The Sussex

LGBTU

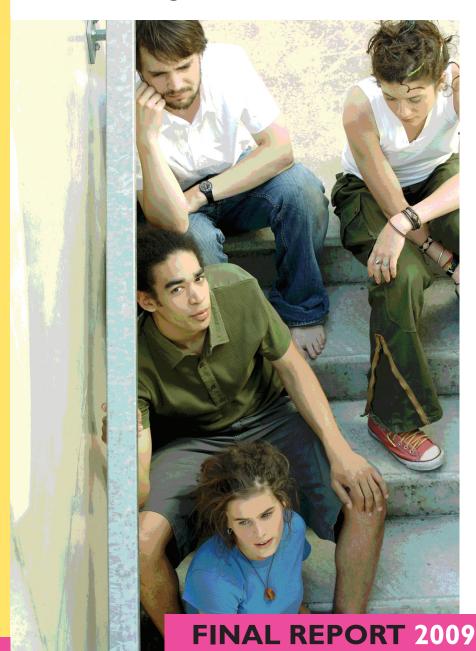## (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Unsure)

University of Brighton

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

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FINAL REPORT 2009

University of Brighton

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West Sussex NHS
Primary Care Trust

The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership

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**Final Report
2009**

Published by the University of Brighton

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FOREWORD

The International Health Development Research Centre (IHDRC) is established at the University of Brighton within the School of Nursing and Midwifery (Faculty of Health and Social Science). The work of IHDRC is based on a philosophy of health, not just the absence of disease, and a belief in participation and empowerment, sustainable development, equity, and social justice. IHDRC strives to fill a niche market which is rapidly growing with increased globalization. It specialises in working at international level relating its work to local action under the banner – 'Think Global: Act Local'.

The overarching aim of IHDRC is to provide a focus for research, development, and consultancy related to knowledge development and dissemination in salutogenic and socio-ecological aspects of health and well-being.

More specifically, it aims to:

1. Build health development theory
2. Utilise research knowledge for effective capacity building in health
3. Promote international perspectives in research
4. Ensure a focus on holistic health and well-being (salutogenic approach)
5. Disseminate research outcomes to inform the evidence base for health promotion policy and practice at local, national, and international levels.

Core Research Themes

IHDRC strives to achieve the above aims through its following seven core research themes:

- Health Development
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- Sexual Health
- Health Inequalities
- Social Engagement in Health
- Education and Training
- Health Promotion Policy and Practice

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Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their appreciation to the following people for their contribution to this research project. First and foremost, we are grateful to all the young people who willingly gave up their time to participate in the open meeting, individual interviews, and focus group discussions to share their experiences of living in Sussex. Our thanks are also extended to the professionals and practitioners who not only participated actively in the research, but also in some cases, acted as gatekeepers at research sites for young people.

Contributions from the project steering committee have been greatly valued and we thank them for their support, guidance and expertise in every stage of this project. Members of the group were Wook Hamilton (Young People in Focus[1]); Ben Tunstall (Terrence Higgins Trust); Jess Wood (Allsorts); Peter Nieuwets (South East Coast Specialised Commissioning Group); Kenny Glasspool (Dormans Youth Arts Centre); and Dr Kath Browne (University of Brighton).

Thanks also to Andrea Polonijo and Charlotte Hutchinson for their contributions in developing the conceptual ideas for the project proposal, and to Glynis Flood for administrative support.

Finally, we would like to thank the Brighton and Sussex Community Knowledge Exchange (BSCKE) and the South East Coast Specialised Commissioning Group (SECSCG) for funding this research.

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1 Trust for the Study of Adolescence (TSA) changed its name to Young People in Focus (YPF) in June 2009

Executive Summary

Overview of the study

The Sussex Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Trans, and Unsure (LGBTU) Training and Development Research Partnership provides the first attempt to explore and address the training needs of practitioners and/or professionals working with young people across Sussex. This project builds on research by Pope and Sherriff (2008) who identified that accessible and appropriate training (and materials) were required urgently to assist practitioners in working with all young people to be able to address LGBTU issues as part of their everyday work.

How the study was conducted

11 individual in-depth interviews with LGBT(U) young people aged 13-26 years and 18 individual in-depth interviews with practitioners who work with young people across East and West Sussex (individuals represented a variety of sectors and settings such as youth work, clinical psychology, teaching, Connexions related work, social work and specialist project work in housing, for example) were conducted. In addition two open meetings (one for practitioners and one for LGBTU young people) were held at the start of the project to allow participants to inform the development and direction of the research. Two final focus groups were conducted after the main interview data had been analysed to check the validity of findings and to explore further any issues raised.

Key findings

Five key themes emerged from the open meetings and individual interviews including 'coming-out', School and Sixth Form College, Homophobic Bullying, Views on Services, and Training:

'Coming-out'

Experiences of 'coming-out' in different contexts and at different times for young people unsurprisingly varied from being very positive to extremely negative, especially in terms of reactions and support (or not) from friends, peers, and family. 'Fear' emerged as an important concern both for young people in 'coming-out' and for practitioners in approaching young people to talk about their sexual and/or gender identity as well as 'coming-out' themselves. Moreover, many practitioners reported lacking confidence in raising such issues with young people whom they felt may be LGBTU, and said they wanted training to equip them with the appropriate language 'tools'. Several lesbian and gay staff discussed the issue of whether or not to disclose their own gender/sexual identity when working with young LGBTU people, and also reported that relationships with work colleagues could often be difficult, particularly when deciding whether or not to challenge homophobic comments.

'School and Sixth Form College'

Young people reported mixed experiences of being LGBT whilst in school (particularly secondary school) with most commenting that they had been bullied at some point. Many young people felt that had issues around 'sex' and 'sexuality' been separated out in Sex and Relationship Education (SRE), for example, then their experiences of school may well have been a lot more positive, and possibly may have helped them to 'come-out'. Some young people reported that they had been able to identify a specific teacher as a safe person to discuss issues with; counsellors were also mentioned but often in a more negative light because they sometimes 'fixated' only on the young person's sexuality rather than looking at their needs more holistically. Year heads, deputy heads and head teachers were often accused of not acting on information given by teachers about incidents of homophobic bullying. In terms of policy and structure most young participants felt that their school let them down.

'Homophobic Bullying'

Almost all the young people interviewed reported experiencing some form of homophobic bullying, commonly on school premises, (primary and secondary). Perhaps the most common form of verbal abuse reported by LGBT young was reported as being, what has become a common phrase, 'that is so gay'. Incidents of homophobic bullying were felt to be rarely if ever effectively dealt with by schools even when more senior members of staff were made aware of such incidents. Some young people indicated that they were so used to experiencing homophobic bullying (and in some cases violence) in-and-out of school that they didn't always report it because they knew nothing would be done. Contact with the police by young people were reported to be mostly negative mainly because reported incidents were believed not to be followed up, and perceived general apathy on behalf of the police service.

'Views on Services'

Ideas around what an 'ideal service' for LGBTU young people in Sussex should look like were mixed with young people often not expressing a strong opinion in this respect. However, some respondents reported that any LGBTU service provision would need to consider how modern technologies can be exploited effectively to communicate with young people; for example, using social networking sites as well as using mobile phones to text and keep in touch with service users. Both practitioners and young people felt that public environments (such as offices or services which young people might access) should be more welcoming and inclusive of LGBTU young people. In terms of staff, basic 'people skills' such as listening, showing respect, and being sympathetic and open were listed as being important qualities for those working with all young people but particularly LGBTU young people. It was felt by interviewees that staff should be able to recognise and deal effectively with all forms of bullying including homo, bi, and trans phobia. Participants felt that practitioners who work with all young people must be aware of LGBTU issues, and that to work with LGBT young specifically, the worker does not necessarily need to be LGBTU themselves.

'Training'

Some professionals reported having received specific training around LGBTU issues whilst most said they had received some form of diversity or equal opportunities training and that LGBTU issues had sometimes been mentioned within this. For many, however, LGBTU issues had not come up either at all, or to any significant degree in any of their training. Most practitioners reported being unclear about whether policies or documents existed in their workplace that specifically mention LGBTU young people. Many interviewees had strong feelings and opinions around what should be included in a future training programme for practitioners working with young people. For instance, practitioners overwhelmingly reported that they felt that LGBTU young people themselves should play an active and prominent role in the delivery of training around LGBTU issues. Rights and the law were reported as being important area to include for training as well as considering explicitly, trans and bi-sexual issues, and activities that draw attention to, and recognise, the broader complex issues a (LGBTU) person may experience.

Recommendations for Training

'Coming-out'

- The data reveals the need for a training programme and/or materials to include activities that can help practitioners to deal more effectively and sensitively with young people when discussing 'coming-out' in various contexts. For example, such activities might include confidence building exercises around about 'raising the question' of being LGBTU with young person as well as scenarios and case study materials of issues involved in 'coming-out' in various contexts (e.g. school, work, family, peers etc)

- Many practitioners reported that they struggled to find the appropriate language to use with young people around sexuality and/or identity issues for fears about possibly causing offence. It would be useful for training materials for practitioners working with young people to include

sections or activities which would allow trainees to address such language issues directly. Input from LGBTU young people here themselves may be invaluable in the development of such training activities.

- Role play scenarios may be useful to include in a training programme aimed at LGBT staff in the workplace. Practitioners reported needing help with addressing homophobic comments from colleagues in the workplace as well as deciding when it is appropriate (or not) to disclose their own sexuality and/or identity to colleagues and young people.

School and Sixth Form College

- Training materials focusing on the 'real-life' experiences of LGBTU young people would be useful to develop to help raise awareness of why many LGBTU young people do not feel safe enough to 'come-out' in educational environments such as school and sixth form college. Interviewees report that a visual resource (such as a DVD, for example) including young people themselves may be especially useful in this regard.

- Opportunities for practitioners to build confidence in discussing sexuality and/or gender identity issues would be particularly valuable for those working in educational institutions (primary, secondary, and sixth form). Such confidence may not only assist more young people to be able to access a 'trusted adult' but also help school staff to stimulate discussions about LGBTU relationships in a relevant, inclusive, and interesting way during SRE sessions (or equivalent).

- It would be useful for training to emphasise explicitly the need for practitioners working with young people to adopt a holistic approach to thinking about LGBT issues for young people rather than just focusing on sexual health issues.

- The development of a training programme and materials for staff working with young people should be as relevant as possible staff working at all levels, for example, including senior staff and governors in schools.

Homophobic Bullying

- Homophobic bullying appears to be extremely common in the lives of many LGBTU young people, and in some cases leads to severe violence against them. Some young people report that experiences of bullying becomes so normalised that it is often not reported or when it is reported, it is not acted upon by the appropriate authority(ies). Given the majority of young people reported experiencing homophobic bullying in the school environment, it would seem sensible for any training programme and/or materials to include a section on professionals working in this specific context.

- The development of a training programme and materials for staff working with young people should be as relevant as possible to staff working at all levels including senior educational staff and governors. For example, the data points to the need for senior school staff to support their colleagues in tackling homophobic bullying by taking seriously homophobic incidents reported to them and dealing effectively with them. Training activities including strategies helping staff to recognise and section incidents of homophobic bullying when they occur would be important to include.

- It would be useful for future training to include activities that help practitioners to recognise that homophobic bullying is different from other types of bullying. Such an activity, for example, could potentially look at identifying the features of homophobic bullying compared to other types of bullying perhaps also indicating what the different consequences might be for the people experiencing it (e.g. social, emotional, psychological).

- The data suggest a tension for some professionals between the desire to challenge homophobic language and the practicalities of doing so in certain situations with young people, service users, and colleagues. Training materials could include role playing scenarios to help practitioners think through how and when to respond to homophobic language with different client groups and in different contexts.

Views on Services

- It would be useful for training materials for staff working with young people to include a comprehensive list of relevant and local services for LGBTU young people across Sussex to help raise practitioners' awareness and to build links and refer on with other agencies where necessary.

- How young people communicate is changing, and practitioners need support in working with new technologies that can help LGBTU young people get the support they need. For example, it may be useful to assist practitioners in exploring the range of current technologies available to them (and young people) allowing discussion and sharing of examples and existing practices between trainees.

- Public service environments (for example, such as the reception areas of youth services, Connexions, schools, GP surgeries, health centres etc.,) should be welcoming and supportive to LGBTU young people, for example using appropriate and positive imagery combined with relevant information. Supplementary training materials could be included in a future 'training pack' giving examples or templates of such imagery/information.

- Given the future LGBTU training programme and/or materials is aimed at all professionals who work with young people, it may therefore be useful

to include exercises or activities that help practitioners to either develop (or refresh their) basic skills such as listening and empathy, for example.

Training

- It may be useful for training for practitioners around LGBTU issues and young people, to include case studies and examples that offer particularly challenging scenarios. For example, around helping a young person negotiate potentially conflicting identities, or helping practitioners to explore their own prejudices around particular issues such as trans identity or bi-phobia, or exploring scenarios whereby young people present with multiple and complex needs (for example, mental health and learning difficulties as well as sexuality issues).

- Young people expressed time and again in this research that any training for professionals working with young people should cover a wide range of relationship and other issues, not just sexual health. Indeed, professionals agreed and reported that broader issues around adolescence (identity) development (not just LGBTU) would be useful to include in a training programme.

- Practitioners report that LGBTU issues are often subsumed within other broader training around diversity and equal opportunities. In other words, existing training often only pays 'lip-service' to LGBTU issues which does not meet the needs of the trainees. It is therefore important that a future LGBTU training programme and associated materials are developed which although still addressing broader issues of diversity and equality, should be focused on distinct L.G.B.T.U issues.

- It is clear from the findings that many practitioners are not aware if or what guidance and policy documents exist either in their workplace or at more national levels. It is important that training is able to encourage the development (and awareness) of such documents where they don't exist,

but to also encourage senior managers disseminate and help staff to engage with their implementation.

- Given the confusion often reported on rights and the law around young LGBTU issues (see also Pope and Sherriff, 2008), it would be useful for training to include activities and/or information which addresses such issues.

1.0 Introduction

The Sussex Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Trans, and Unsure (LGBTU) Training and Development Research Partnership provides the first attempt to explore and address the training needs of practitioners and professionals working with young people across Sussex. The pressing need for this project was identified though previous research by Pope and Sherriff (2008; see also Sherriff and Pope, 2008), and through collaboration with community partners including Young People in Focus (YPF), the Terrence Higgins Trust (THT), and the Dorman Youth Arts Centre (DYAC). Together, it became clear that accessible and appropriate training (and materials) were required urgently to kick-start the process of assisting practitioners in working with all young people to be able to address LGBTU issues as part of their everyday work (for example, as part of day-to-day youth work or for teachers addressing homophobic bullying in the classroom). Following successful funding applications to the BSCKE and the SECSCG, the Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership was convened in 2008 in order to begin building the necessary evidence base on which appropriate training and training materials could be developed and rolled out to practitioners across Sussex.

The importance of meeting LGBTU young people's needs is supported by the growing evidence base addressing health inequity and health inequalities. LGBTU young people frequently experience homophobic/transphobic bullying, discrimination, and marginalisation (Department for Children, Schools, and Families [DCSF], 2007; Cull, Platzer and Balloch 2006; Johnson, Faulkner, Jones, and Welsh, 2007). In particular, these issues appear to be most virulent in non-urban areas where, compared to large cities such as London, higher rates of homophobia are often exhibited (Bridget, 2009). Research suggests that discrimination (overt or otherwise) has a negative impact on the health and emotional wellbeing of young people. For example, research has shown that LGBTU young people often face social isolation and exclusion (Connexions Service National Unit [CSNU], 2007); homelessness (Cull *et al.,* 2006); violence and abuse from peers and family (Hunter, 1990); bullying at school (Hunt and

Jensen, 2007; Pope and Sherriff, 2008); violence on the streets (Bellos, 1998); and mental health difficulties including high rates of suicide, anxiety, depression, and self-harm (DCSF, 2007; Hind, 2004; Johnson *et al.,* 2007; Noret, Rivers, and Richards, 2006; Pope and Sherriff, 2008; Sherriff and Pope, 2008). Yet despite these established negative impacts on health and emotional wellbeing, there are few LGBTU services for young people across Sussex, and where they do exist, they tend to be located in urban areas such as Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne, and Hastings. This is important as previous research (Pope and Sherriff, 2008; Sherriff and Pope, 2008) revealed that young people living in non-urban areas of Sussex face significant and additional challenges compared to their counterparts living in more urban areas compounding the potential risk of being socially excluded and isolated. For example, although some young people living in non-urban areas reported being in contact with Allsorts in Brighton[2], most had not followed up initial contact because the project was simply too far from where they lived, and they often cited transport difficulties (including cost) as being particularly problematic (Pope and Sherriff, 2008).

In addition to the scarcity of services specifically for LGBTU young people, many individuals within these groups fail to access mainstream services. LGBTU young people have typically been under-served by mainstream healthcare professionals; thereby many find that their needs are not met. As well as a lack of awareness regarding client's sexual orientation/gender identity, evidence suggests that the inability to meet the needs of LGBTU young people is often due to the provider not having received appropriate training which addresses this area (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2008a, 2008b; Scourfield, Roen, McDermott, 2008).

Consistent with these findings, Pope and Sherriff's (2008) research in West Sussex revealed that many mainstream service providers feel that they lack the confidence and necessary training required to identify and work with young

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2 Established in 1999, Allsorts is a registered charity based in Brighton to support young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or unsure (LGBTU). Allsorts provides a drop-in service in Brighton for LGBTU young people under 26yrs to meet new people, relax, and engage in various social activities.

LGBTU people. Practitioners who were interviewed found that there were different challenges in these primarily non-urban areas as compared to more urban environments, and reported a need for training to help address these challenges. Pope and Sherriff's (2008) research findings highlight some particular training needs, notably around homosexuality and language; the law; homophobia[3] and heterosexism; homophobic bullying; self-harm and suicide; social and psychological issues; sexual health information; trans issues and bi-sexual males. They recommend that additional research be carried out to further explore these needs. Many of these themes were also identified in this current research (see Findings, p.33).

In response to Pope and Sherriff's (2008) research, and under the auspices of Young People in Focus (YPF), Polonijo (2008) undertook a scoping exercise of available training resources both in the UK and abroad. This exercise revealed a plethora of materials that deal specifically with issues facing LGBTU young people, but not specifically aimed at non-urban areas, as well as a range of material dealing with rural LGBTU people more broadly, but not aimed at young people. Polonijo concludes that *"the learning needs of service providers in West Sussex cannot be met solely by any of the training resources that are currently available"* (Polonijo, 2008, p.33) as they tend to focus on the impact of homophobia alone and fail to address many of the other training needs identified in West Sussex. She further endorses the notion of developing training that is informed by further research into both the training needs of practitioners working with young people in rural West Sussex and the voices of young people themselves.

This present project therefore aims to meet this important need in order to ultimately benefit LGBTU young people across the wider county. This research comprises two distinct phases; in Phase One (for which BSCKE and SECSCG funding were granted), the IHDRC at the University of Brighton have worked in close collaboration with its community partners to explore the training needs of

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3 In this report we use 'homophobia' as an overarching term to refer to the often violent and overt abuse of an individual or group because they are, or are perceived to be, LGBTU.

with practitioners, and explore the experiences of LGBTU young people from across Sussex who live in mainly non-urban areas. The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership has been established by collaborating with local community organisations to set up a long-term working partnership that provides research evidence on which to develop, pilot, and produce a LGBTU programme or learning resource for trainers (course facilitators). The lead community partner in the project is Young People in Focus (YPF), a UK charity which helps individuals and organisations working with young people and families to provide better services by: carrying out research and evaluating services; running projects that develop professional practice; producing practical resources such as guides, toolkits and training packs; training professionals in a wide range of topics, and; influencing policy-makers.

Other community partners include the Terrence Higgins Trust (THT) which works to maximise sexual health in the UK and minimise the spread of HIV and STI's by encouraging people to value their sexual health; Allsorts (see above), and; the Dormans Youth Arts Centre which is a youth club in Crawley that specialises in music, art and drama.

Phase One (presented in this report) has taken nine months to complete. In Phase Two (for which funds are being sought from other sources), the findings of this work will be made available to the lead community partner (YPF), who are highly experienced in developing accredited training courses and producing training materials.

The aim of Phase Two will be to translate the training needs analysis into a graphically designed learning resource for trainers and to pilot training courses for practitioners throughout Sussex. During this Second Phase, IHDRC will act as academic advisors and evaluators to YPF and will work closely on all aspects of the project including production of the final learning resource. The training courses will be evaluated and learning from each Phase of the project will be disseminated via a national conference where the issues will be considered within a national and wider policy context. YPF will then sell the

learning resource through their publications department and may deliver further training courses as necessary.

1.1 Aims (Phase One)

The aims of this first Phase of the project were to:

- Provide an accessible report that provides a local, up to date description and analysis of practitioners experiences and training needs, together with a contemporary depiction of LGBTU young people's experiences, attitudes, and perceptions concerning staff training, skills, and service provision;

- Build a sustainable network for knowledge exchange between YPF, THT, Allsorts, DYAC, and IHDRC through collaborative research and partnership working. Elements of the project will also be incorporated in IHDRC's post-graduate health promotion courses in which community partners will be invited to talk about their work with students;

- Create sustained partnership working with community partners to develop and implement the second phase of the project to create an LGBTU programme or learning resource based on research findings;

- Form direct synergies and links with the Sussex LGBTU Communities of Practice which is funded under the South East Coast Communities (SECC) programme. More specifically, the current project aims to feed explicitly into Strand Three of this work 'Development of Resources' to 'inform service provision and local policies';

- Ultimately promote the health and wellbeing of LGBTU young people by helping service providers to meet their needs more effectively;

- Build capacity among community partners by providing an evidence base to inform service provision and provide assistance in applications for grants and other sources of funding, for example;

- Produce two conference presentations (British Psychological Society's Annual Conference held in Brighton in April 2009; and the Brighton and Sussex Sexualities Network Conference to be held in September, 2009), and up to two peer reviewed journal articles to ensure wide dissemination including national and international forums;

- Develop the research skills of the project workers, community supervisor, and academic supervisor.

2.0 Methodology

The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership has built upon the evidence base provided by the West Sussex LGBTU Youth Research Project (Pope and Sherriff, 2008; Sherriff and Pope, 2008). It has explored the experiences of LGBT(U) young people living mainly in non-urban locations across Sussex, and the specific training needs and experiences of practitioners and/or professionals working with young people in a wide range of settings through a series of open meetings, individual interviews, and focus groups. The methodological details of these discrete but interrelated aspects of the study are detailed below.

2.1   Open Meetings

In keeping broadly with participatory methodologies (e.g. Hart, 1992; Reason, 1994) where research agendas are developed collaboratively, the first stage of this project was to establish two open meetings which would allow participants to inform the development and direction of the research. More specifically, it was hoped that these meetings would begin the process of identifying the issues to be included in the individual interview schedules, and to also identify potential project participants. Contacts with young people and practitioners were made initially from Pope and Sherriff's (2008) study to include those individuals who participated in the initial West Sussex LGBTU Youth Research Project, and whom also expressed an explicit interest in participating in future research. The open meetings were promoted in free publications aimed at LGBTU people such as the Source, One Eighty and G Scene, and in on line sites such as Children and Young People Now, Youth Work News, and Youth in West Sussex on line magazine.

The first open meeting was held for LGBTU young people from across Sussex in the Dorman Arts Youth Centre Crawley in January 2009. This location was chosen purposively to provide a 'safe' and collaborative space within which LGBTU young people could feel comfortable in order to engage fully in the

research. The meeting was facilitated by a qualified youth worker in collaboration with the first author. Although the preliminary agenda and interview schedule for the meeting were devised by the research team, they were only intended to act as a*ide-mémoires* to remind the facilitators of the areas to be covered rather than as tools to prescribe the actual list and order of issues and/or questions to be discussed. However, despite extensive marketing by the Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership, only one young person attended the meeting on the day. Whilst such attendance was disappointing, the young person was still able to offer useful comments and insights which were incorporated into the final interview schedule.

The second open meeting was held in January, 2009 at the THT premises in Eastbourne. This meeting was specifically for practitioners working with (LGBTU) young people across Sussex. Following similar procedures to the young people's open meeting, the intention was to canvass opinion from practitioners about areas such as the direction of the research, the development of a suitable interview schedule, and other issues. Once again, despite extensive marketing through the Partnership's networks, turn-out was disappointing with only two practitioners as well as two staff from THT being present.

2.2   Sample

Young People

A total of 11 individual interviews with LGBT(U) young people (13-26yrs) were completed by the first author and were reached through diverse and complementary strategies (see pages 26 and 28 for summary tables of the sample socio-demographic characteristics). Examples of specific strategies to recruit young people included approaching a number of sites and stakeholder networks from across East and West Sussex schools including (primary and secondary), sixth-form colleges, youth clubs, local trans and Black and Minority

Ethnic (BME) [4] organisations, and contacts established from Pope and Sherriff's (2008) study. Moreover, publicity materials (posters and flyers) to raise awareness of the research and encourage participation were also developed and distributed to various LGBTU groups and youth services (see Appendix C Recruitment Posters). A project website was also established (www.lgbtu.co.uk) which gives details of the Partnership (including its history) as well access to the interview schedules, consent forms and useful relevant organisations to contact across Sussex for young LGBTU people (see Appendices A, B and E).

As the LGBTU population is hidden and can be particularly hard to reach, snowballing[5] and liaising with key informants (for example, youth workers) can be particularly useful sampling strategies to adopt in order to reach young people. In the present research these strategies were crucial in engaging with the 11 young people who participated in the project. However, whilst undoubtedly useful, it is still important to recognise that such strategies often only facilitate access to those young people who are either 1) already in touch with services or other support systems or, 2) 'out' in terms of disclosing their identity. Recruiting in this way can therefore mean that some of the most vulnerable people are often not included in research populations (Cull *et al.,* 2006).

In the present research, recruitment was unsurprisingly problematic and it is unlikely that our sample is representative of the wider LGBTU young people population. In the initial research proposal up to 15 interviews with young people were originally planned; however, it was simply not possible within the project constraints to do this despite concerted efforts to recruit. Moreover, it was hoped to engage with a range of young people who identified themselves as being L, G, B (both males and females), T, and U as well as young people

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4 The phrase Black and Minority Ethnic is used in this report as it is the most commonly used and accepted term by a number of agencies. However, we also acknowledge the potentially divisive nature of the term as it can be seen as being all-inclusive and does not recognise the diversity of ethnic identities subsumed within it.

5 Snowballing is a method used for obtaining samples of numerically small groups (e.g. young people), by means of referrals from earlier participants (Arber, 2005; Gomm, 2004; Polit , Beck, and Hungler, 2001)

from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. However, as can be seen in table 1 (below) all young people were White British (N=11), most were female (64% or n = 7), and no young people identified as being unsure. Moreover, both individuals identifying as bi-sexual were females.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics of LGBT(U) Young People

Age	N	Gender	N	Trans	N	Ethnicity	N	Religion	N	Disability	N	Preference	N
13-15	1	Male	4	Yes	1	White British	11	Yes	1	Yes	3	Lesbian	5
16-18	1	Female	7	No	10			No	10	No	8	Gay	3
19-21	7											Bi-Sexual	2
22-24	1											Trans	1
26-28	1											Unsure	0
												Other	0
												Heterosexual	0
Totals	**11**		**11**		**11**		**11**		**11**		**11**		**11**

Given the difficulties experienced by Pope and Sherriff (2008) in accessing young people who identified themselves as being from BME groups, the research team attempted to recruit purposively to try and ensure that such individuals were included in the final sample demographic. To this end various services, groups and organisations across East and West Sussex who support these groups, such as Allsorts and Connexions, were contacted on several occasions. Somewhat surprisingly none of these strategies and contacts were fruitful. This has important implications for the planned Phase Two of this project as it would be important for any training programmes and materials to incorporate the views and experiences of those young people who may face the double burden of discrimination based on both ethnicity or 'race' and sexual/gender orientation (Polonijo, 2008; Pope and Sherriff, 2008). For example, Savin-Williams and Rodriguez (1993) note that non-heterosexual BME young people may have difficulty establishing their identity because their ethnic, 'racial', and cultural backgrounds must be integrated with their sexual orientation. These groups may also be subject to both rejection from their racial/ethnic community and racism from the LGBTU communities, potentially isolating them and putting them at greater risk of self harm and suicide (Morrison and L'Hereux, 2001).

Similarly, it is likely that young people who are unsure about their sexual and/or gender identity may also be particularly vulnerable and in need of support.

However, it is important to recognise that despite the sample limitations, the issues and concerns emerging from the research support and extend many of the findings from the wide literature. Therefore the experiences explored in this report could be considered to be valid reflections of LGBTU young people across the country.

Professionals/Practitioners

In addition to the 11 young people, a total of 18 individual in-depth interviews were conducted with practitioners who work with young people across East and West Sussex. These individuals represented a variety of sectors and settings such as youth work, clinical psychology, teaching, Connexions related work, social work and specialist project work in housing, for example (see Table 2 below)[6].

As with reaching young people, practitioners who participated in Pope and Sherriff's study (2008) were contacted first, with further participants being accessed through snowballing, and with assistance from members of the project's steering group. Strategies to recruit included approaching a number of sites and stakeholder networks from across East and West Sussex schools including (primary and secondary), youth clubs, local trans and BME organisations, youth offending teams, social services, the police and a professional LGBTU special interest group. Once again, publicity materials (Appendix C) were distributed to these networks and via the project website.

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6 Broad occupational sector categorisations are utilised here rather than, say for example, job titles or similar to help ensure anonymity for participants. This is also reflected in the Findings section that follows.

Table 2: Sample Characteristics of Professionals/Practitioners

Age	N	Gender	N	Trans	N	Ethnicity	N	Religion	N	Disability	N	Preference	N	Employment Sector	N
20-29	4	Male	10	Yes	0	White British	18	Yes	5	Yes	0	Lesbian	1	Mental health	3
30-39	5	Female	8	No	18			No	13	No	18	Gay	6	Education	5
40-49	9											Bi-Sexual	0	Social services	2
50-59	0											Trans	0	Housing	4
60-69	0											Unsure	0	Police	1
												Other	1	Youth services	3
												Heterosexual	10		
Totals	18		18		18		18		18		18		18		18

Recruiting professionals to participate in the research was much less problematic than recruiting young people. Indeed, many more individuals requested to be interviewed than could be accommodated. However, there were still difficulties in achieving a diverse sample, for example, in terms of ethnicity and (sexual/gender) preference. All participants were White British (N=18), and most identified their sexual preference as heterosexual (55% or n = 10). Although six gay practitioners and one lesbian practitioner took part, no individuals identified as bi-sexual, Trans, or Unsure.

As with young people, it will be important for Phase Two of the project to ensure that such individuals are engaged with so their views are reflected appropriately in the training programme and training materials.

2.3   Individual Interviews

Young People

For LGBTU young people, individual interviews were used as a means to explore their experiences of living in non-urban areas of Sussex including (*inter alia*) their experiences of and aspirations for, statutory and non-statutory support services. As with Pope and Sherriff's (2008, p.23) study, an important aspect of this part of the research was to try and "*provide a collaborative and 'safe-space' within which LGBTU young people could feel comfortable in order to engage fully in the interview process and disclose details (e.g. concerning*

their sexual or gender identity) without fear of judgment." As such, the final interview schedules (informed by the open meetings) were intended to be used as a flexible guide for the project worker (Shelby Wigmore) for conducting a conversation with young people and to help prompt them to discuss aspects of their experiences, thoughts, and perspectives, rather than provide a prescriptive list of questions to be asked in a specific order.

At the start of the individual interviews (see Appendix A for interview schedules for both young people and practitioners), LGBT young people were asked a series of 'warm up' questions such as where they were from, whether they were at school, college or University, and what they liked to do in their spare time. Personal experiences of being LGBT in non-urban areas of Sussex were then explored before examining individual stories and opinions of accessing (statutory and non-statutory) 'services'. For instance, first impressions, whether their needs were met, characteristics of workers, thoughts about staff and so on. Young people were also asked explicitly to consider what they thought might be important themes for the development of an LGBTU programme or learning resource. They were also invited to ask questions around the research process itself, and if they had any ideas for questions to be included in the interview schedule.

Each individual interview lasted between 30-60 minutes. Prior to the interview, the project worker offered telephone interviews as an alternative to face-to-face interviews in order to offer varying levels of anonymity and privacy for the participants (no young people opted to do this). Young people were asked to complete a brief socio-demographic questionnaire prior to the commencement of the interview (see Appendix D). All travel expenses were reimbursed as necessary and young people were given a £5 'thank-you' voucher for taking part. Opportunities to debrief fully with the project worker and/or community supervisors were provided. Further details about ethical procedures are given below in section 2.6).

Practitioners and/or professionals

For practitioners and/or professionals working with young people, individual interviews were used mainly as a means to explore their experiences of working with (LGBTU) young people residing in mostly non-urban areas of Sussex, as well as examining their perspectives on the lack of services for LGBTU young people and the challenges this raises.

Similarly to the interviews with young people, the interview schedule for practitioners (see Appendix A), again informed by the open meeting, was intended to be an *aide-mémoire* to ensure coverage of the same kinds of questions whilst still maintaining flexibility. Participants were asked a number of 'warm up' questions before moving on to explore their experiences of working with (LGBTU) young people including challenges, fears and concerns, and needs for support or training. Practitioners were also asked for their views on what the development of a training pack/manual and training programme might look like, as well as their views on current and potential future service provision.

Each individual interview lasted between 30-60 minutes. As with young people, prior to the interview, practitioners were asked to complete a brief socio-demographic questionnaire (see Appendix D). Opportunities to debrief fully with the project worker and/or community supervisors were provided.

2.4   Focus Groups

Two final focus groups (one with young people and one with practitioners) were conducted after the interview data had been analysed to check the validity of findings and to explore further any issues raised. The first focus group meeting was held at the YPF offices in central Brighton during July 2009 for practitioners and was facilitated by the first author, and a representative from the lead community partner (YPF). All interviewees from this project were contacted to attend, as were other professionals who had been interested and involved with the research project but had not been interviewed. Unfortunately, despite the wide spread promotion of the event, no professionals attended.

The second focus group (for young people) was also held in July 2009 at Allsorts in Brighton. As with the practitioner meeting, all young people who had taken part in the individual interviews were invited. This venue was chosen primarily for its central location and because it provides a safe space for LGBTU young people to discuss the findings from this report and other related issues. Three LGBTU young people attended the focus group (one of whom had participated in the research) during which the findings of the project were discussed, and in many cases, corroborated.

2.5   Data Analysis

Data collection was carried out by the project worker (first author) in close partnership with the academic supervisor and project manager (second author), and the community partners from the YPF, THT, Allsorts, and DYAC. Thematic data analysis was carried out in consultation with LGBTU participants and service providers, the community supervisor, and academic supervisors. Qualitative data analysis software (Nvivo 8) was used to facilitate this process and to provide a consistent system for cataloguing the data set. The following conventions were used for the transcription of the interview data: [   ], background information including emotions, interruptions, tone of voice or any contextual note; '', direct quotation; ?? inaudible responses; […], text extract from the same interview, or extract from a different interview to follow. The interviewer (Shelby Wigmore) is referred to as SW throughout. Practitioners are identified in the text by their occupational sector (mental health, housing, education, social services, police, and youth services), whereas age range (for example, *19-21yrs*), is used as an identifier for young people.

2.6   Ethical Issues

Ethical approval for this research has been received from the Faculty of Health and Social Science Ethics and Governance Committee (FREGC) at the University of Brighton prior to the commencement of any work.

The following paragraphs refer to the ethical practices adopted for working with both professionals and young LGBTU people. However, more references are made to LGBTU young people because they are a particularly vulnerable group of young people.

All participants had the research processes explained fully to them both verbally by the researcher and in writing (see Appendix B for copies of the participant information sheets). Participation in all aspects of the research was by informed consent only (see Appendix B for consent forms). All interviewees had direct access to support from one of the community partners (Allsorts), as well as the academic and/or community supervisor in the case of any residual distress or concerns following the conduct of the interview. All young LGBT people were provided with a list of relevant organisations (see Appendix E) where they could access further support if required.

All project staff with access to young people had undergone a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check.

Confidentiality was limited only by the need to ensure young LGBTU people's protection. Concerns about the safety of any individual young person would have been raised if necessary with the appropriate party within the agency, and participants were made aware of this at the onset of their involvement. All data generated by the project has been treated in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. Data has been anonymised, and information about sources is not available outside of the University of Brighton LGBTU research team. All data has been kept securely and has only been available to those directly involved in the project (including the lead community partner). Pseudonyms have been used throughout to distinguish individual participants for research purposes, and where it has been necessary to hold real names these have been held on computers which are password protected. Research participants have not been identified by name in written reports or verbal presentations.

3.0 Findings

This section of the report outlines the key findings from the individual interviews, open meetings, and the final focus groups with LGBT[7] young people and professionals. Five key themes emerged from the open meetings and individual interviews and findings are presented under these headings below. Specific themes include: 'Coming-Out'; School and Sixth Form College; Homophobic Bullying; Views on Services; and Training. Although training is discussed at length as a separate theme within these findings, it is important to stress that all the themes identified are inextricably linked to the training needs of professionals working with young people. To reflect this, training issues have been elicited and summarised at the end of each theme in the form of a bullet pointed list of 'recommendations for training'.

3.1 'Coming-Out'

This first section of the findings looks at experiences of 'coming-out' for both young people and professionals. 'Coming-out' is a process that happens over time in different settings, and experiences for young participants unsurprisingly varied from being very positive, to extremely negative, especially in terms of reactions from friends, peers, and family. However, overwhelmingly 'fear' emerged as an important concern both for young people in 'coming-out' (see also Pope and Sherriff, 2008), and for practitioners in approaching young people to talk about their broader issues of sexual and/or gender identity as well as specifically about 'coming-out'. Such fears are perhaps not surprising given that although 'coming-out' can play a positive role in the personal identity development of young people, it can also greatly increase the risk of victimisation, harassment and physical violence (Hunter, Cowell, Mallon, Moyer, and Riddel, 2006).

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7 No interviewee in this research identified themselves as (U)nsure. Consequently, for the purposes of this findings section (and subsequent sections), the project's sample will be referred to as being 'LGBT' rather than LGBTU.

Young people were asked about their 'stories' of 'coming-out', for example, to friends, family, teachers and work colleagues. Kreiss and Patterson (1997) argue that the young person discloses his or her identity to a few carefully chosen friends first, and only later to family members. The data generated from individual interviews supported these findings. Secondly, LGBT young people were then asked about how many people knew how they identified, and what experiences they had had after they 'came-out'. Further, they were asked what could have made a difference, such as having a supportive teacher or boss, and whether things had changed since they came out, such lifestyle and relationships. Professionals were asked if they had experience of working with LGBTU young people, and what their fears and concerns were around working with these groups.

In this first Phase of the research, most participants reported 'coming-out' in their mid-teens, although it is important to note that because 'coming-out' happens over time and often several times in different contexts, it is often misleading to pin-point an exact age when this has reportedly occurred. For example, 'many gay and lesbian adults say retrospectively that they knew from early childhood that they "*felt different" from their peers and… were able to recognise that their primary attractions were to people of the same sex"* (Kreiss and Patterson, 1997, p.268). Therefore, although several young people did report an exact age when they came out, (see quotes below), others said it was difficult to think of an exact time because it had been a process throughout their lives:

> *"I came out aged 10 to staff in children's home. My mum slapped me when I told her. I was 13." (Joanne, 16-18yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

> *"[I came out] to myself when I was 13, but I didn't 'come-out' to my parents or friends until I was 16." (Adrian, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)*

> *" 'Coming-out' for me was actually really, really easy. I came out at 13. I said 'Mum I'm gay'. And she went - 'Hallelujah, you won't get pregnant at 15!' " (Amelia, 22-24yrs, W.Sussex, lesbian)*

In relation to 'coming-out', professional's narratives revealed fears and concerns around the use of language and terminology, for example, using the 'correct' words so as not to cause offence, or to minimise possible negative reactions from other. Similarly, young people noted a certain fear from professionals, particularly teachers, when discussing LGBTU issues. Participants also discussed disclosing sexuality in the workplace, both with clients and colleagues, discussed below (see 'Disclosure', p.40).

As in the West Sussex findings (Pope and Sherriff 2008, p.42), a small number of young people said that when 'coming-out' a family member had already realised they were possibly LGBTU before the young person themselves had made the disclosure:

> *"People at school knew before my parents knew. I told one person and it escalated. My Auntie was the first person I told and she said 'I knew since you were 11' - I was 15 when I told her." (Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

3.1.1 Language and confidence

The open meeting held for professionals in January 2009 generated a discussion around the use of language when working with young people, particularly in terms of addressing sexuality. Many practitioners reported lacking confidence in raising such issues with young people whom they felt may be LGBTU. Some practitioners felt that being equipped with the 'right' words when talking to a (LGBTU) young person who may (or may not) have already disclosed their status, would improve their confidence, and in turn, their working relationship with that young person, especially at a time when they may be 'coming-out'.

Indeed this issue was also raised in some of the individual interviews with practitioners. Although many young people might 'come-out' to family and close friends (Pope and Sherriff, 2008), they may not necessarily choose to 'come-out' to the professionals they are in contact with. For such professionals, the

situation of trying to raise the question of sexual/gender identity is often extremely difficult, especially if the young person has multiple and diverse support needs. Many professionals reported that they would like to learn strategies through additional training in order to help them address such issues more competently:

> *"It's difficult because in the one case I'm thinking of that I've worked with, it's not necessarily that they come saying what their need is." (Stuart, mental health, E.Sussex, gay)*

> *"It's very hard to ask the question because you don't know if you are treading on an incredibly sensitive area, so I try not to push that. I would like to think that if they did have issues around it they would come and speak to me." (Graham, education, W.Sussex, heterosexual)*

> *"I have a real dilemma about that directness in a very gentle way, but being direct about how do you define your sexuality… Is it messing up their 'coming-out' thing, or putting them back in the process? Yeah, it's a tricky one actually." (Liz, mental health, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

Numerous practitioners reported lacking confidence in raising the issue of 'coming-out' when working with young people. For instance, one West Sussex manager working in the housing sector reported a real lack of confidence in his staff to deal with the issue of raising the question with young people who they may believe could be LGBTU. Moreover, and importantly, he reported that not one young person who had accessed the project over a number of years has ever identified as LGBTU, in turn, exacerbating the lack of confidence staff felt when working with these young people:

> *"I think it has to be done in the right way. I don't think my staff are trained in that area really to be even talking about [LGBTU issues]… and I think we should, they should have some training around lesbian, gay, bi, transgender training. I believe at least two, three [clients] here aren't*

openly [LGBTU] and I wouldn't want to force the issue with anybody."
(Josh, housing, W.Sussex, heterosexual)

This perceived lack of 'professional confidence' was also reported by some young people. For example, one young woman reported that at her school some teachers appeared to lack the confidence needed to use terms such as 'lesbian' or 'gay' in educational environments:

> *"I think it's the confidence to say it. Some tutors and teachers lack a bit of confidence in saying 'lesbian' or 'gay'." (Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

If all staff working with young people received specific training around LGBTU issues to equip them with, for example, adequate language, phrases, and confidence for discussing sexuality with young people, then perhaps more young people may have the confidence to 'come-out'. As one young participant mentioned when discussing staff at school, (see Alex, p.53), had there been a more open discussion of LGBTU issues then he feels he may have 'come-out' earlier. Other young people in their individual interviews also said that had they received adequate support, then life as a young LGBTU person may have been a lot easier. This is undoubtedly the case for many other young people who access services but who feel their needs as LGBTU young people are not met (see Pope and Sherriff, 2008).

However, many professionals are mindful of the drawbacks of encouraging a young person to 'come-out' if they feel they may be LGBTU. Two practitioners mentioned specifically the dangers of raising the question of sexuality and/or gender identity and inadvertently categorising a young person's sexuality when they were not ready:

> *"It's not as straightforward as just putting yourself in a box. A lot of damage can be done by encouraging young people to categorise themselves. I feel especially for boys there's no going back really." (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay).*

"... It's a dilemma - because we don't want to even ask the question - at 13, a child might not even know what they are, or fully understand. We've had cases before where a child could appear to be really going that route, but is not at all. And I think professionals are quite wary of asking that question actually." (Simon, youth services, E.Sussex, gay)

"I think probably as a gay man working with young LGBTU people, it [his fear] is about how I might be perceived as potentially biasing their choice; [gay] is a very loaded term." (Stuart, mental health, E.Sussex, gay)

If sexual/gender identity is not raised with a client, it may come to be regarded as simply another issue among many for the young person, when in fact it could be a significant factor affecting their mental health and wellbeing:

"It felt to me that he didn't perhaps want to disclose [his sexuality] to me, for whatever reason, and that it wasn't that relevant to what his issues were at the time. I didn't feel that it was relevant - it did feel as if it were this kind of elephant in the corner for me. There have been other occasions where I have been unsure and have wondered [about sexuality] but have thought 'is it relevant?' Is it a person's need in terms of lots of other needs?" (Sharon, social services, E.Sussex, heterosexual)

"A lot of my clients have so many issues anyway, it's just another one." (Simon, youth services, E.Sussex, gay)

However, it is also important to acknowledge that for some professionals working with young people raising issues around sexual and/or gender identity is not just about having confidence. Rather, in certain contexts, such as secondary school, raising issues of sexuality (especially if the practitioner is LGBTU) can be particularly problematic leading to deep fears about potential career damaging or school reputation tarnishing accusations. For example:

"As a gay man myself, my fear is always accusations cos we have some parents that are quite difficult to work with. I know from my own experience of 'coming-out' that some parents believe people can make people gay. I think that would be my fear with some of the parents I work with. I personally would not want to go through that cos there's always the attitude from some people, 'no smoke without fire'. Even if you were cleared I think it would really affect you if accusations were made." (Ian, education, E.Sussex, gay)

"As a school, our biggest concern is backlash from the parents... you want them to go away feeling happy because you don't want a parent on the end of the line berating you. It's the political correctness thing - if their parents aren't supportive around their sexuality, they could be blaming you for the advice you've given." (Graham, education, W.Sussex, heterosexual)

Although most interview data revealed that practitioners lacked confidence in talking to young people about sexuality issues, one practitioner did report having a specific strategy in place to bring out the question of sexuality if it is not forthcoming from the young person themselves:

"I do sometimes try and steer it into a conversation to give them the opportunity to 'come-out' if they want to. I used to work with a young lad - I put money on him having issues around sexuality. And what he'd do, if I talked about discrimination - cos that's what I'd try and raise it as - he used to be racist in front of me to provoke the conversation of discrimination and then he'd steer it onto gay things all the time." (Liz, mental health, E.Sussex, lesbian).

However, this practitioner was the only participant who spoke of having a strategy in place. More commonly practitioners expressed concern, fear, and a lack of confidence around raising the question of sexuality when working with young people. Clearly, then there is an important training need for practitioners

to be equipped with key phrases and terms around sexuality and 'coming-out' to avoid discomfort or offence and build good practice:

> *"If they did, [raise the question of sexuality] they could be on another level with that client, and really support them. But people are fearful."* (Simon, youth services, E.Sussex, gay)

> *''What do you say to them? You deal with it, but we could do with some training and ideas on what would be the right thing to say at the right time... '' (Annette, education, W.Sussex, heterosexual)*

3.1.2 Disclosure

An important finding from this research was that many lesbian and gay practitioners responded to the promotional material about this project and came forward for an individual interview. This meant that particular opinions, anxieties and fears of these groups of professionals and practitioners are highlighted in these findings, and possibly suggests that support and training may be needed for these groups of people, especially gay men who work with young people. Gay and lesbian workers discussed the issue of whether or not to identify their sexuality when working with young LGBTU people:

> *''A big concern for me as a gay man is whether it's appropriate or helpful to actually let young people know that. I've chosen not to because I don't necessarily think that's the right thing to do - but I just haven't answered that question to myself yet. I'd rather not take that risk because potentially you could as a worker be opening a can of worms. It turns out that it was OK for me to 'come-out' in the end, but I don't want to give young people a false sense of hope that it's ok and 'look at me I've done it, its fine.' So that's a big issue for me, being gay myself and how I relate and identify with those young people. And I suppose not projecting my own experiences onto those young people as well.'' (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay)*

"We need to be sensitive to everyone's circumstances because there is a gay community - we are all linked because of the oppression that we face - but there's so much diversity that it is foolish to say 'oh because he's gay and I'm gay I understand what he is going through.'" (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay).

"I'm out at work with my colleagues, but none of my clients know. That's been up for debate for a while for myself… does it matter? Would it be useful? Or would it just cause me all kinds of problems? But in a day at work, enough bad things are thrown at you, I don't know that at times I have been strong enough to handle one more thing… it's pretty full on. One young person has asked me outright, and I've lied. But I reinforce positive things by saying; 'of course I've got gay friends!'" (Simon, youth services, E.Sussex, gay)

"I don't disclose personal information per se. If I've ever mentioned a partner, I keep the gender out of that." (Liz, mental health, E.Sussex, lesbian)

However, one practitioner did disclose his sexuality to a client because he felt it was important for their therapeutic relationship:

"There can be some very strict rules about disclosure. I felt that this young person was eliciting from me a disclosure as well… I made the decision to disclose that I was gay and I think that was a really important part of the work for that person - that they felt that they were speaking to somebody who understood where they were kind of really coming from." (Stuart, mental health, E.Sussex, gay)

Clearly, the decision to disclose or not can be a difficult one for the practitioner and it certainly appears to be an area where support and training is needed for LGBTU staff. Specifically, the interview data reveals definite tensions exists between not wanting to disclose, yet feeling that it may be a positive decision for the young person and the working relationship; here professionals need

training and support to increase their confidence and skills base to manage this tension.

3.1.3   Relationships with others

Narratives from young people and practitioners revealed a number of issues around relationships with others when 'coming-out' that potentially have important implications for the development of training programme and associated materials. For instance, in this research lesbian and gay practitioners reported that their relationships with their work colleagues were sometimes difficult not just because of specific instances of homophobic comments, but also because of ostensibly more general prejudices and misunderstandings from co-workers about sexuality issues:

> "*There's been times where I've let it go [homophobic comments] - afterwards I've been annoyed with myself and thought I should have challenged it. [SW: Do you know why you let it go?] Because I'm not really 'out' at work, but I know people know because of [his town] being a small place. A member of staff when I'd lost my scarf once made some comment about was it pink or something. I just kind of gave them a look and didn't really address it. Looking back, I should have done.*" (Ian, education, E.Sussex, gay)

> "*A big issue is that there is still a lot of prejudice and misunderstanding about sexuality even from other workers. Potentially some people might think there were malevolent reasons for you telling a young person that they were gay. Perhaps that's just an unfounded fear of mine, but I do know of workers I have met in the past who don't hold particularly open minded views. And that is a concern.*" (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay).

For young people, good relationships with others such as peer groups, friends, and family, were seen as crucial in providing social support for the emotional health and wellbeing of the LGBTU young person, particularly when 'coming-

out'. For example, similar to Pope and Sherriff (2008), in terms of 'coming-out', close friends were often the people a young person chose to tell first. As discussed above, wider literature such as Kreiss and Patterson (1997) also recognise this process:

> "I came out to my friends when I was ten. That was really easy." (Steph, 13-15yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

> "I think the first person I came out to was my best friend at the time cos I think she fancied me." (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

Similar to Pope and Sherriff's (2008) findings however, some young people reported that their friendships changed once they had disclosed their LGBT(U) status usually due to friends and peers feeling uncomfortable with the disclose, often leaving the young person feeling isolated:

> "One of my friends didn't want to hang around with me but everyone else saw it coming [his being gay]. He was kind of forced to hang out with me." (Barry, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

> "Because of my best friend's religion, I'm no longer allowed to go round there. Because I'm gay, I'm a bad influence on him; therefore I'm not allowed to see him. So he has to lie to them to see me. Religion really complicates that." (Barry, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

> "I had one really close friend… but then she moved away and when she came back she was a really strongly Christian. By the time she'd come back I was 'out' and we didn't really speak anymore." (Louise, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, bi-sexual)

Indeed, some young people reflected on their relationships with others in school reporting experiences of homophobia and feelings of rejection and isolation from their peer group:

"P.E [physical education] was a nightmare and I never did it. I couldn't share a changing room with other girls because it was like 'turn around, there's a fucking dyke there.' " (Amelia, 22-24yrs, W.Sussex, lesbian)

"My best friend told girls that they'd better look out because I'd look at them in the changing rooms." (Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this report to discuss in detail young people's experiences of being LGBT in school, such experiences as those reported above are common in the literature (e.g. see Adams, Cox, and Dunstan, 2004; Clarke, Kitzinger, and Potter, 2004; Pope and Sherriff, 2008; Sherriff and Pope, 2008; Hunt and Jenson, 2007; Thurlow, 2001) and elicit important implications for the training of practitioners working with young people. Peer group cultures are a key aspect of pupil life in school and can have a profound and powerful influence on the formation of pupil identities (for example, Cotterell, 1996; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Harris, 1998; Walker, 1988). They can provide a valuable sense of belonging and support during periods of adjustment and transition (Gavin and Furman, 1989; Palmonari, Pombeni, and Kirchler, 1989). Therefore practitioners working with (LGBTU) young people need to be able to recognise, acknowledge, and then support young people in negotiating and managing their relationships within important peer group cultures.

Unsurprisingly, relationships with family members and the support (or not) they can provide emerged as a common and important theme when 'coming-out'. Kreiss and Patterson (1997) point out that by the time the young person comes out to family members, they have already been involved in an internal identity acceptance process that has occurred over months or years. This process has undoubtedly been the case for many young interviewees here:

"I told my mum… I was quite lucky cos she's quite intelligent, went to University and she's quite a liberal kind of mum to have [laughs]. So I had quite a good 'coming-out' experience I suppose from about the age of 14." (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

[When asked how it was telling her Mum she was a lesbian] "Easy. She really didn't care as long as I was happy." (Steph, 13-15yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

'It sounds horrendous [bullying at school], but because my family was accepting of it [her sexuality] I didn't really give a shit what the school thought. Having that [family support] helped me get through it.'' (Amelia, 22-24yrs, W.Sussex, lesbian)

In contrast, those young people who did not have parental support when 'coming-out' reported negative experiences:

"I was with my first girlfriend for two months and decided to tell my parents - I wrote them a letter and went out. I came back and they'd read it, my mum hit the roof, went absolutely mad… 'it's a phase, you don't know what you're doing you've been influenced, you're young.' She said if you're still gay by the time you're 25 she'll believe me. That made me feel pretty crap - she clearly doesn't understand." (Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

"My dad was really rude; he cried and told me I wasn't his daughter." (Charlotte, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

Cull *et al.,* (2006) investigated the experiences of LGBT youth homelessness in Brighton and Hove. They found that the sexual/transgender identity of a young person was implicated directly or indirectly in the initial cause of homelessness in most cases of their interviewees. The interview schedule for this project did not directly ask LGBT young people about housing, but several respondents mentioned either a period of homelessness or insecure housing in their lives. It is not possible, however, to comment whether this is directly attributable to their sexuality. Adrian describes his experience of being asked to leave the family home when he came out:

'My parents didn't accept that fact that I was gay - so they said, 'you have to leave.'... It's a lot better now since I've left home, but when I was living at home it was rather difficult for my parents to get along with it. Support from my mum could have made a huge difference. Her not liking the fact that I was different from what she wanted me to be was difficult for me to accept.'' (Adrian, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

The importance of parental support around a young person's sexuality was also recognised by some professionals. One respondent who works directly with homeless young people discussed the frustration she feels at not having the capacity to also work with a client's family which would enable her to provide a more holistic service to young people:

"A couple of them [young LGBTU clients] specifically have had problems with their parents, or parent, and family, accepting the whole thing. I remember one guy coming back one night really drunk and upset, crying about how his mum didn't get him. We don't deal with family - it would be good if we could but we don't have the staff." (Sarah, housing, E. Sussex, heterosexual)

Such issues may also be another reason why some practitioners do not encourage a young person to 'come-out' if they feel they may be LGBTU:

"Family loyalties, religious issues, all need to be taken into account - it's a delicate sort of area to touch on. I didn't want to encourage him [a young BME client] to fully 'come-out' and talk about his sexuality because that would create a whole load of difficulties for him that perhaps he wasn't ready to deal with, potentially losing his family." (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay)

In addition to talking about parents, many LGBT young people also discussed the importance of their siblings understanding their sexuality and identity, and frequently talked in terms of 'educating' and 'bringing them up' to be accepting

of LGBTU issues, especially younger brothers and sisters. This theme was particularly prevalent among LGBTU young people who did not have parental support, and was corroborated in the final focus group meeting when one young person commented that when he 'came-out' he was concerned about his younger brother experiencing homophobic bullying at school because he had a gay older brother. Two young people discuss this:

> *''My little sister knows [about me being lesbian] since she was 12. She did have a real issue at first, she said I want you to get married, have kids - I tried to explain to her I can still do that, it's just with a woman, it's no different. I've tried to bring her up to understand that it's OK, there's nothing wrong with it and I haven't changed. But my parents seem to think that I've changed now that I'm gay.'' (Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

> *''My little brother is just four and he's old enough to realise I don't have a boyfriend. My dad tries to hide it from him, but when I go home I look after him quite a lot and I never hide it from him. I want him to understand.'' (Charlotte, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

However, sibling support may not always be straightforward, and young people describe the difficulty of having a homophobic/transphobic brother or sister:

> *''My eldest brother doesn't know. He wouldn't take it well I don't think. He would come into the house sometimes and say 'effing gays' or something.'' (Barry, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)*

> *"I don't actually talk to my brother anymore. He's a born again Christian and takes it upon himself to… believe that he is God's messenger, and prays for me that I will get healed, and I find that quite offensive." (Alex, 26-28yrs, E.Sussex, trans)*

> *"My family are against that sort of thing. My little sister is 16, absolutely hates it… completely homophobic but still loves me, still sees me as her sister." (Joanne, 16-18yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

These narratives from young people and practitioners suggest that training is needed to help practitioners deal with LGBTU young people as members of a family with complex relationships as well as an individual and member of various peer groups. It also seems that young people who may not be LGBTU themselves but have an LGBTU family member such as an elder sibling may need the support of staff who have been trained in LGBTU issues because they may be experiencing homophobic bullying.

This section illustrates that processes and experiences of 'coming-out' vary widely for both young people and professionals and that there are clear areas where appropriate training could be beneficial. For instance, the data suggests that the quality of the relationship between young person and client could potentially be improved if staff have the confidence to ask the question of sexuality without fear of accusation. Clearly, training to improve confidence and reduce fear among professionals is needed, particularly among LGBTU staff. These groups of people are often confident and 'out' at work, but when working with clients, and indeed having contact with colleagues, confidence can be diminished when the issue of sexuality is raised and this is an issue that needs to be addressed both in training and in practice in the workplace. The support of family, especially parents and siblings, as well as friends and peers is also vital for LGBTU young people when 'coming-out' and this issue should be acknowledged in training for all professionals working with young people.

Recommendations for Training

- The data reveals the need for a training programme and/or materials to include activities that can help practitioners to deal more effectively and sensitively with young people when discussing 'coming-out' in various contexts. For example, such activities might include confidence building exercises around about 'raising the question' of being LGBTU with young person as well as scenarios and case study materials of issues involved in 'coming-out' in various contexts (e.g. school, work, family, peers etc.)

- Many practitioners reported that they struggled to find the appropriate language to use with young people around sexuality and/or identity issues for fears about possibly causing offence. It would be useful for training materials for practitioners working with young people to include sections or activities which would allow trainees to address such language issues directly. Input from LGBTU young people here themselves may be invaluable in the development of such training activities.

- Role play scenarios may be useful to include in a training programme aimed at LGBT staff in the workplace. Practitioners reported needing help with addressing homophobic comments from colleagues in the workplace as well as deciding when it is appropriate (or not) to disclose their own sexuality and/or identity to colleagues and young people.

3.2   School and Sixth Form College

For young people, their experiences of being LGBT whilst in school (particularly secondary school) ranged from positive to very negative. Not all the young people interviewed had 'come-out' whilst at school for a variety of reasons; often because they hadn't even acknowledged to themselves at school age that they could be LGBT, let alone to a trusted adult or friend. Some reported not 'coming-out' at school because they didn't feel safe, and those that had 'come-out' reported a range of mixed experiences:

"We were joking at one point that we should start up a tent and start charging cos everyone comes up to you asking questions. Yeah. Charge admission and then people can ask their strange sexuality questions." (Louise, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, bi-sexual)

"I never really wanted to 'come-out' at school because it was quite a rough school." (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

"Stuff gets around regardless of who you tell. It's not a question of am I gay - you can't be gay. The environment has to be right for people to 'come-out', and the teachers have to help make that environment right." (Charlotte, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

In some cases young people reported that there was (or had been) a member of staff or two that they felt they could trust, but that overall their needs as a LGBT young person were not met because their sexuality/identity simply wasn't addressed:

"I had a good tutor, and I think that made a difference. I talked to them, but I didn't say specifically, 'I am gay', but I kind of hinted, in dribs and drabs. Sixth form I had fantastic teachers, completely supportive." (Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

"I was out of a comfort zone. At home and with friends, I could feel more comfortable with myself, but not at college or at school. I didn't know anyone I could go to. [2 female teachers] sort of counselled me in a non-direct way - I could go to them at the end of class and talk to them, just talk casually." (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

"Most of the teachers were bastards, but there was a couple who were really sweet and they bought the books to my home [she left school due to the bullying she received]. Those teachers really did help. As soon as I left school everything was fine." (Amelia, 22-24yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

However, in terms of policy and structure most felt that their school let them down. Seven young people agreed that having a specific person to turn to at school could have made a difference to them. Many felt that had there been a specific person to turn to, who was equipped to deal with the needs of LGBTU young people, then their time at school may well have been a more positive experience:

"I think it would have been useful to have someone to have spoken to at school, because that's when it was all kicking off - but my school was quite useless to be honest. They never offered anything. I don't think they wanted to acknowledge that there was any gay people, let alone homophobia, in their school." (Louise, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, bi-sexual)

[In his secondary school] "They've got some quite strict ideas in their minds about what kind of things boys do and what kind of things girls do. So I didn't 'come-out' at school until well, ever I don't think. And I didn't even in college. So I think it would have made a big difference for me at school if there was a teacher or a counsellor, because at home it was fine, but at school it was a bit… so I didn't." (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

Interestingly however, in his interview Mark went on to observe that perhaps the question of his sexuality being raised at this time may have been problematic for him:

"I knew that they [2 teachers] knew. Well I think they knew. So I really wouldn't talk about it at that age [about 14] because I wasn't ready. And I think if they did it might have, you know, forced me into 'coming-out', which I don't know if was ready for at that point. So I'm glad they didn't." (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

These responses suggest it is vital that *all* staff in schools receive appropriate training to raise awareness that is specific to the needs of LGBTU young people. Most young people in this research reported 'coming-out' during their time at secondary school, and nearly all felt they could have done with much more support at this time to help them through this process. Currently, the Equality Act (2007) makes provision for regulations to be introduced to extend to sexual orientation the protection already in place against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief - for schools this means admissions, benefits and services for pupils and treatment of pupils. However, the data generated from this project suggests this Act is not adequately being enforced from a senior

level in many schools in East and West Sussex. Consequently, the data reinforces the recommendation here that *all* staff in schools (inclusive of senior members) should receive specialist LGBTU training as part of their remit of working with young people.

3.2.1 Sex (and Relationships) Education

In the present research LGBT young people said that they wanted staff in schools to focus more on relationships and sexuality rather than the prevalent emphasis staff often place on sex and prevention, such as teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and general sexual health. Young people felt that this change of emphasis may help the processes of LGBTU young people 'coming-out', and prevent the stereotypical view of LGBTU young people being primarily sexual beings:

> *"I had sex education lessons in year six, and it was about puberty and stuff, but it should have been broached about sexuality." (Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

> *"Even in sex education - lesbian and gay relationships never came in to it. If they had have done, it would have made it a hell of a lot better." (Amelia, 22-24yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

> *"We had [sex education in school] before I 'came-out' - I just remember sitting there thinking 'well this isn't relevant to me' and then not really listening - which was a pain later when I actually then did need that information [laughs], but that was my own sort of not realising that I was actually bi then." (Louise, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, bi-sexual)*

> *"When I went to school there was still Section 28[8]. There was no way anyone would have talked to me about sexuality or anything like that and I think perhaps in hindsight in sex ed.[education] classes, or in PSHE*

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8 Section 28 of the local Government Act 1988 prohibited local authorities in England and Wales promoting homosexuality by teaching or published material. Section 28 was repealed in July 2003.

[personal, social, health education], if they actually talked about relationships and that some people might not be straight, then I might have actually come to make a conclusion earlier.'' (Alex, 26-28yrs, E.Sussex, trans)

One participant mentioned her school did actually broach the subject of relationships other than heterosexual ones in SRE, but not in any great detail. As mentioned by Alex, above, this lack of discussion could hinder a young person 'coming-out', and as part of a larger discussion about acceptance of lesbian and gay pupils in her school, Charlotte felt that the almost total exclusion of LGBTU matters in school life prevented LGBTU people being seen as 'acceptable':

''I never ever heard them talk about gay people, except in sex ed. when it was like, 'some people are gay'. And you think 'that's not going to help'.'' (Charlotte, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

Two young women proposed similar ideas for what could perhaps be included in SRE:

''Better education about lesbians and STI's as a lot of ignorance exists. I get myself checked every 6 months but it's ridiculous how many people don't know about this.'' (Charlotte, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

''Safe sex with lesbians - It is hammered home with men, by giving out condoms and stuff, but you can still get an STI off a woman if you are a woman, and it's not put out there. They think it doesn't happen but it does.'' (Amelia, 22-24yrs, W.Sussex, lesbian)

Two young people talked about their experiences of school counsellors. They both mentioned frustration that their sexuality was highlighted to the detriment of other issues, and consequently that an awareness of the young person not just being LGBTU is an important training need for professionals and practitioners generally, not just for school counsellors:

"I think they've [counsellors] got to not be obsessed with that fact that you are that sort of thing [LGBT]. You might have problems to do with being gay, but that isn't your only identity. It's not the only thing that could be causing you issues and it's not the root of all your problems." (Louise, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, bi-sexual)

"I saw a counsellor because I was self harming. They thought it was because of that [sexuality] but it wasn't - even though obviously stuff came up. She was OK, but I think things need to be more specific in consideration of LGBT because she seemed a bit lost. I think she was trained in self harm and drug abuse and stuff like that but not necessarily the other side of it." (Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

One young woman noted that generally her sexuality was being highlighted at school, especially by bullies, but the reality for her was that her sexuality was one of many issues at that time:

"I was going through a lot of mental abuse from my stepfather at the time [at school], so my sexuality was the last thing on my mind to be honest." (Amelia, 22-24yrs, W.Sussex, lesbian)

Recommendations for Training

- Training materials focusing on the 'real-life' experiences of LGBTU young people would be useful to develop to help raise awareness of why many LGBTU young people do not feel safe enough to 'come-out' in educational environments such as school and sixth form college. Interviewees report that a visual resource (such as a DVD, for example) including young people themselves may be especially useful in this regard.

- Opportunities for practitioners to build confidence in discussing sexuality and/or gender identity issues would be particularly valuable for those

working in educational institutions (primary, secondary, and sixth form). Such confidence may not only assist more young people to be able to access a 'trusted adult' but also help school staff to stimulate discussions about LGBTU relationships in a relevant, inclusive, and interesting way during SRE sessions.

- It would be useful for training to emphasise explicitly the need for practitioners working with young people to adopt a holistic approach to thinking about LGBT issues for young people rather than just focusing on sexual health issues.

- The development of a training programme and materials for staff working with young people should be as relevant as possible staff working at all levels, for example, including senior educational staff and governors.

3.3   Homophobic Bullying

There is a growing body of research evidence to suggest that not only is homophobic bullying in schools more severe than other forms of bullying, but it is not always taken as seriously as other forms of bullying by teachers (Adams *et. al.* 2004, p.259; Guasp, 2009). In this research, almost all the LGBT young people interviewed reported experiencing some form of homophobic bullying, most commonly on school premises, or carried out by peers from school in public places. Again, supporting findings in the recent literature (Guasp, 2009; Hunt and Jenson, 2007) whilst some young people reported that a teacher had on occasion been sympathetic to accounts of bullying, they also reported that it was rarely or never taken any further, for example, when more senior members of staff were made aware of such incidents:

> *"I went to the head teacher and said; I've been beaten up by students outside of school because of who I am'. That was definitely very bad experiences for me; the police not doing much and the school not doing anything really." (Adrian, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)*

Consistent with the Stonewall's findings (Hunt and Jenson, 2007), some young people in this research indicated that they were so used to experiencing frequent homophobic bullying in-and-out of school that they didn't always report it because they knew nothing would be done. In the quote below, Adrian acknowledges this explicitly, but ostensibly also seems to imply an almost inevitability whereby some people who hold certain views (e.g. religious) will never challenge their own negative beliefs:

"I had bullies through the last year of my high school when I came out and through college. It's something you just get used to. Obviously not everybody's going to accept it - there's some people that have religious beliefs and they just believe it's not right to be that way." (Adrian, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

As evidenced in Stonewall's work on homophobic bullying in schools (Guasp, 2009; Hunt and Jenson, 2007; see also Skelton, 1997; 2001) young people's narratives also indicated that such bullying was not just a problem in secondary schools; rather, that primary school staff also need to be aware of heteronormativity in the classroom and potential homophobic bullying:

"I was bullied through my whole entire primary school. For not being interested in boys and stuff, being different… nine of the boys beat me up in year seven, and it was pretty bad actually. Loads of scars and scratches all down my back and all bruised." (Steph, 13-15yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

New government guidance on *Homophobic Bullying: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools* (DCSF, 2007, p.5) sets out the (legal) need for schools to take an active approach to tackling all forms of bullying including both prevention and responding to homophobic bullying:

'Schools have a legal duty to ensure homophobic bullying is dealt with in schools. Under the Education and Inspection Act 2006, head teachers, with the advice and guidance of governors and the assistance of school

staff, must identify and implement measures to promote good behaviour, respect for others, and self discipline amongst pupils, and to prevent all forms of bullying. This includes the prevention of homophobic bullying.'

Certainly, the experiences of many of the LGBT young people who took part in this research (see also Pope and Sherriff, 2008; Sherriff and Pope, 2008) suggest this guidance is not always being implemented successfully. The DCSF guidance document looks to senior staff, such as head teachers, to implement anti-bullying measures. Yet many respondents in the present research suggest it is precisely these staff members who are not recognising or effectively dealing with homophobic bullying when it arises:

> *"When I was 14, I got beaten up in school so badly I had three cracked ribs - the school let the person get away with it knowing he had done it. They only excluded the guy after he beat up a bloke - I didn't count. The school refused to get the police involved saying it was my fault because I was gay. This was said to me by deputy head… I got beaten up a lot at school, and I would complain and my mother would complain. But they said 'because she's a goth, has mental health issues and is gay, she's a sitting target. Expect it to happen'. When Ofsted came I pulled them to one side and reported it to them." (Amelia, 22-24yrs, W.Sussex, lesbian)*

The victim 'blaming' evident in Amelia's quote above was characteristic of the wider data set. Moreover, as Louise's explains below, some school staff simply try to ignore the issue or diminish the importance of it (*'shush now, stop making such a fuss')* rather than trying to address it directly:

> *"A lot of teachers tended to ignore these things [homophobic bullying]… the conflicts I had - the bullying - was never really addressed. They [the teachers] told me off or they just sort of said, 'shush now, stop making such a fuss' or they pretended they didn't hear, especially in lessons when people would be saying things, making comments to me and my friend. They just… pretended not to notice". (Louise, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, bi-sexual)*

Linked to the above issue, one young person said she felt that a particular problem with school staff is perhaps their belief that bullying is often overt when in fact is most often more subtle, hidden, and therefore more dangerous:

> *"Bullying can be any type whatsoever. It's not the most obvious thing in the world. No. The stereotypes for a bully are like someone who is not happy with their lives, not as popular as everyone or like the most popular person. That's not true whatsoever. They can be rich, beautiful whatever and they'll still just pick on someone. It's not always so noticeable… because normally teachers always think they take them in the corner and punch and kick them and stuff. It's not that whatsoever."*
> *(Steph, 13-15yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

Similarly, one young woman noted that although homophobic bullying urgently needs to be tackled in all instances, it is not always easy to identify and often takes on many forms:

> *''Homophobic bullying is such an umbrella thing, it covers so many different aspects, especially trans-phobic bullying; it's such a difficult thing to try and explain or pinpoint in order for workers to be able to help them.''* *(Charlotte, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

One education professional expressed a belief that homophobic bullying should be treated by schools in the same way, and along the same policy guidelines as other forms of bullying:

> *"I haven't really seen any guidance in policy documents at all. I know simply for instance that if a child is being teased or bullied about their sexual preference it's dealt with along the bullying lines, so it's not tolerated at all. They [LGBTU young people] are not treated any differently to any other students, and certainly we just keep ourselves aware of any bullying issues that might occur... I think they just need to*

be treated exactly the same as other students." (Annette, education, W.Sussex, heterosexual)

This viewpoint is interesting in that it is clear that some educational staff need training to explore government guidance on addressing homophobic bullying in schools. In contrast to her view, existing policies and guidance suggest homophobic bullying *does* need to be treated separately, and it would seem that all school staff urgently need training to recognise and respond appropriately to this. Worryingly, nine in ten teachers and non-teaching staff at primary and secondary schools have not received any specific training on how to tackle homophobic bullying (Guasp, 2009). The effects on LGBTU young people of not identifying and dealing with homophobic bullying in school can have profound and lasting effects:

"That was a very difficult time in my life. It was just before my exams; obviously my head was swimming… so I didn't talk to people. I just kept to myself. I started self-harming because of It [homophobic bullying]. I was trying to get rid of it. Trying to get it out of my body saying, I want to be different but I can't change who I am. That was a very hard time."
(Adrian, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

"I used to draw pictures of killing them [bullies] and ask my mum if I can kill 'em, and I was being one hundred percent serious. I started cutting [self-harming] and just going mental and stuff." (Steph, 13-15yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

LGBTU identity has been identified as a particular risk factor for self-harm and suicide including drug and alcohol abuse, and early and/or risky sexual behaviour (Morrison and L'Hereux, 2001). However, as Talburt (2004) argues, there is a tendency to rely on images of risk when advocating for LGBTU specific provisions, which has therefore continually reinforced the association of 'LGBTU' with 'problem'. Therefore any training in this area should recognise it is not one's sexuality/gender identity that puts one at risk of self-harm and suicidal behaviour, but the prevailing social stigma, hostility, alienation and isolation

experienced that puts these young people at increased risk (Kreiss and Patterson, 1997: Talburt, 2004). Pope and Sherriff's findings (2008) reported several LGBTU young people saying they had attempted suicide because of homophobic bullying. Although no-one suggested this in their individual interviews, one young person said to the interviewer informally that he wasn't surprised so many LGBTU young people tried to kill themselves. Similarly, in the final focus group meeting, one young gay male said he attempted suicide when he was in his final year of secondary school because the bullying had become too much for him to take. It may therefore be important for any training for staff working with young people, to show how to identify warning signs which may be prudent for practitioners and may allow them to intervene and offer support or refer on (Polonijo, 2008).

One young woman's school was so unable to cope with the bullying she was receiving they asked *her* to leave, suggesting a complete failure of confidence on the part of the school to either protect her, acknowledge homophobia, or to deal with it effectively:

> *"Towards the end the school did kick me out because they did realise enough was enough and I couldn't take it anymore. For my own safety they removed me from the school aged 15, just before my exams. It did bug me at first because I thought, well what have I done wrong? But then I thought, well, even if they did ask a couple of the bullies to leave then more are just gonna come along." (Amelia, 22-24yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

3.3.1 Violence

Violence was a particularly prevalent theme from the data and factored prominently in all but two of the young participants lives. Moran and Skeggs (2004) explore the relationship between lesbians, gays, and violence in the USA and argue that these groups are overwhelmingly represented as objects of violence in literature of homophobic violence, that is, of victims and survivors of violence. They furthermore suggest that lesbians and gay men are *subjects* of

violence, and therefore become identified as having violence as an attribute of their identity. Findings from this current project support such arguments:

> *"I have been physically attacked and verbally attacked - but I think it's made me a stronger person because I'm not afraid to be who I am. I'm not trying to hide myself, lock myself in cupboard. I'm just there in the open."* (Adrian, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

> *"About a year and a half ago I was just walking in the street, holding my boyfriend's hand... we were attacked by a straight couple [laughs]. We weren't trying to start a fight with them, but we were attacked. I assume it was homophobic... Violence puts a full stop on your life. But you have to carry on."* (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

Although some young people said they were frightened, angry, frustrated, and upset by violent incidents (in-and-out of school) because attacks occurred so frequently, such incidents often became a normal part of life. As noted previously, the frequency of homophobic bullying and/or violent incidences can mean they go unreported as such instances become normalised by the 'victim'. Indeed, Moran and Skeggs (2004) comment that violence infiltrates not just the daily lived experience of lesbians and gay men, but also the knowledge systems through which identity is constructed. Therefore the violence experienced (which is in reality a breach of the law), is not perceived as such by the state or those experiencing it because of its very normality and association with those groups of people.

> *"The girl slapped me. They [the police] said if that came out as a mark I should definitely report her for assault. But I didn't cos it wasn't that bad."* (Louise, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, bi-sexual)

> *"I've been attacked a few times, at school especially - pushed over. At school it's not quite as serious, but I've been pushed over and punched on the way home."* (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

"If you do too much about it [homophobic attacks] you put yourself and your friends in danger, so you do what you can." (Charlotte, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

A police worker also commented on the normalisation of violence:

"Reports show that young people are far less likely to report crime, certainly LGBT young people. And that is also partly due to tolerance of crime. I talked to a group [of LGBTU young people] recently and found it very difficult to engage with them around hate crime; they were just like, well, actually this doesn't have any relevance for us! They did acknowledge that, as soon as it got down to it, well actually I have experienced this every day of my life at school." (Phil, police, E.Sussex, gay)

It is clear that any training around LGBTU issues for staff working with young people needs to take into account the construction and persistence of LGBTU identities and how they can commonly become associated with violence. These ideas are echoed again (below) in many of the comments by young people when discussing contact with police after incidents of homophobic violence.

Many of the LGBT young people interviewed mentioned that they had had some contact with police workers, usually as a result of a violent incidence against them. Whilst young people's narratives about contact with the police did prompt mixed views, most responses were more negative. This was reported mainly as being due to incidents that had been reported to the police not being followed up, and perceived general apathy on behalf of the police service:

"I don't know the volume of attacks or assaults the police have to deal with, but I don't think that excuses the police. I got the impression that I shouldn't trust the police or the authorities, cos I don't really feel I can [or] they're on my side or they're willing to put in the time and effort to do anything." (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

"The police were involved in one incident when I was unconscious - I was beaten quite severely and my friend phoned the police. That was when I was about 15. [SW: Was that followed up?] No. It wasn't. They just contacted their parents and said 'this boy's been beaten up because he's gay', and it wasn't anything other than that." (Adrian, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

However, it is important to stress that not all responses were negative. For example, two young people reported very positive experiences of their contact with the police:

"They were very nice. I don't know if they knew [the attack was homophobic] … cos they turned up after the group had dispersed. I think some member of the public had called them. They were very nice to us." (Louise, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, bi-sexual)

"Aside from one incident, the police have been amazing. I reported some transphobic abuse and I had such a… it sounds wrong to say - a great time, but I had a wonderful experience talking to the LGBTU liaison officer that I was even tempted to join the police afterwards!" (Alex, 26-28yrs, E.Sussex, trans)

3.3.2 Homophobic Language

Many LGBT young people said they had been subjected to homophobic abuse particularly in the form of day-to-day phrases such as 'that is so gay'. Homophobic language and comments happen both in-and-out of school and work, from peers and strangers, but many young people noted such language usually goes unchallenged, especially in schools:

"Most of the time when there were homophobic comments - no-one has stood up to it – shameful really. I know that I haven't always stood up to things, partly because I was scared; I think that would be very different now; I definitely would speak up now, but in the past I've always been too

scared to. You don't want to be seen a different, to stick your neck out on the line particularly if it is coming from someone that you see as potentially quite aggressive.'' (Alex, 26-28yrs, E.Sussex, trans)

''At school, when people said the word 'gay' as an offensive term, some teachers completely ignore it and some say, 'well that's not actually gay so stop using that word', and that's quite good sometimes.'' (Barry, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

Ostensibly contrary to some young people's perceptions however, some professionals commented that they did feel comfortable and confident in challenging homophobic comments. Moreover, in some cases, professionals stressed a zero tolerance policy approach to any abusive language in their service:

''We have no homophobic language at all. Any language, racist, even just pure bad language, is always challenged within the housing project. So no, we wouldn't accept it. We've written it into our house rules that it would be an immediate warning, and if continued, that person would be asked to leave. It's very clear.'' (Linda, housing, E.Sussex, heterosexual)

''I think everyone would be in shock and horror if anybody said anything like that [homophobic] at my work place! They'd be pulled up immediately.'' (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay)

The challenging of homophobic language is important and needs to be rigorous because as one young person noted, a seemingly throwaway comment is not always considered to be a form of bullying by practitioners, yet can lead to other forms of abuse for the young LGBTU person:

"You get the odd comment, like 'you're a homo'… and I don't think people take it as homophobic abuse, but it is because it escalates into other things. I never had any help with it - even if other people heard it, I never had any help with it.'' (Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

For one practitioner, the way in which some homophobic language has become normalised means the challenging of it can become tiresome:

> "The whole culture of 'that is so gay'… it is actually challenged more than I would bother with even. When you've got 20 kids out on a trip, you do get fed up of saying it. More recently, one of my colleagues said 'well I'm gay and I find that offensive' and that just shut the whole crowd up quite quickly." (Simon, youth services, E.Sussex, gay)

However, given Wendy's comment (above) about homophobic language potentially escalating, it seems that practitioners do need to be vigilant and confident around challenging such terminology. Although practitioners may find confronting the homophobic language of (some) young people difficult, particularly without specific strategies and support polices to do so, it is likely that they may find challenging the language of colleagues even more difficult:

> "In my last job this worker used to say 'that's so gay' so many times. I tried to have a conversation with her about it. Then you feel like some PC [political correctness] Nazi. I remember saying to her do you realise that saying 'it's so gay' means 'that's rubbish' - so that translates to all that everything that is gay is rubbish or stupid. But it became so habitual in this woman that she kept doing it [laughs]." (Liz, mental health, E.Sussex, lesbian)

It is also important to realise that comments around bi-and trans-phobia also need to be challenged because these groups of young people are often less visible and therefore even more vulnerable than lesbian and gay young people:

> "I pulled up a colleague on a slightly borderline transgender joke recently… You've got to see the signs of where homophobia, trans-phobia and bi-phobia comes in." (Amelia, 22-24yrs, W.Sussex, lesbian)

For some professionals and practitioners, common homophobic terminology such as 'that is so gay' is not seen as an offensive:

"I wouldn't challenge it simply because that's not what the child… I know in normal usage for the children that's not what they mean. [SW: So you would just let it go?] Yeah, because the phrase has a different meaning for our kids. They mean it's sort of… it's sad, it's pathetic… they don't mean its homosexual." (Annette, education W.Sussex, heterosexual)

Although respondents noted that all homophobic language is harmful despite the frequency with which it is heard in society, homophobic language can often be in the form of abusive, threatening and consequently upsetting incidents, especially when it comes from strangers on the street:

"Abuse on the street… people really think they are entitled to tell you the obvious…and it's usually just twattish men… you're walking down the street, and someone just goes 'oi, queer!' and I'm just like 'yeah, and?' Or something similar, like 'dyke', or 'lesbian', or 'tranny'… just random abuse. Stupid guys that run away straight away because they're in a car or something, so they're just cowards. That really is a downside [to being LGBTU]." (Alex, 26-28yrs, E.Sussex, trans)

One young woman commented that despite verbal abuse from strangers in the street, she was able to rise above such incidents:

"[I got] Verbal abuse whilst waiting at bus stop last night from men in cars. Completely inappropriate - I don't really have an issue with it." (Charlotte, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

One practitioner noted that the decision whether to challenge homophobic language or not depended for him much upon the situation in which it is said:

"It depends on the circumstances really. If I'm going into a family home, talking to a young person in immense amounts of distress about something, they are angry, there's something that they really are legitimately angry about, and they happen to use a phrase like that, ['that

is so gay'] that I don't agree with, I think that I have to look at the grand scheme of things and maybe let it go on that occasion. Because that is going to completely destroy any sense of perspective that the young person has." (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay)

Recommendations for Training

- Homophobic bullying appears to be extremely common in the lives of many LGBTU young people, and in some cases leads to severe violence against them. Some young people report that experiences of bullying becomes so normalised that it is often not reported or when it is reported, it is not acted upon by the appropriate authority(ies). Given the majority of young people reported experiencing homophobic bullying in the school environment, it would seem sensible for any training programme and/or materials to include a section on professionals working in this specific context.

- The development of a training programme and materials for staff working with young people should be as relevant as possible to staff working at all levels including senior educational staff and governors. For example, the data points to the need for senior school staff to support their colleagues in tackling homophobic bullying by taking seriously homophobic incidents reported to them and dealing effectively with them. Training activities including strategies helping staff to recognise and section incidents of homophobic bullying when they occur would be important to include.

- It would be useful for future training to include activities that help practitioners to recognise that homophobic bullying is different from other types of bullying. Such an activity, for example, could potentially look at identifying the features of homophobic bullying compared to other types of bullying perhaps also indicating what the different consequences might be for the people experiencing it (e.g. social, emotional, psychological).

- The data suggest a tension for some professionals between the desire to challenge homophobic language and the practicalities of doing so in certain situations with young people, service users, and colleagues. Training materials could include role playing scenarios to help practitioners think through how and when to respond to homophobic language with different client groups and in different contexts.

3.4   Views on Services

Building on the work of Pope and Sherriff (2008), an important part of this current project was to explore further the experiences and opinions of LGBTU young people and the practitioners who work with them from across Sussex. Consequently, LGBT young people were asked about their experiences of having accessed services across Sussex, for example, were they easy to find out about, easily located, and were their needs met? Moreover, interviewees were asked about their opinions of an 'ideal service' for young LGBTU people, given that outside of Brighton and Hove, very few exist. For example, professionals and young people were asked what specific features such a service should have. Responses, ideas and opinions were mixed, and frequently research participants declined to comment on this section of the individual interview because they felt they did not have a strong opinion in this area:

> "I think it would be good to sort of base it around a youth group, through which you could access more specialist services - maybe counselling - maybe peer support - perhaps advice and information." (Emily, mental health, W.Sussex, heterosexual)

In terms of where the ideal LGBTU service should be located, for instance, within a mainstream setting or situated independently, opinion from practitioners was mixed:

"I wouldn't want it as a standalone service. I think it's got to be incorporated into regular services cos I think separating sometimes isn't the best idea… like mental health; we try not to sort of hive people off into mental health. We want people to go mainstream. So within other young people's services would be quite good." (Liz, mental health, E.Sussex, lesbian)

"… I know a lot of young people have said that they would like an LGBT specific housing project. I think that it would be far better for us to work in a more supportive way within the mainstream, because that's not real life is it? It's good to be in a supportive environment if people are going to bully you… or attack you – to work through that and come out as a stronger person able to deal with those things." (Linda, housing, E.Sussex, heterosexual).

"They should be in everyday young people's settings. So that would make me think probably, a GPs surgery would be fine. It's a bit of a health setting I suppose, isn't it?" (Stuart, mental health, E.Sussex, gay)

However, the problem of maintaining anonymity when visiting an LGBTU service within a community location was an issue raised by one interviewee:

"I don't think a GP surgery cos I know that when I was young I would have been afraid that if I was accessing it, someone my family knew would know about it - So some kind of independent place." (Ian, education, E.Sussex, gay)

Given the current prevalence and role of information technologies which impact on how young people communicate (for example, mobile phones, the internet etc), some participants felt that any LGBTU service provision (whether mainstreamed or more independent) would need to consider how they can be exploited effectively. For example, the internet, particularly social networking sites (such as Facebook, Bebo, and MySpace) were mentioned as possible

resources for supporting young people remotely, as well as using mobile phones to text and keep in touch with service users:

"Internet sites would be useful, that are young people friendly and are around relationships rather than sex generally, especially for young people that are unsure." (Graham, education, W.Sussex, heterosexual)

"Something along the Bebo route where they can communicate with their friends. Other agencies use Bebo to get different stuff flagged up. You could use it as people could become a friend of a specific LGBTU organisation. For me, that could be huge, because if you've got that, that is then a network for anybody in the county, wherever they are. It's completely faceless but they can chat and it's a powerful resource that we need to look at. The whole texting thing… they will respond to a text, or something that's on Bebo. So if we are trying to get hold of somebody, we will use one of those routes. And we use it to track kids, to say 'how's it going'. Addresses aren't updated. And there could be a survey in Bebo that they could do." (Simon, youth services, E.Sussex)

A service which is easily accessible as well as readily available was reported by interviewees as being important when offering support for LGBTU young people. Young participants themselves expressed the need for a resource which they felt they could constantly rely on and provided potential opportunities for counselling. Some practitioners felt that the ideal service should provide a telephone help-line, where LGBTU young people could speak directly with trained workers:

"Easy accessibility would be really important. By that I mean that there's a reliably 'manned' telephone contact so that at least the person could know that they could make contact. Possibly with the chance of being called back maybe. That would be quite important." (Stuart, mental health, E.Sussex, gay)

"Some sort of drop-in service would be quite useful. A service that's easily available, either by phone or actually popping in. Having someone to speak to. Some sort of counselling might be useful." (Ian, education, E.Sussex, gay)

"I've never taken any counselling before. I don't know if they are trained in LGBTU, but if they are, I think maybe it should be advertised in school. I think the perfect LGBTU service would be one that's constantly there for you just at any time." (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

"Accessible to everyone." (Charlotte, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

As discussed at length in the West Sussex report (Pope and Sherriff, 2008), youth service provision for LGBTU young people in East and West Sussex outside of Brighton and Hove is inadequate. The effects of this on the young people themselves are detrimental, but it also impacts on professionals who want to provide a comprehensive service to LGBTU young people by referring them to appropriate and accessible agencies, but who are unable to do so. Indeed, one practitioner working in West Sussex explains:

"I have had quite a lot of working with young people lesbian or gay, and a young man that was unsure. I think that that was quite a difficult journey for him really. I know that there's lots of support in Brighton - eventually he did say that he was openly gay. But there is nothing here [in West Sussex]" (Josh, housing, W.Sussex, heterosexual)

3.4.1 Workplace Environments

Public environments (such as offices or services where young people may access) were often mentioned by professionals as being limited in that spaces were often not available or appropriate in which to meet young people and talk in confidence. Many respondents felt that improving such spaces to welcome all young people (including LGBTU) was important:

"There's often times where things are said in the reception area that are offensive to everybody [laughs]. It's not always a welcoming environment. No". (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay)

"There are lots of different ways of engaging [with their service]. One of them is to come to the front office, which isn't very welcoming; it's kind of like a big armoured tank!" (Phil, police, E.Sussex, gay)

"I don't know about welcoming. I guess it's about whether it's accessible isn't it. I don't think we have enough of a range of literature or information that, that would support young people with LGBTU issues." (Faith, youth services, E.Sussex, heterosexual)

Imagery and information giving about LGBTU services, such as leaflets and posters in the reception area or on the walls of the workplace was reported by interviewees as often being overlooked, or not given enough priority by professionals and practitioners. However, displaying such information can make a difference to how young LGBT people feel about that service and how welcome they are made to feel:

"In the social services/council building that my Mum works in, I did notice there aren't any posters or anything to do with LGBT issues. It is mainly drug, drink pregnancy." (Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

"We're looking at putting on different events that are more targeted at that of population of young people [LGBTU]. And bringing in more literature gradually as well, which is positive. Up until now it's been left off the agenda really." (Faith, youth services, E.Sussex, heterosexual)

"It would be quite nice for a service, especially the first assessment or meeting, to actually be able to sit somewhere and see things that reinforce that this service is accepting of LGBTU people. They will feel a bit more; 'oh well, this worker isn't going to drop dead if I say I'm gay,

lesbian…' If I think about the waiting areas that we use, I don't think there's anything around." (Liz, mental health, E.Sussex, lesbian)

"We're not a place that has lots of leaflets around because we're not used as a place where people come to a lot. There's no waiting room, it's just kind of one big house really." (Simon, youth services, E.Sussex, gay)

However, some commented on the lack of value of leaflets for young people:

"We do tend to put out leaflets, but I'm dubious about the value of leaflets; they tend to be more ignored that taken on board." (George, housing, E.Sussex, heterosexual)

"We notice leaflets aren't picked up anymore. Kids pick up very little actually." (Simon, youth services, E.Sussex, gay)

3.4.2 Qualities of Staff

The open meetings and one to one interviews raised discussions around the skills needed by staff working with LGBTU young people. Although many young people in their individual interviews said they felt specific training around LGBTU issues was needed by workers, many also said (including professionals) that basic 'people skills' such as listening, showing respect, and being sympathetic and open were important qualities. Interviewees also felt that they should be able to recognise and deal effectively with all forms of bullying such as bi and trans, and not just homophobic. Many participants also commented that the worker needn't necessarily be LGBTU themselves, but must be aware of the issues facing LGBTU young people:

"There's a lot that needs to be said about listening, and not making assumptions. I don't know how much that is a given when youth workers get trained anyway, but you can't make assumptions; what seems trivial to one person, say, being called a fag on the streets, to another person could be crushing. So it's having the patience to listen and to see how

someone is actually dealing with that, and probe a bit; if they say it upsets them, say why does that upset you? How can we make things better?" (Alex, 26-28yrs, E.Sussex, trans)

"Having someone that I knew I could talk to. Just a youth worker that I could go to or a support worker, cos anything to go to would have made it a lot easier. Before I did 'come-out' fully I was being really defensive about certain things and didn't really want to be." (Barry, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

"Dedicate time. Listen. Care." (Amelia, 22-24yrs, W.Sussex, lesbian)

"What's most important is that empathy you show for that person. And offering them a different kind of experience in terms of the relationship you create with them. That applies regardless of what the issue is." (Faith, youth services, E.Sussex, heterosexual).

"To be non judgemental and generally accepting and approachable… to be confident themselves." (Sarah, housing, E.Sussex, heterosexual)

A basic skill of showing respect was seen as an important quality in a professional, especially in the context that the young person knows their own mind and often just needs to talk through issues with a worker:

"That anything can be said and it'll be respected." (Liz, mental health, East Sussex, lesbian)

"Anyone that treats you with respect and doesn't condescend. I've had too many condescending teachers in my life - particularly when you are 16 and above; you are almost an adult and should certainly be treated as one. Give me that respect! Understand I can make decisions for myself and not everything is a phase. Anyone that can demonstrate that they clearly are listening to you and respect your opinion, point of view, experience, or whatever. I always get a bit freaked out with young

people's workers who act a bit like children's presenters!" (Alex, 26-28yrs, E.Sussex, trans)

Workers need to feel comfortable with LGBTU issues:

"The most important skills are they're comfortable with working with that group - they're accepting. They don't have any issues themselves." (Emily, mental health, W.Sussex, heterosexual)

When professionals are at ease with LGBTU matters then young people also seem to be comfortable with expressing themselves:

"If I don't feel comfortable around someone, I couldn't tell them. I could never have told my best friend and I could never have told my mum, I don't think, if I didn't have those two teachers at school who I felt quite comfortable with." (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

Interviewees also believed that it was important that workers felt confident when supporting and offering advice to LGBTU young people. However, both practitioners and young people thought that confidence was often compromised by issues such as fear of accusation, especially from parents. Political correctness was also stated as hindering supportive working relationships between professionals and young people. Although the quotes below are around school staff, it is important that *all* staff working with young people have relevant LGBTU training to improve their confidence in talking about sexual/gender issues:

"I think the main thing is confidence. We are so concerned with political correctness, it's a major issue - people are so worried that when certain topics come up they have to be really careful with what they say and may not provide the best advice, or the best sign-posting just because they're worried about that. They don't want to end up with a parent on the end of the line berating them, or a student making a complaint, and it may have

been just because of a lack of confidence." (Graham, education, W.Sussex, heterosexual)

"I suppose the first thing I'd recommend is that teachers develop a sort of personal relationship with someone. I mean not necessarily… I was going to say quite an intimate relationship cos there are all these boundaries now about teachers developing too close a bond. They need to be careful because parents can often go on crusades [laughs] if teachers seem to be too close to their pupils." (Mark, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

Many respondents suggested that a wide range of knowledge and experience about the issues affecting LGBTU young people should be essential in a professional or practitioner working with young people:

"Awareness of issues around sexuality; friendly, approachable, respectful, and able to build up trust with people. It depends on the person; some people have life experiences and would be great, and some people… need a bit more." (Sharon, social services, E.Sussex, heterosexual)

Two young people were specific about exactly which issues affecting LGBTU young people should be effectively identified and dealt with by professionals:

"They're supportive. They're there if you need them for any reason; anything like a sexual health issue, or about bullying, issues at home, issues with housing, anything like that you can just go to them and say, I really need to speak to someone." (Adrian, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay).

"A lot more of the LGBT communities are self-harmers compared to straight people, and take more drugs, and they've got to be aware of that; 'coming-out' can be a difficult process for people. Same-sex domestic violence does go on, and not that many people talk about it. It

needs to be spotted by workers more.'' (Amelia, 22-24yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

As discussed above, the issue of homophobic bullying needs to be dealt with effectively, and not classed within the framework of other types of bullying. Louise again raises the theme of how important it is for a practitioner to be confident with language around LGBTU issues:

''They need to actually deal with bullying and not just ignore it. And recognise that it is slightly different to normal bullying, but kind of the same as well. Maybe talk to the bully about not bullying people and punish them for that, but also maybe have a conversation with them about what it is to be gay and why you shouldn't really bully someone for that.'' (Louise, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, bi-sexual)

''How to deal with homophobic behaviour, and maybe the ability to give sanctions for that.'' (Barry, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

It is important to note that many young LGBT people were extremely positive about services they access regularly, especially about workers they had come into contact with:

"I can be myself there. In general I am a vivacious person, but in general I feel I can't be like that. When I'm there, I feel I can be like that. Going there has opened up new things for me." (Barry, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, gay)

"I have tenancy support which is an LGBT safe-space… I feel very, very safe there. They have safe space stickers, and quite a few gay workers." (Joanne, 16-18yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

Recommendations for Training

- It would be useful for training materials for staff working with young people to include a comprehensive list of relevant and local services for LGBTU young people across Sussex to help raise practitioners' awareness and to build links and refer on with other agencies where necessary.

- How young people communicate is changing, and practitioners need support in working with new technologies that can help LGBTU young people get the support they need. For example, it may be useful to assist practitioners in exploring the range of current technologies available to them (and young people) allowing discussion and sharing of examples and existing practices between trainees.

- Public service environments (for example, such as the reception areas of youth services, Connexions, schools, GP surgeries, health centres etc) should be welcoming and supportive to LGBTU young people, for example using appropriate and positive imagery combined with relevant information. Supplementary training materials could be included in a future 'training pack' giving examples or templates of such imagery/information.

- Given the future LGBTU training programme and/or materials is aimed at all professionals who work with young people, it may therefore be useful to include exercises or activities that help practitioners to either develop (or refresh their) basic skills such as listening and empathy, for example.

3.5 Training

As noted earlier, although training is represented here as a separate section, training issues as a whole are discussed where relevant and applicable to all sections of the findings. In their interviews, practitioners were asked about their experiences of undertaking training related to equality, diversity, and/or

sexuality, and whether it met their needs in terms of helping them in their work with young people. Both practitioners and LGBTU young people were also asked to reflect upon what they thought should be included in a (LGBTU) training pack and/or training programme for professionals who work with young people.

3.5.1 Experiences of Training (Practitioners)

A variety of training experiences were reported by practitioners around LGBTU issues and diversity. Some, particularly staff in Brighton and Hove, said they had received specific training on this issue, but it had been some time ago. Others had received diversity training or equal opportunities training when they first started in post and LGBTU issues had sometimes been mentioned within this. For many, however, LGBTU issues had not come up either at all, or to any significant degree in any of their training, particularly for those who started their present role some time ago. One practitioner with a social services background reported that she had undertaken training around young people and sexuality but that it had not meet her expectations or training needs:

> *"I thought there was going to be more stuff about sexuality [in training], in terms of LGBTU issues - but it was more about young people having sex and the issues around protecting them. So I did learn quite a lot about underage sex and how that's dealt with, etc., but it only touched on sexuality." (Sharon, social services, E.Sussex, heterosexual)*

Several professionals and practitioners said that LGBTU issues had been placed within diversity and equal opportunities training but was not particularly prevalent:

> *"What I remember more specifically was about people with physical disabilities and ethnic minorities. That was certainly more prevalent." (Ian, education, E.Sussex, gay).*

"As part of the NVQ we covered working with vulnerable populations, I think; and that's where LGBTU issues came, under that." (Faith, youth services, East Sussex, heterosexual)

Participants highlighted the importance of *not* lumping together LGBTU issues within other diversity or equal opportunities training because they felt the needs of these group should be dealt with in separate training:

"Getting to people to integrate it more as opposed to it being an issue that's on the outside." (Faith, youth services, East Sussex, heterosexual).

Practitioners working with young people were asked whether there were any policies or guidance documents in their workplace around LGBTU issues for young people. Most practitioners were unclear about whether such policies or documents existed in their own workplace:

"Not that I'm aware of. What we do is the same as for any specific group which is just try and be aware of where there are gaps in services and make sure we're being proactive about reaching out to groups that are difficult to engage with or find it difficult to engage with us." (Emily, mental health, W.Sussex, heterosexual)

"I think there might be guidance in development, broadly to do with equal opportunities which will cover a broad range of equal opportunities for say, people who are of different ethnicity; kind of cultural competency I guess; people with disability." (Stuart, mental health, E.Sussex, gay)

"I believe there is guidance in the foster carer's handbook. That was recently updated so I'm hoping there is more information than there was." (Simon, youth services, E.Sussex, gay)

One education professional noted that although LGBTU young people were mentioned specifically in his organisation's policy statement, it doesn't

necessarily follow that the guidance is actually acted upon with the practices and culture of a school:

> *"It's in our policy. Whether it's an active policy in the whole school… but the policy is there for people to use - whether it's implemented well enough amongst the whole school - that remains to be seen… "* *(Graham, education, W.Sussex, heterosexual)*

Consequently, it can be argued that it is not enough for LGBTU young people to be mentioned specifically in guidance in policy documents without appropriate training to direct professionals to be able to implement actively such policy directives.

3.5.2 Themes for Training

LGBT young people and professionals came up with innovative, interesting, and thoughtful ideas for themes within the training of professionals and practitioners. Many had strong feelings and opinions in this area, and felt that LGBTU young people themselves should play an active and prominent role in the delivery of training, either in person or via DVD to really get the message across about the lived experience of being LGBTU in East and West Sussex. Some respondents had had experience of using video in training and found it an extremely powerful way of allowing professionals access to the lives of LGBTU young people:

> *"[Include] young people and just a little story saying 'I have experienced this', and 'this is how I had to deal with it'. It shows people it is real - video is really hard hitting. Showing people who are not necessarily stereo-typical doesn't work, people take it the wrong way, it looks like they haven't had that experience. Stereotypes are good to get the message across that we are real."* *(Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)*

> *"Video clips with a really wide range of people. Not just racially wide ranging, but all different backgrounds. No actors, they must be gay. Use university students because they are a bit older, have a more*

retrospective attitude to themselves, and have a lot of free time on their hands.'' (Charlotte, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

A small number of participants suggested better knowledge around rights and the law affecting LGBTU issues would be an important area for training to include:

''In terms of homophobic stuff, sometimes the idea of going to the police is a bit daunting, and it would be really good if people knew about what incidents to go to the police - at what point it is necessary. I definitely think there needs to be more awareness on rights and the law.'' (Alex, 26-28yrs, E.Sussex, trans)

''I was just thinking about how early days we are in, where this issue is at; in terms of the legalisation of sex and the age consent and demystifying those myths that seem to be out there still. There are a lot of myths in terms of things like the age of consent.'' (Faith, youth services, East Sussex, heterosexual)

"Different laws and about protection for workers - I don't believe I'm the only worker who would fears a finger being pointed at me for encouraging a student… staff need to know about support and protection issues for them.'' (Ian, education, E.Sussex, gay).

Although few interviewees separated out the different groups (L,G,B,T,U) in their responses about training without prompting from the researcher, some practitioners did nonetheless raise trans issues as an area in which they could benefit from more training:

''Transgender is a real issue; there is nothing about transgender at all and that really needs to be sorted. My Mum [a youth worker] has had all the LGB training, but she's never said anything about transgender. I didn't even know what transgender was until about a month before I

came to Uni - that's a problem I think.'' (Wendy, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, lesbian)

''In some ways the [LGBTU] umbrella is useful for protection and to say that we all experience oppression and we can all help each other to learn how to combat that. For the benefit of those [trans] peoples' sense of identity it really needs to be recognised that the experiences within those groups are massively different. That's a big training need really.'' (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay).

''My knowledge about trans issues is poor. The 'Mind Out' conference covered trans issues; I became aware really how much more I need to know. And also how some of my assumptions might be quite prejudiced as well.'' (Stuart, mental health, E.Sussex, gay)

''The trans issue… anything lesbian and gay can be really easily discussed in training, but anything beyond that is just skated over quite quickly… 'let's not go there!' And I think my team, even though they are an experienced bunch, still struggle with that bit of it as well.'' (Simon, youth services, E.Sussex, gay)

One professional interviewee described working with a young trans person where the entire team felt confusion and lack of confidence:

"She had relationships with heterosexual men, and we were worried that in doing so she would shock someone who discovered that they were having sex with what was anatomically a young man; there might be a violent reaction, so we were concerned with, to what extent do we intervene? To what extent do we offer advice? While you are comfortable with who you are, other people might not be." (George, housing, E.Sussex, heterosexual)

The needs of bi-sexual people are often assumed to be the same as those faced by gay and lesbian people, and thus often overlooked in research.

However, bi-sexual young people may face bi-phobia – rejection from both the heterosexual as well as gay and lesbian communities, based on the assumption that they should choose to be either heterosexual or homosexual, or that bi-sexuality is a passing phase (Peate, 2008). Data generated confirms this as concerns about working with bi-sexual and unsure young people were raised in individual interviews:

"I've worked with young men who are unsure. I think it's really hard for bi-sexual people, boys and girls. They're often rejected by both ends of the spectrum. It's really underestimated the amount of difficulty that bi-sexual people face." (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay)

"My main difficulties are with young people who are unsure, because you feel like you're walking on eggshells and you just… you haven't got a starting point really." (Emily, mental health, W.Sussex, heterosexual)

The finding that some professionals struggle with the specific needs of young bi-sexual people was backed up by one bi-sexual young woman who described in her individual interview receiving bi-phobia from gay people:

''You do get some gay people who are quite funny about bi-sexuals. [SW: Men or women?] My experience is mainly women because you get a lot of girls who say they won't go out with a bi girl because they touch men, oh my god [laughs]. And you still get all the homophobic arguments against bi-sexuals where it's like, 'oh you can't choose' or 'oh you're just a slag' or whatever - I never understand that. Sometimes it can be intimidating admitting to being bi-sexual in an LGBT thing.'' (Louise, 19-21yrs, W.Sussex, bi-sexual)

A number of practitioners said that what would important for them when receiving training around LGBTU issues was to be challenged, and not simply hear about sexual health matters. For example, some professionals reported they wanted in-depth training around the stages of sexuality/identity that all young people (not just LGBTU people) go through in order to better understand

the experiences of the clients they work with. In his interview, Gary also touches on the important point that has been discussed elsewhere in these findings, that LGBTU young people are frequently seen mainly as sexual people:

"The most important thing [in training] will be about issues around 'coming-out', and the stages that come before that. How a young person makes sense of their sexuality and identity - so I suppose stuff on adolescent development of sexuality - for everybody, not just for LGBTU young people. It's almost like people see sexuality as something that only affects LGBTU people and for straight people it's not an issue. It's an issue for absolutely everybody." (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay)

"I don't think I understand the experience of a young person coming to terms with an alternative sexuality, and I don't think I could. I would be interested in training on that, to do with the feelings they might be experiencing, how it affects their lives, how they feel about it. A lot of the training tends to be about discrimination and equal opportunities, there is very little about the personal experience of young people." (George, housing, E.Sussex, heterosexual)

Again, these comments support the need that LGBTU young people be seen not just as young people needing information about sexual health matters, but as young people embarking on complex relationships and life styles which will need a lot of support, confidence, and guidance from the practitioners that work with them.

Some participants highlighted the need for training to include activities around acknowledging the complexity of needs that a LGBTU young person may present to practitioners, for example such as mental health difficulties:

"The link between mental health difficulties and being LGBTU [is an issue for training]. There are a lot of young people who self-harm who are depressed. Who are sometimes suicidal because they just can't face

being different and they can't face the prospect of being rejected by people they love.'' (Gary, social services, E.Sussex, gay)

''Sometimes when people have mental health issues there are issues around their sexuality that are kind of interlinked with that, and sometimes it's nothing… it's completely separate. It's finding that balance for me." (Sharon, social services, E.Sussex, heterosexual)

Several interviewees suggested training should allow for personal reflection and an exploration of a worker's own issues in order to effectively work with young LGBTU people:

"Helping people to juggle those professional responsibilities [is an area for training]. Yet also how they're feeling personally, and how they hold the two together. The importance of the clinical supervision that they need in terms of working through their own stuff as well. I think that's really important." (Faith, youth services, East Sussex, heterosexual).

"One of the things that could be really dangerous and I say this because of my experience of working in mental health, is that you can get a lot of people working in mental health who have themselves had mental health problems. I think it's really important that if you've got an LGB group with people from that community who have had issues and difficulties themselves, that they've had training like counselling training, where they can separate their stuff and what their clients bring in. That's the same in any field really." (Emily, mental health, W. Sussex, heterosexual)

A significant area for training may be around working with LGBTU young people who also have learning difficulties. Ian discussed the difficulties faced by LGBTU young people who also have special educational needs:

''Some of them will always need their parental support and will never have that full independence. So 'coming-out' takes on a whole new meaning when you're always going to be living with your parents and

relying on them. That feeling of letting your parents down… the people I work with are so dependent on their parents and the people in their life, more than ordinary young adults. Then that [feeling of letting parents down] is increased I think.'' (Ian, education, E.Sussex, gay)

A small number of young LGBT people who took part in this research identified themselves as having learning difficulties. This young woman said her special educational needs were a target for bullies but that her sexuality was not recognised:

"I have ADHD [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder] and Aspergers. I was bullied at school due to my special needs rather than my sexuality. Because of this I left school early to be home educated." (Gemma, 19-21yrs, E.Sussex, bi-sexual)

Recommendations for Training

- It may be useful for training for practitioners around LGBTU issues and young people, to include case studies and examples that offer particularly challenging scenarios. For example, around helping a young person negotiate potentially conflicting identities, or helping practitioners to explore their own prejudices around particular issues such as trans identity or bi-phobia, or exploring scenarios whereby young people present with multiple and complex needs (for example, mental health and learning difficulties as well as sexuality issues).

- Young people expressed time and again in this research that any training for professionals working with young people should cover a wide range of relationship and other issues, not just sexual health. Indeed, professionals agreed and reported that broader issues around adolescence (identity) development (not just LGBTU) would be useful to include in a training programme.

- Practitioner report that LGBTU issues are often subsumed within other broader training around diversity and equal opportunities. In other words, existing training often only pays 'lip-service' to LGBTU issues which does not meet the needs of the trainees. It is therefore important that a future LGBTU training programme and associated materials are developed which although still addressing broader issues of diversity and equality, should be focused on distinct L.G.B.T.U issues.

- It is clear from the findings that many practitioners are not aware if or what guidance and policy documents exist either in their workplace or at more national levels. It is important that training is able to encourage the development (and awareness) of such documents where they don't exist, but to also encourage senior managers disseminate and help staff to engage with their implementation.

- Given the confusion often reported on rights and the law around young LGBTU issues (see also Pope and Sherriff, 2008), it would be useful for training to include activities and/or information which addresses such issues.

4.0 Discussion and Conclusions

This research has explored qualitatively the experiences, thoughts, ideas and opinions of LGBT(U) young people living in East and West Sussex, particularly outside of urban areas such as Brighton and Hove. It also looked at the experiences, fears, concerns and ideas of professionals/practitioners who work with young people (including LGBTU young people) in the same geographical regions. In doing so, it has identified a number of pertinent training needs for all practitioners who work with (LGBTU) young people. As set out in the Introduction (see p. 17), the findings of this research which will be utilised directly by the Partnership's lead community partner (Young People in Focus; YPF), in collaboration with the International Health Development Research Centre at the University of Brighton, to take forward a proposal for funding to develop Phase Two of the project. In Phase Two, YPF will translate the findings of the research (including the findings from Pope and Sherriff, 2008) into a graphically designed training pack for trainers. In doing so, YPF will pilot and produce the training pack, with associated 'Training The Trainers' courses, to prepare facilitators to use the material.

Limitations

It is important to note that our sample of young people and practitioners was not intended to be representative of the wider population across Sussex. Recruitment of LGBTU young people was unsurprisingly problematic given the 'hidden' status of this population, and it is perhaps unlikely that our sample is representative of the wider LGBTU young people population across Sussex. For example, in terms of young people, it was hoped to engage with a range of young people who identified themselves as being L, G, B (both males and females), T, and U as well as young people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. However, as reported in section 2 of the report (p. 24), all young people were White British, most were female, and no young people identified as being unsure. Yet despite these sample limitations, the final focus group meeting held with young people at Allsorts in Brighton did corroborate and thus

add an important measure of validity to the research findings. Whilst it was not possible within the remit of the present study, different and purposive sampling strategies are required that enable the voices of the hidden LGBTU youth in Sussex to be heard more fully than could be done here (Pope and Sherriff, 2008).

In term of recruiting professionals to participate in the research, this was much less problematic with many more individuals requesting to be interviewed than could be accommodated. However, there were still difficulties in achieving a diverse sample, for example, in terms of ethnicity and (sexual/gender) preference. All participants were White British, and most identified as heterosexual. Although six gay practitioners and one lesbian practitioner took part, no individuals identified as bi-sexual, Trans, or Unsure. During Phase Two of the project, it would be important to try and include a further research element to ensure practitioners who identify as B,T, or U and who work with young people, are included in the sample.

Participation

Supporting the findings of Pope and Sherriff (2008), the present research has demonstrated a clear need for all professionals who work with young people to be trained around issues for LGBTU young people separately from other types of training such as diversity and equal opportunities which commonly only include token references to LGBTU issues. An important point raised by participants was about the need for LGBTU young people's views and experiences to be included specifically in training materials and programmes.
We would agree and propose that young people's participation in Phase Two of this project could potentially be very valuable, and be done in a number of ways. For example, by: 1) involving LGBTU young people directly in the development and creation of the training resources by collaborating with the lead community partner; 2) LGBTU young people participating in the creation of specific visual resources such as a DVD; 3) LGBTU young people acting as peer researchers to help access other 'hidden' LGBTU young people, and; 4)

involving LGBTU young people directly in the delivery of a final LGBTU training programme.

In moving forward to Phase Two of the project, it will be important for The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership to consider these issues carefully. Plans are already being developed by the Partnership which includes young people in the direction and steering of the Phase Two of project. Involving LGBTU young people directly is likely to be very valuable as they are often in a position to elicit and contribute rich insights which may otherwise be missed by the wider project team. Moreover, such participation can also create valuable opportunities for young people themselves to develop confidence and a range of new skills, whilst also helping to ensure (indirectly) that services are accessible and LGBTU friendly through better and more appropriately trained staff. However, it is also important to remember that such participation will have cost implications as young people may require training, support, and supervision themselves.

Given the difficulties experienced in recruiting LGBTU young people, by both Pope and Sherriff (2008) and in the current research, training LGBTU young people to act as peer researchers may also be a useful way forward in Phase Two of the project. Peer methodologies make it possible to research from the 'inside' allowing potential access to more hidden and hard to reach populations, knowledge, and understandings. Data generated can often be very rich and detailed as participants may feel more relaxed and open talking to them than they might talking to professional interviewers. It is likely therefore, that the adoption of LGBTU young people as peer researchers in Phase Two of the project will add valuable insights into the development of the future training programme and materials.

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Appendix A - Interview Schedules

The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership

Interview Schedule for LGBTU Young People

Location:
Interviewer:
Date:

Introduction

Thank you for coming along today. We are carrying out this research called the Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership which will look at the training needs of professionals (such as teachers, youth workers), working with young people, including young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or unsure. We would like to hear your opinions and experiences about what you think are the training needs of these people. We are also looking at the lack of services to support LGBTU young people in Sussex, and would like to hear what you have to say about this.

This research is important because it will inform the development of a training pack/manual that will help to train professionals working with young LGBTU people.

Aims

- To meet the needs of service providers who feel they lack the confidence and diversity training needed to work with LGBTU young people

- With community partners, develop a LGBTU training pack/manual for trainers

- Provide a report that shows a current, local description of practitioners experiences and training needs, as well as an up to date and realistic picture of LGBTU young people's experiences, attitudes, opinions and ideas regarding staff training, skills and service provision

- Ultimately promote the health and well-being of the LGBTU young people themselves by helping service providers meet their needs more effectively

Ethics and Consent

Your responses are strictly confidential, that is, private, and will only be used for this piece of research. Nothing you say will be told to anyone else, and you will not be identified in any way. I will ask you to fill out a demographics form and with your permission, I will tape record our interview. The recording will be destroyed when the project has finished in July 2009. Some quotes from this interview may be used in the final report, but you will not be named or identified. You can stop the interview at any time, and withdraw from the research without giving a reason. There will be 4 sections to the interview, and will last about 30-40 minutes. If you are unsure of what I am asking you, please ask me to repeat myself, or make a question clearer.

Background Information

1. Where do you live?
2. Do you go to college/school/University? Could you tell me where it is please?
3. Do you work? Is this part-time, full-time or holiday work?
4. What kinds of things do you like to do in your spare time?

'coming-out' experience

5. Could you tell me what 'coming-out' has been like for you, for example what is your story of 'coming-out'? How do you identify?
6. Does anyone know how you identify? For example, friends, family, teachers, work colleagues?
7. Could you tell me any stories about the experiences you have had when 'coming-out'? Perhaps tell me a story about what it was like telling people.
8. What could have made it different? For example, could having a supportive teacher or boss have made a difference?
9. If you aren't out to key people in your life, do you feel able to tell them? If the answer is no, what gets in the way of you telling them?
10. Have things changed since you came out? For example, your lifestyle, relationships with people?

Your experiences of being LGBTU

11. Could you tell me about any positive experiences you have had of being LGBTU? For example, a new social life? What made it a positive experience?
12. And have you had any negative experiences? Can you tell me more about this?

Services and Staff

13. Have you ever contacted organisations for young people? (For example Connexions, health services, the police). Could you tell me more about this, for

example, what are their names, where are they, why did you make contact, or why didn't you?

14. What has been your experience of using services? For example, are they easy to find out about, find the location, opening times, have the environments felt safe, welcoming, and was your religion, ethnicity and gender considered? Were there images such as posters and leaflets around that made you feel welcome, or not?

15. Would you say you had a good or bad experience when using these services? I would like you to describe if you can what exactly made an experience good or bad, for example, were your needs met as a LGBTU young person? Did you get the advice or information that you wanted? Please give examples of a particular situation or incident if you can.

16. If you have used a service, can you say 3 good things and 3 bad things about it please? If you can't think of any examples, has a friend had a good or bad experience of a service?

17. I'd like to talk now specifically about staff who work with young people. Again, if you can tell me stories about incidents that have happened to you, that would be great. Could you say 3 things that make a good worker? If you haven't used a service or met a worker, can you say what you hope their qualities would be?

18. If you have ever been involved in, or witnessed a situation of conflict, such as a homophobic comment, how did the workers deal with it? Did they do the right thing? If not, what do you think they could have done differently?

19. Could you describe your idea of a perfect young people's LGBTU support service?

20. Where would this service be? For example, where is it, and would it be in a community centre, for example.

Development of a training pack/manual

The findings of this research will be put together in a short report, and a more detailed ring binder. This will have all the findings, organised as 'themes'. These findings will help to produce a training pack/manual, and for the final few questions I would like to ask you some specific questions around this.

21. What things do you think professionals need to be trained in when working with young LGBTU people? For example, handling 'coming-out' stories, dealing with incidents of homophobic bullying.

22. Are there specific issues or problems that you have experienced when accessing services, that you think should be included in a training pack? For example if you have been bullied. Could you give me some specific examples?

And finally….

Thank you very much for talking to me today. Is there any other experience you would like to tell me about, or anything else you would like to say about taking part in this research? Is there a question you think I should have asked here?

Thank you for your time, and confirm details for further contact.

The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership

Interview Schedule for Practitioners

Location:
Interviewer:
Date:

Introduction

Local practitioners have for some time been aware that there is inadequate LGBTU (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and unsure), youth service provision for young people residing in Sussex, as well as a lack of appropriate training for service providers. It has become clear from prior research that accessible and appropriate training materials are required urgently to kick-start the process of assisting practitioners in working with all young people to be able to address LGBTU issues as part of their everyday work.

The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership key elements are to:

- Provide the first attempt to explore the training needs of practitioners/professionals working with young people across Sussex.
- Address the lack of services for LGBTU young people across Sussex especially in rural areas, and acknowledge the significant and additional challenges this presents to the young people living here

Aims

- To meet the needs of service providers who feel they lack the confidence and diversity training needed to work with young LGBTU people

- With community partners, develop a LGBTU training pack/manual for trainers

- Provide a report that shows a current, local description of practitioners experiences and training needs, as well as an up to date and realistic picture of young LGBTU people's experiences, attitudes, opinions and ideas regarding staff training, skills and service provision

- Ultimately promote the health and well-being of the LGBTU young people themselves by helping service providers meet their needs more effectively

Ethics and Consent

Confidentiality is of the highest priority. I will ask you to fill out the socio-demographic questionnaire and we will record your interview with your permission to help with the analysis of the data for this project. Your responses will only be used for this research, some quotes from your interview may be used in the final report, but no names (either yours or the organisation you work for) will be mentioned and you will not be identified in any way. The recording will be destroyed when the project has finished in July 2009. You can stop the interview at any time, and withdraw from the study without giving a reason. There will be four main sections to the interview, and on average it will last 30-40 minutes.

Background Information

1. Name, job title and organisation you work for? What type of support does your project/service offer to young people?
2. Can you tell me the about the range of work you do with young people? Do you work with all young people, or is your work targeted at certain young people, such as young people in or leaving care, drug users, etc.?
3. Is your post permanent, temporary, etc? What issues does this raise for you in your work? How long have you been in post? Did you have an induction or training programme when you started?
4. What did your equal opportunities training consist of? And did it include any reference to young LGBTU people?
5. What does your service do to meet the needs of young LGBTU people? For example, is there guidance in policy documents?

Training and Support for staff

6. Have you had experience of working with any LGBTU young people? Is so, can you tell me about what kinds of needs you think they have as service users? Think especially of their needs as separate groups, especially the T and U groups.
7. What would you say are the main issues facing you, as a practitioner working with young LGBTU people? For example, what are your fears and concerns, where do you lack confidence and feel you need training on?
8. Are there any specific areas that you feel you could do with support or training to help with young LGBTU people's needs more fully? For example, homophobic bullying, conflict resolution, someone 'coming-out' to you, mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse/use, gender identity issues.
9. Would you say yours is a work place where you can challenge homophobic comments/terminology, for example, 'That is so gay'? Or is such language considered normal? Please could you use specific examples.
10. And would you say your workplace is welcoming to LGBTU young people in terms of imagery and information giving?

11. Can you give any examples of an incident or significant event that you had difficulty dealing with?
12. What training is currently available to you around supporting young LGBTU people?
    Is this basic training, or more specialist? Could you define what you think of as 'basic' and 'specialist'.
    Who delivers the training? Where is it held?
    What impact does it have on your practice or knowledge? Did it meet your expectations?
    What was good or bad about it?
    What could have been improved?
13. Are there any barriers or obstacles to you accessing training about the health and emotional well-being of young LGBTU people? For example, are colleagues supportive of you accessing such training?
14. Do you know of, or are you able to signpost young people to LGBTU friendly services, such as Allsorts?

Development of a training pack/manual

The finding of this research will be put together in a short report and a more detailed ring binder with the findings organised by 'themes' will also be produced. These findings will inform the development of a training pack/manual. Therefore I'd like to ask you a final few questions around this.

15. What key areas do you think this training pack will need to cover, and why? Please give some examples of why you think it is needed.
16. Are there specific topics or areas that you would like to see included in the training pack? If so why and which ones? Please give some specific incidences or examples
17. Are there specific issues, dilemmas, and challenges that arise in your work which would be useful to include in the training pack? Can you give some examples?

Service provision

18. Would you say your project/service/educational establishment meets the needs of young LGBTU people? Give examples if possible.
19. What do you think would make an ideal service aimed at you LGBTU people? What form do you think it would take, specific features, etc.
20. What do you think would be the most important skills for the staff to have when working with young LGBTU people?
21. Where do you think this ideal service would be? E.g.: geographical location, in a GP surgery, for example.
22. Do you have any ideas for other projects/services that might help young LGBTU people?

And finally….

Do you have any further comments or suggestions on the training needs of staff working with young LGBTU people?

Do you have any questions you would like to ask about the research?

Is there a question you think should be included for this interview?

Conclusions, thanks, and details for further contact.

Appendix B - Consent Form and Participant Information Sheets

Consent Form

I agree to participate in an interview which is being conducted as part of the 'The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership', and run by the University of Brighton.

The researcher has explained to my satisfaction the purpose of the study and the risks involved.

I have had the principles and the procedures explained to me and I have also read the information sheet.

I am aware that I will be required to take part in a one to one interview.

I understand that any confidential information will be heard only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else.

I understand that I am able to withdraw from the study at any time (for example if I am uncomfortable with any questions).

I understand that I am under no obligation to disclose personal information during the interview.

Name (please print)…………………………………………

Signed……………………………………………………………

Date……………………………………………………………….

Participant Information Sheet (Practitioners/Professionals)
The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research
Partnership

Invitation

You are invited to take part in this study which is to help inform the development a new training pack for those working with young people (e.g. teachers, youth workers, etc). Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully, discuss it with others if you wish, and ask questions to clarify any queries you may have.

What is the purpose of this study?

The International Health Development Research Centre at the University of Brighton is working with various community partners (Allsorts, Trust for the Study of Adolescence, Terrence Higgins Trust, and the Dorman Youth Arts Centre) to establish a long-term working partnership that will research, develop, pilot, and ultimately produce a training pack /manual for practitioners working with young people including those who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Trans, or Unsure (LGBTU). Together the partnership will explore the training needs of practitioners working with young people and by talking to both practitioners and LGBTU young people themselves from across Sussex who are living mainly in rural areas. This study is necessary because there is inadequate service provision for (LGBTU) young people residing in rural areas of Sussex, as well as a lack of appropriate training for service providers.

About the study

The study is divided into two phases. The first phase (which is the phase we are asking you to take part in) aims to conduct interviews and focus group discussions which will be written up into a short report. In the second phase, this report will be used by the partners in the project to develop a specialist training pack or manual for individuals working with young people.

In order to complete the first phase of the study (October 08 to July, 09), the project worker (Shelby Wigmore) will conduct up to 15 individual interviews with LGBTU young people. This may either be face-to-face or via telephone depending on the preference of the young person. The project worker will also conduct up to 20 individual interviews with professionals/practitioners working with young people across East and West Sussex. These individuals will be from a variety of sectors and settings such as, youth workers, teachers, Connexions workers, and specialist project workers for example.

Two final focus groups, one consisting of LGBTU young people and a second composed of professionals/practitioners, will be held after all the interviews have been completed and the data analysed. These focus groups will allow the project worker to check the findings have been interpreted correctly and to explore further any issues raised.

The overall aims and outcomes of the study are as follows:

- To produce an accessible report that provides a local, current description of practitioners experiences and training needs, as well as a contemporary depiction of LGBTU young people's experiences, attitudes, and perceptions concerning staff training, skills, and service provision;

- To develop an established and sustainable network for knowledge exchange between the University of Brighton and its community partners through collaborative research and partnership working.

- To encourage sustained partnership working with the community partners to develop and implement the second phase of the project to create an evidence-based training pack/manual based on the research findings;

- To develop direct synergies and links with the Sussex LGBTU Communities of Practice funded under the South East Coast Communities (SECC) programme.

- To ultimately promote the health and well-being of LGBTU young people by helping service providers to meet their needs more effectively;

- To build the capacity of the community partners by providing an important evidence based to inform service provision and provide assistance in applications for grants and other sources of funding, for example;

- To facilitate the development of new skills in LGBTU young people (e.g. by taking part in networking events, the steering committee, and being involved in dissemination);

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you whether or not to take part. If you are not sure, please feel free to discuss it with someone else. Also, please ask the project worker (Shelby) any questions you may have.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

It is possible that some of the topics that are talked about could be potentially sensitive or embarrassing. The project worker will try and ensure you feel as comfortable as possible about being open and honest. Don't forget, you can stop the interview at any time and withdraw from the study without giving a reason.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The information from this study will be used to help develop better training for individuals who work with (LGBTU) young people. In order to do this, it is important that you have your say so we can make sure any training covers the most relevant issues.

What will happen to me if I <u>do</u> decide to take part?

If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw, or a decision not to take part will not affect you in any way.

If you agree to take part, you will be invited to attend a face-to-face interview with the project worker to talk about training with respect to working with (LGBTU) young people. This may include areas such as outlining your professional background and expertise, training courses attended, discussion of issues around LGBTU young people's needs and use of services, for example. The discussion will last around 30-40 minutes.

You may also be asked to take part in an informal group discussion which will last for approximately 45 minutes. Between 7-10 professionals/practitioners will attend this group. The project worker will tell the group about some of the findings from the study so far, and will ask for your comments on what is said. The purpose of this discussion will be to check the findings of the study have been interpreted accurately and to allow you to explore further any issues raised.

What will happen to me if I <u>do not</u> take part?

Nothing! Not taking part will not affect you in *any* way. The project worker will thank you for your time and interest.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have any kind of complaint or would like to discuss any aspect of the project, you can contact the project worker (Shelby Wigmore; s.j.wigmore@brighton.ac.uk) or the project manager Dr Nigel Sherriff (n.s.sherriff@brighton.ac.uk).

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes, confidentiality is of the highest priority. The project worker will ask you if she can record any discussions to assist with the analysis of the data after the interview. Only the worker will hear this tape, and it will be destroyed once the project has finished (July, 2009). Some quotes from your interview may be used in the final report although no names will be mentioned and you will not be identified in any way. All data will be stored securely using locked filing cabinets and password protected computers.

The definition of confidentiality that is utilised in the project means that all interview discussions will be kept confidential unless someone discloses something that means they have been or are at significant risk of harm, either physically or emotionally. Should this happen, the project worker will inform the project manager in the first instance.

Reimbursement of transport costs.

Unfortunately, we will be unable to reimburse any transport costs but will endeavour to arrange the interview in a location and time that is most suitable for you.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be put together into a short report written by the researcher. A more detailed ring binder with the detailed findings organised by 'themes' will also be produced. These findings will be presented to the project steering committee and the community partners to inform the development of the training pack/manual. All the partners will then work together to secure funding for the development and production of the pack (phase two).

Several publications will also be written outlining the findings of the research. These publications are likely to include publications such as *Young People Now*, the *Journal of Youth Studies*, The University of Brighton's *Channel* magazine, and *Education and Health*. No individuals will be identified in these publications.

Who has reviewed the study?

The University of Brighton's Faculty of Health and Social Science Research Ethics and Governance Committee have reviewed the study and given it their full support.

Who has funded the study?

The project has been funded by the Brighton and Sussex Community Knowledge Exchange (BSCKE) and the South East Coast Specialised Commissioning Group. The project will be overseen by a project steering committee consisting of professionals from all the organisations involved (see above).

Contact for further information

s.j.wigmore@brighton.ac.uk – Shelby Wigmore (Project Worker) 01273 644536
n.s.sherriff@brighton.ac.uk – Dr Nigel Sherriff (Project Manager)
j.k.davies@brighton.ac.uk – Professor John Kenneth Davies (Director, IHDRC)

Or visit: www.lgbtu.co.uk

You are invited to keep a copy of this sheet for your information

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY!

Participant Information Sheet (Young People)
The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership

Invitation

You are invited to take part in this study which is to help inform the development a new training pack for those working with young people (e.g. teachers, youth workers, etc).

Before you decide whether to take part or not it is important for you to understand why the

research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask any questions you may have about any part of the study.

Why are we doing this study?

The University of Brighton is working with organisations in the community to develop a new training pack for individuals working with young people including those young people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Trans, or Unsure (LGBTU). These organisations are experts in working with young people and together, we aim to explore what kind of training people need in order to work with (LGBTU) young people more effectively. This study is necessary because there are very few services to support (LGBTU) young people living in Sussex). There is also very little training to support those who work with (LGBTU) young people.

What are we planning to do?

The project worker (Shelby Wigmore) will conduct up to 15 interviews with young people like yourself. You can be interviewed face-to-face, or if you prefer, by telephone. The project worker will also conduct up to 20 interviews with individuals who work with young people.

Once the interviews have been completed, the worker will hold two final group discussions (one with young people and one with individuals who work with young people). The purpose of these groups is so the project worker can check the findings to make sure they have been interpreted correctly and to allow you to add any other comments or thoughts.

Do I have to take part?

No! It is entirely up to you whether or not to take part. If you are not sure, please feel free to discuss it with someone else. Also, please ask the project worker (Shelby) any questions, worries, or concerns you may have.

What will happen to me if I <u>do</u> decide to take part?

You will be given this information sheet and be asked to sign a consent form (if you are under 16yrs your parent or guardian may need to sign the form on your behalf. If you do not wish them to sign but you would still like to take part, then the project worker will discuss this with you). You will be given a list of organisations you can contact afterwards in case any issues come up that you would like to talk about more.

Even if you do take part, you will be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and this will not affect you in any way.

You will be invited to attend an interview to talk about your thoughts and experience of being a LGBTU young person, living in West Sussex. You will be asked about how you spend your spare time, for example, the clubs you go to, use of the internet, and so on. The interview will last around 30-40 minutes. The project worker will ask you if she can record it so she can remember what was said later without having to write down lots of information.

You may also be asked to take part in an informal group discussion which will last for approximately 45 minutes. Between 5 and 7 young people will attend this group. At the beginning of the group, the project worker will put together a group agreement to ensure everyone feels comfortable to take part and agrees that any discussion that takes part within the group remains private to those in the room. The project worker will tell the group about some of the findings from the study so far, and will ask for your comments on what is said. For example, you might want to talk about a particular topic that is raised or mention something that you think is missing. Again, the project worker will ask you if she can record the discussion.

What will happen to me if I <u>do not</u> take part?

Nothing! Not taking part will not affect you in *any* way including your use of any services. The project worker will thank you for your time and interest, and if you wish, give you a list of organisations you can contact which you may find useful.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have any kind of complaint or would like to discuss any aspect of the project, you can contact the project worker directly (Shelby Wigmore; s.j.wigmore@brighton.ac.uk) or the project manager Dr Nigel Sherriff (n.s.sherriff@brighton.ac.uk).

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

It is possible that some of the topics that are talked about could be a bit embarrassing. The project worker will try and ensure you feel as comfortable as possible about being open and honest. Don't forget, you can stop the interview at any time and withdraw from the study without giving a reason. If you feel that you need support after the interview or focus group has taken place, please look at the 'Useful Contacts' sheet to help you get in touch with the relevant organisation(s). Alternatively, you may contact the project worker who will put you in touch with an appropriate person who will be able to help you.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The information from this study will be used to help develop better training for individuals who work with (LGBTU) young people. This is important because it will mean that they will be better equipped to meet your needs. In order to do this, it is also important that you have your say so we can make sure any training covers the most relevant issues. You will also receive a £5 voucher as a 'thank-you' for taking part.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential (private)?

Yes! Some quotes from your interview may be used in the final report but no names will be mentioned and you will not be identified in any way. All data from your interview will be stored securely using locked filing cabinets and password protected computers. All discussions will be kept confidential (private) unless someone discloses something that means they have been or are at significant risk of harm, either physically or emotionally. Should this happen, the project worker will need to inform the project manager. The project worker will tell you first if she needs to do this.

What about my transport costs?

If taking part has cost you money in public transport fares (e.g. bus or train), these will be paid to you by the project worker if you keep a receipt. Unfortunately, payments for transport cannot be given without one. We are also unable to pay for taxi fares. The project worker will try and meet you in a place and time that is most suitable for you.

What will happen to the results of the study?

At the end of this study, a short report will be written by the researcher, according to the information collected during the interviews and focus groups. A more detailed ring binder with the detailed findings organised by 'themes' will also be produced. Together, these findings will inform the development of the training pack/manual.

Who has reviewed the study?

The University of Brighton's Faculty of Health and Social Science Research Ethics and Governance Committee have reviewed the study and given it their full support.

Who has funded the study?

The project has been funded by the Brighton and Sussex Community Knowledge Exchange (BSCKE) and the South East Coast Specialised Commissioning Group. The project will be overseen by a project steering committee consisting of professionals from all the organisations involved (see above).

Contact for further information

s.j.wigmore@brighton.ac.uk   – Shelby Wigmore (Project Worker) 01273 644536
n.s.sherriff@brighton.ac.uk   – Dr Nigel Sherriff (Project Manager)
j.k.davies@brighton.ac.uk   – Professor John Kenneth Davies (Director, IHDRC)

Or visit: www.lgbtu.co.uk

Please keep a copy of this sheet for your information

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY!

☺

University of Brighton

Appendix C: Recruitment Posters

ARE YOU LESBIAN, GAY, BI, TRANS OR UNSURE?

WHAT SERVICES FOR YOUNG LGBTU PEOPLE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN SUSSEX?
COME AND TELL US!

For more details please contact:

Shelby Wigmore (Project worker) at
IHDRC, University of Brighton,
Falmer
S.J.Wigmore@brighton.ac.uk
(01273) 644536)
(Answerphone messages only picked up by the project worker)
www.lgbtu.co.uk

**We are exploring training needs of professionals working with young people across Sussex, and would like to hear your views. An open meeting for you is in Crawley in mid January, contact Kenny on (01293) 526388 for more details.
One to one interviews are in February, please be involved!**

Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans & Unsure Young People Research Project

Are you confident working with young LGBTU people?

We are researching the training needs of professionals/practitioners working with young people

Have your views heard!

Open meeting January 7th 2009 4-6pm THT Eastbourne

We will also be holding one to one interviews in February, in complete confidence in a location of your choice

For more details please contact Shelby Wigmore
IHDRC, University of Brighton
S.J.Wigmore@brighton.ac.uk
01273 644536
www.LGBTU.co.uk

University of Brighton

BRIGHTON&SUSSEX COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

West Sussex NHS Primary Care Trust

Terrence Higgins Trust

allsorts youth project

young people in focus
research | training | publications

Appendix D: Socio-Demographic Questionnaires

The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership

Please complete this form by ticking the appropriate boxes. All of the information you provide will remain private and confidential.

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1. What is your gender?

a)   Female   Male

b)   Do you identify yourself as being trans?

        Yes   No

---

2. How old are you?

13 -15   19-21   26-28

16-18   22-24

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3. How would you describe your ethnic group?

<u>White</u>   <u>Asian or Asian British</u>   <u>Black or Black British</u>

White British   Indian   Black Caribbean

White Irish   Pakistani   Black African

White (Other)   Bangladeshi   Black Other

                     Chinese

                     Other

<u>Mixed 'Race'</u>   <u>Other Ethnic Group</u>

White & Black Caribbean   Unknown

White & Black African   Other Ethnic Group

Other   If Other please state/explain:

                                    _____

---

4. Do you have a religion that you follow or practice?

Yes   No

If yes, which religion?

_____

5. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes   No

If yes, what is your disability?

_____

---

6. How would you describe your sexual preference?

Lesbian   Gay   Bi-Sexual

Trans   Heterosexual   Unsure

Other   If Other please explain:

_____

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7. Please can you provide us with the 1st part of your postcode?

For Example: TN22   _____

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8. Would you like to take part in a one to one interview for this project? All information from interviews will be in complete confidence and you and your project/organisation will not be identified in any way in the final report. Each interview will last approx. 40 minutes and can be in a location of your choice.

Yes   No

9. Would you like to receive feedback about the findings of this research? If yes, please write the method of contact you would prefer us to reach you on below.

Name:
_____

Address:
_____
_____

Postcode:

E mail address:

Mobile number:

Any other comments?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM!

The Sussex LGBTU Training and Development Research Partnership

Please complete this form by ticking the appropriate boxes. All of the information you provide will remain private and confidential.

---

1. What is your gender?

a)   Female   Male

b)   Do you identify yourself as being trans?

        Yes   No

---

2. How old are you?

13 -19   30-39   50-59

20-29   40-49   60-69

---

3. How would you describe your ethnic group?

<u>White</u>	<u>Asian or Asian British</u>	<u>Black or Black British</u>
White British	Indian	Black Caribbean
White Irish	Pakistani	Black African
White (Other)	Bangladeshi	Black Other
	Chinese	
	Other	

<u>Mixed 'Race'</u>   <u>Other Ethnic Group</u>

White & Black Caribbean   Unknown

White & Black African   Other Ethnic Group

Other   If Other please state/explain:

                                 _____

---

4. Do you have a religion that you follow or practice?

Yes   No

If yes, which religion?

_____

5. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes   No

If yes, what is your disability?

_____

6. How would you describe your sexual preference?

Lesbian   Gay   Bi-Sexual

Trans   Heterosexual   Unsure

Other   If Other please explain:

_____

7. Please can you provide us with the 1st part of your postcode?

For Example: TN22   _____

8. Would you like to take part in a one to one interview for this project? All information from interviews will be in complete confidence and you and your project/organisation will not be identified in any way in the final report. Each interview will last approx. 40 minutes and can be in a location of your choice.

Yes   No

9. Would you like to receive feedback about the findings of this research? If yes, please fill out the method of contact that you would prefer us to reach you on.

Name: _____

Address:
_____
_____

Postcode:

E mail address:

Work number:
Mobile number:

Any other comments?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM!

Appendix E: Useful Contacts

Local Organisations

Allsorts Youth Group: drop-in for young LGB and unsure people, under 26 years. Meets Tuesday evenings.
Phone: 01273 721211 or 07932 852533
Web: www.allsortsyouth.org.uk

Brighton Lesbian & Gay Switchboard and Counselling Project: Confidential telephone help line and low cost counselling service (for 16 years and over).
Helpline (5 – 11pm): 01273 204050
Counselling project: 01273 202384

Clare Project: a self help group for people dealing with issues around gender. Drop-in every Tuesday afternoon.
Phone: 07776 232100
Web: www.clareproject.org.uk

Claude Nicol GUM Clinic: Confidential sexual health clinic based at The Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton. Young person's drop-in clinic every Thursday from 3.30 – 5.30pm. Self-referral, no need to go through a GP.
Phone: 01273 664721

Warren Brown GUM Clinic: Confidential sexual health clinic based at Southlands Hospital, Shoreham. Self-referral, no need to go through a GP.
Phone: 01273 461453

Mindout LGBT Mental Health Project: Support groups and social activities for people age 16 and over. They are planning to run a group for young people in the near future.
Phone 01273 739847
Web: www.lgbtmind.com

Terence Higgins Trust and Street Outreach Service: Sexual health and HIV prevention services.
Phone: 01273 764200
Web: www.tht.org.uk

The Information Shops: Drop-in service for young people (13-25) including counselling service. Centres exist across West Sussex, to find your nearest one:
Phone: 01243 839093
Web: www.informationshopchi.org.uk

Hove YMCA's Youth Advice Centre: Drop-in centre for young people (13-25) based in Blatchington Rd, Hove. Pan Sussex counselling services are also available.
Tel: 01273 889292
Web: www.hoveymca.org.uk

Connexions Direct: anonymous and confidential helpline offering information, advice and guidance to all 13 – 19 year olds. They can also be contacted through chat rooms on the website.
Tel: 080 800 13 2 19
Text: 077664 13 2 19
Web: http://www.connexions-direct.com/

Childline: Free and confidential help line.
Phone: 0800 1111
Web: http://www.childline.org.uk/

Useful Websites

www.fflag.org.uk - Information and support for families and friends of lesbians and gay men.

www.itstimetoaccept.org.uk - For people who are black and gay.

www.regard.dircon.co.uk - REGARD is a national organisation for disabled LGBT people.

http://www.stonewall.org.uk – National organisation for LGB equality.

LGBTU people of faith

http://www.lgcm.org.uk/ - Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement

www.al-fatiha.org – Muslim LGB support organisation

www.safraproject.org – Muslim lesbian, bisexual and transgender women

http://www.questgaycatholic.org.uk – Catholic LGB support organisation

http://www.jglg.org.uk/ - Jewish Gay and Lesbian Group