Promoting Equal Opportunities in Education
PROJECT TWO
GUIDANCE ON DEALING WITH HOMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS

Phase 1 Report and Recommendations

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Introduction

LGBT Youth Scotland was commissioned by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) to carry out Phase 1 of the Guidance on Dealing with Homophobic Incidents project. This was one of the SEED Promoting Equal Opportunities in Education projects and ran from February to November 2005.

Although some research into homophobia and homophobic incidents in schools has been carried out in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (this includes Rivers 2000, Adams, 2004, Warwick et al., 2001, Douglas et al., 1999, Renold, 2002, Youthnet Northern Ireland, 2003) there has, until now, been no Scotland-wide research into these issues.

Phase 1 of the Guidance on Dealing with Homophobic Incidents project involved research into the practice that schools and Education Authorities (EAs) employ to deal with homophobic incidents and the awareness levels of staff and pupils in identifying and addressing such incidents. One key aim of the project was to ensure that there is a consistent and effective approach that will build the confidence of school staff in terms of recognising and dealing with homophobic incidents.

Research was carried out with EAs and schools across Scotland and with young people attending or having recently attended school. Findings are contextualised by a literature review of academic, government and voluntary sector publications and presented according to the main themes which emerged from the research.

Often the literature reviewed and the respondents surveyed or interviewed throughout this report discuss only LG (Lesbian and Gay) or LGB (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual) issues. However, for the purposes of this research the term LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) is used by the authors both for consistency and to reflect the trans-inclusive culture of the Scottish LGBT sector.

1: Research Aims and Objectives

The overarching aim of Phase 1 of this project was to review the practice that schools and EAs employ to deal with homophobic incidents, prejudice and harassment and gauge the awareness levels of staff and pupils in identifying and addressing such incidents.

The original research objectives were related to homophobic incidents alone. However, it soon became clear that homophobic incidents, awareness levels and ways of dealing with incidents could not be effectively explored without looking into the wider issues of staff confidence, barriers to dealing with incidents, homophobia and heterosexism[1] in Scottish schools and anti-homophobia work with pupils. It was therefore agreed with SEED that the objectives were expanded to include these issues as it was vital that the initial research be as extensive as possible to provide a sound basis for the series of recommendations:

- To identify current policy in relation to homophobic incidents in Scottish schools, both from the perspectives of EAs and school staff
- To identify current practice in dealing with homophobic incidents in Scottish schools, both from the perspectives of EAs and school staff
- To determine awareness levels of homophobic incidents amongst EAs and school staff
- To determine confidence levels amongst school staff in dealing with homophobic incidents
- To determine confidence levels amongst school staff in discussing anti-homophobia and LGBT issues with pupils
- To gain information about possible confidence building measures for school staff to ensure a consistent effective approach to recognizing and dealing with homophobic incidents
- To gain information about the experiences of young people currently or recently attending Scottish schools and compare them to findings from EA and schools research

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[1] Heterosexism is "the widespread social assumption that heterosexuality may be taken for granted as normal, natural and right." (Wilton, 1999). Heterosexism can be practiced consciously or unconsciously at structural, institutional, legal and personal levels.

- To make a series of recommendations to SEED based on the research with Education Authorities, schools and young people and therefore inform activity in Phase 2 of the project.

2: Methodology

It was recognised that consulting with Education Authorities and schools about issues related to homophobia and sexual orientation was a new, sensitive and methodologically problematic task. Potential issues such as non participation and low response rates were a concern and emphasis was placed on close collaboration with contacts in SEED and various EAs.

Over the course of the research, three meetings were held with a Project Advisory Group. The PAG included representatives from LGBT Youth Scotland, CERES, ChildLine Scotland, Parent's Enquiry, Lothian and Borders Police and Dumfries and Galloway Council. The PAG used their experience, expertise and knowledge to inform the shape and direction of the research.

2.1 Research Methods

The following approaches were used to gather evidence for analysis. The different stages of research are illustrated in the chart at the end of this section of the report.

2.1.1 Literature Review

A review of literature was conducted in order to contextualise this research and understand current thought regarding the nature, extent and effects of homophobic incidents in schools. The literature review provides an overview of relevant academic, government and voluntary sector research into homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools. It also highlights examples of good practice in the UK, and in other countries with comparable populations and education systems, which might be employed in Scottish school settings.

Literature searches were carried out on a variety of Social Science databases (e.g. IngentaConnect, Emerald, Science Direct), Internet search engines, relevant websites and the LGBT Youth Scotland library.

2.1.2 Postal questionnaire to Education Authorities and schools across Scotland

The survey method was selected to obtain standardised and measurable data from a large number of respondents. It was envisaged that the survey would provide a broad mass of quantifiable information from schools and EAs across Scotland, some of which could then be explored in greater depth with a smaller sample of EAs and schools at the interview stage of the research.

Survey questions were designed with reference to the project's objectives and also to additional key themes emerging from the literature review. Questions focused on issues such as policy, practice, awareness and confidence amongst schools and EAs. The questionnaire was piloted with a number of professionals who work with young people.

A questionnaire was sent to the Director of Education in all 32 Scottish Education Authorities (see Appendix 1). The cover letter requested that the survey be completed by the member of staff responsible for Equal Opportunities, Equalities or Pastoral Care.

A spreadsheet of Scottish schools was provided by SEED: schools were selected randomly and the same questionnaire was sent to the Head Teachers of 9 schools in each Education Authority area: 5 Primary Schools, 3 Secondary Schools and 1 Special School (see Appendix 2). In those EAs which do not have a Special School another Secondary school was selected.

Independent schools and denominational schools were interspersed throughout the sample to achieve a representative sample of schools in Scotland. 6 Independent schools and 23 Roman Catholic schools (16 Primary and 7 Secondary) were chosen at random across the EAs and included in the final sample.

A three week deadline was set for the return of the survey with a reminder email and phonecall to the EAs which had not replied one week post deadline. A reminder email was not sent to the remaining schools as there had already been a good response rate.

2.1.3 Survey Sample

As mentioned previously, the Research Team was aware that the subject area was sensitive and that a low survey response rate from EAs and schools was likely. In the original proposal a likely response rate of 10-15% was projected and therefore the actual percentage return rate, illustrated in the tables below, was a welcome surprise.

Education Authority Postal Survey Response Rate		
Surveys Sent	**Number of Responses**	**% Response Rate**
32	31	97%

Table 2.1: Education Authority Postal Survey Response Rate

Schools Postal Survey Response Rate			
School Type	**Surveys Sent**	**Surveys Received**	**% Response**
Primary	160	50	31%
Secondary	96	32	33%
Special	29	10	34%
Response Rate	**285**	**92**	**32%**

Table 2.2: Schools Postal Survey Response Rate

Returns from denominational schools were lower than average and of the 23 surveys sent to Denominational Primary and Secondary schools, 4 were returned (17%)

6 Independent schools were included in the survey, 33% of which returned the survey.

One Special school emailed to state that due to their pupils' profound learning difficulties the issues addressed in the survey were not applicable to the school. This may have been an issue for other Special schools who did not respond.

2.1.4 Interviews with EA and school representatives in six EAs

Six Education Authority areas were selected for the interview stage of research. This stage was conducted in order to discuss in greater depth the themes which were emerging from the survey responses.

Three EAs were located in predominantly rural areas of Scotland and 3 were based in cities in order to provide as geographically representative a picture as possible.

Interviews were carried out in the first instance with representatives from each EA with Pastoral Care, Equalities or Quality Improvement remits, each nominated by their Director of Education. These representatives then nominated four schools in the EA to contact for interview: 1 Secondary, 1 Special and 2 Primary (questions for schools included in Appendix 3).

Although it had originally been planned that a number of interviews would take place in each school with different members of staff it soon became clear that this was unrealistic due to other priorities and time pressures amongst school staff. Therefore, in the majority of cases, senior management decided to take sole responsibility for responding and interviews took place with senior members of staff such as the Head Teacher, Depute Head Teacher or PT Guidance/ Pastoral Care/ Pupil Support. An interview with a class teacher was only possible in one school.

EA and School Interviews					
Location	Number of Schools in Area	EA	Primary	Secondary	Special
Urban	287	1	2	1	1
Urban	158	1	1	1	1
Rural	189	1	2	1	-
Rural	220	1	2	1	-
Rural	131	1	2	2	-
Urban	45	1	2	1	1
Total		6	11	7	3

Table 2.3: Number of Primary, Secondary and Special School Interviews

There were fewer than anticipated interviews with representatives from Special schools. This, in one instance, was because there were no Special schools in the EA. However in another EA, the HT declined to be interviewed stating that pupils in this particular school would not have the ability to grasp the concepts of homophobia or sexual orientation.

As only one of the 6 EAs nominated a Denominational school for interview, only one Denominational school representative from was interviewed.

2.1.5 Online Survey

Previous research into homophobic incidents has relied on retrospective interviews with individuals who were homophobically bullied at school. However, this project provided the ideal opportunity to carry out research into the perspectives of young people currently attending school.

An online survey (see Appendix 4) was conducted in order to gain an understanding of the perceptions and experiences of young people at school in relation to homophobic incidents. This has provided much needed Scottish data which will inform and add value to work within Phase 2 of this project.

The survey considered the specific experiences of young people who identify as or are perceived to be LGB or T, as well as gaining the views and experiences of non-LGBT young people. The survey was targeted towards young people in Scotland who were currently attending school or who had recently left school

An online survey was selected for a number of reasons:

- **Increased access to respondents** Online survey research provides access to groups and individuals who are traditionally 'hard to reach' and whose identities are often stigmatised offline (Wright, 2005)
- **Disregard for geographical limitations** The online nature of the survey meant that any eligible young person in Scotland with Web access was able to complete the survey; a broad geographical sample of young people would have been difficult to otherwise achieve.
- **More open and honest responses when researching 'sensitive' topics** As online responses are anonymous and involve no interaction with the

researcher there is a greater likelihood of participation, honesty and open ended responses.

Survey questions were developed by the Research Team and three of LGBT Youth Scotland's ProjectScotland[2] volunteers, all of whom have recently left education and are aged between 18 and 19. Sections of the survey responses were coded for analysis by a young Project Scotland volunteer. ProjectScotland volunteer involvement in this stage of the research was included not only to develop their research skills and experience, but also to access their knowledge and outlook about key questions and issues which affect young people in education.

The questionnaire was placed on the LGBT Youth Scotland website at the end of September 2005 and was publicised in the monthly LGBT Youth Scotland E-News which is distributed to a range of professionals and young people across Scotland. An explanation of the project and a link to the survey on the LGBT Youth Scotland website was also posted on the following websites.

- Young Scot (www.youngscot.org.uk)
- Faceparty (www.faceparty.com) Popular online community for users aged 16 and over. A push email was sent by LGBT Youth Internet Outreach workers[3].
- Scottish Youth Parliament (www.scottishyouthparliament.org.uk)
- Anti Bullying Network (www.antibullying.net)
- ChildLine Scotland (www.childline.org.uk)
- Schools Out (www.schools-out.org.uk)

A total of 77 young people responded to the online survey. These responses represented a cross section of geographical locations, genders and sexual orientations. Although the survey yielded useful quantitative data it also included valuable qualitative stories which respondents chose to disclose and suggestions which young people themselves made for improvements in schools across Scotland.

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[2] ProjectScotland is a national volunteering programme for young people aged between 16 and 25. ProjectScotland connects young people with a choice of full time volunteering placements and experience in a wide range of areas such as the environment, the arts, education, youthwork and sports.

[3] LGBT Youth Scotland's Internet Outreach Team conduct sexual health interventions and discussions with young people in online chatrooms. This enables LGBT Youth Scotland to target 'hard to reach' groups of young people who cannot be accessed by other methods, increasing access to information, support and direct services.

When the survey was removed from the LGBT Youth Scotland website at the end of October 2005 it was replaced with signposts to accessing support and links to further useful information on the LGBT Youth website and elsewhere.

2.1.6 Focus Group with Young People

The Research Team conducted a focus group interview in October 2005 which sought to explore the issues emerging from the online survey in greater depth with a group of LGBT young people. A focus group approach was chosen because of the opportunity to reflect in depth on the specific experiences and opinions of LGBT young people currently or recently attending school.

The group consisted of four Female and four Male participants aged between 15 and 19. Five of these young people were accessing LGBT Youth Scotland services and three were working at LGBT Youth Scotland as ProjectScotland volunteers. These volunteers helped to organise and co-facilitate the focus group interview.

Six of the participants had recently left school while two were still attending school. All identified as Lesbian or Gay and six out of the eight focus group participants had been homophobically bullied at school.

Literature Review

Education Authorities

Schools

Young People

Questionnaire to all 32 Education Authorities

Questionnaire to 9 schools in each of the 32 Education Authorities: 5 Primary, 3 Secondary and 1 Special (285 in total)

Online questionnaire for all young people attending school or recently left school in Scotland

6 Education Authority areas selected for interview stage of research

Interviews with representatives from the 6 Education Authorities

Interviews with representatives from schools within the 6 EAs: 2 Primary, 1 Secondary, 1 Special

Focus Group with LGBT young people currently attending school or recently left school

Recommendations made to the Scottish Executive based on research with Education Authorities, school staff and young people.

Chart 2.1: Guidance on Dealing with Homophobic Incidents Research Process and Methods

3: Literature Review

As stated in the methodology, a literature review was conducted in order to contextualise this piece of research with an overview of previous work on the nature, extent and effects of homophobic incidents in schools alongside examples of good practice both within and outwith the UK.

3.1 Research into attitudes towards discrimination

3.1.1 General attitudes towards discrimination

Research into attitudes to discrimination in Scotland (Bromley and Curtice, 2003) examines the attitudes of the Scottish population towards issues such as ethnicity, gender, disability and sexual orientation. The research investigates what Scottish people believe is the extent of discriminatory attitudes in Scotland, the extent and character of discriminatory attitudes in Scotland and why people hold these attitudes.

This research shows that general attitudes are discriminatory towards gay men and lesbians. Many respondents were aware of this with almost half of all respondents stating that there was a lot of prejudice against gay men and lesbians.

- 19% of people believe that equal opportunities for gay men and lesbians have gone 'too far'.
- **26% believe that gay men and lesbians are unsuitable to be primary school teachers.**
- 18% would prefer not to have a gay man or lesbian as their MSP
- 60% of people feel that it is a 'waste of money' for local authorities to spend money on support services for gay men and lesbians.

In addition, while just over two thirds (68%) said that Scotland should get rid of all types of prejudice, one quarter (26%) also felt that there were sometimes good reasons to be prejudiced: 'Evidently some kinds of prejudice are still socially acceptable for a considerable minority of people in Scotland.' (Bromley and Curtice, 2003).

First Out: report of the findings of the Beyond Barriers survey of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Scotland (Morgan and Bell, 2003) presents the outcomes of a survey investigating the needs, experiences and concerns of LGBT people in Scotland (n=924). Respondents felt that some of the main issues facing LGBT people in Scotland today were bigotry and discrimination, equal rights and acceptance and acceptability, all of which have relevance in the school environment.

Safety was a key concern for respondents: 68% of respondents had been verbally abused or threatened by someone who had assumed they were LGBT at some point in their lives and those aged under 24 were more likely to state that this had occurred in the last 12 months. Almost one quarter of respondents had been physically assaulted at some point and for 13% this had occurred in school or University; this percentage would no doubt have been even higher had more young people been included in the survey. Comments from respondents included:

> School never dealt with any homosexual issues or even gave information on people to talk to.
> When I was at school and was the victim of homophobic bullying, I had nobody to turn to regarding the specific type of bullying.
> (Morgan and Bell, 2003)

As a result, one of the key areas which respondents would like to see further research into was issues surrounding bullying at school and in the workplace.

3.1.2 Young people's attitudes towards discrimination

One of the findings of the *Attitudes to Discrimination in Scotland* report was that young people are more aware of prejudice than their older counterparts. YouthLink Scotland, the national youth agency for Scotland, surveyed 3,096 11 to 25 year olds on what it means to be young in Scotland. One of the areas explored was that of equality. 84% of 11 to 16 year olds and 78% of 17 to 25 year olds believed that respect for others is what makes someone a good citizen.

Questions regarding attitudes towards LGBT people were not included in the survey but the young people appeared to be predominantly non-racist with at least seven in ten regarding the use of terms such as 'chinky' or 'paki', speaking negatively in private about people from different ethnic backgrounds and being verbally offensive

to people from different ethnic backgrounds to be either slightly or strongly racist (YouthLink Scotland, 2003).

Bullying can be an issue for all young people. NCH, a national charity working with vulnerable and excluded children and young people, surveyed young people using their services (n=623) about their experiences of education and found that, for a quarter of respondents, bullying was the single biggest issue they faced at school (Allard and McNamara, 2004). The young people questioned in focus groups were sceptical about the effectiveness of school or governmental anti-bullying initiatives, believing that even if bullying was tackled in class and the playground it would happen elsewhere. They also felt that teachers were not interested in helping the situation: 'I was bullied and the teachers did nothing about it'. The young people using NCH services were likely to be seen as somehow 'different' due to being in care, being in trouble with the law, being young carers or being disabled. This can perhaps be likened to the perceived differences of LGBT young people. In relation to this, NCH suggest that:

> … practice has also shown that schools can employ strategies that make it harder for bullying to flourish and easier for children to seek help. These include practical measures to 'shut down' opportunities for bullying, such as ensuring that breaks are effectively supervised, utilising peer mentoring approaches so that children support each other in challenging bullying cultures, and tackling bullying as part of a whole-school approach to creating a positive, respectful learning environment. The evidence is that schools with a cooperative and participative ethos tend to have lower levels of bullying.
> (Allard and MacNamara, 2004)

3.2 Homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools

3.2.1 Homophobic bullying and its effects on young people

Homophobic bullying is when individuals are victimised as a result of being LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender), being perceived to be LGBT or having LGBT parents, relatives or friends. It is said to have taken place:

> … when general bullying behaviours such as verbal and physical abuse and
> intimidation is accompanied by or consists of the use of terms such as gay,
> lesbian, queer or lezzie by perpetrators. (Douglas et al., 1997)

In the school setting, homophobic bullying can be expressed through name-calling, social isolation, public ridicule, the spreading of rumours, teasing, having belongings stolen and being sexually assaulted. This can take place in all areas of the school and its surrounding areas but 'low level' bullying such as name-calling is thought to take place most frequently in the classroom and the corridors (Rivers, 2000). Constant victimisation may mean that young people internalise these homophobic attitudes and the names or labels repeatedly used become an integral part of their identity at school (Rivers, 1998). It is unsurprising then that many LGBT young people feel unable to 'come out' at school, a decision which can leave them isolated and unsupported.

This isolation is often compounded by a fear of rejection from parents and other family members. 'Coming out' is not only a task for the individual who identifies as LGB or T, the process also has an impact on the collective identity of the family. As the majority of heterosexual parents assume that their children will also be heterosexual, the family is often an inadvertent source of negative attitudes towards, and stereotypes of, lesbian and gay sexualities long before young people identify as such (Valentine et al. 2003). Indeed, a UK survey found that 61% of violent acts committed against lesbians and gay men were carried out by family members (Hunter, 1990). Rejection from the family home also puts many LGBT young people at risk of homelessness and risk taking behaviours (O'Connor and Molloy, 2001).

> A life of secrecy and lies can hinder young people's emotional development,
> reinforce their own homophobia, undermine their self-esteem and confidence,
> and inhibit them from connecting with the lesbian and gay `community'.
> (Valentine et al., 2003)

Homophobic bullying in school is a barrier to participation in education. One Head Teacher describes the effects which homophobic bullying can have on young people:

> Diminishing or total loss of self confidence, likewise self esteem, withdrawing
> into a shell, not communicating, obviously being very unhappy and that
> affecting friendships, affecting their work, motivation towards school, being off

school and feigning illness with parents and refusing to come to school. (Warwick et al., 2001)

In the long term, low educational attainment will influence entry into further or higher education and future career prospects. Negative experiences in the formal learning environment may also discourage those bullied to engage in learning at a later date. In addition, long-term mental health issues can be triggered by bullying and continue into adult life; suicide and attempted suicide are far more likely in those young people who identify as LGB or T than in the general youth population. In one study, over 50% of LGB people who had been bullied at school had considered self-harm or suicide and 40% had attempted self-harm at least once (Rivers, 2001, Remafedi et al. 1996, Remafedi, 2002). A recent Scottish study (Johnston, 2005) found that over a quarter of survey respondents who had been homophobically bullied had performed worse at school while over a third had suffered from depression or anxiety, a third had self-harmed and a third had had suicidal thoughts. These mental health issues are discussed at greater length in section 4.2. of the literature review.

Recent Northern Irish research was commissioned by the Department of Education as part of their statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Youthnet Northern Ireland, 2003). 44% of the LGBT young people surveyed had been bullied at school because of their sexuality. There were clear connections between early school leaving, poor educational attainment and homophobic bullying. Over two thirds of the young people who left school earlier than they would have preferred had experienced bullying of this kind and 65% of those who had achieved low results had also been bullied. Mental health issues were also an issue in Northern Ireland: almost one third of the participants in the survey had attempted suicide and it was found that young LGBT people were five times more likely to be medicated for depression (Youthnet Northern Ireland, 2003).

Homophobic bullying is distinct from other types of bullying in its 'pervasive and covert nature' (Adams et al., 2004). Although homophobic language is often used only as a convenient verbal weapon and may not reflect the bully's actual attitude towards LGBT people, it is the casual use of such language which makes it both common and somewhat acceptable in school and wider society. As shown by the survey discussed earlier (Youthlink, 2003), racist language is perceived as taboo for many young people. However, homophobic language is seen to be somehow not as 'serious' as other types of discriminatory language.

This can be illustrated by research carried out in two English and Welsh secondary schools in which young people were asked '*What words do people at school use for slagging someone off? Write down as many words as you can*'. Responses were grouped into categories such as 'sexist', 'scatological', 'homophobic' and 'racist' and participants were asked to rate these pejoratives in terms of which were worst: 'that is, carrying the sense of their being either antisocial or immoral, or both.' (Thurlow, 2001). Homophobic insults accounted for 10% of all of the insults reported, significantly more than racist items (7%). However, only 28% of the homophobic insults were rated as 'worst' whereas racist language was seen as far more taboo with 55% of racist insults rated as 'worst'. The responses of the young people showed that although abusive homophobic language was very much part of their everyday discourse it was not considered to be particularly offensive:

> After all, they reason, these are not bad words— not like racist words. Homophobic pejoratives are certainly hurtful, though, if you are homosexual. (Thurlow, 2001)

In one study based in Scotland researchers based in the classroom witnessed:

> … revulsion over the idea of sex between men; "accusations" made that particular teachers "are gay"; use of the word "poof" as a general derogatory term; and violence being threatened against particular pupils who were "suspected" of being gay. These kinds of comments were not a feature of every class, but were audible in a considerable number… Many pupils are exposed to and are the target of homophobic comments on a regular basis. (Buston and Hart, 2001)

The use of homophobic language begins in Primary school, albeit without the sexual connotations which adults may associate with it, and their use in this early years setting establishes an 'asexual' early homophobia (Plummer, 2001). Primary school is a location in which sexual and gender identities are produced and the boundaries which define gender-specific hegemonies are established. Homophobic performances in primary school playgrounds and classrooms are more related to gender roles than sexual orientation and practice (Renold, 2000 and 2002). Homophobic and misogynistic language and behaviour are the methods by which some boys assert and consolidate their own emerging masculine heterosexual

identities. Homophobic practices such as these 'are a means of regulating and policing the boundaries of hegemonic heterosexual masculinities' (Renold, 2000). Gender binaries are set in place at an early age: femininity is directly associated with gay men and lesbianism conflated with masculinity. Therefore, homophobic insults may be used against those young people – especially young boys - who do not adhere to the traditionally dominant traits of their own gender.

> A boy who is different, stands apart from the group, is a loner, is smarter than other boys, who adheres to adult authority in preference to peer group codes and/or who doesn't participate in team activities can provoke homophobic targeting. (Plummer, 2001)

> The main demand on boys from within their peer culture (but also, sometimes, from teachers), up to the sixth form at least, is to appear to do little or no work, to be heavily competitive (but at sport and heterosex, not at school work), to be rough, tough and dangerous to know. (Epstein, 1998)

3.2.2 Homophobic bullying and schools: barriers to progress

Clause 28 Section 2a of the Local Government Act 1988, commonly known as Section 28, stated that there was no place in any school for teaching which advocated homosexual behaviour, treated homosexuality as the 'norm' or which somehow encouraged homosexual experimentation by pupils. It also forbade teaching the acceptability of homosexuality as a 'pretended family relationship' (DES, 1987).

Despite the fact that this legislation applied only to local authorities, many schools believed that it applied directly to them and that therefore any discussion of 'homosexuality' was prohibited. Equally, some schools may have viewed Section 28 as a way in which to avoid addressing 'uncomfortable' issues such as these and others perhaps saw it as a legitimation of their own homophobia (Epstein, 1994 in Douglas et al., 1999, p.54).

In addition, misinterpreted legislation will undoubtedly have caused great discomfort for the many LGB or T teachers in the UK. The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation of 2003 now outlaws any discrimination or harassment in the

workplace on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation. However, even in 2005, sexuality remains an issue in denominational schools with a senior Scottish bishop recently stating that there is no place for gay teachers in Catholic schools (Gordon, 2005).

LGBT sexualities and identities are marginalised and silenced within the education system from the very beginning: these issues are rarely, if ever, mentioned during Initial Teacher Education (ITE). Nixon and Givens (2004) explored the experiences of six lesbian and gay trainee teachers during their time at Trainee Teacher College and found that all believed that 'coming out' in school to colleagues had the potential to harm their teaching careers. The trainee teachers demonstrated internalised homophobia as all had, at times, doubted whether they, as lesbians and gay men, should become teachers. These students had "taken on for themselves the easy conflation of homosexuality with paedophilia."

> One female trainee teacher pointed out that 'We were talking about race and religion at one point and it did come up and they said, "Well, you can't talk about it in schools so don't get yourself into that situation" It was very much brushed under the carpet - I think it should be addressed. If we're addressing all the other sort of areas that discrimination occur in, you know we talk about sex, we talk about gender, we talk about race, religion, then why aren't we talking about homosexuality? It seems to be an area which is a `no go' area.' (Nixon and Givens, 2004)

Section 28 was repealed in Scotland in 2000 and in the rest of the UK in 2003. Jenny Broughton, national coordinator for Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (FFLAG), states that it "went out not with a bang, but with a whimper. Many schools are blithely unaware that anything has changed, or choose to ignore that it has" (Hastings, 2004).

However, these changes must be acknowledged:

> To make schools safer and more productive places for lgb-identifying young people (and, we would suggest, *all* young people) we believe it is important to acknowledge the significant cultural changes that have taken place around

sexuality in the last 20 years and, as a matter of priority, to consider doing things differently. (Ellis and High, 2004)

School policy often discourages young people from reporting homophobia and homophobic bullying. Although the vast majority of schools have an anti-bullying policy, many do not include explicit reference to homophobic bullying. In one study in English and Welsh schools, it was found that although 99% of schools had an anti-bullying policy only 6% made reference to lesbian and gay bullying (Douglas et al. 1999). Similarly, in a survey carried out in the Republic of Ireland, 93% of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) teachers reported that their school had an anti-bullying policy but 90% stated that the policy did not include any reference to 'lesbian and gay related bullying' (Norman, 2004). Only half of the schools surveyed in England and Wales had a school confidentiality policy and of those that did, only 15% made reference to sexual orientation issues. Reporting homophobic bullying involves the young person disclosing personal information regarding his or her sexuality or perceived sexuality. If pupil confidentiality cannot be ensured and if it is uncertain whether the bully will be punished in any case, it is very likely that homophobic bullying will continue unreported and unchallenged.

Often, bullying takes place between young people. However, it is also important to note that school staff can also be complicit in bullying by either actively bullying pupils themselves or by providing no support for the young person who is being bullied (Rivers, 2000). Teachers are often aware of homophobia and homophobic bullying in their own schools. Research carried out with 307 secondary schools in England and Wales showed that 82% of teachers were aware of pupil-to-pupil homophobic verbal bullying and over 1 in 4 teachers were aware of young people being physically attacked during homophobic bullying (Douglas et al. 1999 and 2001). There must, therefore, be barriers present which discourage teachers from tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying.

Respondents in an earlier study by the same researchers (Douglas et al., 1997) cited the following discouraging factors:

20.9%	Parental disapproval
18.9%	Inexperienced staff
14.0%	Unsupportive staff
13.7%	Concern about the image of the school

11.6%   Pupil disapproval

11.4%   Governor disapproval

9.5%   Other

These findings are supported by the survey of teachers in Irish Second-Level schools who were hindered in improving their work on sexual orientation by many of the same barriers (Norman, 2004). 'Disapproval' from a variety of sources is clearly a key concern and it is interesting to consider whether this disapproval had ever been directly expressed or whether teachers simply thought that this might be the case (Biddulph, 1998). Douglas et al. (1997) asked respondents what they thought would support their work on dealing with sexuality issues:

29%   More resources

24%   Training and support

20%   Strategy and policy

14%   Other

13%   Change in attitudes

These answers demonstrate the gaps in school policy and practice which act as barriers to improvement: lack of school policy commitment and strategic drive alongside a lack of resources, training and guidelines. Many teachers may be unsure of how to proceed in this area, and many may be hindered by the absence of support from senior management or a culture of homophobia within the school as a whole.

The heterosexist curriculum supports and sustains the school culture of homophobia. LGBT issues are marginalised in the classroom where a 'presumption of heterosexuality' dominates (Mac an Ghaill, 1991, Epstein and Johnson, 1994 in Buston and Hart, 2001). Recent doctoral research carried out in schools in Dumfries and Galloway explored teachers' discourses on LGB pupils (McIntyre, 2005). Interviews with teachers in the area revealed a tendency towards 'assimilation'. Teachers felt that it was inappropriate to give specialised attention to LGB pupils as all pupils should be treated 'equally' and in the same way. However, McIntyre argues that the rhetoric of equality within a heterosexist institution such as the school means that, in effect, all pupils are treated as if they are heterosexual while their individual differences and needs are denied.

Furthermore, a potential focus on non-heterosexual pupils as 'disadvantaged', while excluding their existence—and that of their families—from relevant aspects of the curriculum, both marginalises this group and leaves few openings for a consideration of the need to educate *all* young people for a society in which sexual identity is extremely diverse, and discrimination against non-heterosexuals is rife. (Atkinson, 2002)

Currently, the most likely location for any discussion regarding sexuality is in Sex Education. However, if the overall atmosphere of the class is heterosexist then valuable sexual health information will not be conveyed to LGBT young people. Indeed, the inclusion of LGBT issues only in sex education classes – and often only when talking about risk, protection and Sexually Transmitted Infections – over sexualises LGBT issues and propagates the idea that 'homosexuality' is only about sexual practice.

SHARE (Sexual Health and Relationships Education) is a 2-year sex education course for 13-15 year olds coordinated by Healthy Respect, the Lothian based sexual health National Demonstration Project. Although the SHARE programme does not provide sessions which deal exclusively with LGBT issues, it does offer advice on how to be more inclusive when approaching and discussing these issues (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2003a). During SHARE lesson observations it was noted that teachers' approaches to dealing with LGBT issues varied (Buston and Hart, 2001). In classes where good practice prevailed, homosexuality was normalised alongside heterosexuality and relevant information was disseminated to pupils. However, some teachers were explicitly homophobic, providing misinformation based on stereotyping and making inappropriate jokes. In other classes, although no overt homophobia was present heterosexism remained, for example in defining sexual activity as vaginal intercourse alone.

Buston and Hart identified the barriers to good practice, some of which are similar to those by Douglas et al. (1997): confusion regarding Section 28, teacher discomfort, lack of guidance from senior management and fear of negative pupil reactions:

Adverse pupil reactions was the most commonly talked about constraint [*to good practice*], and we can see the irony in this: heterosexist sex education is being justified and perpetuated by the contention that pupils are too

homophobic for issues of gay and lesbian sexuality to be discussed or even acknowledged. (Buston and Hart, 2001)

A whole school approach to the problem of homophobia and homophobic bullying is necessary:

> The constitution of heterosexuality as the norm, through policy, during lessons and by way of everyday conversations, jokes and gossip creates a context within which certain young people (and also teachers and parents) come to think of themselves as, in some way, less than normal. This is why making schools safer places for lesbian and gay pupils is not just a matter of the provision of, say, the telephone number of a helpline, but is a whole school issue affecting all of those linked to a school community. (Warwick et al. 2001)

The resources listed in the Good Practice section of this literature review have all been produced in recent years and represent fledgling attempts to surmount the barriers listed above.

3.3 Policy context

3.3.1 Education

Tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools is not a matter of choice. The following represents only a handful of the recent policy documents which explicitly or implicitly emphasise that the whole school community is obliged to address these issues.

It has been recognised that bullying is a problem in schools and several government publications and initiatives have been prepared in an attempt to combat the problem. However, until recently, these initiatives have made no explicit mention of LGBT issues. In 1994, prior to devolution in Scotland, the then Department for Education and Employment published *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence.* Updated versions make explicit reference to homophobia as a cause of bullying and suggest strategies with which to tackle this (DfES, 2000 and 2002). *Stand Up For Us*, which will be discussed further in the good practice section, is dedicated solely to the problem of

homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools (Jennett, 2004). However, as well as resources such as these which explicitly refer to the problem of homophobic bullying, the wider principles of equality of opportunity and respect for diversity have been highlighted in a number of reports.

National Priorities in Education (2000) and How Good is our School? (2002)

The Scottish Executive's vision for children and young people is of a Scotland in which every child matters and is given the best possible start in life. Social inclusion for all has been a key component of New Labour's agenda since 1997 and *Inclusion and Equality* is one of the five National Priorities in Education set by the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 (Scottish Executive, 2000). Local authorities and schools are required to show how these Priorities are being delivered through local action.   One of this priority's main outcomes is that '*Every pupil benefits from education'* and a key performance measure for this outcome is adherence to quality indicator 5.3 'Equality and Fairness' of HGIOS.

In a high performing school equality issues will be discussed openly among and between pupils and staff and diversity will be recognised and valued in the school as a whole. This indicator makes explicit reference to the sexual orientation of pupils:

> Positive steps are taken to ensure that pupils, parents, and staff are treated equally, with respect and in a fair and just manner. Culture and language, disability, gender, race, religion, **sexual orientation** and special educational needs are not barriers to participation. There is a whole-school approach to issues of equality and fairness, such as racial harassment and sexual discrimination. Pupils are assisted to feel confident in recognising and addressing discrimination. Staff, pupils and visitors to the school feel valued, safe and secure. (HMIE, 2002)

HGIOS also stresses the importance of support for pupils and fostering a whole school ethos of openness and trust. Quality indicator 4.1 Pastoral Care requires schools to ensure the care, welfare and protection of pupils and meet the emotional, physical and social needs of individual pupils by ensuring that their needs and concerns are dealt with sensitively, confidentially, with dignity and privacy (HMIE, 2002).

New/Integrated Community Schools (1998 and 2002) and Curriculum for Excellence (2004a)

Another key outcome in the 'Equality and Inclusion' National Priority is the number of schools adopting the New Community Schools - now Integrated Community Schools - approach.

This approach is one which the Government believes is fundamental in raising educational attainment and promoting social inclusion. It is directed at areas of social deprivation and aims to involve pupils, families and the wider community in learning by providing a multi-disciplinary range of services from the education, social work, healthcare and health promotion sectors (The Scottish Office, 1998). It is hoped that this service integration will result in greater levels of support for pupils, something which is seen as crucial by the government: 'Support in schools must meet the needs of all children and young people, whatever the choices and experiences they face.' (Scottish Executive, 2004c)

Similarly, the 2004 Curriculum for Excellence argues that the 3-18 curriculum should be adapted to enable all young people to benefit from education and 'support them in developing concern, tolerance, care and respect for themselves and each other' (Scottish Executive, 2004a, p. 11). This, it is clear, cannot be achieved without direct engagement with the problem of homophobia in schools. Young people who are bullied on the grounds of their sexual orientation are being excluded from the benefits of education and being denied opportunities and life chances. By allowing this to continue in any sense, schools are teaching nothing about tolerance, care or respect for others and are, in fact, conveying the message that this behaviour is acceptable both in school and in later life.

Better Behaviour – Better Learning (2001)

Links between behaviour and learning are also made explicit. Several recent publications include recommendations for bullying policy and practice, guidance on dealing with bullying and advice for the monitoring and reporting of violent and bullying behaviour. *Better Behaviour – Better Learning* (Scottish Executive, 2001) has been implemented in schools across Scotland:

Given the close links between pupil learning and behaviour, promoting positive behaviour in schools must be a key element in ensuring the best possible educational outcomes for our children. Furthermore, teaching young people to manage their relationships with others in positive ways is also an important end in its own right. For pupils, acquiring the ability to manage their behaviour and relationships appropriately is a key part of preparing them for life in an adult society, including the workplace. (HMIE, 2001)

Being Well, Doing Well – a Framework for Health Promoting Schools in Scotland (2004)

This policy document emphasises the "physical, social, spiritual, mental and emotional health and well-being of all pupils and staff" and states that school should:

- ensure a safe, supportive and challenging atmosphere
- value and care for all pupils, their families and staff
- encourage a sense of belonging and promote self-esteem and respect among all pupils and staff

In terms of the curriculum, the document states that Health Promoting Schools should have approaches to personal and social development and health education that take account of pupils' health needs and of the range of factors that influence their values, attitudes, behaviour and health. They should pay particular attention to helping pupils establish values, attitudes, knowledge and skills that will enable them to make well-informed decisions about their lifestyle.

In terms of ethos and behaviour, inclusive Health Promoting Schools include and value all members of the school community and demonstrate "respect, fairness and equality of treatment for all." Again, although specific groups of people are not mentioned in this document, the rhetoric implies inclusion and respect for all and attention to the needs of all young people, a concept which implicitly includes LGBT young people.

3.3.2 Health

As discussed earlier, homophobic bullying can have long lasting and detrimental effects on the health of LGBT young people. The *Young LGB People's Health Needs Assessment* carried out in Glasgow concluded that suicidal ideation was up to two or three times higher amongst LGBT respondents and that this was often a direct reaction to the discrimination 80% of the young people had experienced (Coia et al. 2002). Research carried out by LGBT Youth Scotland into suicidal thoughts and feelings amongst gay and bisexual young men in Edinburgh found that they were at higher risk than members of the general population (LGBT Youth Scotland and Gay Men's Health, 2003a).

- 54% of gay and bisexual respondents had seriously considered taking their own life, compared to 13% of men in the general population who have ever considered suicide.
- 27% of young gay/bisexual men have attempted suicide compared to 4% of the general population.
- Suicide attempts were most common in those young gay/bisexual men aged 14 to 20.
- 28% of respondents had at some point deliberately injured themselves with no suicidal intent. This compares to 2% of men in the general population.

The INCLUSION project, a partnership between Stonewall Scotland and the Scottish Executive Health Department, presented research into the health needs and health inequalities of LGBT people in Scotland (INCLUSION Project, 2003). It uncovered a number of further physical and mental health issues.

- Unusually high rates of suicide and attempted suicide amongst the LGBT population.
- High levels of sexual risk-taking amongst gay men and limited sexual health knowledge and information amongst lesbians.
- High levels of alcohol, drug and tobacco use across the LGBT population.
- Gay men and heterosexual women are similar in disordered eating patterns.

Choose Life: a national strategy and action plan to prevent suicide in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2002a) forms a key part of the work of the National Programme to Improve Mental Health and Well-Being and aims to address the rising rate of

suicide in Scotland. However, although it identifies children and young people as an at-risk priority group and states that issues relating to sexual orientation may create risks and pressures for these young people, the publication lacks extensive discussion of the connection between suicide and sexual orientation. The suicide and mental health research listed above firmly suggests that further policy development and action is necessary to combat these problems.

The *Children and Young People's Mental Health* draft consultation (Scottish Executive, 2004b) suggests that some groups of children and young people are at greater risk of developing mental health problems than their peers. It is acknowledged that LGBT young people are in this category and may require additional support. The publication recommends links with local authorities to establish policies to identify and support young people in schools and other settings who need additional or specific emotional support.

However, an example of a publication which does not refer explicitly to LGBT issues is the *National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare* (Scottish Executive, 2002). This report states the importance of providing an environment in which children's emotional and social development is considered. According to this, young people should receive support from staff who respond to his or her personal, educational, emotional and physical needs and should be made to feel comfortable in an environment of mutual respect, trust and open communication. For LGBT pupils or for any pupil who is suffering bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation, this must mean an engagement with LGBT issues from his or her school and a commitment to tackling homophobic bullying.

Although these publications do not focus solely on the links between homophobia and poor mental health, it is clear that this connection does exist. As with the publications which focus on education, the emphasis placed on inclusion for all can and should be taken to include LGBT young people and their own specific needs.

> Young people who are subjected to bullying because they are (or are perceived to be) lesbian, gay or bisexual deserve no less than our best efforts to protect, support and empower them if we really care about their health and well being. (Douglas et al. 1999)

3.4 The Rights of the Child

The appointment of Kathleen Marshall in 2004 as Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People has demonstrated a new emphasis on children's rights in Scotland. Homophobic bullying and its effects on the attainment, health and wellbeing of young people can be viewed from a human rights perspective.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out the basic rights of children and the obligations of governments to fulfil those rights. Especially relevant articles in this context include the right to information, the right to education and the rights of young people to express their views about decisions which have an impact on their lives:

Article 12 – The right to have their say in all matters affecting them: 'States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.'

Article 13 – The right to information: As long as it does not damage the child or anybody else he or she 'shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.'

Articles 28 and 29 – The right to education: 'States Parties recognize the right of the child to education' which will develop 'the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential… respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations…' and prepare 'the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.' (OHCHR, 1990)

The LGBT Youth Charter of Rights, based on the UNCRC and developed by LGBT young people across Scotland, sets out the rights which LGBT young people should have but which are often denied to them due to homophobia, heterosexism and a general lack of awareness. The LGBT Youth Charter of Rights makes clear reference

to some of the issues surrounding homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools, including the rights to personal safety, education and information:

You have the right to be kept safe from harm:
• We believe that LGBT young people have the right to be protected from violence and homophobic hate crimes including bullying, gay bashing and domestic abuse.

You have the right to education:
• We believe that places of learning should recognise and value diversity, and support both staff and pupils to come out
• Young people should be able to easily access information and an education which develops their personality, knowledge and abilities and which is relevant to their lives. (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2004)

3.5 Examples of Good Practice

This section identifies examples of good practice in the UK and elsewhere. This includes practical resources designed to tackle homophobic bullying and encourage the discussion of sexuality issues in the classroom. Included also are examples of schools resources from other equality areas which could be adapted for use in this context.

3.5.1 UK Initiatives and Resources

3.5.1.1 Talking About Homosexuality in the Secondary School (Forrest et al. 1997)

Talking about homosexuality in the secondary school is by Avert, an HIV and AIDS charity, and is aimed towards those people working within and supporting secondary schools. This resource is especially useful in its whole school approach. It acknowledges the concerns and doubts which teachers, young people, school governors, parents and carers may have in dealing with these issues and suggests strategies to overcome these doubts. The publication includes:

- o Introductory facts such as 'definitions of homosexuality', 'terminology and language', 'what is homophobia?' and 'the effect of homophobia.'
- o Case studies and stories focusing on lesbian and gay youth issues followed by statements designed to provoke thought and discussion: 'Society encourages people to be anti-gay' and 'Verbal bullying can be as harmful as physical bullying.'
- o Emphasis that attention to homophobia and tackling homophobic bullying is a crucial part of the positive school ethos.
- o Ways in which information on lesbian and gay support can be made available to staff and young people in schools.
- o Suggestions of ways in which teachers and other school staff can identify the knowledge and skills which they need in order to discuss these issues in the classroom environment or on an individual basis with young people.

3.5.1.2 Stand Up For Us (DfES, 2004)

Stand up for us is a government commissioned resource for schools in England and Wales and is intended to complement *Bullying: don't suffer in silence* (DfES, 2002). This resource aims to help schools tackle homophobia in the hope of creating a safer and more inclusive environment for all pupils.

Stand up for us lists the English and Welsh education legislation which teachers are obligated to follow and reminds them - as some resources do not - that challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying is not a choice but a legal duty.

The importance of the whole school approach is stressed in this resource. It encourages the use of a checklist when challenging and responding to homophobia and homophobic bullying. This checklist targets the whole-school environment and addresses the areas to be considered when challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying (adapted from Jennet, 2004):

- **Leadership, management and policy:** Developing an inclusive ethos which targets homophobia and ensuring that all staff are involved in this; up to date policy and procedures with which to tackle homophobic bullying; robust system of recording, monitoring and evaluating progress.

- **School culture and environment**: School's commitment to challenging homophobia made explicit to all members of the school community through

staff handbooks, induction materials, policy documents etc.; inclusive language used; appropriate training and guidance for all staff; support for LGB staff to be open about their sexuality; identify and target the physical locations in which bullying likely to take place; celebrate diversity and ensure that resources reflect different family units; generic information and support includes information for LGB pupils.

- **Staff professional development, health and welfare**: Staff must be supported if cultural change and a whole-school approach is to be successful; professional development and training such as workshops, literature, coaching, discussion provided; LGB teachers offered equal conditions of employment with regards to compassionate leave etc.; disciplinary procedures regarding staff-to-staff and staff-to-pupil homophobic bullying made explicit.

- **Assessing, recording and celebrating achievement**: the input and achievements of pupils is recognised and applauded; targets set with pupils' help; impact assessment methodology used to measure the effectiveness of the school's work.

- **Teaching and learning**: Teachers must feel personally comfortable with discussing sexuality issues sensitively and without embarrassment; the right environment must be created to allow effective discussion and learning.

- **Planning and resourcing the curriculum**: Making use of opportunities within the mainstream curriculum in which to discuss attitudes, sexuality and prejudice; inclusive resources used; engagement with external LGB support services to support curriculum planning and delivery

- **Support for pupils and allowing them to have a voice**: Involve young people in school's commitment to tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying, e.g. needs assessment based on consultation with pupils; confidentiality and anonymity respected; relevant staff able to support pupils with regards to sexuality issues; information about support services made freely available.

- **Partnerships with parents, carers and communities**: Parents and carers made aware in prospectus and parents handbook that there are processes in place for them to raise issues about homophobic bullying; parents and carers made aware that information about their sexuality would be welcomed by the school and would remain confidential.

Stand up for us also provides a sample homophobic incident log on which staff can record homophobic comments and events around the school. This, it is hoped, will highlight 'low level' abuse as well as more serious harassment and help to establish what action needs to be taken. The resource also offers practical advice in supporting young people who disclose information regarding their sexual orientation.

Stand up for us and *Talking about homosexuality in secondary schools* emphasise the importance of involvement and commitment from the whole school. This type of approach is critical if strategies or resources are to have their desired effect. These initial strategies are designed to lay the solid foundations for a school environment in which sexual orientation can be discussed confidently and constructively and homophobic bullying is challenged wherever it occurs.

3.5.1.3 A Guide for Teachers on LGBT Issues (LGBT Youth Scotland and Healthy Respect, 2003b)

As one of the main barriers to dealing with these issues is a lack of teacher experience and confidence, this resource suggests ways in which LGBT issues can be integrated into the existing curriculum as well as ways in which teachers can support LGBT young people on an individual basis. The importance of working constructively with parents is emphasised.

This resource is useful from a Scottish perspective as other resources focus on English and Welsh schools. Although homophobic bullying manifests itself in similar ways all over the UK, the issues involved in tackling the problem may differ according to the education system. The guide is valuable in raising teachers' awareness of the issues surrounding homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools and providing practical suggestions regarding anti-homophobia work.

3.5.1.4 Tackling Homophobic Bullying in Secondary Schools (Bolton Health Promotion, 2000)

Tackling Homophobic Bullying in Secondary Schools is an attempt to engage with and combat homophobic school culture and one which has had proven success.

The project was piloted in Bolton during 2000 and is now used in all Primary and Secondary schools in Greater Manchester. It was delivered by the multi-agency

Bolton Homophobic Bullying Forum which incorporated representatives from areas such as the Health board, the Local Education Authority, Bolton Victim Support, and Greater Manchester Police. The Forum gathered information via surveys of headteachers and PHSE teachers, focus groups of young people and incident logs in order to ascertain levels of homophobic bullying in the two pilot schools.

The forum then delivered Awareness Training to school staff and informed pupils about the effects of homophobic bullying using a Theatre In Education (TIE) resource. The vast majority of pupils indicated that they enjoyed the production and three quarters said that they had sympathy for the main character who was homophobically bullied. Discussion amongst pupils led to the drawing up of Homophobic Bullying Charters. These pledged to offer support regarding sexual orientation issues, ensure equal rights for all in the school, create more opportunities for the discussion of homophobia and its effects around the school and, crucially, punish those who use homophobic language. The project also had a positive impact on teachers. They claimed that they felt more confident with the prospect of dealing with homophobia in school and the majority found the Awareness Training Sessions to be useful as this allowed the sharing of ideas and suggestions for strategies to deal with incidents.

The development of a video resource and toolkit for use in schools called *Living It* means that this example of good practice can be used elsewhere in the UK.

3.5.1.5 Theatre in Education (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2003c)

LGBT Youth Scotland, in association with Healthy Respect, launched a TIE production in three Edinburgh secondary schools in 2003 (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2003c). 96% of people returning evaluation forms stated that they found the experience enjoyable and 71% of young people were able to state at least one thing that they had learned from the production. The experiences of LGBT Youth Scotland and Bolton Homophobic Bullying Forum suggest that creative solutions to sensitive issues are received favourably by both young people and staff.

3.5.1.6 Sectarianism: don't give it, don't take it (Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES et al. 2005) and Educating for Race Equality – a toolkit for Scottish teachers (CERES et al. 2002)

These resources are examples of good practice in other equalities areas which can be adapted and used to tackle homophobic bullying.

Educating for Race Equality is an anti-racism staff development resource for Scottish teachers commissioned by the Scottish Executive in response to the McPherson Report. It offers staff in publicly funded pre-school, special, primary and secondary schools with materials and support for the delivery of anti-racism education. The resource contains

- Information and advice on legislation related to equality, faith and festivals.

- Advice on raising awareness about and tackling racist bullying and incidents.

- Examples of good practice in Scottish schools and the ways in which these are connected to curriculum, policy, parental involvement and whole school ethos.

- Staff development exercises (videos, quizzes, discussion topics) and suggestions for conducting a school audit on race equality based on HGIOS

- Terminology and FAQs

Sectarianism is a complicated area which involves issues of religion, culture and history and, like homophobic language, sectarian language is often used casually without awareness of its true meaning. The Anti-Sectarian resource is aimed towards teachers, youth workers and young people. It explains the context of sectarianism in a clear and thematic fashion alongside relevant pieces of legislation. Examples of good practice in schools are highlighted to help schools develop their own lesson plans and connections with HGIOS quality indicators are made explicit.

The online resource, alongside the CD ROM, provides games, scenarios and further resources for young people and also emphasises that teachers and youth workers must consider their own values and attitudes before successfully incorporating the resource into their work (CERES et al. 2005).

The Anti-Sectarian resource is especially useful because a formal evaluation of the pilot programme has also been published (Rae, 2005). This provides useful

guidelines about what works and what does not in schools and is a valuable starting point when considering anti-homophobic bullying work in Scottish schools.

The evaluation highlighted several outcomes which are clearly desirable for any type of anti-homophobia resource.

- Teachers who had believed that sectarianism did not exist as an issue now accept that it does. Some had been unsure of how to tackle the subject but stated that they had grown in confidence during the pilot. It was revealed that time set aside for planning and preparation by teachers was crucial and practitioners stated that it was crucial to examine their own attitudes before beginning work with the resource.

- The topic was integrated into subjects such as Scottish Curriculum 5-14 areas of: English Language, Personal, Social & Health Education, Religious & Moral Education, Information & Communication Technology, Environmental Studies, History, Geography and Modern Studies. Teachers were free to adapt the lesson plans to suit the specific needs of the class and the school as a whole and pupils were also allowed flexibility. "The children and their responses decided our direction. The children led, and teachers responded to that."

- Creative elements of the resource were warmly received by the young people: the games and drama scripts were the most popular and effective parts of the resource. Young people in all the pilot areas reported that they had had fun using the resource.

- Parents were made aware of the pilot and the Pastoral Care Team reassured parents that the Anti-Sectarianism project would be subsumed within the context of the positive behaviour, citizenship and anti-bullying policies and procedures.

- Teachers and youth workers provided evidence that attitudes had changed as a result of using the resource and pupils themselves stated that the project had changed their attitudes. At the beginning, very few could give a definition of sectarianism. The project raised their awareness of language as prior to this, they had "used the words" without understanding the meanings behind them. Some pupils became passionate about the issue, taking it home and

challenging their parents' value systems. One pupil stated: "It makes you think before you speak."

3.5.2 Non-UK Initiatives and Resources

It is useful here to highlight a selection of initiatives and resources from outwith the UK. The problem of homophobia and homophobic bullying is a global issue and lessons can be learned from anti-homophobia work in other countries.

3.5.2.1 New Zealand: Safety in Our Schools Action Kit (Out There, 2004)

A survey of young people in New Zealand schools revealed that almost half of the non-heterosexual pupils had been physically bullied at least once during the previous twelve months, one third of all pupils said that they did not feel safe in school and 23% of non-heterosexual students reported a significant number of depressive symptoms that were in need of professional intervention. The action kit suggests work in schools surrounding:

- Professional development and training
- Visibility of LGBT staff, pupils and role models
- Support for LGBT pupils and staff
- Policies and processes for addressing homophobic bullying, harassment and derogatory use of language
- LGBT issues in the curriculum
- Visible and positive messages and information: an LGBT social support group, posters, inclusive health education.

Many of these action points are very similar to those mentioned in the UK literature, resources and initiatives. Homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools is a global issue and possible solutions are not unique to Scotland or the UK.

3.5.2.2 Canada: Human Sexuality Program, Toronto (Solomon, 2004)

For the last 12 years the Human Sexuality Program within the Social Work Services of Toronto District School Board has been working with LGBT young people, teachers, parents and families. This programme delivers anti-homophobia workshops to classrooms of all ages in the district. The Toronto District School Board equity

policy clearly stipulates that schools must create and maintain safe, welcoming and inclusive learning environments for LGBT young people and young people with LGBT parents. This has led to a great demand for support, advice and workshops, and in recent years much of this demand has come from teachers of elementary school pupils (ages 5-14).

This paper focuses on the responses of elementary school children to a same-sex families workshop which involved a video, general discussion and brainstorming of ideas. One follow-up to the workshop is for young people to write letters or journal responses to the facilitator which gives some the opportunity to say things they did not want to say during the workshop. Some responses were positive: '*My piano teacher is gay and I thought that was weird. But after the [video] and what Helen and Steven [workshop facilitators] talked about, I don't think it's that weird anymore.*' Other responses were more negative and surrounded the appropriateness of the subject matter for younger age groups: '*They shouldn't be telling this two us now, they should be telling us this in grade 9, not grade 5 or under. My mom said that is so stupid. We aren't adults we shouldn't be learning on gays and lezbeains, that's their life not ours.*' Negative responses are replied to via letters and follow up visits each year from the Program facilitators.

This programme, as well as demonstrating how much more advanced other countries are in terms of anti-homophobia initiatives, demonstrates the importance of evaluation and the measurement of effectiveness and impact. This paper also emphasises the importance of beginning anti-homophobia work in early years education and continuing this work throughout school to consolidate and develop learning and awareness.

3.5.2.3 United States of America:
The Harvey Milk High School (Hetrick-Martin Institute, 2005)

The Harvey Milk High School was founded in 1985 in collaboration with the New York City Department of Education. The school is dedicated to the educational needs of at-risk LGBT young people and aims to provide them with the skills and support necessary to move safely and successfully into higher education, career, and life. The existence of a school specifically for LGBT young people is a contentious issue, debated even within the LGBT community, but highlights the seriousness of the situation and the fact that homophobic bullying can, in some cases, lead to exclusion

from mainstream education and unconventional and controversial solutions such as these.

The Safe Schools Coalition: a public private partnership in support of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth (Safe Schools Coalition, 2005)

The Safe Schools Coalition aims to support LGBT young people and help schools in America and elsewhere become safe places that are free from homophobia and homophobic bullying. The Coalition provides resources such as posters and publications for school and helps to raise media awareness of homophobia in schools. It also provides training for teaching professionals and conducts and disseminates research to policy makers and teaching professionals.

Making Schools Safe (American Civil Liberties Union, 2001)

The *Making Schools Safe* program is a model training workshop which emphasises to schools that they have a legal responsibility to address a school culture which ignores or allows homophobia. It also provides schools with the skills and resources they need to tackle homophobia in the form of lesson and workshop plans, handouts, additional LGBT information and step-by-step guidance. The focus of the program is a workshop for teachers on how to create a safe environment for everyone, but especially for young people who are LGBT, whom others perceive as LGBT or who have LGBT family members.

The workshop consists of three main threads

- An interactive panel presentation by one or two LGB graduates from the school in which they discuss their experiences.
- Presentation by an lawyer about the duties of educators to promote a safe environment and to end homophobic harassment.
- Series of exercises designed to help teachers deal with homophobic attitudes in schools, including video clips and role-playing scenarios. Practical suggestions about how to address name-calling in the classrooms and hallways, and how to build support for a whole school approach.

This approach is interesting as it takes an uncompromising and practical approach. It states that attendance should be mandatory for all school staff to show the

seriousness of the issue and it stresses the legal ramifications involved in ignoring homophobia in schools.

In addition, an interesting feature is the involvement of former pupils in the panel presentation who are able to articulate the ways in which homophobic bullying affected their school career. A key problem in schools is a lack of visibility for the LGBT community and, managed correctly, this may prove to be a worthwhile workshop feature.

3.5.2.4 Europe: GLEE Project: creating safe and affirming schools for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students and staff (Glee Project, 2002)

This is a European Commission funded project developed by practitioners across Europe and the USA. It is designed to allow primary and secondary school teachers to develop an action plan with which to tackle homophobia in their own school communities. It aims to:

- Raise awareness of the extent and effects of homophobia and heterosexism on all members of the school community
- Develop strategies to combat heterosexism and homophobia in school policies, practices and curricula to create a safe learning environment for all

The course provides workshops filled with scenarios and case studies which raise questions for discussion. One of the most interesting features of the course is the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) workbook, a tool for measuring, describing and improving the school climate. This involves a school assessment survey which asks questions regarding school policy, the curricular inclusion of LGBT issues and general attitudes towards LGBT issues within the school. Depending on its score, a school is placed into the categories of Hostile School, Resistant School, Open School or Inclusive School. Although these categories should not be seen as absolute, they and the questions which the workbook asks are a convenient way for schools to confront issues that they may not have previously considered and develop a clear understanding of the current needs and priorities. This resource is valuable in its audit and assessment techniques and its emphasis on the school climate and culture: before confronting homophobia in schools it is first necessary to gain a clear picture of the current situation.

In addition, rather than simply mentioning heterosexism the GLEE project includes heterosexism alongside homophobia at every opportunity and it is treated as an equally serious issue for schools to consider. UK resources do not have the same emphasis on heterosexism and the GLEE Project may therefore be useful in providing a fresh slant on the issue for schools.

3.6 Summary of Literature Review

The main points which emerged from the literature review are listed below.

- **Homophobic bullying in schools affects the whole school.** It affects LGBT young people and staff, young people and staff who are perceived to be LGBT and young people and staff who have LGBT families or friends. It also has a negative effect on the whole school ethos and culture.
- **Homophobic bullying is a barrier to participation in education**. It can lead to low levels of educational attainment, absenteeism and early school leaving. Allowing homophobic bullying to continue unchallenged means that LGBT young people are unable to realise their full academic potential.
- **Homophobic bullying can affect mental health**. It can lead to problems such as depression and self harm and there is a clear link between sexual orientation and a far greater likelihood of suicide.
- **Homophobic bullying and the use of homophobic language begin at an early age**. Targets for homophobic bullying may be those young people who do not adhere to traditional gender identities.
- **Homophobia exists at an institutional level in the education system.** Homophobia and LGBT issues are not discussed in ITE and teachers may believe that disclosing their sexual orientation will harm their teaching careers.
- **Homophobic language is not perceived to be as serious or as offensive as other types of discriminatory language and few schools make specific reference to homophobia in their anti-bullying policies.** This will undoubtedly affect the ways in which homophobic bullying is dealt with in schools and the likelihood of young people reporting incidents of homophobic bullying.
- **Teachers are often aware of homophobia and homophobic bullying but feel unable to challenge it for a variety of factors.**

- o Lack of policy and guidelines from senior management
- o Concerns about disapproval from staff, parents or pupils
- o No staff confidence or experience due to lack of training in this area.
- **Schools have an obligation to tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying.** Under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, schools are required to show how the National Priorities in Education are being delivered locally. Education and health policy publications emphasise the importance of inclusion and support *for all pupils*.
- **Several factors must be considered when thinking about tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools.**
    - School policy and senior management support
    - Staff training, support and professional development
    - Curriculum
    - Parental consultation and involvement
    - The extent to which homophobia as an ingrained part of the school culture
- **Several approaches might be useful in tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools.**
    - Whole school approach
    - Input from external agencies and multi agency working
    - Creative solutions: drama, games, quizzes etc.
    - Evaluation and feedback from staff and young people regarding anti-homophobia work.
- **Homophobia and homophobic bullying must be addressed as part of a wider equality programme which explores the diversity of our schools and communities.** Resources and initiatives from these other areas – e.g. racism, sectarianism - can be utilised when looking at ways in which to challenge homophobic bullying.
- **Homophobia and homophobic bullying occur in similar forms all around the world.** Resources and initiatives found elsewhere can be adapted for the Scottish schools setting.

3.6.1 Limitations of the Literature Review

It is important to note that homophobia and homophobic bullying is an under-researched area. The following points identify some of the main gaps in the literature which will require further research in the future.

- The specific needs, concerns and experiences of transgender young people.
- The specific needs, concerns and experiences of bisexual young people.
- The experiences of young people with physical and learning difficulties in either mainstream or special education.
- Homophobic incidents in Scottish schools: this will be developed by the Homophobic Incidents Project.
- The current, rather than retrospective, accounts of young people in schools: this, again, is addressed in the following research.

4: Education Authority and Schools - Survey and Interviews

This section of the report presents the responses to the survey completed by EA and school staff and discusses them with reference to the more in-depth interviews carried out with EA and school staff in six Local Authority areas.

Key

EA   **Education Authority**

P   **Primary School**
S   **Secondary School**
IS   **Independent Secondary School**
SP   **Special School**

ND   **Non Denominational**
D   **Denominational**

The names and locations of respondent Education Authorities and schools remain anonymous throughout this report.

Schools are described in terms of type and denomination e.g. a non denominational Secondary school is 'S-ND' and a denominational Primary school is 'P-D'. Education Authority responses are marked as 'EA'.

4.1 EA and School Policy

In their investigation of multi-culturalism and anti-racism in three Scottish Primary schools, Donald et al. (1995) found that although one school had implemented multi-cultural and anti-racist policy this had not yet affected anti-racist behaviour. The consequence of this was that teachers were not fully aware of, or responsive to, racist attitudes and behaviours. Although it is crucial that EAs and schools develop strong and meaningfully inclusive policies, this policy must clearly relate to and have an impact on practice.

As a result of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), EAs and schools in Scotland have certain obligations in terms of anti-racist discrimination policy and practice. The McPherson Report into the Stephen Lawrence murder placed Education second only to the Police Service and Criminal Justice System in having a key role to play in combating racism. The RR(A)A places a legal duty on Public Bodies to promote race equality in all aspects of their work. EAs have a legal duty to

produce a Race Equality Policy for publicly funded schools and schools must hold a copy. However there is no similar obligation for schools and EAs to have policies which make specific reference to sexual orientation and homophobia. This was reflected in the survey responses and interviews with schools and EAs.

The table below provides a summary of the responses to the policy questions asked in the survey. These are discussed further in the next section of the report.

Type of Policy	EA Policy		School Policy	
	Reference to homophobic bullying/ sexual orientation	Reference to racist bullying/ BME issues	Reference to homophobic bullying/ sexual orientation	Reference to racist bullying/ BME issues
Anti-Bullying	48%	56%	25%	70%
Equal Opportunities	74%	90%	36%	71%

Table 4.1: Summary of EA and school survey responses: inclusion of homophobic bullying/sexual orientation in Anti-Bullying and Equal Opportunities policies

4.1.1 Anti Bullying Policy

In the survey, EAs and schools were asked whether their anti-bullying policies included reference to sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying.

Although almost half of EA respondents (48%) indicated that their anti bullying policies included specific reference to sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying only a quarter of schools (25%) stated that their anti bullying policies made reference to these issues. This suggests that good practice within EAs may not always be passed down to schools in the Authority area.

4.1.1.1 Generic Policy

Several of the schools which stated in the survey that their anti-bullying policies did not include reference to sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying felt that that all bullying should be dealt with on an equal basis regardless of the motivation. These schools felt that a generic anti bullying policy was sufficient to deal with homophobia and homophobic bullying.

Not specifically – it would be treated as a bullying issue but not specifically mentioned. (S-ND)
Not specifically, but the policy is inclusive of any form of bullying. (S-ND)
Policy is generic in order to be inclusive. (EA)

Two EA interviewees stated that a generic policy approach was used in an attempt to implicitly include all pupils. Explicitly mentioning specific groups was seen to be '*just not practical. If you mention someone, you leave someone else out'.*

However, some interviewees felt that the generic approach would only serve to obfuscate the real motivations behind bullying behaviours. One EA interviewee stated that a generic policy had been avoided for reasons of clarity as all types of bullying are different and should be treated as such. These EAs mentioned sexual orientation in their Anti Bullying and Equal Opportunities policies alongside race, gender, disability, socio-economic status, language and religion.

Some EAs are shifting towards non-generic policy. One EA interviewee stated that their anti bullying policy was in the process of being updated to make mention of homophobic bullying. The policy will refer to the 'inner being' of the child being a reason for being bullied, one example being sexual orientation. This EA representative stressed that school policies should reflect authority policy, something which is not reflected in the survey findings.

4.1.1.2 Anti bullying policies in Primary Schools

65% of the school survey respondents who did not include mention of sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying in their anti bullying policies were Primary schools. One of these schools commented: "*Decided against as Primary.*" This suggests that some respondents do not feel that these issues are relevant and/or appropriate for the Primary school and Primary school aged pupils, a theme which is explored further in the *Inclusion within the Curriculum* section of this report.

None of the 4 denominational school respondents mentioned sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying in their anti-bullying policies.

4.1.1.3 Homophobia and Race

EA and school respondents were asked about the inclusion of race and BME issues in policy documents.

56% of EAs make explicit reference to racist bullying in their anti bullying policies and 48% of EAs make explicit reference to sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying in their anti-bullying policies.

In comparison, there is a greater disparity in terms of reference to race and homophobia amongst the schools surveyed. 70% of schools make explicit reference to racist bullying in their anti-bullying policies but only 25% make explicit reference to sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying.

42% of schools surveyed have anti-bullying policies which make explicit reference to racism and racist bullying but make no mention of sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying.

4.1.2 Equal Opportunities Policies

74% of EA equal opportunities policies make reference to sexual orientation. However, this reasonably high percentage is not replicated in schools across Scotland. Although sexual orientation is mentioned in a slightly higher number of school equal opportunities policies than anti-bullying policies (25%), the schools which include reference to these issues are still in the minority at 36%. 2 of the 4 denominational schools stated that a reference to sexual orientation was included in their equal opportunities policies.

Although only just over a third of schools have an equal opportunities policy which includes reference to sexual orientation, over 70% of schools make reference to BME issues in their equal opportunities policy.

These survey responses demonstrate that in policy terms, schools are far more developed in terms of race than homophobia.

4.2 Priorities, Expectations and Commitment to Equalities

The survey asked EAs whether there was some commitment to equality in the School Development Plans (SDPs) in the schools in their area which would potentially promote and support Continuing Professional Development (CPD) on homophobia and homophobic bullying. School respondents were asked the same question specifically about the SDP in their own school.

CERES' Project 3 Phase 1 report (School Staff Development and Equality) raises some key issues concerning CPD on homophobia and LGBT issues in schools.

- Many schools are reactive rather than proactive in terms of equalities issues – if a problem in need of immediate attention does not present itself then they will not see the need to take pre-emptive action through CPD. This reactive attitude is illustrated by one Primary school survey respondent in this research who, instead of answering 'yes' or 'no' to the question about commitment to equalities in the SDP, simply wrote '*NO NEED.*'
- Equalities issues are low on the agenda for many schools. The SDP determines the priorities for many schools and CPD choices follow accordingly. However, one teacher referred to equalities issues as a 'Cinderella' subject, forgotten in a mass of more pressing attainment and discipline related priorities.

A key component of the whole school approach to tackling homophobia is the cooperation and support of staff within the school as they have both the authority and the opportunity to challenge homophobic language and behaviour. Increased information, support and awareness raising through CPD is one way in which to encourage the cooperation, support and confidence of staff.

It would be hoped that a commitment to equality in the SDP would promote and support increased CPD on homophobia and homophobic bullying. Schools were asked whether there was any commitment to equality in their own SDPs, and EAs were asked whether there was commitment to equality in the SDPs of schools in their areas.

Commitment to Equality in School Development Plans which would promote and support CPD on homophobia and homophobic bullying		
Response	*EAs*	*Schools*
Yes	**58%**	**33%**
No	32%	61%
No Answer	3%	4%
Don't Know	7%	1%
Other	-	1%

Table 4.2: Survey Responses to commitment to equalities in SDP

The responses illustrated in the table above suggest that EAs feel that there is a stronger commitment to equalities in the schools in their areas than is actually the case. Although 58% of EAs stated that there is this commitment and the consequent opportunity for increased CPD, only 33% of schools in the survey concurred with this.

The issues of priority, commitment to equalities and expectations placed on schools were explored further in the interviews stage of the research.

4.2.1 Priority and commitment to equalities

Several EA interviewees felt that although equalities issues were high on schools' list of priorities in terms of general ethos, time pressures and competing priorities meant that this was not always translated into meaningful action: "*There's lots of talk about happy healthy children – what are we doing about it? Giving them more homework.*"

One issue which emerged from the interviews with both Primary and Secondary schools was that although equalities issues are generally held in high esteem, sexual orientation is often disregarded as a valid equalities 'strand' and does not receive the attention devoted to issues such as disability or race. For example, all of the Primary schools apart from one stated that equalities issues were high on their agenda but mentioned other 'strands' as illustration of this or resorted to a generalised equality and fairness approach: "*Treat everyone the same no matter if they're black or white, disabled or not, whether they're a boy or a girl, it's right across the board and this homophobia would probably come into this as another strand.*"

Opinions amongst Secondary school interviewees were similar. One HT thought LGBT issues only arose indirectly for pupils through TV, newspapers and magazines and only one Secondary school PT Pupil Support stated that equalities issues were extremely high on the agenda and LGBT issues had their place within this. However, the point was made that schools had to place the highest emphasis on attainment and on funded initiatives – of which equalities is not one.

Special school interviewees were most positive about the inclusion of LGBT issues within equalities priorities. One interviewee stated that she accorded high priority to all equalities issues including LGBT issues "*simply because of the type of school it is*".

4.2.2 Levels of expectation

Interviewees were asked whether there were any expectations placed on them either from outwith or within the school in terms of tackling homophobia and homophobic incidents.

Although this was not a question directly asked of EA staff, one interviewee brought it up independently and stated that there were exactly the same expectations placed on dealing with homophobic incidents as there are on dealing with racist incidents. When asked if schools were aware of this she admitted that they were in the process of making this clear to schools and that race was still foremost in their minds.

Internal expectations were shown to be influential. One HT stated that although there were no external expectations staff in the school know that she had high expectations of them.

However, the majority of school interviewees stated that there were absolutely no expectations that they tackle homophobia and LGBT issues and that there was the sense that homophobia and homophobic incidents are "*really new*" to schools. One Primary HT said that there was in fact an expectation that they would *not* tackle these issues due to the age of children - she said however that this was simply "*burying your head in the sand*".

A number of interviewees stated that although there are no expectations that they deal with these issues this did not matter as the Anti-Bullying Policy covered all

eventualities and, in any case, different types of bullying should not be treated in different ways: "*Bullying is bullying – homophobic bullying is not worse or different or better than other types.*"

4.3 Awareness of Homophobic Incidents

In order to determine the perceived extent of homophobic incidents from an EA and school staff perspective, survey respondents were asked how aware they were of homophobic incidents in their schools and the schools in the Authority.

Agreement over the homophobic nature of an incident is likely to be related to the subjective opinion of those involved. Several survey responses indicated that it was impossible to speak accurately about the perceptions of a wide range of people in their schools and EA areas. Although it is important to reflect on the embodied subjectivity of respondents, it was hoped that the sample would provide a broad overview of perceptions.

4.3.1 Verbal Homophobic Incidents

The graph below illustrates awareness levels of verbal homophobic bullying taking place in schools, as stated in the surveys.

Awareness of Verbal Homophobic Bullying in EAs and schools

Awareness	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Answer
EAs	45	42	10	3
Schools	46	49	2	3
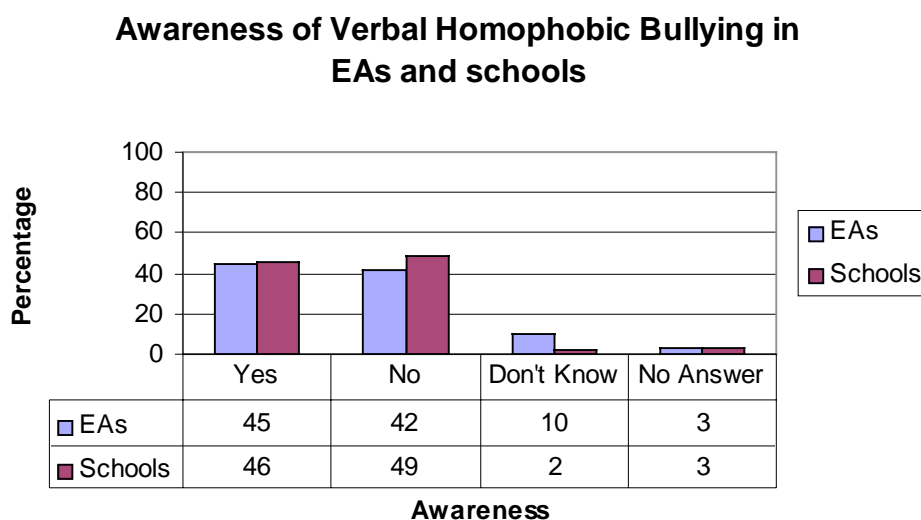
Figure 4.1: Awareness of verbal homophobic bullying in EAs and schools

Almost half of all EA and school respondents stated that they are aware of verbal homophobic bullying taking place. This includes the casual use of homophobic language:

> *Children use the words 'That's gay' as being the opposite of 'cool'. It's the 'in' words just now. (P-ND)*
> *Unfortunately, the expression 'you're gay' is prevalent. (S-ND)*

One problem in gauging awareness was mentioned by EA interviewees who pointed out that many homophobic incidents will be dealt with '*in house*' and not fed back to the EA.

Schools were asked how often verbal homophobic bullying had occurred in their schools in the last 12 months. As the question focused on individual schools, EAs were not asked this question. The graph below shows the incidence of verbal homophobic bullying in schools over the previous 12 months.

How often would you say verbal homophobic bullying had occurred in your school in the last 12 months?
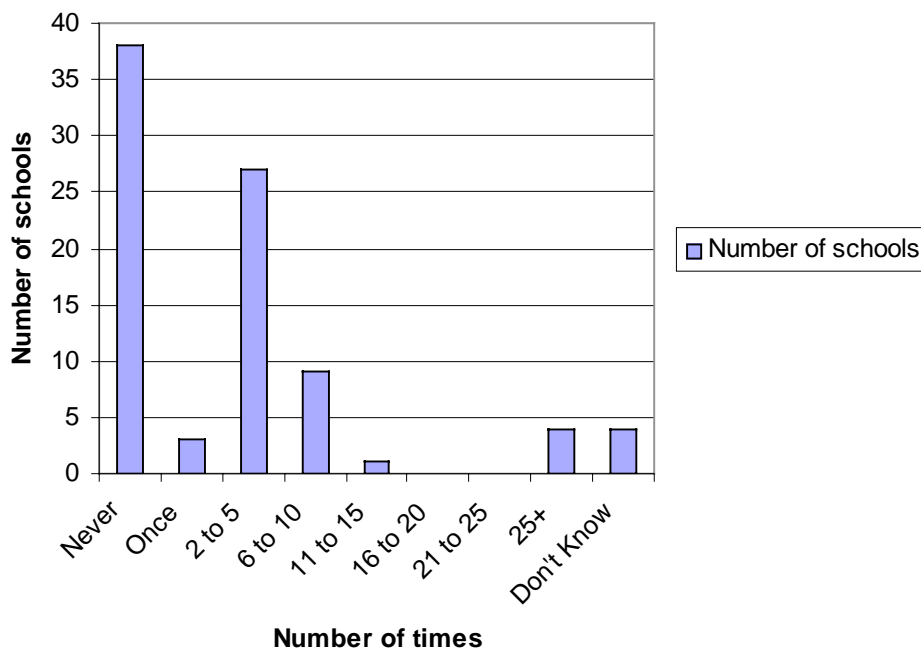
Figure 4.2: Schools: Incidence of verbal homophobic bullying in last 12 months

Although 44% of schools stated that verbal homophobic bullying had never occurred over the last 12 months, the combined total of schools selecting the other options from 'once' to '25+' outweighs this at 51%.

Although a number of respondents stated that they were not aware of verbal homophobic bullying, they did not then answer that it 'never' occurred but instead made an estimated guess at the frequency of such incidents. It seems that respondents understood that although they may not be aware of a problem in their schools this did not mean that it did not exist.

As homophobic incidents are not reported and recorded in the same way as racist incidents, it is difficult for schools to estimate the exact frequency of homophobic incidents.

> *Any incident that is reported is dealt with swiftly. My concern is that there may be behaviours happening in playgrounds and social areas that staff are unaware of.* (S-ND)

4.3.2 Physical Homophobic Incidents

The graph below illustrates awareness levels of physical homophobic bullying in schools amongst school and EA respondents.

Awareness of Physical Homophobic Bullying in EAs and schools

Awareness	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Answer
EAs	10	74	13	3
Schools	1	95	2	2
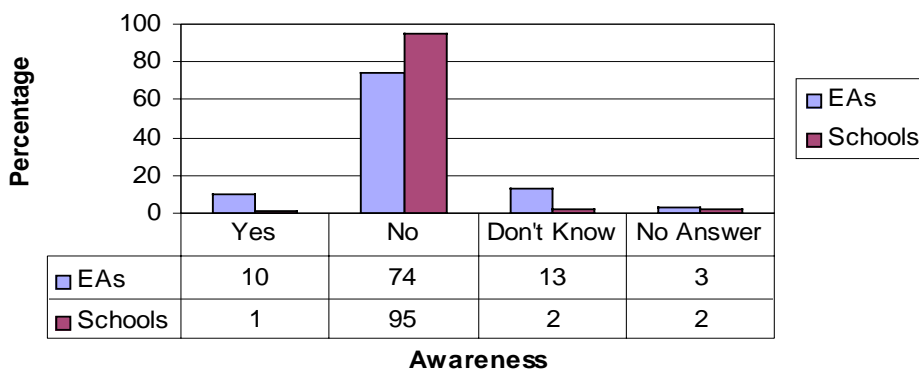
Figure 4.3 Awareness of Physical Homophobic Bullying in EAs and schools

Awareness levels of physical homophobic bullying were extremely low amongst both EA and school respondents. The numbers of respondents who stated that they were aware of physical homophobic bullying in their schools stood at 1% for schools and 10% for EAs.

How often would you say physical homophobic bullying had occurred in your school in the last 12 months?
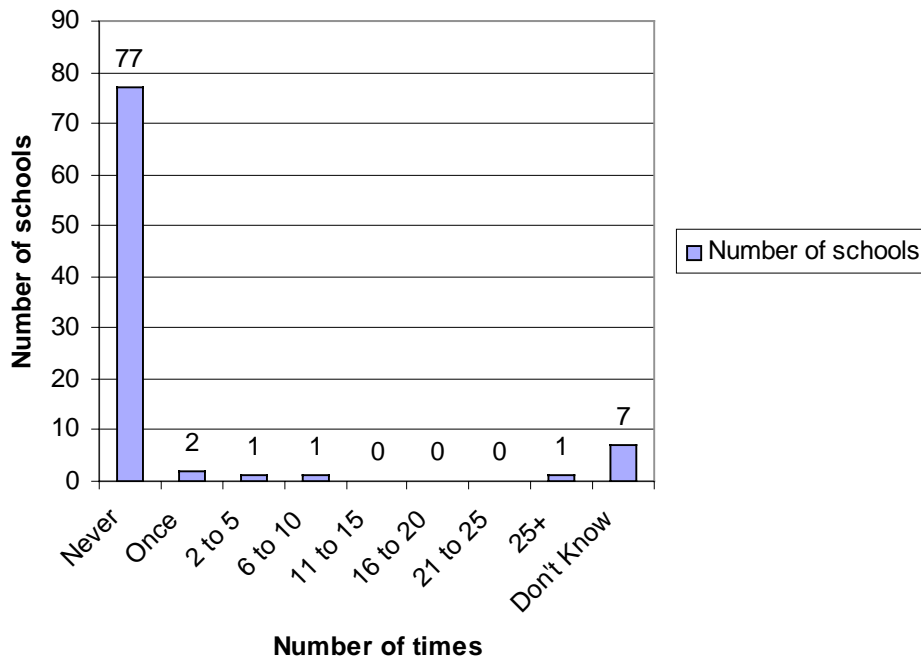
Figure 4.4: Schools: Incidence of physical homophobic bullying in last 12 months

Although the majority of schools stated that physical homophobic bullying was not an issue for them the minority of schools which stated that this has happened at all in the last 12 months is significant: one school reported over 25 occurrences in the last 12 months. Again, the fact that respondents may not be aware of everything that goes on in their schools should not be disregarded.

No reported instances of this. (S-ND)
Am unaware of this taking place but this does not mean that it never occurs. (S-ND)

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4.4 Current Practice in Dealing with Homophobic Incidents

Homophobic incidents might be dealt with in a variety of ways by different schools. In the survey, EAs and schools were asked what they thought the most likely course of action would be in the event of a verbal homophobic incident.

The graph below illustrates EA responses to this question. Although respondents were asked to circle the appropriate answer many selected a variety of options.

EAs: most likely course of action in the event of a verbal homophobic incident in schools
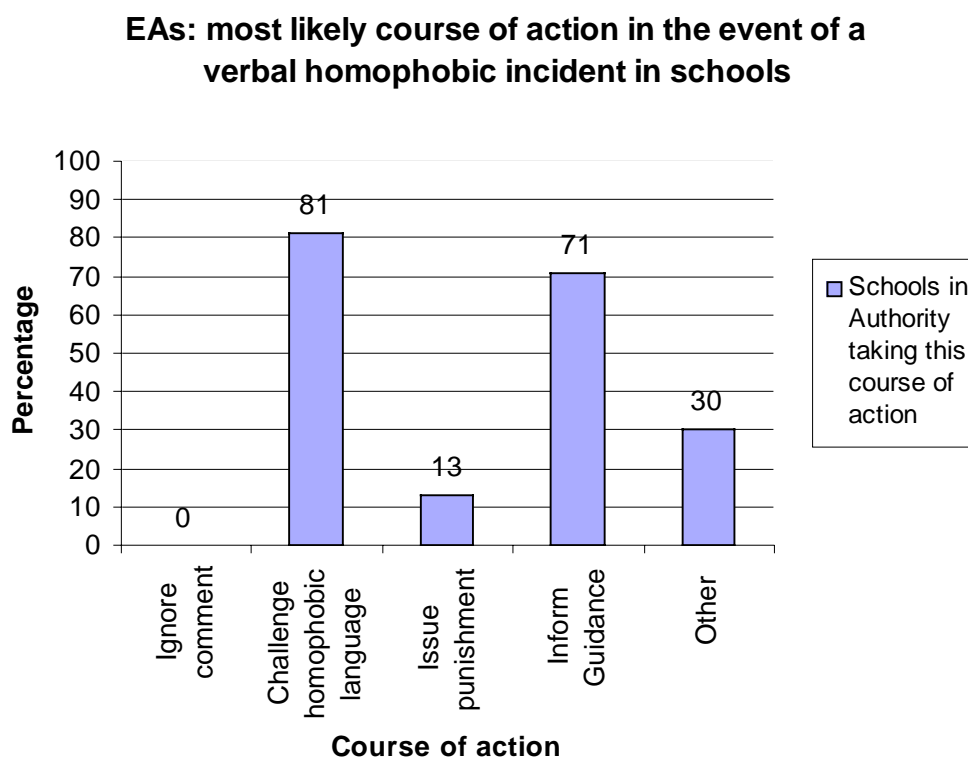
Figure 4.5: EAs: most likely course of action in the event of a verbal homophobic incident

81% of EAs stated that teachers in their schools would challenge the homophobic language, the next most popular option being to refer the situation to Guidance/ Pastoral Care staff.

30% of EA survey respondents selected the 'other' option either on its own or alongside another of the options. Alternative courses of action not offered in the options provided include:

• Action in line with the school Anti-Bullying Policy.

- Restorative justice and solution oriented approaches
- Contact parents or carers

Schools: most likely course of action in the event of a verbal homophobic incident
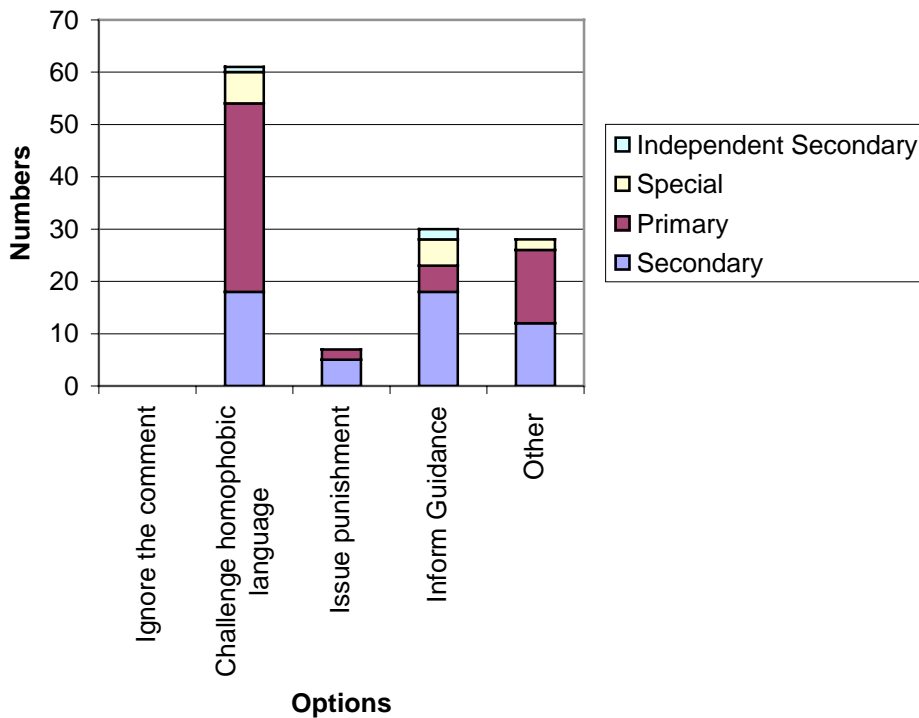
Figure 4.6: Schools: most likely course of action in the event of a verbal homophobic incident

Most likely courses of action were similar in both EA and school responses. 66% of schools stated that teachers would challenge the homophobic language while 33% stated that they would refer the incident to Guidance/ Pastoral Care.

28% of schools selected the 'other' option either on its own or in conjunction with another of the options. Alternative courses of action not included in the options provided include:

- Referral to SMT, HT or Depute HT
- Inform parents
- Follow school procedure and anti-bullying policy as with other types of bullying
- Record incident in bullying log

- Discussion with the child
- Discussion with whole class in Circle Time or PSE

The problem of respondents being unable to predict what all teachers in their schools would do was highlighted by two Secondary school survey respondents who stated that action would depend on the situation and the teacher. A number of EAs and schools stated that the course of action depended on the situation and the "*level of misdemeanour*" (S-ND).

One Special school stated that it was "*Unlikely that pupils would have the verbal ability to make a homophobic comment.*" (ND-SP)

A common sentiment expressed throughout the school surveys was that homophobic bullying should be treated in exactly the same way as other bullying.

> *Teachers should feel confident about tackling any bullying incidents – no more, no less for homophobic bullying. It is the bullying aspect of the behaviour teachers must tackle.* (S-ND, Survey)

For some schools interviewed, confidence came from the belief that homophobic bullying was no different to any other type of bullying and homophobia was no different to any form of discrimination. Words and phrases like 'inclusion', 'equality', 'fairness' and 'positive ethos' were used by many schools and EAs interviewed. However, the framework in which these concepts exist does not appear to include homophobia or sexual orientation to any extent. As discussed previously, sexual orientation is seen to be the most complicated 'strand' within the diversity/equalities matrix and is marginalised in favour of more embedded strands such as racism. For instance, in one Primary school in which the discussion of homophobia and LGBT issues was seen as inappropriate, pupils were said to be very aware of racism and sectarianism but, simultaneously, ignorant of homophobia.

The marginalisation of these issues cannot fail to impact on the ways in which homophobic incidents are dealt with. The most popular course of action in the event of a verbal homophobic incident was to challenge the homophobic language: although this is laudable, teachers need to have the language and confidence to do this effectively. One EA respondent who had suggested that schools in the EA would challenge the language and inform Guidance stated that "*the challenge re. The*

homophobic language is likely to be dependent on the confidence of the teacher."
This confidence is unlikely to grow while anti-homophobia, sexual orientation and
LGBT issues are marginalised in the school environment.

4.5 Current Levels of Confidence in Dealing with Homophobic Incidents

EAs and schools were asked about current levels of confidence in dealing with
homophobia and homophobic incidents. Incidents were divided into verbal and
physical, as confidence levels may differ between the two.

The graph below illustrates EA responses to the question of confidence levels of
schools in the Authority area in tackling verbal homophobic bullying.

**How confident do teachers in the schools in your
Authority feel in tackling verbal homophobic bullying?**
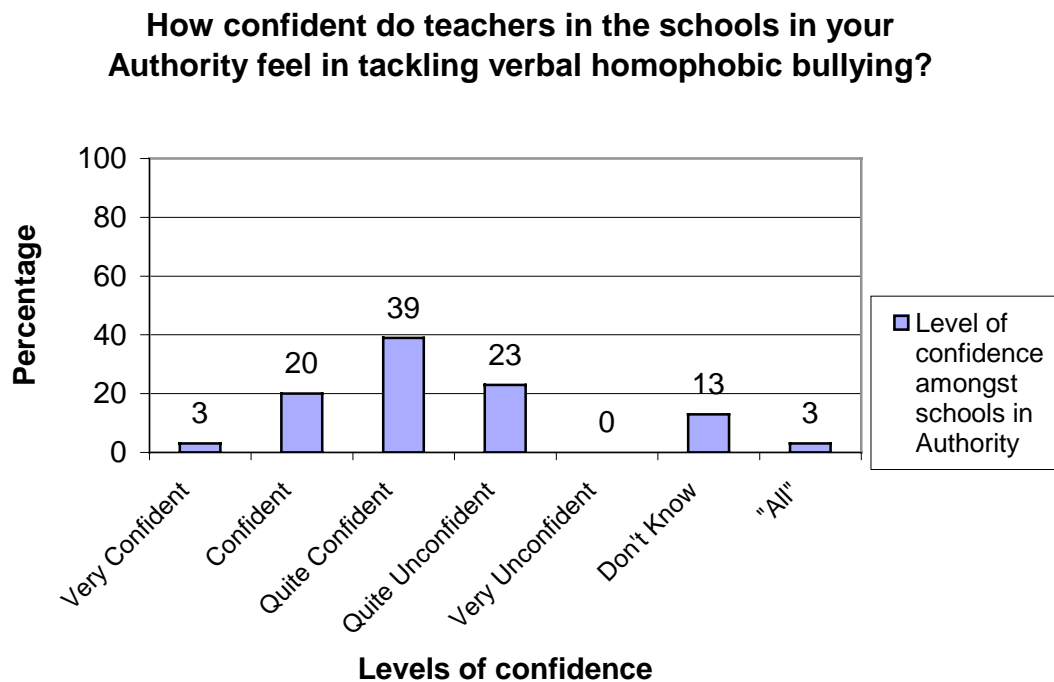
Figure 4.7: EAs: confidence in dealing with verbal homophobic bullying

Confidence levels were reasonably high. A large proportion of EAs (39%) felt that the
teachers in their schools would feel quite confident in tackling verbal homophobic

bullying and 23% felt that teachers in the schools in the EA would feel confident or very confident in tackling verbal homophobic bullying.

However, 23% of EAs stated that teachers would feel quite unconfident in dealing with an incident like this and 13% stated that they simply did not know. A number of EAs stated that it was difficult to speak for every teacher in every school in the Authority area and that confidence levels would vary depending on a range of factors.

One EA respondent selected both the 'quite confident' and 'don't know' options and wondered whether the added element of homophobia would affect confidence: "*I think teachers would be confident in tackling bullying issues in general – however, I'm not sure what a homophobic dimension to that bullying would do to that confidence.*"

The connection between confidence and training was made by two EA respondents. One respondent felt that confidence levels would depend on how much training had been done in the school and the other, who felt that teachers would be 'quite unconfident', stated that "*Many have asked for more public backing and for some training.*"

One EA interviewee stated that in the event of a homophobic incident, or even if LGBT issues were raised in school, the majority of teachers would not feel confident because of the lack of training and the silence which has surrounded these issues for so many years. Other EA interviewees pointed out the historical context of Section 28 and the anxiety which some teachers still feel about addressing these issues.

Stated confidence levels were far higher amongst school respondents, as shown in the graph below.

How confident would teachers in your school feel in tackling verbal homophobic bullying?
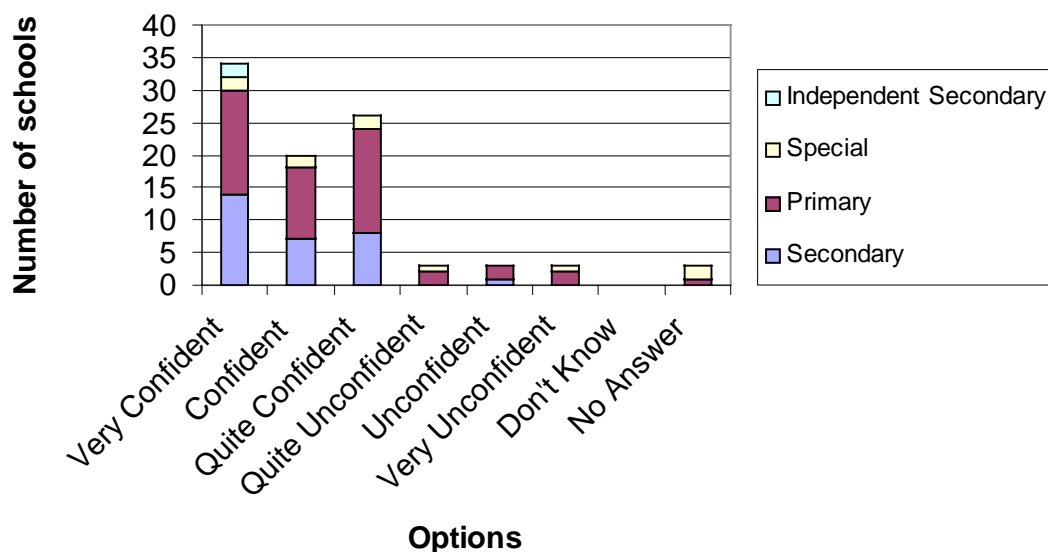
Figure 4.8: Schools: confidence in dealing with verbal homophobic bullying

87% of schools would be confident, quite confident or very confident in tackling a verbal homophobic incident while only 10% of schools would feel at all unconfident.

School, unlike EA, respondents added no additional comments or qualifications to this section. Similarly, none of the respondents stated that they did not know the answer to this question which suggests either that they felt certain in their answers or felt the need to demonstrate certainty about confidence levels in their schools.

When the issue of confidence was explored during the interviews with schools, interviewees were more ambivalent with only a handful stating that they were entirely confident. For these few schools, confidence stemmed from strong systems of documentation and referral, and the belief that a homophobic incident should be dealt with in the same way as any other type of bullying incident: "*With any bullying you've got to get to the roots of it. If the roots are homophobia then that will be dealt with.*"

As illustrated in the graph below, EAs demonstrated higher confidence levels in schools dealing with physical homophobic incidents than verbal homophobic incidents.

**How confident do teachers in the schools in your Authority feel in tackling physical homophobic bullying?**
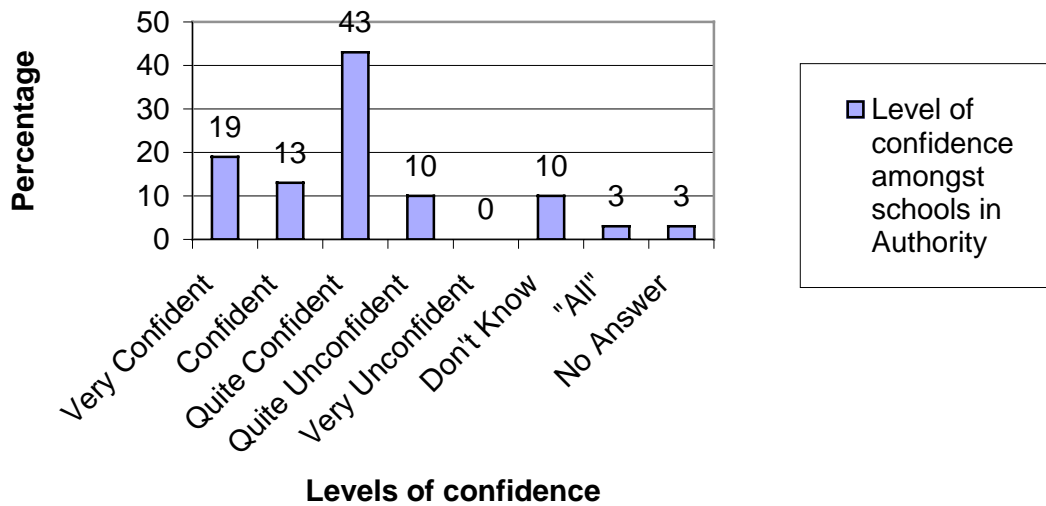
Figure 4.9: EAs: confidence in tackling physical homophobic bullying

32% of EA respondents stated that schools would be confident or very confident in dealing with physical incidents and 43% stated that schools would feel quite confident. Only 10% of EAs stated that schools would feel quite unconfident. 10% of EAs did not know the answer to this question.

As physical violence is perceived to be more 'serious' than verbal incidents, action is perhaps seen to be less related to the personal confidence of individual teachers and more to do with official procedure and policy within the school. As a result, EA respondents may have taken a more decisive line on this issue and stated higher levels of confidence.

One EA survey respondent who stated that schools should feel 'quite confident' pointed out that dealing with a physical incident effectively does not always mean that the motivation behind it will be fully addressed:

Dealing with <u>any</u> physical assault or bullying is probably OK. Doubtful if the homophobic nature of the incident will always be consistently dealt with. Very very few physical homophobic incidents recorded (can't think of any in fact) – not to say they don't occur. (ND-S)

Another survey respondent agreed with this, stating that the physical nature of the incident would take prominence over the reason behind the incident. Similarly, one Secondary school interviewee emphasised that staff would deal with an incident on the basis of respect rather than "*go into it* [the homophobia] *in detail*".

A number of EA interviewees stated that the general ethos in the schools in their area meant that teachers would not feel comfortable ignoring any type of bullying, including bullying with homophobic motivation. However, two stated that the "*personal prejudices*" of staff may influence the ways in which these issues are dealt with and that the emphasis on race awareness training in recent years means that the message has been conveyed that racism is more important than homophobia.

How confident do you think teachers in your school would feel in tackling physical homophobic bullying?
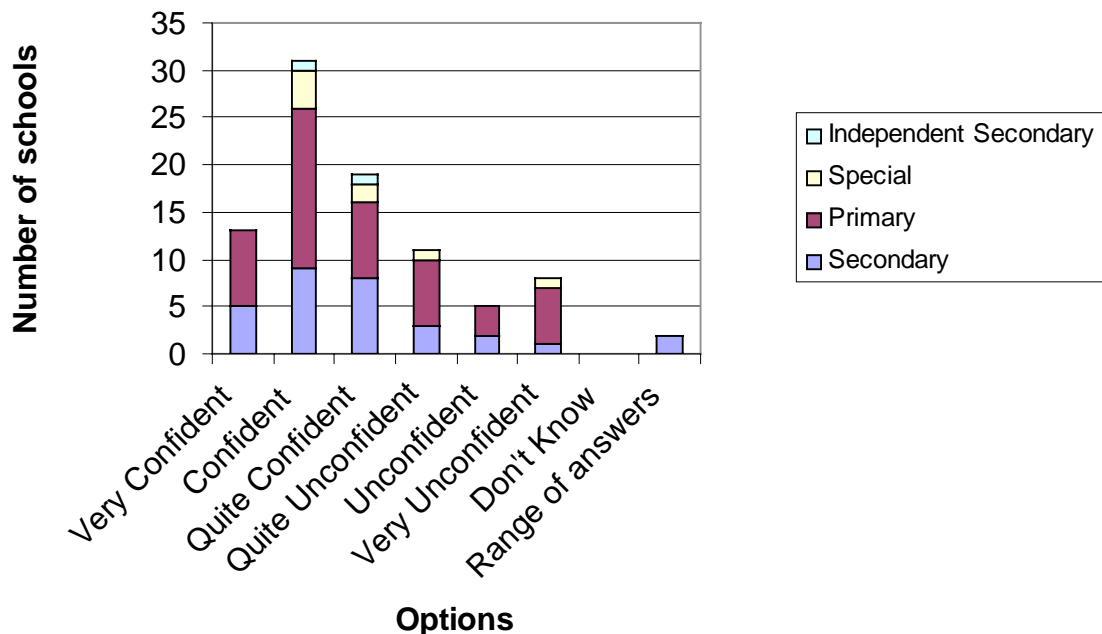
Figure 4.10: How confident are teachers in tackling physical homophobic bullying

Interestingly, although EAs demonstrated a higher level of confidence in dealing with physical homophobic bullying compared to verbal homophobic bullying, school respondents showed lower levels of confidence. Although 70% of schools stated that they were very confident, confident or quite confident, 27% of schools stated that they felt quite unconfident, unconfident or very unconfident.

A number of school interviewees stated that staff lacked confidence and needed training, support and the opportunity to build up experience in tackling incidents and in including LGBT issues in equality/diversity activities. One Primary HT reflected that:

> *The homophobic issue it's new in schools, we don't know how to deal with it, what's the most appropriate way, do you come down heavily on the child or a light touch approach – and it's that that takes confidence away from teachers, they don't know how to deal with it because it hasn't been in place… I mean everyone's looking for guidance on how best to deal with it really.*

Another school interviewee agreed with this: "*Some staff are scared because often they don't know the answers.*" However, she also stressed that others are "*entrenched in bad behaviour*" and would feel that equalities issues had nothing to do with their jobs. This interviewee had been "*horrified*" by some of the attitudes she had witnessed during race equality training.

The issue of who exactly should be feeling confident within the school was also brought up. Two Secondary schools felt that there was a difference in confidence levels amongst different levels of staff with teachers perhaps feeling less confident than Senior Management Team (SMT) and Guidance staff.

4.6 Confidence Building Measures

The research phase of this project is not only about understanding the current situation and barriers to change in Scottish schools but also about looking at ways in which these barriers can be surmounted. Issues of confidence have been highlighted in previous sections of this report and it was therefore essential to know what would

make schools and EAs feel more confident in tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools.

The graph below illustrates levels of EA and school support for a range of confidence building measures suggested in the survey. Respondents were asked to select all options which they felt might be helpful and space was provided for other suggestions.

EAs and Schools: Confidence Building Measures
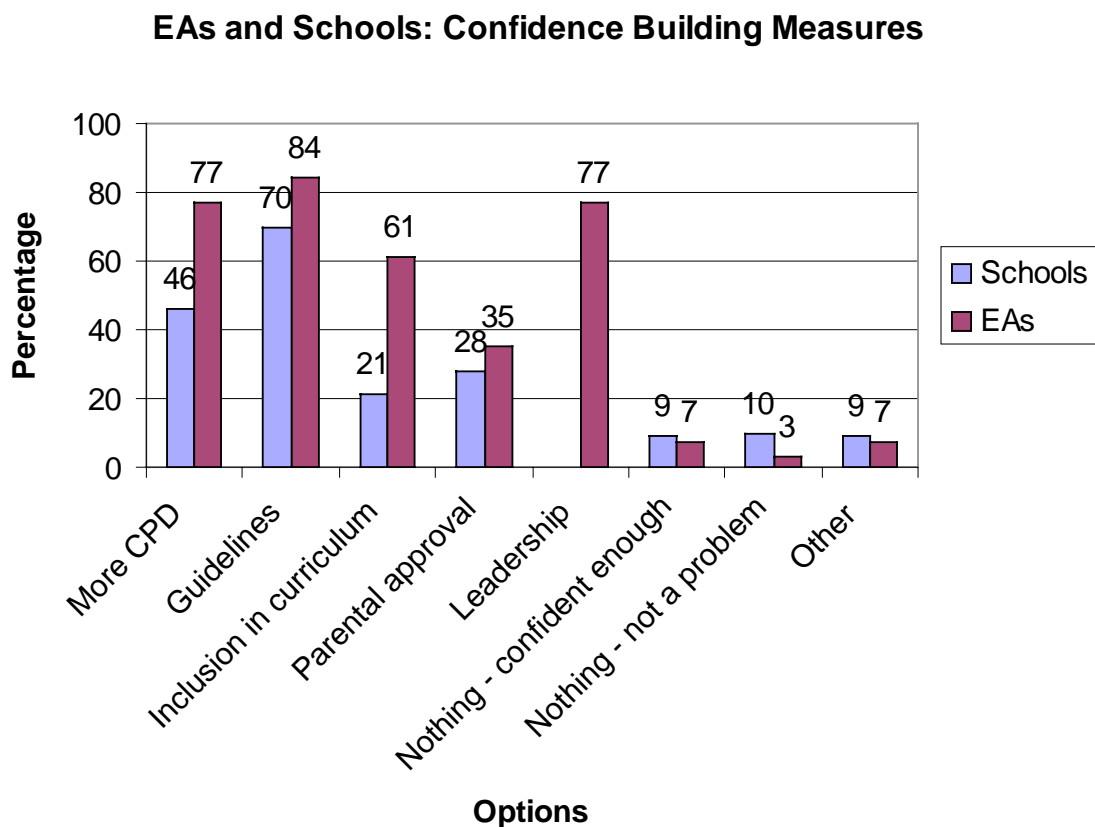
Figure 4.11: EAs and schools: confidence building measures

Support for the full range of confidence building measures was higher amongst EAs than schools. However, generally speaking, EAs and schools agreed on the most useful confidence building measures. Guidelines were the most popular option followed by increased CPD and leadership, parental approval and inclusion within the curriculum.

Only 9% of schools stated that school staff were confident enough already to tackle all forms of homophobia and homophobic bullying. However, 2 of these 8 schools also selected other confidence building options. Similarly, 5 of the 9 respondents who stated that they did not see the need for such measures as it was not a problem in their schools also selected other confidence building options. This suggests that these schools felt that they could become even more confident or that these measures would be a positive development for other schools.

The above confidence building measures and other suggestions will be discussed with reference to both additional survey comments and interviews with EAs and schools.

4.6.1 Clear national and local guidelines

Section 28 and the silence which has historically surrounded the issues of homophobia and sexual orientation within school has resulted in a lack of certainty about how to tackle homophobia. Therefore, clear national and local guidelines for dealing with homophobia in schools was the most popular option amongst both EA and school respondents.

Several EAs and schools, both in the survey and in interviews, commented that guidelines needed to be both specific and practical, focusing on the "*right ways*" to deal with these kinds of incidents. One interviewee suggested that the guidelines should contain examples of incident scenarios, containing 'do's' and 'don'ts' of dealing with actual behaviour. It was also highlighted that the guidelines should take into account the needs of the bullied and the bully and that they should advise teachers on the "*appropriate language*" to use in these situations, i.e. what they should and should not say.

One HT interviewed felt that high quality guidelines such as these would be the only way to override the objections of some teachers and raise general levels of confidence.

4.6.2 Increased SD/CPD

Although 46% of school respondents agreed that LGBT and homophobia related CPD would increase confidence in tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying only 33% of schools have a commitment to equality in their School Development Plans which would promote and support this kind of CPD.

All of the EA interviewees and the majority of school interviewees felt that SD/CPD was essential to raise awareness of these issues and ways of dealing with homophobic incidents. It was suggested that initial LGBT awareness training in which staff were encouraged to explore their own values and attitudes was necessary as one representative recalled the resistance which some teachers put up to participating in anti-racist CPD. The quality of training was highlighted as "*bad training will, with the best will in the world, do more harm than good.*" Interviewees also highlighted the need for CPD in this area to have the full support of EAs and the SMT within schools.

One EA interviewee felt that CPD specifically focusing on LGBT issues would be unhelpful and due to capacity issues, time pressures and competing priorities it should be covered in more generalised equalities CPD in a "*broad brushstroke*".

However, how popular CPD sessions on these issues would be was debated. The problem of competing priorities was mentioned by many interviewees, even those who were strongly in favour of raising awareness through CPD. One HT said that if something "*was not a huge issue*" then CPD would not get done. Another interviewee stated that schools generally know what their CPD priorities will be for the following three years and that this is unlikely to change even if new courses are introduced. One interviewee advised careful planning and sufficient notice to schools to ensure uptake.

There is also the danger of some schools attending single CPD sessions on homophobia and LGBT awareness and then feeling that they have no more to do. One HT whose staff had attended a number of CPD sessions on equalities in the last few years stated that "*it's fairly well laid down what we're doing. We've kind of moved on now.*"

The issue of responsibility and ownership was raised but not resolved. One HT felt that CPD would be useful but class teachers would "*shy away from it*" and see it as an issue only for Guidance teachers. This HT felt that this was probably the case and that issues surrounding bullying and sexuality would not be disclosed to class teachers by pupils.

Personal attitudes were also highlighted as a possible barrier to uptake; one HT felt that CPD on these issues would be treated with a "*high measure of scepticism - as in 'what now?'*" similar to the way in which some teachers reacted to Sex Education.

> "*You'd have a hard time persuading the majority of the teachers that it was relevant, particularly older staff. Many of them just teach their subjects and wouldn't see it as important, they'd say 'I'm not going to talk about this*'"

Another HT said that although CPD might be useful some teachers would not want to deal with these issues because of their "*own personalities and prejudices*".

4.6.3 Inclusion in the curriculum

As stated previously, although discussion regarding homophobia and homophobic bullying is not widespread across the curriculum at the moment there does appear to be backing for greater inclusion, mainly at EA level.

Inclusion in the curriculum will be discussed in greater detail in the next section of the report as it involves a number of complex issues regarding attitudes towards appropriateness, age sensitivity and methods of introducing these issues to pupils.

4.6.4 Parental approval

The views of parents were highlighted by many to be a potential problem. Some schools stressed that what is needed is parental information and awareness raising rather than parental approval.

> *I feel any negative or politically incorrect comments I have ever been aware of in 14 years here have been an echo of uninformed parental comments. As public information/education improves parental attitudes to including and accepting any*

individual will too – the children are less likely to be imprinted with the negativities of parents. In other words – educate the parents – we can do the kids! (P-ND)

Not parental approval but educating and informing parents too. Many of various prejudices of pupils stem from home environment and parental attitudes based on ignorance for the most part. (S-ND)

Section 28 is undoubtedly still an issue and was mentioned several times in the surveys and during the interviews.

Many not inclined to 'promote' or be seen to 'promote' homosexual lifestyles even after the law has changed. (S-ND)

[Teachers need] *Reassurance that no negative actions would follow from their being open in discussion of homosexuality with young people. Sadly, it is a concern for some teachers.* (S-ND)

Although they differed in the extent to which it concerned them, all of the EA representatives were aware of potential backlash from parents if homophobia or LGBT issues were addressed in schools. Most agreed that parental influence, along with messages from the media, often lay at the root of pupils' prejudices. All EA interviewees agreed that it was a minority of parents who would object to these issues being addressed and that many would react either neutrally or supportively. However, the possibility of backlash meant that teachers were "*walking on eggshells, they're not relaxed*".

A number of interviewees suggested potential solutions. The need to get parents "*on board*" was seen as necessary. Several suggested that the issue should be approached with parents in terms of a broader anti-discrimination framework, treating homophobia as 'just' another form of discrimination. Another suggestion was a multi agency approach involving school staff, health professionals and the police to demonstrate a joined up and dynamic approach. One PT Pupil Support mentioned that as part of the Health Promoting Schools initiative her school was holding two days of sexual and mental health and wellbeing workshops. This included evening sessions for parents and she suggested that this was one place in which LGBT issues could be broached.

However, those schools which were mostly firmly behind the discussion of these issues felt that as the decision to discuss homophobia and LGBT issues was entirely justifiable there was nothing wrong with schools having the confidence to simply go ahead, and defend this to parents while involving them in workshops or information seminars: "*This could be some children's reality* [being LGB or T]*, I'm not prepared for them to be discriminated against.*"

4.6.5 Leadership

The issue of strong leadership was highlighted as essential by EA survey respondents and by a number of EA and school interviewees. One interviewee stated that, ultimately, the HT determines the ethos of the school and what staff members must do. Therefore, to be effective, developments must be top down. One HT, who was firmly supportive of challenging homophobia wherever possible in her school, stated that staff could have any attitudes that they wanted but they should not expect that she would not challenge them.

As EA staff and the SMT within the school are in the leadership roles which determine the ethos and direction of the school it was suggested that training should initially be targeted towards them with whole school training following this. However, an EA representative pointed out that the 'top down' approach should be tempered by training at the "*grassroots level*" as this is where real differences will be made.

4.6.6 Reporting Mechanisms

Many EA and school interviewees questioned the benefits of introducing reporting mechanisms for homophobic incidents similar to those used in racist incidents. In addition, it was felt that legislation would need to be passed before mechanisms such as these would be used in schools: "*If the legislation's not behind it, it ain't gonna happen.*"

However, one interviewee from an EA which has a system of recording homophobic incidents stated that it was useful to an extent, despite many incidents going unreported and remaining outwith the EA's knowledge. This interviewee also put forward the idea of a remote reporting system; she stressed however that this should not remove the onus from schools to tackle these issues head on.

However, another interviewee felt that adding another layer of reporting would be pointless: "*Oh it would be completely mad, it would make our job so difficult*". This HT felt that inclusion and non-discrimination was less about paperwork and form filling and more about the wider policy, practice and culture of the school.

4.7 Inclusion of Anti Homophobia and LGBT Issues within the Curriculum

Awareness raising and information for the whole school community is necessary to transform a culture of homophobia where it exists. Including the discussion of homophobia within the formal curriculum helps to raise awareness of LGBT issues amongst all young people and allows them to question their own attitudes and behaviour. The inclusion of LGBT issues in the curriculum may help to alleviate the isolation often experienced by LGBT young people and 'normalise' these issues throughout the whole school community.

The curricular questions in the survey were designed to ascertain:

(i)   Whether the discussion of homophobia is currently included anywhere in the curriculum

Also, as the discussion of homophobia cannot be successfully integrated into the curriculum without the support of school staff, the survey also addressed:

(ii)   Whether EAs and schools believed that it would be appropriate to include the discussion of homophobia within the curriculum.

The survey suggested a range of subjects in which homophobia could be discussed. Respondents were asked whether homophobia was discussed in any of these subjects at the moment. The second question asked whether respondents felt it was appropriate to discuss homophobia in any of these subjects.

Personal and Social Development (PSD)	**English**
Religious and Moral Education (RME)	**Geography**
History	**Modern Studies**

Respondents could also select 'None of these subjects' or state an 'Other' subject. Space for comments was included in the question.

4.7.1 EA Survey Responses and Interviews

Discussing homophobia within the curriculum
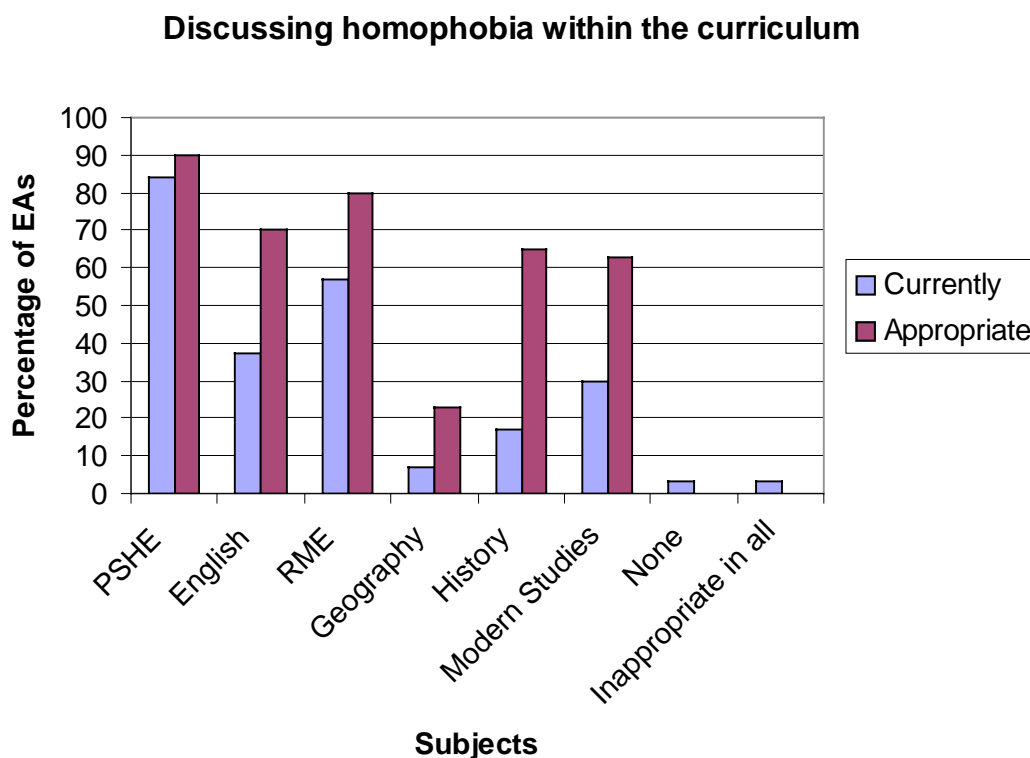
Figure 4.12: EAs survey response: inclusion in curriculum

In the graph above, the first column – named 'currently' - indicates whether homophobia or LGBT issues are currently discussed in each of the named subjects. The second column - named 'appropriate' – focuses on whether respondents thought it appropriate to discuss homophobia and LGBT issues in these subjects. The named subjects focused on Secondary school subjects but were intended to indicate broad areas of study for Primary schools.

Is homophobia discussed in any of the following subjects in the schools in your Authority?

Options: PSD, English, RME, Geography, History, Modern Studies, None of these subjects, Other Subjects (please specify)

EA respondents felt that PSD is the most likely location for discussion regarding homophobia and LGBT issues followed by, in order, RME, English, Modern Studies, History and Geography. Only 3% of EAs stated that homophobia and LGBT issues were not discussed in any subject.

It is important to note that many EA respondents stated that they could not speak definitively for every school and every teacher in the Authority area. Qualifying comments included:

> *"Would hope that schools cover these aspects in PSE but we do not monitor the content of PSE courses until a School review takes place."*
> *"The EA does not hold this information. Programmes will vary from school to school."*
> *"It is difficult for me to speak for all schools in the Authority. Practice currently varies from school to school and some schools may address homophobia in some subjects. There is no overarching Authority policy."*

In which subjects, if any, do you feel it would be appropriate to discuss homophobia?

Options: *Options: PSD, English, RME, Geography, History, Modern Studies, None of these subjects, Other Subjects (please specify)*

What is possibly more important from the EA perspective is whether EA staff believe the discussion of these issues are appropriate for the schools in their area. In these terms, EA survey respondents showed support for greater inclusion and discussion, although 3% still felt that it would be inappropriate in any subject. For every named subject, EAs stated that the number of schools currently discussing homophobia was lower than appropriate.

Additional EA comments were supportive but were tempered by qualifications such as: "*Dependent on the relevance of homophobia to the issues being studied/discussed...*"; "*…appropriate to the age and stage of pupils*"; "*…if context is correct.*"

This cautious support was also characteristic of interviews with EA representatives. Every EA representative expressed some support for addressing homophobia and LGBT issues in schools in the EA. However, it was discussed very much as a complex and delicate area to negotiate. One EA interviewee talked about Section 28 and the fear which still surrounds the discussion of homophobia and LGBT issues in schools. She felt that the issues of homophobia and sexual orientation and the silence surrounding them in schools are similar to those surrounding domestic violence some years ago in terms of sensitivity. This interviewee highlighted a general lack of awareness and a need to raise the level of knowledge amongst both EA and school staff.

Some EA interviewees tempered their support for inclusion by mentioning issues such as constraints placed on Secondary school teachers who must concentrate solely on their subjects with no time to "*open the can of worms.*" An interviewee stated that capacity issues for schools were a key problem as there was no space to address all equalities issues separately and in enough depth. He suggested that schools should be looking at the common themes between the strands and developing pupils' transferable attitudes related to all equalities areas.

One interviewee stated that although these issues should be explored everywhere he presumed that teachers would be less than receptive to moves to change the present situation. Another EA interviewee agreed, saying that inclusion within the curriculum is the "*bigger ticket*" as some may see it as "*promoting a lifestyle*".

4.7.2 School Survey Responses and Interviews

Discussing homophobia within the curriculum
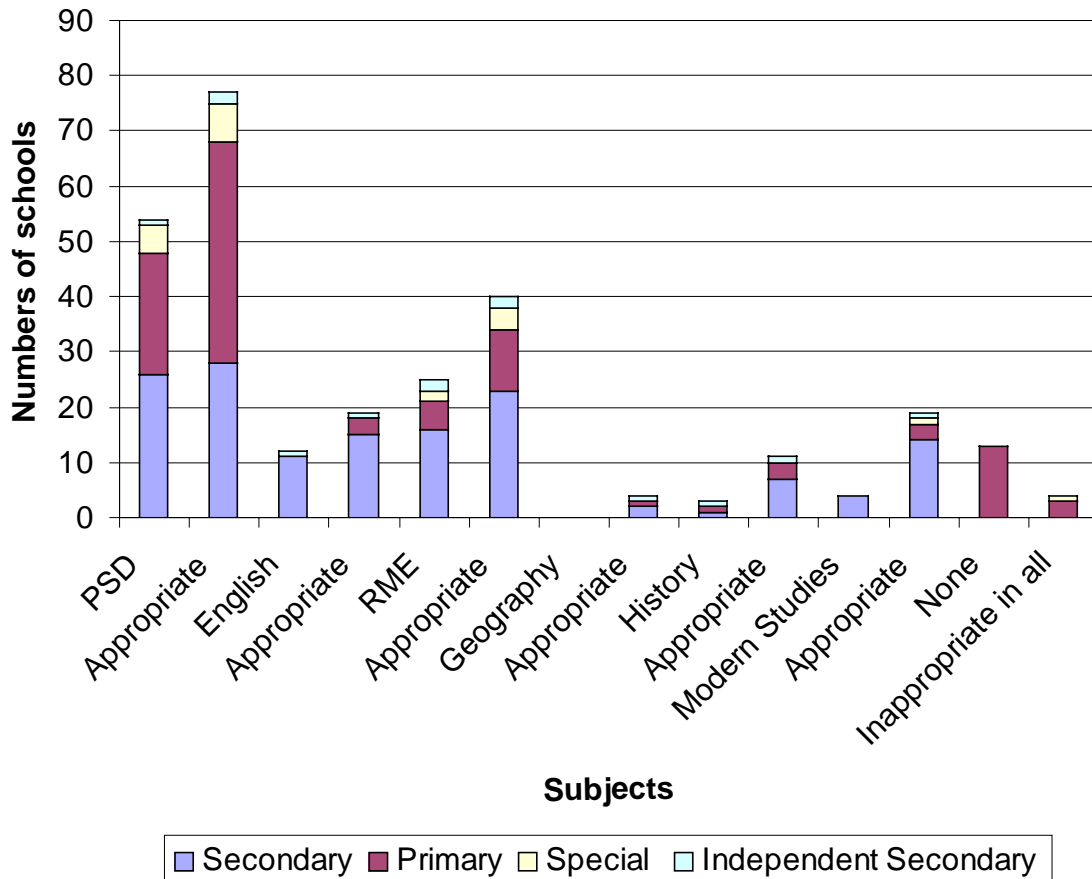
Figure 4.13: Discussing homophobia within the curriculum

Is homophobia discussed in any of the following subjects in your school?

Options: PSD, English, RME, Geography, History, Modern Studies, None of these subjects, Other Subjects (please specify)

The school survey responses showed that PSD was the most common subject in which these issues were discussed, followed by RME, English, Modern Studies, History and Geography. Although EA respondents had been hesitant about speaking for all schools in their areas, their responses match with those given by schools. Only

13 schools, all of which were Primaries, stated that these issues were not discussed in any subject.

School interviewees mentioned the same range of subjects above with Primary respondents mentioning the P6/7 Living and Growing curriculum as a particular focus and Special school respondents highlighting Circle Time, components of Environmental Studies and general discussions on 'feelings' and emotional health. Drama was suggested as another subject in which homophobia could be addressed.

Two of the three Special schools and three of the Secondary schools interviewed stated that they included discussion of homophobia and LGBT issues in some context.

Two Secondary school interviewees stated that there was no focus on homophobia or LGBT issues but discussion might occur if raised by pupils. One HT declared that the school captains, when asked, replied that "*it was not an issue*". The PT Guidance in the same school indicated that ad hoc discussion was usually related to relationships, health and bullying.

One Special school HT stated that it was currently discussed only if raised by pupils but that the discussion of homophobia should definitely be discussed as part of general anti-discrimination or anti-bullying lessons and would be in the future.

In which subjects, if any, do you feel it would be appropriate to discuss homophobia?

Options: *Options: PSD, English, RME, Geography, History, Modern Studies, None of these subjects, Other Subjects (please specify)*

Only 4 survey respondents (3 Primary, 1 Special) stated that the discussion of homophobia was inappropriate in all subjects. The remaining respondents showed support for the discussion of homophobia in a range of subjects. In each subject the number of schools currently discussing homophobia within the curriculum was lower than the number of schools and EAs who thought it would be appropriate to do so. This suggests that there exists among schools a baseline of general support for including the discussion of homophobia within the curriculum.

> *"Equality issues should be addressed everywhere!"* (S-ND)
>
> *"There may be opportunities in all these subjects to tackle issues of homophobia."* (P-ND)

Although there appears to be support for greater inclusion of these issues in the curriculum amongst schools, this support is moderated and qualified by the following comments made and concerns raised in both the survey and interviews with schools. The majority of additional and qualifying comments in the survey were made by Primary respondents, confirming that issues of sexual orientation and homophobia are particularly contentious for Primary schools.

4.7.2.1 Generic Approach

One interesting feature of both the surveys and the interviews is that some schools believe that addressing the particular needs of individuals or 'groups' of individuals is a direct negation of - and mutually exclusive to - equality and respect for all. The issue of a broader and more generic anti-discrimination and equalities approach was brought up by 3 schools:

> *"This is a primary school and so we do a lot of work on treating <u>everyone</u> equally but do not especially mention sexual orientation." (ND-P)*

> "*As a primary school we discuss all forms of discrimination generically when teaching and address specific issues as they are raised by pupils*." (ND-P)

> *"Within our school the emphasis is on respect for others – we do not single out particular groups for special attention as this would be contrary to our policy." (ND-P)*

Discussing homophobia and LGBT issues as part of a wider anti-discrimination framework is certainly a valid way to approach inclusion in the curriculum. However, the danger lies in anti-discrimination being addressed only or mainly in terms of the other equality strands while leaving out the trickier areas of sexual orientation and homophobia.

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4.7.2.2 Proactive or Reactive Discussion

9 schools commented in the survey that rather than include the discussion of homophobia formally within the curriculum these issues would only be dealt with if pupils raised the issue.

> *"Homophobia would only enter the debate if a pupil brought it up." (ND-P)*
> *"This would be dealt with if/when the issue was raised by pupils. There would not be a planned session dealing with homophobia." (ND-P)*

This is similar to the cautious support displayed by the EAs. Several school survey respondents made qualifications regarding appropriate context and only *"if necessary" (ND-P)*.

This was also common amongst school interviewees as most stated that they would not actively bring up these subjects. Many felt that they implicitly addressed the issue of anti-homophobia under the generic themes of 'fairness', 'respect' and 'tolerance' for all types of people but, still, homophobia was dealt with explicitly only on an ad hoc basis if a pupil brought it up in class. One Primary HT mentioned that this is sometimes a "*grey area*" where pupils want to discuss issues which are not "*appropriate*" for the whole class.

However, some schools interviewed did make an effort to actively bring these issues up with pupils. Two Primary school interviewees stated that they tried to address these issues wherever possible as children were now regularly exposed to "*harmful stereotypical images*" of LGBT people in the media. One of these interviewees was determined that both staff and pupils should take LGBT issues seriously and proceed beyond the "*giggle barrier*". This was the same for the other interviewee who wanted to "*make these issues normal*" and move beyond the "*underground, sniggery thing*" that happened every time they were discussed - even, she regretted to say, in the staffroom.

Several interviewees stated that they were aware of LGBT parents in their schools. One Primary HT interviewee who had mentioned this said that she therefore had "*no idea why people would delay it*" as "*what type of message is this sending to them* [the children of LGBT parents] *if you remain silent?"*

4.7.2.3 Age and Innocence of Pupils

As with any other topic addressed in schools, the discussion of homophobia or other LGBT issues would have to be age and stage appropriate: any other approach would be ineffective and unsuitable. However, rather than viewing the discussion of LGBT issues and homophobia as a matter of, for example, citizenship, general anti-discrimination work or relationships education, some schools appeared to view it in terms of the discussion of same sex sexual activity alone. This appears to heighten anxiety, uncertainty and the refusal to engage with these issues.

> *This seems to be far more a Secondary issue when sexuality becomes more apparent.* (P-ND)
>
> *Homophobia would only enter the debate if a pupil brought it up. It would not be considered appropriate otherwise as it would clash with the level of understanding reached in their Sexual Education Programme. (ND-P)*

Some interviewees felt that Primary school children were not yet aware of LGBT issues and there appeared to be a reluctance to draw their attention to them. This fear of "forcing" the issue and bringing it to a child's attention "too early" suggests that some school staff are working at a heterosexist baseline from which non-heterosexual relationships are seen to be risqué, unsavoury and something to protect children from.

The issue of 'innocence' amongst children and young people and *when* to introduce these issues also concerned survey respondents and interviewees. One survey respondent stated only that "*Do not believe that it is relevant or desirable to discuss homophobia with primary age children." (ND-P)*. Other interviewees were more ambivalent: "*It shouldn't not be talked about but it's difficult, at what stage do you do this?"* For schools of this opinion the appropriateness and relevance of the issues depended on teachers gauging the awareness levels of the children they were working with.

Young people are paradoxically portrayed as being 'innocent' and unaware of homophobia and LGBT issues – and therefore unprepared to be involved in discussion of these issues – but simultaneously capable of expressing homophobic language and attitudes.

> *Maybe you could say the opposite, maybe we shouldn't be raising it, kids might be reactive to it – sometimes you find that children, when you put ideas into their heads, they think 'oh right, didn't know about this' and maybe start to call someone 'gayboy' whereas if you don't raise awareness of it maybe they don't think of saying something like that.* (Primary HT, Interview)

As discussed in the literature review, although homophobic language is very much part of young people's everyday discourse it is not considered to be as offensive as, for example, racist language (Thurlow, 2001). In the schools survey, several respondents defended their pupils' use of homophobic language by mentioning their age and innocence. Although they agree that homophobic language is unacceptable, it is nevertheless seen as not that serious.

> *Young children sometimes use the word 'gay' as a term of name calling – it is not used with only specific individuals but as a general name calling. This is not acceptable but I'm not sure that I would call it homophobic bullying.* (P-ND)

> *Some children are more aware than others – some say 'you're so gay' or 'you poof' as insults and don't necessarily know what that means. (*P-ND)

> *Children in this primary use the verbal terms gay, poof, homo to hit out at pupils they fall out with. Pupils are discouraged from name calling in our anti-bullying practice… In many cases they do not fully understand the terms but understand they don't like them being used. The incidents are quickly forgotten and pupils are friendly again!* (P-ND)

Issues of age and levels of 'innocence' will vary from school to school and from child to child. However, if children are using homophobic language then this must be treated seriously rather than relying on arguments of innocence and lack of awareness. Indeed, including the age and stage appropriate discussion of homophobia and LGBT issues in the classroom may serve to raise general levels of awareness and reduce the occurrence of homophobic language and behaviours.

4.7.2.4 Rurality

Some survey respondents highlighted their school location as justification for not discussing homophobia or LGBT issues.

> *This is dealt with very sensitively as the children are very young and sheltered in many respects due to the location of their school and home i.e. rural. (ND-P)*

> *This may be more of an occurrence in Secondary Education or city schools. (ND-P)*

> *As this is a rural primary school this is not an area we feel the need to spend a great deal of time on. (ND-P)*

Recent research stated that the experience of LGBT people outwith the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh was felt to be difficult due to greater invisibility, greater perceived homophobia within rural communities and the power of the church in rural areas (McLean and O'Connor, 2003). A mapping exercise conducted by LGBT Youth Scotland in the Scottish Borders found that there was a lack of awareness of LGBT issues in the community at large, a lack of positive LGBT role models and no significant challenges made towards stereotypes of LGBT people (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2005). Clearly, the statements made by these school survey respondents both confirm and sustain these attitudes and behaviours.

4.7.2.5 Staff Attitudes

Including LGBT issues and the discussion of homophobia within the curriculum is, to a large extent, a personal choice for teachers. One Secondary school respondent made reference to the personal attitudes and values of teachers and the impact that this may have on the discussion or non-discussion of these issues: *"The input will often vary depending on the subjective view of the staff, not necessarily linked to their age!" (ND-S).*

The personal attitudes of school staff towards these issues were mentioned by a number of interviewees as impacting on how homophobic incidents are dealt with

and whether homophobia and LGBT issues were likely to be discussed within the classroom. The age of staff was highlighted as a particular barrier with older teachers being seen to be less likely to want to engage with these issues. However, school staff are obliged to provide a safe, supportive and healthy environment for all of their pupils. There appears to be the need to stress the importance and relevance of engaging with these issues with all staff alongside the potential consequences of *not* engaging with these issues.

4.7.2.6 Religion and Denominational Schools

As the sample of denominational schools was small it is difficult to generalise about attitudes or approaches in Scotland's 418 denominational schools. However, based on the Roman Catholic stance towards 'homosexuality' and recent comments regarding gay teachers (Gordon, 2005), it is possible that the discussion of homophobia and LGBT issues might be especially contentious for denominational schools.

In the survey, comments regarding religion came from non-denominational schools.

> *We teach that God loves all men/women – He does not necessarily approve of some of our behaviour – but people are free to make their own choices and are responsible for their own actions.* (P-ND, Survey)

The one denominational school interviewee stated that the discussion of homophobia and LGBT issues were inappropriate for the Primary school and would not be addressed as children did not come in contact with these issues and neither staff nor parents would approve. This stance, whether rooted in religious belief or not, was nevertheless similar to that of some staff in non-denominational schools. This interviewee suggested that LGBT issues would have to be tackled in Secondary school at around the age of 15 "*rightly or wrongly*" so that pupils could "*protect*" themselves when they start going out to pubs and clubs. When asked what would happen if legislation was put in place which obliged schools to address these issues, the interviewee answered that denominational schools would "*take direction from the Church*" as they did with the issues surrounding Sex Education.

Non-denominational school and EA interviewees were asked about 'ways forward' in introducing anti-homophobia work and the discussion of LGBT issues into denominational schools.

Although the main focus was on Roman Catholic schools in Scotland, children and young people from a wide range of religious backgrounds attend school in Scotland. One Primary interviewee mentioned the Muslim, Sikh and Hindu girls withdrawn from Sex Education classes and stresses that it is important to take care not to "*step on any cultural toes*". However, he feels that this may result in children receiving misinformation in the playground which is not being corrected in the classroom "*We have to educate children for the world but at the end of the day there's nothing we can do about that* [religion issue]".

The feeling that 'there's nothing we can do about that' was prevalent and the majority of EA representatives and schools said that they did not know or were not qualified to answer this question: *"It's really outside the Authority's control."*

4.7.2.7 Methods of approaching homophobia and LGBT issues with pupils

Schools and EA interviewees put forward a range of suggestions about ways in which to approach these issues with pupils. As one method may work well with one group of pupils but not with another there needs to be flexibility in ways of approaching these issues and awareness amongst staff that there are multiple methods available which can be adapted to their own needs.

The consensus from school and EA interviewees was that the discussion of homophobia and LGBT issues should be situated within a broader equalities and anti-discrimination framework. One HT felt that treating the topic too explicitly could generate increased homophobia from pupils and discourage participation: "*I'm not going to that poof class.*" This approach, as stated previously, is valid provided that homophobia and LGBT issues are addressed fully and effectively within this framework.

Interviewees suggested the following methods:

- Open discussion through Circle Time. One interviewee mentioned a specific homophobic incident in which a pupil was being bullied because his brother

was gay and stated that Circle Time had been effective in airing the issues and raising awareness and sensitivity amongst the whole class.

- Resources such as DVDs, CD ROMs, worksheets and lesson plans to encourage discussion and reflection and challenge stereotypes and misinformation. One interviewee pointed out that "*If you just say away and teach it and there's no resources or materials then it maybe doesn't get done as there's so many other things.*" Audio visual resources were highlighted as crucial by Special school respondents as pupils' discussion skills may be underdeveloped.

- External speakers and workshops to 'normalise' the issues

- Increased partnership working with the LGBT voluntary sector to share expertise. LGBT Youth Scotland already conduct successful workshops and awareness raising sessions for pupils in a number of schools in this representatives area and although she felt that responsibility should still lie within the school she also felt that this was an extremely effective way of getting messages across to pupils.

- Drama productions such as Theatre in Education with supporting resources. One interviewee had recently seen a production addressing domestic violence and had found it effective in getting sensitive message across to pupils.

4.8 Additional Survey Comments and Interview Questions

Closed questions were used in the survey both for ease of completion and the need for quantitative data at this stage in the research. However, an open ended question was included at the end of the survey to allow respondents to raise points which had not been previously addressed or further expand on their survey responses.

4.8.1 LGBT School Staff

I am surprised that no mention is made of gay teachers. The incidents I am aware of in this school did not target a pupil but teachers. I believe I handled it well but since a pupil name calling a teacher isn't 'bullying' it isn't covered here – and it's an issue. (S-ND)

One Primary school HT interviewed stated that although there were several gay teachers in the school they would never be open about their sexual orientation because of the immediate link with paedophilia. This is unsurprising given that 26% of respondents in a 2003 Scottish survey felt that gay men and lesbians are unsuitable to be primary school teachers (Bromley and Curtice, 2003). School's Out, a national organisation which works towards equality in education for LGBT people, estimate that there are only 50 'out' teachers in the whole of the UK (Donald, 2005).

Homophobia, heterosexism and homophobic bullying are issues for the whole school community and can affect school staff as well as pupils. Although the issue of LGBT staff is outwith the scope of this particular research, it is an important point to consider for the future.

4.8.2 Transgender Issues

In the school and EA interviews there were varying opinions on whether Transgender issues should be discussed alongside issues of sexual orientation.

One EA representative felt that, although schools in the area might feel that tackling transgender issues alongside LGB issues was a "*step too far*", the EA would be supportive because ignoring the topic would be "*ignoring a section of the population.*" This was broadly supported by the other representatives who qualified this support by suggesting that it may only be suitable for Secondary age children and that teachers would need initial transgender training and awareness raising to build confidence as there was a great lack of understanding.

Only one EA representative, although tentatively accepting of the introduction of lesbian and gay issues, felt that the discussion of Bisexual and Transgender issues are not appropriate in the primary school, or even perhaps at secondary level in any depth.

None of the Primary or Secondary school staff interviewed had addressed transphobia or transgender issues before.

Some interviewees were positive about the possibility of addressing these issues alongside homophobia and other LGBT issues. However all interviewees, from both Primary and Secondary schools, were extremely unsure about how to go about this

and would need more information in order to understand the issues and address them effectively. One Primary HT admitted that she had seen a number of children over her years as a teacher who may have been dealing with gender identity issues. Another Secondary HT pointed out that sexual orientation and gender identity can be easily confused and that she had taught pupils who teachers had assumed were gay but were possibly, in retrospect, experiencing more complex gender issues.

Some interviewees felt that these issues would be discussed if they came up in the classroom and that this often depended on the age and maturity of the children in the class: "*I take my lead from the children*". However, one Primary HT felt that transgender issues were "*just too confusing for them* [the pupils]" and the age factor was introduced again as it was said that older teachers would not feel comfortable talking about this.

> "*Personally I think it's a bit heavy for this stage, for an 11 or 12 year old to be going into that at the moment is a bit much, personally speaking. Talking about gays and lesbians is fair enough as they're part of society but it's just a bit much, I think some adults would find difficulty with approaching it. Personally I would leave it til they were older.*

4.8.3 Wider National Awareness Raising

A number of survey respondents and interviewees, while talking about LGBT awareness raising amongst parents, pointed to the fact that local and national awareness raising campaigns were necessary to tackle homophobia in wider society. An EA interviewee pointed out that "*It's not that we* [EAs and schools] *don't have a part to play, we just can't do it all.*"

> *Like other issues under Equal Opportunities an awareness raising at national level requires to be undertaken.* (S-ND)
>
> *Major national/local campaigns on homophobia – similar to those on anti-racism. (S-ND)*

Summary of Research with EAs and Schools

In this sample of Scottish schools and EA representatives there was demonstrated a wide and often disparate range of responses to homophobia, homophobic bullying and the discussion of sexual orientation and LGBT issues. These ranged from blindness/denial towards LGBT issues (due to factors such as the age of children or the rural location of the school), to their pragmatic supposed inclusion in the broad spectrum of diversity/equalities procedures to considered attempts to address issues of sexual orientation in a distinct, thoughtful, educative and responsive manner.

In terms of both policy and practice, a number of respondents and interviewees advocated dealing with homophobia within a general generic equalities and anti-discrimination framework. However, there is evidence to suggest that LGBT issues are often marginalised within this framework. Dealing with these issues in terms of more general anti-discrimination discussion is a valid approach provided that the discussion of sexual orientation, homophobia and LGBT issues is not excluded in favour of what are perceive to be more embedded and developed equalities strands such as race and disability. Schools and EAs should not assume that they are covering all equalities areas while only addressing some.

A number of EAs and schools stated that they do not know everything that goes on in the school and may be unaware of some incidents. Although a number of EAs and school survey respondents stated that they felt confident in dealing with different sorts of homophobic incidents, almost all respondents also selected other desirable confidence building measures. Clear guidelines on how to deal with homophobic incidents was the most popular option for both schools and EAs. This reflects the new and sensitive nature of these issues in schools.

Although homophobia is sometimes discussed in schools this is done inconsistently and often on an ad hoc basis with the personal attitudes of staff having a part to play in this. Survey respondents and interviewees made a number of suggestions - resources, external speakers, increased work with the voluntary sector, drama productions - regarding ways in which to raise anti-homophobia issues with pupils. As opinions on what would be most effective varied and are likely to be dependent on the needs of particular classes it is important to provide a flexible, adaptable and diverse range of supporting resources. Parental support in introducing these issues

to the classroom was also highlighted and suggestions were made about ways to achieve this: increased information through workshops, the integration of LGBT issues into a more general equalities framework and multi agency initiatives.

5: Research with Young People in Scottish Schools

> **The views that are expressed in this part of the report are those of the young people surveyed and interviewed and do not necessarily reflect the views of LGBT Youth Scotland.**
>
> **Extracts from the online survey and focus group have been quoted verbatim. Any explanations are placed within square brackets [ ] and italicised.**
>
> **Survey respondents are identified by the fact that they were responding to the survey (S), their gender, their age and their sexual orientation.**
> e.g. S-F-15, Bisexual – Survey Respondent, Female, aged 15 and Bisexual
>
> **Focus group participants are identified by the fact that they were participating in the focus group (FG), their gender and their age. All of the female participants identified as Lesbian and the Male participants as Gay.**
> e.g. FG-M-17 – Focus Group participant, Male, aged 17.

5.1 Demographics

5.1.1 Respondent age and year at school

77 young people completed the online survey. The graph below illustrates the age range of respondents.

60% of respondents were aged between 15 and 19. 22% of surveys were completed by a younger group of pupils aged between 11 and 14 and the remaining 18% of surveys were completed by respondents aged between 20 and 25. Two survey respondents did not state their age ('U' on the x axis) but it was clear from their responses that they had recently attended school.
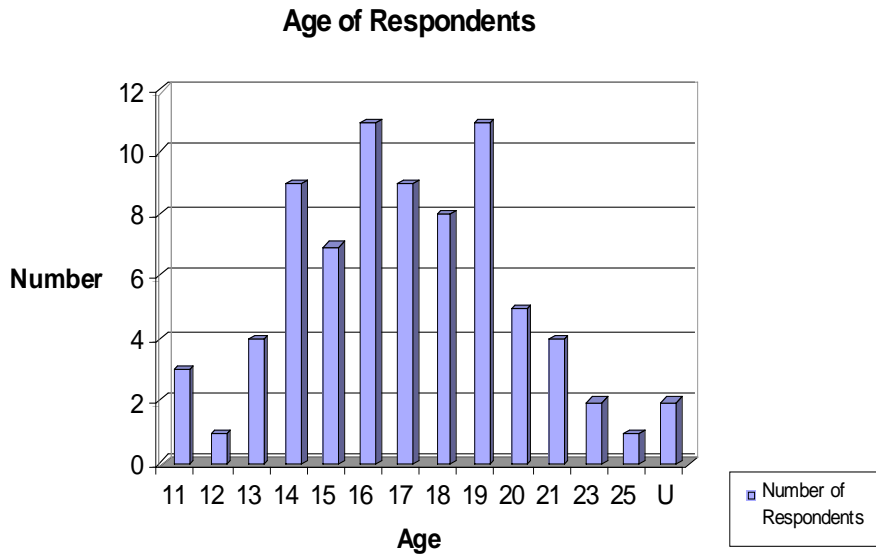
Age of Respondents

Figure 5.1: Age of Online Survey Respondents

As illustrated by the graph below, respondents' current year at school ranged from Primary 7 to S6.

Respondents Currently Attending School - Year
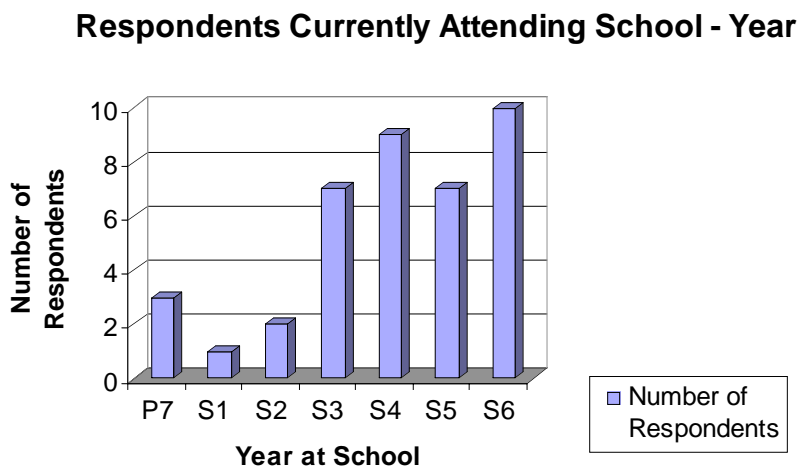
Figure 5.2: Year of School for Online Survey Respondents Currently Attending School

5.1.2 Local Authority Area

Surveys were completed by young people in 15 Local Authority areas across Scotland.

The majority of respondents (56%) were attending or had attended school in either Edinburgh or Glasgow. One likely explanation for this central belt bias is that this is the area in which LGBT specific services are most developed and visible. Although

the survey was online to encourage the widest geographical response rate, young people outside of these areas may be less aware of LGBT Youth Scotland and its website and therefore less likely to complete the survey. Nevertheless there was a wide spread of responses across Local Authority area, stretching from Highland down to Dumfries and Galloway. Response rates by Authority are shown in the table below.

Local Authority	Number	Local Authority	Number
Highland	5	Fife	3
Aberdeenshire	1	North Ayrshire	2
Angus	5	Edinburgh	32
Stirling	1	Glasgow	11
Clackmannanshire	1	Renfrewshire	3
Perth and Kinross	2	East Dunbartonshire	1
North Lanarkshire	2	Dumfries and Galloway	4
South Lanarkshire	2	Unknown	2

Table 5.1: Online survey respondents by local authority area

5.1.3 Gender Identity

Respondents were fairly equally weighted in terms of gender with 44% of respondents identifying as Female and 53% as Male. One respondent identified as 'Androgynous – neither Male or Female'. One respondent did not disclose his or her gender.

The survey responses therefore did not highlight specific issues which transgender young people might have in relation to school.

5.1.4 Sexual Orientation

The survey asked whether respondents would identify themselves as 'Bisexual', 'Gay', 'Lesbian', 'Straight/Heterosexual' or 'Unsure/Questioning'.

Sexual Orientation of Online Survey Respondents
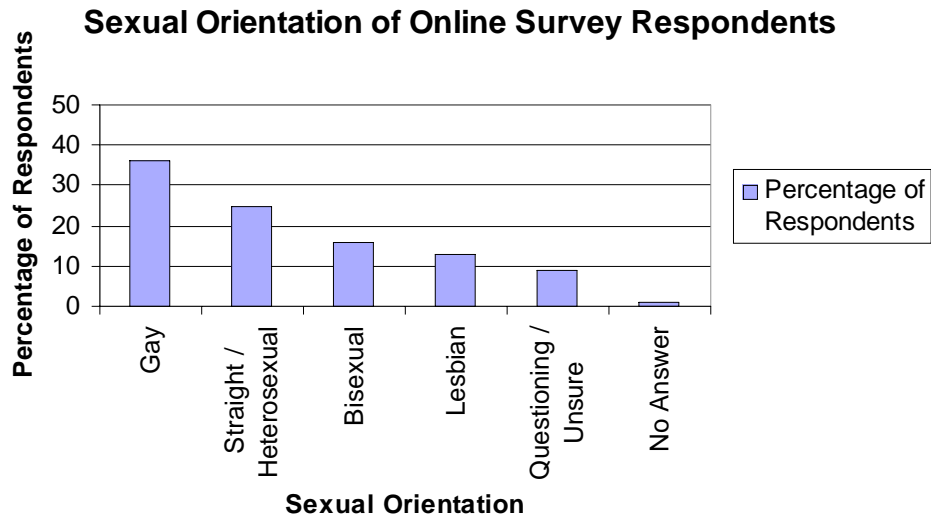
Figure 5.3 Sexual orientation of online survey respondents

The majority of respondents (36%) identified as Gay. 13% identified themselves as Lesbian, 16% as Bisexual (16%) and 9% identified themselves as Questioning or 'Unsure' of their sexual orientation.

The intention was to survey a range of both LGBT and non-LGBT school pupils across Scotland and this was successful as one quarter of respondents identified as 'Straight' or 'Heterosexual'. One respondent declined to answer.

5.1.4.1 Age and Sexual Orientation

Two of the three Primary 7 pupils who completed the online survey identified as Gay and another as Questioning/ Unsure. Of the remaining 11 surveys completed by 12 to 14 year olds in S1 to S4, 8 respondents identified as Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual and 3 as Questioning.

It is interesting to note that these young people are clearly identifying their sexual orientation at a young age. Although no generalisations or conclusions can be drawn from a small sample such as this, the identifications made in this sample call into question the belief that Primary and early Secondary age school pupils are unaware of sexual orientation and are therefore unprepared to hear about homophobia or general LGBT issues in school.

In addition, the 9% of survey respondents who stated that they were Questioning/Unsure demonstrates that many young people may not fit neatly and permanently into the constructed categories of 'Lesbian', 'Heterosexual' or 'Gay'. Indeed, for many young people these categories do not adequately describe their sexuality; for example feeling that they are "just not straight."

5.1.5 'Racial Identity' and 'Ethnic Origin'

99% of respondents were White/ Caucasian, 1 respondent did not disclose his or her racial identity.

80% of respondents identified themselves as Scottish. 4% described themselves as British and 3% as English. The remaining respondents described themselves as being of Irish, German, Polish or Finnish origin with one respondent declining to answer.

5.1.6 Type of School

The majority of respondents (86%) attended or had attended a Non-Denominational school. 14% of respondents were attending or had attended a Denominational school.

80% of respondents did not disclose whether they attended or had attended a State school or an Independent school. Of the remainder, 13% attended or had attended a State school and 9% attended or had attended an Independent school.

One respondent was currently attending a Special school.

5.2 Anti-Bullying Policies

Respondents were advised that 'most schools have an Anti-Bullying Policy which sets out the ways in which staff will deal with bullying if it occurs' and asked whether they were aware of a policy like this in their schools.

Only 9% of respondents indicated that they were aware of their school Anti-Bullying policy.

Interestingly, 62% of survey respondents did not answer this question.

Ideally, young people should be involved in developing the policies which impact upon their school lives and involved in the design and delivery of initiatives aimed towards them. One of the main priorities for the young people who set the agenda for ChildLine Scotland's 2003 Conference was improved anti-bullying policies which involve young people in delivering the solution (ChildLine Scotland, 2003). A report by Save the Children Scotland (2000) as part of the Improving Our Schools consultation stated that:

> Children and young people want to be better informed and to be more involved in decisions concerning their education and their school. They want to be given more opportunities to be consulted on matters which affect them and to have their views taken into account when decisions are made.

Involvement and participation in policy development and decision making means that young people can be more confident of positive outcomes. However, these survey responses suggest that respondents either did not understand the question being asked or did not care enough to answer it. Either of these explanations suggests a significant disengagement from the policy development and delivery process and is likely to have had an influence on the low levels of reporting general and homophobic bullying discussed below.

5.3 Bullying in Scottish Schools

5.3.1 General Safety

Before being asked about the awareness and experience of homophobic bullying, survey respondents were asked about 'general' bullying in their schools, the frequency and type of bullying and whether they had ever reported bullying to school staff.

- 88% of respondents were aware of general bullying taking place in their schools and 81% of respondents were being or had been bullied at school.
- 72% of respondents stated that bullying occurred in their schools 'Frequently' or 'Often'. 4% stated that it happened only 'Sometimes' and 10% 'Rarely'.

- The table below illustrates the types of general bullying which the young people were either aware of or experiencing. Respondents were able to select more than one option.

Type of Bullying	Respondents Aware	Respondents Experienced*
Verbal Bullying	99%	98%
Being left out or ignored	81%	61%
Physical Bullying	72%	39%
Property stolen or vandalised	54%	37%

Table 5.2: Online survey: types of general bullying
* of the 81% who were experiencing or had experienced general bullying

Verbal bullying and ignoring or leaving people out were the most common types of bullying which almost all respondents were aware of or had experienced. However, almost three quarters of respondents were aware of physical bullying in school and just over half were aware of pupils having their property stolen or vandalised. Over one third of the respondents who had experienced bullying had experienced physical violence or had their property stolen or vandalised.

Focus group participants agreed that school is potentially unsafe for every pupil, regardless of sexual orientation. All were aware of bullying of some type in their own schools.

> *I don't think they're safe places for anyone* [schools] *… (laugh)… because everyone at my school to some degree was being bullied even by teachers or other members of staff. (Female, 16)*

> *You know in American schools you graduate from high school? In Scottish high schools you survive. You should get a qualification in survival at the end of it. (Male, 17)*

5.3.2 Homophobic Bullying

Survey respondents were asked more specifically about homophobic bullying.

84% of respondents were aware of homophobic bullying in their schools and 52% of respondents were being or had been homophobically bullied at school.

Awareness of specifically homophobically motivated bullying was therefore at a similar level as awareness of general bullying but the number of respondents who have experienced homophobic bullying is lower than the number of those who have experienced more general bullying.

As homophobic bullying accounts for only one type of general bullying in schools, it was to be expected that the incidence of homophobic bullying would be lower than that of general bullying. 72% of respondents had indicated that general bullying occurred in their schools 'Frequently' or 'Often' while 45% of all respondents stated that homophobic bullying occurred in their schools 'Often'. 22% stated that it happened 'Sometimes' and 17% 'Rarely'.

Respondents who stated that they were aware of homophobic bullying identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning and Straight. As the literature review discussed, young people who are homophobically bullied may have been labelled as LGBT but do not necessarily identify as such. However, in this survey, all of the respondents who were being or had been homophobically bullied identified as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Questioning.

The table below illustrates the types of homophobic bullying which the young people were either aware of or experiencing. Respondents were able to select more than one option.

Type of Homophobic Bullying	Respondents Aware	Respondents Experienced*
Being left out or ignored	45%	58%
Physical Bullying	31%	30%
Property stolen or vandalised	17%	28%
Verbal Bullying	11%	8%

Table 5.3: Online survey: types of homophobic bullying
* of the 52% who were experiencing or had experienced general bullying

The most common types of bullying differ between general and homophobic bullying. The most common type of homophobic bullying was being left out or ignored and over a quarter reported having had their property stolen or vandalised. Most interestingly, respondents reported lower levels of verbal abuse than was the case in more general bullying but a higher incidence of physical bullying with almost a third of respondents reporting awareness of and experience of physical violence.

5 respondents selected the 'Other' option when describing types of homophobic bullying. Examples included:

> *A lot of kids call me a freak and throw bottle lids at me. The make fun because I'm often on my own and they hiss at me. (F-13, Questioning)*

> *Sexual harassment (M-20, Gay)*

> *Staff treating me differently because I am open about my sexuality. (F-17, Lesbian)*

Focus group participants were asked to describe types of homophobic bullying. In addition to tales of verbal bullying from six of the participants, four had experienced physical violence. One participant (FG-M-18) had been stabbed in the chest with a fork after he was 'outed' at school.

> *My favourite was 'let's throw footballs at her head' (FG-F-16)*
> *I got headbutted in the face once. (FG-M-17)*
> *People spat in my face, stabbed me with a compass... (FG-F-18)*

5.3.2.1 "You're so Gay!"

Focus group participants and several survey respondents agreed that phrases such as 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' were commonly used as insults in school.

> *The only homophobic bullying in my school that I was aware of was that the word 'gay' was used frequently as a derogatory term. The people doing the bullying often had no reason to think that the person they were bullying actually was gay, it was just a term that was used. (S-F-18, Lesbian)*

> [There were] *many cases of using the term 'gay' and others as an insult,*
> *where all i wanted to do was say 'well, yes, i am - that's not an insult to me'*
> *(S-F-19, Lesbian)*

> *People throw the word gay around like… fucking ridiculously. Anything that's*
> *not positive or good, if it's something crap, they've given up saying 'that's*
> *shit', now it's 'that's gay'. (FG-M, 18)*

One survey respondent pointed out, as did the focus group participants, that many young people may have LGB or T family members. This may mean that these young people are targets of homophobic bullying or, as shown below, may be affected by indirect homophobia in the school.

> *I havent been bullied in that way but ive heard it and dont like to hear people*
> *being called "gay"* [as an insult] *'cause ive got family members who are gay*
> *and would be insulted by that. (S-M-11, Straight)*

Focus group participants felt that it was the intention behind the words which was crucial; the use of homophobic language was more acceptable if it was used jokingly by a friend in a context in which it was not intended to be insulting or bullying.

> *There's a big difference between your best mate calling you a stupid dyke*
> *and a bully throwing something at your head and calling you a stupid dyke.'*
> *(FG-F, 16)*

> *Yeah, it depends where they're coming from. (FG-F,19)*

> *I think it's partly the feeling behind it. If it's someone that you don't know or*
> *that you're not friends with then whether they're meaning it as a joke or not*
> *it's pretty unacceptable. (FG-M, 17)*

5.3.2.2 Location

Focus group participants were asked where and when homophobic bullying was most likely to take place. The experiences of these young people show that homophobic bullying can happen anywhere in school.

Most participants stated that homophobic bullying occurred most frequently between classes and during breaks and lunchtime, i.e. at those times in which school staff were not present. However, one participant felt that at no time was he safe either in or out of school.

> [It happened] *during classes, break and lunch, after school and at the weekends if you happened to bump into them. (FG-M, 17)*

Two participants then disclosed more subtle bullying within class time.

> *During class wasn't as bad cos the teachers wouldn't leave for a minute in case the class went mad. (FG-F, 16)*

> *Facilitator: When you say 'not as bad'?*

> *Well you know you'd get comments and stuff like that but you wouldn't get violence. (FG-F, 16)*

> *Yeah, whispering and hissing (FG-F, 19)*

5.4 Effects of Homophobic Bullying

As discussed in the literature review, previous research has indicated that the effects of homophobic bullying can include low academic attainment, truancy and mental health and wellbeing issues (e.g. Warwick et al., 2001, Rivers, 2001, Johnston, 2005, Youthnet Northern Ireland 2003). As such, these were the issues which respondents were asked about in the survey. It must be stressed that a clear causal relationship cannot be confirmed in a small sample such as this and the experience of homophobic bullying may be a factor rather than the single cause of these feelings and behaviours. However, the self reports of survey respondents indicate that, for them, some connection exists between the experience of homophobic bullying and these effects.

5.4.1 Personal effects

In an attempt to gauge the impact of homophobic bullying on young people's health and general wellbeing a broad question was asked about the ways in which homophobic bullying made young people feel.

The effects of homophobic bullying described by survey respondents have been grouped in the following categories and are illustrated by direct quotations from the online survey.

5.4.1.1 Unhappiness and Depression

Depressed, left out and like you have done something wrong. (S-F-19, Questioning)

i felt deppressed,paranoid anixous,hated school. (S-F-17, Lesbian)

5.4.1.2 Low Levels of Confidence and Self Esteem

Anxious, mostly, and it seriously affected my self-confidence. Been through uni and I'm still not comfortable speaking publically or meeting strangers. Still do it of course. Just worried without cause. (S-M-21, Gay)

totally alone worthless at the time - want to leave here sometimes - other times not so bad - easier than when I was in second or 3rd year. (S-M-16, Gay)

[I feel] *pointless. (S-M-15, Bisexual)*

5.4.1.3 Fear, Isolation and Loneliness

I felt isolated. Found it hard to make friends and be comfortable around people, esp guys. Wasnt my own self and felt lonely and afraid. (S-M-21, Gay)

5.4.1.4 Shame, Embarrassment and Feeling Different

why do i feel like this when normal people are straight. (S-M-14, Gay)

It made me feel ashamed of what i really am!! (S-F-15, Bisexual)

it made ma feel very small and if i should be a shamed of who i was , which i know i shouldtn be im proud to be gay but they dont like that it also made me feel regected and unwanted as if no one wants to know me and like i should be dead plus i was always nervous about going to skool as i didnt know what was going to happen that day like who would say somethign or who would hit me next. (S-M-14, Gay)

5.4.1.5 Anger

It usualy makes me very angry and not long ago i took that anger out on a door and nearly broke my foot. (S-F-14, Bisexual)

depressed, angry, sad, suicdal, so fucking angry. (S-M-20, Gay)

5.4.1.6 Suicide Attempts

I tried to kill myself, and only just failed. (S-M-19, Bisexual)

I suffered severe depression, I felt as if I was a bad person and because I couldn't talk it over with anyone, I tried to kill myself - 3 times or so. I felt angry at myself, i felt flustrated that I was gay. (S-M-16, Gay)

5.4.1.7 Self harm and Eating Disorders

I felt very lonely.No one stood by me.I had no friends at school.The teachers did not listen.I felt let down by everyone and everything that possibly could let me down.I started self harming at the age of 14 owing to the extreme depression I was in..I still do it because, as you grow older, the bullies, sadly -often- do not. (S-F-20, Lesbian)

i'm on fluoxotine [medication used to treat depression and/or bulimia] *and avoid leaving my house much,unless with friends or going to school, and i'm also severely underweight. (S-M-16, Gay)*

This long list of damaging and distressing feelings and behaviours illustrate some of the effects of homophobic bullying. A key issue is the longevity of the effects of

homophobic bullying. Mental health issues and problems with confidence and self esteem may continue into later life, adversely affecting future wellbeing and life chances. In addition, if one of the effects of homophobic bullying is to make a young person feel ashamed or guilty about his or her sexual orientation then this homophobia may become internalised in the long term, causing difficulties in future relationships with partners, family, friends and colleagues.

5.4.2 Effect on Schoolwork

Over one quarter of survey respondents (26%) felt that their schoolwork had suffered as a result of homophobic bullying. Respondents reported difficulties in concentrating, lower levels of motivation and failing exams.

> *I like Maths but, I could not do the work cos they [the bullies] were in that class. (S-M-19, Gay)*

> *I just get distracted by it and cant consintrate on my work. (S-F-14, Bisexual)*

> *I failed my Highers the first time around. (S-M-19, Bisexual)*

> *lower motivation to study - constant worry about what would be said or done to me next by the bullies. Always 'on guard' and worrying about bullies. My performance was worse when I had to sit near to a bully as bullying also could occur in class, esp if teacher left the room. (S-M, Gay)*

Focus group participants reported a similar lack of concentration and poor attainment.

> *I started 5th year doing 4 Highers and an Intermediate 2 and by the end of the year I was on 3 Intermediate 2s and 2 Highers and when I did the exams I failed the 2 Highers. So… Just because I wasn't concentrating in class because of what had just happened before class, what was about to happen when I left class… (FG-M, 17)*

5.4.3 Effect on Attendance

12% of survey respondents had truanted because of homophobic bullying.

A number of the survey respondents who had truanted appeared to feel guilty about this, feeling the need to apologise for or justify their behaviour in the survey. One 14-year-old boy who identifies as gay pointed to the fact that missing school in S3 was not a good idea and an 11 year old boy who also identifies as gay stated that it has only been twice this year. This suggests that truancy is generally being used as an avoidance tactic and a last resort for these young people.

> *i went to school but didnt go to registration then decided to just go into town instead before any1 saw me, i didn't want to go home and face the music from my mother as they would send me back. but come midday i decided to go back, i decided that they didn't have the right to make me sad etc so i bit the bullet and went back claiming i had been at the doctors. That afternoon though i wish i hadn't skipped, i felt like they had won, i felt realy guilty. (M-21, Gay)*

In the focus group, two participants described how homophobic bullying had led to truancy and early school leaving.

> *I got a social worker and I was threatened with being put in a home because I stopped going to school, I had a 91% absence rate - because the bullying was happening in class and the teacher was going oh I can't see it happening, you're just not concentrating, not doing your work. I ended up leaving school when I was 14 and doing the rest in college. (FG-F, 18)*

> *Yeah. I started skipping school all the time. I ended up leaving school because of bullying, that was my reason for leaving school and people might say that's silly and unacceptable but it's like [angry] what am I meant to do, just sit there and take it? (FG-F, 16)*

5.5 Young Peoples' Views on Current Methods of Dealing with Homophobic Bullying

One objective of the young peoples' survey was to elicit opinions on the effectiveness of current practice in dealing with homophobic bullying in their schools. This involved questions on reporting, satisfaction with outcomes and confidence in school staff.

5.5.1 Reporting Homophobic Bullying

Rates of reporting homophobic bullying were lower than rates of reporting more general bullying. 69% of respondents who had experienced general bullying reported it to school staff but only 15% of respondents who had been homophobically bullied reported it to a member of school staff.

Only 10% of respondents who reported general bullying to school staff were pleased with the outcome. However, of the respondents who had reported homophobic bullying to school staff none were satisfied with the outcome. This strongly suggests that there are problems with current methods of dealing with homophobic bullying: young people lack confidence in these methods and feel let down by their outcomes.

The survey tried to ascertain why respondents might not report homophobic bullying. Three main themes emerged, two of which were common to both general and homophobic bullying and one of which was unique to homophobic bullying.

5.5.1.1 Feeling that the situation was not serious enough to report it

Some respondents – both those who had experienced homophobic and those who had experienced more general bullying – felt that it was not serious enough to take it to a member of school staff, dismissing it as 'silly' or 'stupid' and claiming that it had little impact on their lives. However, the seriousness of any type of bullying, homophobic or otherwise, should not be diminished and no young person should be forced to ignore it or live with it.

> *Verbal: didn't seem any point. I didn't let it bother me. Physical: it was only once, punched in the face, and the guy apologised the next day (however, I doubt it was because he was sorry). Didn't seem worth it. My property wasn't stolen*

vandalised, but I was worried it WOULD be from 1st to 4th year. Not a nice feeling. (S-M-21, Gay)

It wasn't extreme bullying; just silly name calling and the like - I was able to ignore it and it didn't make my life any different. (S-M-21, Gay)

I didn't think of it as bullying at the time, i passed it off as people being stupid and spent as little time as possible with them. (S-F-18, Bisexual)

5.5.1.2 Believing that there was no point in reporting it as nothing would be done or it may make the situation worse

A great deal of hopelessness was expressed by respondents with a number of young people believing that there was little point in reporting the homophobic bullying as nothing would be done to improve the situation or it may make the situation worse. This was a feature of both general and homophobic bullying responses. However, there was an added element for those who were or had been homophobic bullied which might be absent from other types of bullying. Several of the respondents who stated that there was no point in reporting the bullying felt that nothing would be done about it specifically because it was related to sexual orientation. They felt that school staff would not be responsive because they would not understand the issues facing them.

Again, no point. This is a Jesuit school. (S-M-19, Bisexual)

I didn't feel as if it was accepted. (S-M-16, Gay)

I didn't feel the staff would understand or do anything about it. (S-F-19, Bisexual)

They don't understand the issues facing LGBT people. (S-F-19, Questioning/ Unsure)

because it wouldnt stop anyway so there is no point. (S-F-14, Bisexual)

5.5.1.3 Not wanting to tell school staff about their sexual orientation
This reason for non-reporting was unique to the experience of homophobic bullying. A number of survey respondents were afraid that disclosing homophobic bullying to

school staff would be tantamount to 'coming out' and acknowledging that the bullies were right. 'Coming out' is a process which is extremely personal, often difficult and which should ideally be done only when a young person is ready to deal with the possible consequences in all areas of their life. It was assumed by several young people that their parents would be involved and the fear of being 'outed' and rejected made reporting the bullying extremely unlikely.

> *Because I don't feel happy with informing the school of my orientation, I haven't come out to my parents and know they would be involved… (S-M-15, Gay)*

> *i wasn't out at the time and felt if i reported it everyone would assume i was gay, which i didnt want at the time. (S-M-18, Gay)*

These responses emphasise the fact that confidentiality and sensitivity are crucial when dealing with homophobic bullying as young people may be anxious about disclosing the reasons behind the bullying and may be unready to disclose their sexual orientation.

Focus group participants also highlighted the lack of confidentiality shown when homophobic bullying actually was reported.

> *One thing they had a problem with was confidentiality – if you went to a teacher and said look someone is bothering me they would then go to this person and say look so and so said that you've done this to them and then you'd just cop it 10 times worse. (FG-M, 18)*

> *Yeah if you told anyone they'd go to the person and say '[name] said you called him a faggot' and so thanks, cheers, I'll see them after school… (FG-M, 17)*

5.5.2 Effectiveness of Action Taken

Focus group participants were aware that teachers should be acting to protect pupils but still did not feel that they were safe. The sense of being 'let down' seemed to add to the virulence of participants' comments.

Facilitator: So how did your schools cope with it? [homophobic bullying]

They didn't cope. (FG-M, 18)

They have no power. Or they like us to think they have no power. I don't know what power they do have. (FG-M, 17)

One way in which focus group participants' schools reacted was to try to protect them by minimising contact with bullies. Although intentions were laudable, participants felt that they were being hidden away to cause teachers less inconvenience and that this was not an effective long term solution.

My headteacher offered me an empty classroom for my breaks and lunchtimes so I could sit in the corner and hide on my own. Yeah, thanks for that… (FG-M, 17)

Every day I would go in and the same thing would happen and I would go and see the teacher and they would say oh just avoid them. Every day I would go down this corridor and it would happen – oh choose a different one. (FG-M, 17)

Focus group participants stated that they would like or would have liked to speak to someone objective within the school who would understand the issues involved. However, none of the young people had had positive experiences with counsellors.

Well our school had a counsellor but it ended up that all the people who came to her were just sort of after free dinners cos she used to take you for dinner – her time was always taken up so she never got to spend much time with people who maybe needed her help. (FG-F, 16)

My school had that but you had to fill in about 5 forms and tell about 3 people what your problems were before you could see her, it was ridiculous. (FG-M, 18)

Several participants felt that rather than being seen as victims of bullying they were being blamed simply because they were 'different'. This confirmed their suspicions that school staff did not understand or care about the issues facing LGBT young

people. This inculcated defiance in these young people which, in turn, legitimised their teachers' perceptions of them as troublemakers.

> *if I went to any teachers in school I would always get the same spiel of 'well if you don't want to get bullied change the way you dress, change the way you are' as if it's your fault. Why should I have to change who I am just because people won't accept it? (FG-F, 16)*

> *I know of one school where similar things were happening to my friend and they dealt with it, people were suspended. But me, people spat in my face, stabbed me with a compass and the teachers put me on detention breaktime and lunch. (FG-F, 18)*

> *I got jumped outside my school and I broke the guy's nose and I got excluded. (FG-M, 18)*

5.5.3 Attitudes towards School and Teachers

There was an alarming level of cynicism and negativity towards teachers in focus group participants' schools. These young people genuinely felt that teachers knew they were being bullied, knew the reasons behind the bullying and did not care.

> *Teachers, they don't see what they don't want to. They've got selective vision. (FG-F, 18)*

> Facilitator*: do you know about your school's anti-bullying policy?*

> *What, ignore it? (FG-M, 17)*

> *Well yeah, the general policy was pretend it's not happening. (FG-M, 18)*

Participants believed that teachers generally did not care about their pupils or their jobs.

> *Facilitator: what would your ideal teacher be like? Your ideal teacher…*

[interjects] … Would care about their subject (FG-F, 16)

Actually care about their pupils! (FG-M, 18)

Actually give a toss about anything. (FG-M, 15)

We need teachers who're not just waiting for class to be over so they can get to the staff room and have a coffee and start bitching again. (FG-M, 18)

In addition, focus group participants felt that teachers were more than capable of allowing or, in some cases, generating homophobia in the classroom either through 'jokes' or the careless use of homophobic language. This was echoed by a number of survey respondents.

In R.E my teacher tld us how gays should not be allowed to kiss in public...this is not what teachers should be teaching us and i started an argument with him about it but it didnt make a diffence. I think it is people like him that make people beleive that homosexualism is wrong. (S-F-13, Straight)

5.5.4 Parallels with racism

Focus group participants felt that homophobia was not treated as seriously as it should be in school and compared this to the swift and significant action which would be taken over a racist incident.

If I'd said 'Paki' in my school I'd have been kicked out. (FG-M, 15)

Exactly. Racism and homophobia are the same. (FG-M, 17)

But it's like people think racism is worse than homophobia because 'they [i.e. LGBT people] *can change' (FG-M, 18)*

Yeah, I think schools think 'oh it's just a phase'. (FG-M, 18)

If you call someone – well, I'm not going to say the words [racist] *– in the middle of a class you would only get the word halfway out of your mouth and you're outside the gates. It should be the same. (FG-M, 17)*

As discussed in previous sections of the report, anti-discrimination practice in areas such as race are more firmly embedded in schools and wider society. Although many schools in this study stated that they treat all forms of bullying equally seriously, the differences between the treatment of racist and homophobic bullying are clear, and a number of young people surveyed and interviewed called for sexual orientation to be taken seriously as a part of identity no less important than 'race' or ethnic origin.

5.6 Discussion of homophobia and LGBT issues in school and access to information and support

EAs and schools were asked about the extent to which homophobia and LGBT issues were discussed. The same question was then asked in the young peoples' survey.

77% of respondents stated that discussion of homophobia or LGBT issues had 'Never' or 'Rarely' taken place in their schools. 17% stated that this discussion took place 'Sometimes' and only 6% of respondents' schools discussed these issues 'Often'. The inconsistency in levels of discussion which were displayed in surveys and interviews with professionals is here substantiated by pupils.

The most likely subject for this discussion to take place was PSD. Other areas included RME, Biology, "*once or twice in English*", Modern Studies, "Sex Education" and a "*presentation by an outside organisation about AIDS."* One 12 year old girl who identified as Questioning/Unsure stated that these issues were only discussed in "*PSD for older pupils*".

In common with those EAs and schools which felt that homophobia and LGBT issues should be addressed within a broader equalities framework, a number of respondents felt that these issues should be discussed in the same way as other types of discrimination.

> *I would like it if our teachers would disscus this issue like they do with Racisism, Sexisim, and other bullying. (S-M-11, Straight)*

school help you understand and stop racism, sexism, etc so why not homophobia. (S-F-14, Lesbian)

At the school i was at it wasn't talked about, if it was racial etc then it was an issue but when i was being bullied and reported it to my teachers etc they said they would look into the matter but it didn't stop they didn't even punish them, so I reported it again but still nothing ever happened. The teachers just didn't want to get involved. (S-M-21, Gay)

All focus group participants felt that there was a silence surrounding these issues which hindered open discussion and increased awareness. In terms of access to LGBT specific information, in some schools the silence extended to active censorship by staff and pupils.

There were [LGBT Youth Scotland] *posters in the library, they lasted about two weeks before they were ripped down. (FG-M, 18)*

I asked to put them up [LGBT Youth Scotland posters] *but was told no. (FG-M, 15)*

Similarly, a survey respondent pointed out that because of filtering software it is not always possible to get online information from, for example, the LGBT Youth Scotland website when in school.

Homophobic bullying happens quite often at our school, for a while this site [LGBT Youth Scotland's] *was even banned and the schools excuse was that it contained words that we should't be exposed to. (F-15, Bisexual)*

The filtering issue was also highlighted by an EA survey respondent who stated that this was a barrier to information in schools: "*Need LGBT websites developed in such a way that it will get through a 'nanny' net in schools – because of language used.*"

Censoring information about LGBT issues sends out the clear and distinct message that it is something unsavoury to be hidden away, a message which cannot fail to have an impact on those pupils who are LGBT or questioning their sexual orientation.

i think we should cover a topic on it in pse coz it's really important for us to know about. it would also make it easier for people like me who aren't 100% sure what they are yet! (F-13, Bisexual)

5.6.1 Catholic schools

14% of survey respondents indicated that they attended or had attended a denominational Catholic school. 8 of these respondents were Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Questioning.

it is wrong in sooo many ways [homophobia] *but teachers dont see that especially at a catholic skool (which i go to) they dont like dealing wif it cos its bad in our religion and even the deputy heads have started treating me differently because of what i am . . . now im not saw as* [name of respondent] *im saw as the gay kid to all the teachers who know and its not a nice feeling as teachers are there to help u learn and to give u advice. (S-M-14, Gay)*

Teachers in Catholic schools really need to lighten up...I feel that their dismissal of it is very painful for those who believe themselves to be LGB or T. (S-F-20, Lesbian)

One focus group participant had attended a Catholic school where, she said, it was unthinkable that any kind of discussion around LGBT issues would take place.

In our school it's like in 1ˢᵗ year and 3ʳᵈ year the girls get taken away for like a morning and get given the sort of like healthy living lecture and period lecture and all that but we never got anything about sex education or contraception or anything like that, definitely not we're a Catholic school. (FG-F, 16)

5.6.2 Visibility and 'Coming Out' at School

62% of respondents were aware or had been aware of openly LGBT pupils in their schools.

However, 'coming out' and being 'out' is a complex process which is different for each individual. Young people may be 'out' to some people but not to others. In

addition, the decision to 'come out' may have been consciously made by the young person but they may have been 'outed' by others. The complexity of the 'coming out' process and visibility in the school was illustrated by the focus group interview.

Of the eight focus group participants, six were or had been, to some extent, 'out' at school. However, only one participant had made the decision to 'come out', the others had been 'outed' by supposed friends who they had confided in or had been homophobic bullying for such a long time that it was assumed – rightly in these cases - by other pupils at the school that they were LGB or T.

Focus group participants displayed ambivalence regarding the issue of visibility in the school. The majority of participants had experienced negative reactions to their sexual orientation which they viewed as unfair and unacceptable. However, when asked about the presence of LGBT staff in their school, one participant stated that teachers simply would not be able to be openly LGB or T in school as their careers and reputation would suffer.

> *Well pupils who are out at school or pupils that people think are, then they get hassle so teachers probably would aswell, they're going to get judged the same off of ignorant little kids who won't listen to them, are going to start skipping their classes, they might tell their parents and the parents will come in and kick up a fuss about it. (FG-F, 16)*

The fact that this appeared to be a taken for granted fact for participants is revealing as it illustrated the ability to see something as wrong but also as 'just the way things are' and insurmountably so.

5.6.3 Support Mechanisms

A strong support network is invaluable for young people who are dealing with issues surrounding sexual orientation or gender identity. However, it may be difficult for LGBT young people to ask for support from families or carers as this may involve disclosure and potential rejection. In addition, young people who are homophobically bullied may have few friends at school.

> *I didn't have friends at school. I didn't have friends til I came here* [LGBT Youth Scotland youth group]. *Sad but true… (FG-M, 17)*

I was pretty much on my own (FG-M, 18)

Even for those respondents who had other LGBT friends the need for a more formal support network was evident.

Our school has no LGBT set up within school, or any help for LGBT teenagers. I've got many bisexual friends but no gay friends, and only one lesbian friend. And even then, we're not confident enough to try and go to LGBT meetings as it poses a problem due to the distance from the meeting, parents etc. (S-M-15, Gay)

Focus group participants expressed a strong need for someone to talk to about their sexual orientation and the bullying which they were experiencing. They discussed the value of organisations such as LGBT Youth Scotland and the benefits of having somewhere to meet other LGBT young people. Participants were asked where they had heard about LGBT Youth Scotland. The haphazard list of responses – through word of mouth, street and school outreach workers, social workers, parents - demonstrates the variety of ways in which these young people had heard about the service. It also emphasises the need to expand the capacity of LGBT outreach work in schools and elsewhere to create a consistent and reliable procedure with which to alert young people to LGBT services and support. This will involve, as was suggested by the EA and school research, increased partnership working between schools and the LGBT voluntary sector. Clear communication and cooperation between the two sectors will result in the effective signposting of specialist LGBT services to young people and increased awareness and understanding amongst school staff.

5.7 Possible Improvements

Survey respondents and focus group participants suggested a number of ways in which schools might prevent and tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying. Suggested approaches fall into the following categories.

5.7.1 Proactive and Preventative Approach

Young people need to see that there is nothing wrong with it and that it is not right to make fun of people who might be gay. It's horrible to have to go into school

everyday and worry about whether you are going to be called a 'poof' in the corridor or have people staring at you, and should not be allowed. (S-M-16, Gay)

Although school staff will react in some way to news of homophobic bullying they cannot react to what they do not know exists. Participants felt that measures should be put in place to prevent homophobic bullying before it takes place. In effect, schools should expect that homophobic bullying *will* take place rather than waiting to be alerted to it.

At the school I'm at a lot of the bullying seems to take place out of sight so I think there needs to be a lot of effort to deal with… not to deal with bullying as it crops up but to catch it before it happens if you know what I mean. (FG-M, 17)

5.7.2 Open Discussion and Readily Available Information

A number of survey respondents felt that homophobic bullying could not be tackled without more open discussion and information in school.

People who are *bullying*others for being gay etc is usually because they just dont understand - or see it as normal - if being gay etc was explained better in SE classes maybe things would be different - usually bullys are just bullying because it is something they do not understand and just want to go away. (S-F-16, Straight)

Access to information was highlighted as crucial.

Please get posters and info in my school and make it better for me and other people. All schools should talk about different relationships so that its better and we don't get bullied. (S-F-12, Questioning)

Some respondents felt that adults should be providing information and support and reaching out to LGBT young people while discussing homophobia alongside other types of discrimination.

There should be something which allows adults/social workers etc. to reach out to the students if they can (S-M-16, Gay)

> *I would like it if our teachers would discuss this issue like they do with Racism, Sexism, and other bullying (S-M-11, Straight)*

Focus group participants called for an end to the silence surrounding homophobia and LGBT issues in schools and for information about LGBT issues to be made readily available to school pupils. Participants were pragmatic about the likely extent of change in attitudes in the near future but felt that earlier and more open discussion of the issues in school would promote greater understanding and begin the process of change.

> [By discussing these issues in school] *I think it'd* [homophobia and homophobic bullying] *be lessened a little bit because people would understand a bit more. But it would still be there. (FG-M, 17)*

> *I think it would be a gradual thing. If you introduced it now you wouldn't see a lot of effects because folk in senior school you know from 3rd year up your mind is set but if you started it earlier when minds are more open – then next year you've got a fresh load of pupils – eventually it's got to sink in, something's got to stick. (FG-M, 17)*

> *I think Primary schools should have these books – I think you can get them in Sweden – they're just like normal primary school books that have got 4 words on each page but you get ones about same sex relationships…(FG-M, 17)*

> *I heard in some schools they were using two dolls* [Persona Dolls] *to teach about gay relationships and I think that's a really good idea. (FG-F, 16)*

> *But if you had gay kids books wouldn't that turn kids gay? (FG-M, 18)*

> *Oh, don't be so stupid! (FG-M, 15)*

> *But that's how some schools would perceive it – what would you say to that? (FG-M, 18)*

> *There's no point in explaining to those idiots that you don't turn people gay. (FG-M, 15)*

If you don't explain things to people then they won't ever understand them
and then things just keep on the same. (FG-M, 18)

5.7.3 Training for School Staff

A number of survey respondents stated that teachers should be provided with more information and training to be able to respond more effectively to the needs of LGBT pupils.

I believe that the staff in schools should be given training to be better able to deal
with gay students. I know that I knew i was gay in S1 and I never dreamt of going
to talk to a teacher about it. They have to be more approachable and have the
knowledge to deal with the situation and help gay students to see that they are
the same as everyone else. (S-M-16, Gay)

some teachers grew up why it was wrong and unexceptable but as a teacher they
should learn to move with the times.Teachers should have more information
about it ans actully read that information. What makes a good teacher for me is
an open minded one. (S-F-19,Questioning)

5.7.4 Calls for Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying to be treated more seriously

I lost respect for staff in school becuase I reported countless times when I was
bullied. Nobody was punnished enough for my liking. A slap on the wrist was
given, parents were phoned but it happened as usual as if nothing was done. Not
even a punishment exercise was given. (S-M-17, Gay)

The guidance teachers normally say that they didn't mean any harm by it!! (S-F-
15, Bisexual)

Although schools may have adequate and effective anti-bullying policies which deal with all types of bullying the fact remains that homophobia is not seen to be as serious a form of discrimination as others such as racism. Participants strongly recommended that homophobia be taken more seriously and that homophobic bullies be more strongly penalised.

This is for the Scottish Executive is it? Well surely they should take the hint that expulsion for these kinds of people would be a positive idea. (FG-M, 17)

[There should be] *a stricter way of dealing with bullying, not just a tap on the wrists and an 'if you do that again you'll get a severe talking to!' (FG-M, 18)*

In addition, one survey respondent stressed the importance of a visible Anti-Bullying policy.

Have the school bullying policy out where students can read it. If they can't read it, get someone to read it to them once in a while. (M-19, Straight)

Similarly, another respondent felt that explicitly mentioning homophobic bullying in policy documents would mean that staff would be obligated to tackle this type of bullying and the homophobic motivation behind it.

School teachers were reluctant to tackle homophobic bullying when they knew of it occuring. Could be improved by a better whole school policy, specifically on homophobic bullying. This would also require teachers to be more alert and less prejudiced. (S-M, Gay)

5.8 Summary of Research with Young People

The awareness and experience of homophobic bullying was high amongst survey respondents and focus group participants. A number of these young people stated that they felt homophobic bullying had adversely affected their attainment, attendance and wellbeing while at school yet rates of reporting were low. Reasons for not reporting homophobic bullying to school staff included (1) not wanting to 'out' oneself to teachers or parents (2) the belief that nothing would be done about the bullying because staff do not understand the issues surrounding homophobia and sexual orientation and (3) the belief that the situation is not serious enough to report it. These responses show that confidentiality, sensitivity and a high level of awareness are crucial when dealing with homophobic bullying and the importance and unacceptability of all types of bullying should be emphasised to pupils. Very few of the young people surveyed or interviewed were aware of their school Anti-Bullying policy which is likely to have had an influence on the low levels of reporting.

In addition, many young people feel that homophobic bullying is not taken seriously enough and that current methods of dealing with homophobic incidents are ineffective. This appears to lead to low levels of confidence in school staff and the belief that they do not care about their pupils or the issues which they face.

The majority of survey respondents stated that the discussion of homophobia and LGBT issues 'never or 'rarely' took place in their schools. Many of the young people surveyed and interviewed suggested a more proactive and preventative approach to dealing with homophobic incidents, greater open discussion and information about these issues both in Primary and Secondary school, training for school staff to raise awareness and the need for homophobic bullying to be treated more seriously.

6: Conclusions

Phase 1 research has provided evidence of the nature and extent of homophobia and homophobic incidents in Scottish schools from the perspectives of EA staff, school staff and young people. It has also gathered and presented information regarding staff confidence levels, general awareness of homophobic incidents and current practice in dealing with these incidents. As well as determining the current situation, the research has shown ways in which the situation could be improved through potential confidence building measures.

Schools are obliged to ensure that pupils are treated with respect and ensure that sexual orientation is not a barrier to participation (HMIE, 2002). However, findings from the research carried out with young people currently or recently attending school strongly suggest that this is not the case in every school.

Few schools explicitly include the mention of sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying in their anti-bullying and equal opportunities policy documents. Race is the equalities strand mentioned more often due to legislative obligations. A number of EAs and schools felt that there was value in dealing with homophobia, sexual orientation and LGBT issues within a broader and more generic equalities framework which emphasises anti-discrimination and respect for all kinds of people. It was suggested that this approach would be useful in terms of anti-discriminatory policy documents, dealing with homophobic incidents, approaching these subjects with pupils and in training and awareness raising with EA and school staff.

This more general approach is valid provided that anti-homophobia and LGBT issues are dealt with thoroughly and on an equal basis with the other equalities strands within this broader framework. This research suggests that this is not currently the case and that LGBT issues are seen to be the newest and most difficult of the equalities strands. Findings show that anti-homophobia is not seen as a priority by many schools and that there are few expectations placed on schools in terms of dealing with homophobic incidents and engaging in anti-homophobia work. This marginalisation is partly related to the after effects of Section 28 and is also connected to the oversexualisation of LGBT issues: EAs and schools who expressed

concern about the introduction of these issues into schools may be viewing them in terms of same-sex sexual activity alone rather than in terms of identity, anti-discrimination and citizenship.

Dealing specifically with the needs of an individual or a 'group' of individuals does not negate and is not mutually exclusive to notions of equality for all: if "treat[ing] everyone the same" involves treating all pupils as if they are heterosexual then this will mean that the needs of LGBT young people will remain unmet.

Almost half of all schools and EAs are aware of verbal homophobic bullying but very few are aware of physical homophobic bullying. Although the figures cannot be directly compared, awareness of homophobic bullying was extremely high amongst young people surveyed with 84% stating that they were aware of this occurring in their schools. Responses also showed that the bullying was more likely to contain an element of physical violence when the motivation was homophobic. As a number of EAs and schools stated, homophobic incidents might be occurring without their knowledge.

Schools and EAs reported high levels of confidence in dealing with homophobic incidents. Conversely, the young people surveyed who had reported homophobic bullying stated that they were not satisfied with the outcomes. For some respondents confidence came from the belief that a homophobic incident was the same as any other type of bullying incident. However, the research with young people identified a clear difference: rates of reporting were extremely low because young people were concerned about disclosure, 'coming out' and issues of confidentiality.

The young people surveyed and interviewed expressed high levels of cynicism and negativity in relation to school staff. Some of the young people who were experiencing or had experienced homophobic bullying had a huge lack of confidence in staff and this had an impact on rates of reporting. A number of young people directly linked this to school staff not understanding the issues facing LGBT young people and/or being homophobic themselves. This attitude, although extreme, has some support in the number of EA and school respondents and interviewees who pointed to the influence which personal attitudes and prejudices could have on ways in which homophobic incidents are addressed and whether LGBT issues were discussed in the classroom. These findings emphasise even further the need for greater awareness training and information for EA and school staff to emphasise the

consequences of not engaging with these issues and not understanding the seriousness of homophobic bullying: the long list of damaging and distressing behaviours listed by the young people who were being homophobically bullied is ample illustration.

A number of suggestions were made by EA and school representatives about possible measures for increasing confidence amongst school staff. Suggestions were also made about potential ways in which to discuss anti-homophobia and LGBT issues with young people. One characteristic of all of these suggestions is the need for a number of flexible measures and approaches which can be adapted to suit a particular group of young people or the needs of teachers in a particular school. However, with the support of EAs, SMT and teachers, all might prove effective in raising awareness of the issues and building confidence.

A number of EA and school survey respondents and interviewees expressed concern over the 'right' age at which to introduce these issues into the classroom and in most subjects it is up to the teacher's discretion whether he or she discusses these issues. Primary school and early Secondary school pupils were portrayed by EA and school staff as being aware of other types of discrimination but ignorant of homophobia and issues of sexual orientation. However, simultaneously there was evidence to suggest that these same pupils are capable of behaving homophobically towards their peers, something which was supported by survey responses from 11 to 14 year olds who were experiencing homophobic bullying.

In addition, findings show that some young people may be aware of their sexual orientation far earlier than adults assume. 22% of survey responses came from young people aged between 11 and 14 who identified themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Questioning. This clear identification at an early age, along with the experience of homophobic bullying at an early age, calls into question the belief that all Primary and early Secondary age school pupils are unaware and 'innocent' of issues surrounding homophobia and sexual orientation and are therefore unprepared to engage in anti-homophobia work and the discussion of LGBT issues.

A greater level of awareness raising, information and open discussion is necessary in schools. This means that schools are able to fulfil their obligations to all pupils, reduce the likelihood of homophobia and homophobic incidents and ensure that LGBT young people experience a healthy, fulfilling and safe education.

SEED Project 2 – Guidance on Homophobic Incidents

Recommendations

"The homophobic issue it's new in schools, we don't know how to deal with it, what's the most appropriate way, do you come down heavily on the child or a light touch approach – and it's that that takes confidence away from teachers, they don't know how to deal with it because it hasn't been in place…I mean everyone's looking for guidance on how best to deal with it really"

Phase 1: Recommendations

LGBT Youth Scotland was commissioned by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) to review the practice that schools and Education Authorities (EAs) employ to deal with homophobic incidents, prejudice and harassment. The research also examined staff and pupil awareness of homophobic bullying and how to deal with incidents. With agreement from SEED, LGBT Youth Scotland widened the scope of the research to address key issues of teacher's confidence, barriers to dealing with incidents, homophobia and heterosexism in Scottish schools.

These recommendations to SEED will inform a set of actions to be carried out in Phase 2 of the project.

	Key Areas	Recommendations	Outcomes	Quality Indicator
1.	**Policy**			
	The Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED), Education Authorities (EAs) and schools should explicitly make mention and mainstream homophobia into their Anti-Bullying and Equal Opportunities policies. Where appropriate, policy should be developed in consultation with young people and the wider school community. Monitoring and evaluation should be an essential part of the policy development process.	• **SEED** to develop guidance on how to include LGBT issues in policy • **Education authorities and schools** to make specific mention of homophobia in anti-bullying policies • **Education authorities and schools** to mainstream LGBT issues into Equal Opportunities policies • **Education authorities** to monitor the inclusion of homophobia in policy • **SEED** to reinvigorate LGBT Education Forum via new network	• Inclusion of homophobia in SEED, EA and school level anti-bullying and equal opportunities policies • Young people and the wider school community engaged in policy development • Inclusion of homophobia in policy is assessed through Quality Assurance or other monitoring framework	**4.1** Pastoral Care **5.1** Climate and relationships **5.3** Equality and fairness **7.1** Aims and policy making
2.	**Leadership, teaching and curriculum**			
	The importance of commitment at a senior level in schools and EA to challenging homophobia should be promoted by SEED. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) should be available to EA and school management on how to identify and challenge homophobia in the school community. Homophobia and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues more broadly should be included in Initial Teacher Education (ITE). There should be greater inclusion of LGBT issues	• **SEED** to develop online central resource for teachers, young people and parents about addressing homophobic bullying • **SEED** and **LGBT Youth Scotland** to disseminate Project 2 research via research seminar and Executive website • **SEED** to develop and roll out 'train the trainers': training for teachers (including teachers in training) on how to challenge homophobia • **SEED** to work with LTS and others	• Evidence of EA and school management commitment to challenging homophobia in the school community • EA offer CPD on challenging homophobia • Resources, lesson plans and other materials are available which include LGBT issues and help challenge homophobia	**1.2** Courses and programmes **3.2** The teaching process **4.1** Pastoral care **4.2** Personal and social development **5.1** Climate and relationships **5.3** Equality and fairness **7.4** Leadership

	in the curriculum, particularly in areas like citizenship, PSD and RME. Signposts to support and specialist services for LGBT young people should be available to all young people in schools.	to produce curriculum which includes LGBT young people		
3.	**Young People**			
	The existence of homophobia in schools must not be overlooked or underestimated. Homophobic bullying merits the same treatment as other forms of bullying in the school environment. Mechanisms for young people to report homophobic bullying and seek support must respect confidentiality and deal with incidents in a sensitive and inclusive way. The importance of a commitment by young people to challenging homophobia should be encouraged.	• **SEED** to work with schools to develop pilot buddy/mentoring system around homophobic bullying and report findings • **SEED** to disseminate project findings/training with generic youth organisations like Youthlink, Children 1st and others • **National LGBT Youth Council** to pilot work on gay/straight alliance	• Confidentiality relating to a young person's sexual orientation is respected • Young people are consulted on policy, recording and approaches to dealing with homophobic bullying • Young people are aware of their school anti-bullying and equal opportunities policies • Young people have access to appropriate information and support via websites, posters and other resources	**4.1** Pastoral care **4.2** Personal and social development **5.1** Climate and relationships **5.3** Equality and fairness **7.1** Aims and policy making
4.	**Parents**			
	It should be recognised that young people in the school community may have LGB or T parents, brothers, sisters, carers or friends and that this might be a source of homophobic bullying. The school should make it clear that this will be challenged appropriately and in consultation with parents.	• **SEED** to work with **LTS** via the Parentzone initiative to provide information for parents on homophobic bullying • **SEED** to work with **Parents Enquiry Scotland** to provide information for parents on homophobic bullying	• Parents information/induction evenings on school approach to bullying make mention of homophobic bullying • School handbook mentions	**4.1** Pastoral care **4.2** Personal and social development **5.3** Equality and fairness **5.4** Partnership with parents, the School

	The school should promote awareness amongst parents, carers and parent representatives about school policy and procedures to tackle homophobic bullying.	• **SEED** to include homophobic bullying in initiatives on bullying with parents • **Education authorities and schools** to recognise the diversity of parents and carers, including LGBT parents	school anti-bullying policy and reference to homophobia • LGBT parents are offered the chance to inform school about family/home life	Board and the community
5.	**Approaches to working with young people**			
	A more preventative approach should be taken to challenging homophobic bullying in schools accompanied by a more proactive approach to raising LGBT issues in general. Approaches suggested in the research have included circle time with younger children, theatre in education (TIE) with older pupils, increased inclusion of LGBT issues and same-sex relationships in the curriculum, inviting external speakers into the school from the LGBT community and the voluntary sector.	• **SEED** to pilot circle time/TIE approach to dealing with homophobic bullying and raising LGBT issues in schools • **SEED** to disseminate output from Phase 2 of Project 2	• LGBT issues integrated into the curriculum where appropriate • TIE/Circle time approaches used to raise issues of bullying, including homophobic bullying	**1.2** Courses and programmes **4.2** Personal and social development **4.8** Links with local authority or other managing body, other schools, agencies and employers **5.3** Equality and fairness
6.	**Further research**			
	The following areas have been identified during the course of Phase 1 as in need of further research: • The experience of transgender young people at school • LGBT young people and denominational schools • The experience of LGBT young people with additional support needs • The experience of LGBT teachers			

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Appendix 1: Survey of Education Authorities

PROJECT 2: GUIDANCE ON HOMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS

Survey of Education Authorities

Introduction:

- LGBT stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender.
- Homophobia is the fear, hatred or intolerance of LGBT people, often expressed through verbal and non-verbal abuse.
- A homophobic incident can involve verbal abuse and intimidation using homophobic language. It can also take the form of physical abuse and intimidation accompanied by homophobic language or clearly motivated by homophobia. Homophobic language does not have to be used in an abusive fashion; often it will be used casually or jokingly e.g. 'you're so gay' or 'that's so gay.'

If you have any questions regarding this survey or the project as a whole, please contact the Research Team at LGBT Youth Scotland on 0141 2215970

> *Please return the survey in the freepost envelope provided*
> *by the 10th of June 2005*

PART 1: SCHOOL POLICY

1.1   Does your Authority anti-bullying policy include reference to sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying?
Please circle your answer.

   (a)   Yes   **(b)**   No   **(c)**   Don't know   **(d)**   Don't have one

If you circled (d), please proceed to Question 1.3

1.2   Does this anti-bullying policy include reference to racist bullying?
Please circle your answer.

   (a)   Yes   **(b)**   No   **(c)**   Don't know

1.3   Does your Authority equal opportunities policy include reference to sexual orientation?
Please circle your answer.

(a)   Yes   **(b)**   No   **(c)**   Don't know   **(d)**   Don't have one

If you circled (d), please proceed to Question 1.5

1.4   Does this equal opportunities policy include reference to Black or Minority Ethnic issues?
Please circle your answer.

(a)   Yes   **(b)**   No   **(c)**   Don't know

1.5   Is there some commitment to equality in the School Development Plans in your Authority which would promote and support CPD on homophobia and homophobic bullying?
Please circle your answer.

(a)   Yes   **(b)**   No   **(c)**   Don't know

PART 2: CURRICULUM

2.1   Is homophobia discussed in any of the following subjects in the schools in your Authority?

Please circle as many answers as apply. Feel free to add your comments in the space below.

(a) Personal and Social Education   **(b)** English

(c) Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies   **(d)** Geography

(e) History   **(f)** Modern Studies

(g) None of these subjects

(h) Other (please state):
_____

Comments:
_____

2.2 In which subjects, if any, do you feel it would be appropriate to discuss homophobia?

Please circle as many answers as apply. Feel free to add your comments in the space below.

(a) Personal and Social Education

(b) English

(c) Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

(d) Geography

(e) History

(f) Modern Studies

(g) None of these subjects

(h) Other (please state):

_____

Comments:

_____

PART 3: PERCEPTIONS OF HOMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS

_____

The following questions are about incidents of homophobic bullying in the schools in your Authority. These might be incidents which are reported but can also include incidents which occur on a more casual basis and are not dealt with directly.

3.1 Are you aware of any incidents of verbal homophobic bullying in the schools in your Authority? This can be in the classroom, in the corridors, in the playground or anywhere else in the school or surrounding area.

Please circle the appropriate answer.

(a) Yes **(b)** No **(c)** Don't know

3.2 Are you aware of any incidents of physical homophobic bullying in the schools in your Authority? Again, this can be in any location in the school or surrounding area.

Please circle the appropriate answer.

(a) Yes **(b)** No **(c)** Don't know

PART 4: CURRENT PRACTICE

4.1 A member of staff in one of the schools in your Authority hears one pupil threaten another using homophobic language - what would be the most likely course of action?

Please circle the appropriate answer.

(a) Ignore the comment
(b) Challenge the homophobic language
(c) Issue a punishment
(d) Inform Guidance/ Pastoral Care
(e) Other (please describe):
_____

4.2 How confident do you think teachers in the schools in your Authority would feel in tackling verbal homophobic bullying?

Please circle the appropriate answer.

(a) Very confident

(b) Quite confident

(c) Confident

(d) Quite unconfident

(e) Very unconfident

(f) Don't know

4.3 How confident do you think teachers in the schools in your Authority would feel in tackling physical homophobic bullying?

Please circle the appropriate answer.

(a) Very confident

(b) Quite confident

(c) Confident

(d) Quite unconfident

(e) Very unconfident

(f) Don't know

4.4 What do you think might make teachers feel more confident in tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying?

Please circle as many answers as apply.

(a) More CPD surrounding LGBT issues and homophobia

(b) Clear national and local guidelines on dealing with homophobia in schools
(c) Including the discussion of LGBT issues and homophobia in the curriculum
(d) Having gained parental approval
(e) Leadership from school management
(f) Nothing – think teachers would feel confident enough already
(g) Nothing – don't think that this is a problem in schools in the Authority area
(h) Other (please state): _____

PART 5: OTHER COMMENTS

If there is anything else you would like to say regarding homophobia and homophobic incidents please feel free to do so below.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please return it in the freepost envelope provided by the 10th of June.

Appendix 2: Survey of Schools

PROJECT 2: GUIDANCE ON HOMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS

Survey of Schools

Introduction:

- LGBT stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender.
- Homophobia is the fear, hatred or intolerance of LGBT people, often expressed through verbal and non-verbal abuse.
- A homophobic incident can involve verbal abuse and intimidation using homophobic language. It can also take the form of physical abuse and intimidation accompanied by homophobic language or clearly motivated by homophobia. Homophobic language does not have to be used in an abusive fashion; often it will be used casually or jokingly e.g. 'you're so gay' or 'that's so gay.'

If you have any questions regarding this survey or the project as a whole, please contact the Research Team at LGBT Youth Scotland on 0141 2215970

Please return the survey in the freepost envelope
by the 10th of June 2005

PART 1: SCHOOL POLICY

1.1   Does the anti-bullying policy used in your school include reference to sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying?
Please circle your answer.

    (a)   Yes   **(b)**   No   **(c)**   Don't know   **(d)**   Don't have one

If you circled (d), please proceed to Question 1.3

1.3   Does this anti-bullying policy include reference to racist bullying?
Please circle your answer.

    (a)   Yes   **(b)**   No   **(c)**   Don't know

1.3   Does the equal opportunities policy used in your school include reference to sexual orientation?
Please circle your answer.

(a)   Yes   **(b)**   No   **(c)**   Don't know   **(d)**   Don't have one

If you circled (d), please proceed to Question 1.5

1.4   Does this equal opportunities policy include reference to Black or Minority Ethnic issues?
Please circle your answer.

(a)   Yes   **(b)**   No   **(c)**   Don't know

1.5   Is there some commitment to equality in your School Development Plan which would promote and support CPD on homophobia and homophobic bullying?
Please circle your answer.

(a)   Yes   **(b)**   No   **(c)**   Don't know

PART 2: CURRICULUM

2.1   Is homophobia discussed in any of the following subjects in your school?
Please circle as many answers as apply. Feel free to add your comments in the space below.

(a) Personal and Social Education   (b) English

(c) Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies   (d) Geography

(e) History   (f) Modern Studies

(g) None of these subjects

(h) Other (please state):
_____

Comments:
_____

2.2   In which subjects, if any, do you feel it would be appropriate to discuss homophobia?

Please circle as many answers as apply. Feel free to add your comments in the space below.

(a) Personal and Social Education   (b) English

(c) Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies   (d) Geography

(e) History   (f) Modern Studies

(g) None of these subjects

(h) Other (please state):
_____

Comments:
_____

PART 3: PERCEPTIONS OF HOMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS

The following questions are about incidents of homophobic bullying in your school. These might be incidents which are reported but can also include incidents which occur on a more casual basis and are not dealt with directly.

3.1 Are you aware of any incidents of verbal homophobic bullying in your school? This can be in the classroom, in the corridors, in the playground or anywhere else in the school or surrounding area.
Please circle your answer.

(a) Yes   **(b)** No   **(c)** Don't know

3.2 How often would you say verbal homophobic bullying had occurred in your school in the last 12 months?

Please circle your answer.

(a) Never	**(e)** 11-15 times
(b) Once	**(f)** 16-20 times
(c) 2-5 times	**(g)** 21-25 times
(d) 6-10 times	**(h)** 25+ times

3.3 Are you aware of any incidents of physical homophobic bullying in your school? Again, this can be in any location in the school or surrounding area.

Please circle your answer.

(a) Yes   **(b)** No   **(c)** Don't know

3.4 How often would you say physical homophobic bullying had occurred in your school in the last 12 months?

Please circle your answer.

(a) Never	**(e)** 11-15 times
(b) Once	**(f)** 16-20 times
(c) 2-5 times	**(g)** 21-25 times
(d) 6-10 times	**(h)** 25+ times

PART 4: CURRENT PRACTICE

_____

4.1   A teacher in your school hears one pupil threaten another using homophobic language - what would be the most likely course of action?

Please circle the appropriate answer.

    (a) Ignore the comment

    (b) Challenge the homophobic language

    (c) Issue a punishment

    (d) Inform Guidance

    (e) Other (please describe):
    _____

4.2   How confident do you feel in tackling verbal homophobic bullying?

Please circle the appropriate answer.

    (a)   Very confident

    (b)   Quite confident

    (c)   Confident

    (d)   Quite unconfident

    (e)   Very unconfident

    (f)   Don't know

4.3   How confident do you think teachers in your schools would feel in tackling physical homophobic bullying?

Please circle your answer.

    (a)   Very confident

    (b)   Quite confident

    (c)   Confident

    (d)   Quite unconfident

    (e)   Very unconfident

    (f)   Don't know

4.4   What do you think might make teachers feel more confident in tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying in the school?

Please circle as many answers as apply.

(i)   More CPD surrounding LGBT issues and homophobia
(j)   Clear national and local guidelines on dealing with homophobia in schools
(k)   Including the discussion of LGBT issues and homophobia in the curriculum
(l)   Parental approval
(m)   Nothing – feel confident enough already
(n)   Nothing – don't think that this is a problem in my school
(o)   Other (please state):
_____

PART 5: OTHER COMMENTS

If there is anything else you would like to say regarding homophobia and

homophobic incidents please feel free to do so below.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please return it in the freepost envelope provided by the 10th of June.

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

Primary School Questions

1. Do you think that the discussion of homophobia and LGBT issues is appropriate or relevant for pupils in primary schools? Why or why not?
2. Is homophobia or the mention of LGBT people currently discussed in your school? If yes, where and how and why do you think this is important?
3. How do you think homophobia and LGBT issues are best tackled with pupils? e.g. specific discussion/ as part of a wider discussion on discrimination/ external specialist speakers/ dedicated resource?
4. How confident would staff in your school feel in challenging homophobic language or homophobic bullying if it arose? If confident, where does this come from?
5. What would help to build confidence? e.g. CPD, reporting mechanisms, legislation, parental approval? What are the things that would make you able to talk about LGBT issues and handle homophobic incidents?
6. What expectations are placed on school staff in terms of handling homophobic incidents? Same as racist incidents? Are these expectations the same for primary school staff as secondary school staff?
7. Where do (1) equalities issues in general; and (2) LGBT issues and homophobia sit on the list of priorities for your school?
8. Denominational schools: general thoughts about possible ways ahead in introducing LGBT issues and discussion of homophobia?
9. Transgender issues: often sidelined – how do you feel about the discussion of transgender issues in primary school; should they be discussed along with lesbian and gay issues?
10. Anything else to add?

Secondary School Questions

1. Is homophobia or the mention of LGBT people currently discussed in your school? If yes, where and how and why do you think this is important?

2. How confident would staff in your school feel in challenging homophobic language or homophobic bullying if it arose? If confident, where does this confidence come from?

3. What would help to build confidence? e.g. CPD, reporting mechanisms, legislation, parental approval? What are the things that would staff able to talk confidently about LGBT issues and handle homophobic incidents confidently?

4. How do you think homophobia and LGBT issues are best tackled with pupils? e.g. specific discussion in lessons, as part of a wider discussion on discrimination, external specialist speakers, dedicated resource?

5. What expectations are placed on school staff in terms of handling homophobic incidents? Same as racist incidents?

6. Where do (1) equalities issues in general; and (2) LGBT issues and homophobia sit on the list of priorities for your school?

7. Denominational schools: general thoughts about possible ways ahead in introducing LGBT issues and discussion of homophobia?

8. Transgender issues: often sidelined – how do you feel about the discussion of transgender issues; should they be discussed in the same way as lesbian and gay issues in school?

9. Anything else to add?

Special School Questions

1. (*Mention that some special schools have declined to complete the survey or be interviewed*) Do you think that the discussion of homophobia is appropriate or relevant for pupils in special schools? Why?

2. Is homophobia or the mention of LGBT people currently discussed in your school? If yes, where and how and in what way?

3. How confident would staff in your school feel in challenging homophobic language or homophobic bullying?

4. What would help to build confidence? e.g. CPD, guidance, parental approval?

5. How do you think homophobia and LGBT issues are best tackled with pupils in special schools? e.g. specific discussion in lessons, as part of a wider discussion on discrimination, external specialist speakers, dedicated resource?

6. Do you think that the same expectations in terms of handling homophobic incidents are placed on staff in special schools as in mainstream schools?

7. Where do (1) equalities issues in general; and (2) LGBT issues and homophobia sit on the list of priorities for your school?

8. Anything else to add?

Appendix 4: Online Survey for Young People

This survey is designed to find out about homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools across Scotland. We are interested in the experiences and opinions of all young people, LGBT or not, so please do complete the survey as long as you are currently or have recently been at school in Scotland.

The results of this survey will be used in a report on homophobic bullying which we will present to the Scottish Executive at the end of the year. However, **your answers and comments will remain completely anonymous and confidential** and there is no way that you will be identified by your answers.

If there are any parts of the survey which you are unsure about just leave them blank. Make sure you read the introductions to each section as they may explain things which you are unclear about.

In all sections of the survey, please circle the appropriate answer.

Thank you for completing the survey. If you have any questions or would like to add anything else to the project please don't hesitate to call Sara on 0141 2215970 or email sara.oloan@lgbtyouth.org.uk

About You

This section lets us know a bit about you. All responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

1   Age
How old are you? _____

2   Where do you live in Scotland?
Please tell us the first part of your postcode to give us a rough idea of where you live (e.g. G20, AB16)

3   Gender
Please tell us your gender (circle the appropriate answer)

Female / Male / Transgender Female / Transgender Male / Other / Prefer not to say

4   If you answered 'other' to the last question, please explain further here.

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5   Sexual Orientation
What is your sexual orientation? (please circle the appropriate answer)

Bisexual / Gay / Lesbian / Questioning or Unsure / Straight or Heterosexual / Prefer not to say

6   Racial Identity
What is your racial identity? (e.g. black, white)

7   Ethnic Origin
What is your ethnic origin? (e.g. Irish, Cantonese, Scottish)

8　**Where did you hear about this survey?**
Let us know where you heard about this survey - was it on the LGBT Youth website or did you hear about it somewhere else?

Your School

This section lets us know a bit about you and your school.

1　**Year At School**
If you are currently attending school, what year are you in? (e.g. S3, S5)

2　**Year You Left School**
If you are not currently in school, in what year did you leave? (e.g. S4, S5)

3　**Is your school Non-Denominational or Denominational (e.g. Catholic)?**

Non denominational / Denominational

4　**Type Of School**
Do you go or did you go to a state school or an independent school (i.e. fee paying)?

State school / Independent school

5　**LGBT Issues In Your School**
Are LGBT issues and homophobia (e.g. same sex relationships, anti homophobic discrimination, same sex sexual health, transgender people) ever discussed in your school in any subject?

Frequently / Often / Sometimes / Rarely / Never

6　**Subjects**
If homophobia or LGBT issues are addressed in your school, please tell us the subjects in which they are discussed (e.g. PSE, English)

7　**Do you think homophobia and LGBT issues should be discussed at school?**

Yes / No / Maybe / Don't Know

8　**Are you aware of any pupils in your school who are 'out'? i.e. are openly LGB or T.**

Yes / No

General Bullying in Your School

Before we go on to look at homophobic bullying in more detail, this section lets us know more about general bullying and whether it takes place in your school. Bullying covers a wide range of behaviour from physical violence to namecalling to leaving someone out and making them feel isolated.

1　**Bullying In Your School**
Are you aware of general bullying in your school?

Yes / No / Don't Know

2   **Type Of Bullying**
If you answered Yes to the last question let us know what kinds of bullying take place. Please tick all of the options that apply.

Verbal Bullying (namecalling, teasing, spreading gossip) / Physical Bullying (violence) /

Stealing or vandalising property / Ignoring someone and leaving him or her out / Other

3   **If you answered 'other' to the last question, please explain further here.**

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4   **Frequency of Bullying**
If bullying does take place in your school, how often would you say it happens?

Frequently / Often / Sometimes / Rarely / Never

5   **School Anti Bullying Policy**
Most schools have an Anti Bullying Policy which sets out the ways in which staff will deal with bullying if it occurs. Are you aware of a policy like this in your school?

Yes / No

6   **Your Own Experience**
Have you ever been bullied at school?

Yes / No

7   **Type Of Bullying You Experienced**
If you answered No to the last question please carry on to the next section of the survey. If you answered Yes to the last question then please let us know what type of bullying you experienced by selecting all of the boxes which apply.

Verbal Bullying (namecalling, teasing, spreading gossip) / Physical Bullying (violence) / Having your

property stolen or vandalized / Being ignored or left out / Other

8   **If you answered 'other' to the last question, please explain further here.**

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9   **Reporting Bullying**
Did you ever report the bullying to school staff?

Yes / No

10   **If you did report the bullying were you pleased with how it was dealt with?**

Yes / No

11   **If you didn't report the bullying why was this?**

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Homophobic Bullying In Your School

Homophobic bullying is when the motivation behind the bullying is a dislike of people who are LGBT. Anyone at all can be homophobically bullied, you don't have to be LGB or T - the bullies may just label you as such and use this as an excuse or maybe you've got LGBT families or friends. In addition, homophobic language doesn't have to be directly used to bully people, it can be used in an everyday 'joking' way e.g. "you're so gay" and still be hurtful.

1   Are you aware of homophobic bullying in your school?

Yes / No

2   Frequency of Homophobic Bullying
If you answered Yes to the last question, how often would you say homophobic bullying takes place in your school?

Frequently / Often / Sometimes / Rarely / Never

3   Type of Homophobic Bullying
If you are aware of homophobic bullying in your school, what form does this take? (please circle all appropriate answers)

Verbal Bullying (namecalling, teasing, spreading gossip) / Physical Bullying (violence) / Stealing or vandalising property / Ignoring someone and leaving him or her out / Other

4   If you answered 'other' to the last question, please explain further here.

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5   Your Own Experience
Have you ever been homophobically bullied in school because you are LGB or T or because someone assumed that you are LGB or T?
If you have not directly experienced homophobic bullying please continue to the next part of the survey.

Yes / No

6   Type Of Homophobic Bullying You Experienced
If, yes, you have been homophobically bullied, what form did this take? Please circle all answers that apply.

Verbal Bullying (namecalling, teasing, spreading gossip) / Physical Bullying (violence) / Having your property stolen or vandalized / Being ignored or left out / Other

7   If you answered 'other' to the last question, please explain further here.

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8   Reporting Homophobic Bullying
Have you ever reported homophobic bullying to school staff?

Yes / No

9   **If you did report the bullying were you pleased with the way in which it was dealt with?**

Yes / No

10   **If you didn't report the homophobic bullying why was this?**

11   **Effects of Homophobic Bullying**
Being bullied for any reason can make you feel lots of things: anxious, depressed, angry and isolated. We would like you to write a few words about how homophobic bullying made or makes you feel - write as much or as little as you like.

12   **Effect on schoolwork**
Do you think that your experience of homophobic bullying had or is having an effect on your schoolwork or exam results?

Yes / No

13   **If you answered Yes to the last question**
Please let us know more about the ways in which your work has been affected.

14   **Truancy**
Have you ever deliberately missed school because of homophobic bullying?

Yes / No

15   **If you answered Yes to the last question**
Please tell us a bit more about this.

All About Homophobic Bullying

This is a space for you to tell us whatever you like about homophobia and homophobic bullying in your school. This can be about your own experiences, homophobia or homophobic bullying that you have witnessed in your school and things that you think staff could do to help improve things for LGBT people in schools.

Thank you. We really appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey.