I had with someone in the department was with the counsellor. I mentioned I had an issue with my personal tutor saying transphobic stuff towards me then he started telling me that it wasn't transphobic… I tried to complain about it but then they told me at the Student Union that I wouldn't get anywhere. I still love [my subject] and I really feel like I could've been great in it even though I didn't get the opportunity for it. I feel really bitter about not getting there.'
Kennedy, non-binary person, 24, white, nation excluded for anonymity

As they lacked openly LGBT peers, participants said they felt alone as they could not see 'people like them' on their course. Participants also told us their course content was not LGBT-inclusive, which increased their feelings of isolation.

Rachel, a trans woman and student (who is taking an indefinite period of leave from her course) told us that she was initially deterred from coming out, as there was only one openly trans person out of 1,000 in her department and few trans professionals in her chosen field. As a result, she felt she had no one to model her experience on or turn to for reassurance, and worried about attitudes she would encounter from her peers and staff.

'If [my lecturers and colleagues] don't like me, that's going to be a shit time. I'm just gonna have to get through it.'
Rachel, trans woman, 23, white, nation excluded for anonymity

Some participants said that peer-run LGBT support organisations or university LGBT societies were a valuable resource, as they provided an opportunity to meet other LGBT young people. However, one non-binary young person, Kennedy, struggled with those organisations, as they felt they were less inclusive of trans and bi people, and were often oriented around drinking, which could make them difficult to attend for people who don't drink alcohol. Kennedy felt that inclusivity in these organisations was particularly important, as they did not feel safe in many student bars, pubs and clubs as a trans person.

Another young person explained that having to undertake paid work to support themselves at university meant that their work commitments prevented them attending formally arranged groups for LGBT people.

'There was an LGBT society at university but I didn't attend it as I often had to work a lot.'
Dylan, trans man, 23, white, Wales

LACK OF SUPPORT FOR LGBT STUDENTS

Experiences of mental health challenges were common among the LGBT young people we spoke to who had attended university. Pre-existing mental health challenges were felt to have been worsened by difficulties at university. Participants told us that mental health support at university wasn't always available and, when it was, it varied in quality. It was rare that staff were trained to meet the specific needs of LGBT young people.

Trans participants explained the challenges they experienced while transitioning at university. This required some to take time out of their studies, or otherwise prevented them from focusing on their course. These participants said that a lack of role models, support or signposting to appropriate medical advice compounded these challenges. Though university counselling services were sometimes available, participants did not come across counsellors with training in trans issues.

'I told them I was trans and they went "Hey, we don't know how to help you with this – go look elsewhere. We'll do what we can but this is not our paygrade, we're sorry".'
Rachel, trans woman, 23, white, location excluded for anonymity

LGBT participants experienced specific barriers to accessing healthcare while at university, particularly when they had left home to go to university. These included difficulties finding a GP who they knew would be LGBT-inclusive, or having to travel long distances to attend a Gender Dysphoria Clinic (GDC) appointment.

'I think that I would rather have a better standard of [GPs who are specialised in supporting trans people] in the area. I have one at the minute who I don't think really trusts me, thinks I'm taking too much testosterone and things like that…I have to travel [a long way] for surgery and it's annoying not to have those assignment surgeries in the local area. I would rather have one close to me.'
Kennedy, non-binary person, 24, white, nation excluded for anonymity

IN WORK AND APPRENTICESHIPS

OVERVIEW

The LGBT young people we spoke to had some experience of work, and found that issues relating to their LGBT identity posed particular challenges, including:

- Experiences of anti-LGBT abuse and language.
- Gendered workplaces and those which were not LGBT-inclusive.
- Poor mental health support at work.

These problems were compounded by wider issues, which included:

- Limited job opportunities, leading to unsatisfying work.
- Little progression within these jobs.

Knowledge and experiences of apprenticeships were rare, with similar challenges faced as those in wider work.

Further research on LGBT young people's experiences of work can be found in _LGBT in Britain: Work Report_ (2018), Stonewall research with YouGov.

NON-INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

Several LGBT young people we heard from had experienced anti-LGBT abuse and discrimination in the workplace. In some cases this was dealt with poorly by management and colleagues. One young lesbian in England told us that she felt forced to adapt her appearance to be more 'feminine' to ensure a reliable stream of shifts as a bartender. When her LGBT identity became known at work, she was labelled as 'the gay bartender'. Another young person said they left their job due to not feeling safe as an LGBT person.

One gay man working in a club in Scotland had experienced verbal and physical abuse from customers, which his colleagues ignored. Experiences like this meant that LGBT participants felt that environments which reinforced rigid gender norms would be challenging for them to work in.

Some trans young people we heard from faced particular challenges at work, as employers rarely understood their needs. A trans woman in Scotland said her employer failed to implement their inclusion policies, repeatedly deadnamed her (used the name she was given at birth) and used incorrect pronouns. As a result, she felt it was hard to know if a workplace would be inclusive for her before working there, because how a company acts in practice can differ to their policies.

'He was a dodgy boss. He made me feel unsafe. He was anti-LGBT, and said that if any employees were gay, he'd fire them. So I left… I felt unsafe as an LGBT person.'

Jamie, non-binary person, 19, white, England

'On my work pass, they gave me my old male pronoun and I spoke to them about it but they kept putting my work pass name as [the name I was given at birth].'
Federica, trans woman, 22, white, Scotland

We heard how LGBT young people's assumptions about how safe or inclusive a work environment will be can significantly impact on an LGBT young person's career goals and the paths they feel are open to them.

Some participants said they had directed their longer-term goals towards fields which they expected to be LGBT-inclusive, such as childcare, psychology or theatre. Participants largely saw workplaces that are predominantly occupied by women as being more LGBT-inclusive. For example, one gay man in Scotland, Aidan, had experienced severe homophobic bullying at school. At college he studied childcare alongside mostly women, and found this environment was much more accepting. As a result, he wanted to work in childcare as he felt he could be accepted as an LGBT person in that field.

'When I went to college, I didn't suffer from bullying and my friend group was all girls… it was much easier getting along with them as a gay man.'
Aidan, gay man, 21, white, Scotland

POOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN THE WORKPLACE

Some of the LGBT young people we spoke to said they had either been dismissed from, or had to leave, previous jobs because they were struggling with their mental health. Day-to-day, mental health challenges were a significant barrier to attending shifts and maintaining regular work routines.

'I was working at Burger King when I was 16 and I really enjoyed that but because of my mental health problems, I had to leave.'
Matthew, gender-questioning, 21, white, Scotland

The LGBT young people we spoke to had rarely disclosed their mental health conditions to their employers, and were generally reluctant to do so. We heard from a gay man in England who is a choreographer, and has been told by colleagues that he has a very promising career ahead of him. He has bipolar disorder, which means that his mental health is unpredictable, with high and low days. He felt that this limited his chance of being successful in this pressurised field, as he worried that he would appear unprofessional if he took days off to manage his mental health.

'There are opportunities that I haven't gone for because of my mental health. I feel like having health problems doesn't suit that lifestyle.'
Robert, gay man, 23, white, England

None of the LGBT young people we heard from said they had received any support for their mental health at work. Given the short-term nature of the roles that many participants had worked in, participants said there was often little social or emotional support among colleagues. Because participants often perceived themselves as 'disposable' in their jobs, they felt less inclined to seek support at work, as they felt they were replaceable.

INSECURE JOBS WITH POOR PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES

Many participants' experiences of work were limited to jobs in low-wage and insecure roles, including in the hospitality and retail sectors. The young people we heard from said these were often not roles they saw leading to a career, but jobs they found themselves in after leaving school with limited qualifications, or as an interim arrangement before re-entering education or training.

These roles were marked by a lack of company investment in their futures, and there were limited opportunities to progress into new roles. Few of the young people we spoke to said they had received training or opportunities to develop their professional skills at work. As a result, many said they didn't feel invested in these jobs, which sometimes lead to low attendance and dismissal.

'I've got some qualifications in cooking but they often want experience of 1-3 years too, and the work I would end up doing in the kitchen would be pot washing or something like that.'
Bobby, bi man, 22, BAME, England

Because participants felt these roles were replaceable, they frequently moved between different jobs, particularly in retail and hospitality. As a result, their employment situation was often insecure, and they also lacked the social or emotional support they might have received from a work environment had they been there for a longer time.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Among the LGBT young people we heard from, knowledge of apprenticeship opportunities was limited and experiences of apprenticeships were rare. One trans participant, Sean, started an apprenticeship but needed to take time off for his gender affirmation surgery, then struggled to re-enter his apprenticeship afterwards. The lack of support Sean experienced in his apprenticeship meant he missed out on a valuable opportunity.

'My transition made it difficult for me to continue work – there wasn't a lot of support available and I felt like there was lots of attention on me. Not completing the apprenticeship was my biggest loss. I tried to go back and do it after, but I wasn't able to.'
Sean, trans man, 24, BAME, England

Another participant said she had not been able to use her apprenticeship to help her find meaningful work.

'I struggle a lot because I lack experience, I don't think they even consider you if you have no experience. It seems like my apprenticeship means nothing to them.'
Federica, trans woman, 22, white, Scotland

3. BARRIERS TO RE-ENTRY

OVERVIEW

The factors that contribute to LGBT young people leaving education, training or work continue to hold LGBT young people back from re-entering it.

The most common barriers faced by the young people we heard from include:

- Poor mental and physical health.

- A lack of practical support and knowledge about how to re-enter education, training or work.

- Feeling that there were limited opportunities available to them.

- Lack of confidence in taking the 'next step'.

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Many participants described their mental health as a significant obstacle they needed to overcome and 'get under control' before they could apply for jobs or re-enter education or training. One LGBT young person we heard from had been signed off from work by the doctor because of their mental health, and had not returned for the past two years.

'It's not like I don't want to do things. It's going to take a long time for me to get to where I want to get to but hopefully I can.'
Kennedy, non-binary person, 24, white, nation excluded for anonymity

'I want to get back into employment as I really did enjoy working but I want my head to be in the right place first.'
Alison, bi woman, 24, white, Scotland

Among those considering going into work, many participants believed they would struggle to find or keep a job, because they felt there is not enough support and understanding in workplaces for people struggling with mental health challenges. Many feared that because of their mental health they would not be able to work consistently and worried they would be dismissed if they had 'bad days' and could not work as a result.

'I can't go back to work. It's been such a long time since I had that routine, I wouldn't know how to do it. My bipolar means I struggle to sleep sometimes, so I wouldn't want to go for work for 9am if I've fallen asleep at 6am. I can't get to grips with not being able to take time off whenever you need it.'
Robert, gay man, 23, white, England

LGBT young people with physical impairments and long-term physical health conditions felt that these significantly impacted their ability to enter higher or further education or employment. Some participants said they had not been, or were not currently, well enough to work – particularly in the physically demanding roles they felt qualified for (such as retail or hospitality roles).

LACK OF PRACTICAL SUPPORT AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HOW TO RE-ENTER EDUCATION, TRAINING OR WORK

Many LGBT participants said they lacked the practical support and knowledge they needed to find training opportunities, apprenticeships and routes into work, particularly after the age of 18, when they no longer had access to this support through school and college.

Participants in England and Wales in particular said it was unclear what jobs, education and training opportunities were available to them, particularly for those who lived in rural areas and outside of major cities. Many LGBT young people had not received careers advice or guidance on opportunities available locally, and their searches on generic jobs websites produced few relevant options. Participants in Scotland said that resources from Skills Development Scotland had given them a greater awareness of what opportunities were available in their area.

'I don't know where I'd go for advice, most help I've got for jobs and things has been through knowing people. Most times I've applied for things, I just haven't got them.'
Bobby, bi man, 22, BAME, England

FEELING THAT LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES WERE AVAILABLE TO THEM

Some LGBT young people felt that while their local area offered opportunities, they worried that these would not be 'for them' – they feared they would be discriminated against when applying because they were LGBT.

LGBT in Britain: Work Report (2018), research by Stonewall and YouGov, found that almost one in five LGBT people (18 per cent) who were looking for work said they were discriminated against because of their sexual orientation or gender identity while trying to get a job in the last year.

Several participants who felt their local area was unwelcoming and unsafe for LGBT people were anxious about leaving their house, and said this impacted their ability to seek out employment or education opportunities.

> *'I [worry that if I] got to the interview and had to hand in my passport [they would think] I was lying, or maybe they just don't want a trans person working there, and I'd never get the job.'*
> Oliver, trans man, 20, white, England

> *'It's not very safe, there is a lot of crime [in the area]. So I don't spend a lot of time outside, only when I'm walking my dog.'*
> Dylan, trans man, 23, white, Wales

Many LGBT young people felt the education, training and employment opportunities they could access were limited due to a lack of qualifications. Some participants had left school early, or with very few formal qualifications – several LGBT young people we heard from struggled to remember what qualifications they had. As a result, many participants did not see continuing in post-16 education as an option, and felt there were limited jobs they could successfully apply for.

Many young people did not believe the qualifications they did have would help them find work. As a result, they discounted them and instead searched for jobs based on what they thought was available. One non-LGBT man in England, Joe, told us he chose to do a plumbing course as he didn't feel there were any other viable options, but eventually had to leave after working in unclean environments made his OCD unmanageable.

> *'I needed to get some kind of trade, and nothing else really inspired me. I knew there was good money in it.'*
> Joe, non-LGBT man, 20, white, England

Participants also said that the limited range of courses available to them at college restricted their career prospects, and there was a general lack of awareness of training and apprenticeship opportunities that would be available to them. Several LGBT young people cited the cost of going to university as a barrier to accessing higher education.

One young bi man, Bobby, had studied music at college and had ambitions of working in the music industry, although he didn't think he'd be able to earn a living from this. He loved cooking and wanted to train as a chef to earn a reliable income, but was struggling to find work without having more experience. He dreaded the idea of going back to college with people much younger than him, but wasn't aware of any other training opportunities available for adults.

> *'I need something I can definitely build a career on, you can't really with music and that's why I'd want to be doing more training in cooking.'*
> *Bobby, bi man, 22, BAME, England*

LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN TAKING THE 'NEXT STEP'

Some LGBT young people told us that a lack of confidence was a significant obstacle to them re-entering education, training or work.

Several participants were nervous that previous negative experiences (including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying) would be repeated, which deterred them from applying for roles or courses. Katherine, a young lesbian in Wales, had experienced homophobic bullying at school. Although she wanted to go study photography at college, she feared the college environment would be the same.

> *'I'm always really scared of people and what I'm going to face when I get there.'*
> *Katharine, lesbian, 19, white, Wales*

Participants also shared worries about 'fitting in' in different environments, particularly at university, and being able to achieve their goals in their studies and work, alongside wider concerns about 'the unknown'.

Many LGBT young people, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities/ Additional Support Needs/Additional Learning Needs and who had left school with low literacy levels, felt they lacked the practical ability or confidence to write CVs, applications and cover letters. Many participants said they had received no support for this, and regularly received rejections when making formal applications.

One young lesbian we spoke to, Aisha, left school at the age of 15 without formal qualifications, after experiencing homophobic bullying and struggling to learn in large classes as someone with Asperger's syndrome. She said that while she wanted to work, she found written applications difficult to navigate, and so instead preferred applying for retail jobs where she could meet managers in person.

> *'Sometimes I find some of the application forms for jobs to be too confusing. The language they use can be confusing even if the job itself isn't… Anything like that can really put me off.'*
> *Aisha, lesbian, 16, BAME, Scotland*

4. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

▪OVERVIEW▪

Following the interviews, we reflected on the core factors that led the LGBT young people we heard from to become and remain disengaged from education, training or work, alongside the factors that had helped them.

Using these findings, we held a workshop with LGBT young people who were not in education, training or work to identify some of the key measures that could be taken to better support LGBT young people to stay in, or re-enter, education, training or work, and establish how these could be delivered effectively.

These included:

- Improving mental health support for LGBT young people.

- Delivering specific careers support for LGBT young people.

- Enabling peer support from other LGBT young people.

- Creating LGBT-inclusive college environments.

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE

Throughout the research, experiences of mental health challenges emerged as a clear factor contributing to LGBT young people becoming, and remaining, disengaged from education, training and work. Alongside the difficulties faced by young people in general, many of the LGBT young people we heard from faced additional challenges relating to their LGBT identity. These had a significant negative impact on their mental health, and their ability to progress in, and re-enter, education, training or work.

Many participants told us they were unable to access adequate mental health support, or had suffered negative experiences when seeking support. All participants agreed that good-quality, LGBT-inclusive mental health support was vital.

Several LGBT young people told us about instances where they had been well supported, and the positive impact this had on them. One LGBT young person was supported by his school nurse, who helped him through mental health challenges that were driven by medical issues and internal conflict about his LGBT identity. He said that although he didn't realise that he needed help, the school offered him support from the nurse regardless, and he eventually stayed at college and gained qualifications.

Participants told us that good-quality mental health support for LGBT young people should be provided as part of inclusive, wider mental health support for all young people.

LGBT young people told us that this support would be most effective if it was easy to access through multiple channels, including face-to-face, phone and online services.

'Some people might not have time to stay after school, or some people might be comfortable talking online.'
Co-creative participant

They said that this support should be delivered by practitioners who understood how to support LGBT people, in an inclusive space (for example, one that was accessible to all young people, and displayed resources and posters showing that the service was LGBT inclusive).

'Rather than saying "I'm going to this guy because he's gay and he understands", you should be able to go to any counsellor.'
Co-creative participant

Some LGBT young people also highlighted a desire for LGBT-specific services. Several participants said they would prefer to receive support from someone who was LGBT, although acknowledged that this may be challenging to consistently achieve.

'I used to have a counsellor who was a black woman, and that helped a lot, but I think it would've been more helpful if they were gay too.'
Co-creative participant

Alongside delivering services specifically for LGBT people, some participants said that all services in general need to be LGBT-inclusive, as they felt that some LGBT young people may be concerned that going to an LGBT-specific service could leave them at risk of being 'outed' to their peers.

'You can single people out by specifically having an LGBT group and counsellor, making people nervous. It can be too direct.'
Co-creative participant

IMPROVED CAREERS AND APPRENTICESHIPS SUPPORT FOR LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE

Nearly all of the LGBT and non-LGBT young people interviewed said they had not received good-quality careers advice and support at school and college. This presented significant challenges to the LGBT young people we spoke to, including:

- Limited knowledge about what career paths were available to them, regardless of personal interest, leading many to be funnelled into a narrow range of work (e.g. retail and service roles).

- Perceptions that some jobs were not 'for them', partly driven by a sense of not having the right qualifications.

- Practical barriers to applying for jobs, including challenges with the application process and interviews.

However, for those young people we heard from who had received good-quality support, this made a real difference. One young person praised the advice they received from their college on moving into higher education:

> *'They told me to look at [university courses], told me what course would suit me for what I want to do. They supported everything.'*
>
> *Jamie, non-binary person, 19, white, England*

LGBT young people at the workshop agreed that improved and inclusive careers advice should be a priority. These young people said that this should include:

- Advice on going into a broad range of careers, focusing on entry-level positions.

- Case studies of LGBT people in work, including young people in the early stages of their career (whose experience would feel more accessible to LGBT young people starting out in their careers), and people in senior roles.

'It would be good to see relatable people – people like us who are just starting out on their careers.'
Co-creative participant

- Advice on finding an LGBT-inclusive employer, and examples of LGBT-inclusive employers in sectors not widely considered to be inclusive.

- Guidance on workplace rights, with information on how to recognise and respond to workplace discrimination, and how to approach employers about LGBT-specific issues (for example, taking time out for gender affirmation surgery).

- Advice on how to prepare for interviews, which participants considered to be an issue that particularly impacts LGBT young people (who they felt might be discriminated against because of their LGBT identity).

The LGBT young people we spoke to were very enthusiastic about the idea of an LGBT-specific careers advice website. They felt this would be able to reach a wide audience, given that LGBT young people regularly go online to seek help and support.

> *'It would be so useful to have just like a central database of "here are all the things you might want that might be useful"… and "here's a bunch of legal advice".'*
>
> *Co-creative participant*

There was a consensus that a residential programme helping LGBT young people who have left school or college to make the next step could be very impactful for those able to access it. Participants felt it would be a useful opportunity to meet sector leaders and inspirational figures in person and build professional and social networks with other LGBT young people.

'A programme would be really beneficial for young people who need a bit more of a push, who need a bit more guidance.'
Co-creative participant

Some LGBT young people noted that a programme like this might end up attracting young people who are already in work, and confident in the workplace, rather than those who are starting out.

'It sounds like it's for people who are already in work, to help them move higher up in the workplace.'
Co-creative participant

The LGBT young people we spoke to said this should be free to access, and that online alternatives should be provided for those young people who face barriers to accessing a programme like this (for example, because they aren't 'out' yet, or experience physical or mental health challenges).

ENABLING PEER SUPPORT

Many of the LGBT young people interviewed experienced isolation and loneliness at school and college. Many participants said this was driven by the absence of any LGBT friends or non-LGBT allies, which they felt limited the support that was available to them. As peer networks are a key source of information and encouragement for young people, this also impacted their motivation and inspiration when pursuing education and employment opportunities.

One form of peer support that participants said had a positive impact on them was LGBT youth groups (provided outside of education environments) and student groups (provided in education environments). Most participants who had been to these had attended groups outside of school.

'It felt like it was rewarding speaking to people who were younger and struggled with what I was struggling with.'
Aidan, gay man, 21, white, Scotland

Participants explained how the informal nature of these groups allowed them to make LGBT friends. One young person, Matthew, credited their LGBT youth group with helping them make friends for the first time, and helping to alleviate their severe depression.

'My three bisexual friends who I met through the youth group have always been open about who they are. I learned from them we shouldn't be afraid to show who we are, on the inside or out.'
Matthew, gender-questioning, 21, white, Scotland

'We started an alliance group for people who lack LGBT support in school with our teacher. It really helped younger people in school. They felt they could come out, when I couldn't at that age.'
Aidan, gay man, 21, white, Scotland

Several LGBT young people we spoke to had already tried to set up their own group, reflecting the importance they placed on this type of support.

'We called it the Pizza Club so other kids wouldn't know what it was there for.'
Co-creative participant

In the workshop, participants agreed that information for LGBT young people on how to set up an LGBT student group at school or college would be useful.

Some of the LGBT young people we heard from highlighted the importance of specific groups for LGBT young people to talk about their experiences and support each other in a safe space, with a teacher present.

'I think it would've helped me a lot… knowing there are people like me in school, not just outside of school.'
Co-creative participant

By contrast, some participants felt that wider equalities groups – which advocate for all forms of equality, including gender, race and disability equality, alongside LGBT equality – would be more helpful, as these could create spaces for non-LGBT students to learn how to be an ally to the LGBT community, and to discuss intersecting equalities issues (such as racism, sexism and anti-LGBT abuse).

Some participants who had not been 'out' at school said they would have felt more comfortable attending a group like this, as they felt this would reduce the risk of them being 'outed', and some felt they would be more likely to attend a support group if they were able to bring their non-LGBT friends with them.

For both of these types of groups, the LGBT young people we spoke to said it would be essential to have clear support and supervision from school leaders, including practical support and resources to set up and run the group (such as providing a room and refreshments).

'It's really important that the school is actively encouraging the club.'
Co-creative participant

CREATING LGBT-INCLUSIVE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENTS

After school, many of the LGBT young people interviewed who had attended sixth form and further education colleges said they faced particular challenges there as LGBT people, including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and discrimination, which led some of them to go back into the closet.

However, some participants said that their college had been an inclusive and accepting environment that offered a fresh start for them.

'[College was] the best place in the world. It's like a proper family. Everyone is always there for you and everyone supports each other and is there to help out with studying.'
Co-creative participant

The participants in the co-creative workshop agreed that more should be done to create LGBT-inclusive college environments that motivate and inspire young people to reach their full potential.

Participants stated that sixth form/final year and further education colleges should deliver LGBT-inclusive teaching – for example, ensuring textbooks include case studies about LGBT people and relationships. Several participants noted that form time at the start of the day could be used more productively, with suggestions including having an LGBT guest speaker to present an interactive session. The LGBT young people we heard from said that LGBT people and relationships should not be singled out as a stand-alone topic, but embedded in wider teaching.

'If something comes up in the lesson and they all turn and look at you, and the LGBT person thinks 'oh no this is directed at me' then [the school] are doing it wrong – it needs to be more general support, general acceptance and representation in the classroom.'
Co-creative participant

'Having that representation just being part of the environment would be good.'
Co-creative participant

Participants said that colleges needed strong policies to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, accompanied by clear complaints procedures, and a requirement for colleges to inform the reporter about the outcome of their complaint.

'I had anxiety around coming out, then I was penalised for anxiety – and they denied the bullying problem.'
Co-creative participant)

'At school we had an anti-bullying policy that didn't include LGBT.'
Co-creative participant

Participants stated that colleges should provide inclusive facilities, including gender-neutral toilets and changing rooms. Trans participants agreed that there needed to be practical and accessible college policies on how trans people could update their information on their college records.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING (EET) SERVICES AND DATA

Local authorities should:

- Ensure all EET staff have received training on meeting the needs of LGBT young people who are not in education, employment or training.

- Conduct voluntary monitoring of the sexual orientation and trans status of the young people being supported by their EET teams.

- Provide a platform for young people in their area (including LGBT young people) to inform the strategic development of their EET and youth services, for example by including LGBT representatives on their Youth Councils.

The Office for National Statistics should:

- Monitor respondents' sexual orientation and trans status in the Labour Force Survey, and publish the resulting data on the experiences of LGBT young people who are not in education, employment or training.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Department for Education and Department for Health and Social Care (in England), the Mental Health Directorate (in Scotland), and the Department of Health and Social Services (in Wales) should:

- In England, significantly upscale and accelerate the implementation of the Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision strategy to help more young people benefit from the proposals. They should also ensure that the evaluation of wave one trailblazer areas assesses how effectively the strategy is meeting the needs of LGBT young people, and use these learnings to inform the subsequent roll-out of the strategy.

- In Scotland, ensure that the needs of LGBT people as an at-risk group are considered throughout the implementation of the Mental Health Strategy (2017-27). As part of the Suicide Prevention Action Plan, specific training should be delivered to equip Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) staff with the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of LGBT young people.

- In Wales, ensure that the needs of LGBT people as an at-risk group are considered throughout the implementation of the Together for Mental Health strategy. As a part of any future decisions on CAMHS, ensure decisions consider the needs of LGBT young people.

NHS Digital, Information Services Division Scotland and NHS Wales Informatics Service should:

- Ensure that future studies on the national prevalence of poor mental health among young people and adults includes analysis in respect of sexual orientation and trans status. This should be cross-referenced with data on 'not in education, employment and training' status/time out of EET, to identify mental health inequalities experienced by LGBT young people not in education, employment or training. These should be subsequently addressed through targeted Government interventions.

Local authorities should:

- Explicitly recognise that mental health support, specifically for LGBT young people, is a priority and reflect this in their Health and Wellbeing strategies, which should encourage joint working between local CAMHS, primary care services, sexual and reproductive health services, early help services, LGBT youth groups and schools.

CAMHS and adult mental health services should:

- Train all staff on meeting the mental health and wellbeing needs of LGBT young people, including the specific needs of trans young people. In partnership with YoungMinds, Stonewall has recently launched a _Train the Trainer_ course for local authority officers, and those providing services supporting children and young people, on improving mental health and wellbeing outcomes for LGBT children and young people. For more information, please contact _cyps@stonewall.org.uk_.

- Consistently monitor patient and service user sexual orientation and trans status, supported by training for practitioners, to identify inequalities in LGBT patient experiences and outcomes, and develop targeted services and initiatives to address the inequalities identified.

- Make LGBT-inclusive information and resources readily available for staff, patients and service users, including signposting to LGBT-specific services and groups.

- Join Stonewall's _Diversity Champions_ programme. With over 75 health and social care organisations who are already members, the programme can help you develop effective training and deliver LGBT-inclusive services.

PEER SUPPORT

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (in England), the Local Government and Communities Directorate (in Scotland), and the Local Government Directorate (in Wales) should:

- Require and financially support local authorities to provide LGBT youth groups across their localities. All staff running these groups should receive training on meeting the needs of LGBT young people (including BAME LGBT young people; LGBT young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Additional Support Needs and Additional Learning Needs; and LGBT looked after children).

- In England, update the statutory guidance for local authorities on providing youth services, to provide substantive advice on how to deliver LGBT youth groups (and LGBT-inclusive youth services more widely) and engage with LGBT young people when planning and reviewing youth service provision.

Local authorities should:

- Provide, or fund third parties to run, LGBT youth groups in accessible venues in each of their localities.

- Deliver, or support third parties to provide, training for all youth workers on meeting the specific needs of LGBT young people (including those with other protected characteristics).

- Proactively advertise the support offered to LGBT young people locally, and ensure alternative support is available for LGBT young people who are unable to travel to an LGBT youth group.

HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL CARE

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (in England), the Housing and Social Justice Directorate (in Scotland) and the Housing and Regeneration Directorate (in Wales) should:

- In England, update the Homelessness Code of Practice to recognise LGBT people, including LGBT young people, as a vulnerable group.

- In England, with the Government Equalities Office, complete the actions on LGBT homelessness in the LGBT Action Plan, and develop a dedicated strategy to address the gaps in service provision identified.

- In Scotland, commence the local connection and intentionality provisions in the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 to enable more LGBT people who are presenting as homeless to access and receive the support they require.

- In Wales, update the Strategy for Preventing and Ending Homelessness to acknowledge the increased risks facing LGBT people. Ensure that future action plans stemming from the strategy includes tangible actions for addressing the specific needs of LGBT young people who are at an increased risk of experiencing homelessness.

- In Wales, implement the recommendations made in End Youth Homelessness Cymru's _Out on the Streets: LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness in Wales_ report.

- Provide increased funding for local authorities to meet their statutory duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003, and the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Local authorities should:

- Working with other local authorities or relevant agencies, consistently commission LGBT-specific

homelessness support services, and engage with local LGBT organisations and communities when planning homelessness and care services provision. Commissioning and procurement processes for all homelessness and care services should include substantive equality and diversity considerations.

- Train all frontline staff in homelessness support services and residential children's homes to meet the specific needs of LGBT young people.

- Monitor, and support local services to monitor, the sexual orientation and trans status of young people and adults accessing their homelessness support services.

AT SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

The Department for Education (in England), the Learning Directorate and Advanced Learning and Science Directorate (in Scotland) and the Department for Education and Skills (in Wales) should:

- Develop specific guidance for further education colleges on delivering targeted provision to re-engage young people who have spent time out of secondary school in education.

- Create practical guidance for schools and colleges on how to embed equality and diversity (including LGBT-specific) considerations in their careers programme, in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks, supported by high-quality equality and diversity training for careers advisors (which specifically covers the needs of LGBT young people).

- Require and support all initial teacher training providers to deliver substantive face-to-face training on tackling bullying, including bullying based on protected characteristics such as homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, to all trainees.

- In England, alongside continuing to increase funding rates for post-16 education, create a dedicated leadership programme for LGBT staff in further education, and dedicated training programme for FE staff on creating LGBT-inclusive learning environments.

- In England, ensure that teachers in every school in England can access face-to-face training and high-quality resources for delivering LGBT-inclusive Relationships, Sex and Health Education through increased dedicated funding from March 2020 onwards.

- In England, update the Teachers' standards and accompanying guidance to including tackling bullying and promoting respect for the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

- In Scotland, ensure the recommendations of the LGBTI Inclusive Education Working Group, including those relating to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL), are fully implemented and consistently funded.

Ofsted, Education Scotland and Estyn should:

- Provide all inspectors with high-quality training on assessing a school or college's approach to LGBT inclusion, including how to identify patterns of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying and how to assess the inclusivity of a school's curriculum, so that LGBT-specific considerations are consistently reflected in inspection reports.

Local authorities and, in England, multi-academy trusts (MATs), should:

- Make sure education settings in their area are aware of the importance of tackling anti-LGBT bullying and language, and delivering LGBT-inclusive teaching, by offering guidance and training on creating LGBT-inclusive learning environments and identifying and sharing best practice in their area.

- For local authorities, join Stonewall's *Children and Young People's Services Champions* programme, which gives local authorities tailored advice, resources and training to help them put LGBT equality at the heart of their Children and Young People's and Public Health Services.

Education providers should:

- Have clear policies and procedures (that are widely promoted to current and prospective students and staff) on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language, supported by training for all staff on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

- Deliver LGBT-inclusive teaching across the curriculum, including but not limited to RSHE/PSHE (England) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (Wales).

- Have a careers programme that explicitly acknowledges the needs of LGBT students, and profiles LGBT-inclusive employers and LGBT role models in a range of professions.

- Support students to set up and run dedicated LGBT/equalities groups.

- Ensure that school and college pastoral staff have received training on meeting the specific mental health and wellbeing needs of LGBT students.

- Ensure that timely and effective support processes are in place for students who have been identified through student absence monitoring.

- In FE colleges, offer targeted provision for students who have spent time out of secondary school, or who had poor school experiences, to support them to re-engage in education.

- Join *Stonewall's School & College Champions programmes*, which give schools and colleges the knowledge, confidence and skills to create LGBT-inclusive learning environments. To stay in touch with latest developments and maintain best practice, existing members can renew their membership and refresh their training.

AT UNIVERSITY

In England, the Office for Students should:

- Undertake specific research into barriers to access and participation in higher education for LGBT young people.

- Require the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to collect data on students' sexual orientation and trans status. This should be a compulsory return for higher education institutions, and the data collected should be used to establish access, retention and attainment rates of LGBT students.

- Using this data, update its access and participation plan guidance to require higher education institutions to address the needs of LGBT students in their access and participation plans.

Universities should:

- Ensure their access and participation plans explicitly include LGBT students, including LGBT students with other protected characteristics (such as BAME LGBT students and LGBT disabled students).

- Use promotional materials to communicate a clear commitment to LGBT inclusion to current and prospective students and staff.

- Have clear and widely promoted policies, which communicate a zero-tolerance approach to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic discrimination, bullying and harassment, supported by staff training on how to identify and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse.

- Engage in meaningful consultation with LGBT student societies to ensure that policies, accommodation and university facilities are LGBT-inclusive, and provide sufficient resources and support to LGBT societies and student unions to increase the availability of peer-to-peer support.

- Ensure that data collection systems and facilities are trans-inclusive, and develop a policy to support students who are transitioning, including information on confidentiality, taking time out, and use of facilities. Guidance for staff with responsibility for pastoral care should also be provided.

- Ensure that LGBT people, history and experiences are reflected throughout course content.

- Join more than 100 British universities on *Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme*, the UK's leading best practice forum for employers on LGBT inclusion. Membership includes access to our LGBT-inclusive Higher Education and Service Delivery toolkits.

- Further research on LGBT students' experiences at university, and recommendations, can be found in *LGBT in Britain: Universities Report* (Stonewall and YouGov, 2018)

WORK AND APPRENTICESHIPS

The National Apprenticeship Service (in England) and Careers Wales should:

- Develop best practice guides for apprenticeship employers on delivering LGBT-inclusive apprenticeships, including through the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network in England.

The National Careers Service, Skills Development Scotland and Careers Wales should:

- Deliver high-quality equality and diversity training to all its advisors (including specific training on meeting the needs of LGBT young people seeking careers guidance).

- Profile LGBT-specific careers resources and proactively challenge gender stereotypes about career choices on their websites and resources.

Employers should:

- Develop clear and widely promoted zero-tolerance policies on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic discrimination and harassment, with clear sanctions for staff, service users, clients and customers.

- Include statements and examples of their commitment to LGBT staff, equality and inclusion on their website, including when advertising job roles. This should be underpinned by clear policies on inclusive recruitment and promotion, and reinforced through training for recruitment teams, to tackle discrimination in the recruitment process.

- Develop an internal strategy on supporting positive mental health and wellbeing, led by senior staff championing mental health awareness, that explicitly addresses the needs of groups at particular risk of developing poor mental health, including LGBT people.

- Implement all-staff LGBT-inclusive diversity and inclusion training (including specific training for line managers), to equip staff with the skills, tools and confidence to challenge discrimination and harassment, and promote an inclusive workplace culture.

- In larger organisations, encourage and support the formation of LGBT network groups to empower LGBT staff and allies. In smaller organisations, assist LGBT staff in joining an external network. Network members should be encouraged and supported to becoming Mental Health First Aiders.

- Develop a policy to support employees who are transitioning, including information on confidentiality, dress codes and using facilities, with related guidance for line managers.

- Collect diversity data on their workforce across pay and grade through different stages of the recruitment process, alongside reviewing staff satisfaction data. This should be used to identify any areas of discrimination in career progress based on sexual orientation and trans status, and for specific groups of LGBT people (such as LBT women, BAME LGBT people, and LGBT disabled people).

- Join Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme, the UK's leading best practice forum for employers on LGBT inclusion. Visit *www.stonewall.org.uk/diversity-champions-programme* for more information.

Apprenticeship providers should:

- Demonstrate their commitment to LGBT inclusion in their promotional materials and websites (including by profiling LGBT role models), and proactively engage with LGBT communities (for example through LGBT youth groups) to promote their apprenticeships and LGBT-inclusive approach.

- Proactively challenge gender stereotypes in career choices using their promotional materials and websites.

- Monitor the sexual orientation and trans status of applicants and apprentices to identify any areas of discrimination in recruitment and career progression based on sexual orientation and trans status, and develop targeted initiatives to address any inequalities identified.

Further research on LGBT people's experiences of work, and recommendations, can be found in *LGBT in Britain: Work Report* (Stonewall and YouGov, 2018)

METHODOLOGY

BritainThinks for Stonewall undertook a mixed-methodology approach to this research, with two key stages.

ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEWS

Between April and June 2019, BritainThinks undertook 22 face-to-face interviews with young people who were currently not in education, training or work, including:

- Interviews with 18 LGBT young people who were not in education, training or work.

- Control interviews with four non-LGBT young people who were not in education, training or work.

These interviews were ethnographic – a type of qualitative research where researchers immerse themselves in the lives and experiences of their participants. This study involved spending time with participants in their home or community setting, and undertaking long, semi-structured interviews to allow the participants and researchers to explore their experiences in depth. Some of these took place at home, allowing researchers to understand the wider context of their lives, while others took place in venues in participants' local area.

As with all qualitative research, the views expressed are the individual thoughts and experiences of the participants, and so may not represent the views of all LGBT people not in education, employment or training. In-depth surveys allow us to draw out key themes and explore them in more detail, rather than presenting a large sample.

All names in quotes have been changed for anonymity. The location of some participants has also been withheld for anonymity. Descriptors identifying participants (such as 'bi' or 'trans') were chosen by participants.

These interviews explored:

- Participants' history, current situation and aspirations for the future.

- Their experiences of school, college, university/FE and work as an LGBT person.

- Their attitudes to re-entering education, training or work and potential barriers.

- How to address the challenges identified for LGBT young people.

Six of our participants identified as having behavioural conditions or learning difficulties, including dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder and Asperger syndrome.

SAMPLE		NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
LGBT STATUS	LGBT	18
	Non-LGBT	4
AGE	16-18	2
	19-21	9
	22-24	11
LENGTH OF TIME NOT IN EDUCATION, TRAINING OR WORK	Less than 6 months	6
	6-12 months	9
	More than 12 months	7
GENDER	Female	10
	Male	9
	Non-binary	2
	Questioning/ unsure	1
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Lesbian/gay woman	4
	Gay man	3
	Bi/pan	5
	Questioning/ unsure	5
	Did not disclose	5
TRANS STATUS	Trans	7
	Cis (non-trans)	14
	Questioning/ unsure	1
ETHNICITY	White British	15
	BAME	7
DISABILITY OR LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITION (including both physical and mental health conditions)	Disabled or having a long-term health condition	13*

* Participants self-identified as disabled or having a long term health condition. Conditions encountered included severe asthma, achalasia, borderline personality disorder, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder.

CO-CREATIVE WORKSHOP

In July 2019, BritainThinks then moderated a co-creative workshop with Stonewall colleagues and 12 additional LGBT young people not in education, training or work. The co-creative workshop offered an opportunity to discuss and further develop some possible interventions identified from the first phase of the research. These interventions were developed as possible actions relevant stakeholders could take to support LGBT young people who have become disengaged from education, training and work and address underlying factors that contribute to this.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the young people who took part in the research.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF

Stonewall's *Train the Trainer* courses give teachers and education professionals the knowledge, tools and confidence to train colleagues on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and supporting LGBT young people. Our courses help you understand and meet legal and statutory requirements under the Equality Act 2010, Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate. With best practice advice on everything from tackling derogatory language to planning an inclusive curriculum, we can help you make sure your setting is a place where everybody is accepted without exception. Participating schools become members of Stonewall's School Champions programme – your first year of membership is included in the price of your training course.

Stonewall's *School & College Champions programme* is a network of schools and colleges across Britain working with Stonewall to support LGBT young people and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. Schools can join by attending a Stonewall Train the Trainer course. As a School Champion, you'll get access to a range of membership benefits, including exclusive education resources, a poster and sticker pack and year-round support from our Education and Youth team. For more information, you can also email *education@stonewall.org.uk*.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ORGANISATIONS

Our *Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) Champions Programme* helps put LGBT inclusion at the heart of your service. We'll help to devise innovative solutions based on your needs to better support vulnerable LGBT children and young people as well as improve their health and wellbeing. You can access a wealth of expert support including tailored advice, training, and resources as well as tools to evaluate and improve your policies and practice. More information is available *here*.

Learn more about supporting LGBT young people on our day-long *Improving mental health and wellbeing outcomes for LGBT children and young people* training course. Developed in partnership with YoungMinds, the course will help you understand more about LGBT young people's experiences and how you can help the young people in your care develop resilience and positive coping skills. For more information email *cyps@stonewall.org.uk*.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

SUPPORT FOR JOBSEEKERS

Our *Proud Employers* website is the only recruitment website which caters exclusively for LGBT people and their allies. It aims to help candidates find roles with organisations committed to true diversity and inclusion for their employees.

All employers on this site are current members of the Stonewall *Diversity Champions programme*, a world-leading employers' forum focusing on ensuring LGBT equality, diversity, and inclusion. Members from across the public, private and third sectors work with us to create inclusive and accepting environments for LGBT employees – almost a quarter of the UK workforce.

Proud Employers advertises vacancies available with those employers, and features advice for jobseekers, including '*Top tips for finding an LGBT-inclusive employer*'.

RESOURCES AND SIGNPOSTING

Stonewall has a wide range of education toolkits, guides and resources for teachers, LGBT young people and their families. These are available online *here*.

We also have a wide range of workplace toolkits, guides and resources. These are available online *here*.

To find local LGBT organisations and LGBT youth groups in your area, visit *here*.

INFORMATION SERVICE

For help or guidance on any issue affecting LGBT people, contact Stonewall's Information Service:

By phone: 08000 50 20 20
By email: *info@stonewall.org.uk*
Online: *www.stonewall.org.uk/info*

SHUT OUT

The experiences of
LGBT young people not
in education, training or
work

'I knew I was not going to continue in education and that
I wouldn't be able to. It made me feel better to know that
if I don't feel comfortable staying in school then I don't
have to stay in education. I can't deal with the negative
energy tied to my sexuality.'
Sam, gay man, 17, England

'He was a dodgy boss. He made me feel unsafe. He was
anti-LGBT, and said that if any employees were gay, he'd
fire them. So I left… I felt unsafe as an LGBT person.'
Jamie, non-binary person, 19, England

Britainthinks
Insight & Strategy

Stonewall
Acceptance without exception