

THROUGH OUR EYES

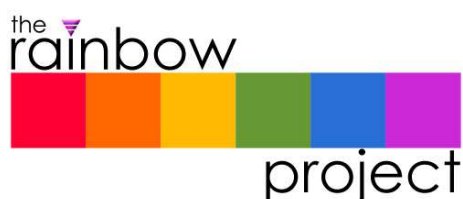
John O'Doherty

**Perceptions and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People
towards Homophobic Hate Crime and Policing in Northern Ireland**

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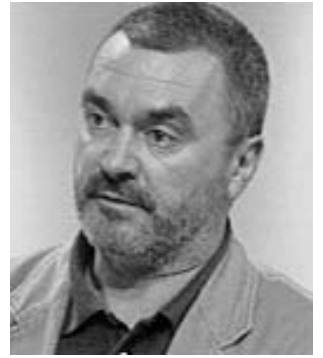
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FOREWORD



There have been a number of unexpected developments in Northern Ireland, which have emerged following the ending of the conflict, the signing of the Agreement and from the process of political transition. Among the positive changes has been the growing acknowledgment of the diversity of local society, and the important role that the different minority communities can make to the wider process of democracy and normalisation.

One element of this recognition of diversity has been the increased visibility and heightened public profile of the lesbian, gay and bisexual population and the developing activism within the LGB community and support groups which aims to raise awareness of the key issues affecting the community. This greater public profile has in turn resulted in an increased awareness of the particular and sometimes distinctive issues that affect the LGB population and in growing attempts to respond to issues of discrimination and inequality towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people among key statutory agencies and government departments.

However, there has also been a growing awareness of the problem of homophobia in Northern Ireland and in particular of the too numerous incidents of homophobic violence, harassment and abuse that continue to be experienced by lesbian, gay and bisexual people in communities across Northern Ireland.

This latest report by the Rainbow Project provides a link between each of these developments. The report itself is another example of the high quality research that the Rainbow Project has produced on LGB issues in recent years and of the wider work that the Project has done in raising the profile of LGB issues. Notably this research is based on responses from more than 1,100 LGB people from all of the 26 district council areas, making it one of the largest and most comprehensive research samples from the community in Northern Ireland. This in turn evidences the importance of the issues of hate crime and policing among the LGB community.

The report highlights that homophobic hate crime is still a significant factor in the lives of many LGB people, with more than 20% of respondents indicating that they have experienced some form of homophobic hate crime in the past 3 years, and with many individuals being the victim of violent physical assaults.

Finally, the report also provides evidence of the attempts by the Police Service of Northern Ireland to engage with the LGB community and respond to issues that affect them. Although a large percentage of victims of homophobic hate crime still do not report incidents to the police, the research does indicate that attitudes to the police from within the LGB population are improving and that LGB people believe the police to be less homophobic than previous research had indicated. In particular the research highlights positive work that has been done between the police and LGB communities in south Belfast and in the Foyle Division to put in place specific initiatives to try to respond more effectively to homophobic hate crime.

These key findings inform the focused recommendations in the report which aim to encourage more LGB people to report homophobic hate crimes, and for the PSNI to further develop their recording mechanisms, the training of all police officers and to extend their existing working relationship with the LGB community.

The research thus usefully illustrates something of the journey that has already been made, while also helpfully recommending some of the work that needs to be done.

Neil Jarman
Director
Institute for Conflict Research

INTRODUCTION



Northern Ireland has seen many changes over recent years through introduction of new Equality legislation securing the rights of all people regardless of their gender, age, race, religion, political views, disability status or sexual orientation. We have also seen a significant change in the criminal justice system including substantial improvements in how our communities are policed.

Despite Northern Ireland moving forward in their acceptance of LGB people, homophobia and heterosexism still play too large a part in the lives of gay people within our communities. The fear of being attacked or abused on the street or in their homes for many gay people remains an everyday reality. The criminal justice system, despite having made significant changes, still cannot provide a reliable picture of the levels or extent of hate incidents throughout Northern Ireland. It is for this reason that The Rainbow Project took the initiative to research and develop this piece of work, secure funding and for the betterment of our own core service users and the broader LGB community dedicate our Equality Officer John O'Doherty to conduct this critical research.

This report, which catalogues the fears, experiences and perceptions of LGB people throughout Northern Ireland, has the largest response of any research ever done on LGB issues in Northern Ireland. It is a statistically significant report in providing a picture as to the extent and nature of hate incidents and LGB perceptions of policing.

It is clear that homophobic hate crime is still too common within our society and that too many people feel unable to report for a variety of reasons. While the PSNI have made progress in addressing the issue of homophobic hate crime and in communicating with the LGBT community, it is clear that although perceptions of police and policing are improving, that there are still too many people either dissatisfied with the service received or unaware of what the PSNI can do to protect them.

I believe this report creates an opportunity to build on the progress made and to ensure not only that LGB people are receiving the quality of service that they deserve, but that they are aware of the PSNI's goal to provide a quality service to all.

Vince Creelan
Chairperson
The Rainbow Project

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Summary and Key Findings

SUMMARY

In January 2009, the Northern Ireland Police Service Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Independent Advisory Group commissioned The Rainbow Project to survey the lesbian, gay and bisexual community in Northern Ireland about their experiences and fears in relation to homophobic hate crime, and their perceptions of policing and the PSNI in Northern Ireland. The survey enquired about fear of crime, experiences of crime, who committed the hate incidents, what actions victims took to report the incidents and how respondents perceived the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

KEY FINDINGS

Fear of Crime

- 39% of LGB people are worried about being a victim of crime
- 13% of LGB people feel that harassment/attacks on people because of their sexual orientation in their neighbourhood is a problem
- 39% of LGB people alter their behaviour to avoid others knowing that they are not heterosexual
- 11% of LGB people are more concerned about being a victim of crime than being seriously ill, having an accident or having financial problems

Homophobic Hate Crime

- 39% of LGB people have been victim of some sort of crime in the last three years
- 21% of gay and bisexual males and 18% of LGB females have been victim of one or more homophobic hate crimes or incidents in the last three years
- 10% of LGB people have been a victim of one or more homophobic incidents in the last year
- 30% of those experiencing homophobic hate incidents in the last three years were physically injured
- 29% of those experiencing homophobic hate incidents in the last three years were psychologically injured
- 11% of all LGB female respondents experienced unwanted sexual contact. 29% of females who were victim of a homophobic incident in the last three years suffered unwanted sexual contact
- 24% of homophobic hate incidents were carried out by neighbours or someone living in the local area
- 19% of homophobic hate incidents occurred at LGB people's homes

"I dread when it comes evening time and I am called names and my windows have stones thrown at them at night when I am in bed. I feel scared and depressed and I wish it would stop."
31-40 year old male, Magherafelt

Reporting of incidents

- 56% of all incidents against LGB people in the last three years, regardless of motivation, were never reported to the police
- 64% of homophobic incidents in the last three years were never reported to the police
- 16% of LGB people reported homophobic incidents to third party organisations
- 14% did not report because they thought the police wouldn't do anything
- 15% did not report because they didn't think it was serious enough

Experiences and perceptions of policing

- 30% of LGB people have had contact with the PSNI in the last year, most commonly through reporting crime
- 53% of those LGB people who had contact with the PSNI in the last year were either very or somewhat satisfied with the service they had received, while 29% were either very or somewhat dissatisfied
- 21% of LGB people have experienced problems with the police at some point, with 30% of these experiencing problems in the last year, most commonly an unsatisfactory service and/or police being rude or impolite
- 20% of those experiencing problems made complaints, the majority of which were made to the Police Ombudsman's Office or local police stations
- Over half of LGB people believe that the PSNI is professional, helpful and there for their protection
- 21% of LGB people believe that the police are homophobic and 17% believe that they are transphobic
- 30% of LGB people believe that the PSNI are aware of issues affecting the LGB community

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Methodology

In January 2009, the Northern Ireland Police Service Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Independent Advisory Group commissioned The Rainbow Project to survey the lesbian, gay and bisexual community in Northern Ireland about their experiences and fears in relation to homophobic hate crime, and their perceptions of policing and the PSNI in Northern Ireland. The survey enquired about fear of crime, experiences of crime, who committed the hate incidents, what actions victims took to report the incidents and how respondents perceived the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

The research was supported by a steering group drawn from the LGBT Independent Advisory Group to the PSNI, the Northern Ireland Policing Board LGBT Reference Group, District Policing Partnership members, Lesbian Advocacy Services Initiative, the Gay Police Association, and staff and Board Members from The Rainbow Project.

The research involved a number of methodologies:

- Self-completion questionnaires;
- Focus groups, small group interviews with lesbian, gay and bisexual groups and individuals held in both rural and urban locations; and
- Interviews with representatives from key policing organisations who deal specifically with hate crime.

STUDY VISITS

To ensure that this research was as affective as possible The Rainbow Project visited two organisations, Maneo and Stonewall, both with extensive experience in carrying out homophobic hate crime research. These study trips were funded by the Policing Board for Northern Ireland. Below you will find specific details of the research carried out by the two projects.

Maneo – Berlin

Maneo is a department of Man-O-Meter, a gay men's helpline based in Berlin. They have carried out research into homophobic hate crime in many German-speaking parts of Europe including Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

From 2006-2008 Maneo conducted two studies of homophobic hate crime in Germany. The first surveyed 24,000 people using:

- Focus groups;
- Printed questionnaires placed in Berlin based magazines; and
- Online questionnaires.

Maneo reported that focus groups proved successful in obtaining information on specific incidents but did not help in relation to getting the overall picture of the problem in Germany. Of the 120,000 printed questionnaires which were distributed, only 300 written responses (1.25% of all responses) were returned.

95% of responses received were from online surveys, advertised through gay social sites, chat rooms and support group websites.

The main findings were:

- 34% of respondents had been victim of a homophobic incident in 2006-2007;
- 90% did not report to the police;
- of those that did report to the police, 60% did not report that there was a homophobic motive; and
- 20% of incidents were physical attacks.

In 2007-2008, Maneo conducted further research and sampled 17,500 people using the same methods in its earlier research.

The main findings were:

- 40% of respondents had been the victim of a homophobic incident in 2007-2008;
- of the 2,150 people surveyed from Berlin, 40% had been victim of a homophobic incident, this equates to 860 incidents in the capital alone; and
- the statistics regarding reporting to the police remained the same.

In both pieces of research, intelligence gathered by Maneo, had helped the police to identify possible homophobic hate crime hotspots and cases. The research showed that a common crime against LGB people was robbery and intimidation. Fear of being 'outed' and fear of police intimidation were the main reasons for not reporting. A partnership approach, focussing on prevention, has now been established between the police and MANEO.

Stonewall – London

Stonewall was founded in 1989 by a small group of women and men who had been active in the struggle against Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988. Section 28 was a discriminatory piece of legislation designed to prevent the so-called 'promotion' of homosexuality in schools; as well as stigmatising gay people it also galvanised the gay community. The aim from the outset was to create a professional lobbying group that would prevent such political attacks on lesbians, gay men and bisexuals from ever occurring again.

Stonewall is renowned for its campaigning and lobbying work throughout England, Wales and Scotland. Some major successes include helping achieve the equalisation of the age of consent, lifting the ban on lesbians and gay men serving in the military, securing legislation allowing same-sex couples to adopt and the repeal of Section 28. More recently, Stonewall has helped secure civil partnerships and ensured the recent Equality Act 2006 protecting lesbians and gay men in terms of goods and services.

Stonewall's most recent research into homophobic hate crime was carried out in 2007-2008. The study surveyed 1,700 people throughout the UK. The research was carried out using online surveys only, and participants were identified using the organisation YouGov. YouGov sent the survey to lesbian, gay and bisexual people from throughout the UK with an incentive to complete the survey.

The following results were obtained:

- 20% of respondents had been victim of a homophobic hate crime in the last three years;
- 12.5% had been victim of a homophobic hate crime in the last year;
- 75% of these did not report to the police;
- 6% reported to a third party;
- 70% did not report to anyone; and
- 1/6 of those experiencing a homophobic hate crime had experienced physical assault.

Due to the large area covered and the small number of respondents, hot spots were not able to be established and this made prevention more difficult. However, the research allowed police to identify the gravity of the issue and put measures in place to ensure that people are aware of how and why to report homophobic hate crime. They have also been taking steps to address the reasons why people do not feel they can report homophobic hate crime, such as fear of discrimination from the police.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed by The Rainbow Project. Questions used in previous homophobic hate crime studies in Northern Ireland, Britain, Germany and Holland were incorporated and/or amended as necessary.

The PSNI define Homophobic Hate Incidents as 'any incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by homophobia'. The same perception test was used in this study to identify whether or not an incident is classified as homophobic.

The questionnaire was then tested on service users of The Rainbow Project and LASI and was considered as effective. The need to reach those members of the LGB community who may not be 'out' or may not frequent LGB groups and/or venues was identified. Lessons learned from Maneo and Stonewall prompted the steering group to ensure that the questionnaire was available for completion online to reach those identified above.

The questionnaire was hosted by Gaydar and Gaydar Girls, commonly used gay social networking sites. Due to a much lower membership on Gaydar Girls than on Gaydar the steering group raised concerns about low levels of response from females before the survey was launched. Therefore, the survey was launched on gaydar girls one weekend before the gaydar survey to test the response of females. Of the 1,143 survey responses received, 757 were received through Gaydar and 159 through Gaydar Girls. Because of the low level of response from women through Gaydar girls an outreach event with questionnaires was carried out in two gay commercial venues, Union Street Bar and the Kremlin nightclub, during which 120 survey responses were received. 107 responses were received through LGBT support and social groups.

Focus Groups

Focus group meetings were held with a number of organisations and individuals from throughout Northern Ireland. The focus of the meetings was to get a more in-depth perspective of LGB people's experiences and perceptions of policing and homophobic hate crime. One on one interviews were also held with PSNI Minority Liaison Officers and Hate Crime Investigators, as these are the officers dealing directly with victims of homophobic hate incidents.

The PSNI and Northern Ireland Policing Board have both established groups with the aim of supporting and developing the work of these bodies in relation to minority groups. A joint meeting between the PSNI Independent Advisory Group and the Northern Ireland Policing Board LGBT Reference Group to learn more about the work of these bodies and their feelings and perceptions of these issues and possible actions. A discussion also took place with the 'Foyle Protocol Committee' to discuss the effectiveness and future of the protocol.

Focus group meetings took place with 3 regional LGBT groups; Gay and Lesbian Across Down (GLAD), Banbridge and Craigavon LGBT and Strabane and Lifford LGBT. Open focus groups were also held in Belfast and Foyle.

The topics for focus group meetings were:

What do you feel the key policing concerns are for LGB people in your area?

Do you feel that homophobic hate crime is a big issue in your area?

What have been your experiences of policing?

Do you know how to and would you report homophobic hate crime? Why?

Do you feel that police consultation with the LGB community is effective?

What changes would you like to see?

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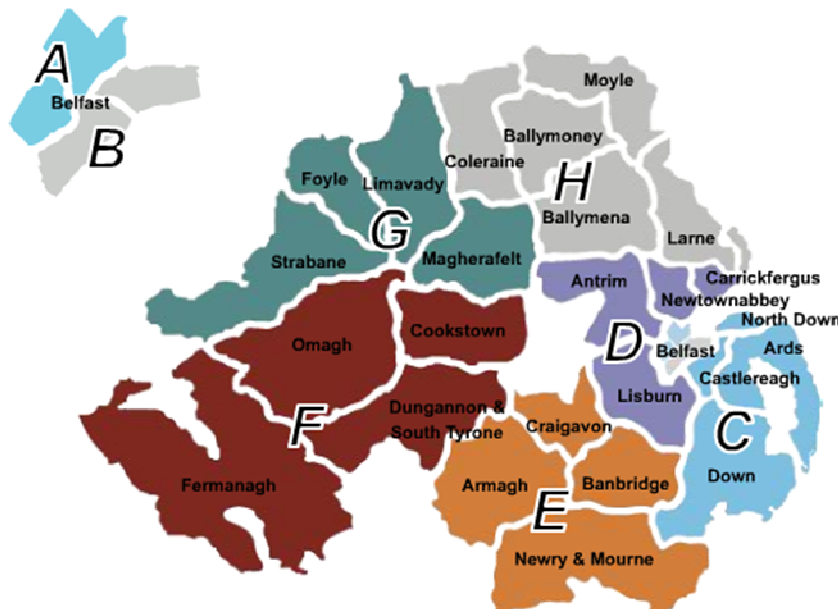
Background Information

The PSNI define Homophobic Hate Incidents as ‘any incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by homophobia’. The PSNI define Homophobic Hate Crime as ‘any crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by homophobia’. Homophobic hate incidents have a devastating effect on victims and those who fear becoming a victim. Both the PSNI and Northern Ireland Policing Board have recognised hate crime as a serious issue and acknowledge the need to address it effectively. Both organisations also recognise the high levels of under-reporting in relation to all types of hate crime in Northern Ireland.

Total number of incidents			Total number of crimes		
2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
220	155	160	148	117	114

Table 3:1 Homophobic hate incidents and crimes recorded by PSNI 2005-2008

Over the period 2005-2008 the PSNI have recorded a decline in the number of reported homophobic hate crimes from 148 to 114.



Map 3:3 Northern Ireland Policing Districts

In 2007 the PSNI introduced 8 districts to replace the previous 29 districts throughout Northern Ireland. On page 11, we can see the breakdown of homophobic hate crimes and incidents in 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 throughout the newly developed districts.

	Total Number of Incidents		Total offences recorded	
Districts	2006/2007	2007/2008	2006/2007	2007/2008
A District	32	19	23	12
B District	22	33	19	17
C District	16	24	9	13
D District	20	20	14	21
E District	19	13	13	11
F District	11	12	9	8
G District	16	28	12	23
H District	19	11	18	9
Total	155	160	117	114

Table 3:2 Homophobic hate incidents and crimes per district recorded by PSNI 2006-2008

A, E and H District shows a substantial decrease in the number of reported homophobic hate incidents and crimes between 2006/2007 and 2007/2008. D and F District show similar figures for both years whereas B, C, and G District show a substantial increase in the reporting of incidents.

The increased level of reporting in B District may be a result of the appointment of PSNI Hate Crime Investigators, whose role is to review and investigate Hate Incidents reported to PSNI regardless of motivation. Hate Crime Investigators also have a role in reviewing reported incidents looking for those which may have a hate motivation.

The increased level of reporting in G District may be a result of 'A Partnership Protocol' or 'The Foyle Protocol' as it has become known. This is a partnership agreement established between The Rainbow Project, PSNI and other statutory and voluntary agencies in order to prevent hate crimes and to increase the levels of reporting of hate crime.

Type of crime	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Murder	0	0	1
Attempted Murder	1	0	0
Threat or conspiracy	7	4	3
All woundings/assaults	68	63	53
Intimidation/harassment	19	12	17
Robbery	2	6	2
Other Violent Crime	4	5	2
Burglary	2	1	1
Theft	4	2	0
Criminal Damage	40	23	35
Other notifiable offence	1	1	0
Total	148	117	114

Table 3:4 Types of homophobic hate crime recorded by PSNI 2005-2008

Although hate crime can manifest itself in many ways, recorded homophobic hate crimes show high levels of violent crimes, including a homophobic murder in 2007/2008. Woundings and assaults account for, on average, 48% of all recorded homophobic hate crimes. Criminal damage is the second most common crime accounting for 25% of all incidents.

Policing, Accountability and the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community in Northern Ireland

Katy Radford, Jennifer Betts and Malcolm Ostermeyer

In 2005 the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI) commissioned the Institute for Conflict Research to undertake a study on the attitudes towards and the experiences of the new policing arrangements in Northern Ireland by individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB). Questionnaires were completed by 233 LGB people across Northern Ireland. Focus groups involving 90 people and a number of one to one meetings with LGB people and representatives of key policing bodies were also held.

Key Findings (PSNI):

- Almost one in five (17.98%) LGB people in Northern Ireland had been a victim of one or more homophobic hate incidents in 04-05.
- 31% of LGB people in Northern Ireland had been a victim of a crime or incident in 04-05.
- Two in five of those experiencing hate crimes or incidents did not report them to the police.
- One in three of those who did not report, did so, due to fear of police hostility because of their sexual orientation.
- Almost half of LGB (47%) people believe strongly that the PSNI are not aware of LGB Issues.
- 38% of LGB people thought the police were homophobic.
- 17% of respondents had received an unsatisfactory service from the police. Of these 25% believed it was due to their sexual orientation.
- Three out of four of those who were unsatisfied with the service from the police did not report the police to anyone; 4% reported to Police Ombudsman's office.

Statistics from this research on levels of crime and reporting are not used as a comparison in this report. It was the view of the steering committee that the difference in numbers of respondents and demographics, with respondents living in the large urban areas of NI having made up the main part of the sample, meant that these statistics were not a direct comparison.

4 Demographics of Respondents

Which council area do you currently reside in?

Council Area	Number	%
Antrim	97	8.5
Ards	37	3.2
Armagh	30	2.6
Ballymena	22	1.9
Ballymoney	13	1.1
Banbridge	24	2.1
Belfast	390	34.1
Carrickfergus	24	2.1
Castlereagh	39	3.4
Coleraine	33	2.9
Cookstown	8	0.7
Craigavon	39	3.4
Derry	66	5.8
Down	78	6.8
Dungannon	10	0.9
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	18	1.6
Larne	9	0.8
Limivady	15	1.3
Lisburn	43	3.8
Magherafelt	8	0.7
Moyle	5	0.4
Newry and Mourne	34	3.0
Newtownabbey	50	4.4
North Down	22	1.9
Omagh	12	1.0
Strabane	17	1.5
Total	1143	100

Table 4:1 Breakdown of respondents by council area

Due to fears of homophobia many LGB people move to more urban parts of Northern Ireland where they feel they will be more accepted. Furthermore, many support and social groups or venues are situated in more urban parts of Northern Ireland which leads to migration to large towns and cities. Not surprisingly, the largest proportion of respondents are from the Belfast City Council area.

Policing District	Number	%
A & B District	390	34
C District	176	15
D District	214	19
E District	127	11
F District	48	4
G District	106	9
H District	82	7
Total	1143	100

Table 4:2 Breakdown of respondents by policing district

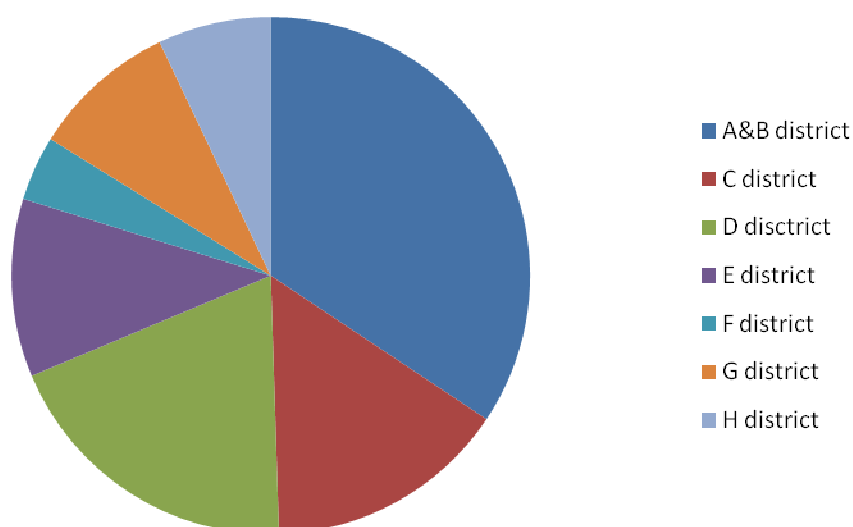


Chart 4:3 Breakdown of respondents by Policing District

The target sample size for this survey was 1000 with 100 people from each of the Policing Districts. The overall target of 1000 respondents was met and the target of 100 in each of the policing districts was met in six out of eight of the districts. Low levels of respondents from Cookstown, Dungannon, Fermanagh & South Tyrone, Omagh, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Larne and Moyle was expected due to LGB people in these areas being isolated from the mainstream gay community.

"I am a rather private person and as a result I rarely come up against any problems, however, part of the reason I feel I have to be private is that I feel Northern Ireland, particularly rural areas, is still very closed minded".
22-30 year old female, Belfast

What age category are you in?

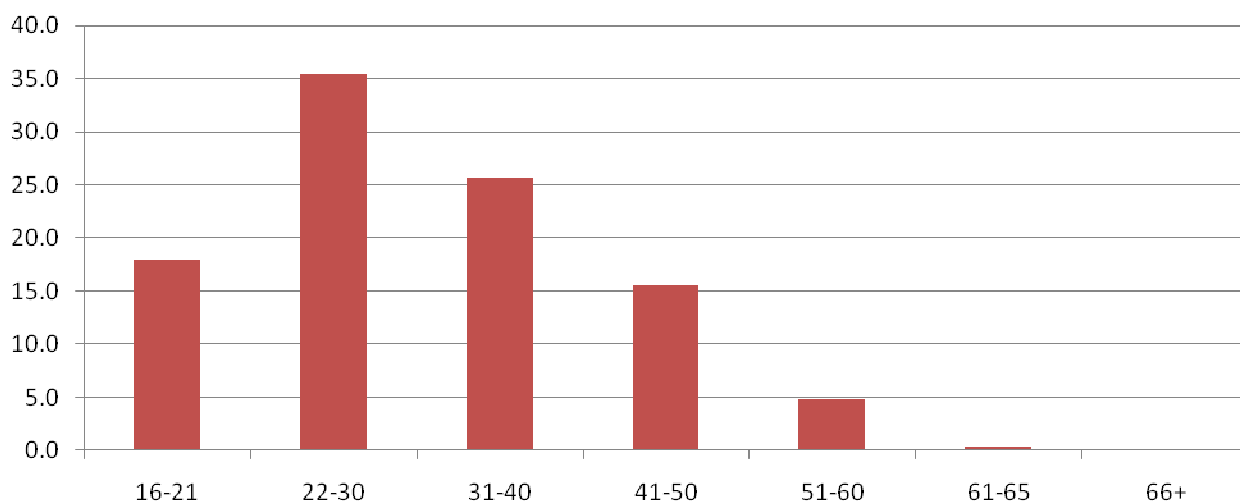


Chart 4:4 Breakdown of respondents by age category

The majority of respondents are under 50 years of age with a large number in the 22-30 age category. This perhaps could be linked to the fact that the survey was extensively online based and older people are less likely to use the internet than younger people.

Are you male/female/trans?

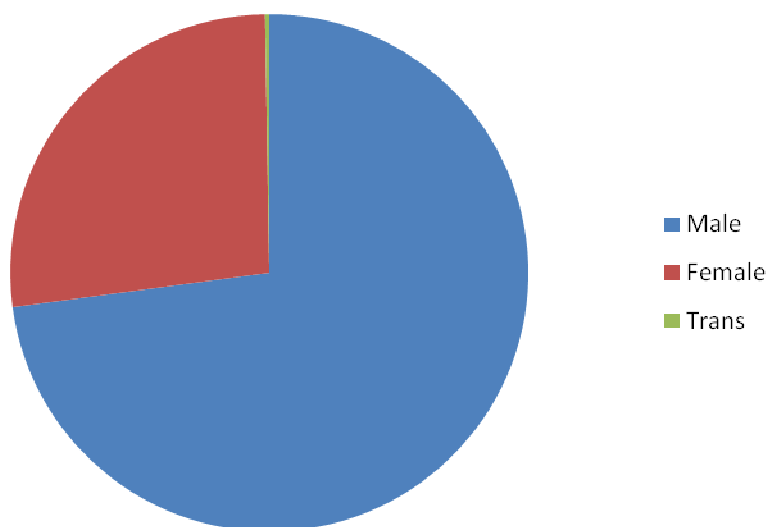


Chart 4:5 Breakdown of respondents by gender

833 of respondents identified as male, 307 identified as female and 3 identified as trans. Initially it would seem that there is a low response from females. The reality being that there was an unprecedented number of males who responded to this survey. Due to a much lower membership on Gaydar Girls than on Gaydar it would seem that females are less likely to use gay social networking websites than males.

Support from LASI as well as outreach work in gay venues, targeting specifically lesbian, gay and bisexual females, helped us to reach the number of female respondents above. As this survey focussed on homophobic hate crime, there was no specific aim to engage those who identify as transgender or transsexual. However, those who identify as both trans and LGB were invited to complete the survey.

Do you consider yourself to be....?

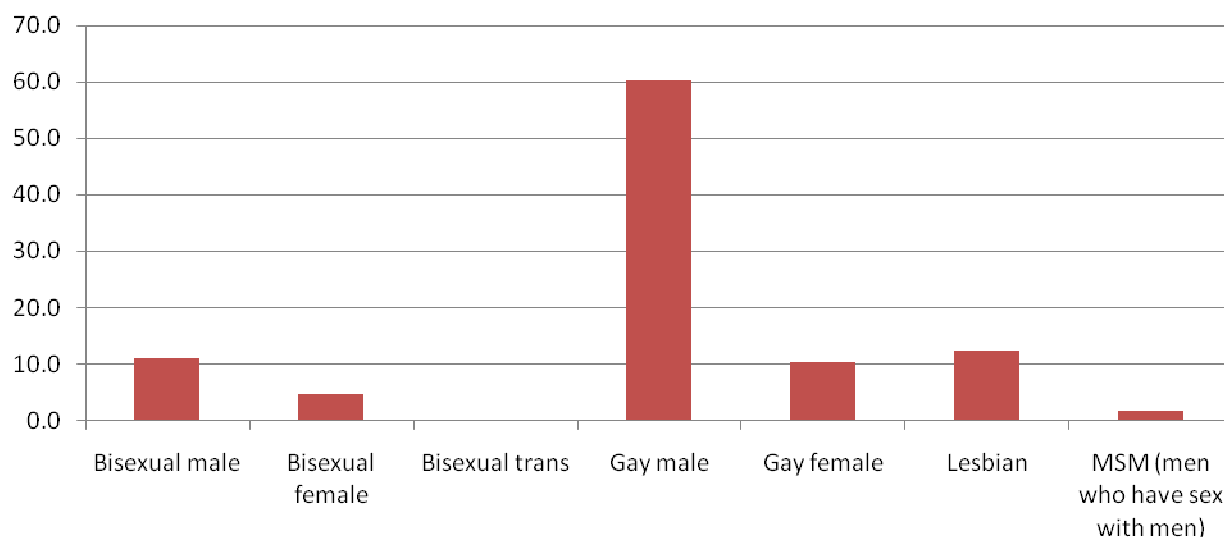


Chart 4:6 Breakdown of respondents by sexual orientation

During the survey process 9 people who identified as heterosexual attempted to complete the survey. Their answers have been removed from the overall statistics. Those who identify as MSM are classified by The Rainbow Project as a hard-to-reach group. As they do not identify as LGB they are less likely to be involved in mainstream LGB life, groups or events.

Who out of the group below is aware of your sexual orientation?

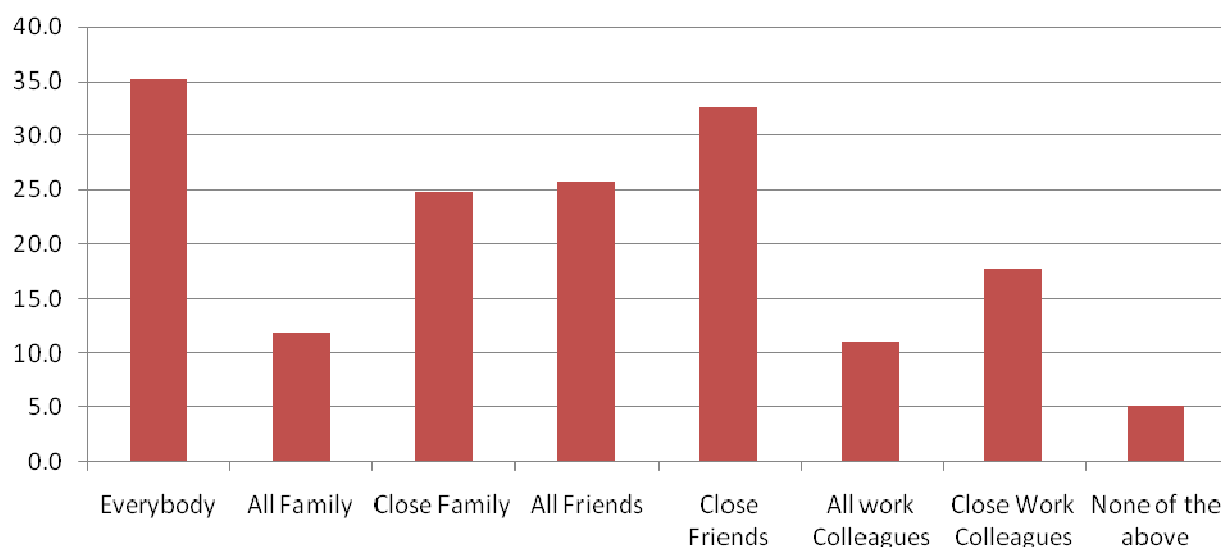


Chart 4:7 Breakdown of respondents by groups they have made aware of their sexual orientation

Respondents living in urban areas are more likely than those living in rural areas to have told everyone about their sexual orientation. The fact that many people feel uncomfortable making those they work with aware of their sexual orientation is not surprising as many people fear discrimination, harassment or bullying from co-workers or employers. 68 people stated that they are not 'out' to any of the above groups, 54 of which were male.

What do you consider to be your community background?

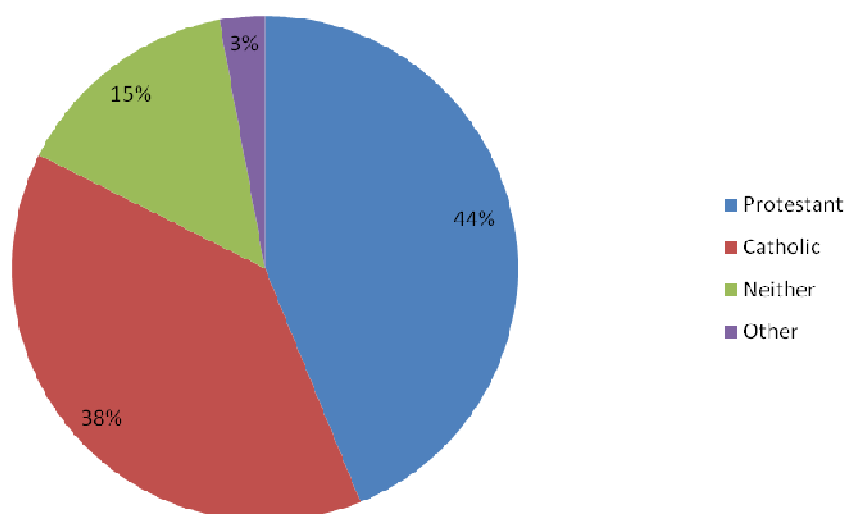


Chart 4:8 Breakdown of respondents by community background

Which ethnic group do you belong to?

Ethnic Group	Number	%
Bangladeshi	1	0.1
Black African	0	0.0
Black Carribean	2	0.2
Black other	2	0.2
Chinese	6	0.5
Indian	1	0.1
Pakistani	2	0.2
White	1113	97.4
Irish Traveller	1	0.1
Other	15	1.3
Total	1143	100

Table 4:9 Breakdown of respondents by ethnic background

The vast majority of respondents indicated their ethnicity as white. There is a low response rate from those of other ethnic backgrounds. Similarly, the same can be said for membership of many LGBT groups throughout Northern Ireland. The need to find new ways to effectively engage with LGB people from other ethnic minorities has been identified by these groups.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Do you consider that you meet this definition of a disability?

Of the 1143 respondents 91 (8%) considered themselves to have a disability. Of those 91:

- 8 considered themselves to have a learning disability;
- 33 considered themselves to have a mental health disability;
- 42 considered themselves to have a physical disability; and
- 8 considered themselves to have a sensory disability.

What is your relationship status?

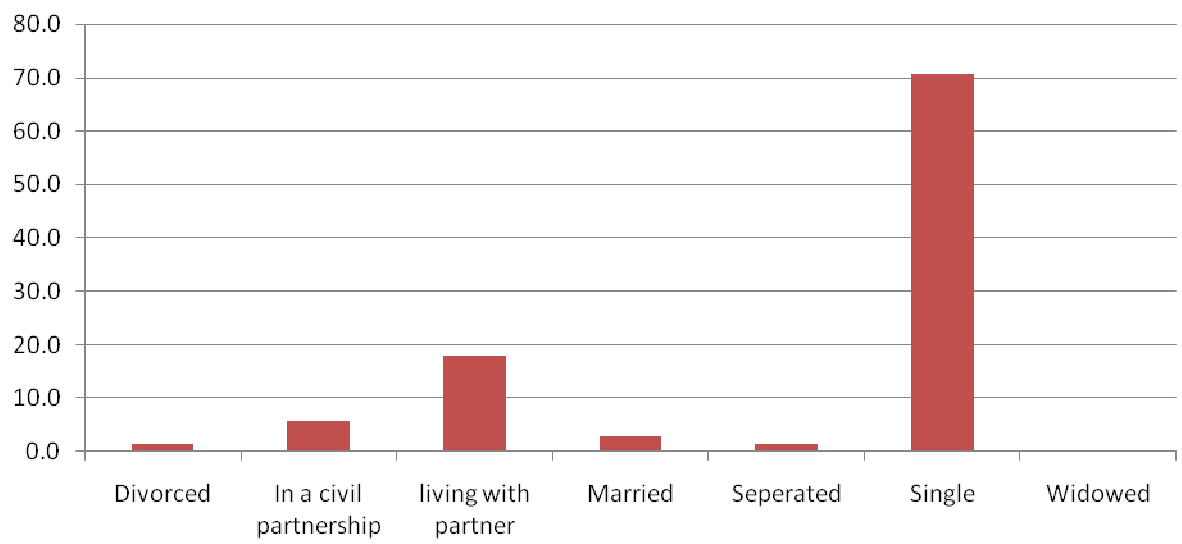


Chart 4:17 Breakdown of respondents by relationship status

110 respondents indicated that they had children of which 53 stated that their children currently live with them.

5

Fear of Crime

SUMMARY

- 11% of LGB people are more concerned about being a victim of crime than being seriously ill, having an accident, having financial debts or not having enough money to pay the bills
- 39% of LGB people are worried about being the victim of crime
- 5% of LGB people would not walk in their neighbourhood after dark
- 13% of LGB people feel that harassment/attacks on people because of their sexual orientation is a big issue in their neighbourhood
- 39% of LGB people alter their behaviour to avoid people knowing they are LGB
- 18% of LGB people have moved to an area they feel safer to avoid being victim of crime

Which of the following do you worry MOST about in relation to yourself?

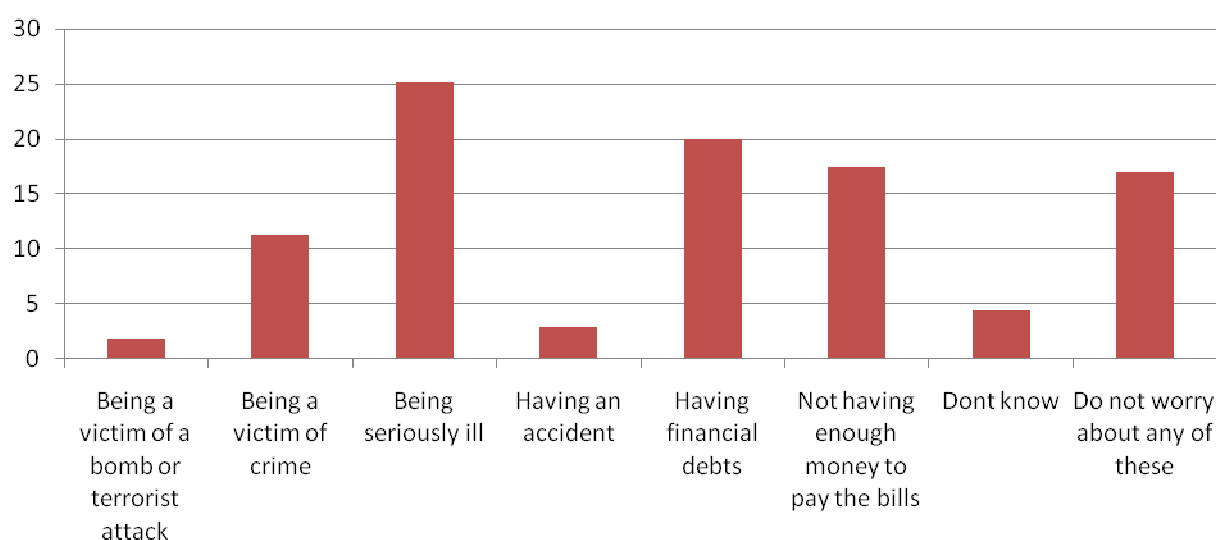


Chart 5:1 Fears of respondents

11% of LGB people are more concerned about being a victim of crime than being ill, having an accident, having financial debts and not having enough money to pay the bills. 17% do not worry about any of these issues. During the current economic climate it is not surprising that 37% of people are more concerned about issues relating to personal finances than anything else.

Thinking about all types of crime in general, how worried are you about being a victim of crime?

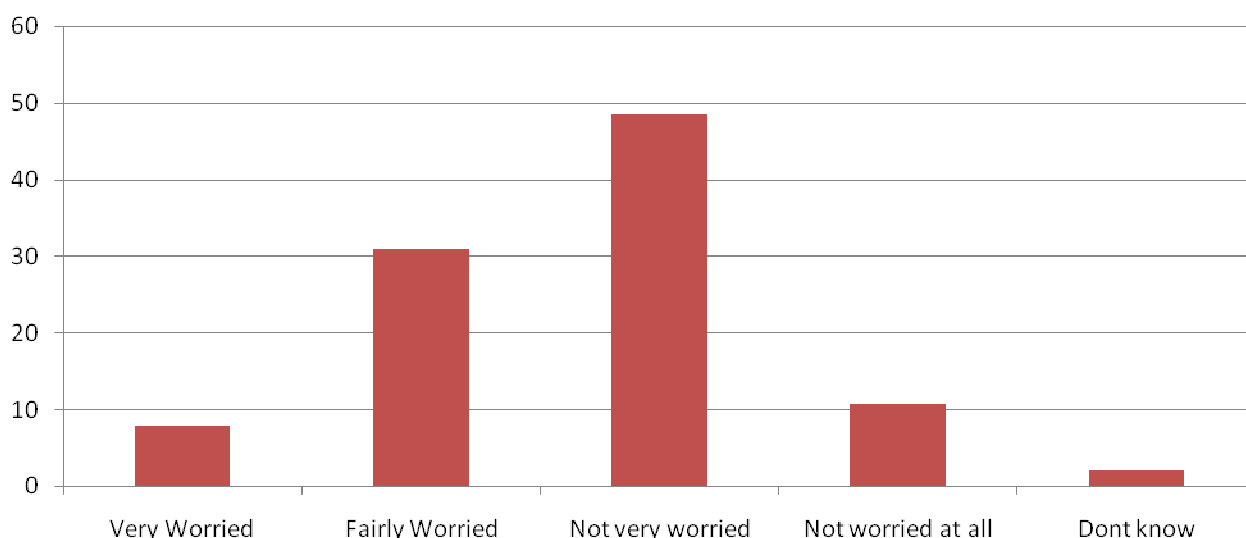


Chart 5:2 Respondents level of fear in relation to being victim of crime

Fear of crime is not unanimous by any means throughout the LGB community. Some people have relatively low, if any, fear of crime. 39% of LGB people are either very or fairly worried about being a victim of crime. Of these, almost 50% have been victim of some sort of incident in the last three years and 30% have been victim of a homophobic incident.

How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighbourhood after dark?

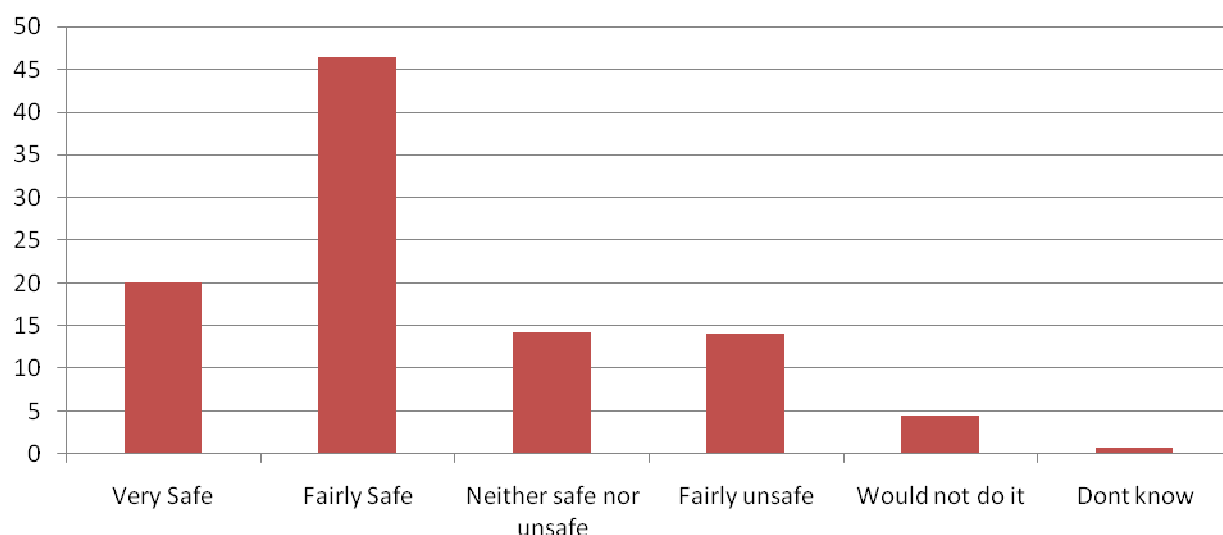


Chart 5:3 Respondents perception of safety within their neighbourhood after dark

66% of LGB people feel either very or fairly safe in their neighbourhood after dark. 14% feel fairly unsafe and 5% would not walk alone in their neighbourhood after dark. 25% of respondents from Belfast stated that they felt either fairly unsafe or would not walk in their neighbourhood, the largest percentage of any of the areas in Northern Ireland.

"Being gay in Belfast is fairly easy, although, maybe that is just my experience."
22-30 year old male, Belfast

In your neighbourhood, how much of a problem is harassment/attacks on people due to their sexual orientation?

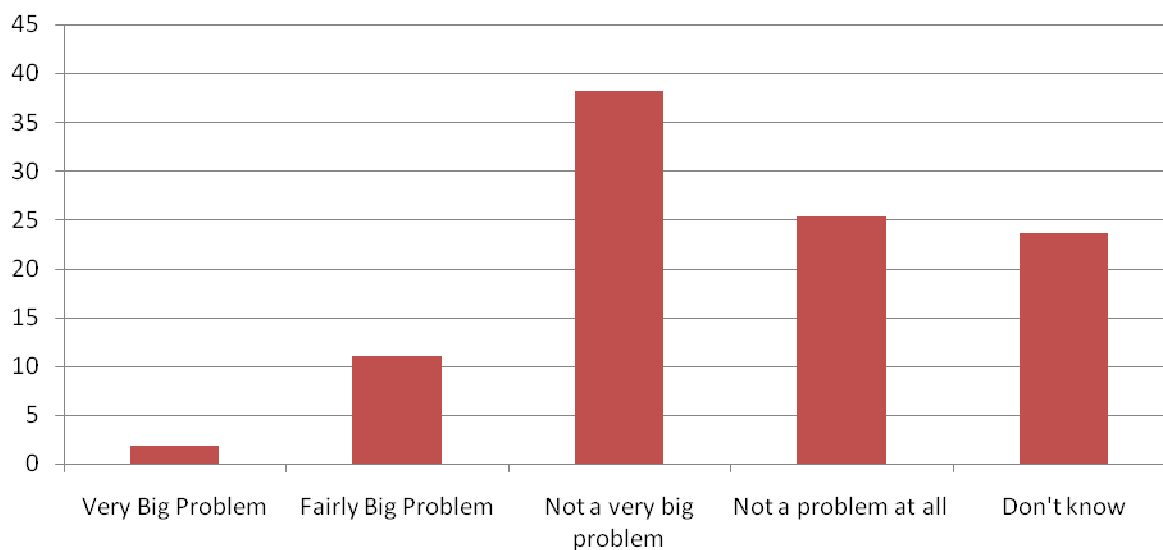


Chart 5:4 Respondents perception on harassment/attacks on people due to their sexual orientation in their neighbourhood

13% of LGB people feel that harassment/attacks on people because of their sexual orientation is a problem in their neighbourhood. 21% of respondents from Derry city council area believe that harassment/attacks on people because of their sexual orientation is a problem.

"Fortunately I live in a safer area of Belfast where I don't have to be frightened of homophobia, but I know most of the city is not safe and I would always be wary when out of my own area."
22-30 year old male, Belfast

Which, if any, of the following actions have you taken to prevent being the victim of crime?

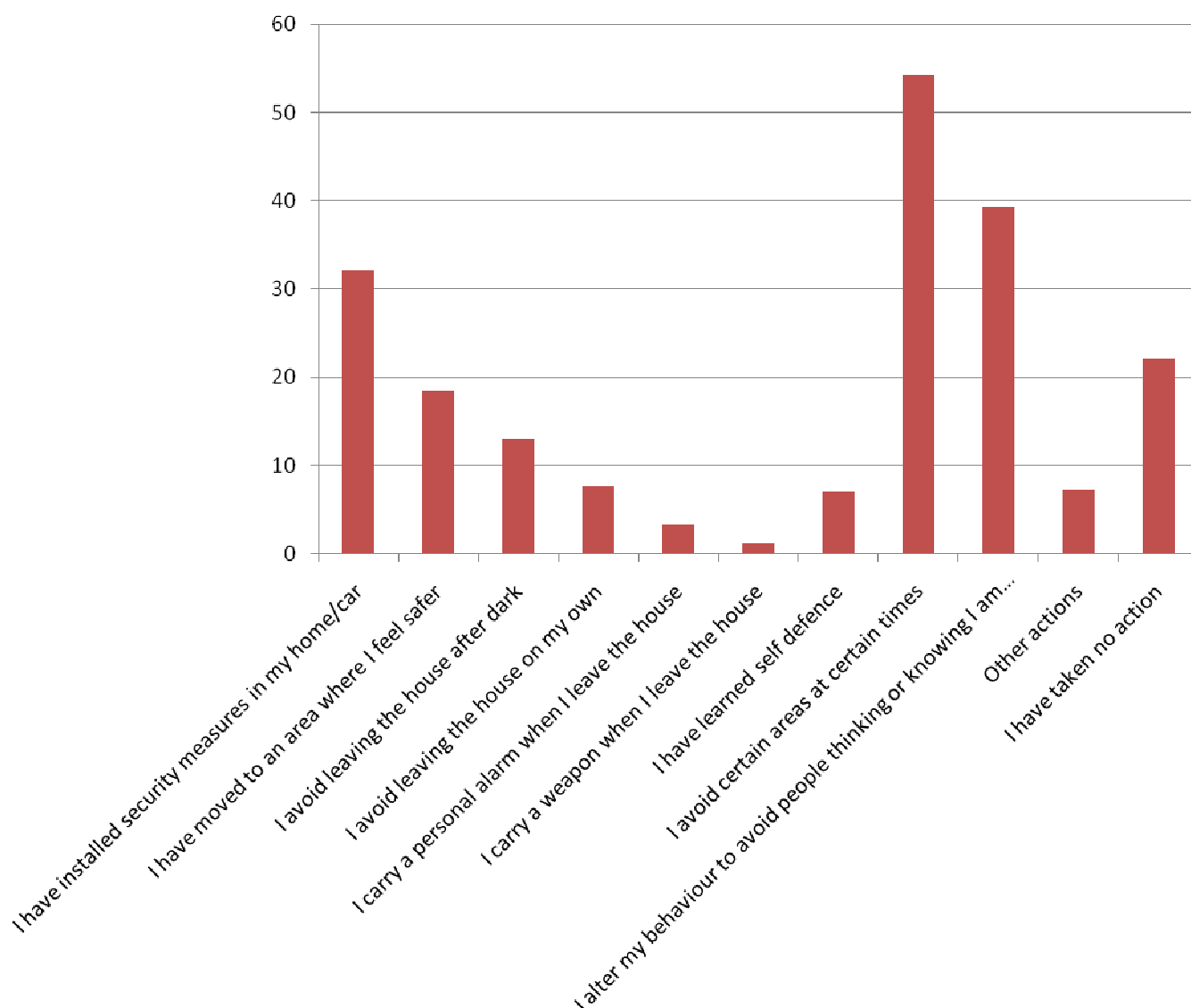


Chart 5:5 Actions taken by respondents to prevent being victim of crime

Although only 39% of LGB people stated being either fairly or very worried about being a victim of crime, 78% have taken some action to prevent being a victim of crime. The most common action taken, at 54%, is to avoid certain areas at certain times. This is followed, at 39%, by LGB people altering their behaviour to avoid people knowing that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Unlike the other answers, this response links directly into fear of being victim of a homophobic incident rather than more general crime.

"I have never been the victim of a hate crime, but I know people who have. It does affect you and how you behave in public, you deny yourself almost."
16-21 year old male, Lisburn

6

The Nature and Extent of Hate Crimes

SUMMARY

- 39% of respondents have been victim of some sort of crime in the last three years
- 40% of males and 38% of females have been victim of some sort of crime in the last three years
- 52% believed the incident was motivated by homophobia
- 21% of males and 18% of females have been victim of a homophobic hate incident in the last three years
- 49% of respondents were injured either physically or psychologically during homophobic incidents
- 10% of LGB people have been victim of one or more homophobic incidents in the last year
- 11% of all LGB female respondents experienced unwanted sexual contact. 29% of females who were victim of a homophobic incident in the last three years suffered unwanted sexual contact

Have you been victim of any type of crime in the last THREE years?

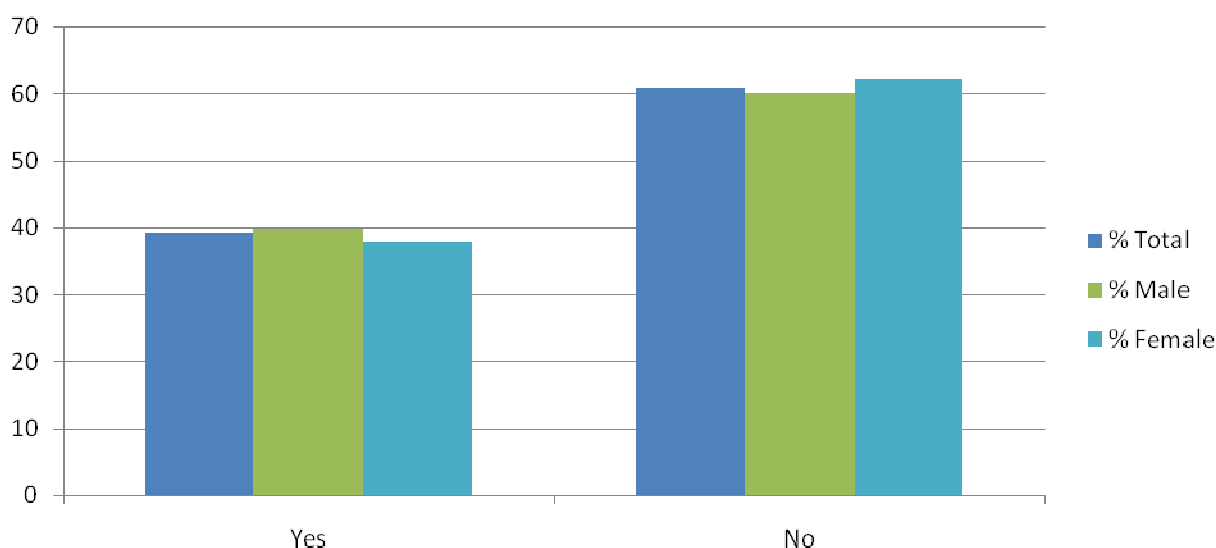


Chart 6:1 Respondents experience of all types of crime

LGB people experience crime and policing in many different ways. Not all incidents are motivated by homophobia. 39% of respondents experienced some sort of crime in last three years. Males, at 40%, are slightly more likely to have experienced crime than females at 38%. None of the respondents who identified as trans indicated being the victim of crime. Incidents experienced range from verbal insults and harassment to physical and sexual violence.

Do you feel this incident was motivated by the perpetrator(s) knowing or believing you were lesbian/gay/bisexual?

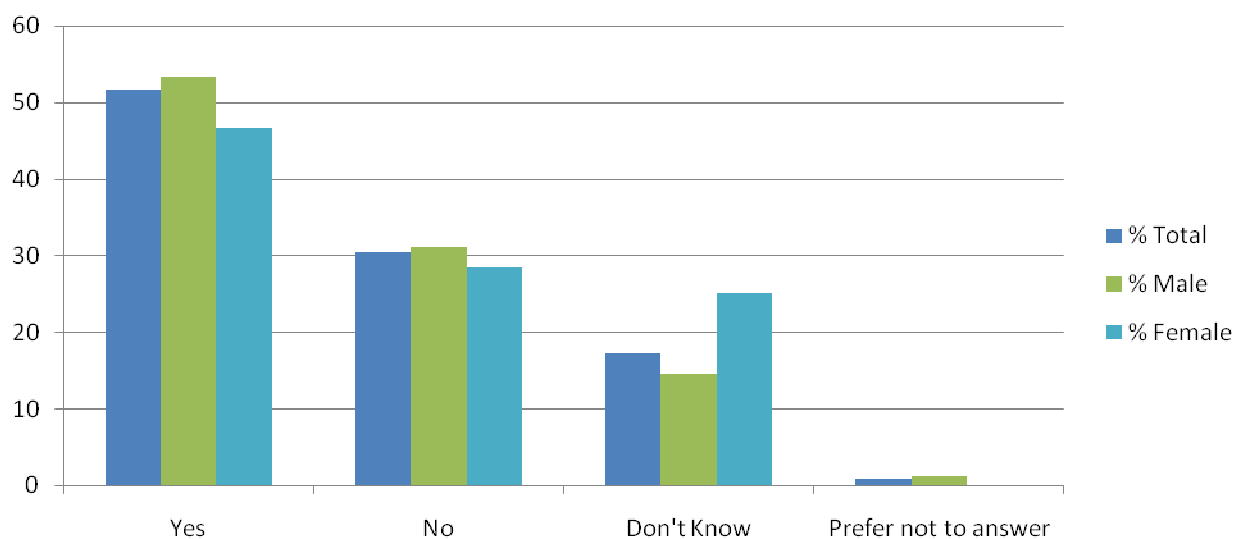


Chart 6:2 Respondents perceived motivation for incident

The PSNI policy on hate incidents clearly states that an incident should be recorded as homophobic if that is the perceived motivation. The motivation can be perceived by the victim, perpetrator, investigating officer or witness. Over half of the incidents experienced were perceived to be motivated by homophobia which, in accordance with PSNI policy, corresponds to 20% or one in five LGB people being victim of a homophobic incident. Males, at 21%, are slightly more likely than females, at 18%, to be victim of an incident motivated by homophobia.

Why do you think this incident was motivated by the perpetrator(s) knowing or believing that you were lesbian/gay/bisexual?

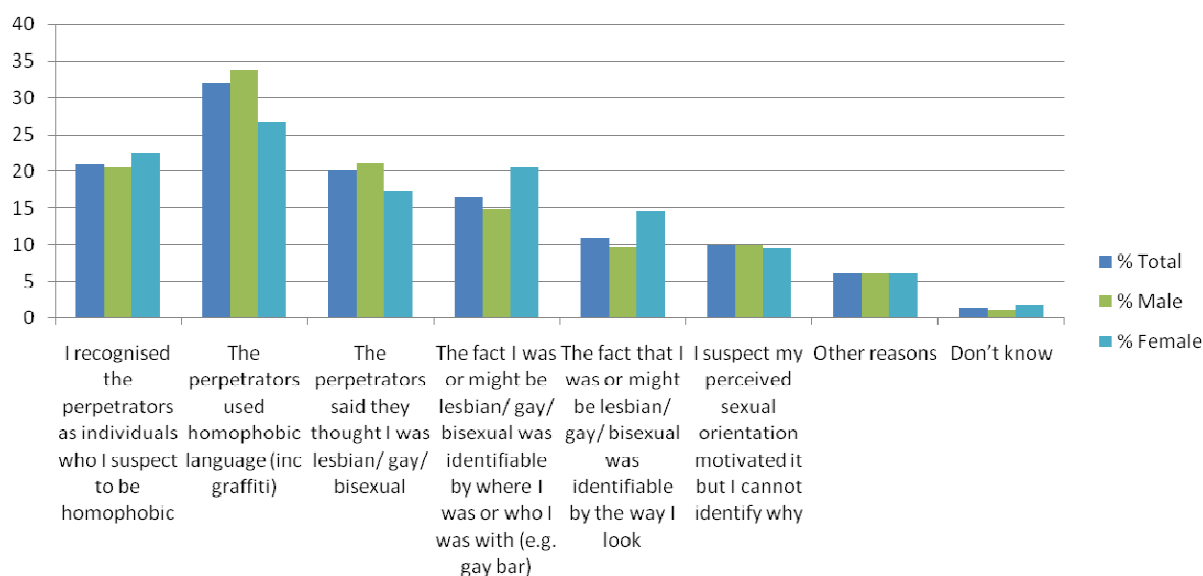


Chart 6:3 Respondents justification for why they feel incidents were motivated by homophobia

The most common reason for perceiving incidents as homophobic is the use of homophobic language and/or graffiti. Others recognised the perpetrator(s) as people they perceived to be homophobic or felt their sexual orientation was identifiable by who they were, who they were with or the way they look.

Were you injured during this incident?

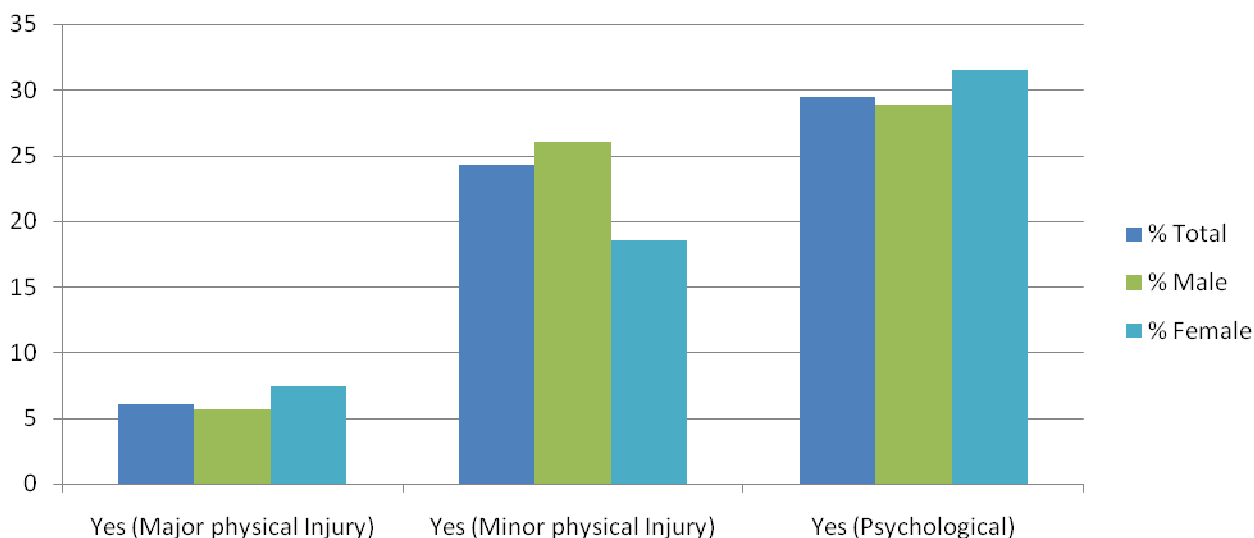


Chart 6:4 Injuries sustained by respondents during incidents

Homophobic incidents, like all crime, have a devastating effect on victims and society. Almost half of those who were victim of a homophobic incident were injured in some way. Males are more likely to suffer physical attacks, so it is not surprising that they are more likely to sustain physical injuries than females. Females are slightly more likely to suffer psychological injuries through homophobic incidents.

When did the most recent of these incidents occur?

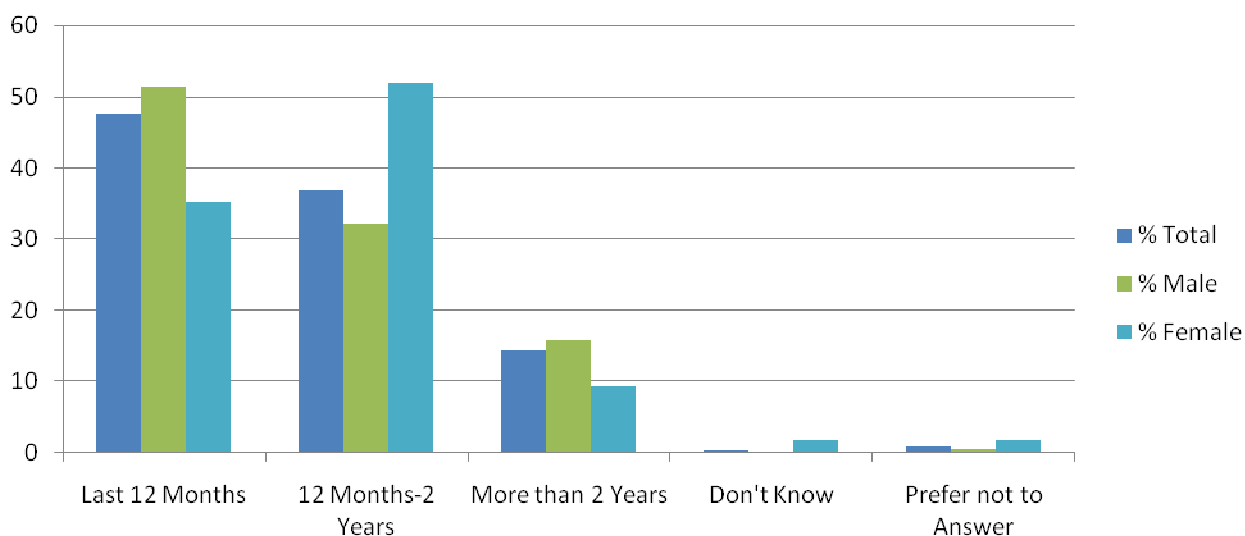


Chart 6:5 Time since last incident

Of the 20% of LGB people who reported being victim of more than one homophobic incidents within the last three years, 48% indicated that the most recent incident occurred in the last 12 months, and 37% occurred 1-2 years ago.

Which if any of the following types of incidents have you been affected by in the last THREE years?

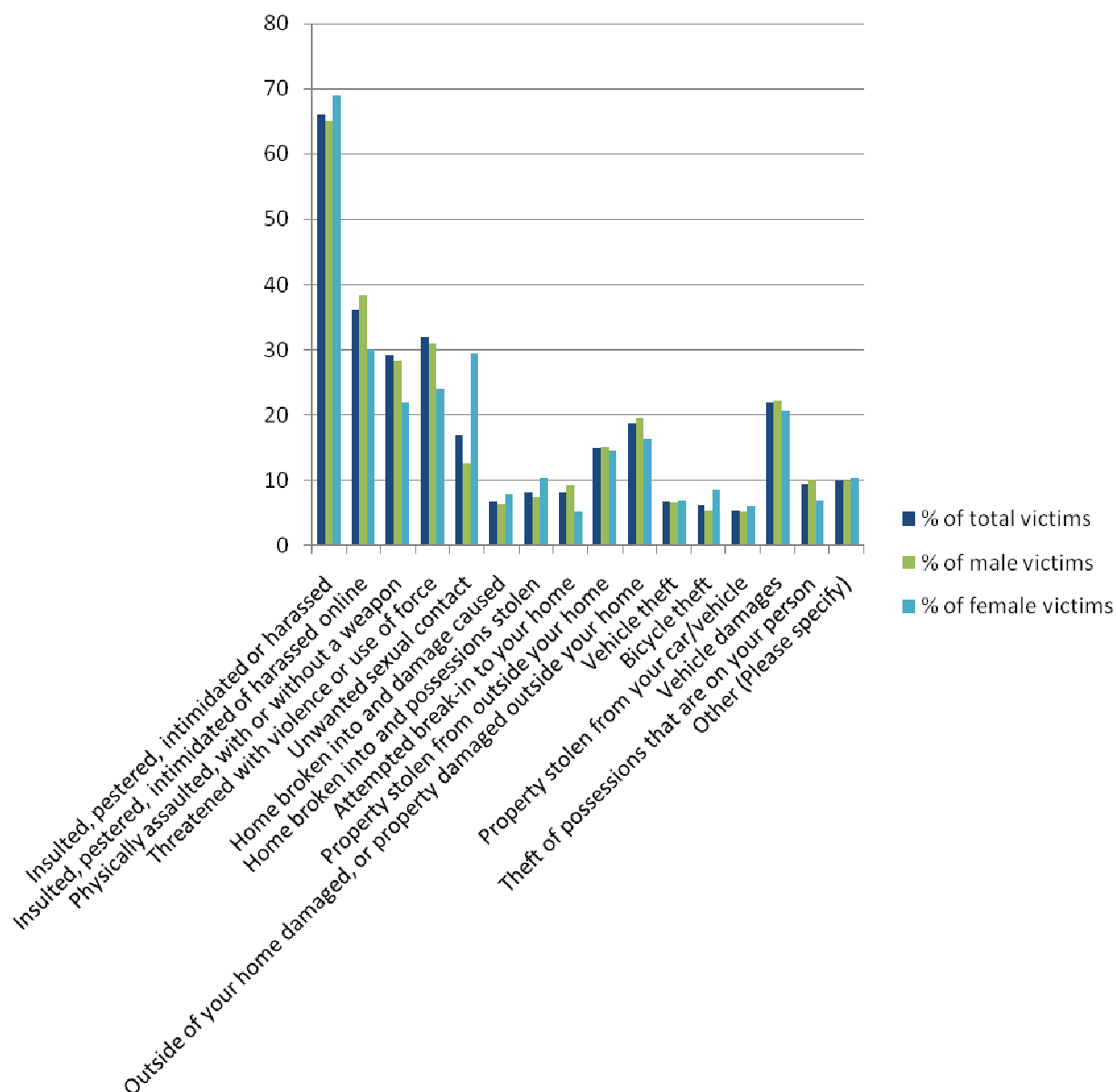


Chart 6: 6 Types of incidents experienced by respondents

Homophobic hate incidents are defined as any incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by homophobia. This means that any incident or crime can be referred to as homophobic. Incidents ranged from verbal incidents to physical assaults. 66% of LGB people reported being victim of verbal insults, intimidation or harassment, with females, at 69%, being more likely to suffer verbal incidents than males at 65%. Males are more likely to suffer physical violence or threat of violence than females. Females are substantially more likely to suffer from unwanted sexual contact, most commonly from heterosexual males who feel that they can 'turn' LGB females heterosexual.

"I don't choose to be a lesbian because I think it's a better lifestyle choice, its just who I am and some men need to appreciate the fact that some girls don't like men in that way. No should mean no and not cause men to think they need to convince you that they could make you heterosexual."
22-30 year old female, Belfast

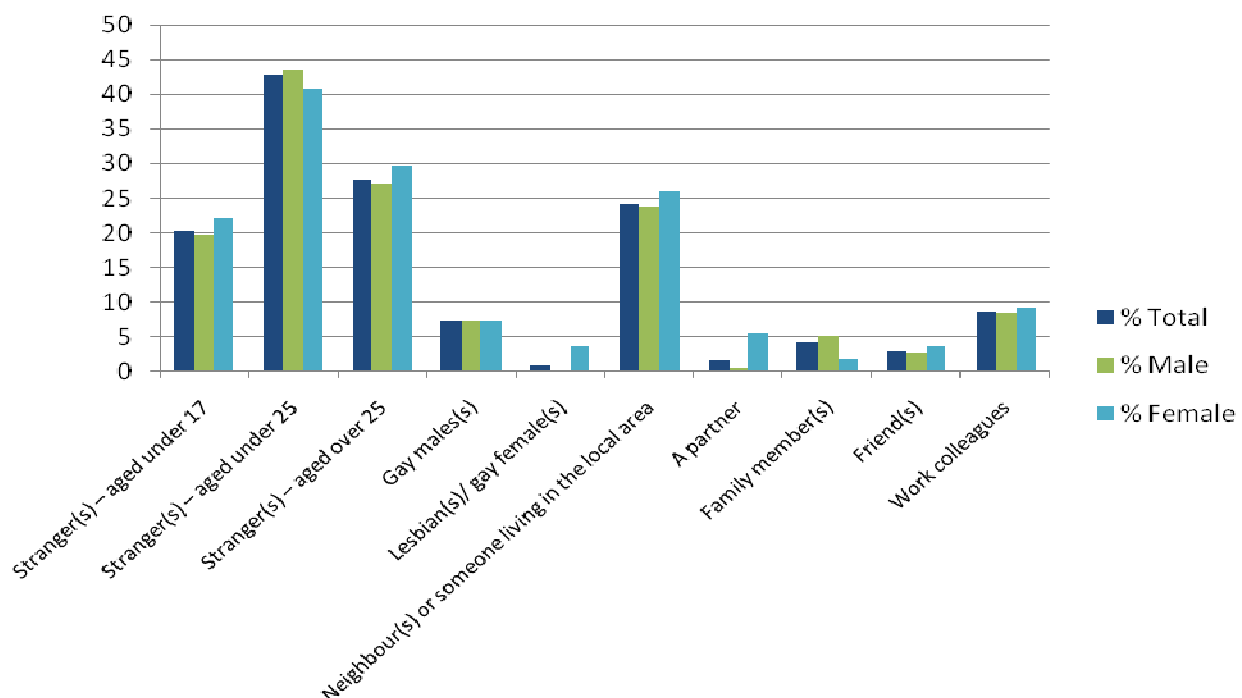
7

Who Commits Hate Incidents and When?

SUMMARY

- 93% of homophobic hate incidents were perpetrated by people of a Caucasian ethnicity with only a small number being attributed to ethnic minorities
- 68% of homophobic hate incidents were carried out by strangers
- 24% of homophobic incidents were carried out by neighbours or someone living in the local area
- 9% of homophobic hate incidents were perpetrated by work colleagues
- 19% of homophobic hate incidents occurred at participants homes
- 60% of homophobic hate incidents when the date was remembered were carried out during weekends (Friday – Saturday)
- 53% of homophobic hate incidents occurred between 9pm - 3am

Who was/were the perpetrator(s) of this incident?



6:1 Breakdown of who carries out homophobic hate incidents

As with all types of crime, homophobic hate crimes can be carried out by individuals or groups of people. However, there are some patterns which can be identified. Young people, for example, are more susceptible to homophobic incidents involving people of the same age. 79% of people aged 16-21 who had been victim of an incident stated that the perpetrator(s) were strangers aged under 25 and/or strangers aged under 17 years of age. In total 68% of incidents involved strangers with those aged 17-25 being most likely to perpetrate homophobic hate incidents.

"I feel afraid, constantly afraid. As soon as I get the money I am going to move."
 16-21 year old male, Moyle

"I hate going to college everyday because of homophobic comments from most 'straight' boys that pass me. It makes me feel extremely uncomfortable within myself and my surroundings."
 16-21 year old male, Newry and Mourne

Lesbian/gay/bisexual females are more likely to be victim of incidents involving other LGB females, partners, friends and/or co-workers. This follows a trend in society where females are statistically more likely to be victim of domestic abuse and workplace harassment.

"I fear my family victimizing me because of my sexual orientation more than any stranger."
 16-21 year old female, Newry and Mourne

Males are more likely to be victims of incidents involving family members. Homophobic incidents within the home can range from physical to psychological. Males appear more likely to be victim of homophobic domestic abuse from family members and females more likely to be victim of domestic abuse from partners.

24% of incidents involved neighbours or someone living in the local area. Those in civil partnerships, and/or living with partners, accounted for half of the homophobic incidents where neighbours, or someone living in the local area, were the perceived perpetrators.

Where did this incident take place?

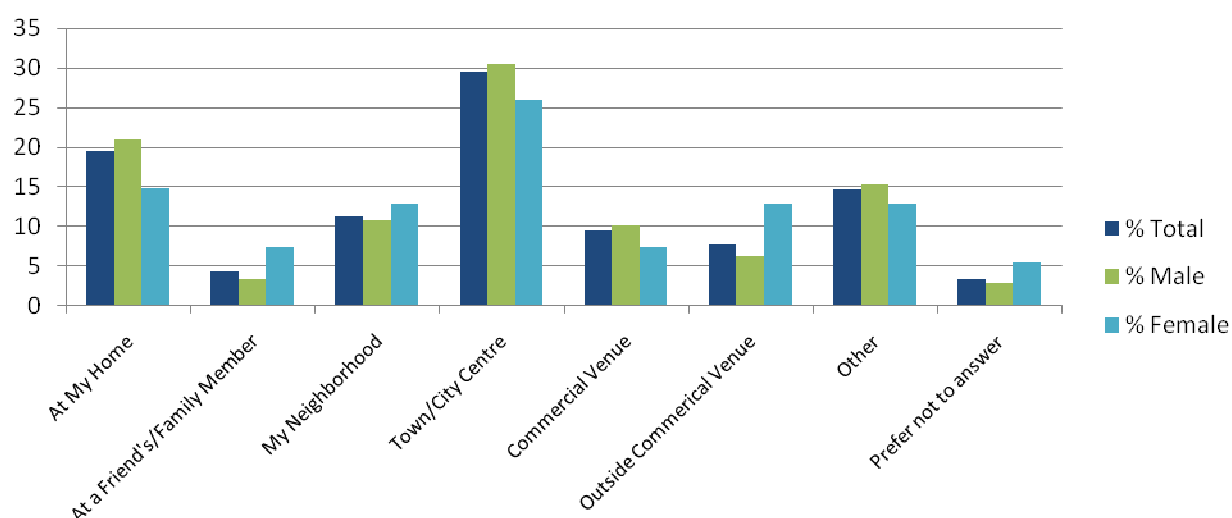


Chart 6:2 Breakdown of where homophobic hate incidents take place

Homophobic incidents can occur anywhere. 19% of homophobic incidents occurred at participants homes. Responses show that many people who suffer from homophobia in their homes suffer not just once, but on an ongoing basis.

"The PSNI and most members of the community are fine. My biggest problem is attacks by school boys 14-17 years of age."
51-60 year old male, Carrickfergus

31% of males and 26% of female victims were involved in a homophobic incident in their town/city centre. Alcohol would appear to motivate some homophobic incidents with 18% occurring either within or outside commercial venues.

"I don't report young people in the street laughing or making fun of me or gay people in general otherwise I wouldn't have much time left! It is up to trainers in the education system as well as other organisations to stamp out homophobia and assumed heterosexuality."
31-40 year old male, Limavady

What day of the week did the incident take place?

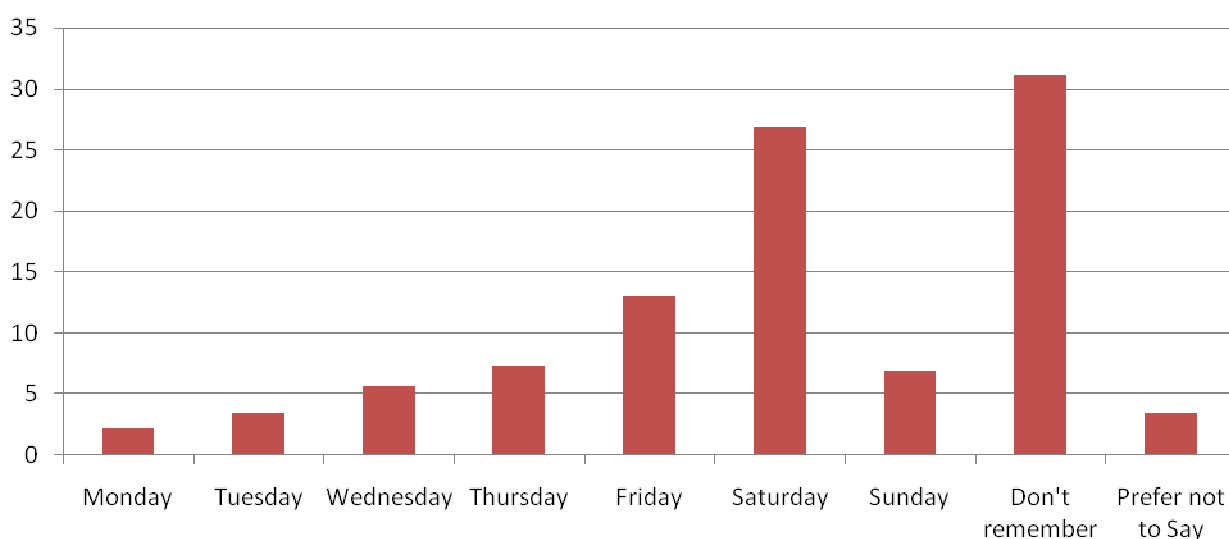


Chart 6:3 Breakdown of days when homophobic hate crimes take place

Although homophobic hate crimes can occur any day of the week there is a clear pattern showing that homophobic incidents are more likely to occur at weekends, with 60%, where the date was remembered, occurring between Friday and Saturday. This again can be linked to alcohol-fuelled violence and anti-social behavior.

At what time did this incident take place?

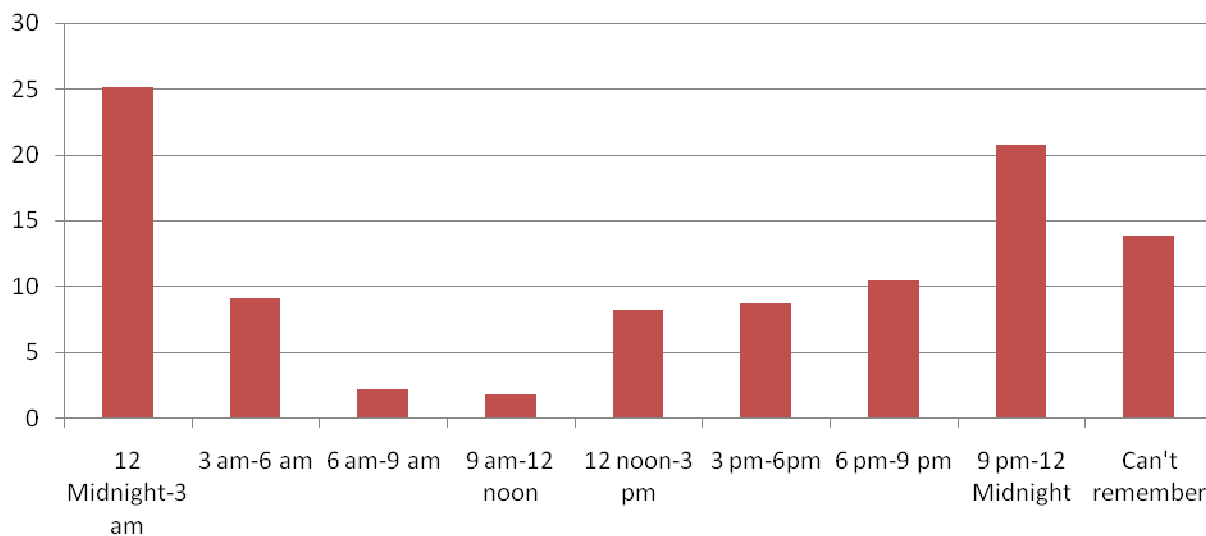


Chart 6:4 Breakdown of times when homophobic hate crimes take place

53% of incidents occurred between 9pm-3am, the majority of which occurring at people's homes and in town/city centres.

"I dread when it comes evening time and I am called names and my windows have stones thrown at them at night when I am in bed. I feel scared and depressed and I wish it would stop."
31-40 year old male, Magherafelt

8

Reporting Homophobic Hate Crime

SUMMARY

- 56% of victims of all types of crime did not report them to the police
- 64% of homophobic incidents were never reported to the police
- 16% of LGB people reported homophobic incidents to a third party organisation
- 56% never reported homophobic incidents to anyone
- Females are less likely to report incidents regardless of motivation
- With 62%, G district has the highest level of reporting of homophobic incidents
- G district has the highest level of homophobic hate crime and H district has the lowest
- Six out of eight districts showed a higher reporting of non-homophobic incidents than homophobic incidents
- The two most common answers given for not reporting are 'I did not think the police would do anything' and 'I did not think I would be taken seriously'

Did you report this incident to the PSNI?

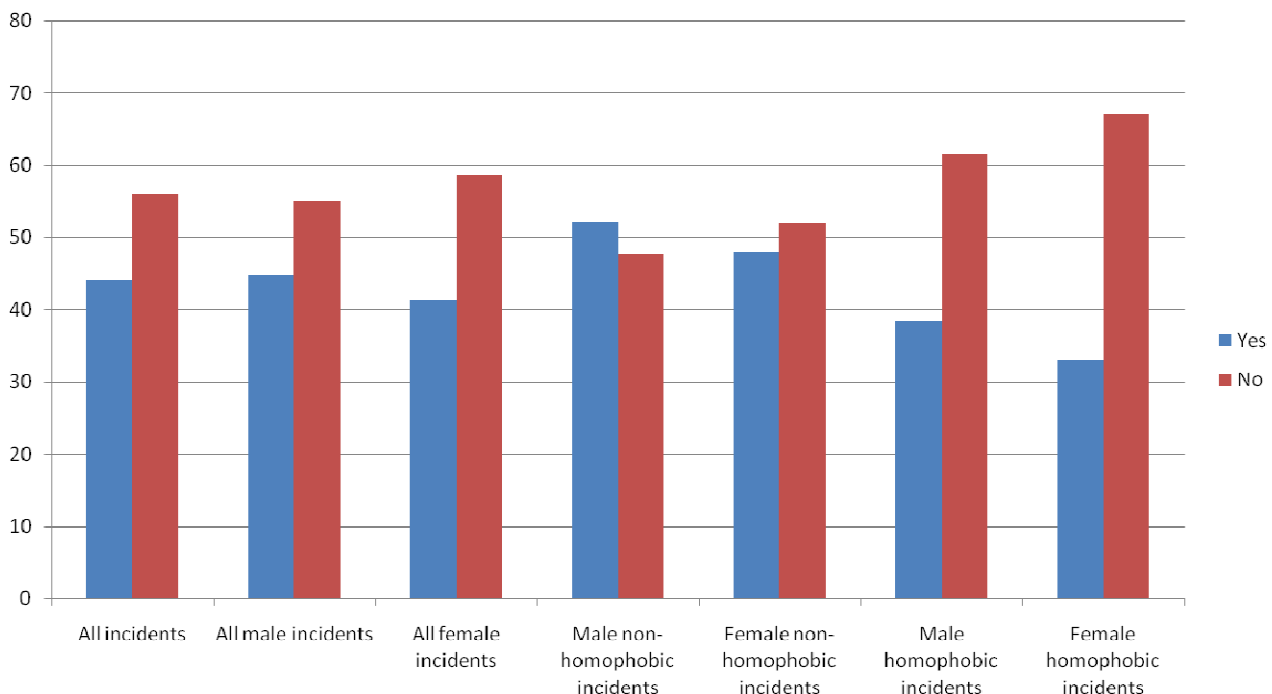


Chart 7:1 Breakdown of male/female reporting of homophobic hate incidents

High levels of under-reporting of homophobic hate crime is recognised by both the PSNI and the Northern Ireland Policing Board. Females are less likely to report incidents to the police than males, regardless of motivation. 50% of non homophobic incidents were reported to the police while only 36% of homophobic incidents were reported. 56% of incidents were never reported regardless of the motivation.

“There is a need to increase awareness among the LGBT community of the need to report incidents, and a need to develop alternative reporting mechanisms rather than having to go through PSNI.”
51-60 year old male, Belfast

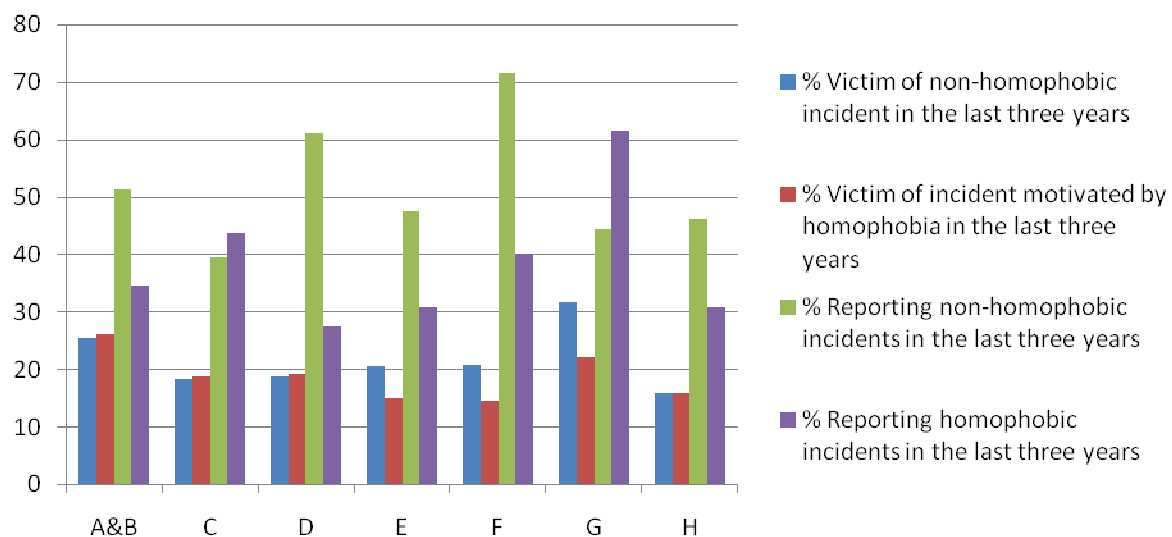


Chart 7:2 Breakdown of reporting of homophobic hate crime by policing district

In six out of eight policing districts there is a lower level of reporting of homophobic incidents than those not motivated by homophobia. G district shows a substantially larger level of reporting of homophobic incidents than any other district. G district has in place a partnership protocol established between PSNI, community groups and statutory agencies. The role of the protocol is to ensure increased levels of homophobic hate crime reporting and to ensure information sharing between agencies.

Why did you not report this incident to the police?

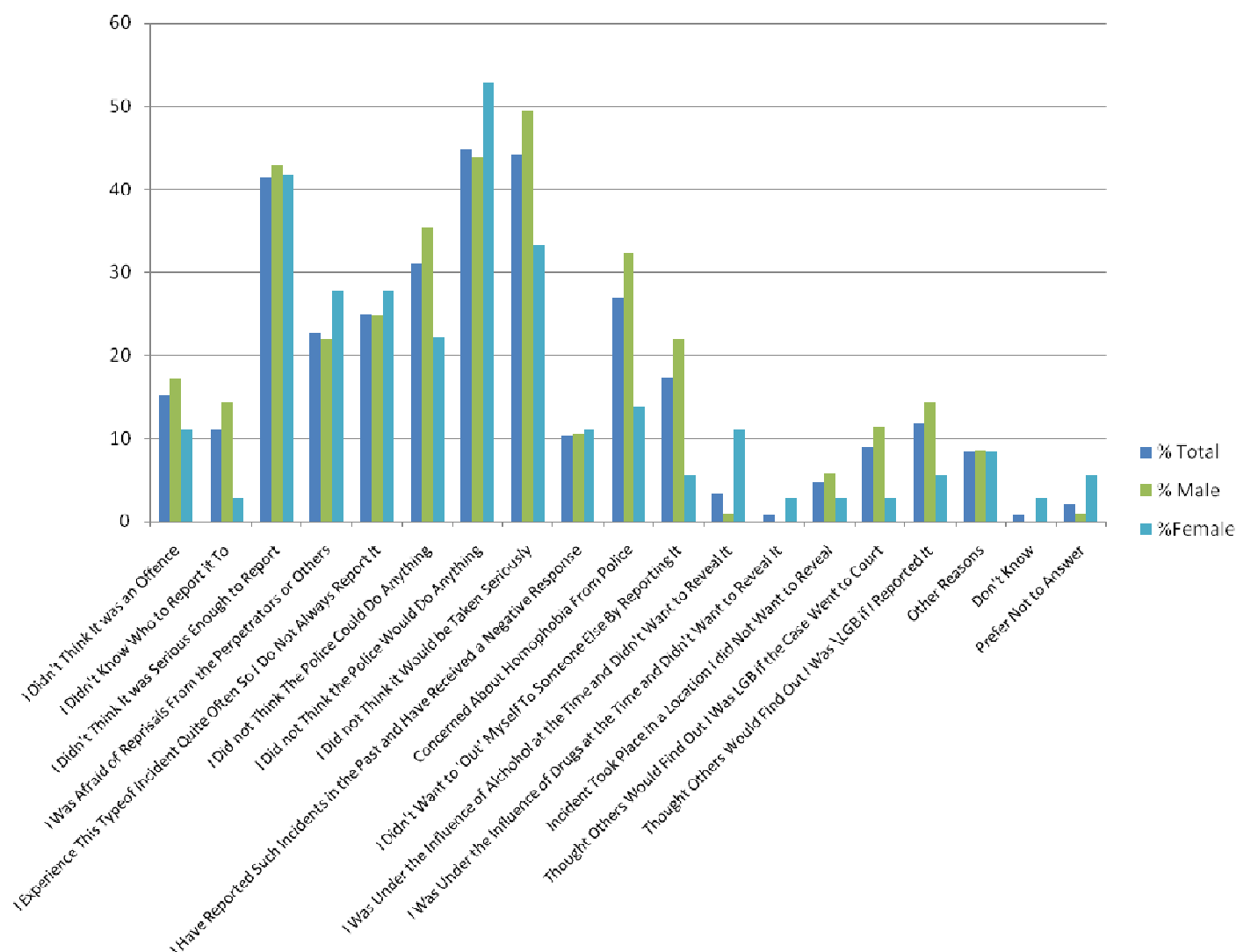


Chart 7:3 Breakdown of reasons for not reporting to the police

The most common reasons for not reporting is fear that the police would not or could not do anything about the incident. A large number of people also felt that the incidents were not serious enough to report. Males show a much higher fear of others finding out about their sexual orientation through reporting incidents than females. Females are more concerned than males about reporting incidents which occurred while they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

"The gay/lesbian and transgender community need to know where to get help. There is not very much information for people that have had problems or are trying to help someone recover from a horrible experience."

16-21 year old female, Belfast

Did you report this incident to a third party organisation?

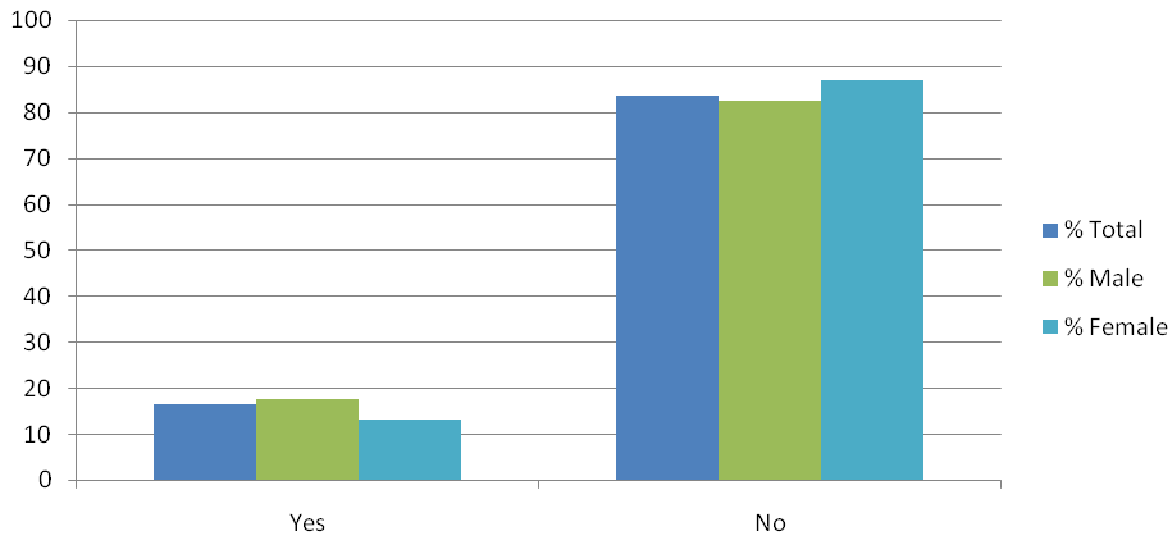


Chart 7:4 Breakdown of reporting to third party organisations

16% of victims of homophobic incidents reported it to third party organisations such as Victim Support and The Rainbow Project. Males are slightly more likely to report to third party organisations than females. 56% of victims of homophobic incidents did not report them to anyone.

9

Experience and Perceptions of Police

SUMMARY

- 30% of respondents had some contact with the PSNI in the last year
- The most common contact was through reporting of crime
- 53% of those who had contact with PSNI in the last year were either very or somewhat satisfied with the service they had received, while 29% were either very or somewhat dissatisfied
- 21% of LGB people have experienced problems with the police at some point, with 30% of problems being experienced in the last year
- The most common problems experienced are unsatisfactory service and/or police being rude or impolite.
- 20% of those experiencing problems made complaints, the majority of which were made with the Police Ombudsman's office or local police stations
- The most common reason for not reporting problems with the police is 'I thought nothing would be done'

Have you had any contact with the PSNI in the last 12 months?

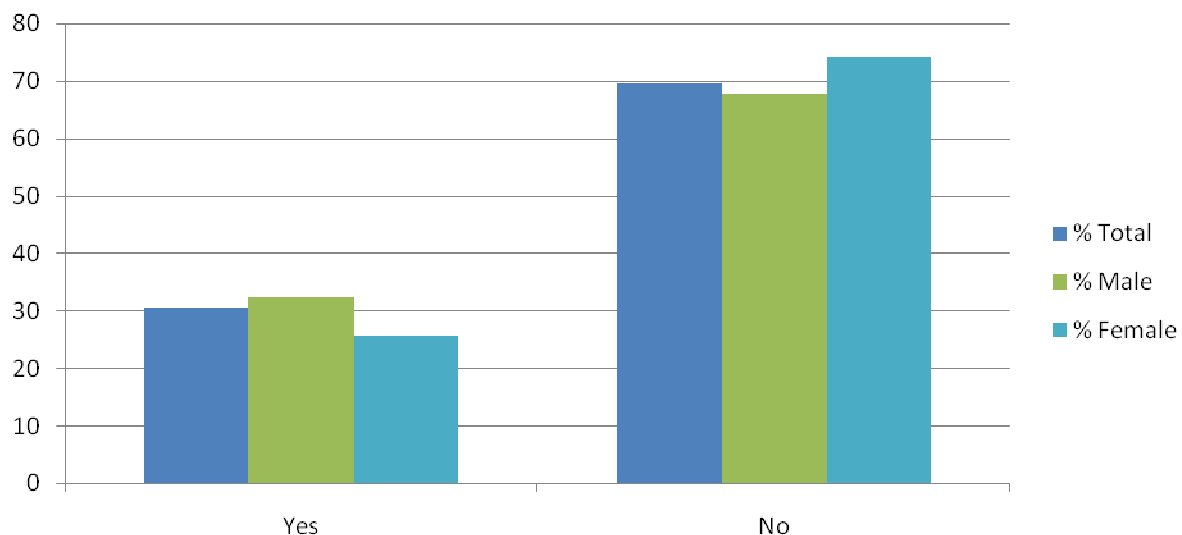


Chart 8:1 Breakdown of those who had contact with PSNI in last 12 months

At 30% a large number of LGB people have had some contact with the PSNI in the last year. Males are more likely to have had some contact with the PSNI than females. One in three of those who had contact with police had been the victim of a homophobic hate crime.

What form did this contact take?

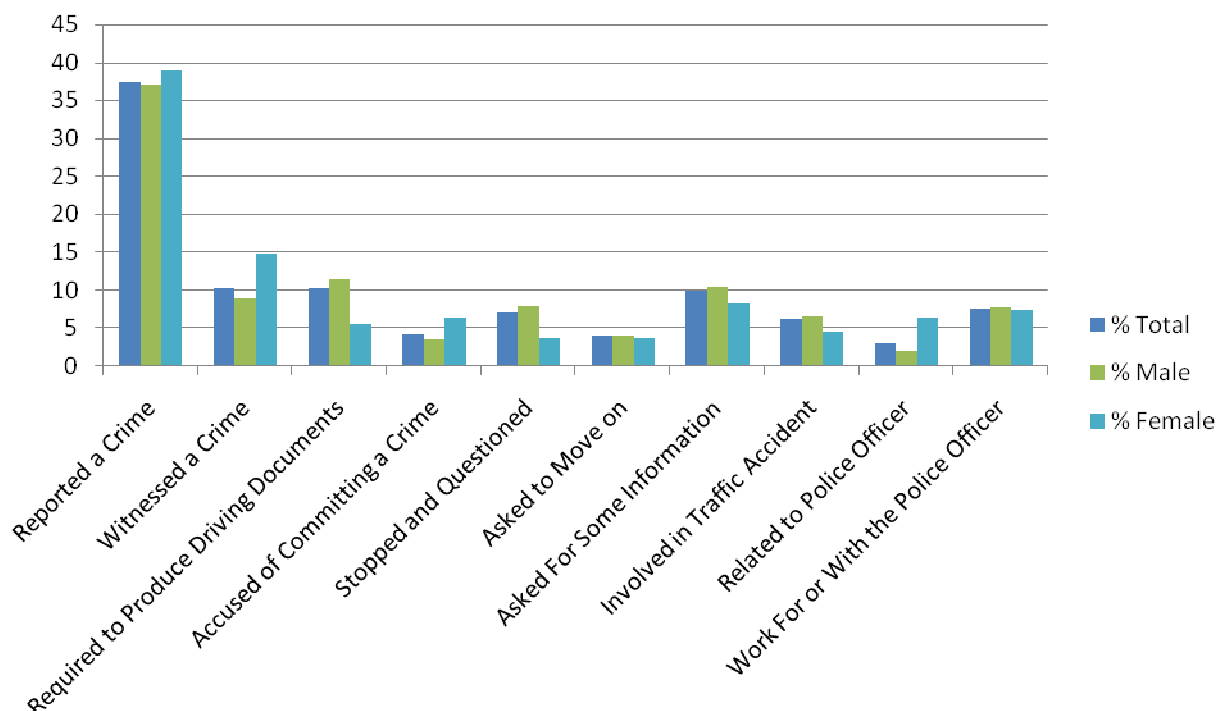


Chart 8:1 Breakdown of forms of contact with the police

The most common reason for contact with police is reporting crime. As with national statistics males are more likely to be involved in road traffic accidents than females. Males are also more likely to be asked to produce driving documents, stopped and questioned and/or asked for information.

Overall, how satisfied were you with the service received from police?

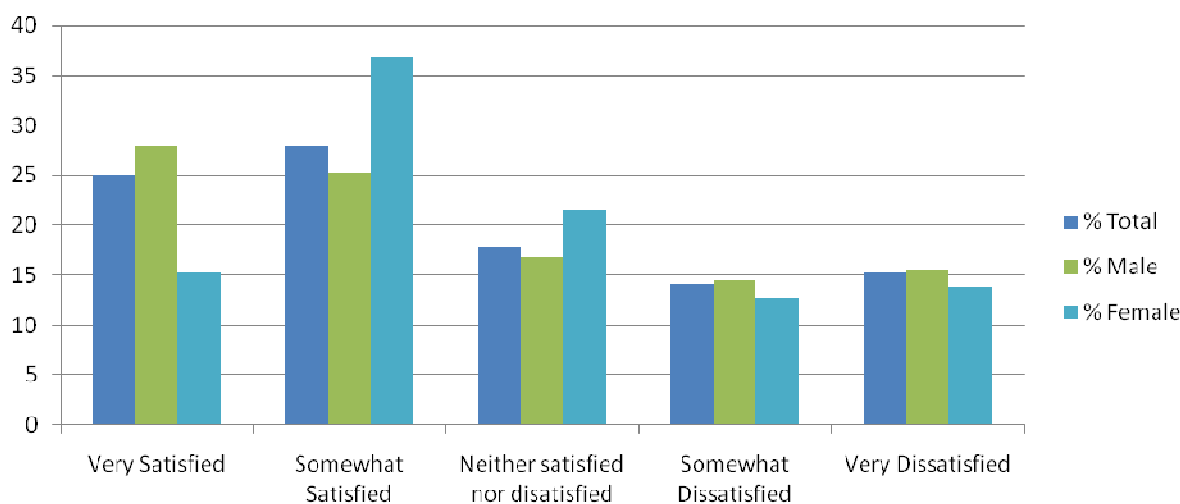


Chart 8:2 Breakdown of level of satisfaction of service received

Of those LGB people who have had contact with the police in the last year, 53% were either very or somewhat satisfied with the service they received. 29% were either somewhat or very dissatisfied with the service they received from police. Males are more likely to be dissatisfied with the service received.

"The PSNI were excellent in helping me with my problem and even returned to me to check up. I am so thankful to them." - 41-50 year old male, Newry and Mourne

"I feel the police did not take me seriously after being beaten up. They didn't ensure that I wasn't injured, go after the person who attacked me or watch video footage to see whether or not I was assaulted" - 22-30 year old female, Belfast

Have you ever experienced any problems with the police?

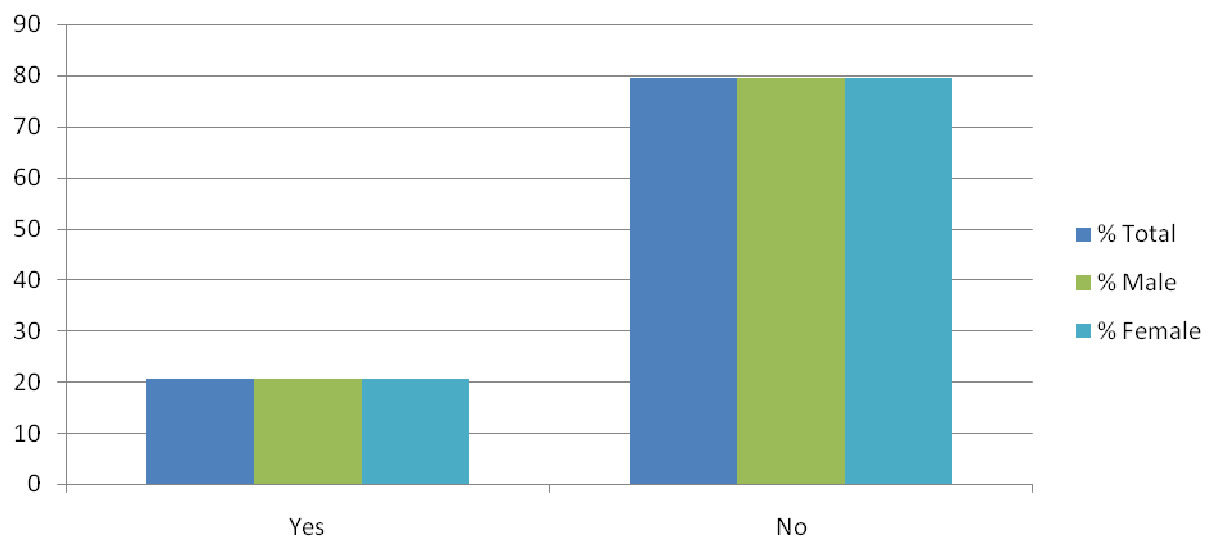


Chart 8:3 Breakdown of those experiencing problems with the police

21% of LGB people have experienced problems with the police at some time.

"I think the PSNI like any organisation will have some very good people who will do their job beyond the call of duty while others will do as little as they can. Unfortunately, in my case, I got the latter." - 41-50 year old female, Newry and Mourne

"I found the PSNI more than helpful on the night of my break in and they came back on several occasions to make sure everything was ok and to get updated on information I was able to give to them." - 51-60 year old female, Belfast

When did you last experience these problems?

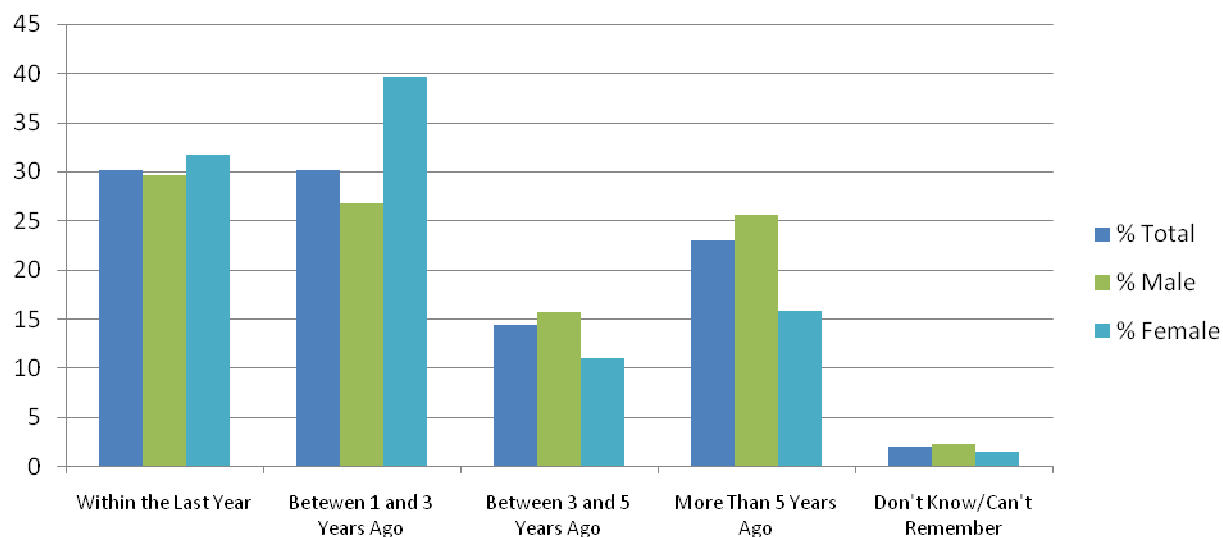


Chart 8:4 Breakdown of time since most recent problems with the police

30% of those experiencing problems with the police experienced them in the last year and 30% experienced them between one and three years ago. Of those who have experienced problems, 57% of males and 70% of females experienced them in the last three years.

Which of the following, if any, have you experienced?

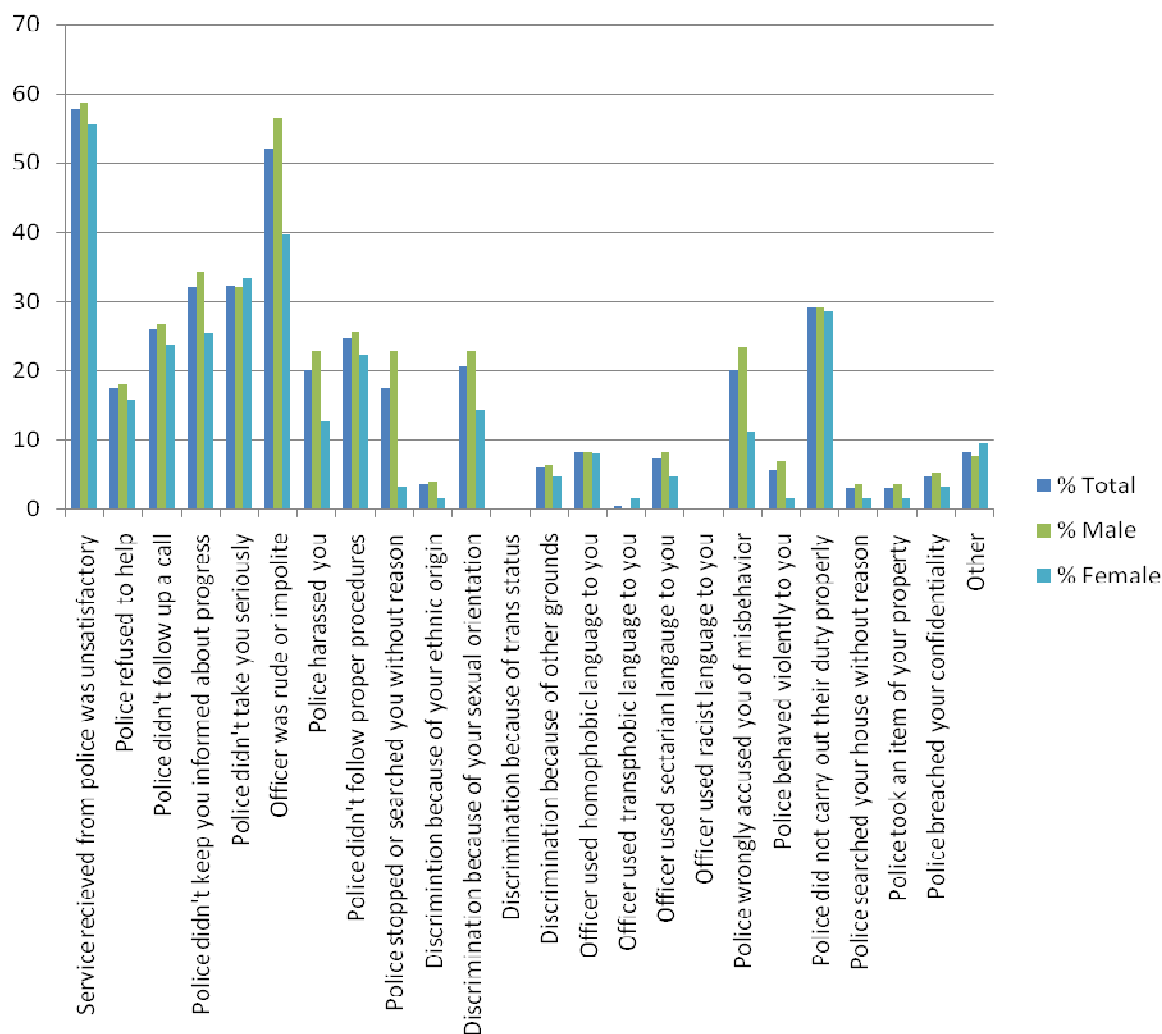


Chart 8:5 Breakdown of problems experience with police

The most common complaint for both males and females is that an unsatisfactory service was received from police, while males at 56% are more likely to suffer rude or impolite behaviour than females at 40%. Males are also more likely than females to experience harassment, stop and search, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and being wrongly accused of misbehaviour.

Did you make a complaint about any of these issues?

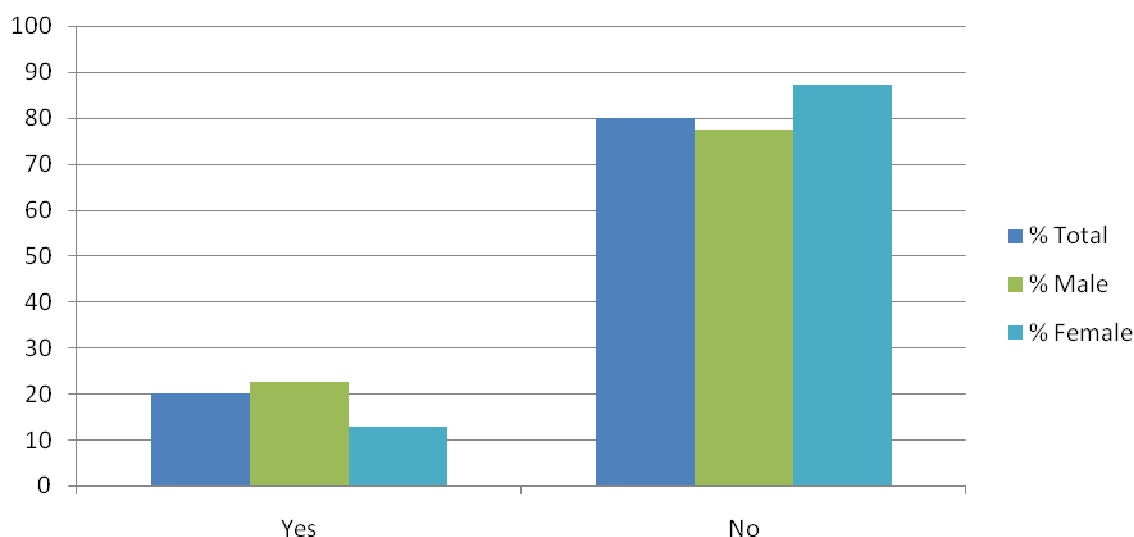


Chart 8:6 Breakdown of complaints made against police

Overall 20% of those who experienced problems with the police reported the incident. Males are much more likely to report negative experiences of policing than females.

Who did you go to first about your complaint?

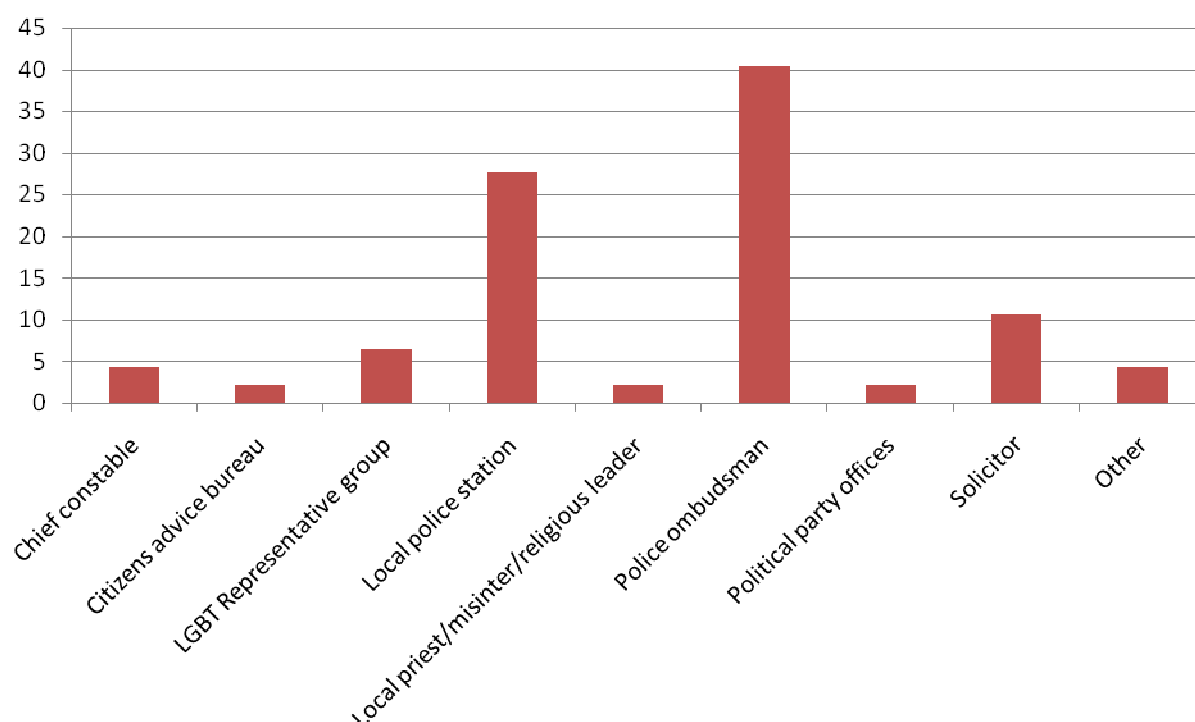


Chart 8:7 Breakdown of organisations which with complaints were lodged

Of those who made complaints about negative experiences, the vast majority approached the Police Ombudsman's office or local police stations. Other groups, such as LGBT representative groups and

solicitors have been contacted as a first port of call by complainants.

If you have had problems with the police but chose not to complain, why didn't you do so?

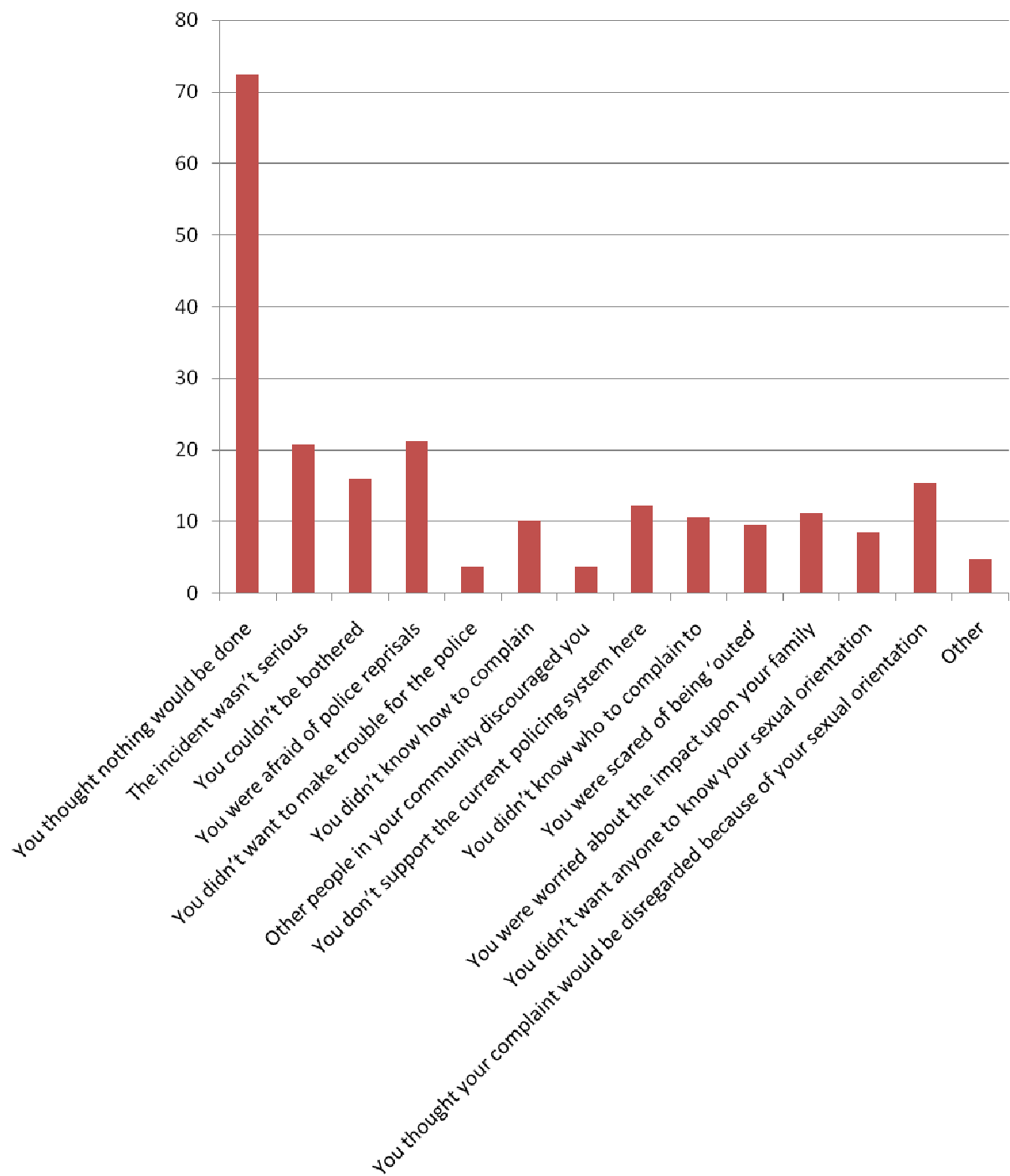


Chart 8:8 Breakdown of reasons for not making complaints about police

Of those LGB people who had negative experiences of policing and did not make a complaint, the majority did not do so because they thought nothing would be done. Other concerns were listed, such as fear of police reprisals and fears that complaints would be disregarded because of their sexual orientation.

Overall do you think the PSNI....

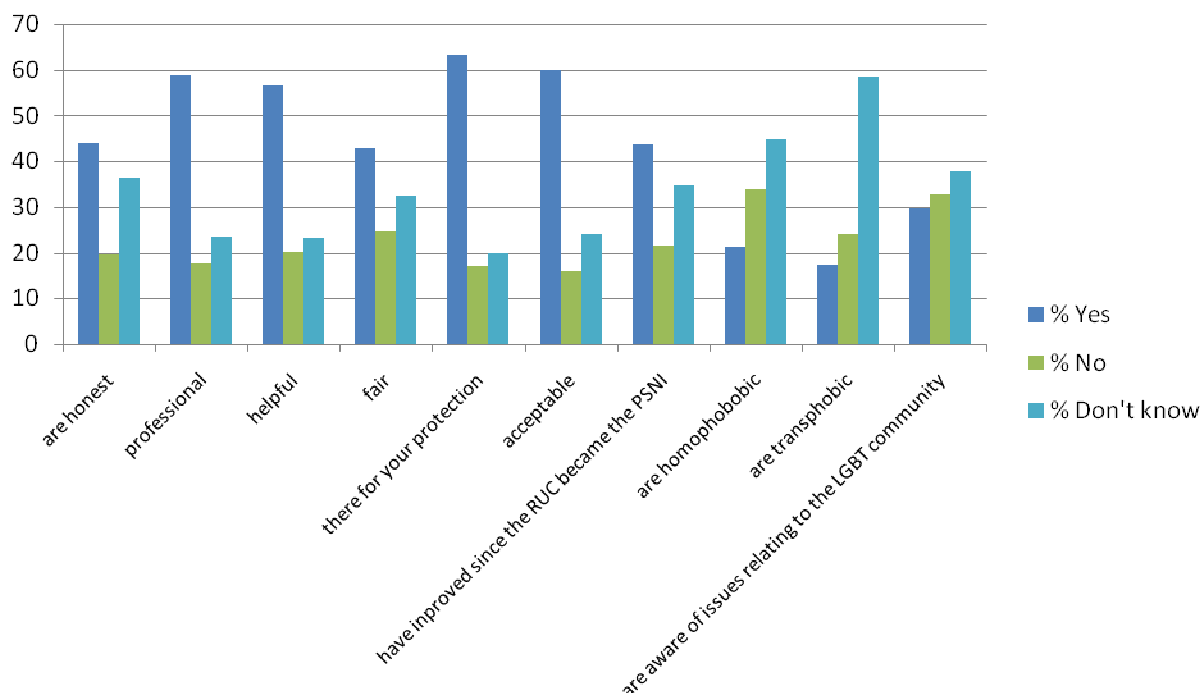


Chart 8:9 Respondents perceptions of PSNI

Over half of LGB people believe that the police are professional, helpful and there for their protection. A large number of people stated that they don't know much about the PSNI and or have no formed opinion on them. The majority of these respondents are people who have had no contact with PSNI. 21% of LGB people feel that the PSNI are homophobic and 17% feel they are transphobic. This is down substantially from the 2006 ICR report 'Policing, Accountability and the LGB Community' which reported 38% of LGB people agreeing that the police were homophobic and 30% agreeing that the police were transphobic. Also 30% of LGB people feel that the police are aware of LGB issues which, again, is up substantially from the stated previous research which reported only 20% of LGB people agreeing that police were aware of issues relating to the LGB community.

43% of LGB people believe that the PSNI are fair, 25% believe they are not fair and 32% don't know. In the Northern Ireland Policing Board September 2008 Omnibus Survey when asked 'How satisfied are you that the PSNI treat members of the public fairly in Northern Ireland as a whole?', 70% were either very or fairly satisfied, while 11% were very or fairly dissatisfied. 2% of people stated that they did not know. It is difficult to draw a direct comparison due to the difference in the style of questions and answers however there would appear to be a much more positive response from the general public than from LGB people.

"There are a growing number of grass roots street patrol police officers who know about LGBT issues, however, many seem unwilling to treat hate crimes as specific problems."

31-40 year old male, Belfast

"The Police are acceptable and here to protect us, but they still have a lot of work to do to be fully professional and fair towards the gay community."

41-50 year old male, Craigavon

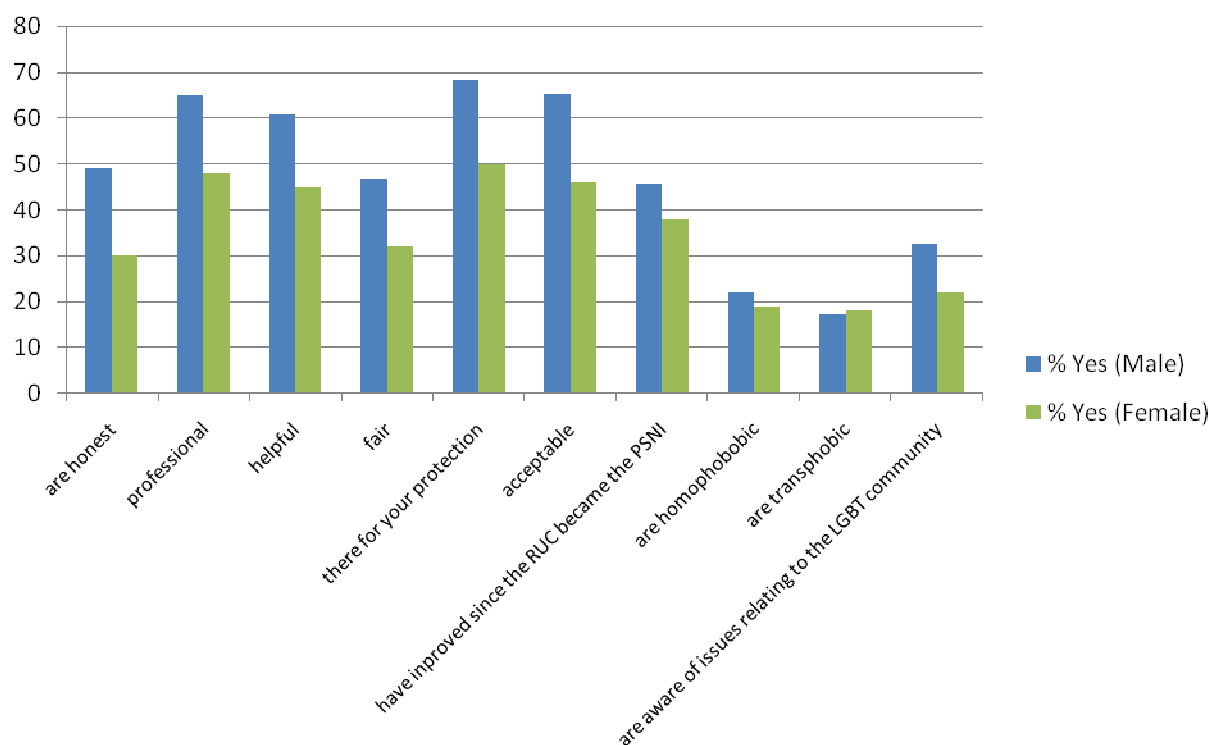


Chart 8:10 Breakdown of male and female positive perceptions of PSNI

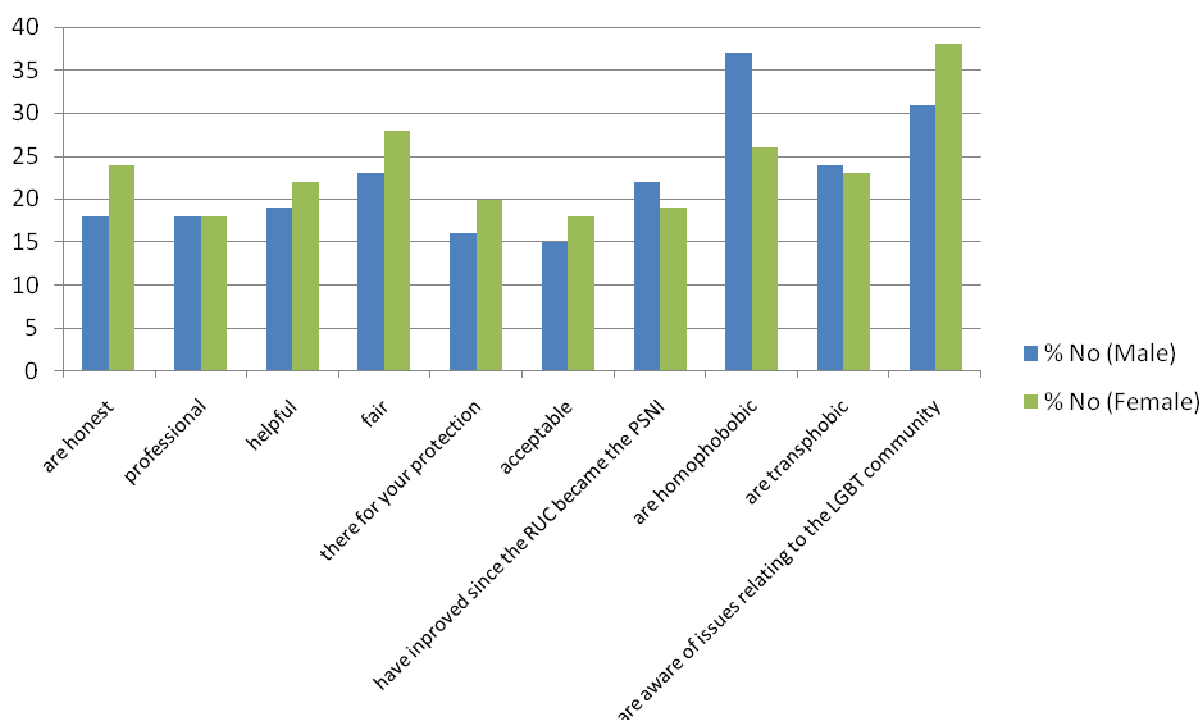


Chart 8:10 Breakdown of male and female negative perceptions of PSNI

Male respondents are much more likely to have a positive view of policing than females. However, males are more likely to view the PSNI as homophobic than females. Males are more likely to have formulated views on police than females which is not surprising as they are more likely to encounter PSNI.

10

Focus Groups

Focus group meetings were held with a number of organisations and individuals from throughout Northern Ireland. The focus of the meetings was to get a more in-depth perspective of LGB people's experiences and perceptions of policing and homophobic hate crime. One on one interviews were also held with PSNI Minority Liaison Officers and Hate Crime Investigators, as these are the officers dealing directly with victims of homophobic hate incidents.

The PSNI and Northern Ireland Policing Board have both established groups with the aim of supporting and developing the work of these bodies in relation to minority groups. A joint meeting between the PSNI Independent Advisory Group and the Northern Ireland Policing Board LGB Reference Group to learn more about the work of these bodies and their feelings and perceptions of these issues and possible actions. A discussion also took place with the 'Foyle Protocol Committee' to discuss the effectiveness and future of the protocol.

Focus group meetings took place with 3 regional LGBT groups; Gay and Lesbian Across Down (GLAD), Banbridge and Craigavon LGBT and Strabane and Lifford LGBT. Open focus groups were also held in Belfast and Foyle.

Reporting

Throughout the focus group events there was a mixture of responses as to whether or not individuals would report homophobic incidents to police. Some people said that they would have no problem reporting incidents to the police while others said that under no circumstances would they do so. When asked about how they would report homophobic incidents to the police, most said they would phone their local police station and seemed unaware of other options which may be available to them. Concerns were raised about the amount of apathy within the LGB community. Many believed that verbal insults were just a way of life and not something to be taken seriously or reported to the police.

PSNI Hate Incident Minority Liaison Officers (HIMLO's) indicated their frustration at the low level of reporting of homophobic hate crime. One HIMLO, who represents a rural district, referred to experiences of reluctance following initial reporting of incidents. People who made initial reports were reluctant to continue through the criminal justice system and in some cases did not return calls or other correspondence. The officer felt this reluctance was due to the fact that there was no LGBT support infrastructure in the local area. Another HIMLO representing an urban district reported a willingness to continue through with complaints and felt that the support received by a local LGBT organisation played a significant part in this.

Fear of being 'outed'

A small number of people raised personal concerns about reporting to the PSNI through fear of being 'outed'. One individual raised concerns about their parent being a member of the PSNI and that other

officers might make them aware of his sexual orientation. A large number of people, although not having personal concerns, accepted that many LGB people have concerns about reporting and police confidentiality.

Online Reporting

Concerns were raised on two occasions about online reporting. Few LGB people seemed to be aware that online reporting was available. Questions were raised about how online reporting had been advertised, where reports would go and how they would be, or if they would be, followed up. Those who initially raised the issue of online reporting were unsure of why the PSNI allowed anonymous reporting of incidents online, and questioned as to whether or not this would create a case file or be recorded as an incident. People agreed that online reporting could be an effective tool; however clarification needed to be sought as to what PSNI policy on online reports actually was.

One HIMLO stated that they were not aware of the online reporting mechanism and others while being aware had never received an online report. All the HIMLO's who were interviewed were unaware of any protocol which may or may not exist with reference to online reporting.

Third Party Reporting

Third party reporting through LGB groups and other organisations such as Victim Support was identified as an effective way to get LGB people to report homophobic incidents; however it was noted that this must be done in partnership with PSNI and required a two tier approach. This facility, which is already available through a number of organisations, such as The Rainbow Project, Cara Friend and GLAD, has proved successful in increasing reporting however this system needs to be promoted effectively throughout the LGB community.

HIMLO's who are currently working in partnership with LGBT groups indicated that this approach was effective and led to increased reporting. Other HIMLO who do not have access to such resources indicated a difficulty in gaining the support and trust of LGBT people. One HIMLO said they felt 'powerless' when dealing with homophobic hate incidents as they have nowhere to direct people for support in comparison to other types of hate incidents.

Police Dealing with Incidents

Some people raised concerns about why they should report incidents to the PSNI, backed up with concerns that the police would/could not do anything about it. Some of those who had reported incidents to the PSNI suggested that officers did not follow protocol, did not make contact with individuals, refused to take action and made homophobic comments. In all cases where concerns were raised, individuals had not had contact with the local HIMLO.

One HIMLO referred to difficulties currently faced within the PSNI due to the strain put on response officers. They stated that as HIMLO are more exposed to issues affecting minority groups, they are more likely to identify incidents as having a hate motivation. Another HIMLO referred to reluctance to record incidents as being hate motivated. Both HIMLO's agreed that incidents not being recorded as being motivated by hate can lead to a lower level of service being received by complainants. HIMLO's have the ability to spend dedicated time with victims, unlike response officers.

Hate Incident Minority Liaison Officers (HIMLO's)

Most people were aware of the role of the HIMLO's and in many cases were aware of who their local HIMLO was. The majority of people who were members of LGBT groups have had some interaction with their local HIMLO and in many cases on an ongoing partnership basis. Special reference was also given to the Hate Crime Investigators, based in South Belfast, who have ongoing interaction with local LGB groups and have developed effective working relationships with them. It was noted by some people that while they had received a low level of service either from response officers or over the telephone, that the service had increased substantially once their local HIMLO had gotten involved. Concern was, however, raised about knowledge of HIMLO outside of LGB groups. It was also noted that with low numbers of HIMLO, and since this role is an addition to their daily duties, that HIMLO can often be difficult to contact.

Some HIMLO felt that they had enough time to deliver an effective service. Due to the low levels of reporting of hate incidents, it was felt by some that the creation of further specialist posts within the PSNI would be ineffective and could lead to a reduction in resources available for response. Others felt that in order to build effective relationships with minority groups, along with promotion of role and service available, that a more dedicated post, such as the Hate Crime Investigators, could be a viable option. One HIMLO representing a rural district indicated that one dedicated post would not be effective due to geography. They felt that if such a post was introduced it would require at least two staff representing different areas of the district. The same HIMLO also indicated that the introduction of such a post would help in making this role more proactive than reactive.

Training

A key theme raised at all focus group meetings was the training received by serving PSNI officers and civilian staff. Respondents seemed confident that new recruits to the PSNI had received a high level of training but concerns were raised about the training received by long serving officers, especially those who began service in the RUC. It was felt that specific training was required for those who carry out front line duties, such as response officers and civilian staff who carry out reception duties at police stations and those involved in call handling. It was felt that if the initial experience of the PSNI for victims was negative that, regardless of any further engagement, victims would be unlikely to continue through the criminal justice system.

Concerns about the training received by front line officers and staff was echoed by some HIMLO's. Some HIMLO's also indicated that although they were referred to as being specifically trained in dealing with incidents motivated by hate, that they had received no specific training on their role. A number of HIMLO's referred to regular conferences which were organised by PSNI Community Safety Branch. They felt that these conferences, while being effective in building relationships and networking with minority groups, were not an alternative to training.

Interaction and Partnership

As previously referred to there are a number of partnerships and structures for interaction between the PSNI and LGB people and organisations. The LGBT Independent Advisory Group to the PSNI acts as the central organisation with responsibility for advice and support on issues relating to LGBT community. All HIMLO's were aware of the existence of the IAG however few have had any interaction with them. Other partnerships exist in some districts; however no consistent structure exists throughout Northern Ireland. The most formal of these partnerships exists in G district through 'A Partnership Protocol' aka 'The Foyle Protocol'.

This document sets out clear protocols to be followed following a homophobic or racist incident. Other issues such as such as suicide and domestic violence, which may have been linked to issues of sexuality or sexual orientation, are dealt with through the protocol. The protocol also has agreed actions to be taken by organisations or individuals in order to prevent, highlight and increase the reporting of incidents of hate. HIMLO's indicated an interest in seeing the extension of this protocol to the other 7 PSNI districts as an effective way of mainstreaming partnerships and preventing and dealing with incidents of hate and other key issues such as domestic violence and suicide.

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Conclusion and Recommendations

The PSNI have made substantial progress in gaining the co-operation of the LGB community and improving perceptions of the PSNI. However, there are still high levels of homophobic hate crime throughout Northern Ireland and low levels of reporting. Some innovative new systems and structures have been implemented to improve reporting but these don't seem to have been followed through with pro-active promotion outside of areas showing already high reporting.

Recommendation 1. Encourage lesbian, gay and bisexual people to report hate incidents.

- The PSNI should ensure that all LGB people have a clear understanding that they can report homophobic hate incidents both directly and indirectly to the police through promotion of online and third party reporting, and partnership with LGB groups and individuals.
- Police, working in partnership with other agencies, should initiate campaigns to educate all members of the public as to what constitutes a homophobic hate crime, why they should be reported and what the police can and will do to tackle them.

The introduction of, and increase in numbers of, Hate Incident Minority Liaison Officers is testament to the PSNI's commitment to tackling the issue of hate crime. However, there are still concerns about how effective the PSNI's internal policies and mechanisms are in ensuring the recording and management of such incidents. There are also concerns that protocol in dealing with victims of hate incidents is not being adhered to.

Recommendation 2. Improve recording mechanisms of hate incidents and ensure protocols are adhered to following reporting.

- All serving PSNI officers and civilian staff with front line responsibility should be provided with an up to date copy of PSNI Policy Directive 02/06 'Police Response to Hate Incidents' and advised of the current contact details of serving Hate Incident Minority Liaison Officers.
- A policy for dealing with online reports of hate incidents should be produced in consultation with the LGBT Independent Advisory Group to the PSNI.
- Case files should be monitored on a regular basis for possible hate motivation. Those officers not recording hate incidents appropriately should be made aware of this. Should this continue to happen formal action should be considered.

Although effective training is provided to PSNI recruits, and has been for a number of years, there are concerns about the training provided to long serving officers and civilian staff with front line duties. Training is required to provide them with the knowledge to recognise incidents of hate and have the knowledge to deal with victims from a minority background with compassion and understanding.

Recommendation 3. Ensure all serving officers and relevant civilian staff, have the expertise to recognise and deal with incidents of hate and minority groups

- An audit should be carried out to establish the training received by all serving PSNI officers and relevant civilian staff. It should be ensured that all relevant officers and staff have received the necessary training, to understand and identify incidents of hate and to deal those from a minority background with compassion and understanding.
- A training programme along with key role specifications should be introduced for all serving and future Hate Incident Minority Liaison Officer and Hate Crime Investigators.
- A review should be carried out into the role of Hate Incident Minority Liaison Officers against the role of Hate Crime Investigators to establish the most effective role in preventing, identifying and dealing with incidents of hate.
- A handbook advising officers and relevant staff on dealing members of the LGB community should be produced by the PSNI in partnership with LGBT Independent Advisory Group to the PSNI and distributed accordingly.

The PSNI have introduced some effective new initiatives and partnerships. Effective partnerships, judged on the perception of HIMLO's and LGBT groups, have been established in a number of areas. Where these partnerships exist we see higher levels of reporting of homophobic hate incidents. However there is no consistency throughout all districts in Northern Ireland. The most effective partnership, measured by levels of reporting, has been 'A Partnership Protocol' aka 'The Foyle Protocol'.

Recommendation 4. A hate crime partnership, incorporating hate incidents against minority groups should be established in each policing district.

- Using the structure of 'A Partnership Protocol' aka 'The Foyle Protocol' a protocol should be developed incorporating key issues as identified by minority groups, PSNI and other relevant agencies in each policing district throughout Northern Ireland.
- An action plan stating key activities and responsibilities should be developed, incorporating key issues as identified by minority groups, PSNI and other relevant agencies in each policing district throughout Northern Ireland.

