



Attitudes Towards **LGBT** in Scottish Education

2016



A report by
Time for Inclusive Education (TIE)

www.tiecampaign.co.uk

 [tiecampaign](https://twitter.com/tiecampaign)

Introduction

Now, it's Time for Inclusive Education

"The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community have made fundamental contributions to our society, our history, our literature and our culture. Despite this, many LGBT people are still subject to discrimination, abuse and hostility on a daily basis - primarily our youth. While Scotland has made considerable progress in the advancement of equality and LGBT rights, unfortunately our education system is yet to catch-up.

This report is a data presentation of two recent surveys that we conducted, which aimed to assess and understand trends in attitudes towards LGBT within the Scottish education system among teachers, school pupils and former school pupils.

It has been sixteen years since the repeal of Section 28 (Clause 2a) in Scotland, yet our research has further highlighted the very real issues facing LGBT learners within Scottish education, and emphasises the need for action. There are alarmingly high rates of bullying, self harm and attempted suicide among LGBT young people and homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic language, attitudes and behaviours are commonplace within school communities across the country.

Our research highlights that the lived experiences of LGBT youth and their heterosexual, cisgendered peers within the Scottish education system are in stark contrast. Clearly, we are not 'Getting It Right For Every Child'.

Furthermore, teachers have highlighted that they do not feel that they had been adequately trained on how to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia within their schools. Many are unsure of their rights in this area, and there is consensus among teachers that more has to be done, to ensure that all schools are inclusive of LGBT learners.

Our research also exposes that the Scottish Government's current strategy of issuing guidance on LGBT to schools without a mandated requirement of uptake is not working. The majority of teachers do not feel equipped to discuss LGBT issues in their classroom and, worryingly, most teachers have never used the government issued RSHP education guidance or the tool-kit to tackle homophobia - with many unaware that such guidance even exists.

This is why we are clear that a new approach from the Scottish Government is required here. Our research has shown that there is a culture of silence around LGBT in most classrooms across the country, and we should not be satisfied until all schools are fully inclusive of LGBT issues and identities in order to ensure that all of our young people can thrive and achieve their full potential in a safe and supportive learning environment."

- Time for Inclusive Education (TIE)

Key Findings: Pupils and School Leavers

LGBT RESPONDENTS - Experiences at School

90% of LGBT respondents reported experiencing homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia while at school.

64% of LGBT respondents reported being bullied because of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

"I never came out at school. In my first few years at secondary, I was bullied for not fitting the stereotypes of masculinity, with my peers questioning my sexuality before I even had a chance to do it myself. This made me hate myself and so I hid this part of my life away... Only after I left school did I begin to explore and finally become comfortable with myself. However, hiding a large part of my life while at school meant I have been left with a poor sense of self." Gay, Left School in 2010s.

86% of LGBT respondents reported that LGBT issues were never discussed or taught in a progressive manner at their school. Many respondents specifically highlighted that the lack of LGBT inclusive sex education was also an issue within their schools.

"The lack of LGBTI inclusive sex education is a massive issue which can have serious effects on queer teens who aren't equipped to approach sex in an informed and safe manner." Bisexual, Left School in 2010s.

"At my secondary school, different sexualities or gender identities were only really mentioned by teachers or pupils in derogatory terms... The sex education we received was woefully inadequate and completely pointless when it came to my own sexuality. There was no mention of LGBT issues besides from the obligatory reference to HIV when we were taught about sexual diseases." Gay, Left School in 2000s.

Only **5%** of LGBT respondents believe that their teachers were adequately equipped to discuss LGBT issues in the classroom, while **72%** of LGBT respondents reported that homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying was not challenged by teachers in their school.

"I think that teachers should be taught about LGBTI issues or just generally about LGBTI, as it is an important thing that not a lot of teachers know fully about." Transgender, Currently at School.

"...teachers didn't seem to think that anyone in the class would be anything other than straight and cis[gender]." Lesbian, Left School in 2010s.

"The majority of homophobic comments actually came from teachers at school, with one saying to an entire sixth year RMPS class "in my day you were either 'normal' or a 'poof', not all of these new things" upon hearing about (and me explaining) by bisexuality... I also heard a lot of 'doing it for attention' comments." Bisexual, Left School in 2010s.

LGBT RESPONDENTS - Scottish Government

Only **4%** of LGBT respondents believe that the Scottish Government has done enough to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia in schools.

"I attempted suicide because I had been bullied since I started high school, because I am gay and more feminine than other boys. When my mum spoke to my year head and guidance teacher about my suicide attempt we were told that maybe I should move to another school because 'they can't stop people' from teasing me because I act 'too gay' in their words... I moved school in 2014 but things are not that much better at my new school and the only difference is that I have more friends here who are LGBT and we just have to defend each other... I don't think that politicians understand this problem or else they would have done something about it." Gay, Currently at School.

"The Scottish Government seems comfortable fighting for LGBT rights and equality when it suits them - when elections are coming up, for instance - but it seems just as willing to quietly drop them again when challenged by religious groups or wealthy donors to their parties." Gay, Left School in 2000s.

LGBT RESPONDENTS - Impact of Bullying

27% of LGBT respondents reported that they had attempted suicide at least once as a result of bullying, while a further **15%** reported that they had attempted suicide more than once as a result of bullying.

13% of LGBT respondents reported that they had self-harmed once as a result of bullying, while a further **45%** reported that they had self-harmed regularly as a result of bullying.

95% of LGBT respondents believe that being bullied has had long lasting negative effects on them.

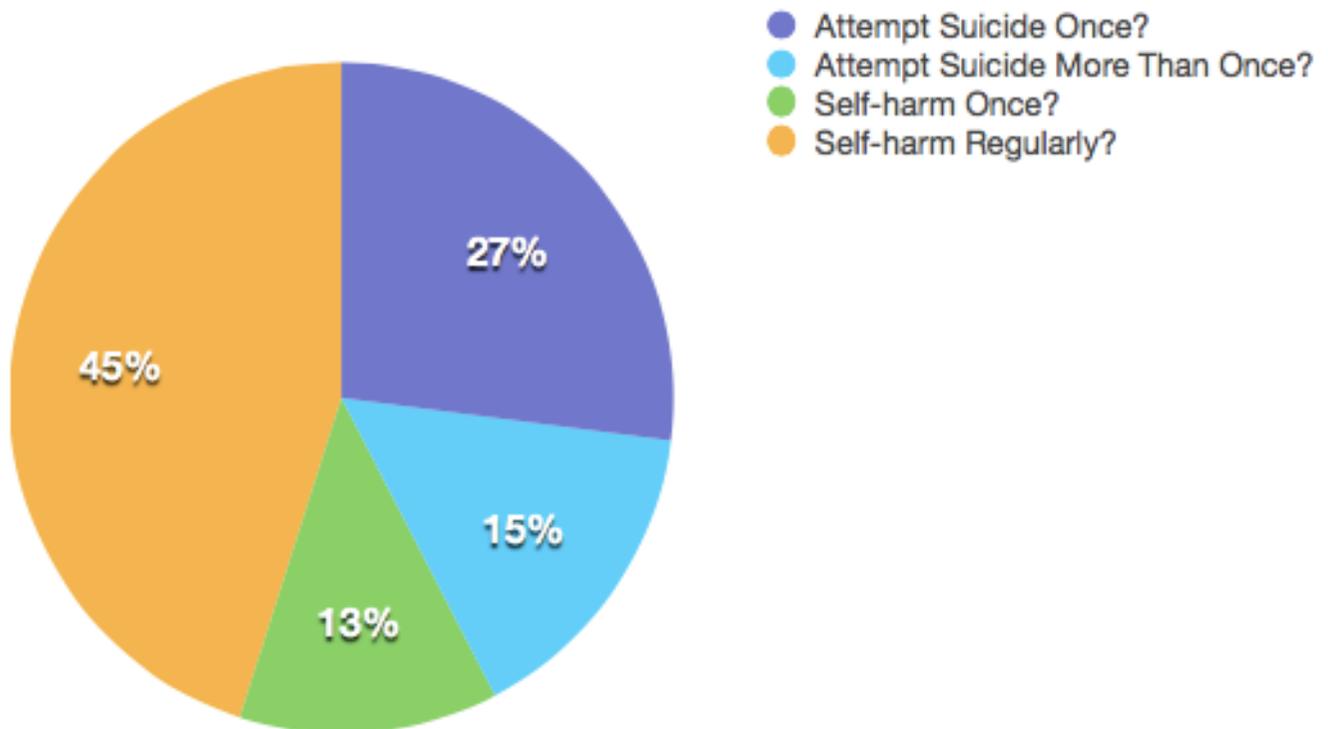
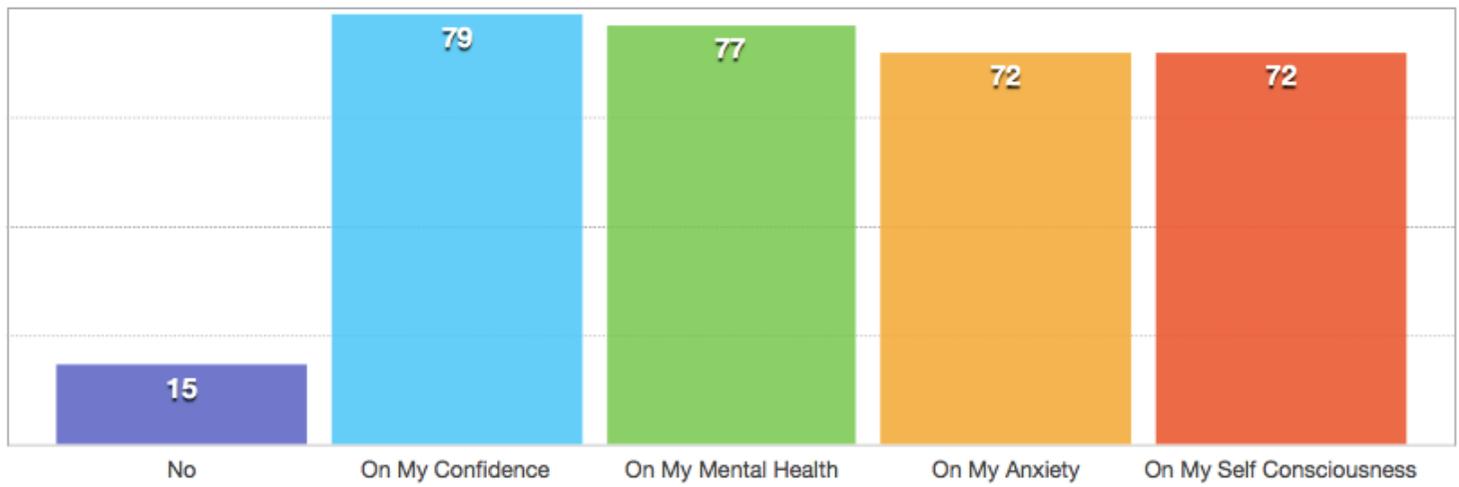
"The treatment I received at school has had a lasting impact on the rest of my life and my mental health to this day. The bullying I received has severely damaged my self-esteem. I currently suffer from an anxiety disorder, for which I have to take medication, and in the past I have self-harmed. I am under no doubt that the bullying I received at school - specifically because of the fact that I was gay - is responsible for the mental scarring that I experience now, a decade on." Gay, Left School in 2000s.

"I nearly came out at 15, but I had to decide between coming out and surviving another two years of school to do S5/S6 and go on to university. I chose the latter but regret not coming out sooner - I did when I was 20 but it affected my confidence and identity through my teens and 20s." Lesbian, Left School in 1990s.

"I attempted suicide because I had been bullied since I started high school, because I am gay and more feminine than other boys. When my mum spoke to my year head and guidance teacher about my suicide attempt we were told that maybe I should move to another school because 'they can't stop people' from teasing me because I act 'too gay' in their words."



If you were bullied for being LGBT, do you feel that your experience at school has had long lasting effects?



LGBT RESPONDENTS - Moving Forward

An overwhelming majority of respondents highlighted inclusive education as a necessary step to improve the lived experiences of LGBT learners within Scottish education.

97% of LGBT respondents believe that all schools should teach LGBT issues.

95% of LGBT respondents believe that all teachers should receive specific training on LGBT issues.

97% of LGBT respondents who were bullied believe that it would have helped if their school was inclusive of LGBT issues and identities.

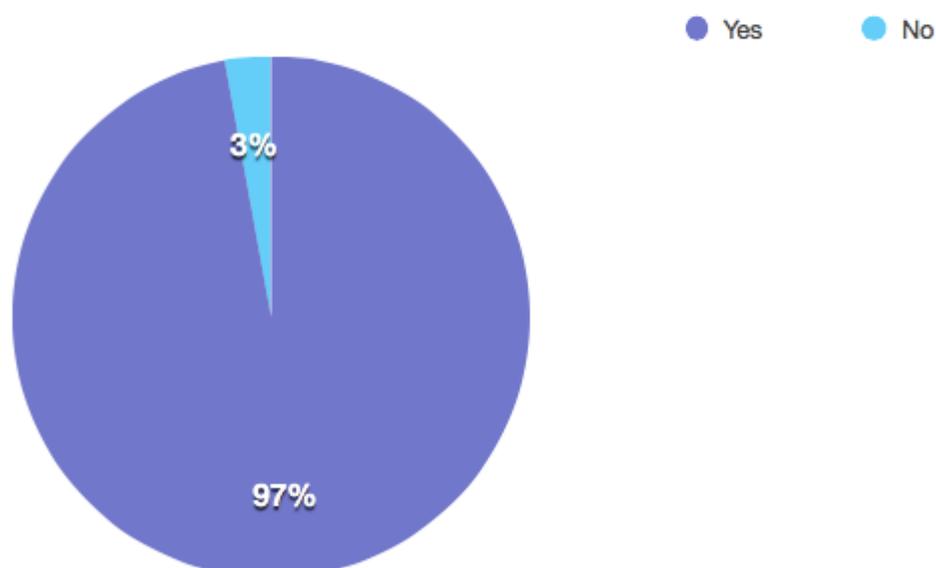
96% of LGBT respondents who faced a personal struggle with their identity believe that it would have helped if their school was inclusive of LGBT issues and identities.

"I feel if [LGBT] had been highlighted, discussed and a safe space identified then I would not have felt like the only one and felt so isolated as I did." Lesbian, Left School in 2000s.

"With living in a homophobic family, having inclusive education would have made it easier for me to accept myself and understand that these feelings are natural." Gay, Currently at School.

"I think that we should be taught about [LGBT] in school, instead of being left with the idiotic assumptions and complete lack of knowledge and respect for those who are LGBT." Bisexual, Currently at School.

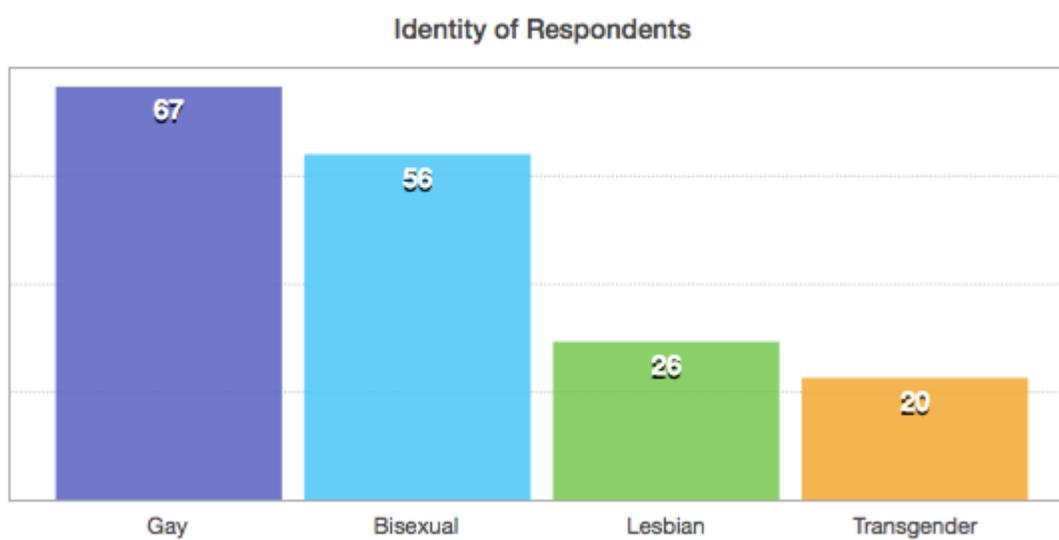
If you were bullied at school for being LGBT, do you think that it would have helped if your school was inclusive of LGBT issues and identities?



RESPONDENT INFORMATION

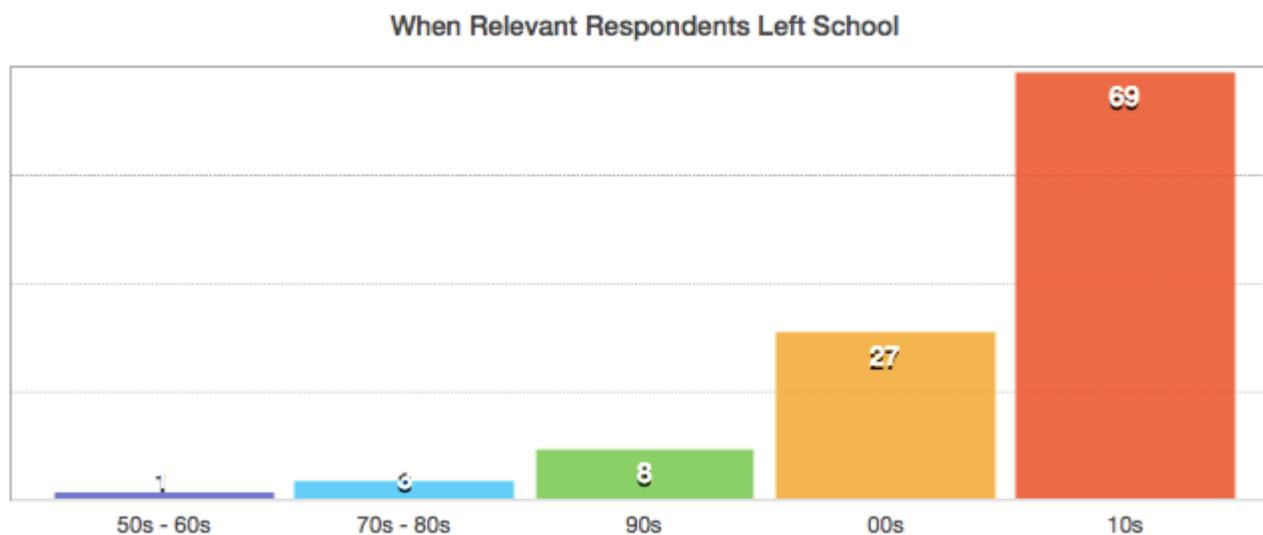
While 343 respondents took part in our 'Pupils and School Leavers' survey, only 317 responses were useable.

Of the useable data: 169 respondents self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. 15% of respondents identified as 'lesbian', 40% of respondents identified as 'gay', 33% of respondents identified as 'bisexual' and 12% of respondents identified as 'transgender'.



The majority of LGBT respondents were either currently at school, or had left school in the last six years. 65% of LGBT respondents reported that they attend or attended a non-denominational school, while 35% reported that they attend or attended a denominational school.

35% of LGBT respondents reported that they were currently at school, while 65% reported that they had left school. Of these respondents: 1% left school in 1950s-1960s, 3% left school in 1970s-1980s, 7% left school in 1990s, 25% left school in 2000s and 64% left school in 2010s.



Key Findings: Pupils and School Leavers

HETEROSEXUAL RESPONDENTS - Experiences at School

Out of all respondents, 36% identified as heterosexual. Analysis of this data highlights several areas of contrast regarding experiences at school when compared to those of LGBT respondents.

45% of heterosexual respondents reported that they never experienced homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia while at school, compared to the **90%** of LGBT youth who reported that they had.

92% of heterosexual respondents reported that they had never been bullied because of their sexual orientation, compared to the **64%** of LGBT respondents who reported that they had.

"I didn't personally face struggles in school due to being straight, but I do believe that people around me suffered and the subject was never raised, nor did I learn anything about LGBT."
Heterosexual, Left School in 2010s.

However, there was general agreement around the lack of LGBT inclusivity within schools.

73% of heterosexual respondents reported that homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying was never challenged by teachers at their school.

76% of heterosexual respondents reported that LGBT issues were never discussed or taught in a progressive manner at their school.

Only **7%** of heterosexual respondents believed that their teachers were adequately equipped to discuss LGBT issues.

HETEROSEXUAL RESPONDENTS - Scottish Government

Only **5%** of heterosexual respondents believe that the Scottish Government has done enough to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia in schools.

HETEROSEXUAL RESPONDENTS - Moving Forward

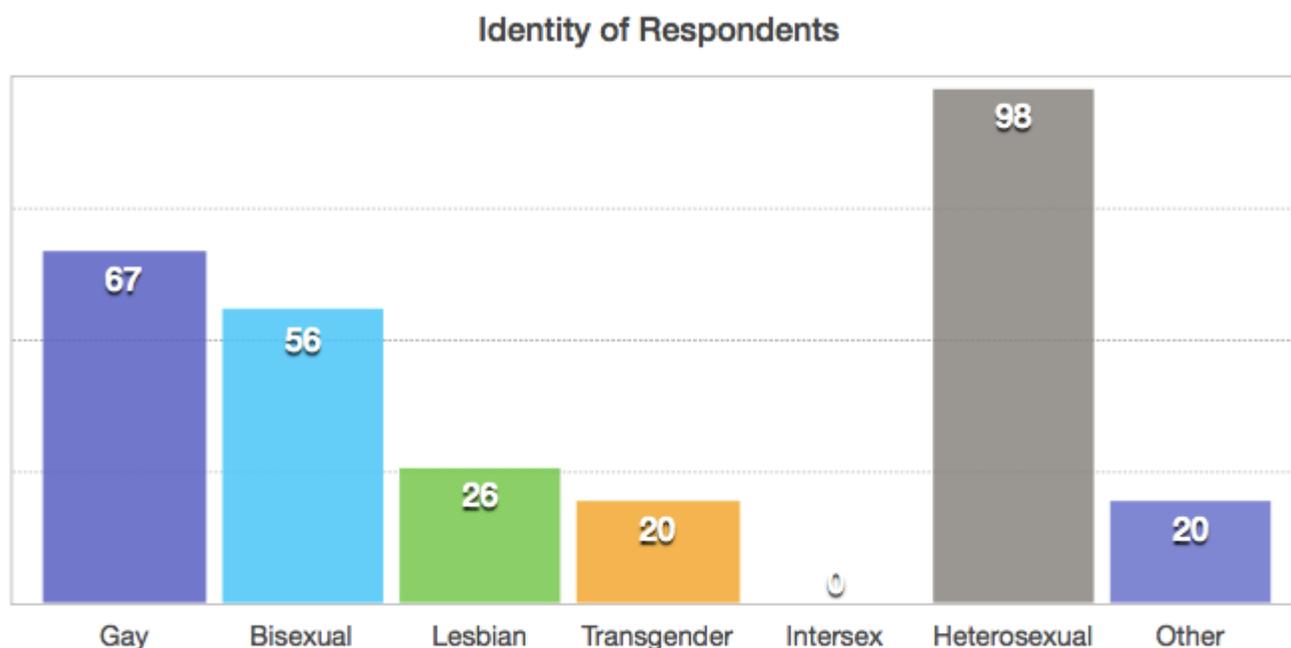
88% of heterosexual respondents believe that all schools should teach LGBT issues.

91% of heterosexual respondents believe that all teachers should receive specific training on LGBT issues.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

While 343 respondents took part in our 'Pupils and School Leavers' survey, only 317 responses were useable.

Of the useable data: 98 respondents self-identified as heterosexual.



The majority of heterosexual respondents were either currently at school, or had left school in the last six years. 66% of heterosexual respondents reported that they attend or attended a non-denominational school, while 34% reported that they attend or attended a denominational school.

37% of heterosexual respondents reported that they were currently at school, while 63% reported that they had left school. Of these respondents: 1% left school in 1950s-1960s, 2% left school in 1970s-1980s, 9% left school in 1990s, 8% left school in 2000s and 48% left school in 2010s.

Key Findings: Teachers

ALL RESPONDENTS - Experiences at School

87% of respondents hear homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic language in their school.

"I'm a primary teacher and I am already noticing the language that my pupils are using in class. I do correct them but most don't - and I think that the main problem is that they're worried about parents complaining. Whenever I've seen bad language addressed, its never been in depth, like explaining to the children WHY being gay is not wrong for example. More needs to be done here." Primary Teacher, Currently Teaching.

"I work in a Glasgow primary school and this term I am with P3. Last year I taught P1 and I have noticed a major difference in the language being used by my new pupils, which tells me that these children are not coming into school with the view that being gay is wrong or something to be mocked, but instead (and more worryingly) they are learning that at school. I do think that this is mainly down to other pupils and perhaps what they hear amongst their friend groups, but fault certainly lies with teachers who do not address such language and intolerant attitudes. The problem is that we just don't feel that we have enough to actually address this." Primary Teacher, Currently Teaching.

ALL RESPONDENTS - Training

A lack of teacher training was highlighted as being a key issue, with many respondents outlining that they have not received any specific training on LGBT issues. Of those who had received training, many still felt that they were not adequately trained.

80% of respondents felt that they had not been adequately trained on how to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia in their school.

75% of respondents reported that they had never received any specific training on LGBT issues. Of those who had, **45%** still believed that they had not been adequately trained and **91%** would attend further CPD accredited training if it could be provided free-of-charge.

"Having supported and known school pupils that have gone through gender identity issues and some that have gone on to make the change from female to male, I feel that we could educate our pupils further if we ourselves had adequate training. I also think that, due to previous experience, all teachers having an awareness of this would be beneficial." Secondary Teacher, Currently Teaching.

"We have never received any LGBT guidance or training... I'd like more training, but I do think that it should be for everyone and it's important that teachers know whether or not we can do this and whether or not we will be protected if we do." Primary Teacher, Currently Teaching.

Some respondents outlined that the financial cost attached to many existing training courses acts as a barrier for schools who do not have the budget to train their teachers.

91% of respondents highlighted that they would attend CPD accredited LGBT specific teacher training if it could be provided free-of-charge.

"Current initiatives charge large sums of money for this in schools - this needs funded by Scottish Government and not schools themselves as it's a lottery for funding. Charging schools £500 per session [for example] is not acceptable - schools want to be involved but not at those costs."

Secondary Teacher, Currently Teaching.

"There needs to be free training on this as my local authority budget does not stretch far enough to pay for it." Primary Teacher, Currently Teaching.

80% of respondents highlighted that they would attend CPD accredited LGBT specific teacher training if it could be provided out of school hours.

ALL RESPONDENTS - Current Approach

A majority of respondents highlighted various issues with the current approach to tackling homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia in schools.

Only **6%** of respondents felt that the Scottish Government has done enough to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia in schools.

77% of respondents reported that they do not know their rights as a teacher with regards to delivering LGBT inclusive education in school.

"Interesting that a question about rights is included in this survey, as this is something that I believe is fundamentally lacking in the teaching profession. When it comes to equalities legislation, most teachers (including myself) are not fully aware of it and in relation to LGBT it is clear from my experience that teachers haven't got a clue where to begin. I began teaching in 2003, so not long after Clause 2A was removed. I wish I could say that I have seen improvements throughout my career, but unfortunately I think that things have gotten worse." Secondary Teacher, Currently Teaching.

"I began teaching in 2003, so not long after Clause 2A was removed. I wish I could say that I have seen improvements throughout my career, but unfortunately I think that things have gotten worse."



ALL RESPONDENTS - Existing Guidance

Only **9%** of respondents felt that the Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education guidance (which is inclusive of LGBT issues) is extensive enough. Furthermore, **34%** had never read the guidance and **21%** did not know what it is.

Only **7%** of respondents reported that they had used the 'Dealing With Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools' tool-kit which was distributed in 2009. Almost half (**47%**) reported that they did not know what it is.

"Don't know about the tool kit or guidance, and this survey is the first that I have been made aware of this." Secondary Teacher, Currently Teaching.

"I only feel confident addressing LGBT issues as a result of my own reading and research in this area. It has not been collectively addressed in my 18 years of teaching." Secondary Teacher, Currently Teaching.

"I do tackle homophobic speech when I hear it (generally in older pupils rather than the classes I teach). It doesn't really deal with the issues though, and I'm not very confident in how to go about changing the mindset that thinks it's fine to call people 'gay' indiscriminately. It's not helped by pupils picking up on attitudes at home and I wouldn't be overly confident challenging that in older children so specific training on this issue would be good. I'll have a look at the tool kit, although isolated incidents - however regular - of hearing the word 'gay' being used is not bullying and is not targeted at specific pupils so I'm not sure how much a bullying tool kit would help with tackling this aspect of it." Primary Teacher, Currently Teaching.

ALL RESPONDENTS - Moving Forward

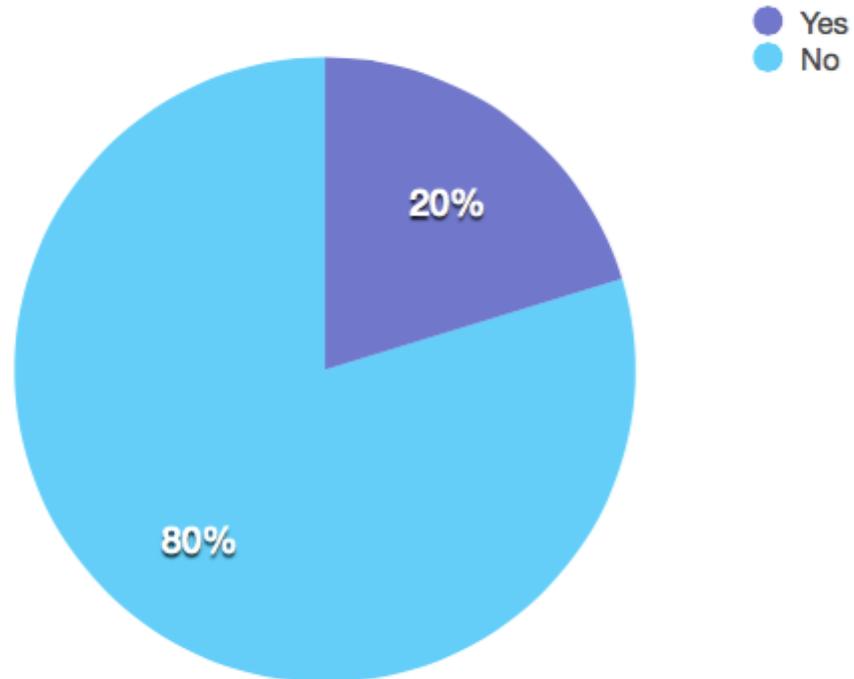
79% of respondents believed that LGBT inclusive education should be a legislative requirement for all schools. Only **2%** of respondents believed that denominational schools should be exempt from any such requirement.

90% of respondents believed that all teachers should receive LGBT specific training and **94%** of respondents believed that all schools should deliver an LGBT inclusive education.

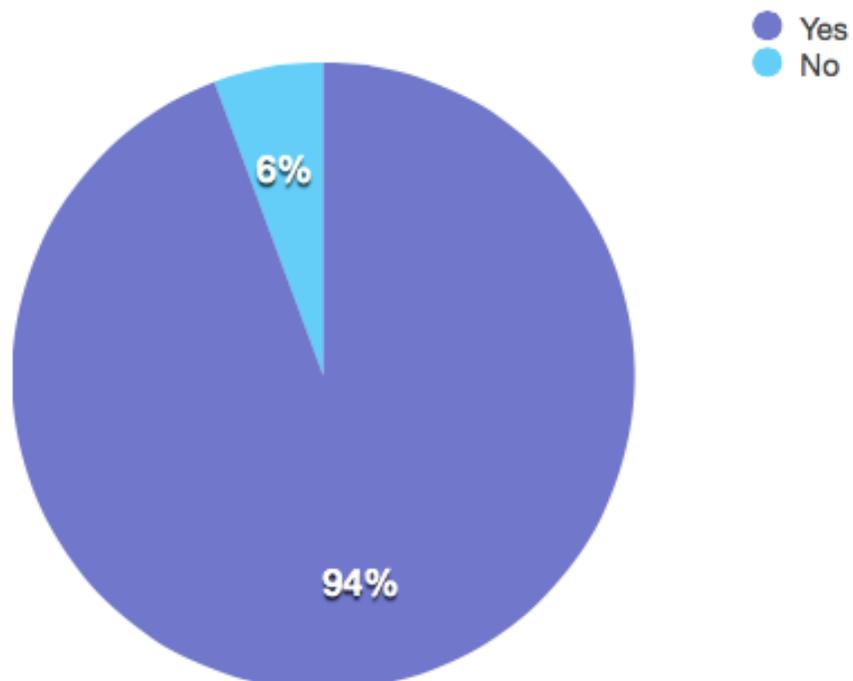
93% of respondents reported that they would personally teach or discuss LGBT issues in their classroom.

"I would certainly welcome both LGBTI training and legislation here, as it would mean that all teachers would find common ground in working together to eradicate this problem as opposed to the minority with an interest in the area who are trying at the moment." Primary Teacher, Currently Teaching.

Do you feel that you have been adequately trained on how to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia in school?



Do you think that all schools should deliver an LGBT inclusive education?



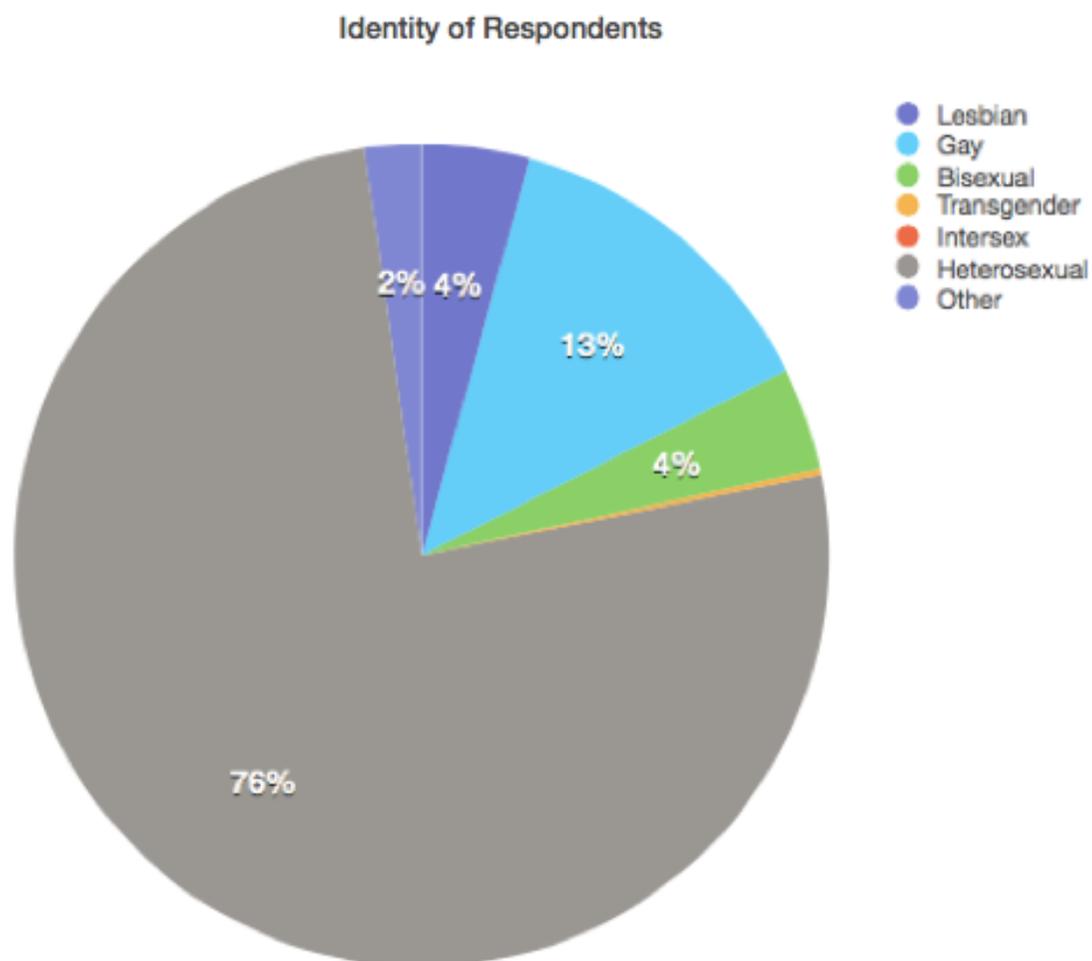
RESPONDENT INFORMATION

While 419 respondents took part in our 'Teachers' survey, only 408 responses were useable.

The majority (**91%**) of respondents were currently practicing teachers. **4%** of respondents were currently completing their teaching degree and **5%** were probationary teachers.

The majority (**72%**) of respondents were teaching in the secondary sector. **23%** were teaching in the primary sector, **3%** were teaching in the additional support needs sector and **1%** were teaching in the nursery sector.

The majority (**76%**) of respondents identified as heterosexual.



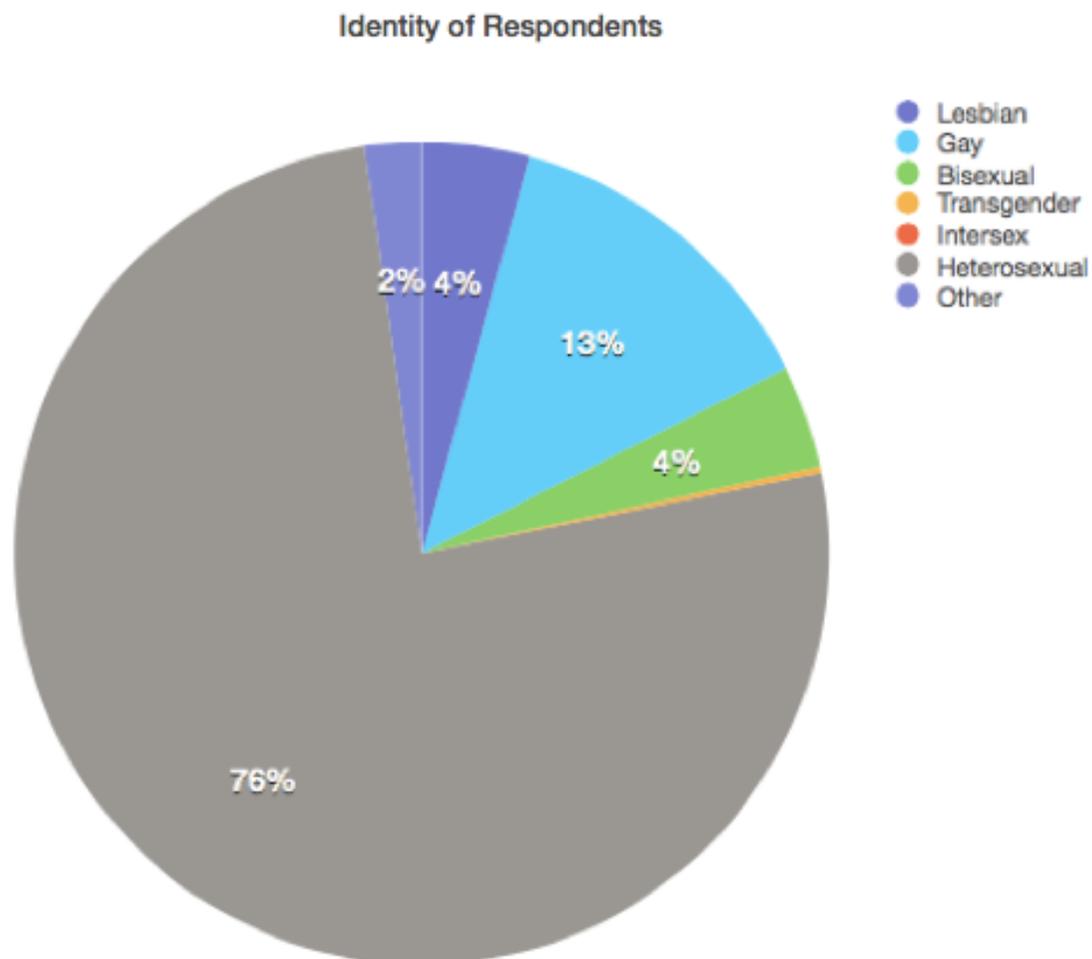
RESPONDENT INFORMATION

While 419 respondents took part in our 'Teachers' survey, only 408 responses were useable.

The majority (**91%**) of respondents were currently practicing teachers. **4%** of respondents were currently completing their teaching degree and **5%** were probationary teachers.

The majority (**72%**) of respondents were teaching in the secondary sector. **23%** were teaching in the primary sector, **3%** were teaching in the additional support needs sector and **1%** were teaching in the nursery sector.

The majority (**76%**) of respondents identified as heterosexual.



The Research

The majority of participants took part in this research by completing an online survey, which was active for a seven day period in August 2016. The server link was distributed amongst various networks relevant to the intended sample, such as LGBT youth groups and teachers networks, including several Education Institute of Scotland (EIS) and the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) mailing lists. The link was also distributed to teaching staff and pupils within several institutions, including Bannerman High School (Glasgow), Dumbarton Academy (West Dunbartonshire) and Vale of Leven Academy (West Dunbartonshire).

Respondent data was tagged by location, via monitoring of Internet Protocol addresses, to ensure that only responses from Scotland were included in the findings. Overall, we received 16 flagged responses from a location outwith Scotland which were not used.

Respondents were limited to answering the survey once and repeat attempts from the same Internet Protocol address were blocked.

Some participants took part in this research by completing a questionnaire (identical to the online survey) at our stall over the course of one day during Glasgow Pride 2016. Overall, 62 responses were collected using this method.

Our Strategy Proposals

A re-evaluation of the current strategy in this area is very much required. We are calling for a new approach from the Scottish Government, which goes further than before and is underpinned by legislation. Further information, including an in-depth analysis of our proposals, can be found in our '[Achieving Inclusive Education](#)' strategy paper. You can view this at www.tiecampaigh.co.uk or by contacting us at stories@tiecampaigh.co.uk

TEACHER TRAINING

80% of teachers reported that they had not been adequately trained on how to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia in their school, while 90% felt that all teachers should receive specific training on LGBT issues.

75% of teachers reported that they had never received any specific training on LGBT issues. Of those who had, 45% still believed that they had not been adequately trained and 91% would attend further CPD accredited training if it could be provided free-of-charge.

As such, we are calling for the creation of a **new, cost-free** and **CPD accredited teacher training programme** which focuses specifically on LGBT issues. Fundamentally, this should focus on the needs of LGBT learners and addressing the issues that they face. We would recommend that such a programme be structured around an early consultation process, which involves young people, teachers, specialists and campaigners.

It is vital that this is approved and monitored by the Scottish Government, to be accessible for schools at Local Authority level. Initial focus should be placed on ensuring that **guidance teachers** and those on **promoted posts** undergo training, as well as any teachers who may initially be keen to attend regardless of post or position, but the eventual expectation should be for **all teachers** to receive this.

Student trainee teachers should receive specific LGBT inclusion modules during **Initial Teacher Education (ITE)**, both for undergraduate and PGDE (primary and secondary) programmes. This is crucial and we are prepared to work with the Scottish Government and the eight universities who provide ITE in order to achieve this.

There is a distinction between tackling homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviours in school, and inclusive education. The former centres primarily around challenging any direct, immediate displays of prejudice within schools with the goal of wholly eliminating them, while the latter is a wider-scale project concerning the social inclusion of LGBT identities and issues into school communities and curricula. For example, teaching key moments in LGBT history and culture to allow for a comprehensive understanding of the inequalities, discrimination and prejudice that LGBT people have faced and continue to face across the globe.

A teacher training course should incorporate elements of both.

CURRICULAR INCLUSION

- 81% of pupils and school-leavers reported that LGBT issues were never discussed or taught in a progressive manner at their school, while 94% felt that all schools should teach LGBT issues.

- 94% of teachers felt that all schools should deliver an LGBT inclusive education, and 93% reported that they would personally teach or discuss LGBT issues in their classroom.

As such, we are calling for LGBT inclusion in individual subject areas, achieved via approved LGBT **curriculum mapping** guidance which can exist by itself, as well as alongside an updated and mandated Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education framework. This should be made available to all schools with a clear requirement of uptake under the Health and Wellbeing and Social Studies curriculum areas.

It is important to be aware that LGBT inclusive education is not about creating a new subject which revolves solely around LGBT, but rather about **incorporating LGBT into the existing curricular frameworks** and educational standards and expectations. Inclusive education can, and should, be achieved without significant additional workload for educators.

Teaching key moments in LGBT history and culture can allow for a comprehensive understanding of the inequalities, discrimination and prejudice that LGBT people have faced and continue to face across the globe.

On the teaching of LGBT histories, another potential starting point would be to work in partnership with the **Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)**. The ultimate goal should be the inclusion of LGBT histories and current issues in relevant subject areas (such as History and Modern Studies) at National and Higher levels. The expectation in this regard is that **LGBT histories should be taught and studied in the same way that other relevant historical events related to the advancement of equal rights are**, such as the Civil Rights and Suffrage movements.

NEW & UPDATED GUIDANCE

- 77% of teachers reported that they did not know their rights with regards to delivering LGBT inclusive education.

- Only 9% of teachers felt that the Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education guidance is extensive enough. 34% had never read it, while 21% did not know what it is.

To this end, we are calling for new guidance which makes clear to teachers what their rights are - and the rights of their pupils - concerning LGBT in school, with specific reference to the **Equality Act (2010)** and the General Teaching Council Scotland's 'Standards for Registration'. With regards to RSHP guidance - its performance within schools is quite obviously patchy at best. The majority of teachers had either never read it, or had never heard of it. This is why we are calling on the Scottish Government to **move beyond the traditional method** of issuing guidance without a requirement of uptake.

RECORDING OF BULLYING

- **65%** of LGBT pupils and school-leavers reported being bullied because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

We are calling for all local authorities to record specific incidents of homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying - in accordance with existing guidance and expectations for the recording of bullying concerning other protected characteristics, such as race.

MONITORING

- Only **6%** of teachers felt that the Scottish Government has done enough to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia within education.

- Only **4%** of pupils and school-leavers felt that the Scottish Government has done enough to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia within education.

We are calling on the Scottish Government to monitor any steps that are taken regarding LGBT inclusivity within education, in order to ensure that **all schools** are following and practicing any issued guidance. This should include the **collection and evaluation of relevant data** across all Local Authorities as well as the addition of a specific LGBT inclusion requirement in the Education Scotland school inspections process, in line with the *How Good is Our School 4* 'Inclusion and Equality' indicators.

LEGISLATION

- **94%** of teachers believe that all schools should deliver an LGBT inclusive education, while **79%** believe that LGBT inclusive education should be a legislative requirement for all schools.

- **94%** of pupils and school-leavers believe that all schools should deliver an LGBT inclusive education.

We are calling for a **legislative requirement** for all schools to deliver upon any LGBT inclusive education programme which is established. This will act to enshrine LGBT inclusion in education and ensure that future Governments **do not become complacent** about the issues facing LGBT learners.

Legislation should encompass the three major components of LGBT inclusive education: **INCLUSION** (of LGBT within school curricula), **TRAINING** (of teachers specifically on LGBT issues) and **MONITORING** (to ensure that all schools are LGBT inclusive).

www.tiecampaing.co.uk

 [tiecampaing](#)

