



York LGBT Forum

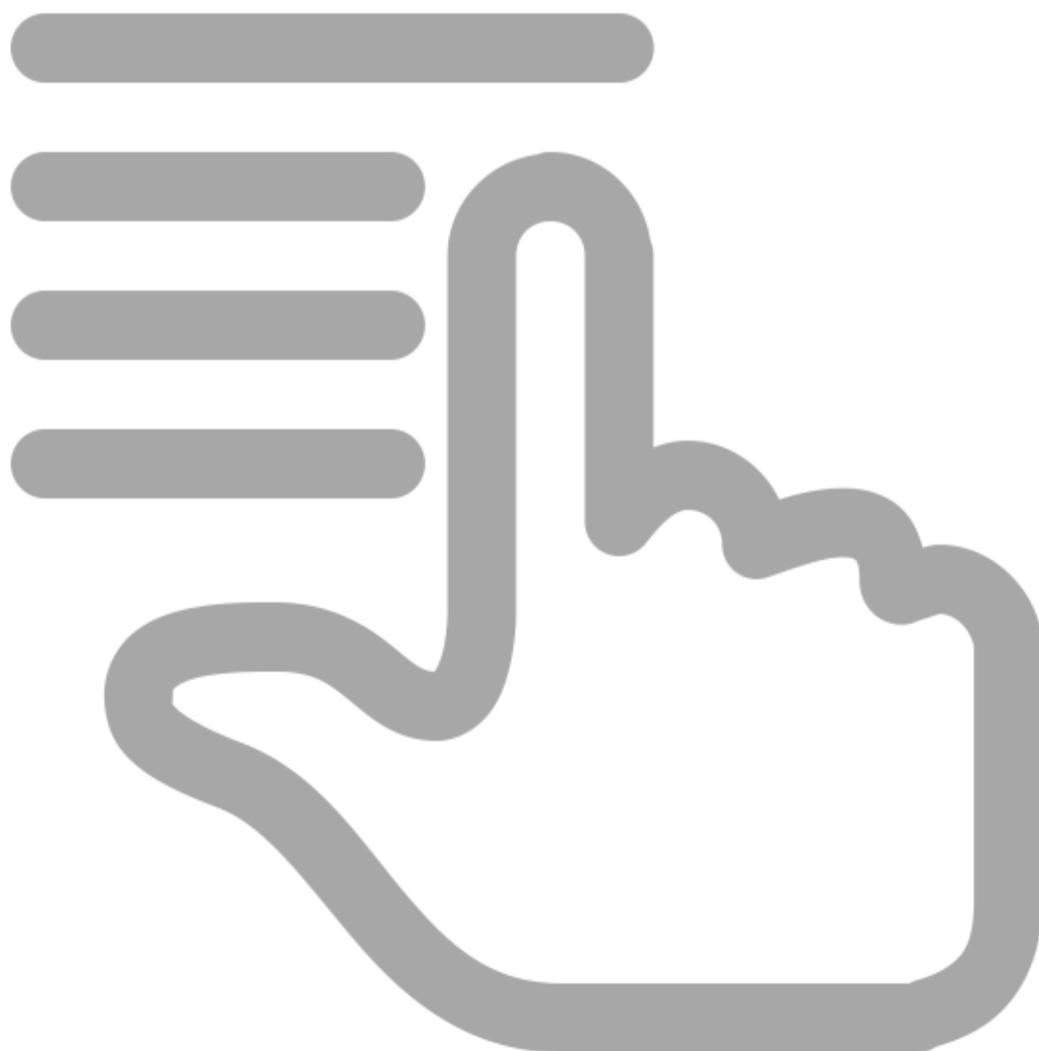
Research into the experiences of
LGBT people living in York

October 2018



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Introduction

Although social attitudes towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people have undoubtedly changed for the better in recent years, many individuals continue to face hate crime, discrimination and social exclusion because of their sexuality and gender identity.

Much of this is reflected in an increasing body of national research, which indicates a higher prevalence of health issues such as eating disorders, recreational drug use, depression and self harm within the LGBT community.

In August 2018 York LGBT Forum commissioned research to develop a better understanding of the experiences of LGBT people at a local level, and to find out if the respondents thought that a dedicated LGBT community resource centre would be a useful addition to the city.

The research was funded by Comic Relief and undertaken by Outsource VCSE Support CIC, which is an independent Community Interest Company.

This report provides a summary of the key findings from the survey covering a range of issues from hate crime to the perceived health inequalities encountered by LGBT people in York.

A separate study exploring the feasibility of a resource centre is currently being produced on behalf of York LGBT Forum.

demographics



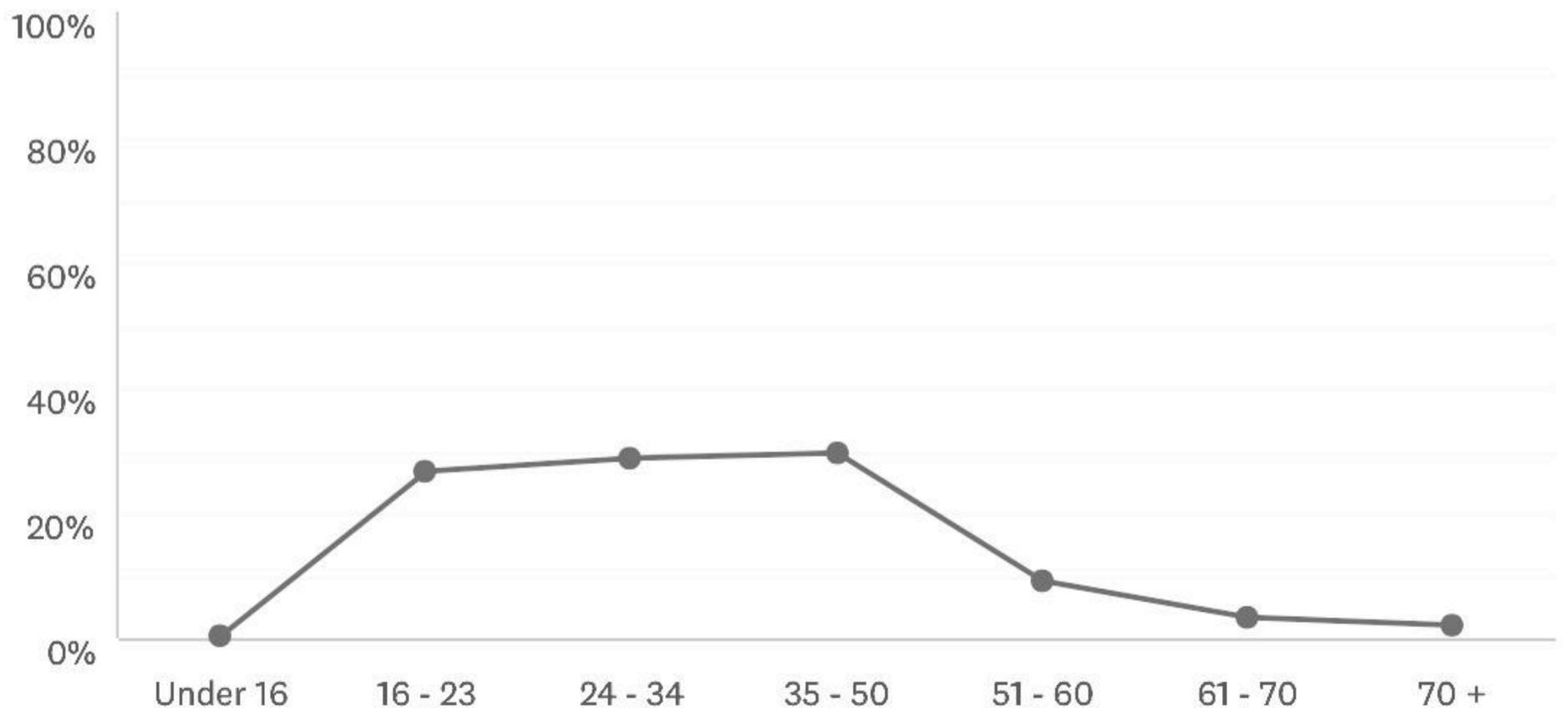
Geography

80% of the respondents were York residents, with a further 11% living in the surrounding area.

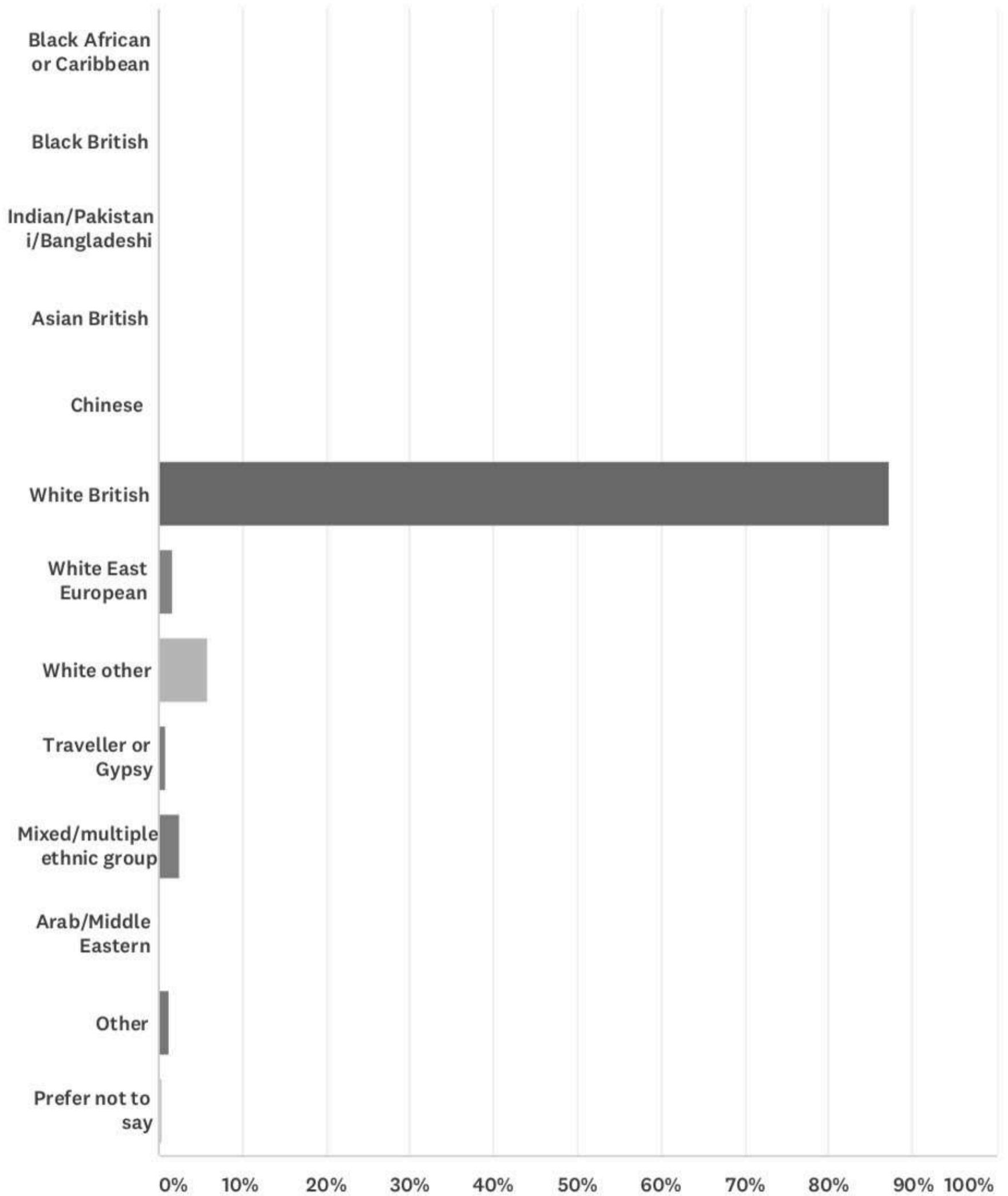
The remaining participants either worked in the city or reportedly visited York on a regular basis.

Age Range

Only 1% of those who completed the survey were under the age of 16. The majority were between the ages of 16-50 and 5% were aged 70 or above.



Ethnicity





Disability

23% of the respondents reported that they were disabled or had a long term health condition.

Gender and Gender Identity

52% of those who responded to the survey were women, 38% were men and 3% intersex/agender.

7% were non-binary (i.e. they identified as having a gender that was neither exclusively that of a man nor a woman).

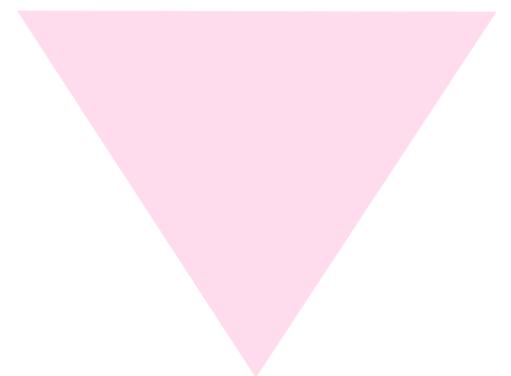
Of the total sample, 9% of respondents identified as transgender (or trans). 5% were trans women (i.e. they had transitioned from a man to a woman at some point in their life) and 4% were trans men.

Younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to identify as non-binary.

Sexual Orientation

The majority of respondents (54%) identified as gay or lesbian and a quarter (25%) identified as bisexual. A smaller number described themselves as pansexual (5%), asexual (4%) and queer (7%).

These figures varied by age, but younger respondents under the age of 23 were more likely to self describe their sexuality.



relationships

National Census Data (2011)¹ indicates that the proportion of married people in York is 44%, which is below the national average. Our survey found that only 21% of the respondents were married or in a civil partnership.

A small proportion (3%) self defined as polyamorous, and 37% of the total sample were either in a relationship or living with a partner.

The remaining 39% indicated that they were either single, divorced, separated, or widowed.

A large number of York citizens do not have children (6.9%), which is the highest in the region. Unsurprisingly, our survey revealed that the percentage of local LGBT residents without children is significant (84%).

Public services, especially in health and social care, generally assume that there are adult children around to help fill the gaps in service provision as people become older. Evidence by Ageing Without Children (AWOC)² suggests that 92% of all unpaid care is provided by family members.

AWOC defines 'people ageing without children' as those over the age of 50 who have no children in their lives, either because they have never been parents or because their children have died, are estranged from them, or are living far away.

Our research found that 69% of respondents over the age of 50 do not have any children.

employment

Many LGBT people continue to face discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

The results of our research revealed that 28% of local LGBT people do not feel comfortable enough to disclose their identity at work, and often those who do are subject to discrimination and abuse, with incidents ranging from offensive language from customers to being outed without their consent.

34% of respondents also reported that they have experienced some form of discrimination because of their sexuality or gender identity at work or where they learn.

“At school there was constant homophobic bullying.”

“My boss has made homophobic comments, which I feel unable to report as we're currently going through a merger so my job relies on his good favour.”

“Outed by a client in a derogatory manner on social media and employers refused to support me in tackling this.”

“I was excluded from social activities by colleagues.”

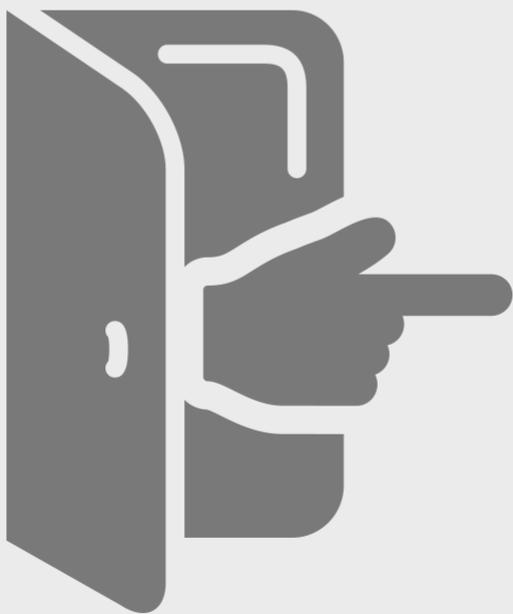
Earnings

Data from HMRC³ shows that just under a fifth (19.8%) of UK taxpayers earn between £15,000 and £20,000 compared to 15.2% of the respondents.

Nationally 25.2% of the population earn between £20,000 and £30,000 compared to 17.8% of local LGBT residents.

Those earning between £30,000 and £50,000 were on a par with HMRC figures but only 2.5% earned over £70,000 compared to 5% among the general population.

34% of respondents earned £15,000 or under.



Unemployment

12.5% of trans respondents reported that they were unemployed compared to 5.2% of the total sample.

The aggregate number of unemployed LGBT respondents is slightly higher than general figures published by the Office for National Statistics⁴, which indicate that 4.2% of the total UK population is unemployed, with local datasets⁵ suggesting that unemployment is consistently lower within York.

one in four

local LGBT people
have experienced a hate crime



78%

didn't report it to the police

community safety

Hate Crime

On average, most of the respondents defined York as a relatively safe place for LGBT people but 10% described the city as unsafe and *one in four* had experienced some form of hate crime.

Compared to statistics published by Stonewall⁶ in 2017, this suggests that the local experience of hate crime is 5% above that seen nationally.

According to North Yorkshire Police, hate crime targeted at the LGBT community is the second most reported hate crime, making up 12.4% of reports.

However, our research found that only 22% of LGBT residents who have experienced a hate crime actually reported it to the police, with 5% preferring to provide accounts of their hate crime incident to an LGBT support organisation.

Domestic Violence

While the vast majority of domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against women, domestic violence is nonetheless experienced within the LGBT community. LGBT survivors are often neglected by the criminal justice system and other agencies.

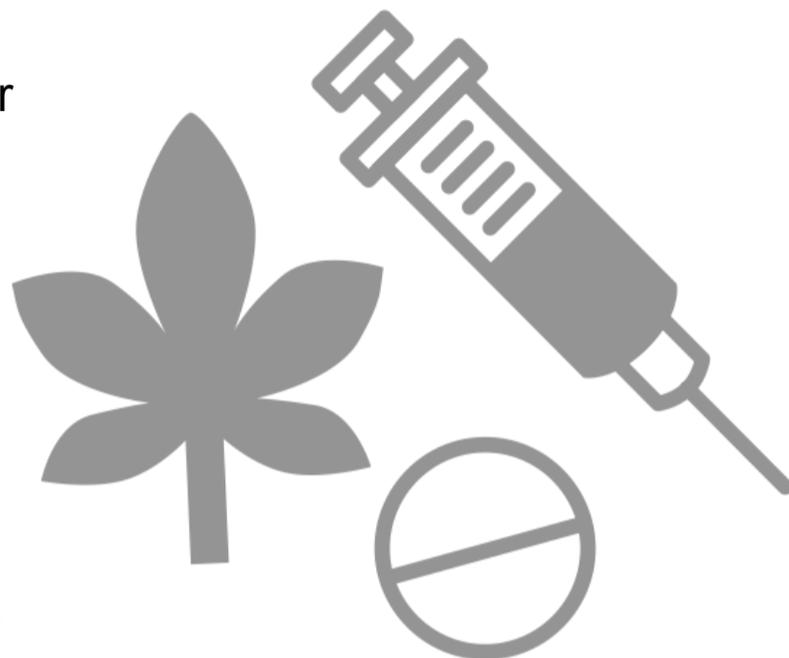
16% of respondents indicated that they had experienced domestic violence.

sex and drugs

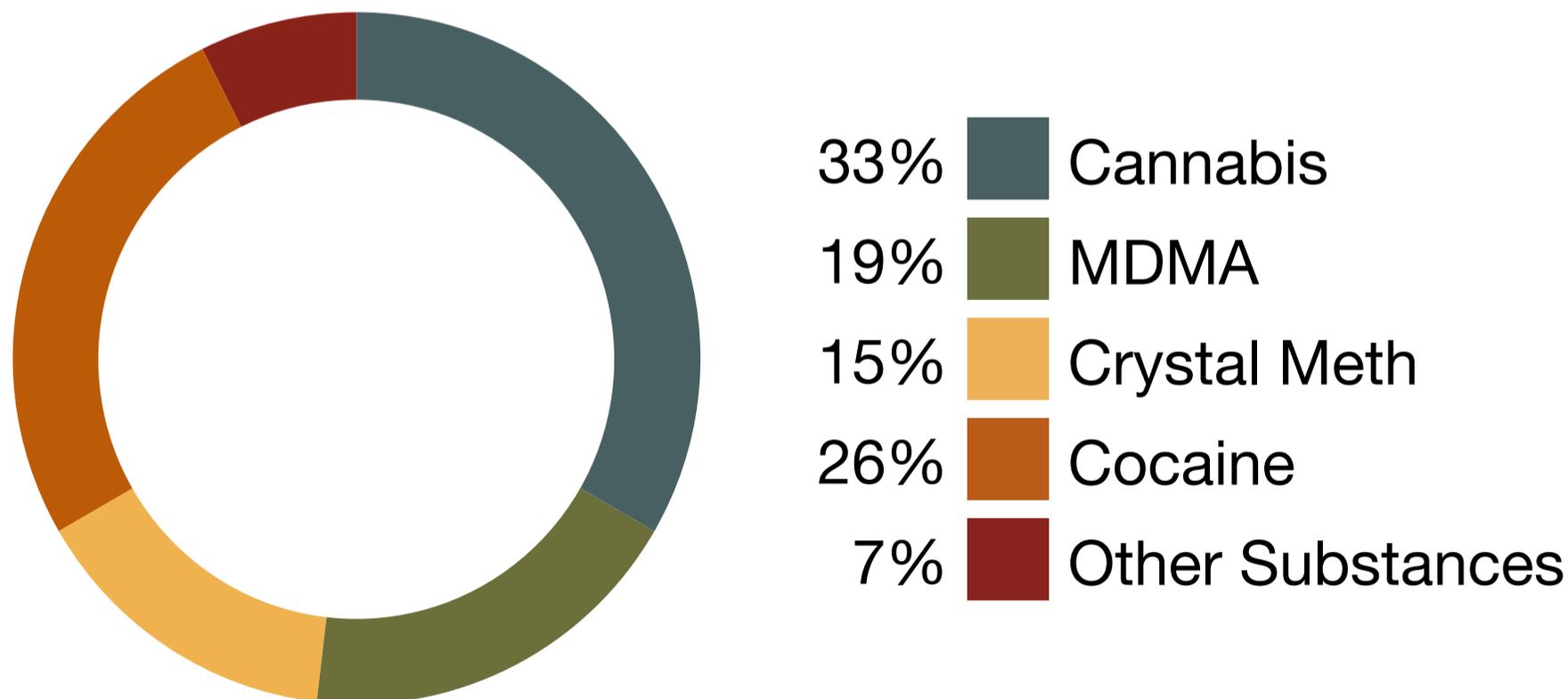
Previous research published by both Stonewall and the LGBT Foundation has uncovered a higher prevalence of drug and alcohol use within the LGBT community.

Our survey found that 12% of respondents have engaged in chemsex to enhance their sexual experiences or have used drugs recreationally.

89% of those who used drugs described their consumption as moderate, but the remaining 11% indicated that their use of drugs was excessive.



Most commonly used drugs within York's LGBT Community



A much higher level of alcohol consumption was prevalent among those responding to the survey, with 57% reporting that they drink regularly. Of that dataset, 25% defined their alcohol consumption as problematic.

sexual health

6%

of respondents reported that they had been treated for a sexually transmitted infection in the past 12 months

22%

had never been tested for HIV or were unaware of their status

69%

were HIV negative

6%

were HIV positive, but all of those respondents were taking medication and the majority had obtained an undetectable viral load

0%

of the participants were using PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis) to prevent HIV transmission

mental health

LGBT people, like anyone else, can experience mental health challenges and distress during their lifetime.

However, research undertaken by the National Institute for Mental Health⁷ in England highlights increased levels of common mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety and stress among LGBT people.



The negative impacts of experiences of discrimination and marginalisation, both directly and indirectly, on LGBT individuals and groups are well established.

A total of 66% of participants indicated that they had experienced mental ill health, encompassing moderate to severe depression, OCD, eating disorders, cyclothymia and a broad range of other conditions.

Furthermore, 38% of respondents reported that they had previously self harmed or had attempted suicide.

This is particularly worrying in York, where the City of York Suicide Audit⁸ has reported that the city has the highest suicide rate compared to similar local authority areas.

“I have had numerous mental health professionals attempt to dismiss my requests to focus on the trauma which is the core of my PTSD and instead switch to my relationship with my family as soon as they hear that I am LGBT. This has forced me to endure extended periods of appointments with little to no progress and ultimately led to me terminating my most recent referral.”

healthcare



Reflecting the findings of a recently published report by Healthwatch York⁹, 32% of our respondents had experienced negative attitudes when accessing health care or medical provision (including dentistry, mental health services or drug and alcohol support) because of their sexuality or gender identity.

Their experiences ranged from a poor understanding of the health needs of LGBT people to hostility from medical practitioners, and even undiagnosed sexual health conditions based upon presumptions of heterosexuality.

“Dentist was hostile when I tried to book appointments for both me and my partner.”

“One GP did not believe we were legally married.”

“CPN badgering me on whether I think that I will regret transitioning (a decade after I transitioned) and strongly implying that he thought that I would regret it, then repeatedly dead naming me over multiple sessions.”

“A presumption of heterosexuality led to undiagnosed syphilis by a York GP.”

Healthwatch York also found that 54.7% of LGBT people felt reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity when accessing health and social care services in the city, and 81% did not know (or were unsure) how to report negative attitudes from healthcare providers.

homelessness

Research undertaken by the Albert Kennedy Trust¹⁰ shows that a disproportionate number of young homeless people (24%) identify as LGBT.

Their study found that the main reasons for homelessness were attributed to parental rejection, abuse within the family or being exposed to aggression and violence.

Among the most prevalent outcomes of LGBT people becoming homeless are sexual exploitation and mental health issues, alongside homophobic bullying, and alcohol or drug misuse.

Stonewall Housing, which also offers specialist advice and support to LGBT people of all ages, say that two thirds of young people who access their services state their housing problem is directly related to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Our research found that 7% of respondents reported experiencing some form of discrimination in housing or harassment from neighbours because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

While this cut across the entire age spectrum, younger respondents between the ages of 16-23 were more likely to experience homelessness.

Of this age group, 8% had either directly experienced homelessness or reported that they had been evicted from housing, either by a landlord or in some circumstances by their own family.

Methodology and Interpretation

The study was open to anyone who identifies as LGBT either living or working in York or the surrounding area.

The broader independent community consultation utilised multiple correspondence analysis and a variety of engagement methods in order to shape a venue options appraisal.

However, given the lack of local datasets, an online survey was considered the best way to access a larger number of respondents, allowing them to provide confidential responses.

The survey used conditional branching and did not collect any personal details, including IP addresses, which would make an individual identifiable.

The content was designed by York LGBT Forum and collected a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data. It was widely promoted by the organisation and other relevant stakeholders, and included an easy read version for people with learning difficulties alongside a variety of language formats.

The acronym 'LGBT' was used as an umbrella term, but respondents could be from any minority sexual orientation (such as asexual or pansexual), or gender identity (including non-binary or genderqueer) and included individuals who have variable intersex characteristics.

In total, 242 valid responses were collected over a two month period between August and September 2018, and although the number of respondents to the survey was relatively large given the short timeframe, care is still required when interpreting the data and extrapolating the findings.

This is because the sample was self-selecting, and there is no guarantee that it is representative of the entire LGBT population in the city. In addition, respondents had to be willing to self-identify as LGBT, meaning that their experience may be different to those who are unwilling or unable to confidently identify in this way.

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