



# LGBT Youth Borders Consultation Results: Young people's report

## Introduction

In March and April 2007, LGBT Youth Borders consulted with young people to find out what they know and what they think about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. We know that a lot of LGBT young people are bullied and discriminated against because of their sexuality or gender identity, but we also wanted to know what the general population of young people thought about issues like homophobic bullying.

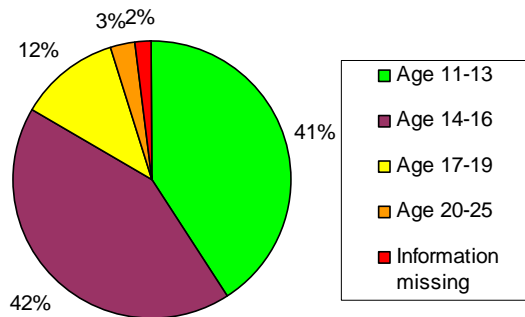
All this information was collected from young people from the Scottish Borders, so the results also showed us what you think life might be like to be a young LGBT person growing up in the area.

## How we did the consultation and who took part

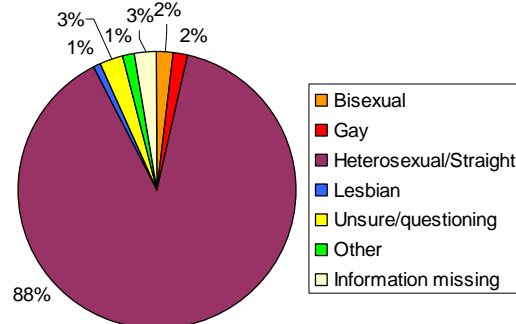
513 young people aged 11-25 filled in paper and online questionnaires, and we also gathered the thoughts and opinions of young people aged 8-25 during outreach events.

Questionnaire demographics:

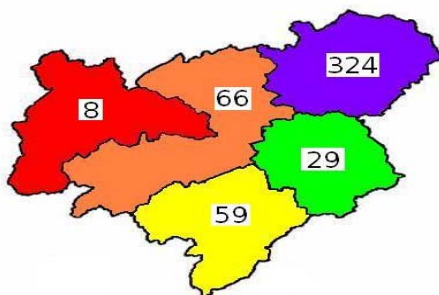
### Age



### Sexual orientation



### Location



Berwickshire: 324  
 Eildon: 66  
 Teviot&Liddesdale: 59  
 Cheviot: 29  
 Tweeddale: 8  
 Information missing: 27



## Results

- At least 86% of young people had heard the words lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and homophobia before. 99% had heard the word gay.
- 74% of young people said that they had heard about LGBT people at school. For a limited number of young people in the Borders this will have been through a formal educational input, but for the majority, LGBT people are more likely to be talked about with friends at school and heard about outside the classroom setting.
- 53% of young people said that they had heard mainly negative things about LGBT people.
- 13% of young people said they wanted to find out about LGBT issues at school. This was top of the list ahead of sources like friends, family and the internet.
- 67% of young people said they knew someone who was L, G, B or T.
- When asked what they would do if a friend or family member told them they were L,G, B or T, some young people were very supportive:

“I would stand by them because it doesn’t matter if they are, they are still the same person they were before” female, 17

Some gave a negative response:

“Be very upset I don’t think it is right!! I won’t like them anymore” female, 14

- From a choice of horrible, bad, okay, good or great, 58% of young people said that school would be horrible or bad for LGBT young people. When asked why they thought this some of their comments included:

“Some people may choose not to be friends with them” male, 17

“...’gay’ is used as an insult” female, 16

“because they get bullied, leftout, beaten up” female, 14

- Only 38% of young people said they would do something if they saw an LGBT young person being bullied. Some young people said they would be worried about being bullied themselves if they did anything to help:

“If I stood up for them the bullies might come after me” male, 13



Some were also worried about being labelled as LGBT themselves if they helped:

“...obviously I’d feel bad for the person and want to help but then the bullies may turn on me and call me a lesbian when I’m not, just because I was helping someone who is an LGBT” female, 14

- 22% of young people said they would go to a family member for help and support if they or a friend were L, G, B or T, with other young people saying they would get help and support from sources like friends, school staff or a medical professional like their school nurse. However, 21% of young people did not know where they would get help and support from.

## Conclusions

Some young people were very positive about LGBT issues and LGBT people, and many said they would get involved in situations like finding help and support for a friend, or stopping the homophobic bullying of an LGBT young person.

However, the results also showed that life in the Borders might not always be good for LGBT young people. The majority of young people had heard mainly negative messages about LGBT people, and the majority also thought that school would be horrible or bad for an LGBT young person. Lots of young people didn’t know where they would access support if they needed it.

Therefore there is still a lot of work to be done in schools and youth settings to raise awareness of LGBT Youth Borders’ services and to share positive messages about LGBT people. We’d also like to talk to more young people about issues like homophobia to ensure that schools and youth settings are safe places for LGBT young people to go to.

**Thank-you** to all the young people who took part in the consultation, your answers are very important to the work that we will do in the Borders in the future.

If you would like more information about the consultation or the results, please contact Christine Hamilton at: [borders@lgbtyouth.org.uk](mailto:borders@lgbtyouth.org.uk) or 07931 458 155