![Just Like Us — The LGBT+ Young People's Charity logo]

Positive Futures

How supporting LGBT+
young people enables them
to thrive in adulthood

Just Like Us & Deloitte

Just Like Us has been an official national charity partner of Deloitte since 2021. Just Like Us forms part of Deloitte's 5 Million Futures societal impact strategy to address inequality by overcoming barriers to education and employment, and empowering individuals with the skills needed to succeed. The firm provides funding for targeted programmes and pro bono support, as well as participating in employee fundraising and volunteering.

This year Deloitte is sponsoring Just Like Us' Positive Futures report, independently conducted by Cibyl, to understand the needs, experiences and aspirations of LGBT+ young people. LGBT+ inclusion is one of Deloitte's priorities, supporting LGBT+ colleagues to feel safe and reach their full potential. As a major employer that recruits more than 2,000 graduates and apprentices every year, it is critical that the firm maintains an environment where young LGBT+ colleagues can be their authentic selves and thrive from the start of their careers.

Foreword

just like us
THE LGBT+ YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHARITY
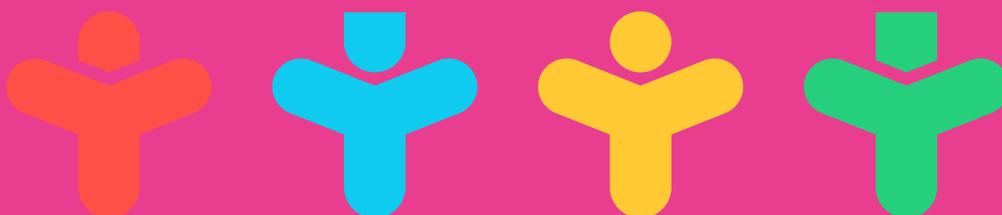
As the LGBT+ young people's charity, we know that growing up LGBT+ is still unacceptably tough. In fact, we live in increasingly hostile times where gender diversity in particular is heavily scrutinised and politicised, and anti-LGBT+ hate crime has risen. In the first half of 2023, the UK has seen a transgender teenage girl killed, Scotland's Gender Recognition Reform Bill blocked, prolonged delays to a ban on so-called conversion therapy and the future of UK's equalities laws questioned. We have witnessed a huge rise in 'debates' around the humanity of trans and gender diverse people, despite only 0.5% of England and Wales' population not identifying with the gender they were assigned at birth. The UK has dropped in ILGA Rainbow Europe's rankings for LGBT+ rights for the third year running, down to 17th place.

Our *Positive Futures* report, sponsored by Deloitte, seeks to shine a light on the current disproportionate issues facing LGBT+ young adults aged 18 to 25 and to explore how we can ensure their future looks more positive. It follows our 2021 report, *Growing up LGBT+*, also independently conducted by Cibyl, which studied the experiences of LGBT+ school pupils aged 11 to 18.

The findings are both ground-breaking and devastating. LGBT+ young people continue to face unique and disproportionate challenges, and spend much of their formative years navigating a lack of support alongside the trauma that often comes with being LGBT+ in society today. We also look at the intersectional experiences of young people – including how ethnicity, faith, gender and disability impact young people's experiences.

We've always known as LGBT+ people that the level of acceptance we receive – or not – in our formative years has a long-lasting impact. Now this report, for the first time, shows just how crucial that support is, even impacting LGBT+ young adults' outlook on their careers.

Positive Futures lays out how the level of support LGBT+ young people receive in school and at home is a deciding factor in their ability to thrive in adulthood. Getting support at home and at school makes LGBT+ young people twice as likely to be happy in adulthood (85% vs 43%). This report therefore also recommends how teachers, workplaces and parents/carers can better support LGBT+ young people and ensure they are able to thrive as their full authentic selves.

Amy Ashenden
Interim Chief Executive of Just Like Us

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Sponsored by

Deloitte.

At Deloitte, we want everyone to be their true authentic selves and reach their full potential, because when you feel like you belong, you're better able to thrive. This can only be achieved by providing a workplace culture characterised by inclusive everyday behaviours and built on a foundation of respect and appreciation for diversity in all its forms. Guided by our purpose and our shared values, we're committed to driving positive change through the impact we make for our people, our clients and society.

 As part of our firm's commitment to inclusion, we support our LGBT+ colleagues to feel safe and be themselves via our established Proud Network and allies community.

Just Like Us has been an official national charity partner of Deloitte since 2021. Just Like Us forms part of our 5 Million Futures societal impact strategy to address inequality by overcoming barriers to education and employment, and empowering individuals with the skills needed to succeed. The firm provides funding for targeted programmes and pro bono support, as well as participating in employee fundraising and volunteering. We are proud to build on our collaboration with Just Like Us by sponsoring its *Positive Futures* report.

Executive summary

Positive Futures examines the individual and disproportionate challenges that LGBT+ young adults face in school, their family life and the workplace. We independently surveyed 3,695 18- to 25-year-olds from across the UK in January 2023, including 1,736 LGBT+ respondents, to enable us to examine how being LGBT+ shaped their formative years.

We know from our everyday work with schools and young people at Just Like Us, as well as our *Growing Up LGBT+* 2021 report, that being a lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or trans teenager in the UK means facing additional and complex challenges while growing up.

In this report, we set out what kind of impact those challenges in school and at home have on early adulthood. The results demonstrate that a lack of support in LGBT+ young people's teenage years is linked to long-lasting and devastating effects on their mental health, self-worth, chances of family estrangement and even their outlook on their careers and whether they believe they'll find a life partner.

We define unsupportive families and school environments through a combination of factors including: bullying, how often their school spoke positively about LGBT+ people, whether they had role models in their everyday lives and how young people perceived their safety and chances of being accepted. This is explained in detail in our methodology.

Key findings

Of the LGBT+ young people who responded to our survey, those who grew up in unsupportive environments (as opposed to supportive environments) were:

1 four times as likely to feel ashamed of being LGBT+ as an adult (41% vs 9%)

2 more than twice as likely to have experienced panic attacks (60% vs 28%) and nearly twice as likely to have experienced depression in the past year (82% vs 42%)

3 more than three times as likely to 'never or rarely' feel optimistic about their future (42% vs 12%)

4 three times more likely to not be confident they'll have a career they enjoy (48% vs 17%)

5 half as likely to feel good about themselves (41% vs 89%)

6 more than four times as likely to rarely or never feel close to other people (49% vs 11%)

7 half as likely to be confident that they will find a life partner (34% vs 70%)

8 nearly half as likely to say they are happy in adulthood (43% vs 85%)

9 more than twice as likely to have had suicidal thoughts and feelings (85% vs 39%)

10 more than twice as likely to have self-harmed (71% vs 33%)

Recommend: Teachers should be aware that our survey showed that when LGBT+ young people are in a supportive school environment, they are four times more likely to feel optimistic about their future all of the time (31% vs 7%).

It's clear that, beyond the additional issues that all LGBT+ respondents faced in comparison to their straight and cisgender peers, there are deeper issues faced by those from unsupportive school and family environments.

We encourage everyone with young people in their lives – whether they know or think they might be LGBT+ or not – to read the recommendations in this report so that we can create more supportive environments and lessen these harmful outcomes.

Also pertinent in this report was the discovery that respondents who know a transgender person are twice as likely to self-describe as 'supportive' towards trans people. And, despite a false and unhelpful growing stereotype about a community divide, lesbians were the most likely of LGBT+ respondents to be trans allies.

Given how few of the respondents who said they aren't supportive of trans people even know a trans person in real life (just 3%), it is clear that anti-LGBT+ attitudes are fuelled by a fear of the unknown. This should be a reminder to us all that LGBT+ inclusive education is essential to driving empathy, acceptance and allyship. Unsurprisingly

25% of LGBT+ young adults go back into the closet after starting work.

49%

of all LGBT+ respondents were likely to 'rarely or never' feel close to other people.

48%

of all LGBT+ respondents were not confident they'll have a career they enjoy.

41%

of all LGBT+ respondents felt ashamed of being LGBT+ as an adult.

46%

of all LGBT+ respondents were estranged from at least one family member.

then, **the majority of LGBT+ respondents said LGBT+ inclusive education should begin in primary school or nursery**.

As well as facing the long-lasting impact of their unsupportive environments at school and at home, LGBT+ young people continue to face fresh and disproportionate challenges as adults.
A quarter of LGBT+ young adults go back into the closet after starting work, many earn less than their straight peers and they are more likely to be bullied in the workplace than their non-LGBT+ peers. Lesbian and asexual young adults were the lowest earners and trans young adults were the most likely to be unemployed. Interestingly, LGBT+ respondents who grew up with unsupportive families are twice as likely to lack confidence that they will have a career they will enjoy, compared with LGBT+ respondents with supportive families.

When it comes to health, LGBT+ young adults are twice as likely to have self-harmed than their non-LGBT+ peers, and are more likely to smoke and drink.

In the last year, LGBT+ young people are more likely than their non-LGBT+ peers to have experienced verbal abuse (38% v 27%) and sexual abuse (50% v 30%). This follows having been far more likely to have been bullied at school (68% v 47%).

Recommendations

To summarise, when LGBT+ young people are supported at home and at school, they are able to flourish in adulthood. When school and home are not supportive environments, LGBT+ young people face worse mental health and higher levels of shame and are far less confident that they will be able to achieve the things that adults typically hope to. The consequences are vast and serious. Unsupported LGBT+ young people are half as likely to be happy in adulthood.

This report should be an alarming wake-up call to all those who have young people in their lives. Whether or not you think a young person might be LGBT+ or not – and whether or not they have come out to you – we must create a supportive environment where they are free to be themselves so that they do not face the devastating outcomes detailed above.

Recommendations for parents, carers and guardians

Many caregivers – including those who consider themselves to be LGBT+ allies – may believe that it's best to not discuss LGBT+ topics or their support unless a young person comes out to them. Given that a third of LGBT+ respondents were not confident that their parents would accept them, and the majority believe discussions about LGBT+ people should begin in primary school or nursery, we would encourage caregivers to proactively talk openly about their support for LGBT+ people when children are very young. When caregivers are silent, LGBT+ young people often assume the worst. So parents, carers and guardians should be clear from the start that they do not see being LGBT+ as 'lesser than'.

Creating support outside of the biological family

LGBT+ respondents face fractured family relationships in ways that their straight/cisgender peers do not. They were twice as likely to report not being close to their families (6% vs 14%), and almost half (46%) are estranged from at least one family member.

We did not examine respondents' individual reasons for this breakdown in family relationships, but it is undeniable that being LGBT+ disproportionately leads to young adults being more distant from their biological families. Many may have already experienced difficulties in a lack of support and fear of, or indeed outright, rejection or abuse.

While we encourage families to better support their LGBT+ young people, there are some who are actively anti-LGBT+. There must be safe and supportive environments created for those whose families do not embrace, love and support their LGBT+ children. These places could include school, youth clubs, libraries, community groups and places of worship. Widening the narrative about chosen family and ensuring LGBT+ young people do not feel ashamed of or feel responsible for their family's rejection will empower them to find a path forward.

Encouraging young people to use LGBT+ inclusive support services, such as Switchboard and Childline, is also a great place to start.

Recommendations for school staff

Given the high levels of family estrangement and emotional distance as well as a common lack of confidence that parents will be accepting, it is clear that outing LGBT+ young people to their families could be incredibly dangerous.

It is vital that schools are supportive towards LGBT+ young people – not only because this helps create an environment where all young people can thrive and learn about the diversity of the world around them but also because they need somewhere they can feel safe and accepted if home is unsupportive.

We recommend school staff create a supportive school environment in the following ways:

• Begin talking about LGBT+ people positively from the outset – the majority of LGBT+ respondents said LGBT+ inclusive education should begin in primary school and nursery. In Early Years, KS1 and KS2, this looks like diversifying the library book collection, taking part in **School Diversity Week**, and talking about how some people have LGBT+ families (such as lesbian mums and trans siblings; making it clear that this is a reality for many young people).

- Set up and run a **Pride Group**, providing a safe and welcoming place for LGBT+ and ally young people to find respite in school; this is particularly important if they face anti-LGBT+ attitudes at home.

- Show visible signs of acceptance, such as displaying free posters from **Just Like Us** or encouraging staff to wear **Rainbow Ribbons** or lanyards.

- Overturn the legacy of Section 28 and support LGBT+ school staff to come out. Our *Growing Up LGBT+ report* found that only 40% of LGBT+ school staff are out in school despite LGBT+ pupils stating that having out teachers would hugely help them – something that LGBT+ respondents in *Positive Futures* also said would have greatly helped them. Many LGBT+ teachers remain afraid that their careers will be stalled by coming out. We must lead by example in showing young people that being LGBT+ is nothing to be ashamed of and that, if they come out, they will not be judged by their school environment.

- Ensure LGBT+ people are talked about positively in a consistent way – not just for Pride month or **School Diversity Week**. LGBT+ inclusive education should be embedded across the school and free subject-specific resources from Just Like Us can be used to diversify lessons as well as form time/circle time activities and assemblies. It's also vital to ensure LGBT+ support is talked about every year so that, as new year groups join the school, all pupils understand the school is an inclusive and supportive environment.

- Ensure anti-LGBT+ language and bullying are not tolerated. Many young people still hear and use the word 'gay' negatively, for example, and verbal abuse is very common. In order for LGBT+ young people to not grow up feeling ashamed of who they are, the very words that describe who they are must not become synonymous with insults.

- Show pupils that being LGBT+ doesn't mean they can't go on to live happy, successful and fulfilling lives. LGBT+ respondents from unsupportive backgrounds were three times more likely to

There must be safe and supportive environments created for those whose families do not embrace, love and support their LGBT+ children.

not be confident they'll have a career they enjoy and half as likely to believe they'll have a family of their own (even though they want to). There are numerous ways to demonstrate this, including talking about diverse families, teaching about LGBT+ people throughout history, and providing relatable LGBT+ young adult role models by having Just Like Us ambassadors in to talk to pupils.

- Many LGBT+ respondents struggled to believe they will have a successful career. We urge teachers to encourage LGBT+ 18- to 25-year-olds to take part in Just Like Us' Ambassador Programme so they can gain access to a career mentoring scheme, skills workshops and community support.

Just Like Us runs **School Diversity Week** with free resources provided for primaries and secondaries to take part, as well as **school talks** and a **Pride Groups programme** for secondary schools.

Support in the workplace

The survey findings show alarming differences between LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ respondents' experiences of the workplace.

Given the stark differences in salary, unemployment, bullying rates and ability to be themselves in the workplace, it's no wonder that LGBT+ young people are less confident that they will have a career they enjoy.

It's also worth considering that, as the respondents are all aged 18 to 25, these differences are impacting and potentially stalling young adults' careers at a pivotal time.

Employers can attract, retain and support LGBT+ talent in the following ways:

- Provide senior LGBT+ career mentors for LGBT+ young adults to help them seek support and be able to see that they can progress their careers as their authentic selves. It's worth noting that LGBT+ respondents who are out were almost twice as likely to say they would like a mentor than their LGBT+ peers who haven't come out

(43% v 27%), so some encouragement may be needed through visibility of senior LGBT+ staff and clear messaging that the workplace celebrates diversity.

- Update policies to better support LGBT+ employees, such as paternity, adoption leave and transitioning at work policies.

- Make clear the organisation's year-round commitment to allyship by providing meaningful volunteering opportunities for LGBT+ and ally staff to support LGBT+ charities and causes.

- Speak up about current issues LGBT+ people (and therefore staff) may be facing; this is particularly important in a time where there is rising transphobia and hate crime.

- Implement diverse recruitment practices, ensuring all staff inductions are LGBT+ inclusive, signposting to support, and establishing a LGBT+ employee network (if there isn't one already).

- Ensure anti-LGBT+ bullying is not tolerated. This is particularly important as LGBT+ respondents faced higher incidences of workplace bullying.

- Show visible signs of acceptance through activities such as taking part in a **Rainbow Ribbons** fundraiser or organising LGBT+ workplace panel talks.

- Celebrate intersectional diversity. LGBT+ respondents who were also people of colour or had a faith faced further challenges and therefore need more support.

Just Like Us works with a range of employers – including Deloitte – through corporate partnerships where we provide workplace panel speakers, volunteering opportunities for staff to mentor LGBT+ young adults, and support with running Rainbow Ribbons fundraisers.

Finally, we urge all readers who have LGBT+ young people in their lives to loudly and proudly show their support so they stand a better chance of a positive future ahead.

The majority of LGBT+ survey participants wished they had learnt about LGBT+ people in primary school or nursery.

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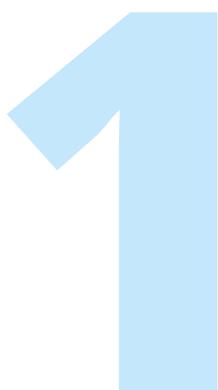
First step of the journey

Start of the 'out' journey

Navigating change, learning about the world around you and finding your place within it are all fundamental parts of the transition from childhood to adulthood. Our experiences at home, school, university and/or work define our formative years. In this report we look at how our respondents, aged 18–25, began to identify their inner selves, navigate coming out and find – or deal with a lack of – support. The survey on which the report is based asked what they felt and feared as well as what it takes to build networks and establish themselves in adult life.

Not all respondents in this survey identified as LGBT+ as we felt it important to have comparative data when looking at the common themes in their experiences. Finding out how young people feel, what they want out of life and how the adults in their lives can help will offer pointers to improve outcomes and that journey for future generations.

When

From our survey results, the most commonly expressed (the mode) ages for 'knowing' and establishing gender identity and sexual orientation (two different things) were between 12 and 15 years old. The (mean) average age respondents said they 'knew' they were LGBT+ was 13.7, which we rounded up to 14 years old. Mean averages don't express a range, however.

Breaking down our results by group and mean average, bisexual and pansexual people* along with asexual and questioning young people said they knew their sexual orientation when they were 14, while gay men said they knew this by the time they were 12 years old. Those identifying as lesbian said they knew aged 13, on average, which was the same age for non-binary and transgender young people.

Positive LGBT+ messaging in school

Less than half (44%) of LGBT+ responders said their school spoke positively about LGBT+ people.

Given our survey is asking for retrospective analysis, there is no control group or standard here to use as a benchmark, but we know from our prior report, *Growing Up LGBT+*, that there is a link between positive messaging about LGBT+ topics in schools and teenagers having better mental health and wellbeing. It is therefore unsurprising this latest report has found that LGBT+ young adults who haven't had positive LGBT+ messaging in school experience worse outcomes in adulthood. It shows how important it is to listen to and prioritise the experiences of LGBT+ young people when it comes to inclusion.

The perception differed markedly between respondents who did not identify as LGBT+ and those who did. *Growing Up LGBT+* established that LGBT+ young people are also more likely to have heard negative language about LGBT+ people.

*The terms bisexual and pansexual are sometimes used interchangeably. For the purpose of this report, we have grouped together both terms as an umbrella group.

What age did you know that you were LGBT+?

LGBT+	Non-binary	Transgender	Asexual	Bi/pansexual	Gay man	Lesbian	Questioning
14	**13**	**13**	**14**	**14**	**12**	**13**	**14**

While 3 in 5 (60%) non-LGBT+ respondents to the survey felt their school had spoken positively on the subject, the proportion of LGBT+ respondents who felt the same way dropped to around 2 in 5 (44%).

Our latest report confirms that 2 in 5 (40%) LGBT+ respondents felt that positive discussion about LGBT+ people had not often happened in school and a further 1 in 6 (17%) said positive discussion had never happened.

Negative talk and criticism is known to have a longer-lasting impact than praise. For young LGBT+ people, language is often the first indicator that someone is unsafe for them to be around and later in the report we indicate just how many feel unsafe in their environments, including at home and at work.

A significant number of respondents felt the lack of LGBT+ role models when they were growing up. Around 3 in 5 (60%) respondents said they had no LGBT+ role models at all (our prompts for possible role models included youth club leaders and sports coaches) with around 1 in 8 (13%) saying they had just one role model. Only 3 in 100 (3%) said they had lots of role models.

Around 1 in 4 respondents said they knew of only one teacher who was open and out at their school and around 3 in 5 (60%) said none had been – figures that were similar regardless of whether respondents themselves identified as LGBT+ or not.

It may be that respondents were either not aware of who was out or did not consider them to be role models during their school years, but since 1 in 10 LGBT+ young people said they had come out to a role model and 1 in 4 (24%) came out to a teacher or lecturer, such knowledge, along with the potential support role models and teachers may offer, can be critical.

The experience of LGBT+ pupils and teachers in school is examined in more detail in Just Like Us' *Growing Up LGBT+* report, 2021.

Out and proud?

Friends were overwhelmingly (78%) the people that LGBT+ respondents felt most able to come out to, with siblings a distant second (45%). It is worth noting that responses were not either/or, so some of our respondents would have been out to several people, while some would have been more selective and careful who they chose to be open with. Despite all respondents in this section being LGBT+ adults, one in 20 (5%) said they had no one in their life who was supportive of their LGBT+ identity. A similar number said they are still not out. Of that 5% of unsupported respondents, 22% said they were afraid to come out and a similar number said they were still unsure of their sexual orientation. From our 'what age were you?' question, we noted that while some respondents felt they always knew they were LGBT+, others were in their 20s before establishing that fact.

Coming out

Out vs not out

- Out
- Not out
- N/A

91%

5%

4%
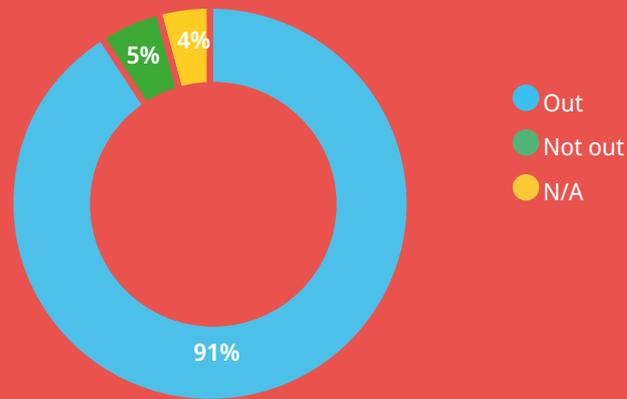
Who in your life have you come out to as LGBT+?

Friend(s)	78%
Parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s)	46%
Sibling(s)	45%
Colleague(s) at work	31%
Other family	25%
Teacher(s) lecturer(s)	24%
Grandparent(s)	20%
Role model(s)	10%
No one	5%
Not applicable	4%
Other	3%

Why have you not come out to anyone as LGBT+?

Afraid	22%
Unsure about sexuality	21%
Other	21%
Not sure	9%
Not ready yet	5%
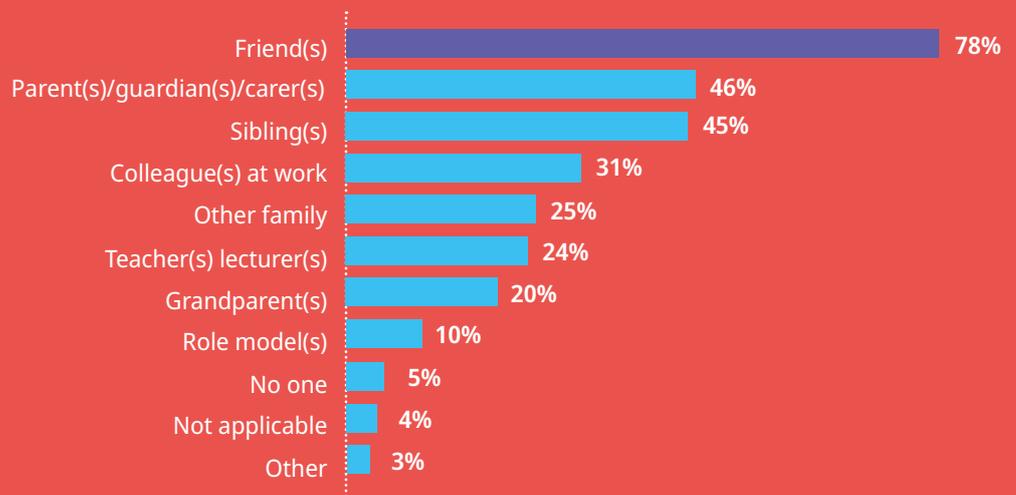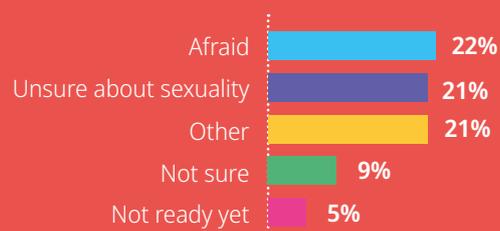
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School environments

The levels of acceptance and support that LGBT+ young people receive have a huge impact on their ability to survive and thrive. In an ideal world, having friends, a community, a job and a sense of future and pride in identity, together with finding happiness and maintaining wellbeing, can be founded in a solid base started at school and home and developed at college, university or work.

For a significant number of LGBT+ young people, this is not their reality and they are more likely to have high levels of anxiety, depression and panic attacks when their school background is unsupportive (93% compared to 78%). Differences were repeated across a range of questions we asked, including how often respondents felt close to people or good about themselves.

The results can be summarised quite simply: schools that are unsupportive create worse future outcomes for all pupils, and LGBT+ pupils in particular.

When schools offered a supportive environment, LGBT+ respondents were four times more likely to say they were optimistic about their future all of the time, compared with those whose school environment was not supportive (31% compared to 7%).

LGBT+ respondents whose school environments were unsupportive were more than twice as likely to say they were rarely or never optimistic about their future (37%) than those whose schools offered supportive environments (16%). When school environments were neither supportive nor unsupportive, LGBT+ respondents' levels of optimism were also poorer.

Supportive schools make a difference to all pupils' levels of optimism about the future, but especially those who are LGBT+, whose levels of optimism are on a par with – and in some points better than – their non-LGBT+ peers.

- 84% of LGBT+ respondents from supportive schools were optimistic about their futures some or all of the time, compared with 63% of LGBT+ respondents from unsupportive schools.
- 85% of non-LGBT+ respondents from supportive schools were optimistic about their futures some or all of the time, compared with 75% of non-LGBT+ respondents from unsupportive schools.

And at the other end of the scale, 1% of LGBT+ respondents whose schools were supportive said they never felt optimistic about the future, compared with 2% of non-LGBT+ respondents.

Comparing LGBT+ respondents' answers by supportive and unsupportive school environments, clear differences start to show.

LGBT+ responses

I'm optimistic about the future by unsupportive/supportive school environment

● Unsupportive
● Supportive
● Neither

All of the time
- Unsupportive: 7%
- Supportive: 31%
- Neither: 18%

Some of the time
- Unsupportive: 56%
- Supportive: 53%
- Neither: 57%

Rarely
- Unsupportive: 31%
- Supportive: 15%
- Neither: 22%

Never
- Unsupportive: 6%
- Supportive: 1%
- Neither: 4%

Non-LGBT+ responses

I'm optimistic about the future by unsupportive/supportive school environment

● Unsupportive
● Supportive
● Neither

All of the time
- Unsupportive: 20%
- Supportive: 26%
- Neither: 29%

Some of the time
- Unsupportive: 55%
- Supportive: 59%
- Neither: 57%

Rarely
- Unsupportive: 23%
- Supportive: 13%
- Neither: 12%

Never
- Unsupportive: 3%
- Supportive: 2%
- Neither: 2%
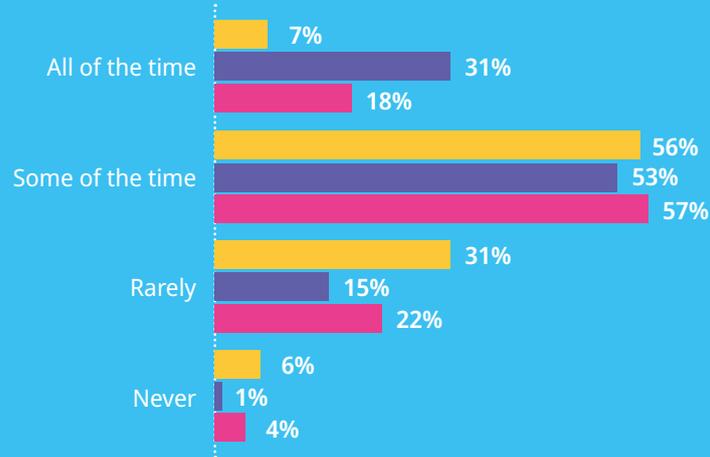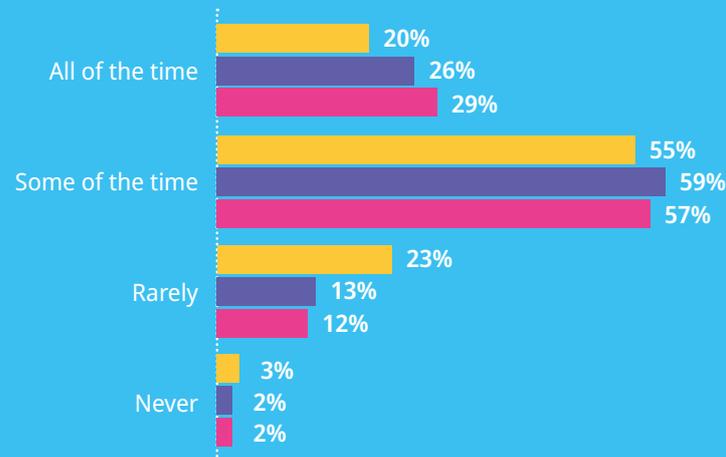
Proportionately, across the series of questions we asked, fewer than 1 in 10 (8%) LGBT+ respondents felt their schools had been supportive, with around 3 in 10 saying their schools were unsupportive and the rest saying their schools were neither supportive nor unsupportive.

The question that made this most obvious was: Did your school speak positively about LGBT+ people? 100% of LGBT+ respondents at supportive schools said this had happened often or very often, while 100% of those at unsupportive schools said this had happened never or not very often. But what was noticeable was that even when responses were unfiltered as either LGBT+ or non-LGBT+ these results were similar, highlighting that this was not a perception held only by LGBT+ young people.

How can schools and colleges do more to inform and broaden students' understanding of LGBT+ identities and allyship?

Our survey participants were aged 18–25, so had either just left school or were a maximum of seven years out of school or college. 3 in 5 non-LGBT+ and nearly 9 in 10 LGBT+ respondents said they would have liked to have been taught about LGBT+ topics in school.

We also asked when young people should learn about LGBT+ people: 3 in 4 (74%) LGBT+ respondents said pre- or primary school or earlier, compared with around 3 in 8 non-LGBT+ people.

Curriculum guidance already advocates for including diverse families in primary school, such as talking about how some young people have lesbian mums. Just Like Us supports many primary schools with **free resources** on learning about kindness, respecting difference and celebrating diverse families.

Earlier in the survey on page 14 we considered how old respondents were when they knew they were LGBT+ and although average figures showed most were in their early teens (gay men were 12), this reflected a mean average score, rather than the range.

- Around 15% (3 in 20) of our respondents knew they were LGBT+ before they reached the age of 11, ie when they were in primary or pre-school.

- A significant additional proportion knew at the age of 11, when they were on the cusp of primary and secondary school.

In our 2021 *Growing Up LGBT+* report on the wellbeing and experiences of 11–18-year-olds, only 9% of LGBT+ respondents (compared with 25% of non-LGBT+) thought their family completely understood the things that were important to them, and 13% said their families didn't understand them at all (compared with 6% of non-LGBT+ school respondents).

The report also showed that 52% of LGBT+ survey participants (more than half) said seeing other LGBT+ students and staff around made the most positive difference to their daily life at school. So who can the youngest LGBT+ pupils turn to if no provision for age-appropriate discussions about sexual orientation and gender is available?

15%
of LGBT+ survey respondents knew they were LGBT+ before they were 11.

Without appropriate guidance and support in schools and from trusted adults school-age children could seek information from:

- friends, who may be under-informed or misinformed
- the internet, social media and chatrooms, which could expose them to predatory adults, inappropriate views and abusive content.

They could also ask:

- teachers/sports coaches, who may feel uncomfortable discussing the subject without supervision and appropriate training
- other positive role models – if young people have them
- loving parents/carers/guardians (who may not know where to find the information they need)
- siblings, who, regardless of whether they are older, close in age, or younger, may not have the experience or maturity to supply helpful advice
- support services such as **Switchboard**, although young people may not be aware of these or how to safely access them.

LGBT+ inclusive education

Yes, I would like to have been taught about LGBT+ topics at school

Non-LGBT+	61%
LGBT+	88%
Non-binary	95%
Transgender	93%
Asexual	84%
Bi/pansexual	90%
Gay man	86%
Lesbian	87%
Questioning	83%
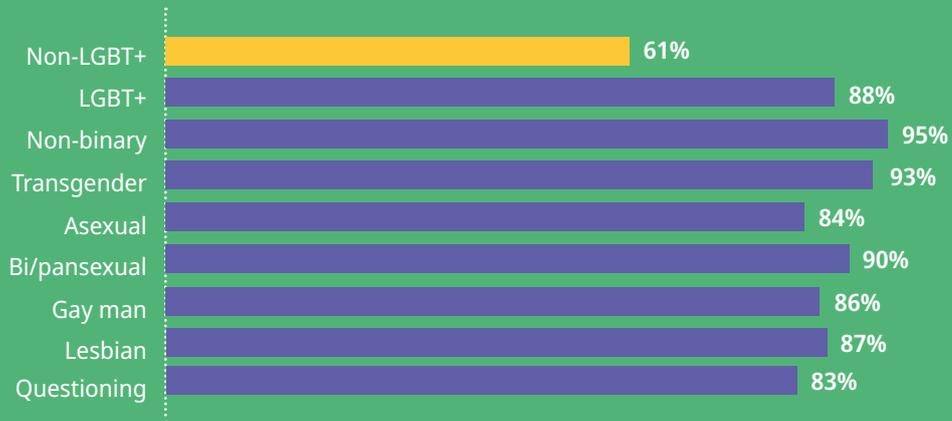
When do you think young people should learn about LGBT+ people?

	non-LGBT+	LGBT+
Pre-school or earlier	9%	30%
Primary school	28%	44%
Secondary school	45%	22%
Young people should not learn about LGBT+ people at school	18%	4%

● non-LGBT+   ● LGBT+

Young people should not learn about LGBT+ people at school

Non-LGBT+	18%
LGBT+	4%
Non-binary	1%
Transgender	2%
Asexual	5%
Bi/pansexual	2%
Gay man	8%
Lesbian	2%
Questioning	4%
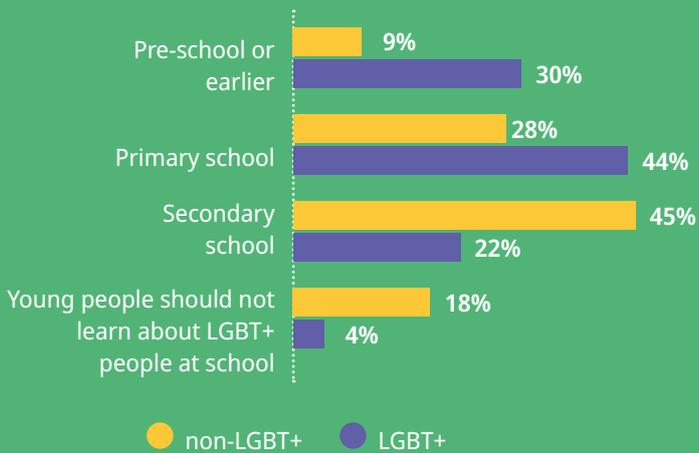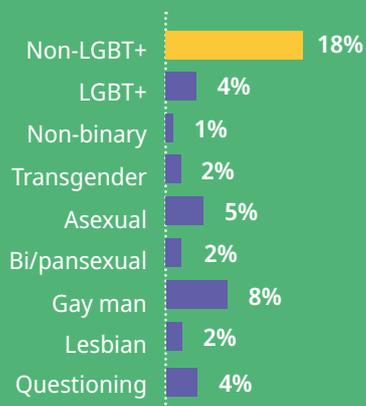
3.

Adult life, university, finding work, being happy at work

Our research shows that a significant number of respondents still feel unable to come out and live openly among their peers and family, or to feel certain of acceptance and integration.

Even allowing for societal changes since the oldest respondents (aged 25) were in school, sensitivity to other people's reactions remains for a myriad of reasons. While some LGBT+ respondents revealed that their reticence was because they were still exploring their identity, or they feared being ostracised by family and friends, others said they worried about losing the support they currently had or did not feel safe.

Nearly 2 in 3 of our respondents were current university students, either undergraduates or postgraduates. Just over 1 in 5 respondents had not gone to university and 3 in 20 had already graduated.

Heading back in the closet at work

Does the experience of school bullying affect workplace confidence and openness? Our survey findings showed that a significant proportion of our young respondents identifying as LGBT+ were likely to have experienced bullying. Fear of unfair treatment and lack of acceptance within wider society can be shaped by bitter experience at school, where 7 in every 10 (70%) LGBT+ respondents who were out were bullied. 1 in 4 (25%) respondents who had already come out elsewhere admitted they had gone back in the closet when they started work. Among the student respondents, for many their job was something they did alongside their current studies, which may imply that they feel their situation is not long-term.

Why have you not come out to anyone as LGBT+?

'Not safe, can't risk backlash or losing support.'

'Homophobic family/fear.'

'I am still trying to figure things out, and I may be ostracised by friends and family.'

'Fear of judgement and labelling.'

'I'm not sure what I am but I think I'm definitely not 'just straight.'

'I'm still exploring my identity and don't want to talk about it until I am more sure of myself.'

'I don't really like having a label.'

Educational background – further/higher education

- University graduate **15%**
- Did not go to university **21%**
- Current university student **64%**

- Undergraduate **77%**
- Postgraduate **22%**
- Other **1%**
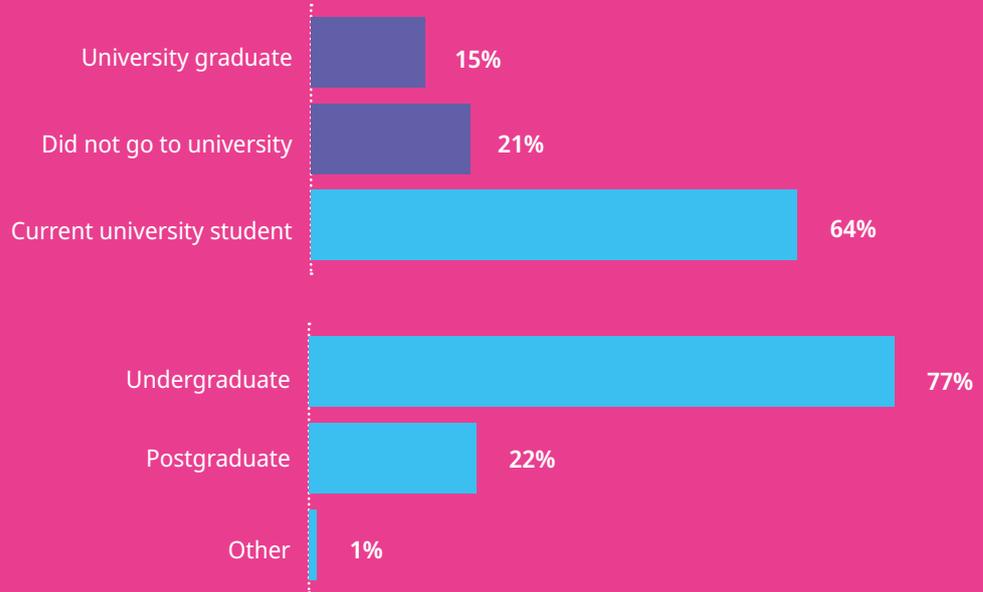
Employment status

Proportion of respondents who have a job

48% of respondents had a job.

- Not been to university **50%**
- Current student **41%**
- Graduate **78%**
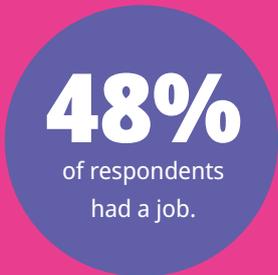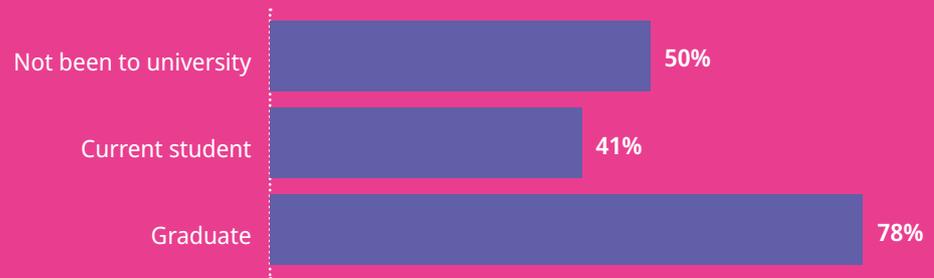
Proportion of respondents who have a second job
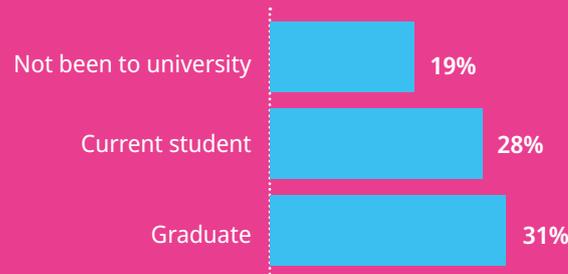
27% of respondents had a second job.

- Not been to university **19%**
- Current student **28%**
- Graduate **31%**

Nearly 2 in 3 of our respondents were current university students, either undergraduates or postgraduates. Just over 1 in 5 respondents had not gone to university and 3 in 20 had already graduated. Students often pick up jobs in the gig economy, doing deliveries, working in hospitality and retail (bars and shops, for example) while they are studying or taking on seasonal jobs during holidays. Some may be on a placement period (eg, a year in business or industry) as part of their course. For the 1 in 3 respondents who were not students, their job may mark the start of their career. Regardless of whether a job is temporary or permanent, all employers should consider why some people feel more comfortable being out and how workplace attitudes and support suit some LGBT+ individuals more than others. That may be influenced by the feeling that having a label can hinder career progression or be specifically worried about colleagues' attitudes.

Looking at responses from transgender people themselves, 3 in 10 (30%) surveyed revealed that they were not open about their status in their workplace. That is similar to the proportion of gay men (31%) who responded who are not out at work, but attitudes towards each group may be very different. Although respondents were not specifically asked why they chose non-disclosure, and for context, fewer than 1 in 4 (23%) gay men said they were bullied at work, it should be noted that nearly 4 in 5 of non-binary, transgender and bi/pansexual respondents experienced bullying at school.

In fact, out LGBT+ respondents as a whole were significantly more likely to have experienced bullying at school or at their place of employment than their non-LGBT+ or closeted LGBT+ cohort and colleagues. It is hard to imagine how an employee can really thrive at work while feeling the need to hide who they are.

Around 1 in 5 (19%) of all our out respondents experienced bullying at work. This is more than non-LGBT+ respondents, of whom 1 in 7 (14%) had been bullied in work. A similar number of lesbian and non-binary people (15%) said they had been bullied at work but the similarities do not follow across the board: lesbian and non-binary people have different feelings about their place of employment, how happy they are and their career progression.

Even where school or workplace anti-bullying and inclusion policy is clear and company policy offers protection and support to a complainant or victim, it takes strength, confidence and resilience to call out, report and change bullying behaviour. Staying in the closet does not guarantee protection against bullying: more than half of LGBT+ respondents who were not out at school, and around 1 in 6 (16%) of those not out at work, were the victims of bullies regardless. To look at those figures another way, 5 in 6 LGBT+ people in the closet were not bullied at work, which may influence their reasoning for being guarded about their sexual orientation or status.
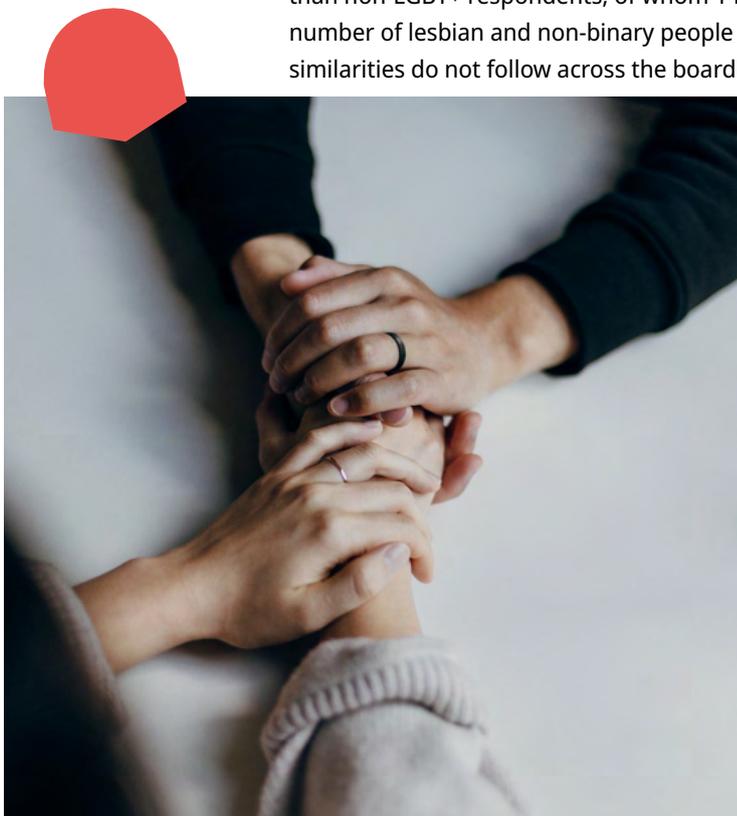
Attitudes towards transgender people

### How supportive are you of transgender people?

Category	Know a transgender person	Don't know a transgender person
Very supportive	64%	33%
Supportive	23%	28%
Slightly supportive	10%	20%
Not supportive	3%	18%
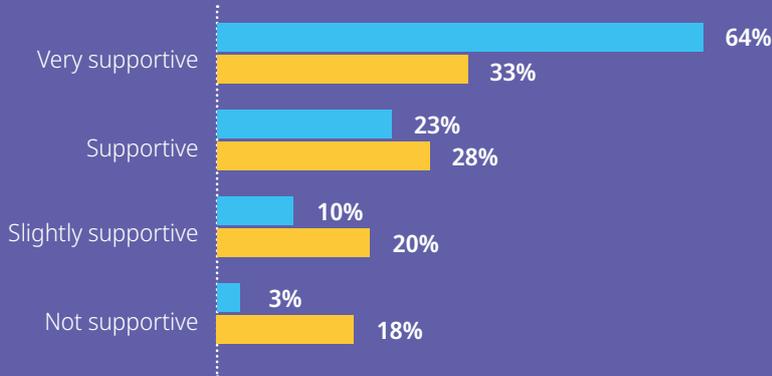
- 🔵 Know a transgender person
- 🟡 Don't know a transgender person

Do you know any transgender people?

- 🔵 28% Yes, someone I'm close to
- 🟢 38% Yes, someone I'm not close to
- 🔴 34% I don't know any transgender people
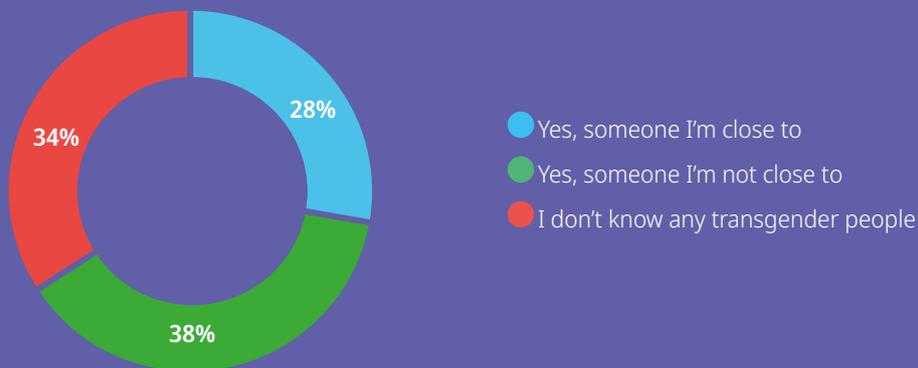
Do you know a transgender person? Yes

Non-LGBT+	49%
LGBT+	84%
Non-binary	94%
Transgender	93%
Asexual	82%
Bi/Pan	85%
Gay man	80%
Lesbian	92%
Questioning	75%
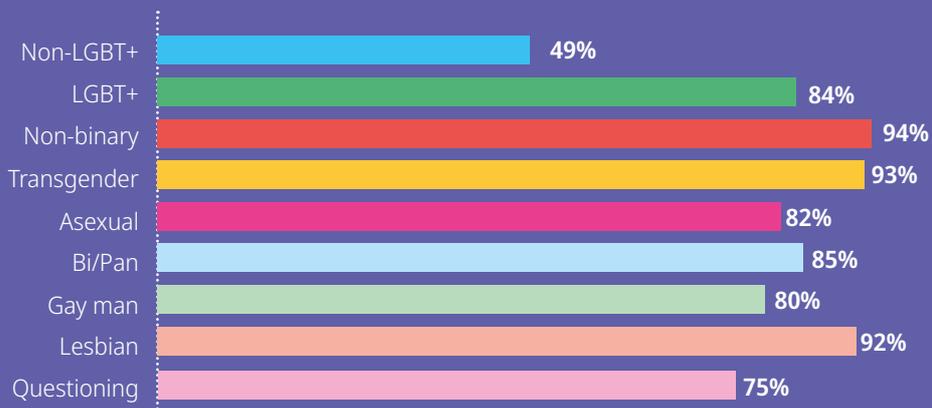
Have you ever hurt yourself deliberately?

- Yes
- No

Non-LGBT+

31%
69%

LGBT+

35%
65%
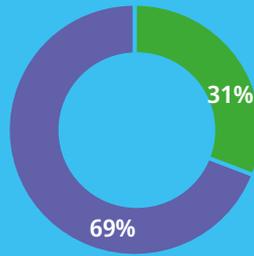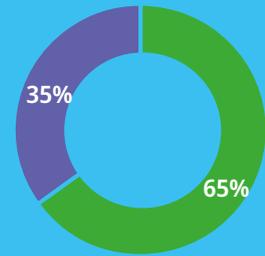
Have you ever personally experienced suicidal thoughts and feelings?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Non-LGBT+

9%
43%
48%

LGBT+

7%
18%
74%
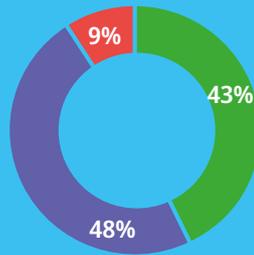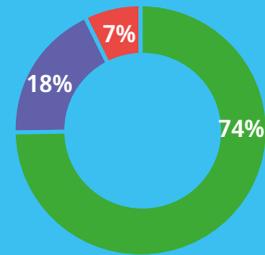
How often do you smoke?

- Never, I do not smoke
- Yes

Non-LGBT+

35%
65%

LGBT+

43%
57%
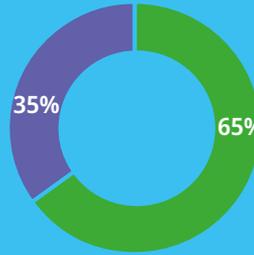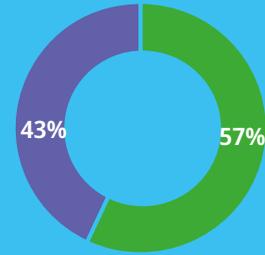
## How often do you drink alcohol?

- 4+ times per week
- 2–3 times per week
- 2–4 times per month
- Monthly or less
- Never, I do not drink alcohol

Non-LGBT+

2%
12%
27%
35%
24%

LGBT+

2%
17%
29%
21%
29%
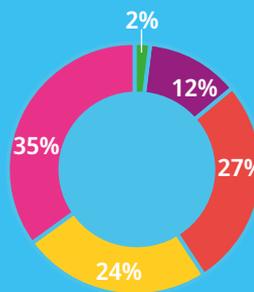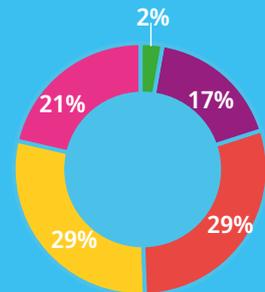
How often do you take recreational drugs?

- 4+ times per week
- 2–3 times per week
- 2–4 times per month
- Monthly or less
- Never

Non-LGBT+

1%
4%
2%
11%
82%

LGBT+

2%
7%
3%
21%
67%
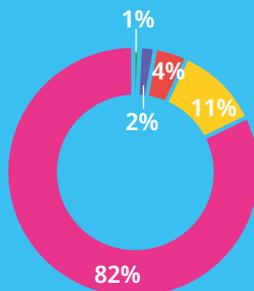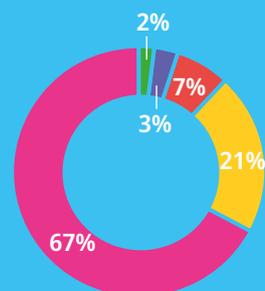
LGBT+ young people were more than twice as likely to deliberately self-harm than their non-LGBT+ peers, (65% compared to 31%) and 3 in 4 LGBT+ people had experienced suicidal thoughts and feelings, compared with around 2 in 5 non-LGBT+ respondents. Fewer than 1 in 5 (18%) LGBT+ young people said they had never experienced suicidal thoughts and feelings compared with almost half (48%) of their non-LGBT+ peers.

LGBT+ young people are more significantly likely than their non-LGBT+ peers to experience problems such as anxiety, depression and panic attacks and to smoke, drink alcohol and take recreational drugs more often.
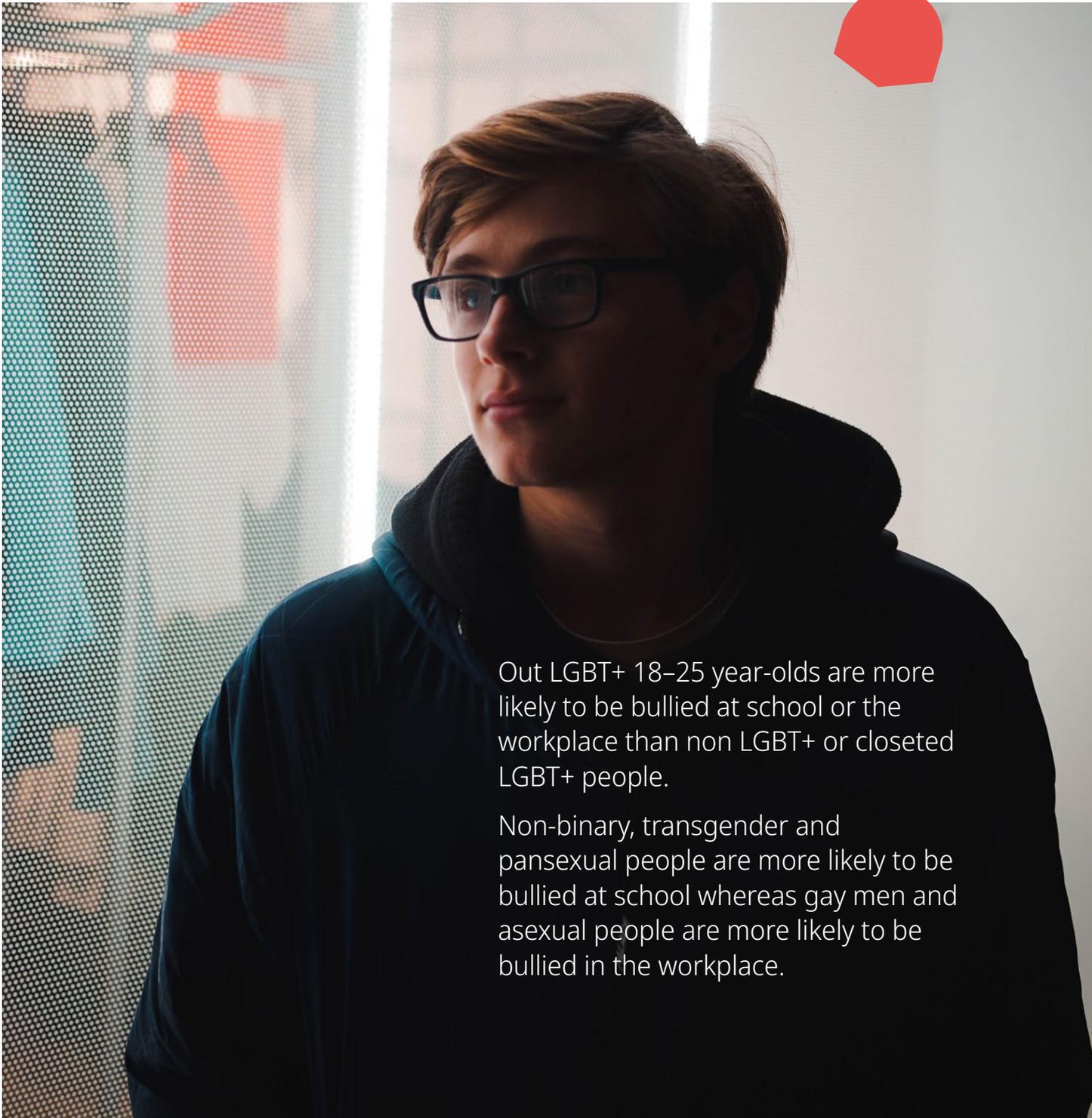
Out LGBT+ 18–25 year-olds are more likely to be bullied at school or the workplace than non LGBT+ or closeted LGBT+ people.

Non-binary, transgender and pansexual people are more likely to be bullied at school whereas gay men and asexual people are more likely to be bullied in the workplace.

25%

go back into the closet
at work

What can and should employers do to ensure equity and equality for LGBT+ colleagues?

Allyship and positive changes to workplace policy have gone some way to improving LGBT+ people's lives. The UN's LGBT Inclusion Standards offer a good starting point for all employers and Deloitte** is one of a number of prominent global organisations to have signed up to these.

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies should be everyone's business, not just a matter for human resources (HR) teams and managers. Employers risk missing out on a significant proportion of the best graduate and school-leaving talent if they don't make their commitment to EDI central, clear and followed through on when they are recruiting. As early as the outset of their career search, respondents to our survey across the board viewed a company's EDI policies as very important. Among non-LGBT+ young people, nearly 3 in 5 (59%) agreed they took this into account when applying for jobs. For LGBT+ respondents this figure rose to nearly 2 in 3 (65%), and by sub-sector, almost 3 in 4 (72%) lesbian respondents agreed it was a very important factor in their choice of employer. That compares with 2 in 3 (66%) gay men – interesting when contextualised against different groups' experience of bullying. Half of all not-out respondents (55%) also said a future employer's commitment to EDI was important when they were applying for jobs, and although the figure is proportionately less than LGBT+ people as a whole, this still represents significant numbers of job seeking young adults.

Young people's careers sites such as **targetjobs** include helpful posts for readers identifying as LGBT+ and offer advice alongside jobs boards aimed at school leavers and graduates. For many LGBT+ people, their journey to coming out and their sexual orientation or gender identity are added stress points at an already difficult time. As previously mentioned, 1 in 5 (22%) LGBT+ respondents are afraid to come out, and some respondents were in their 20s (our upper age limit for the survey was 25) before they felt clear about this part of their lives, while other respondents said they were still unsure of their sexuality.

Do targeted work networks and groups help?

Among respondents who were open about their sexual orientation or gender identity, once in work only around 2 in every 5 (38%) of the out young people we surveyed said they were prepared to get involved in LGBT+ networks or groups. To a lesser or greater extent this response was similar across respondents identifying as bi/pansexual (37%), transgender (42%) or asexual (43%).

More than 1 in 2 gay young men (55%) taking part in our survey said they had been involved in an LGBT+ network or group, compared with only 1 in 3 (33%) lesbians. That figure falls to around 2 in 15 (13%) among respondents who were not out. That viewpoint may be better understood by revisiting the survey's bullying figures, which highlight that staying in the closet appears to reduce the likelihood of being bullied. So a deciding factor could be that the benefits of keeping quiet and not doing anything to identify with LGBT+ groups and networks outweigh the positive aspects of attending or joining.

Have you ever been bullied?

- 🟡 Bullied at school
- 🟣 Bullied at work

Category	Bullied at school	Bullied at work
Out	70%	19%
Not out	55%	16%
Non-LGBT+	47%	14%
LGBT+	68%	19%
Non-binary	79%	15%
Transgender	78%	18%
Asexual	66%	23%
Bi/pansexual	73%	20%
Gay man	62%	23%
Lesbian	58%	15%
Questioning	69%	16%
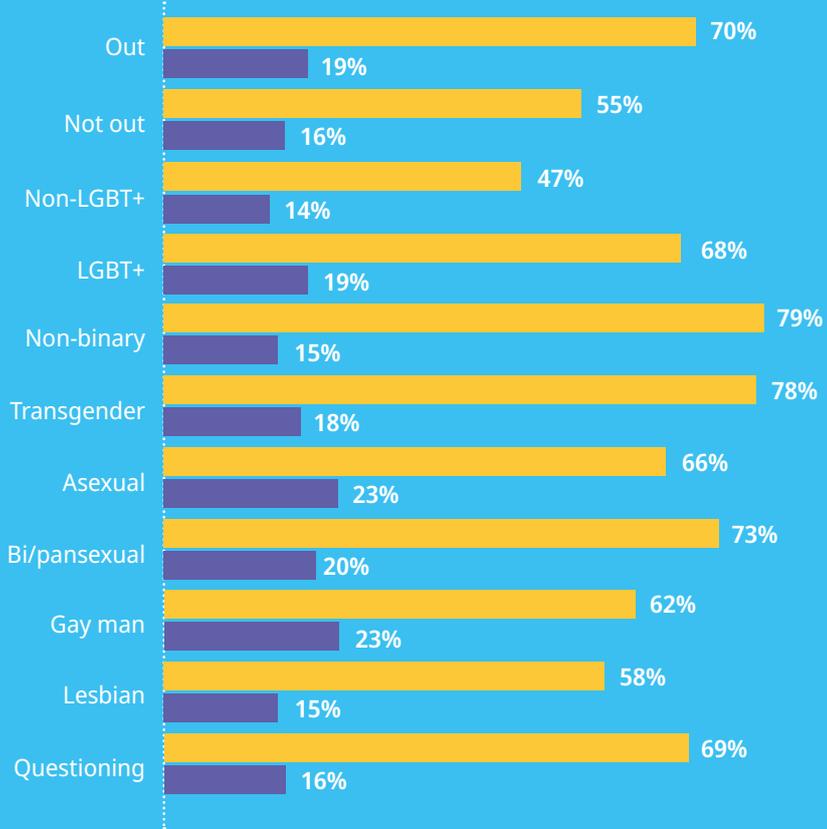
Coming out

- 🟡 Went back into the closet after starting work
- 🟣 Not confident that their parents would have a positive response to them coming out

Category	Went back into the closet after starting work	Not confident that their parents would have a positive response
LGBT+	25%	31%
Non-binary	27%	39%
Transgender	30%	37%
Asexual	24%	33%
Bi/pansexual	26%	35%
Gay man	31%	25%
Lesbian	26%	24%
Questioning	20%	28%
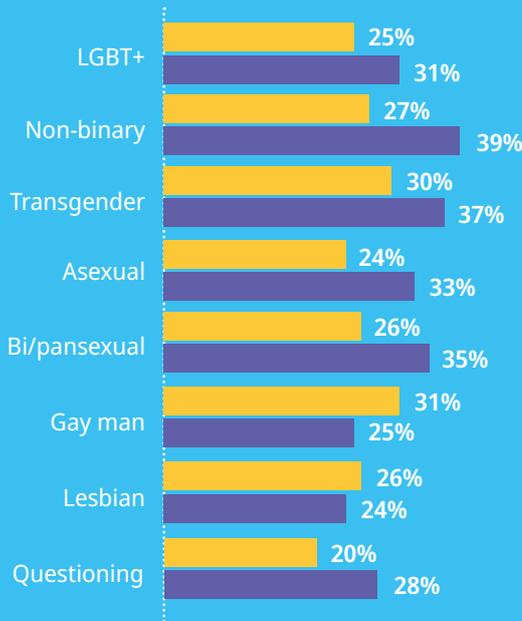
How important is a company's commitment to EDI when applying? Very important

Out	65%
Not out	55%
Non-LGBT+	59%
LGBT+	65%
Non-binary	70%
Transgender	67%
Asexual	62%
Bi/pansexual	62%
Gay man	66%
Lesbian	72%
Questioning	65%
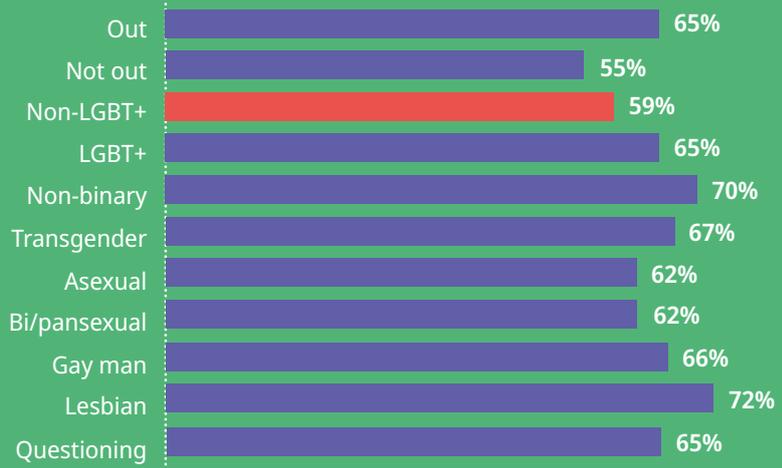
At work, have you ever been a part of an LGBT+ network or group? Yes

Out	38%
Not out	13%
Non-LGBT+	21%
LGBT+	36%
Non-binary	35%
Transgender	42%
Asexual	43%
Bi/pansexual	36%
Gay man	55%
Lesbian	33%
Questioning	19%
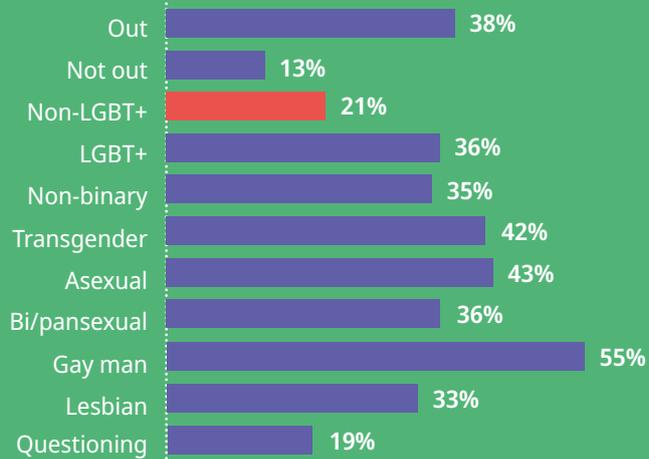
The importance of allies

More non-LGBT+ respondents (around 1 in 5, or 21%) told us they had signed up to LGBT+ networks or groups than those who were in the closet. It should be a consideration though, that although we recruited our survey without being specific about its subject, our non-LGBT+ respondents may already have empathy and be willing to improve their understanding of their LGBT+ colleagues, given their participation in the first place.

What difference does support make?

Many, if not most, people code-switch when they want to blend into unfamiliar situations. Regardless of background, people behave, speak, act or dress differently within different social and professional settings. To have to continue to code-switch long term though, by choosing clothing you are not comfortable in, avoiding pronouns when talking about partners or curbing mannerisms or tone of voice to limit colleagues' curiosity, for example, can be exhausting if a person is not out. And coming out is not a once-and-for-all event but something that often has to be repeated in every fresh situation or encounter. Adding pronouns to a workplace profile or email signature is one small way employers, schools and universities can help navigate this process.

Curiously, despite all of the above, more than 1 in 4 (28%) not-out respondents said they always felt able to be themselves at work: that figure compares with 1 in 2 (49%) non-LGBT+ respondents and 2 in 5 (39%) LGBT+ respondents. When asked who rarely or never felt able to be themselves at work the figures revealed by sector come in at 1 in 10 (10%) of non-LGBT+ people and twice that proportion, 2 in 10, trans and non-binary people (20%) and (19%) respectively.

Experiences can differ substantially within those groups: most lesbian respondents (9 in 10) said they were able to be themselves sometimes or always at work (89%), a figure similar to out gay men (86%), but at the opposite end of the range, 1 in every 20 (5%) lesbians said work was a place where they were never able to be themselves, compared with only 1 in every 100 (1%) gay men.

It should concern every employer that fewer than half of our survey's LGBT+ respondents said they felt safe at work all of the time while around 1 in 16 said they never or rarely felt safe at work. For comparison, those answers among non-LGBT+ respondents were 3 in 5 (safe) and less than 1 in 10 (not safe) respectively. The period between school, university and employment is widely acknowledged as one of intense change and challenge, and in the separate *Cibyl Student Mental Health Study 2022* graduates stated that while they wanted an inclusive and understanding environment at the start of their career, nearly a quarter (24%) did not feel their mental health was supported by their employer.

This is a subject we return to in the 'Difficult topics' chapter.

Job satisfaction

Being comfortable in the workplace (or not) affects issues such as job satisfaction, career progression and confidence in the likelihood of an enjoyable career.

When asked how confident this age group (18–25 years) were that they would have a career they would enjoy, nearly 3 in 4 (72%) non-LGBT+ respondents said they were very or somewhat confident, compared to 2 in 3 (65%) LGBT+ respondents. Those not at all confident an enjoyable career lay ahead for them ranged from nearly 1 in 4 (23%) non-LGBT+ respondents and gay men (24%) to more than 1 in 3 (37%) transgender people and almost 2 in 5 (38%) non-binary respondents. Though the figures are low (and it should be remembered that these respondents are at the start of their careers) nearly 1 in 10 gay men (9%) said that they either did not want, or already had, an enjoyable career, compared to only 3 in 100 (3%) of non-binary respondents. In the big picture, over a quarter of young people responding had no confidence that they would ever have a career they would enjoy and these low expectations are examined later in the report.

Though the questions were posed separately, it is notable that around 1 in 16 (6%) lesbian respondents were not at all happy with the way their careers were progressing, similar to the proportion of transgender respondents (1 in 20 or 5%). Around 3 in every 10 gay men (29%) were very happy with their career progression, similar to non-LGBT+ people's responses (30%). More than 1 in 3 (35%) of not-out respondents said they were very happy with the way their career was progressing; that compares with only around 1 in 7 (14%) lesbian respondents.

Workplace support and wellbeing – what works best?

Can supportive mentors help young people improve their career prospects and outcomes? An element of caution from out, not-out and LGBT+ respondents remains that isn't apparent in those identifying as non-LGBT+. The latter were more than twice as likely to say they would like a mentor at work than those not out (61% v 27%), while the proportion of LGBT+ respondents overall who would like a mentor hovered around the 2 in 5 (40%) mark, including nearly half of gay men who were open to the idea of a workplace mentor (46%) and 2 in 5 (39%) of bi/pansexual respondents.

Employers do need to exercise caution when offering career support, ensuring they are not addressing an identity or orientation rather than looking at a person as a whole. They should also look at the barriers that prevent people taking up opportunities when they are available.

Developing young people's skills

We also asked LGBT+ young adults about which skills they would like to develop. A key theme in the findings was that young people at the start of their careers would like to increase their skills in communicating and networking with others – half would like to learn more about public speaking and presenting.

1 in 4
survey participants were not confident about their job prospects.

Do you feel able to be yourself at work?

	Yes, always	Sometimes	Rarely
Out	39%	48%	10%
Not out	28%	53%	15%
Non-LGBT+	49%	42%	9%
LGBT+	39%	47%	11%
Non-binary	25%	56%	13%
Transgender	31%	49%	14%
Asexual	38%	46%	13%
Bi/pansexual	40%	45%	12%
Gay man	42%	44%	13%
Lesbian	39%	50%	6%
Questioning	37%	47%	14%

● Yes, always
● Sometimes
● Rarely
● Never

Do you feel safe at work?

	non-LGBT+	LGBT+
All of the time	60%	49%
Some of the time	34%	42%
Rarely	3%	5%
Never	3%	4%

● non-LGBT+
● LGBT+
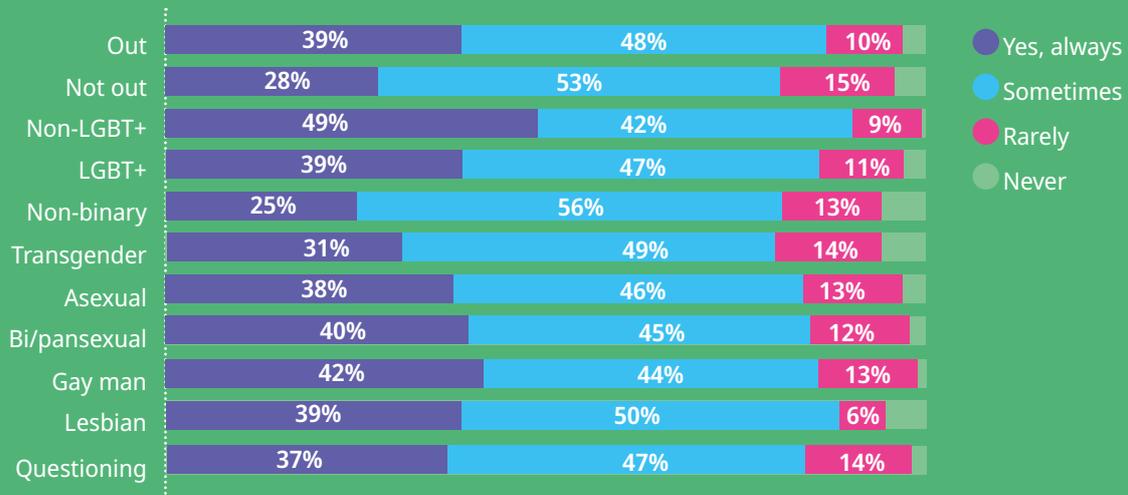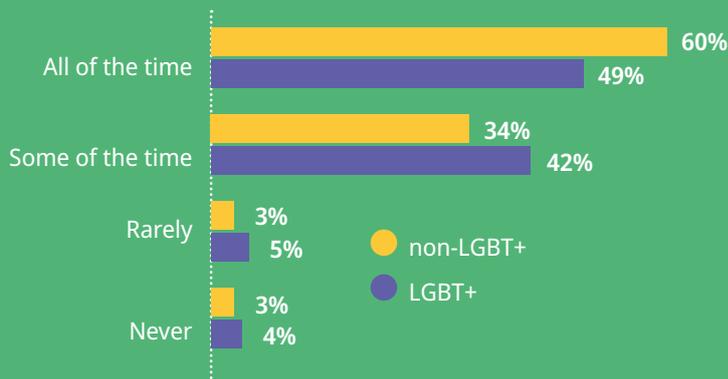
Confidence you will have a career you will enjoy

	Not confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident
Non-LGBT+	23%	50%	22%
LGBT+	30%	51%	14%
Non-binary	38%	53%	6%
Transgender	37%	51%	8%
Asexual	33%	46%	16%
Bi/pansexual	30%	53%	12%
Gay man	24%	47%	20%
Lesbian	28%	49%	18%
Questioning	35%	54%	10%

Total respondents

19%
5%
26%
51%
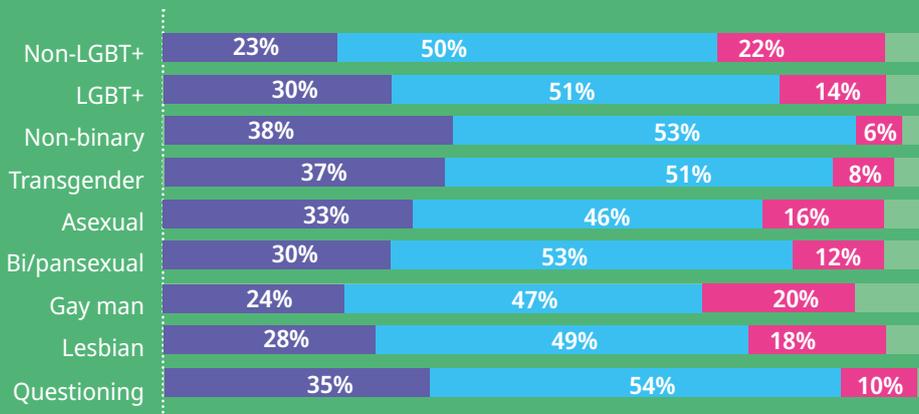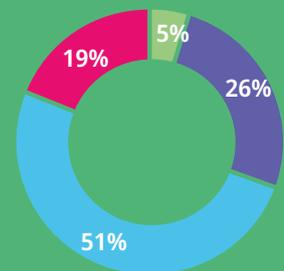
● Not confident
● Somewhat confident
● Very confident
● I do not want this/ I have already done this

Are you happy with how your career is progressing?

	Yes, very	Yes, quite	Not very
Out	17%	57%	22%
Not out	35%	46%	16%
Non-LGBT+	30%	50%	19%
LGBT+	17%	57%	22%
Non-binary	11%	63%	21%
Transgender	14%	57%	24%
Asexual	24%	48%	24%
Bi/pansexual	17%	56%	23%
Gay man	29%	49%	19%
Lesbian	14%	60%	20%
Questioning	5%	59%	31%

Legend: Yes, very / Yes, quite / Not very / Not at all
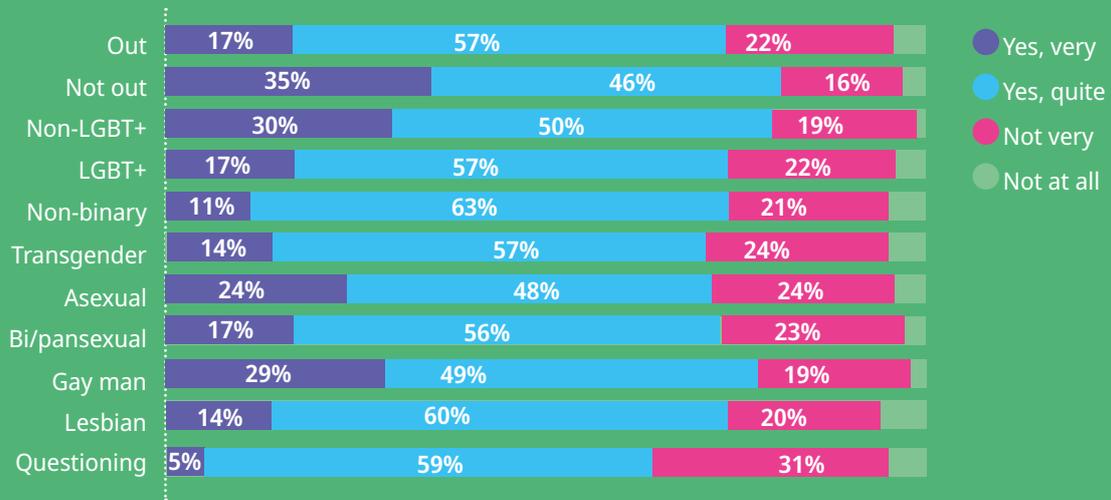
Would you like a mentor at work? Yes

Out	43%
Not out	27%
Non-LGBT+	61%
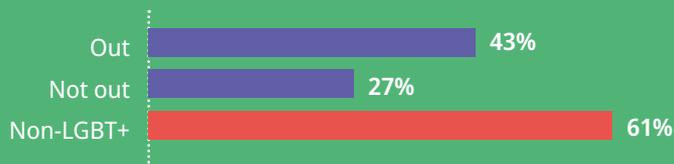
What skills do you want to learn?

Skill	%
Public speaking & presentation skills	49%
Communication	46%
Networking	42%
Article writing & media interview skills	36%
Leadership	35%
Employability	35%
Tech skills	32%
Resilience	29%
Problem-solving	28%
Social media	25%
Teamwork	25%
Entrepreneurship	23%
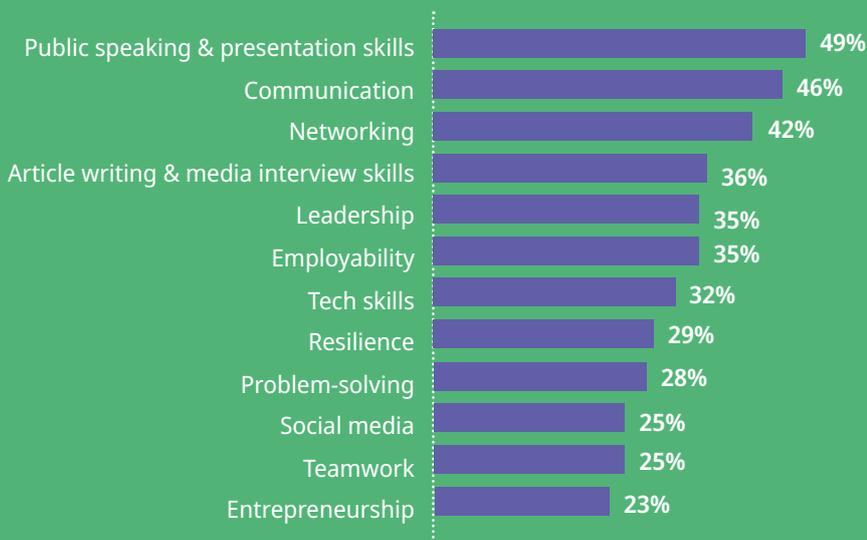
4.

The impact of support

Role models

Among the starkest results our survey revealed were that many unsupported LGBT+ respondents had no role models at all that they could relate to when they were growing up, while those from supportive backgrounds said they had lots.

Similarly, many unsupported LGBT+ young people responding to our survey knew of no teachers in their school who were out as LGBT+, while those from supportive backgrounds knew of one or more teacher.

Across all our respondents, LGBT+ and non-LGBT+:

- 60% (3 in 5) of respondents said they had no LGBT+ role models
- 13% (around 1 in 8) said they had one LGBT+ role model.

The remainder said they had a few (25%) or lots (3%) of LGBT+ role models. Separately, when we asked LGBT+ respondents whom they had come out to:

- 10% said they had come out to role models such as a youth club leader or coach
- 24% said they had come out to a teacher or lecturer.

These were not either/or options, so they may have come out to both.

We've always known as LGBT+ people that the level of acceptance we receive – or not – in our formative years has long-lasting impact. Now this report, for the first time, shows just how crucial that support is, even impacting LGBT+ young adults' outlook on their careers and future family life.

Interim CEO at Just Like Us, Amy Ashenden

The research for our *Growing Up LGBT+* report 2021 found that only 40% of LGBT+ primary and secondary school staff are out to their pupils, implying that there are 60% more potentially supportive adults within school who could be acting as role models to LGBT+ young people, by design or just by the fact they are open. The culture and atmosphere they are treated within, staff members' success in their chosen careers, and the reaction of their peers, not only act as support and role models to LGBT+ young people but also act as good guidance to non-LGBT+ young people.

Other role models

Looking at other ways of bringing role models to young people's attention, our *Growing Up LGBT+* report 2021 found 56% of LGBT+ pupils said that setting up an LGBT+/allies group with support from their school would help them, and 54% said they would like to network with other young people running and attending similar groups. Just Like Us runs a **Pride Groups** programme to support secondary schools to do exactly this.

Anecdotally Just Like Us finds that high-profile and older LGBT+ celebrities such as actors, singers and sports people have less impact than those closer to home or school life at this age. Even when they feature on the covers of national magazines appear in prominent television series, make mainstream media headlines for coming out or winning medals and international competitions, or have an active social media presence with hundreds of thousands of followers, such people do not attract the attention of young people, who do not look at them as role models in the same way as those closest to them, possibly because they seem too distant.

What can be done to help?

In our *Growing Up LGBT+* report 2021, school staff were pointed out as an integral part of making pupils feel supported within school. LGBT+ pupils wanted staff to be visible allies. They also wanted to feel that their school supported LGBT+ staff members to be out and visible.

Providing a level of support to both LGBT+ young people and LGBT+ school staff is something that can be remedied with the investment of time, energy and will, and for little outlay – a major consideration for every budget-holder. This is something that Just Like Us was set up to do – and is doing – consistently and expertly, across the UK.

Support from parents, family members and significant adults

There's an element of the unknown for almost every child or young adult who starts discussing their sexual orientation or gender with their family. Parents, carers or guardians, siblings and wider circles may react very differently from expectations. Raising the subject of same-sex relationships and gender exploration can be met with negativity from other family members, together with anger or abusive behaviour and upsetting and psychologically damaging language. Some of this may have been happening already, whether a young person has been open about being LGBT+ or not.

46%

of LGBT+ respondents were estranged from their family.

Positive outlooks backed by family support

LGBT+ respondents from unsupportive families are twice as likely to not be confident that they'll have an enjoyable career, compared with LGBT+ respondents from supportive environments. It's also worth noting that LGBT+ young adults were half as likely as their non-LGBT+ peers to have a supportive family (21% vs 42%). In fact, LGBT+ respondents were twice as likely as non-LGBT+ respondents to say their families were unsupportive, (6% LGBT+ compared to 3% non-LGBT+). Respondents who were non-binary and transgender reported both the lowest rate of family support at 13% each, and also the highest rate of unsupportive family environment (10% and 8% respectively).

Looking at LGBT+ respondents whose families were not supportive:

- 44% said they were not confident that they would have a career they would enjoy, while 23% of those whose families were supportive felt the same way.

- 42% of non-LGBT+ respondents whose families were not supportive said they were not confident they would find a life partner compared with 30% of their supported peers.

Consistently, support from families produces increased optimism about the future, but this is even more marked for LGBT+ young people.

From LGBT+ respondents' perspectives, nearly 1 in 3 said they were not confident that coming out to their parents, carers or guardians would be met with positivity. This is a significant proportion of LGBT+ young people growing up in fear today that the very support network that should love, nurture and support them might reject them simply for who they are.

Why have you not come out to anyone as LGBT+?

'Because my family is discriminating'

'Because they wouldn't approve and would disown me'

'It's not safe and I can't risk the backlash or losing support'

'I'm too scared about my family's reaction'

'I don't want to start arguments or potentially get thrown out of my house'

According to the answers to optional questions about sexual orientation and gender posed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the national census 2021:

- 89.3% of the population (aged 15+) said they were straight

- 3.1% said they were not straight or heterosexual and of those, 1.5% said they were pan/bisexual

- 7.4% opted not to answer.

When asked if the gender respondents were identified with was the same sex they were registered at birth:

- 93.5% of the population said yes

- 0.5% said no and of those, 0.06% said they were non-binary

- 6% (2.9 million people) opted not to answer.

(Source: ONS – Census 2021)

Are you estranged from any family members?

- Non-LGBT+
- LGBT+

	Non-LGBT+	LGBT+
Yes, all	5%	5%
Yes, more than one family member	18%	26%
Yes, one family member	10%	15%
No	68%	54%
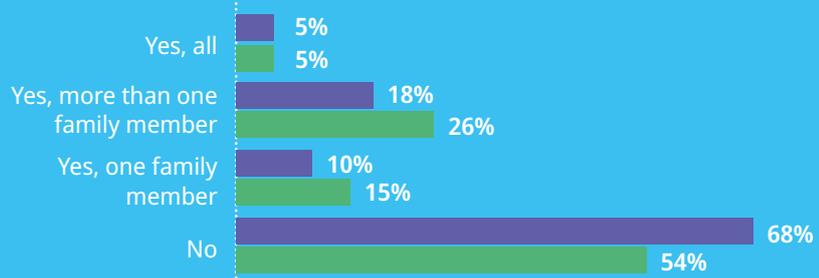
How confident were you that your parents would have a positive response?

Very confident	13%
Mostly confident	25%
Slightly confident	22%
Not confident	31%
Not applicable	9%

Not confident that their parents would have a positive response to them coming out

LGBT+	31%
Non-binary	39%
Transgender	37%
Asexual	33%
Bi/pansexual	35%
Gay man	25%
Lesbian	24%
Questioning	28%
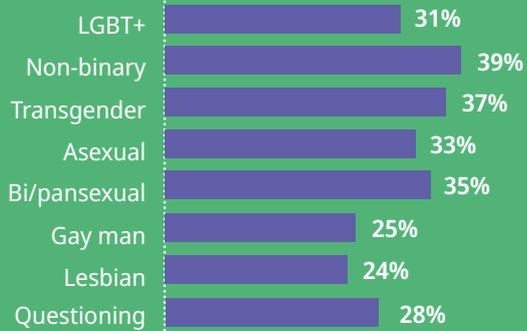
What happens when LGBT+ young people face trouble and intolerance at home?

The cultural norms and laws that surrounded young people's parents, grandparents, guardians and carers when they were growing up themselves were different from those encountered today. But young people and those from older generations, live in the present day, not the past. When family members who could and should be offering support to LGBT+ young people instead retain unreformed views based on past prejudices, LGBT+ young people can find themselves facing intolerance, and verbal, mental and even physical abuse at home. School may be the one place an LGBT+ person can find respite – but this relies on their school offering both a supportive atmosphere and clear policies. Needing a place of support and respite is especially true given the rising levels of hate crime and transphobia encountered and repeated online as well as at home, school and work.

Who was responsible for your verbal abuse/what form did the verbal abuse take?

'Online abuse'

'Someone from school, on the bus'

'People I used to know in secondary school'

'Teacher'

'My dad getting mad at me for something I did wrong'

'Just arguments and name-calling from family members'

What form did the physical abuse take?

'Someone spat at me on the street'

'FV [family violence]'

'Casual violence by passersby in the street'

Only 1 in 8 (13%) respondents said they were very confident their parents, carers or guardians would have a positive response to them coming out, while a quarter (25%) were mostly confident of a positive response, meaning that overall, 3 in 5 felt confident to some extent that their news would be met positively. The remaining 8% felt that the question was not applicable to them.

Looking at the breakdown of responses by LGBT+ identity, the 1 in 3 who felt their family (parents/guardians/carers) would not be positive to them coming out was made up of a quarter of our lesbian respondents (24%) and a similar proportion of the gay men (25%) who took part in the survey. But it was respondents who identified as trans or non-binary who consistently found themselves in the least supportive environments growing up; 39% of those who identified as non-binary, 37% as transgender and 36% as bi/pansexual, reported that they had not been confident their parents would have a positive response to them coming out.

Fears of family rejection

Some of the respondents who had yet to come out to family gave reasons such as, 'homophobic family/fear' and 'I don't want to start arguments or potentially get thrown out of my house'. LGBT+ people learn to assess their safety and the evidence shows their fears are not unfounded as nearly half of our LGBT+ respondents (46%) were estranged from some or all family members compared with non-LGBT+ respondents, 2 in 3 (68%) of whom said they were not estranged from any family. We used this as one of the markers for whether our respondents were from a supportive or unsupportive background.

LGBT+ young adults were consistently more likely to find themselves estranged from one or more family member than non-LGBT+ respondents.

- 22% (1 in 5) were estranged from more than one family member, compared to 18% (fewer than 1 in 4) non-LGBT+ respondents.
- 15% (3 in 20) of LGBT+ young adults were estranged from one family member compared with 10% (2 in 20) of non-LGBT+ young adults.

A family member who decides to cut ties, or who is so unsupportive that a young person feels they need to remove themselves from a damaging or unsupportive sphere, can create an extremely painful, impactful experience. That's especially true if the family member has been a big part of a young person's life as they have grown up. Fear of rejection, negative reactions or even abusive behaviour goes some way to explaining why 5% of our respondents had yet to come out at all.

In addition, **akt**, the UK's national LGBTQ+ youth homelessness charity, states that 24% of young people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness identify as LGBT+, and 77% of that number believe coming out to their family was the main factor in them becoming homeless.

1 in **3** respondents were not confident that coming out to their parents, carers or guardians would be met with positivity.

## Good support pathways lead to positivity and confidence

Teachers and schools provide important points of support and information for all young people. For the significant number of LGBT+ young people who cannot rely on family when they are coming out, schools and teachers become all the more crucial to wellbeing and future outcomes. Just Like Us has LGBT+ **inclusive resources** for all schools and key stages, including resources specifically designed for faith, SEND and Welsh-language schools, to help break down barriers and find pathways to acceptance. The charity also runs **School Diversity Week**, provides school talks and runs a **Pride Groups programme**.

When schools foster a culture of tolerance and understanding towards LGBT+ pupils, all young people, as well as staff and family members, benefit, which impacts on the present and becomes something they take with them into the future.

Our LGBT+ respondents from unsupportive school and family backgrounds were three times more likely to say they are never or rarely optimistic about their future than those from supportive backgrounds. Additionally, they were twice as likely to never or rarely be optimistic about their future than those whose backgrounds were neither supportive nor unsupportive.

Among the respondents to our survey, LGBT+ young adults from unsupportive school and family backgrounds were three times more likely to be unconfident they'll have a career they enjoy, and almost twice as likely than those whose backgrounds were neither supportive nor unsupportive.

I'm never or rarely optimistic about the future – LGBT+ respondents

From unsupportive backgrounds	42%
From supportive backgrounds	12%
From neither unsupportive nor supportive backgrounds	26%

How confident are you that you will have a career that you enjoy? Not confident

From unsupportive backgrounds	46%
From supportive backgrounds	15%
From neither unsupportive nor supportive backgrounds	27%
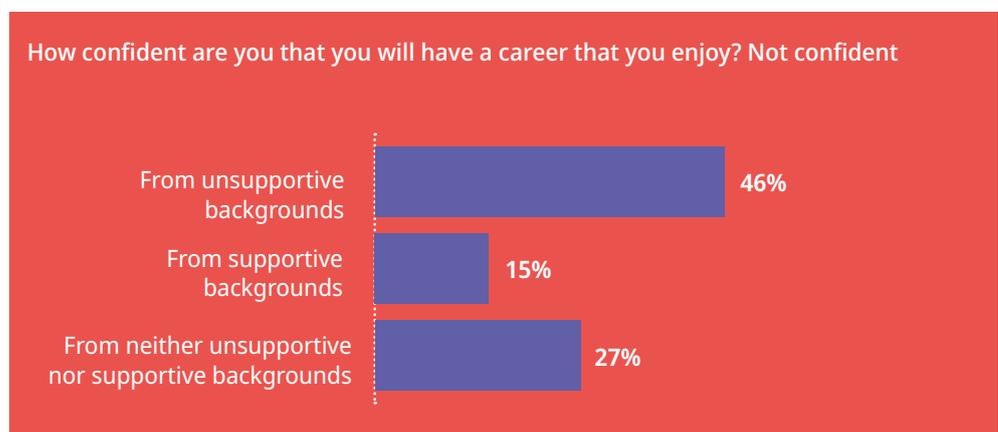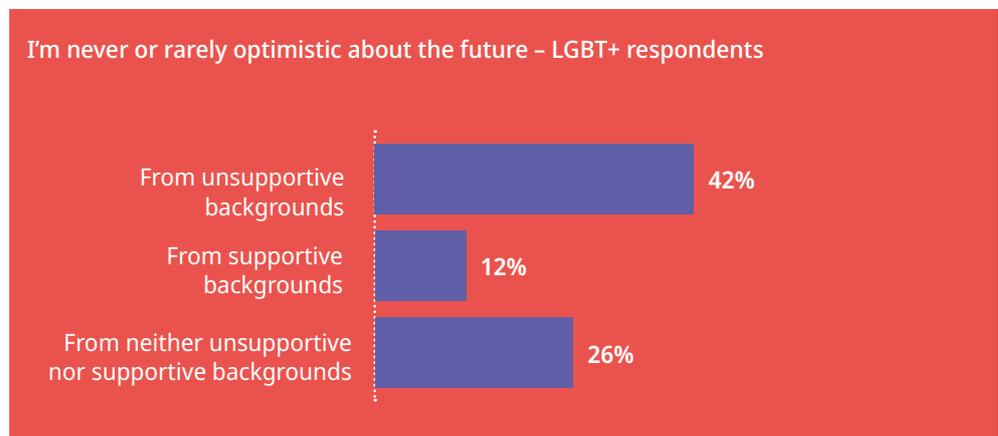
School environments

When we asked our non-LGBT+ respondents about school environments:

- 1 in 10 of said they had not felt supported in school
- around 1 in 8 said they had been supported
- nearly 4 in 5 felt they had been neither supported nor unsupported.

However, among LGBT+ respondents:

- more than 1 in 4 felt unsupported
- only 1 in 12 felt supported
- about 3 in 5 of that cohort said they were neither supported nor unsupported.

Compared with their LGBT+ peers from supportive schools, LGBT+ survey respondents from unsupportive school backgrounds are:

- three times less likely to say they are very confident they will have a career they enjoy
- more likely to say they are not at all confident that they will have a career they enjoy by a factor of 3 to 2.

Trans and non-binary survey respondents particularly felt unsupported in their school environments (37% and 39% respectively), with only 6% and 4% respectively saying they were supported at school.

> Only 6% of trans survey respondents felt supported at school.

## How confident are you that you will find a life partner?

Total respondents

- 5%
- 5%
- 29%
- 36%
- 24%

LGBT+ only

	I do not want this	I have already done this	Not confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident
Unsupportive background	4%	8%	41%	32%	16%
Supportive background	7%	6%	23%	44%	20%
Neither	7%	6%	32%	38%	18%
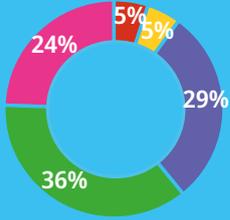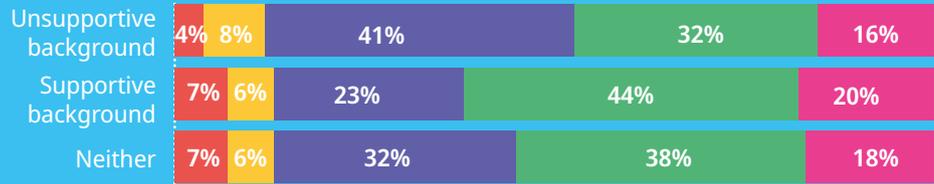
How confident are you that you will get married?

Total respondents

- 16%
- 2%
- 28%
- 32%
- 22%

LGBT+ only

	I do not want this	I have already done this	Not confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident
Unsupportive background	22%		38%	26%	11%
Supportive background	28%		22%	30%	17%
Neither	21%		31%	31%	15%
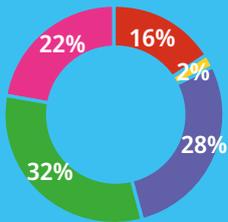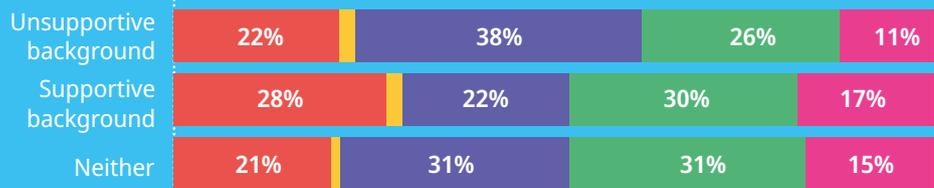
How confident are you that you will have children?

Total respondents
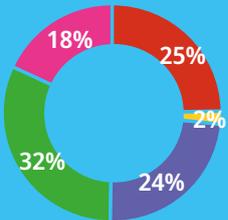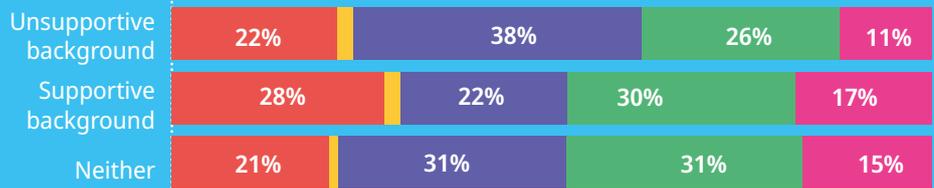
- 25%
- 2%
- 24%
- 32%
- 18%

LGBT+ only

	I do not want this	I have already done this	Not confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident
Unsupportive background	22%		38%	26%	11%
Supportive background	28%		22%	30%	17%
Neither	21%		31%	31%	15%

Legend:
- ● I do not want this
- ● I have already done this
- ● Not confident
- ● Somewhat confident
- ● Very confident

How does LGBT+ support in school shape future hopes?

Our respondents showed how positive LGBT+ support helps young people's perceptions of their future life outcomes. Looking across LGBT+ responses only, those who lacked a supportive school environment were less confident about their future relationships and family life – that they would find a life partner or get married – than respondents who were supported at school.

• Nearly 1 in 2 of those who were supported in school were confident or very confident they would have children if they wanted them.

• 3 in 10 respondents from unsupportive school environments felt the same way.

LGBT+ young people from unsupportive backgrounds were:

• half as likely to be confident that they will find a life partner (34% vs 70%)

• half as likely to be confident they will have children, even though they want to (25% vs 49%)

• nearly half as likely to be somewhat or very confident they would buy a house than those who were supported at school.

LGBT+ identities: family environments

Category	Unsupportive	Supportive
Total	4%	32%
Out	6%	20%
Not out	5%	30%
Non-LGBT+	3%	42%
LGBT+	6%	21%
Non-binary	10%	13%
Transgender	8%	13%
Asexual	4%	19%
Gay man	4%	22%
Lesbian	6%	25%
Pan/bi	7%	20%
Questioning	4%	33%

- Unsupportive
- Supportive
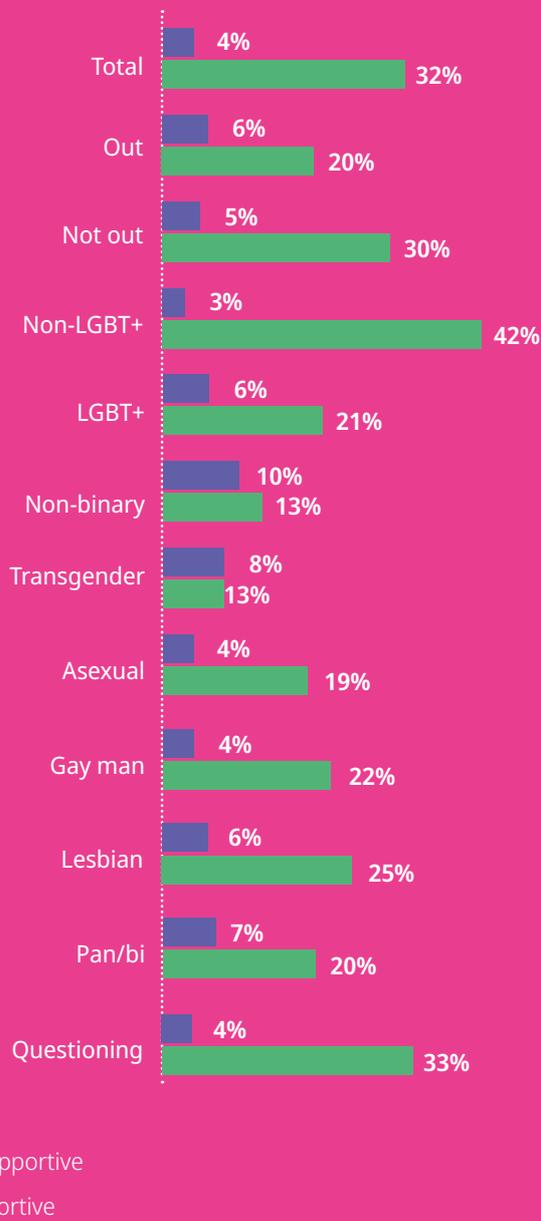
Family environments

Looking at non-LGBT+ respondents' views, more than 2 in 5 said they came from supportive families, with fewer than 1 in 30 saying their family environment was non-supportive.

But this is in stark contrast with the support that LGBT+ respondents had: proportionately half as many – only 1 in 5 – said they were supported while twice as many – 1 in 15 – said their family environment was unsupportive. However, only 1 in 8 (13%) trans and non-binary respondents said their family environment was supportive (8% of trans and 10% of non-binary respondents said their family was unsupportive).

How does support from family shape young people's lives?

Comparing the responses of LGBT+ young people who lacked family support with their peers from supportive families:

- more than 40% of respondents who lacked support were not confident that they would find a life partner or get married
- 30% of those supported felt the same.

While more LGBT+ respondents felt their family was supportive than not, the majority described their family background as neither supportive nor unsupportive, suggesting there is a long way to go until LGBT+ young people overall grow up in families that embrace who they are.

Only 1 in 8 (13%) trans and non-binary respondents said their family environment was supportive.

Looking at career hopes and confidence

LGBT+ respondents from unsupportive families were twice as likely to have no confidence in having a career they'll enjoy, than those from a supportive family (44% compared to 23%). They were also half as likely to be very confident that they'd have a career they would enjoy (7% compared to 18%).

When it comes to house buying, LGBT+ respondents from unsupportive backgrounds were also far less likely to be confident that they would one day own their own home.

How confident are you that you will have a career you enjoy?

Total respondents

LGBT+ only

	I do not want this	I have already done this	Not confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident
Unsupportive background		6%	44%	42%	7%
Supportive background			23%	56%	26%
Neither			30%	51%	14%
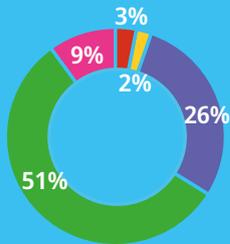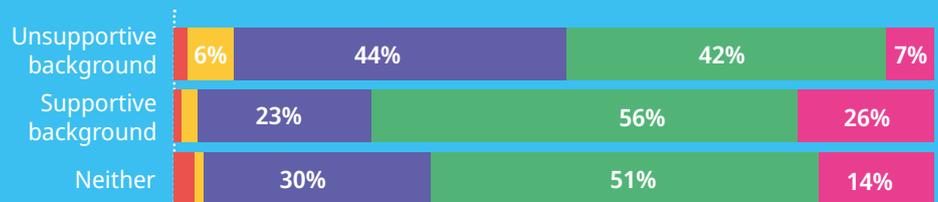
How confident are you that you will buy a house?

Total respondents
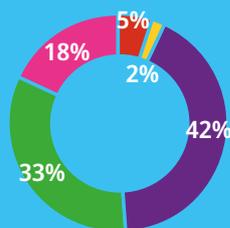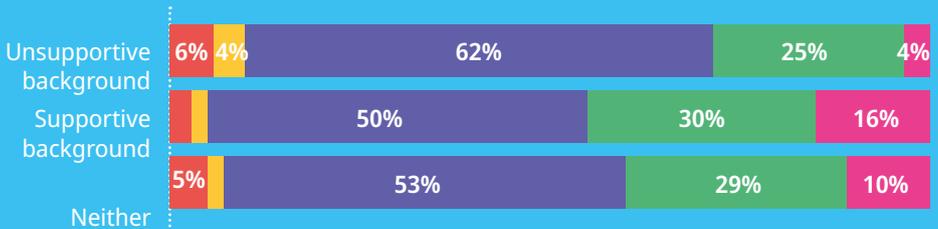
LGBT+ only

	I do not want this	I have already done this	Not confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident
Unsupportive background	6%	4%	62%	25%	4%
Supportive background			50%	30%	16%
Neither	5%		53%	29%	10%

● I do not want this   ● Not confident   ● Very confident
● I have already done this   ● Somewhat confident

Among our survey respondents, LGBT+ young people from unsupportive upbringings were three times more likely to not be confident they'll have a career they enjoy than those who are supported (48% vs 17%).

Difficult topics

Despite 9 in 10 LGBT+ respondents saying they had a person (or people) in their life who was supportive of their identity, and more than 8 in 10 saying they felt part of an LGBT+ community:

• more than 1 in 3 said they rarely or never felt good about themselves

• more than 1 in 4 gay men and almost 1 in 3 lesbians rarely or never felt good about themselves

• nearly 1 in 2 non-binary, transgender and questioning young adults who responded said they rarely or never felt good about themselves.

It is hard to narrow down what damage the lack of support creates when answers are completely unfiltered. These become far clearer when responses are analysed by support/lack of support and by LGBT+ and non-LGBT+.

LGBT+ respondents' greater fears, lower expectations and poorer experiences can be seen across their environments.

Friends and family

How many close friends do you have? (average)

|	
Out	4.3
Not out	3.8
Non-LGBT+	4.5
LGBT+	4.3
Non-binary	4.3
Transgender	4.3
Asexual	4.4
Bi/pansexual	4.1
Gay man	4.7
Lesbian	4.4
Questioning	4.1

Close to family

	Very	Fairly	Not
Out	37%	49%	15%
Not out	51%	36%	14%
Non-LGBT+	56%	38%	6%
LGBT+	38%	48%	14%
Non-binary	21%	56%	23%
Transgender	26%	55%	19%
Asexual	41%	47%	12%
Bi/pansexual	36%	48%	16%
Gay man	44%	46%	10%
Lesbian	39%	49%	13%
Questioning	46%	44%	10%

Estranged from family

	All	More than 1	1 family member	None
Out		27%	14%	53%
Not out		15%	26%	55%
Non-LGBT+		18%	10%	68%
LGBT+		26%	15%	54%
Non-binary		27%	13%	57%
Transgender		29%	14%	54%
Asexual		28%	14%	50%
Bi/pansexual		28%	14%	52%
Gay man		23%	15%	52%
Lesbian		28%	10%	55%
Questioning		20%	13%	65%

I've been feeling good about myself

LGBT+ only

- All of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never

17%
5%
25%
52%
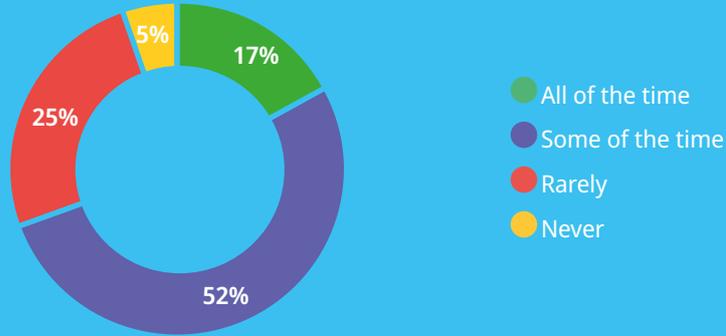
Total respondents

All or some of the time

Non-LGBT+	75%
LGBT+	64%
Non-binary	54%
Transgender	55%
Asexual	65%
Bi/pansexual	62%
Gay man	72%
Lesbian	68%
Questioning	54%

Rarely or never

Non-LGBT+	25%
LGBT+	36%
Non-binary	46%
Transgender	45%
Asexual	35%
Bi/pansexual	39%
Gay man	28%
Lesbian	32%
Questioning	46%
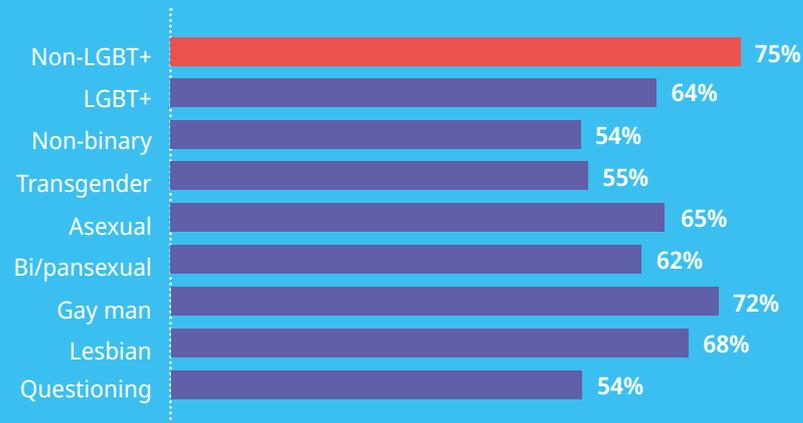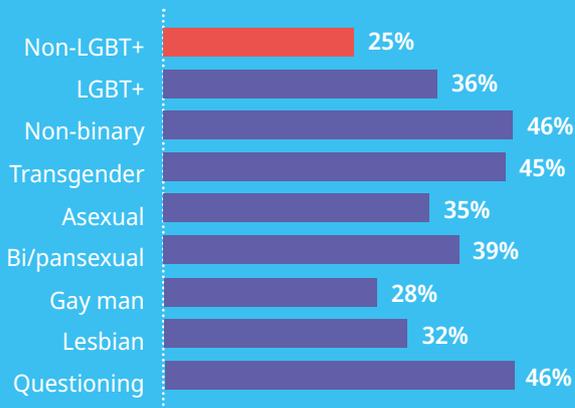
The young people least likely to say they felt safe in the area they live in all of the time were those who were:

- not out, (around 1 in 7 of whom said they never or rarely felt safe)

- questioning (around 1 in 8)

- transgender (1 in 10).

More than 2 in 5 non-LGBT+ respondents said they felt safe in their home area all of the time, but for LGBT+ respondents that figure dropped to 1 in 3.

Non-binary and transgender respondents were the least likely to feel safe at home and at work.

Those who rarely or never felt safe

At home: non-binary **8%**   transgender **8%**

At work: non-binary **12%**   transgender **13%**

# Fear often stems from abuse

Physical abuse

Of the 89% of young people who answered questions on difficult topics in the survey (11% opted out at this stage), LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ respondents encountered physical abuse in similar numbers, with around 3 in 4 saying they had never experienced physical abuse over the course of the last year.

But despite the similarities in overall occurrence, there were differences in the types of physical abuse experienced.

- 3 in 10 non-LGBT+ respondents suffering physical abuse said it was of a sexual nature, compared with 5 in 10 (half) LGBT+ respondents abused.

- Around 3 in 5 non-LGBT+ people and 2 in 5 LGBT+ people physically abused said it was of a violent nature.

- LGBT+ people were more likely (41%) than non-LGBT+ people (31%) to be physically abused by a stranger.

Experience of verbal and physical abuse

Physical abuse in the last year

Category	Percentage
Out	26%
Not out	28%
Non-LGBT+	23%
LGBT+	26%
Non-binary	20%
Transgender	25%
Asexual	32%
Bi/pansexual	25%
Gay man	31%
Lesbian	30%
Questioning	18%

Verbal abuse in the last year

Category	Percentage
Out	62%
Not out	57%
Non-LGBT+	47%
LGBT+	61%
Non-binary	70%
Transgender	72%
Asexual	67%
Bi/pansexual	63%
Gay man	61%
Lesbian	59%
Questioning	54%
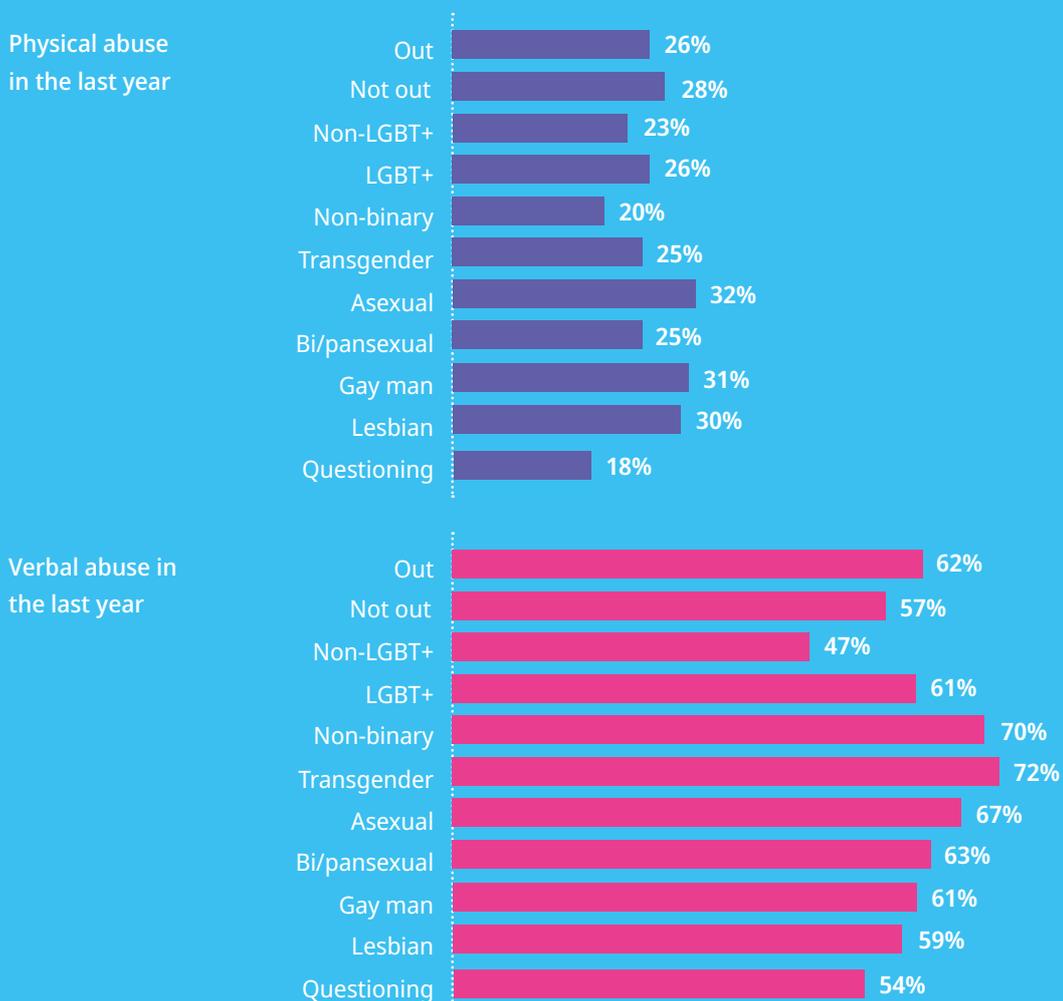
Verbal abuse

When LGBT+ respondents encountered verbal abuse, it was most likely to be perpetrated by a stranger or a family member.

Around 1 in 10 LGBT+ respondents said they experienced verbal abuse all the time in the last year, compared with 1 in 20 non-LGBT+ respondents.

Galop is the national helpline for LGBT+ victims and survivors of abuse and violence

galop.org.uk
Tel: 0800 999 5428
Email: help@galop.org.uk

11%
of non-LGBT+ respondents faced anti-LGBT+ verbal abuse in the last year.

Experiences of abuse

Physical abuse in the last year

● non-LGBT+   ● LGBT+

	non-LGBT+	LGBT+
All of the time	3%	3%
Some of the time	9%	10%
Rarely	12%	12%
Never	77%	74%

What form did the physical abuse take?

	non-LGBT+	LGBT+
Domestic abuse	38%	38%
Sexual abuse	30%	50%
Violence	57%	40%
Other	6%	4%
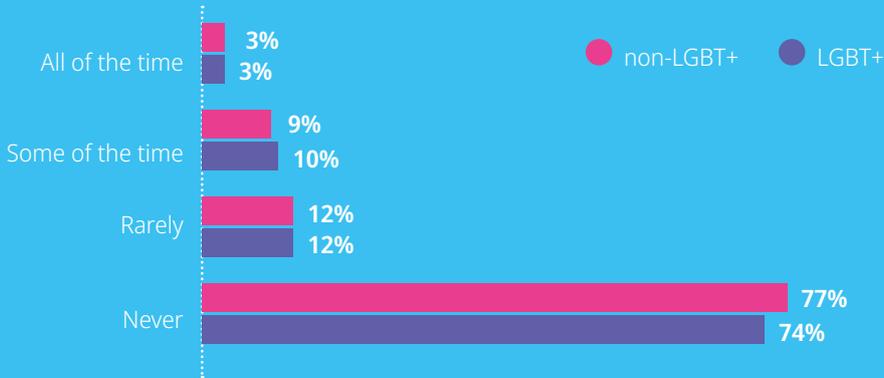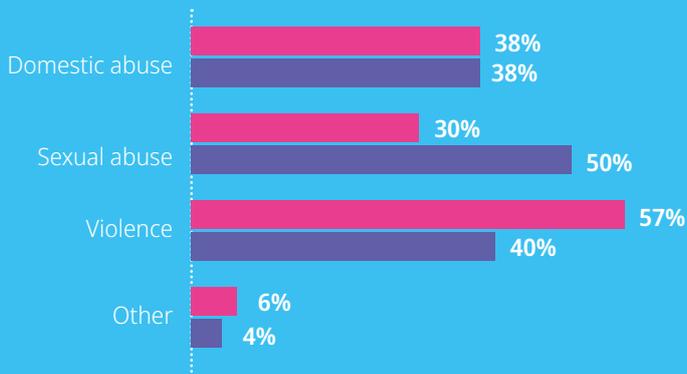
Who was responsible for your physical abuse?

- Stranger: non-LGBT+ **31%**, LGBT+ **41%**
- Partner: non-LGBT+ **27%**, LGBT+ **27%**
- Family member: non-LGBT+ **35%**, LGBT+ **32%**
- Friend: non-LGBT+ **26%**, LGBT+ **19%**
- Colleague: non-LGBT+ **15%**, LGBT+ **12%**
- Other: non-LGBT+ **6%**, LGBT+ **4%**

What form did the verbal abuse take?

- Lesbophobic: non-LGBT+ **5%**, LGBT+ **17%**
- Homophobic: non-LGBT+ **17%**, LGBT+ **40%**
- Biphobic: non-LGBT+ **5%**, LGBT+ **23%**
- Transphobic: non-LGBT+ **10%**, LGBT+ **23%**
- Racist: non-LGBT+ **40%**, LGBT+ **15%**
- Ableist: non-LGBT+ **16%**, LGBT+ **24%**
- Other: non-LGBT+ **32%**, LGBT+ **22%**

Who was responsible for your verbal abuse?

- Stranger: non-LGBT+ **46%**, LGBT+ **58%**
- Partner: non-LGBT+ **17%**, LGBT+ **15%**
- Family member: non-LGBT+ **26%**, LGBT+ **33%**
- Friend: non-LGBT+ **27%**, LGBT+ **18%**
- Colleague: non-LGBT+ **15%**, LGBT+ **13%**
- Other: non-LGBT+ **6%**, LGBT+ **6%**

Verbal abuse in the last year

- All of the time: non-LGBT+ **5%**, LGBT+ **9%**
- Some of the time: non-LGBT+ **22%**, LGBT+ **29%**
- Rarely: non-LGBT+ **20%**, LGBT+ **23%**
- Never: non-LGBT+ **53%**, LGBT+ **39%**

● non-LGBT+   ● LGBT+

The type of abuse most frequently encountered by LGBT+ respondents was homophobic abuse (40%), while for non-LGBT+ respondents the most commonly experienced abuse encountered was racist (40%) or 'other' (32%). It is also worth noting that a considerable amount of non-LGBT+ young people have faced anti-LGBT+ verbal abuse, suggesting that even being perceived as being LGBT+ can lead to abuse. It is vital that we show young people that being LGBT+ is nothing to be ashamed of.

More than

1 in **10**

respondents said they always or very often felt ashamed of being LGBT+.

1 in **5**

said they rarely or never felt proud of being LGBT+.

LGBT+ pride

Do you ever feel ashamed of being LGBT+?

Always	4%
Very often	9%
Sometimes	31%
Rarely	27%
Never	23%
Not applicable	7%
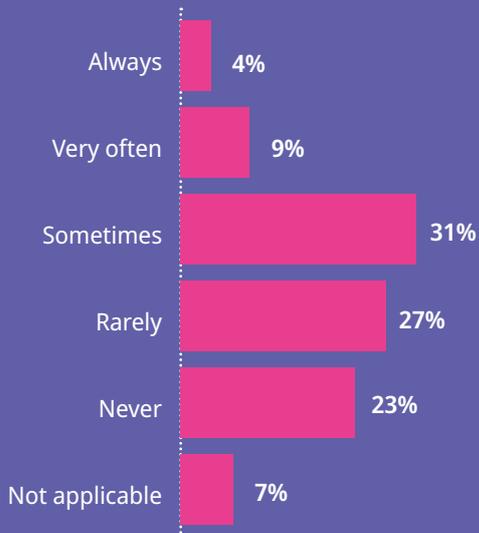
Do you ever feel proud of being LGBT+?

Always	14%
Very often	28%
Sometimes	31%
Rarely	14%
Never	6%
Not applicable	7%
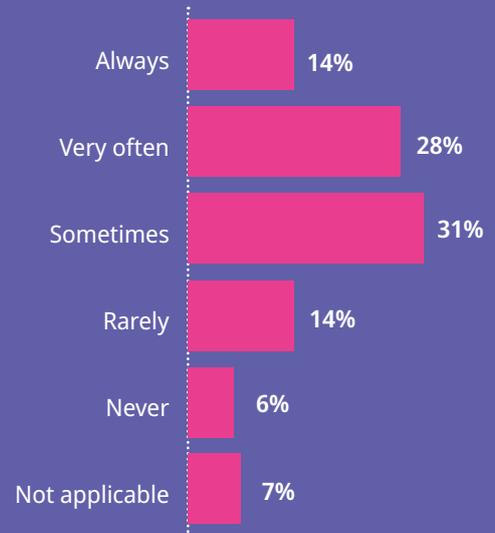
- Overall, 72% identified as white, 18% as Asian, 5% as Black, and 4% as other/mixed.

- Around 1 in 3 non-LGBT+ and around 2 in 3 LGBT+ respondents said they were disabled.

- Overall, 48% said they had no known disability. We included depression and anxiety disorders, dyslexia, dyspraxia and AD(H)D as well as physical impairment and unseen conditions among the list of disabilities respondents might have.

Feeling safe and mental health

Something we should all concern ourselves with is how LGBT+ young people feel.

A significant number of our young respondents living day to day with the reality or fear of physical and/or verbal abuse, suffer from a low sense of self-worth, and lack pride in their LGBT+ identities. Those feelings bring an increase in suicidal thoughts and self-harm as well as an increased likelihood of respondents actually going through to self-harm.

59

- LGBT+ respondents were more likely to have mental health difficulties than non-LGBT+ respondents.
- 9 in 10 LGBT+ respondents experienced anxiety, depression or panic attacks in the last year (compared with 3 in 4 non-LGBT+ respondents).

This is in line with the findings from the *Cibyl Student Mental Health Study 2022*, which found that 91% of LGBT+ university students had experienced mental health difficulties or suicidal thoughts within a year of the survey. In the Just Like Us 2021 survey of school-age pupils, *Growing Up LGBT+*, 68% of LGBT+ young people had contemplated suicide.

Our survey findings also reveal that:

- proportionately more than twice as many (2 in 3) LGBT+ respondents had deliberately hurt themselves than non-LGBT+ respondents (fewer than 1 in 3)

How happy would you say you are?

average scores

Out	6.0
Not out	6.0
Non-LGBT+	6.8
LGBT+	6.1
Non-binary	5.6
Transgender	5.4
Asexual	5.7
Bi/pansexual	6.0
Gay man	6.4
Lesbian	6.6
Questioning	5.8

6.4 average score
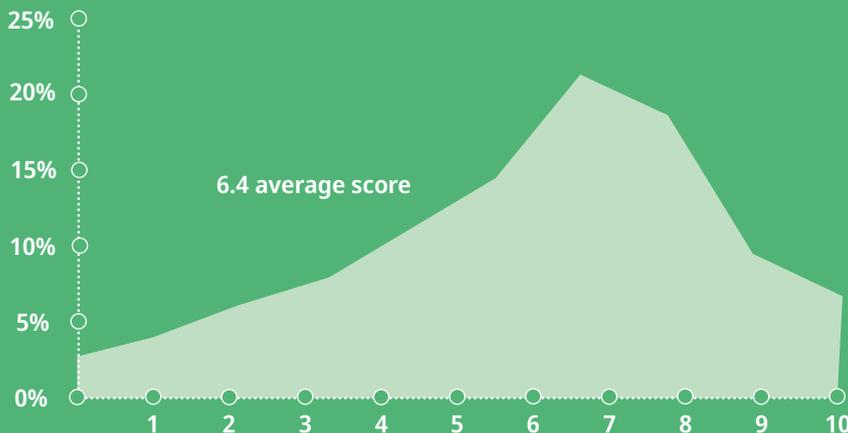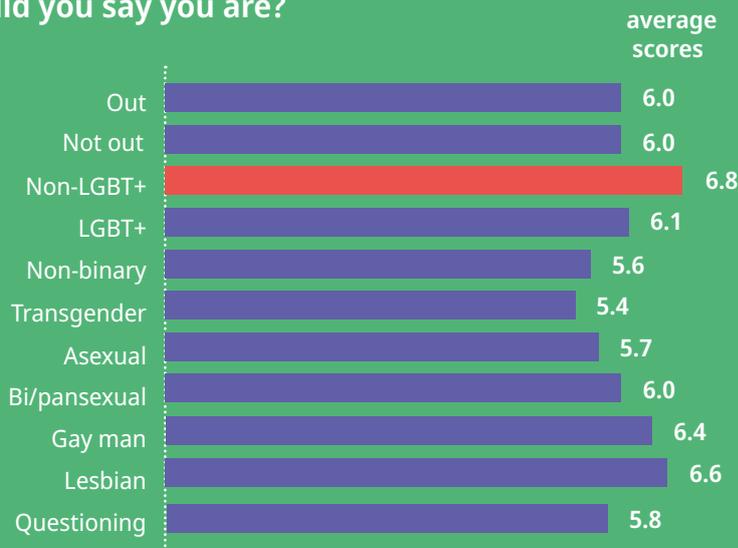
- more than 3 in 4 non-binary and transgender respondents, 1 in 2 gay men and 2 in 3 lesbians had self-harmed
- 3 in 4 LGBT+ respondents had experienced suicidal thoughts and feelings, compared with just over 2 in 5 non-LGBT+ respondents
- nearly 9 in 10 non-binary respondents said they had experienced suicidal thoughts
- around 4 in 5 transgender and pan/bisexual respondents said they had experienced suicidal thoughts.

When we asked our respondents to rate their happiness on a scale of 1–10, the mean average score was 6.4, with the mode (around 20% of responses) hovering around the 7 mark. It was non-LGBT+ people who rated their happiness close to this, averaging 6.8 out of a possible 10, while non-binary and transgender respondents rated their happiness score at an average of 5.6 and 5.4 respectively.

When we asked for specific examples of abuse, our respondents replied that they had experienced:

- acephobic/aphobic comments
- transphobic comments
- challenge to their preference for they/them pronouns
- verbal abuse involving derogatory and degrading language
- bullying based on their appearance.

When we asked specifically who had been responsible for their verbal abuse, a number of respondents answered the perpetrators had been:

- teachers and university staff
- class and course mates
- medical staff and doctors.

Two respondents who were teachers said they had been abused at school. One respondent in a care home said they had been physically and verbally abused by fellow residents.

How does societal portrayal look and feel?

Our survey findings also indicates the view that some LGBT+ identities are portrayed more positively than others.

For example:

- more than half (53%) of our respondents felt gay men were always or mostly portrayed positively with 1 in 10 (10%) saying positive portrayal happened rarely or never.
- portrayal of lesbians was considered positive always or mostly by just under half (49%) of respondents, with around 1 in 8 respondents (13%) feeling their portrayal was rarely or never positive.

Across all our respondents, young people felt that transgender people were rarely or never portrayed positively by the media 31% of the time and received a positive portrayal just 29% of the time. But there were differences between how LGBT+ young people responded compared to their non-LGBT+ peers and a stark contrast when we looked at the viewpoint of trans respondents themselves.

- Nearly 5 in 10 trans respondents (compared with 4 in 10 LGBT+ respondents) said trans people were rarely or never positively portrayed in the media

- Fewer than 2 in 20 (9%) trans respondents (compared with 3 in 20 (15%) LGBT+ respondents) said trans people were mostly positively portrayed in the media.

- Only 3 in 100 (3%) trans respondents (compared with 5 in 100 (5%) LGBT+ respondents) said trans people were always positively portrayed in the media.

Stories of bullying, abuse and negativity towards LGBT+ people tend to make media headlines when they are extreme, with day-to-day microaggressions rarely getting coverage, and kindness and acceptance a non-story. This survey also took place against a backdrop of increasing negative media coverage of trans people.

How positively are transgender people portrayed in the media?

|	Non-LGBT+	LGBT+
Always positively	11%	5%
Mostly positively	27%	15%
Rarely or never positively	24%	38%
Sometimes positively	38%	42%
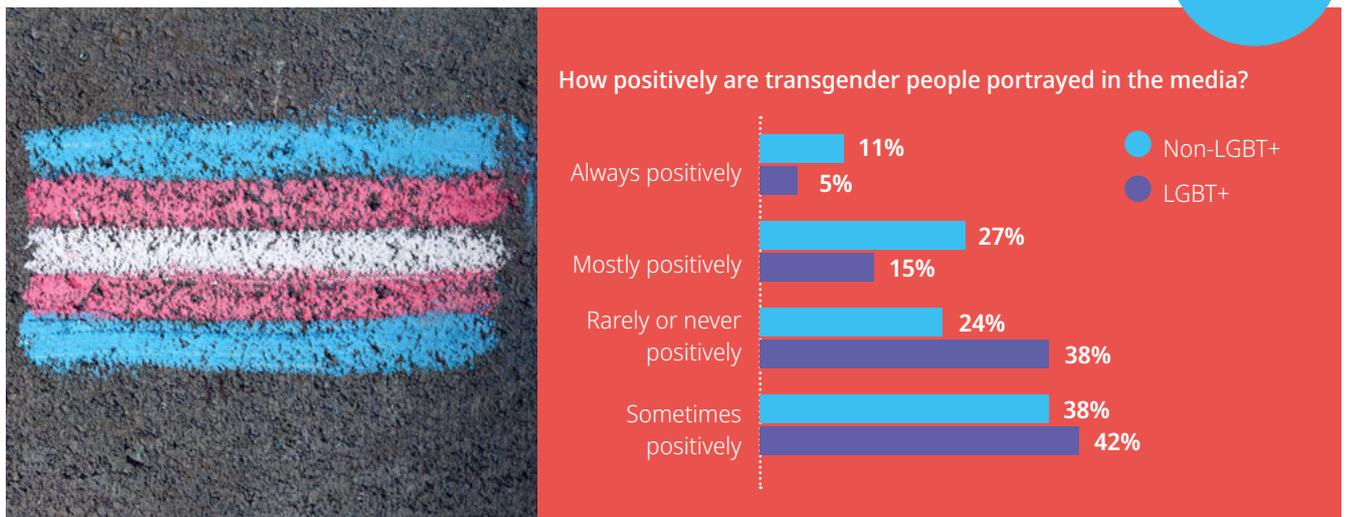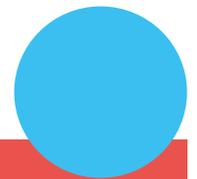
High-profile examples

In early 2023, 16-year-old transgender girl Brianna Ghey was stabbed to death in Warrington. Vigils supporting LGBT+ communities, and trans people in particular, followed in cities throughout the UK and both stories were covered across print, broadcast and online media.

Arguments over gender self-identification regulations, such as those planned in Scotland and blocked by parliament in Westminster, and discussions about access to single-sex spaces have been widely and regularly covered in the media.

How often do you feel these identities are portrayed positively? (all respondents)

Intersex
- 7% Always
- 15% Mostly
- 29% Sometimes
- 49% Rarely/never

Transgender
- 8% Always
- 21% Mostly
- 40% Sometimes
- 31% Rarely/never

Pansexual
- 7% Always
- 19% Mostly
- 35% Sometimes
- 39% Rarely/never

Bisexual
- 11% Always
- 29% Mostly
- 40% Sometimes
- 21% Rarely/never

Gay
- 12% Always
- 41% Mostly
- 37% Sometimes
- 10% Rarely/never
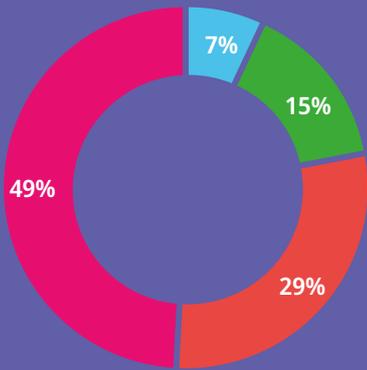
Lesbian
- 13% Always
- 36% Mostly
- 39% Sometimes
- 13% Rarely/never
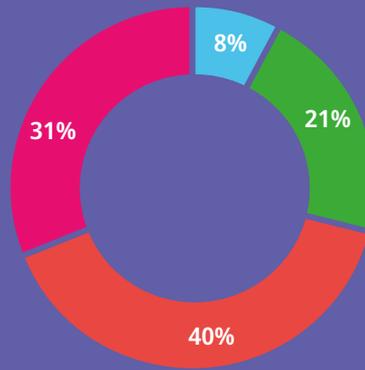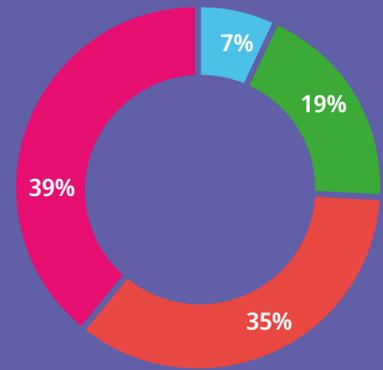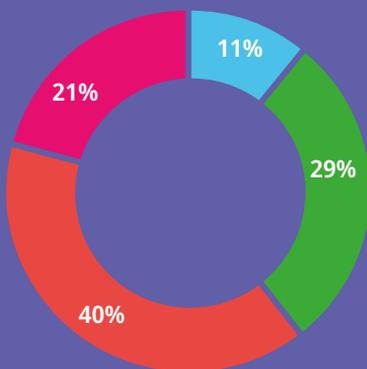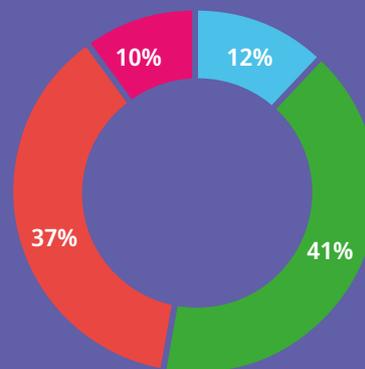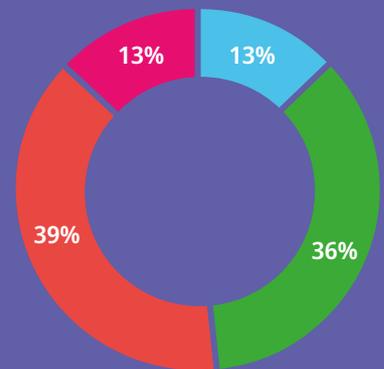
Legend:
- Always
- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely/never

The reality of LGBT+ life

Conducted in 2021, the most recent national census showed that 0.5% of the population (262,000 people in England and Wales) stated that they had a different gender identity from the one that they were assigned at birth.

Our survey revealed:

• 34% of respondents did not know any transgender people, while 28% knew someone close to them, and 38% knew someone they were not close to

• 89% of LGBT+ and 69% of non-LGBT+ young adults responding to our survey said they were supportive or very supportive of trans people, with lesbian, bi/pansexual and non-binary respondents the most supportive groups of all.

Looking at who was the most supportive of transgender people:

• non-binary respondents were 97% supportive or very supportive with 1% of respondents indicating they were not supportive;

• lesbian respondents were 95% supportive or very supportive (3% were not supportive);

• bi/pansexual respondents were 92% supportive or very supportive (2% were not supportive).

Of respondents who were gay men, 82% were supportive or very supportive of transgender people, with 7% indicating they were not supportive. Among non-LGBT+ respondents 69% were supportive of transgender people, with 12% indicating they were not supportive.

• Overall 1 in 10 (8%) respondents were not supportive of transgender people.

• Respondents who do not know any transgender people are six times more likely to not be supportive, than those who do know a trans person (18% compared with 3%).

• 74% of survey respondents who said they were unsupportive of transgender people did not know anyone trans at all.

Respondents who knew someone trans were twice as likely to be trans allies.

• 84% of our LGBT+ and 49% of our non-LGBT+ (making up 2 in 3 of all) respondents said they knew someone trans.

• 9 in 10 LGBT+ and 7 in 10 non-LGBT+ young adults were supportive or very supportive of trans people.

We know that more trans and non-binary respondents (37% and 39% respectively) find school environments unsupportive than their peers. In addition, our survey revealed that people who are intersex were considered:

• rarely/never portrayed positively 49% of the time

• always/mostly portrayed positively just 22% of the time.

96% lesbian respondents supportive of transgender people.

18% of those who don't know a transgender person are not supportive of trans people.

Respondents who knew someone trans were twice as likely to be trans allies.

6.

Intersectionality

While we know that LGBT+ young people face significantly different challenges from their non-LGBT+ peers, it's important to note that there is huge diversity within the LGBT+ community and no one experience is the same. Helping all young people, teachers and allies find understanding of LGBT+ people, and therefore support those who are LGBT+, is part of the work Just Like Us undertakes. LGBT+ young people are not a monolith – some are also Black or South Asian, disabled and/or people of faith, for example. Several respondents to the survey mentioned attending Anglican, Catholic, ecumenical, Islamic, Jewish and Muslim schools or colleges. In reply to a specific question about experiencing verbal abuse, a number of respondents said they had experienced Islamophobic comments, while others mentioned antisemitic, anti-Catholic, sectarian and other religious verbal abuse. In addition, the research found that LGBT+ pupils who attended faith schools were more likely to have been bullied at school than those who attended non-faith specific schools (61% vs 54%).

Disabilities

Our survey found 2 in 3 LGBT+ respondents had a disability, compared with 1 in 3 of our non-LGBT+ respondents.

Of those LGBT+ respondents with a disability:

- 9% said they used a wheelchair, or had another physical impairment such as difficulty using arms
- 3% had a serious hearing impairment or were deaf

- 3% were blind or had a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses
- 24% had specific learning disabilities
- 42% had mental health conditions
- 14% had an unseen health condition such as epilepsy, diabetes, asthma or HIV.

When we asked about mental health, 96% of disabled LGBT+ respondents said they had experienced anxiety, depression or panic attacks in the last year, compared with 88% of disabled non-LGBT+ respondents.

LGBT+ young people of colour

We looked at responses from LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ young people from different ethnic backgrounds to ascertain the different levels of support they received from their family. We asked how confident our respondents were that their parents, guardians or carers would have a positive response when they came out as LGBT+.

- 3 in 10 (28%) white respondents said they were not confident of a positive response
- 5 in 10 (47%) Black respondents said they were not confident
- 5 in 10 (50%) Asian respondents said they were not confident
- 3 in 10 (32%) respondents from other ethnicities were not confident.

LGBT+ young adults who were Black, Asian or from another ethnic minority were more likely to say they were very close or fairly close to immediate family members than their LGBT+ peers from white ethnic backgrounds (89% vs 85%).

2 in **3** of LGBT+ respondents had a disability.

37% of LGBT+ and 24% of non-LGBT+ young adults of colour said they were estranged from one or more family member.

This compares to 42% of LGBT+ and 30% of non-LGBT+ respondents who were from white backgrounds said they were estranged from one or more family member (in this category, we included Scottish, English, Welsh, Northern Irish, British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish traveller and white other backgrounds).

Just 74% of LGBT+ young people of colour felt part of an LGBT+ community, compared to 87% of LGBT+ white respondents.

LGBT+ young people of colour were twice as likely to say they never felt part of an LGBT+ community (9% vs 5% of respondents from white backgrounds).

They also reported struggling with a lack of role models. 36% said they had one or more role models when they were growing up with 64% saying they had none. This is compared to 41% and 59% respectively of LGBT+ respondents from white backgrounds.

When we asked LGBT+ respondents from different ethnic backgrounds whether there were people in their life who were supportive of their LGBT+ identity/ identities, 81% said they were supported, with 10% feeling unsupported. From white ethnicities, 92% of LGBT+ respondents said they were supported, with 4% feeling unsupported.
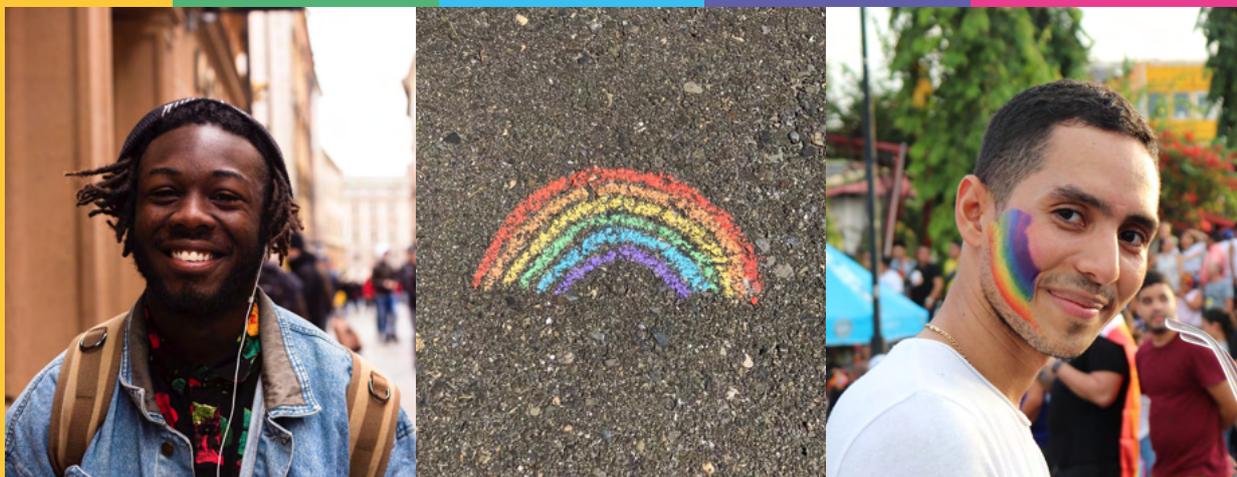
How happy are LGBT+ young people?

Within the survey we asked respondents to rate their happiness on a scale of 1 to 10.

On average (mean), white LGBT+ respondents ranked their happiness as 7.0, but LGBT+ young people of colour ranked their happiness as a mean average of 5.9.

When thinking about their futures, LGBT+ young adults of colour responding to our survey were slightly less likely to be confident they would find a life partner (52% vs 63%), and much less confident they would get married (42% vs 63%) than their white LGBT+ peers.

LGBT+ survey respondents were similarly pessimistic about having children of their own, even though they wanted to, with 27% of white respondents not confident this would happen vs 29% of people of colour and only 36% in each group having some degree of confidence this would happen.

Confident that my parents/guardians/carers would have a positive response to me coming out as LGBT+

White	65%
Asian	31%
Black	42%
Other	60%
Prefer not to say	40%
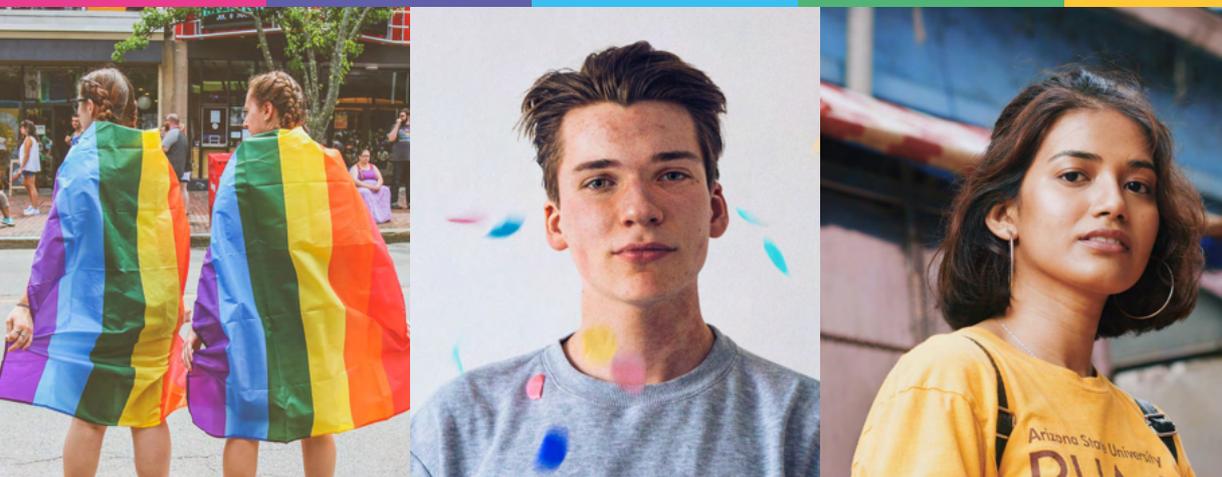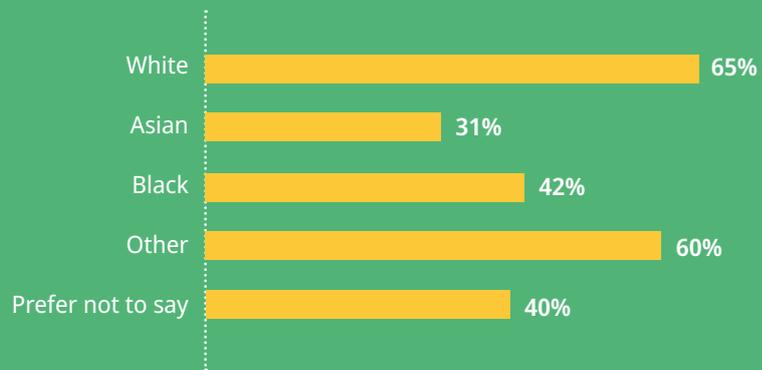
7. Conclusion

Support is everything to young people, even more so if you are, or think you might be, LGBT+.

By asking 18–25-year-olds from a wide range of demographics how they feel now along with their experiences of school, family, support, friendships, role models and much more, we have been able to create a picture of where and how support (or a lack of it) affects young people. By asking them to give a view of what they think may lay ahead for them we can already start to see the damage they feel where support is either withdrawn, or has never been available.

From our findings we know that the majority of LGBT+ respondents have come out to someone and that friends are their main confidantes. We also know that almost a third (31%) of young LGBT+ respondents were not, or are not, confident that their parents would have a positive reaction to the news they were LGBT+. For non-binary and transgender young people their levels of confidence in receiving support from family were even lower.

It may seem an obvious point that LGBT+ young people are more likely to come out when they have supportive people in their lives, such as teachers, parents and grandparents, but it is worth putting statistics against that viewpoint. We can see that family and school support make a significant difference not just to levels of anxiety, depression and panic attacks, but also to levels of optimism in the future, thoughts of suicide and levels of shame.

We know that LGBT+ respondents are less likely than their non-LGBT+ peers to be very close to their family and more likely than their non-LGBT+ peers to be estranged from family. The disadvantage created by this lack of family support is repeated across the years.

But while family support is within the control of the family and discussions about it are usually behind closed doors, school support can be augmented, enhanced, improved and built on. It can be monitored openly, improved, and feedback given across different points, by different LGBT+ identities, and from different age groups.

Improving the lives of LGBT+ young people when they are in school enhances their lives out of school and beyond their school years. Better school provision and support for LGBT+ identities improves the lives of LGBT+ teachers and staff, but it also improves the lives of non-LGBT+ pupils, and fosters greater understanding. We can see in the findings that intersex, pansexual and transgender identities are the least likely to be viewed positively in the media. We also know that these, and non-binary, identities are least likely to have had a supportive upbringing and have the poorest outcomes in young adulthood. We have known from the earliest sight of our participants' answers that respondents who know a transgender person are more likely to be supportive of them. Breaking down barriers is key to improving lives.

When we support LGBT+ young people, we create a keystone that bridges divides and provides a structure that helps everyone. That is our aim with this report.

Methodology and samples

Between November 2022 and January 2023, 3,695 young adults aged between 18 and 25 years old completed an online questionnaire about their wellbeing and experiences growing up. The research was conducted by Cibyl on behalf of Just Like Us. Participants were drawn in partnership between Just Like Us and from Cibyl's independent database of UK students and young adults.

Respondent sample

Diverse samples were gathered as follows, allowing meaningful reporting on the experiences of LGBT+ young people with a control group of non-LGBT+ young people.

Ages

- 56% were aged between 18 and 21 years old.
- 44% were 22–25 years old.

LGBT+ categorisation

For the purposes of this research LGBT+ was defined by at least one of the following:

1. gender: non-binary or other gender
2. gender identity: transgender
3. sexual orientation: asexual, bisexual/ pansexual, gay, lesbian, queer, questioning or other sexual orientation that isn't heterosexual.

Non-LGBT+ (meet all the criteria):

1. gender: female or male
2. gender identity: cisgender
3. sexuality: heterosexual.

3,695 respondents

|	
LGBT+:	1,736
Non-LGBT+:	1,959
Students:	2,921
Non-student:	774
Non-binary:	278
Transgender:	457
Asexual:	275
Bisexual:	670
Gay man:	219
Lesbian:	277
Pansexual:	167
Questioning:	144

For the purposes of this research we have shown bisexual and pansexual respondents as a combined group.

How would you describe your gender?

- 36%
- 54%
- 8%
- 2%
- 1%

● Male ● Other
● Female ● Prefer not to say
● Non-binary
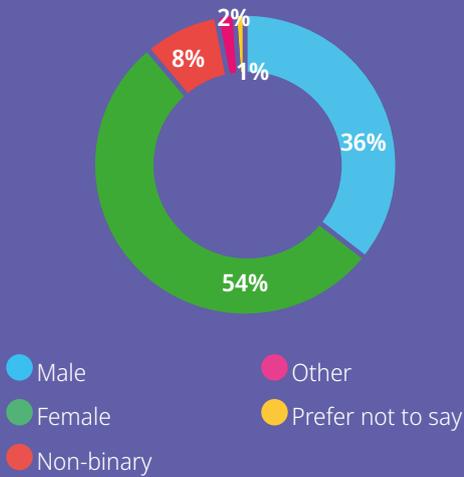
Is your gender identity the same as the one you were originally assigned at birth?

- 1%
- 12%
- 86%

● Yes ● Prefer not to say
● No

What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual	55%
Bisexual	18%
Lesbian	7%
Asexual	7%
Gay man	6%
Pansexual	5%
Questioning	4%
Other	4%
Prefer not to say	0%
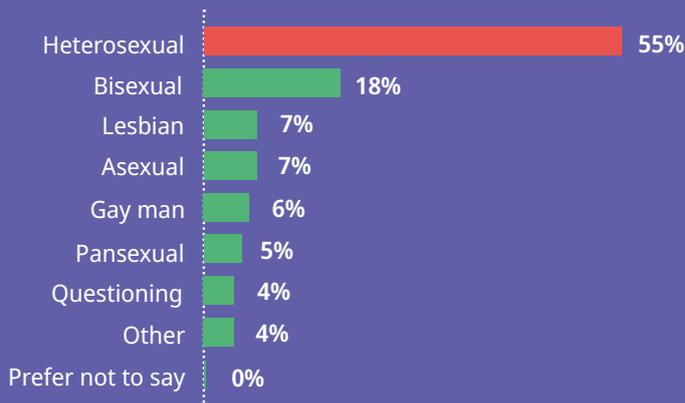
Other information

- 86% of the respondents said their identity was the same as the one they were originally assigned at birth.

- 12% identified as transgender.

- 1% preferred not to say.

- 1,736 (47%) were LGBT+ respondents and 1,959 (53%) were non-LGBT+ respondents with the non-LGBT+ responses collected for comparison purposes as a control group.

- 2,921 were students, 774 were non-students.

- 36% of the respondents were male; 54% were female; 8% were non-binary; 2% were other; 1% preferred not to say.

Within LGBT+ respondents:

- 277 identified as lesbian

- 219 were gay men

- 837 were bi/pansexual

- 457 were transgender

- 278 were non-binary

- 144 were questioning.

Note: We excluded responses from those who could not be classified as definitely LGBT+ or not LGBT+.

Diversity

Ethnicity

- 72% of respondents were white.

- 18% were Asian.

- 5% were Black.

- 4% were mixed/other ethnicity.

- 1% preferred not to say.

Disability

Respondents with disabilities included those with:

- physical impairment 10%
- unseen conditions 11%
- neurodiversity 23%
- mental health conditions 27%
- no known disability 48%
- prefer not to say 4%.

Some respondents may have had more than one disability.
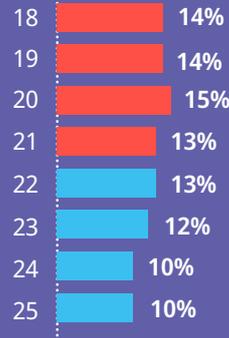
Socio-economic

High or low socio-economic backgrounds

- 7% high
- 7% low
- 87% neither.

We defined respondents' socio-economic backgrounds using the following methodology:

High

- Parents have a professional occupation and
- were not eligible for means-tested funding (ie free school meals) and
- attended a private school and
- parent(s) went to university.

### Low

- Parents have a low socio-economic occupation and
- were eligible for means-tested funding (ie free school meals) and
- attended a state school and
- parent(s) did not go to university.

Note: respondents needed to meet at all four metrics to be marked as from a high or low socio-economic background.

Age

18	14%
19	14%
20	15%
21	13%
22	13%
23	12%
24	10%
25	10%

Disability

Mental health conditions	27%
Neurodiversity	23%
Unseen condition	11%
Physical impairment	10%
No known disability	48%
Prefer not to say	4%

56% 18–21

44% 22–25

Ethnicity

White	72%
Asian	18%
Black	5%
Other/mixed	4%
Prefer not to say	1%
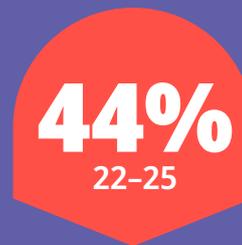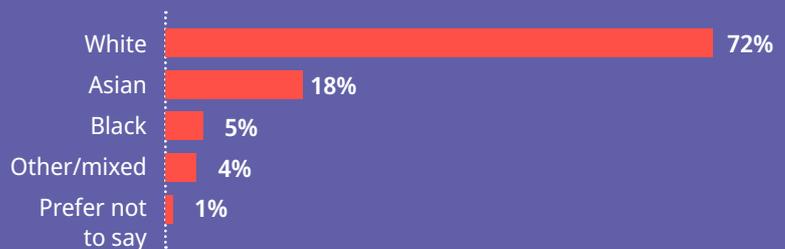
Supportive/unsupportive environments methodology

We grouped respondents as being from supportive environments from their answers to the following questions:

Family environment

Are you estranged from family members? (all or more than one) (no) and

How close are you to immediate family members? (not close) (very close)

- 4% unsupportive
- 32% supportive
- 63% neither.

Note: this is defined by meeting all 2 family criteria.

School environment

Did you experience bullying in school? (yes) (no) and

Did your school speak positively about LGBT+ people? (not very often/never) (very often/often) and

Did you have any teachers at school who were out as LGBT+? (none) (one or more)

- 19% unsupportive
- 10% supportive
- 71% neither.

Note: this is defined by meeting all 3 school criteria.

All environments

Growing up, did you have any LGBT+ role models that you could relate to? (none) (lots)

- 5% supportive
- 7% unsupportive
- 88% neither.

Note: this is defined by meeting at least 5 out of 6 family/school/all criteria.

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