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POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCES OF 16-21 YEAR OLD PEOPLE WHO ARE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND/OR TRANSGENDER (LGBT) -

by Public and Corporate Economic Consultants (PACEC)

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Education & Training

RESEARCH REPORT

PACEC

Public and Corporate
Economic Consultants

*Department of Education – Post-
Primary School Experiences of 16-
21 year old people who are Lesbian,
Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender
(LGB&T)*



April 2016

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PACEC Limited is a well-established provider of economic consultancy services with a core team that has been working together for some 25 years. It trades under PACEC. The firm has offices based in Cambridge and Belfast. It employs over 20 professional staff, including researchers, economists, statisticians, organisational development consultants and accountants. The work covers public policy and programme evaluation, appraisals, feasibility studies, VFM assessments, training needs analysis and Organisational Reviews. PACEC Limited (No NI607634) is registered in Northern Ireland. Registered Office: Number One, Lanyon Quay, Belfast, BT1 3LG.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

In 2015, Public and Corporate Economic Consultants (PACEC) were commissioned by the Department of Education to undertake research into the Post-primary school experiences of 16-21 year old young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGB&T). This report presents a summary of the research findings.

Project Aims

To obtain both qualitative and quantitative information directly from LGB&T young people (16-21 year olds) on the issues affecting them within the Post-primary school environment.

1.2 Methodology

Views of LGB&T young people were captured through an on-line survey (which achieved 532 valid responses) complemented by five focus groups attended by 28 young people¹.

1.3 Key Findings: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of LGB&T Young People

Experiences of Transgender Young People in Post-Primary School

65 respondents identified as transgender.

23 respondents had not told anyone in school about their transgender identity.

40 respondents had spoken to other pupils about their transgender identity and many felt supported by their peer group.

22 respondents had spoken to members of staff and, of those, 12 felt supported or very supported by the response.

The key issues and challenges faced by transgender pupils included binary-gender classification and language/use of names in school.

Particular arrangements which were put in place to help ten transgender respondents deal with the challenges they face/faced as a transgender pupil included name change, uniform change, use of alternative bathroom/changing room and being excused from PE.

Experiences of LGB Young People in Post-Primary School

467 respondents identified as LGB.

53.9% of respondents (n=130) came out as LGB while in Post-primary school.

27.4% (n=128) of respondents had not spoken to anyone in school about their LGB identity.

69.4% of respondents (n=324) had spoken to other pupils in school regarding their LGB identity.

65% of LGB respondents (n=300) agreed or strongly agreed that they had a supportive group of friends at school.

20.1% (n=94) had spoken to members of staff in school regarding their LGB identity.

¹ though as two people attended two groups there were 26 unique individuals

Over 60% of respondents (n=42, base=69) who had spoken to a member of staff within school about their sexual orientation felt 'supported or very supported' by the reaction of the member of staff.

Support included: in-school counselling; a meeting with the teacher responsible for pastoral care; provision of contact details for external organisations offering additional support.

Bullying Experienced by Young LGB&T People in Post-Primary School

91.7% of respondents (n=487, base=531) were aware that their school operated an anti-bullying policy.

48% of respondents (n=257) had experienced bullying as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The main forms of bullying experienced by LGB&T young people included name calling, lies or false rumours, being isolated by other pupils or hit/kicked/pushed/shoved around.

38.8% of respondents (n=99) reported bullying to a member of staff.

Responses from schools were not perceived to be very satisfactory by respondents.

54.1% (n=53, base=98) of those who reported bullying felt 'very unsupported' or 'unsupported' by the member of staff's response.

Teaching and Learning in Post-Primary Schools (including LGB&T issues in the curriculum)

54.5% of respondents (n=289) stated that issues about sexual orientation or gender identity had not come up in any of their classes.

71.4%, of respondents (n=172, base=241) who stated that issues about sexual orientation or gender identity had been mentioned stated it had been mentioned in Religious Education. Other classes where LGB&T issues were mentioned included Learning for Life and Work (40.2%, n=97) Sexual Health Education (24.1%, n=58) and English Literature (17.8%, n=43).

35.7% of respondents (n=86) indicated that LGB issues were presented and managed² 'well' or 'very well' by teachers; a similar proportion stated that teachers had handled LGB issues 'badly' or 'very badly'.

63.1% of LGB&T respondents (n=147, base=233) believed that transgender issues were handled 'badly' or 'very badly'.

38% of respondents (n=203) stated they had been made to feel uncomfortable by teachers through the use of inconsiderate or derogatory language, taking a heteronormative approach, poor coverage of LGB&T issues etc.

66.6% (n=351) said that the sexual health education³ delivered in their Post-primary school was very unhelpful or unhelpful.

School Environment (school policies, resources, etc.)

62.8% of respondents (n=333) reported a negative impact on emotional well-being.

² Question 48: 'How well do you think the teacher presented LGB issues and managed the discussion in class? Tick one' Options were 'Very Well', 'Well', 'Not Well', 'Badly' and 'Very Badly'.

³ Please note that 'sexual health education' is the wording that was used in the survey: this is the same as Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE).

Less than 25% of respondents reported negative impacts on attendance, attainment or career planning.

66.5% of respondents (n=350) indicated that they did not feel welcomed or valued within school as a young LGB&T person.

6% of respondents (n=31) had to move school because of how their school had managed issues relating to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

55% of respondents (n=288) felt school was a safe place for them to be.

68.6% of respondents (n=365) found other pupils to be the most supportive and 12.8% (n=68) mentioned class teachers.

92.1%, of respondents (n=488, base=530) indicated that there was insufficient information available in relation to LGB&T issues within their Post-primary school.

1.4 Key Findings: Focus Groups of LGB&T Young People

Visibility: LGB&T issues and people were largely absent from their education. Participants believed that this not only impacted on their ability to come to terms with their sexual orientation and gender in safe and supportive environments but also contributed to the high levels of homophobic and transphobic language and attitudes they witnessed in formal education.

Teaching and Learning: The participants indicated that their teachers had been unwilling or unable to adequately educate them about issues relevant to their lives. Participants indicated that training on LGB&T issues for teachers is an important step in improving education for LGB&T young people.

Sexual Health Education⁴: The participants felt that the relationships and sexuality education which was provided to them either ignored the needs of LGB&T young people or actively advocated against their interests. The participants had largely taught themselves about sex and relationships using the internet as a resource.

Transgender Specific Needs: Participants recognised that transgender young people were significantly disadvantaged by schools not understanding them or their needs and that particular attention needs to be paid to names, pronouns, uniform, toilets and changing facilities.

Issues related to Confidentiality: The participants stated that their concern about confidentiality is/was a significant barrier to them accessing support and reporting negative experiences within their schools. In particular, they articulated concerns about how, without their consent, parents and careers could be informed of a child's sexual orientation, or gender, by school authorities and how this could pose a risk for some young people.

⁴ Please note that 'sexual health education' is the wording that was used in the survey: this is the same as Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE).

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Introduction

In 2015, Public and Corporate Economic Consultants (PACEC) were commissioned by the Department of Education to undertake research into the Post-primary school experiences of 16-21 year old young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGB&T). This report presents a summary of the research findings.

2.2 Context for the Research

This research project makes up one of the three strands of research.

The most recent study by the Department of Education that directly gathered information on young LGB&T people was conducted in 2003 (Shout – Research into the needs of Young People in Northern Ireland who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and/or transgender (LGB&T)).

In September 2013 the Department's new Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission. As the Department had not directly gathered any information on young LGB&T people since 2003 the then Minister agreed that three strands of research should be undertaken and that that the Department should:

commission a set of questions in the Autumn 2014 Young Life and Times Survey (YLTS) that relate to LGB&T issues, but can be answered independently of gender/sexual orientation;

use the DE School Omnibus Survey (a multi-purpose survey of all Principals in grant-aided schools) to pose questions to School Management in relation to homophobia/transphobia and information/support provided within schools on sexual orientation/transgender issues; and

commission research about issues that affect young LGB&T people in Post-primary education.

2.3 Terms of Reference

The research will focus on the Post-primary education experiences of young LGB&T people as 'understanding relationships and sexuality' is a statutory component of the Learning for Life and Work (LLW) area of learning at Key Stages 3 & 4. Through this strand of LLW, pupils have the opportunity to develop coping strategies to deal with challenging relationship scenarios, strategies to avoid and resolve conflict, the implications of sexual maturation and explore the emotional, social and moral implications of early sexual activity.

The target group for the research should be LGB&T people in the 16-21 age range. This is to ensure that their school experiences of Post-primary education are relatively recent and are likely to reflect the current educational environment. The young people do not need to currently attend school or college.

Project Aims

The project aims are to assess:

- the effect the school environment can have on young LGB&T people and the impact on their well-being and educational attainment;

- the extent to which the school curriculum reflects the needs of LGB&T pupils and the issues that they face; and
- how school policies/resources/curriculum/teaching/support can better reflect the needs of LGB&T pupils and the issues that they face.

Requirements

- To obtain both qualitative and quantitative information directly from LGB&T young people (16-21 year olds) on the issues affecting them within the school (Post-primary) environment, specifically homophobia and transphobia and related bullying.
- To obtain views from LGB&T young people on the visibility, or otherwise, of LGB&T references and identities within the school curriculum and the life of the school generally.
- To obtain views from LGB&T young people on the impact that the school environment has had on their lives, specifically on:
 - school attendance and participation in school life;
 - educational attainment and aspirations; and
 - mental health and emotional well-being.

To identify issues that specifically affect transgender pupils and how the application of school policies impact on these pupils - for example, changing forenames, school uniforms, toilet facilities;

To obtain information from young LGB&T people about how the issues affecting them were dealt with in school - by teaching staff (including pastoral care teachers) and school leadership/senior management and Board of Governors or governing body;

To obtain the views of young LGB&T people on how well equipped teaching staff were in dealing with issues linked to their sexual orientation and gender identity;

To obtain views from LGB&T young people on how school policies, curriculum, teaching, resources and support could better reflect their needs;

To obtain the views of young LGB&T people on the effectiveness of sexual health education and LGB&T relationships within the school environment; and

To identify and outline LGB&T curricular resources designed for use in schools.

2.4 Format of this Report

The remainder of this document is set out as follows:

Section 3: Research Methodology

Section 4: Context: Legislation

Section 5: Findings from the Survey of LGB&T Young People: Key Findings

Section 6: Findings from the Survey of LGB&T Young People: Further Exploratory Analysis

Section 7: Findings from Focus Groups with LGB&T Young People

Section 8: Conclusions

In addition, there are detailed appendices which accompany this report. They include:

Appendix 1: Survey Methodology

Appendix 2: Survey Output Tables

Appendix 3: Focus Group Details

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The methodology for this research comprised a mix of primary and desk based research. The main stages are described in more detail in the sections that follow.

3.2 Desk Based Research

The desk based research involved a review of various legislative and policy documents related to the research as well as a review of relevant literature and comparative studies. This set the context for the study, including the legislative context with regard to safeguarding the rights and ensuring equality of access, treatment and provision for LGB&T young people in schools and colleges in Northern Ireland. It also provided examples of other research including surveys which were used to inform the development of the questionnaire.

3.3 Survey of Young People

A survey was developed to gather feedback relating to the Post-primary school experiences of members of the LGB&T community.

PACEC developed a questionnaire for the research project: initial drafts of the questionnaire were developed based on topics set out in the proposal and further developed in collaboration with the Project Steering Group. We worked with the Steering Group on an iterative basis to refine and amend the questionnaires. A pilot of the survey was issued through the Rainbow Project who asked participants at a youth group meeting to complete the survey. Using their responses the survey team was able to examine the pattern of responses and ensure that all of the questions were answered in an appropriate manner and that, technically, the survey was functioning as expected.

The final questionnaire included questions on:

- Respondent profile;
- Experiences of transgender young people in Post-primary school;
- Experiences of LGB young people in Post-primary school;
- Bullying experienced by young LGB&T people in Post-primary school;
- Teaching and learning in Post-primary Schools (including LGB&T issues in the curriculum);
- School environment (school policies, resources, etc.); and
- Interest in participating in focus groups.

The questionnaire was signed off by the Department of Education and launched through a variety of organisations on 6th January 2016. Overall, 532 valid responses were received and formed the basis for the analysis. Further details of response rate and representativeness is outlined in Appendix 1.

3.4 Focus Groups with Young People

As part of the online survey, respondents were asked if they would be willing to take part in a focus group. Respondents who opted into this were then asked to indicate what type of focus group they

wished to attend (options were: LGB only, transgender only, LGB&T and no preference); respondents were also asked to indicate their preferences in terms of location and time, and to provide contact details (email address and phone number). Feedback from these questions was used to inform the location, time and type of focus groups. These respondents were then contacted by a member of the PACEC team to invite them to attend the focus groups.

Overall 5 focus groups were conducted with a total attendance of 28 young people (though as two people attended two groups there were 26 unique individuals). A breakdown of focus group location and attendance is outlined in the table below. A sixth focus group was planned but did not proceed due to low levels of interest; those who registered were invited to take part in a telephone consultation but did not take up the offer. All focus groups were facilitated by Gavin Boyd of the Rainbow Project and attended by a representative of PACEC; a representative from the DE steering group also attended three of the focus groups.

Table 3:1 Focus group details

Date / Time	Venue	Attendees
01/02/16 / 5:30-7pm	Belfast LGBT Centre	6
02/02/16 / 5:30-7pm	Newry Youth Resource Centre	4
03/02/16 / 5:30-7pm	Foyle LGBT Centre	11
09/02/16 / 5:30-7pm	Belfast LGBT Centre (Transgender Only)	4 Δ
10/02/16 / 5:30-7pm	Dungannon Youth Resource Centre	3 Δ

PACEC, March 2016

Δ Note: two people attended both the focus group on 9 Feb (Belfast) and the focus group on 10 Feb (Dungannon).

3.5 Analysis and Reporting

Information from the surveys and focus groups with young people has been analysed and key findings are presented in this report.

4 CONTEXT: LEGISLATION

The following table summarises each piece of legislation’s requirements, as relevant to this research.

Table 4:1 Relevant Legislation Requirements

Relevant Legislation Requirements
European Convention on Human Rights: Legislation
<p>ARTICLE 10 Freedom of expression</p> <p><i>Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.</i></p> <p>ARTICLE 14 Prohibition of discrimination</p> <p><i>The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.</i></p>
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<p>Article 2: <i>States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind.</i></p> <p><i>All rights apply to children without exception. It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote rights.</i></p> <p>This is summarised by the Northern Ireland Commissioner For Children and Young People (NICCY) in its Understanding Your Rights publication as “You shouldn’t be treated badly because you seem different.”</p> <p>Although the convention has not been made part of UK domestic law, as international law it is to be followed and should be referred to by courts, tribunals and other processes when making decisions that affect children.</p>
Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003
<p>Places duties on Boards of Governors to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at all times when on the premises of the school or in the lawful control or in charge of a member of staff of the school.</p>
Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
<p>Places responsibilities on Boards of Governors and Principals for discipline: to “ensure <i>that policies designed to promote good behaviour and discipline on the part of its pupils are pursued at the school.</i>” The scheme of management shall require the Board of Governors “to make, and from time to time review, a written statement of general principles (regarding discipline) and to “consider any guidance given by the Department, the board for the area in which the school is situated and (in the case of a Catholic maintained school) the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools”. The scheme of management for every grant-aided school shall provide for it to be the duty of the Principal to determine measures (which may include the making of rules and provision for enforcing them) to be taken with a view to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) promoting among pupils, self-discipline and proper regard for authority; (ii) encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils; (iii) securing that the standard of behaviour of pupils is acceptable; and

Relevant Legislation Requirements

(iv) otherwise regulating the conduct of pupils.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003 and the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006

The 2003 & 2006 Regulations make it unlawful for schools, colleges and other educational establishments to discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation. It is unlawful to discriminate: as regards terms of admission to the establishment; by refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an application for admission; and in the way a pupil or student in the establishment is afforded access to any benefits, facilities or services, or by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford such access; or by excluding a pupil or student from the establishment or treating such a pupil or student unfavourably in any other way.

It is also unlawful to harass, on the grounds of sexual orientation, a pupil or student who is at, or seeking admission to, the establishment. In some cases, discrimination against former students will also be unlawful.

The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (SDO)

Outlaws discrimination on the grounds of sex and marital status in employment, education, transport and the provision of goods and services.

5 FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY OF LGB&T YOUNG PEOPLE: KEY FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This section sets out the findings of the survey conducted with LGB&T young people. This is structured around the key headings within the survey.

Full details of the methodology, response rate and a discussion on ability to assess representativeness can be found in Appendix 1. A summary is included in Section 3.3 of this report. A full set of results can be found in Appendix 2.

The survey ran from 6th January 2016 to 27th January 2016. During this time responses were monitored regularly and due to the high level of interest and completions no follow up was needed. The target number of survey completions was 380. The total number of completed responses received by survey close was 715. However of this 715, 183 responses were removed following an initial analysis for the reasons below:

- 7 responses were deemed to be insincere;
- 173 responses were removed due to being from straight respondents⁵; and
- 3 respondents were removed due to not identifying their gender identity or sexual orientation.

The final number of completed responses and the baseline for the survey is therefore 532, representing 140% of the 380 target.

5.2 Notation in reporting survey responses

Data suppression to avoid disclosure

Note: to protect the confidentiality of respondents and to ensure individual respondents cannot be identified, any responses equalling 4 or less have been changed to ‘*’. Additional suppression may also have been applied to responses of 5 or more to prevent the disclosure of cells with a small number of responses. The definitions of the symbols are as follows:

‘*’ - to denote fewer than 5 cases; and

‘#’ - to denote a number (5 or greater) which has been suppressed to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals.

This notation also means that some information is not shown in the charts in the report.

Small Numbers

For some questions, the sample size is small (e.g. less than 100). The reader is asked to treat the results to these questions with caution. The following notation has been adopted:

⁵ A small number of these (8) also identified as transgender. However, due to the routing within the survey, most sections of the survey were skipped by any respondents who indicated they were straight.

Where the total number of responses to a specific question is greater than 100:

- we include in tables both number (N) and % (to 1 decimal place).
- apart from data suppression, the data in these tables refers to both N & %.
- in narrative about these questions we refer to N or % or both.

Where the total number of responses to a specific question is less than 100 but 50 or more:

- we include in tables both N and % (to 1 decimal place).
- apart from data suppression, the data in these tables refers to both N & %.
- in narrative about these questions we refer to N or % or both.
- we include a note under the table stating: *** Caution small numbers.

Where the total number of responses to a specific question is less than 50:

- we include in tables only N (not %).
- in narrative about these questions we refer to N only.

Quantifying responses – summary terms

When quantifying responses the following terms are used and should be interpreted as follows:

Almost all/nearly all: more than 90%

Most: 75%-90%

A majority: 50%-74%

A significant minority: 30%-49%

A minority: 10%-29%

Very few/a small number: less than 10%

5.3 Consideration of representativeness

Ideally to assess representativeness, we would wish to compare the profile of individuals who responded to the survey to the profile of young LGB&T people in Northern Ireland. However, in the absence of robust data on these variables for this population (LGB&T young people aged 16-21), it has not been possible to do this.

In Appendix 1 – Section 1.6, a comparison has been made between the profile of survey respondents (across a number of characteristics) and that of the wider population of young people aged 16-21 or a proxy for this (e.g. all pupils in Post-primary schools when considering data relating to school types).

5.4 Profile of Respondents

The first section of the questionnaire sought to gain information about the respondents. This was to assist in assessing the representativeness of the survey respondents (though for reasons discussed in the previous section this was not possible) and also to enable analysis based on these identifiers (further information on this can be found in Section 6). In the following section we provide information on the profile of survey respondents. A number of characteristics have been examined including:

Age – representation across all age categories, though almost half of respondents are 16-17;
 Gender – fairly even split between female and male, with over 7% identifying as “other”;
 Sexual Orientation – over a third of respondents are bisexual⁶(37.1%) and gay (34.1%) respectively, with 16.6% identifying as lesbian;
 School Type - respondents attended (or had attended) all of the school management types: 52.6% grammar and 45.3% non-grammar; 43.4% attended schools under Catholic Management, 34.4% under Other Management, 20.1% Integrated Schools and fewer than five respondents attended Special Schools. If we assume that the LGB&T population is evenly distributed across all school types, then this suggests an over-representation of respondents from the integrated schools sector;
 Geography /Region – the most common region that respondents’ schools were situated in was Belfast; the least common was Western with similar numbers from each of the other 3 regions (North Eastern, South Eastern, Southern);
 Education/Employment Status – over half of respondents (53.6%) were still in Post-primary school and over one fifth (21.9%) were still in education other than school; and
 Qualifications - over half (52.3%) of respondents that have left school had three or more A Levels grade A* to C or equivalent as their highest qualification on leaving school. The proportion of school leavers achieving three or more A-levels A*-C or equivalent was 37.0% in 2013/14⁷.

Age

The age profile of respondents is displayed in Table 5.1.

Table 5:1 Age Profile of Respondents

Age Group	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
16-17 years	261	49.1%
18-19 years	150	28.2%
20-21 years	121	22.7%
Total	532	100.0%

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: The base is 532

The table shows that:

Just under half (49.1%, n=261) of the respondents were aged between 16 and 17 years old when completing the survey;

A minority of the respondents (28.2%, n=150) were aged between 18 and 19 years old when completing the survey; and

⁶ In a previous Department of Education study produced in 2003 (Shout – Research into the needs of Young People in Northern Ireland who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and/or transgender (LGB&T)), the proportion who were bisexual was 14%. This indicates an over-representation of this group amongst survey respondents.

⁷ Statistical Bulletin 5: Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2013/14 (DE, 2015)

Over one fifth (22.7%, n=121) of the respondents were aged between 20 and 21 years old when completing the survey.

Gender

Respondents were asked about their gender – whilst most indicated male or female, a small number also provided other responses.

Table 5:2 Respondents' gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Male	240	45.2%
Female	250	47.1%
Other	41	7.7%
Breakdown of "other"		
ΔNon Binary ⁸	12	2.3%
ΔGenderfluid ⁹	9	1.7%
ΔAgender ¹⁰	7	1.3%
Other	13	2.4%
Total	531	100.0%

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

ΔThese categories are based on responses provided by respondents who selected 'Other'

Note: One respondent skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 531.

Just under half of respondents described themselves as female with a slightly lower proportion describing themselves as male. Forty-one respondents (7.7%) selected 'other' and entered in free text the gender that best describes them as summarised in the table above (See Appendix for more detailed responses).

Sexual Orientation

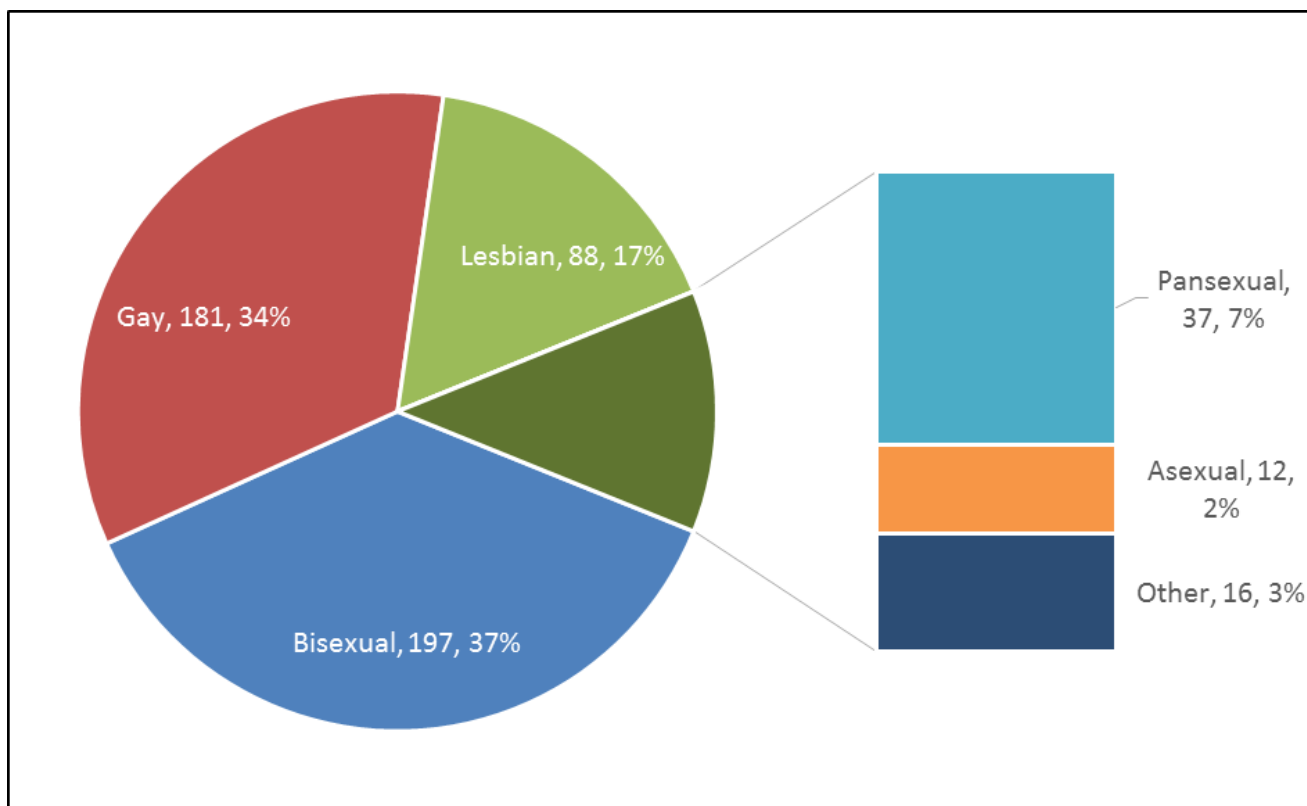
Respondents were asked about their sexual orientation – with a variety of responses provided as illustrated in the following graph. The majority of respondents selected one of the provided responses, though around 12% provided an "other" response.

⁸ Non-Binary: 1) Describes a gender identity that is neither female nor male; 2) Gender identities that are outside of or beyond two traditional concepts of male or female.

⁹ Gender fluid refers to a gender which varies over time. A gender fluid person may at any time identify as male, female, or any other non-binary identity, or some combination of identities.

¹⁰ Agender: not having a gender or identifying with a gender (genderless, agender)

Figure 5:1 Sexual orientation of respondents



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

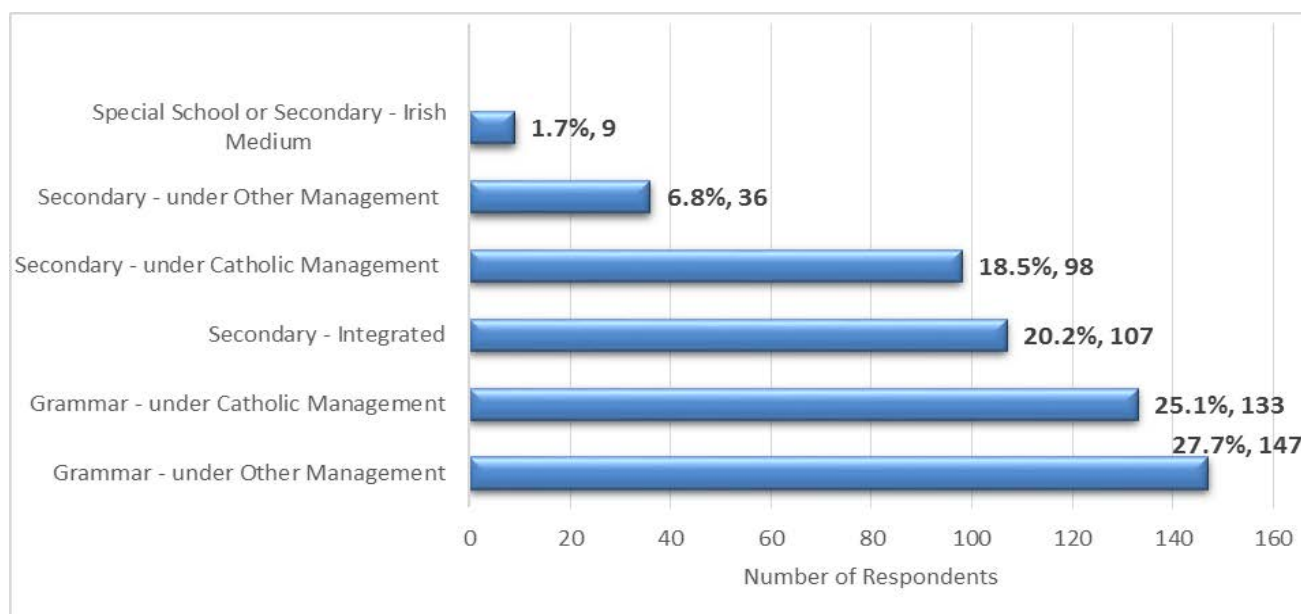
Note: One respondent skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 531

A significant minority of respondents were bisexual (37.1%, n=197) with a similar number (34.1% (n=181)) describing themselves as gay and around half that (16.6% (n=88) describing themselves as lesbian. A minority of respondents (12.2%, n=65) chose “other”; of the further details provided, 37 were pansexual, 12 asexual, and 16 gave ‘other’ responses.

School Type and Management

Respondents were invited to indicate which type of Post-primary school they attended.

Figure 5:2 Type of Post-primary school attended by respondents



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Two respondents skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 530.

First, it is worth stating that respondents were not asked about the school that they attend or had attended. So it is not possible to comment on the number of schools represented amongst the survey respondents. Key points to note include:

The most common answer in relation to the type of Post-primary school attended was ‘Grammar – under Other Management’, with 147 responses (27.7%);

A similar number of responses (around a quarter) were received from pupils who attended a Grammar School under Catholic Management (n=133);

Approximately one fifth of responses were received from two other school types: 20.2% (n=107) ‘Secondary – Integrated’ and 18.5% (n=98) ‘Secondary under Catholic Management’;

Under 10% of respondents (6.8%) indicated that they had attended ‘Secondary – under Other Management’;

A small number of responses (n=9, 1.7%) were received from respondents who attended ‘Special Schools’ or ‘Irish Medium’ Schools.

Overall 52.6% (n=280) attended Grammar Schools and 45.3% (n=241) attended Secondary Schools;

Overall 43.4% (n=231) attended schools under Catholic Management, 34.4% (n=183) attended schools under Other Management and 20.1% (n=107) attended Integrated Schools.

Geography

Respondents were asked about the area which their Post-primary school was based in. The results are displayed in Table 5.3.

Table 5:3 Geography of respondents

Geography	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Belfast	160	30.1%
Southern	110	20.7%
North Eastern	103	19.4%
South Eastern	94	17.7%
Western	64	12.1%
Total	531	100.0%

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: One respondent skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 531

The most common response (school located in Belfast) was provided by just over 30% of respondents (30.1%, n=160); whilst the least common response (school located in Western area) was received from just over a tenth (12.1%, n=64) of respondents.

Fairly similar numbers of respondents indicated that the Post-primary school they attended was in either the Southern area (about one fifth (20.7%, n=110), the North Eastern area (just under one fifth of respondents (19.4%, n=103)) or the South Eastern area (17.7%, n=94).

Education/Employment Status

A majority of respondents (53.6%, n=284) were still attending Post-primary school and 21.9% (n=116) were still in Post-primary education other than Post-primary school. The remaining 24.4% (n=130) of respondents had left Post-primary school with a third of these (33.1%, n=43) currently being in Higher Education, 27.7% (n=36) in employment and 17.7% (n=23) in Further Education. Of the 130 that had left school, 16 identified as transgender whilst 114 as LGB.

Qualifications

On leaving Post-primary school, 52.3% (n=69) of these respondents' highest qualification was three or more A Levels grade A* to C or equivalent (8 of these were transgender, 61 were LGB). 21.2% (n=28) of respondents who had left school achieved five or more GCSEs grades A* to C (including English and maths) or equivalent (fewer than five of these were transgender). Fewer than five respondents had left Post-primary school with no qualifications. In the 2013/14 DE School Leaver's

Survey¹¹ the proportion of school leavers achieving three or more A-levels A*-C or equivalent was 37.0% and 63.5% achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A* - C or equivalent including GCSE English and Maths.

5.5 Experiences of Transgender Young People in Post-Primary School

Section 2 of the survey was specifically for young people who identified as transgender (i.e. those who responded “Yes” to Q10, therefore screening out any other respondents who did not). In total 65 respondents (12.2%, base = 532) identified as transgender¹². So 65 is the base for each of the tables and charts in this section unless otherwise stated. It is important to note that some respondents identified as both LGB (sexual orientation) and transgender (gender identity) as illustrated below.

Table 5:4 Sexual Orientation and Transgender Identity

Sexual Orientation	Identify as Transgender or as a person with a trans history?		
	Yes	No	Total
Gay	9	172	181
Lesbian	7	81	88
Bisexual	18	179	197
Other	30	35	65
Unknown ¹³	1	0	1
Total	65	467	532

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: The base is 532.

*****Caution Small Numbers - The remaining tables in this section relate to the experiences of transgender respondents. As the base for these questions is 65, the reader is asked to treat results in this section with caution.**

Coming out as a transgender young person in Post-primary school

Respondents were asked if they had told anyone about their transgender identity or how they felt about their identity¹⁴. Almost one third of respondents (35.4%, n=23) had not told anyone in school or spoken to anyone in school about issues related to their identity.

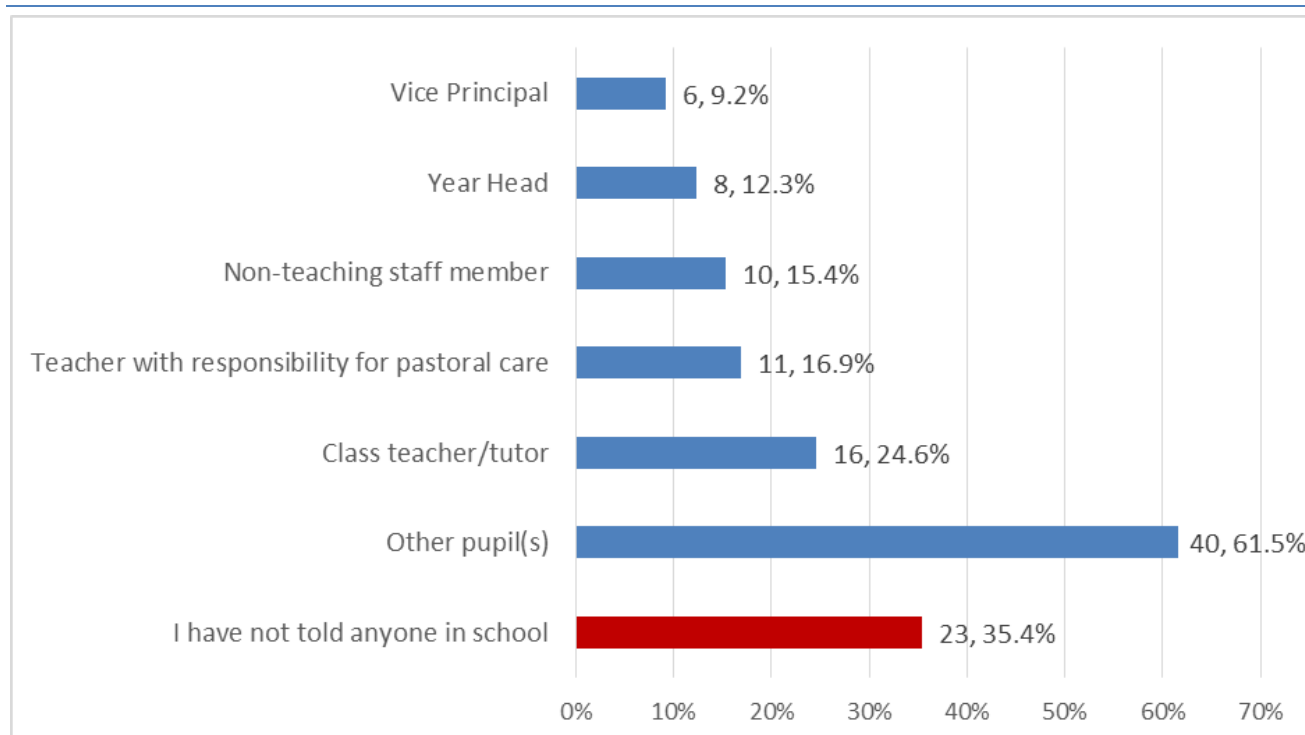
¹¹ Statistical Bulletin 5: Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2013/14 (DE, 2015)

¹² According to figures from SAIL NI, the estimated number of transgender young people in the education system is around 100; therefore this represents a high proportion of that group

¹³ One person answered question 11 (i.e. gender identity) but skipped question 10 (sexual orientation) .i.e. this person is transgender but we do not know their sexual orientation

The most common response (n=40, 61.5%) was that respondents had spoken to other pupils in school regarding their transgender identity. Whilst some respondents had spoken to members of staff, it is clear that the more senior the member of staff becomes within school, the less likely the respondent was to have spoken to them about these issues. Staff with regular contact with the pupil, e.g. class teacher, were perceived as the most approachable with 16 respondents (24.6%) stating that they had spoken to them about their transgender identity, whereas only 6 respondents (9.2%) had spoken to the vice-principal.

Figure 5:3 Who transgender students have spoken to about their gender identity in Post-primary school



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Respondents could select more than one option. Only those that answered ‘Yes’ to Q11 could answer this question. Therefore, the base is 65.

Level of support from staff for young transgender pupils

For those respondents who had spoken to a member of staff within school about their transgender identity we asked how the reaction of the member of staff made them feel.

Twelve of the 20 respondents that answered this question stated that they felt ‘very supported’ or ‘supported’ by the reaction of the member of staff. Eight respondents indicated that they ‘neither felt

¹⁴ Question 12: ‘Q12. While in school have you had the opportunity to tell anyone about your transgender identity or how you feel about your identity?’

supported nor unsupported' or that they felt 'unsupported' (unsupported n<5) by the staff member's response. No respondents felt 'very unsupported' by the staff response.

Additional support provided for young transgender pupils in Post-primary schools

Of those respondents who had spoken to a member of staff about their transgender identity (n=22) we asked them what, if any, additional support was provided by the school.

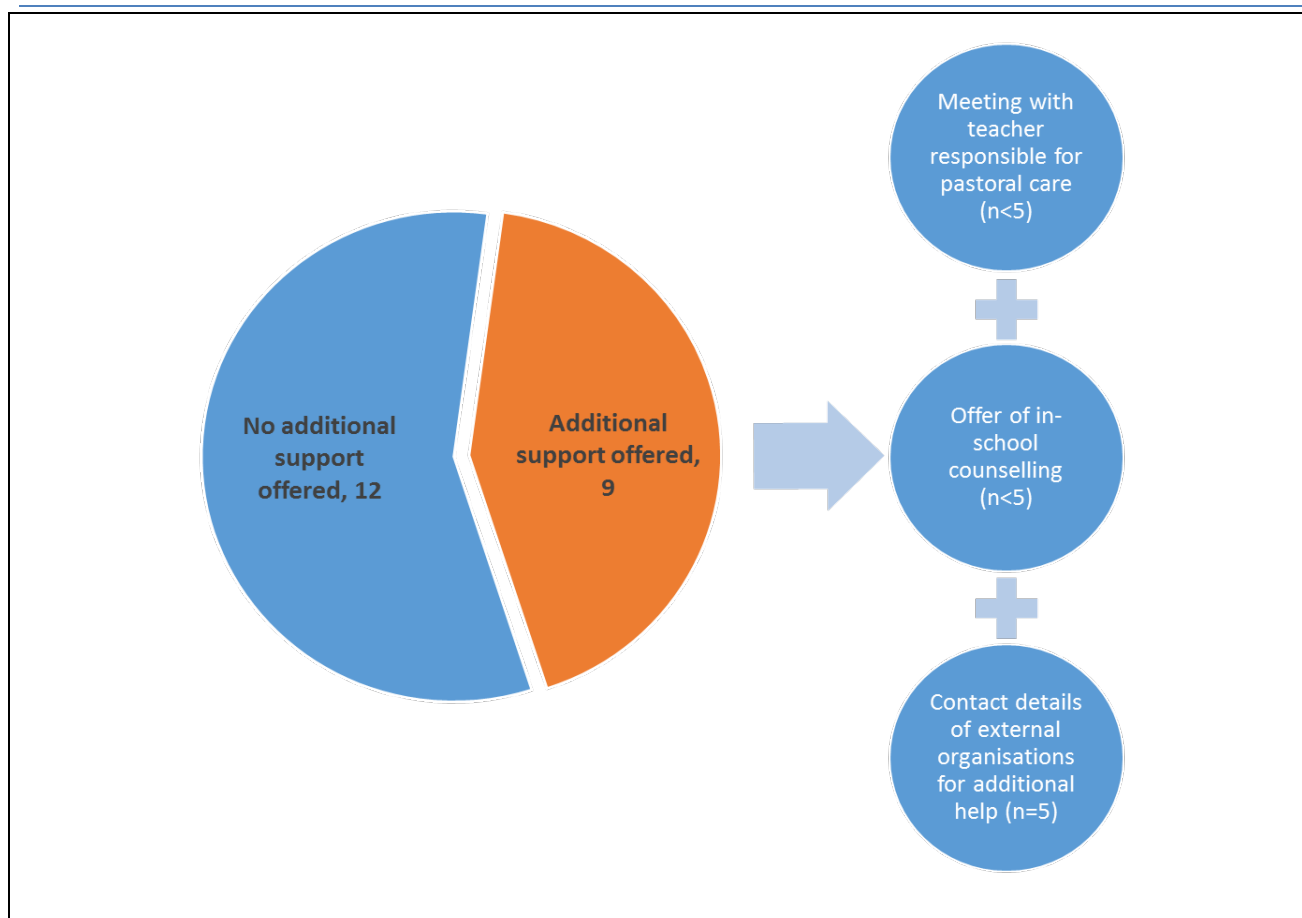
As illustrated below, nine of the respondents were offered additional support after speaking with a member of staff about their transgender identity, whilst 12 were not offered any additional support¹⁵.

Of those who were offered support, this took the following forms:

Student was provided with contact details of external organisations for additional support (n=5, base=9);

Fewer than five respondents were offered in-school counselling and a meeting with the teacher responsible for pastoral care;

Figure 5:4 Additional support for transgender students



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

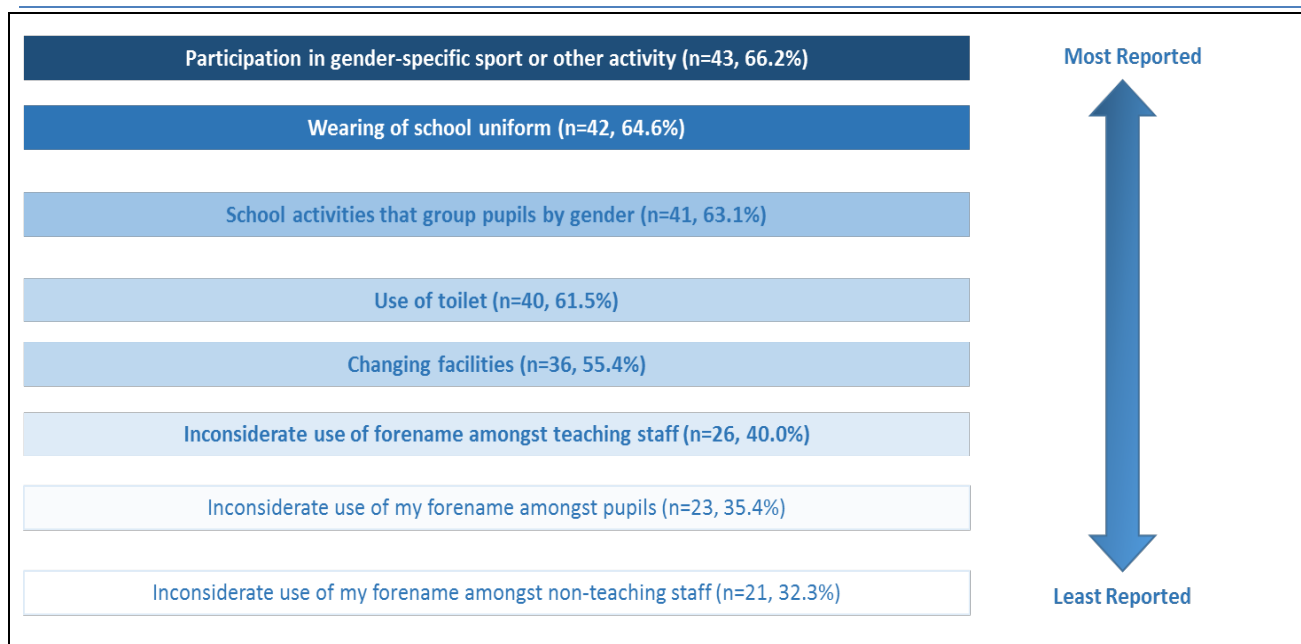
¹⁵ One respondent skipped this question, therefore the base is 21.

Note: Only those that did not answer 'No, I have not told anyone in school' to Q12 and indicated they had told a member of staff in Q12 could answer this question, one respondent skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 21.

Challenges and Issues Experienced by Transgender Pupils in Post-Primary School

We asked those respondents who had identified as transgender (n=65) about specific concerns and challenges they face or had faced whilst in Post-primary school. The responses are displayed below.

Figure 5:5 Issues for concern/challenges faced by transgender students whilst at Post-primary school



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Respondents could select more than one option. Only those who identified as transgender by answering 'Yes' to Q11 could answer this question. Therefore, the base is 65.

The most common challenges faced by transgender pupils in Post-primary school relate to:

Binary-gender classification (i.e. events and practicalities in school which are related to the male/female gender or binary gender paradigms) e.g. school activities including sports which are arranged according to the participants' gender; and

Language and the use of names in school – many transgender pupils have a preferred name which is not their birth name and there were/are challenges faced in getting teaching staff (n=26, 40.0%), other pupils (n=23, 35.4%) and non-teaching staff (n=21, 32.3%) to use the respondent's preferred forename.

Other issues highlighted included attending residential (n=13, 20.0%) and going on school trips (n=8, 12.3%).

A number of respondents highlighted other issues they experienced in Post-primary school including a lack of education on LGBT issues, concerns over outing themselves as transgender and *'Transphobic remarks by teachers'*. Only five respondents (7.7%) said they had no concerns and faced no challenges in Post-primary school.

Arrangements/Provisions in Place to help address challenges faced by Transgender Pupils in Post-Primary School

Particular arrangements were put in place to help ten (16%) of the transgender respondents deal with the challenges they face/faced as a transgender pupil; these included name change, uniform change, use of alternative bathroom/changing room and being excused from PE.

'As I attended an all-female school they allowed me the use of disabled toilets for privacy, allowed me to wear trousers with my uniform and changed my name in the system.'

However one respondent describes being forced to stop participating in PE and how their request to use alternative facilities was denied;

The school was not prepared to allow me to access a-gendered bathrooms so I do not actually have a bathroom I can use. I was also forced to stop PE. There was no attempt to educate other students about transgender issues and many of the teachers were very transphobic'

Transgender Pupils' Perceptions of Understanding and Support

Respondents who identified as transgender were asked about three aspects of Post-primary school including:

- The level of understanding shown by teachers to transgendered pupils;
- The level of understanding shown by pupils to transgendered pupils; and
- The level of support shown by the transgendered pupil's group of friends.

The results are displayed below.

Table 5:5 Transgender Pupils’ Perceptions of Understanding and Support

Part	A	Agree Strongly with A		Agree with A		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree with B		Agree Strongly with B		B	Total N
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
19.1	I have/had a supportive group of friends at school	23	35.4%	23	35.4%	8	12.3%	5	7.7%	6	9.2%	I feel/felt isolated at school	65
19.2	I feel/felt understood by other pupils at school	11	16.9%	12	18.5%	13	20.0%	16	24.6%	13	20.0%	I feel/felt other pupils do/did not understand me	65
19.3	I feel/felt understood by teachers in school	*	*	#	#	20	32.3%	14	22.6%	17	27.4%	I feel/felt teachers do/did not understand me	62

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Only those who answered ‘Yes’ to Q11 could answer this question (n=65); no respondents skipped part 19.1 and 19.2 of this question and three skipped 19.3. Therefore, the base for parts 19.1, 19.2 and 19.3 are 65, 65 and 62 respectively.

** - to denote fewer than 5 cases; and

- to denote a number (5 or greater) which has been suppressed to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals.

Transgender respondents did not feel particularly well understood by either teachers or other pupils with 50% (n=31) indicating that teachers did not understand them and 44.6% (n=39) that other pupils did not understand them. However, transgender students feel better understood by other pupils than they do by teachers in Post-primary school with just 17.7% (n=11) feeling they were understood by teachers in their school compared to 35.4% (n=23) agreeing or strongly agreeing that they were understood by other pupils at school.

On a very positive note, 70.8% (n=46) agreed or strongly agreed that they had a supportive group of friends at school. However, 16.9% (n=11) of respondents felt isolated at school.

A further question was asked to give respondents the opportunity to detail any other issues of concern or difficulty they have experienced in Post-primary school, with one respondent saying:

‘I am constantly singled out and cannot partake in many school activities. Teachers are transphobic and although I have supportive friends, most other students do not understand at all.’

Two respondents discussed the need for more education and readily available information covering transgender issues:

‘People tend not to know what it is when you tell them so there should be information more readily available to help pupils and teachers understand.’

5.6 Experiences of LGB Young People in Post-Primary School

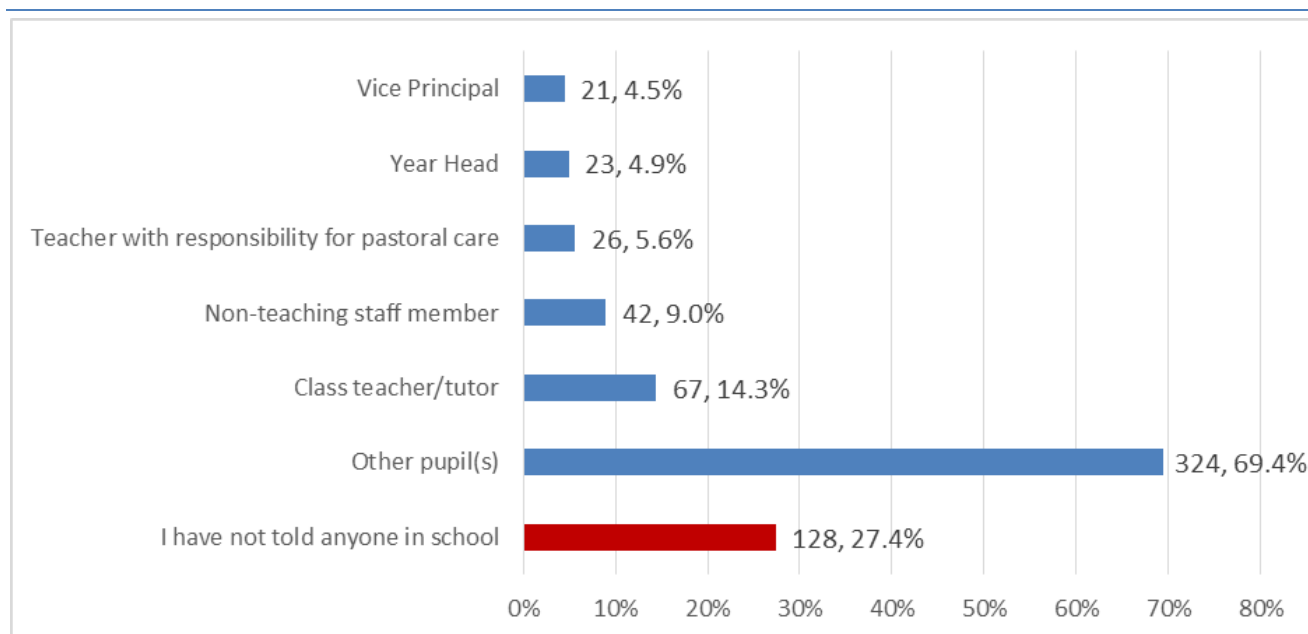
As per transgender pupils we asked those respondents who had identified as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual about their experiences of Post-primary school. Questions in this section of the questionnaire could be answered by those who responded ‘Gay’, ‘Lesbian’, ‘Bisexual’ or ‘Other’ to Q10 and did not identify as transgender in Q11¹⁶ i.e. 467 respondents in total.

In total 467 respondents answered the questions in this section and therefore this is the base for all of the tables and charts detailed below unless stated otherwise.

Coming out as a LGB Young Person in Post-Primary School

Respondents were asked if they had spoken to anyone anyone about their identity or how they felt about their identity¹⁷. The results are displayed below.

Figure 5:6 Who LGB students have spoken to about their LGB identity in Post-primary school



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

¹⁶ Amongst those who responded to the survey, there is some overlap between those who identified as LGB and those who identified as T (34 in total). In discussion with DE, it was agreed to exclude these 34 from this section of the analysis (email from DE to PACEC 8 March, 2016)

¹⁷ Question 20: ‘Q.20 While in school have you had the opportunity to tell anyone about your LGB identity or how you feel about your identity? (Please tick as many as are applicable)’

Note: Respondents could select more than one option. Only those who answered ‘Lesbian or ‘Gay’ or ‘Bisexual’ or ‘Other’ to Q10 and did not identify as transgender in Q11 could answer this question. So, the base is 467.

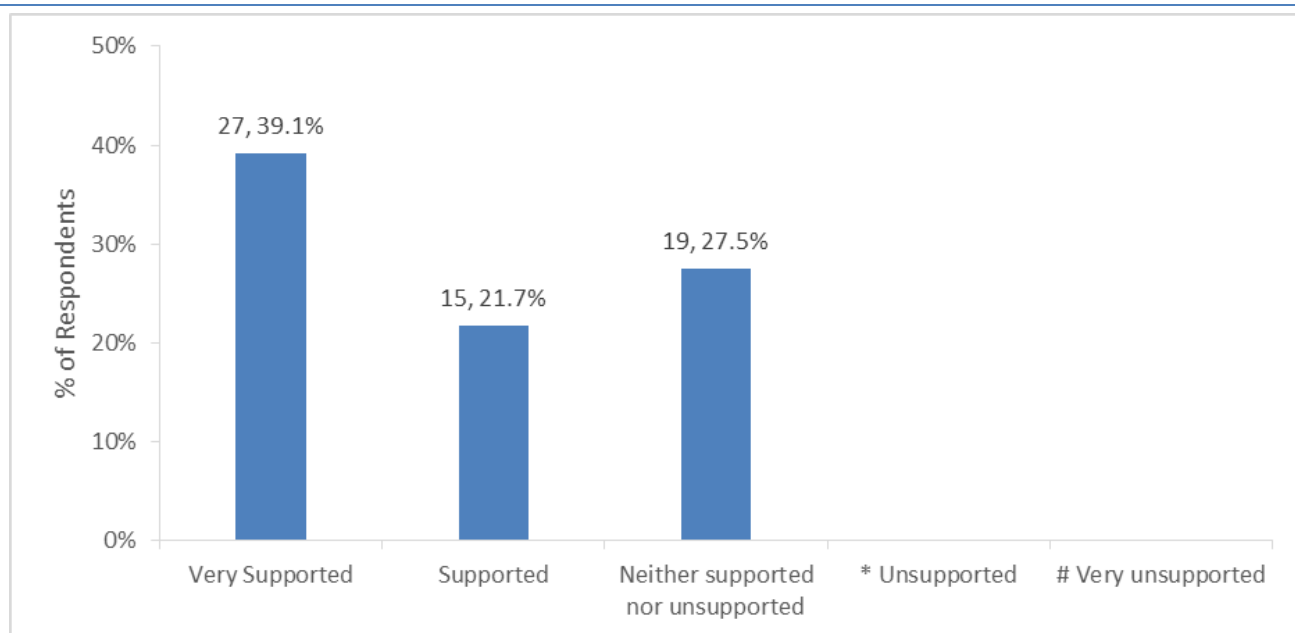
Of particular note is that over a quarter (27.4%, n=128) of respondents had not told anyone in post-primary school about their LGB identity or how they felt about this.

A majority of respondents (69.4%, n=324) had spoken to other pupils about their LGB identity; however less than 15% of respondents had spoken about these issues with a member of staff. This suggests that students are a lot less willing to discuss their LGB identity with members of staff than they are with fellow students. It is also clear that the more senior the member of staff within school becomes, the less likely the respondent was to have spoken to them about these issues.

Level of support from staff for young LGB pupils

Of those respondents who had discussed their sexual orientation with a member of staff, we asked how the reaction of the member of staff had made them feel. The responses are detailed below.

Figure 5:7 Staff response to respondents’ LGB identity



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: 25 people skipped this question and only those who did not answer ‘No, I have not told anyone in school’ to Q20 and indicated that they had told a member of staff in Q20¹⁸ could answer this question. Therefore, the base is 69.

*** Caution small numbers

¹⁸ i.e. this includes people who told a member of staff only; people who told a member of staff and other pupils; but not people that had told other pupils only.

'**' - to denote fewer than 5 cases; and

'#' - to denote a number (5 or greater) which has been suppressed to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals.

Forty-two respondents (60.9%) indicated that they felt 'very supported' or 'supported' by the reaction of the member of staff and 19 (27.5%) stated that they felt 'neither supported nor unsupported' by the member of staff. However, just over 10% (n=8, base=69) stated that they felt the member of staff was unsupportive (n<5) or very unsupportive.

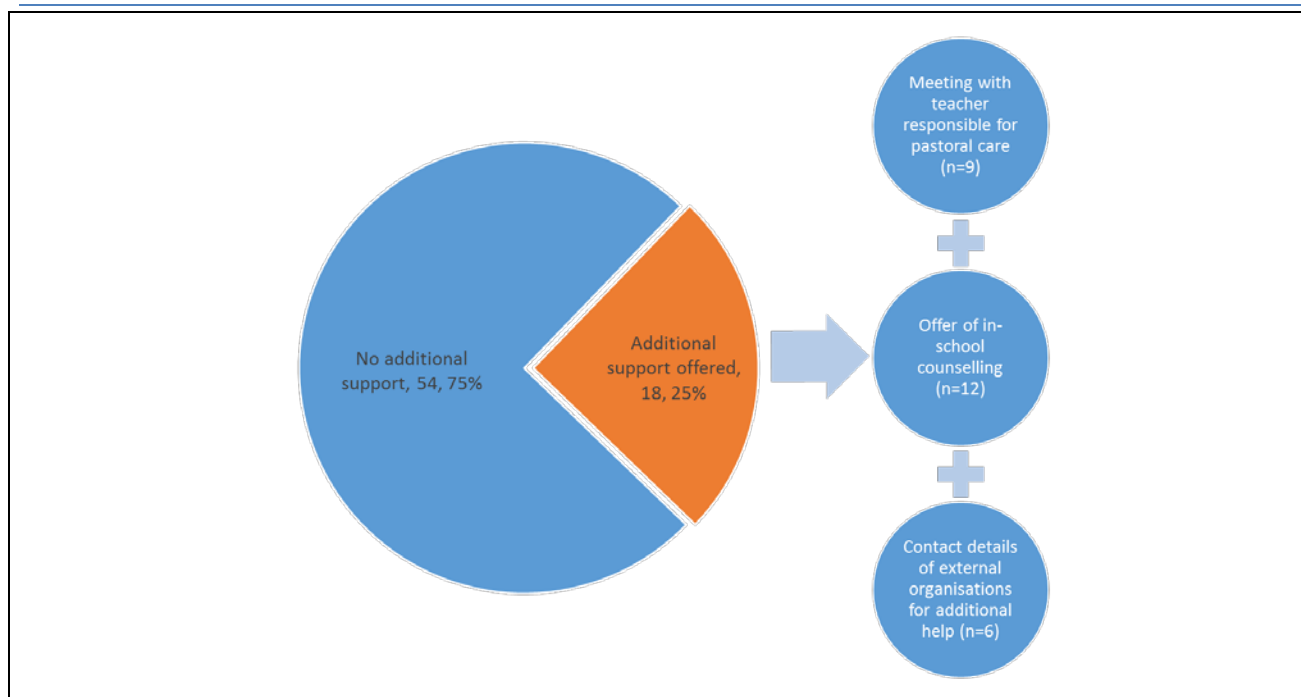
Additional Support Provided for Young LGB Pupils in Post-Primary Schools

Respondents were asked about what, if any, additional support they received. Of those who received additional support in Post-primary school we asked them about the nature of this support. The details are included below.

A quarter of respondents (n=18, base=72, ***Caution small numbers) were offered additional support after telling a member of staff about their LGB identity. The support provided was varied but included:

- 12 were offered in-school counselling;
- 9 were offered a meeting with the teacher responsible for pastoral care; and
- 6 were provided with contact details for external organisations for additional support.

Figure 5:8 Additional support for LGB students



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

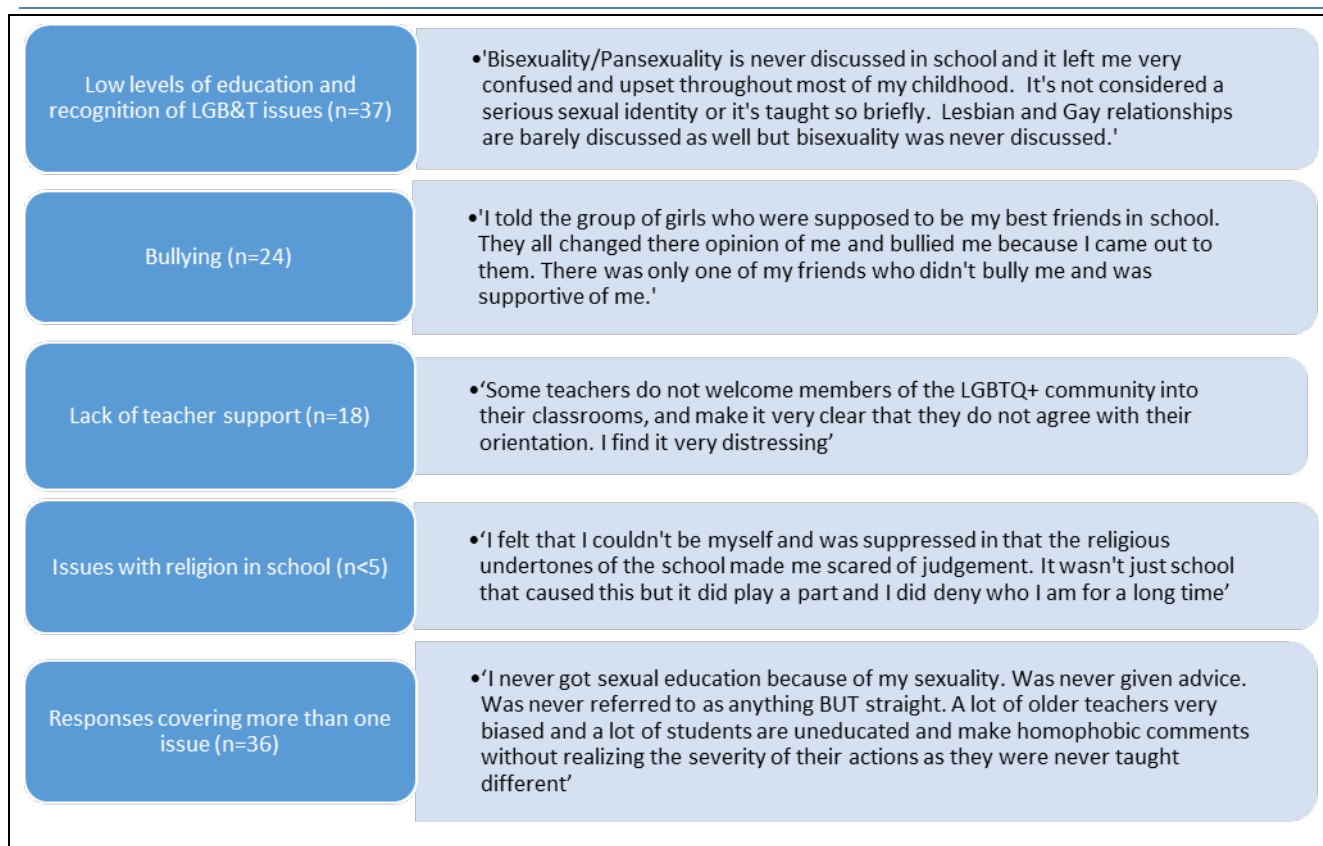
Note: 22 people skipped this question and only those who did not answer 'No, I have not told anyone in school' to Q20 and indicated that they had told a member of staff in Q20¹⁹ could answer this question. Therefore, the base is 72.

***Caution small numbers

Challenges and issues experienced by LGB Pupils in Post-primary school

Respondents also provided details of issues or difficulties they have experienced; these have been categorised in the figure below along with relevant quotes from an LGB student to illustrate the points.

Figure 5:9 Other Issues and Difficulties in Post-primary school



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Based on responses to Q25 under 'other issues of concern or difficulties experienced as a lesbian, gay or bisexual pupil'. All respondents other than those who identified as transgender were allowed to answer this question (n=467), 125 respondents offered qualitative answers to this question and these were categorised to those topics listed in the figure (the numbers against each of the issues in the figure represent the number of responses that covered only that issue, responses covering multiple issues (n=36) have been listed separately).

¹⁹ i.e. this includes people who told a member of staff only; people who told a member of staff and other pupils; but not people who had told other pupils only.

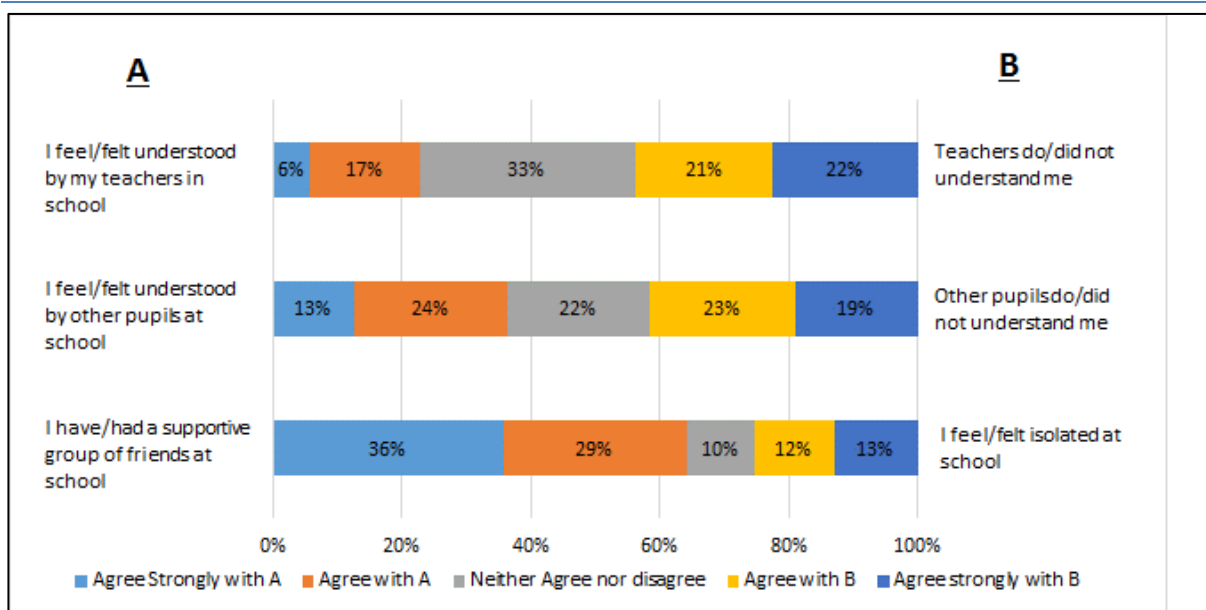
LGB Pupils’ Perceptions of Understanding and Support

LGB respondents were asked about three aspects of Post-primary school including:

- The level of understanding shown by teachers to LGB pupils;
- The level of understanding shown by pupils to LGB pupils; and
- The level of support shown by the LGB pupil’s group of friends.

The results are displayed in the chart below.

Figure 5:10 Impact of Post-Primary School on LGB Pupils



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Only those who answered ‘Lesbian or ‘Gay’ or ‘Bisexual’ or ‘Other’ to Q10 and did not identify as transgender in Q11 could answer this question. Part 1 was skipped by no respondents, part 2 by two respondents and part 3 by five respondents. Therefore, the base for parts 1, 2 and 3 is 467, 465 and 462 respectively.

LGB respondents did not feel particularly well understood by either teachers or other pupils, with similar proportions agreeing or strongly agreeing that teachers and pupils did not understand them (43% and 41% respectively). However, more LGB students felt understood by other pupils than they did by teachers in Post-primary school, with just 22.7% (n=105) feeling they were understood by teachers in their school compared to 36.4% (n=169) agreeing or strongly agreeing that they were understood by other pupils at school. It is extremely encouraging to note that 65% (n=300) of LGB respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had a supportive group of friends at school, though around a quarter did feel isolated in school.

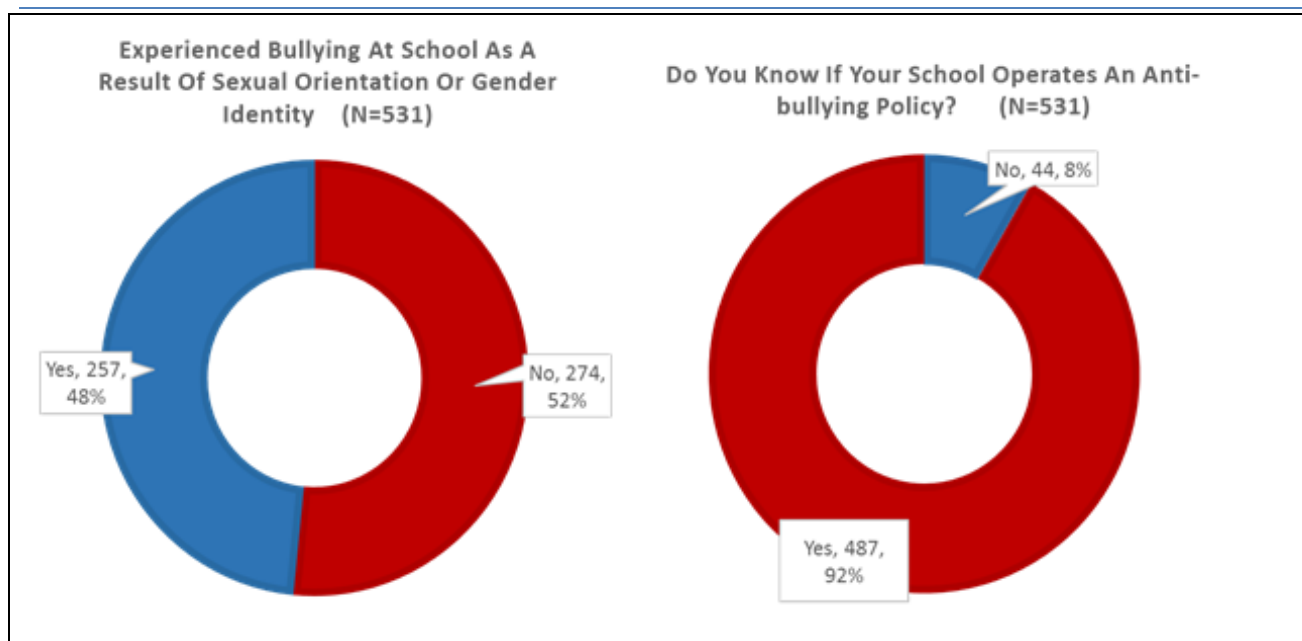
5.7 Bullying Experienced by Young LGB&T People in Post-Primary School

This section of the survey explores the bullying experienced by LGB&T young people in Post-primary school.

Bullying Policy and Experiences of Bullying in Post-Primary School

At the outset respondents were asked if they knew whether their Post-primary school operated an anti-bullying policy. The vast majority (91.7%, n=487, base=531) indicated that they did understand that their Post-primary school operated an anti-bullying policy. Forty-four respondents (8.3%) indicated that they did not know whether their Post-primary school operated an anti-bullying policy.

Figure 5:11 Bullying Policy and Experiences of bullying in Post-primary school



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Experienced bullying question, One respondent skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 531.

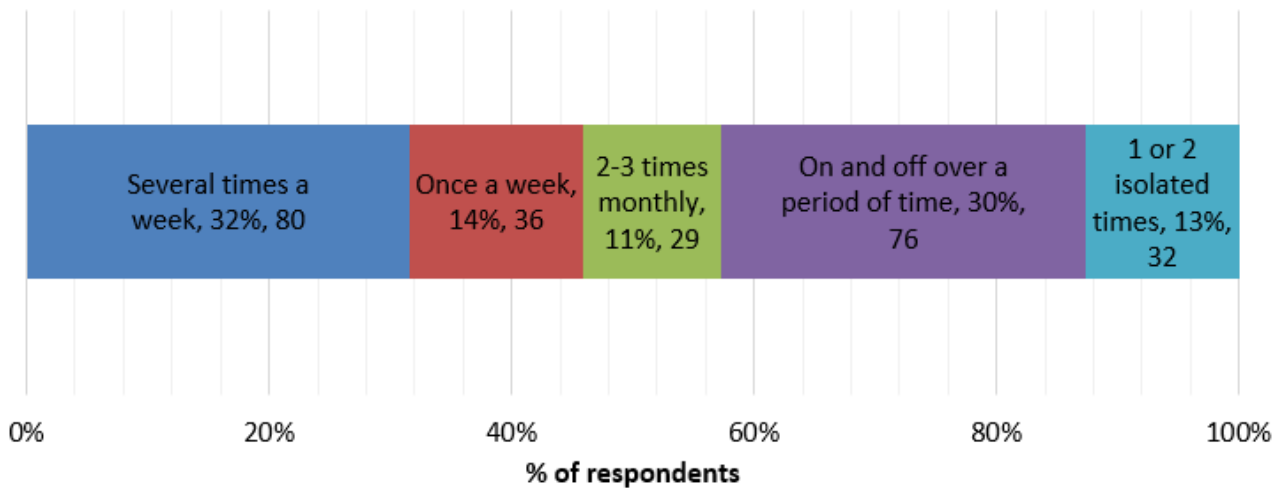
Note: Anti-Bullying policy question, One respondent skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 531.

To understand the overall experience of bullying in Post-primary schools we asked respondents if they had experienced bullying because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and the results are displayed in the figure above. A majority of respondents (52%, n=274, base=531) had never experienced bullying as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity, leaving 257 respondents (48%) who had experienced bullying. In the sections to follow we explore the frequency, scale and scope of the bullying experienced by these LGB&T young people.

Frequency of Bullying in Post-Primary School as a Result of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

Respondents were asked about the frequency of the bullying they experienced. The results are displayed below.

Figure 5:12 Frequency of LGB&T bullying in Post-primary schools



Source: Survey of Post-primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

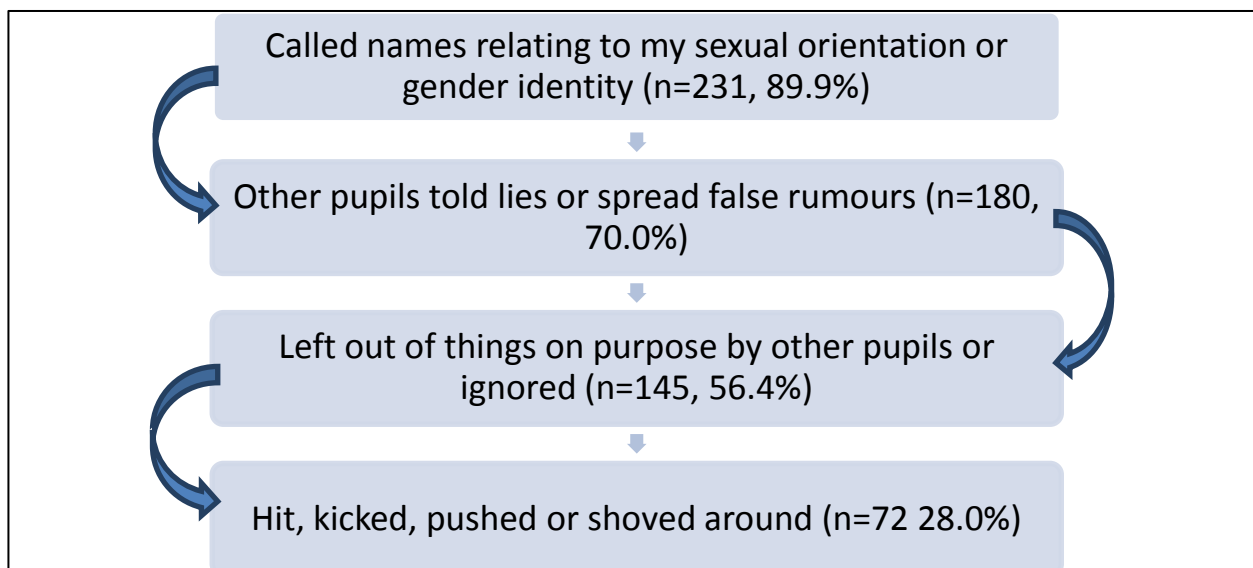
Note: Only those who answered 'Yes' to Q27 could answer this question and four respondents skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 253.

A significant minority of respondents (31.6%, n=80, base=253) were bullied several times a week and a further 14.2% (n=36) were bullied once a week. Just 12.6% (n=32) of respondents experienced bullying on one or two isolated occasions due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Forms of bullying in Post-primary school as a result of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

To gain a better understanding of the bullying experienced by the LGB&T young people we asked them to describe the main forms of bullying they had experienced because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The results are detailed below.

Figure 5:13 Forms of bullying as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Respondents could select more than one option. Only those who answered ‘Yes’ (had experienced bullying as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity) to Q27 (n=257) could answer this question. Therefore, the base is 257.

The figure above illustrates the most common forms of bullying of LGB&T students. Some respondents provided a further explanation of their response as follows:

‘People isolated me, who previously I would have been friendly with. My friend group was significantly reduced to 1 or 2 people’;

‘For an entire year the majority of pupils avoided any contact with me’

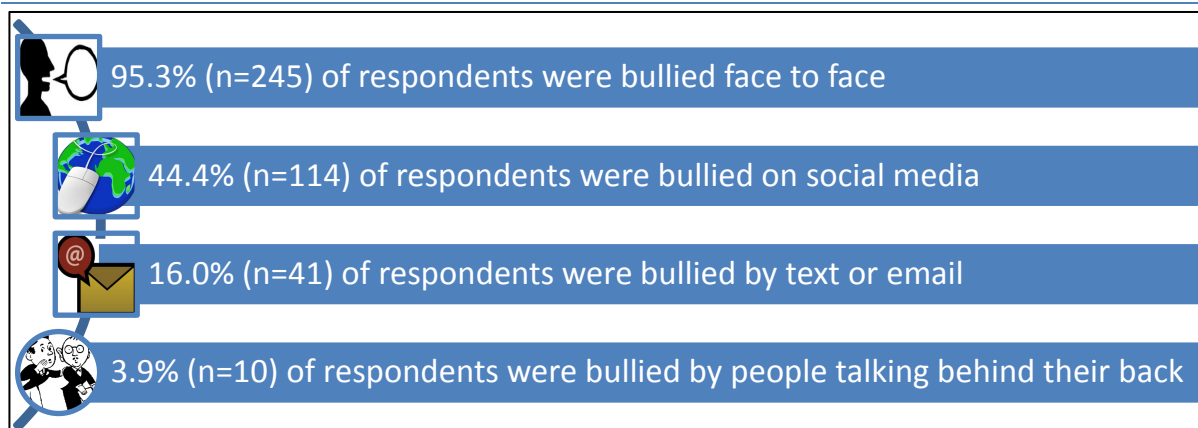
Respondents also had the opportunity to describe other forms of bullying that had taken place with three respondents discussing ‘bully like’ behaviour by teachers;

‘I also had teachers call me names like sissy and pansy and was singled out by one teacher who compared me to a plague.’

Methods of Bullying

Given the widespread use of the internet and social media and the prevalence of cyber-bullying, the method of bullying was also important. We therefore asked respondents about the method used to bully them because of their sexual orientation or their gender identity.

Figure 5:14 Methods of Post-primary school bullying



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Respondents could select more than one option. Only those who answered ‘Yes’ (had experienced bullying as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity) to Q27 (n=257) could answer this question. Therefore, the base is 257.

Almost all respondents (95%, n=245, base=257) had experienced bullying carried out face-to-face. The next most common method was social media with over 44% of respondents reporting that they were bullied on social media; a further 16% were bullied by text or email.

3.9% of respondents (n=10) were bullied by people talking about them behind their backs. In addition to those methods, one respondent noted that items belonging to them had been stolen: ‘Notes left in locker, things stolen’.

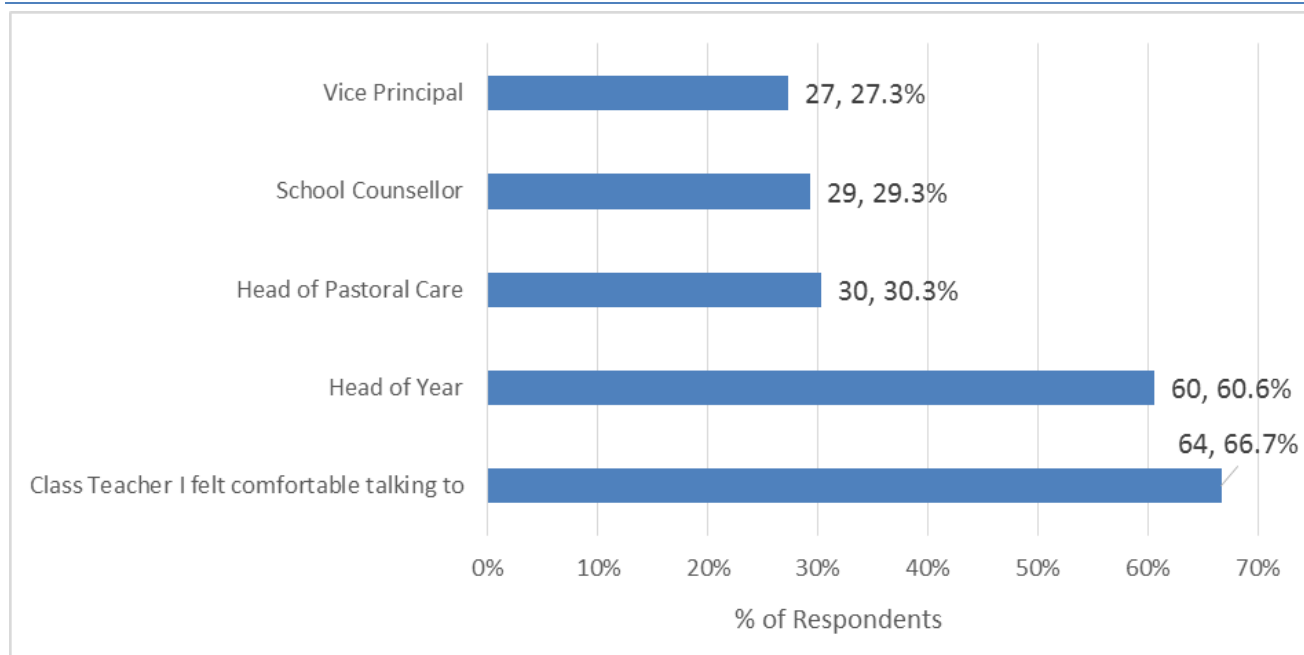
Staff response to Bullying

We asked those who had been bullied if they had reported it to a member of staff. Only 38.8% (n=99, base=255) reported the bullying to a member of staff²⁰.

We also asked those who had reported the bullying to which member of staff they had reported it. The results are displayed below.

²⁰ Two respondents skipped this question, therefore base = 255

Figure 5:15 Member of staff LGB&T students reported bullying to



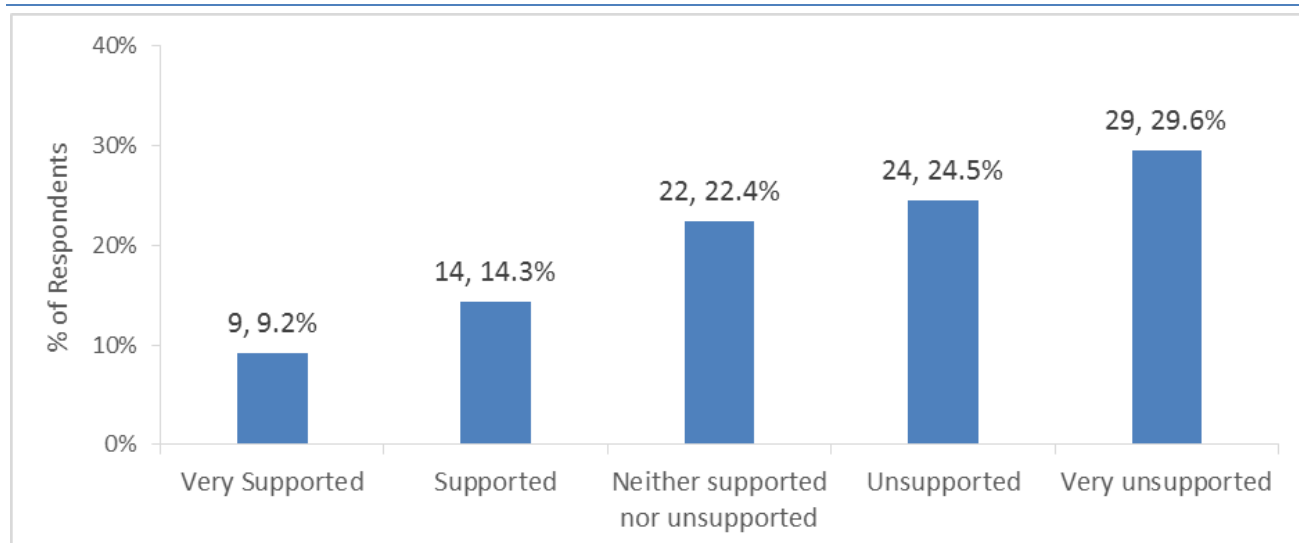
Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Respondents could select more than one option. Only those who answered ‘Yes’ (had reported bullying as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity) to Q31 (n=99) could answer this question. Therefore, the base is 99.

The majority of respondents who were bullied either reported it to ‘a class teacher they felt comfortable talking to’ (66.7%, n=64) or their ‘head of year’ (60.6% n=60). Fewer pupils felt comfortable in reporting the bullying to the ‘head of pastoral care’ (n=30), the ‘school counsellor’ (n=29) and the ‘vice-principal’ (n=27).

We also asked respondents how supported they felt by the school’s response to the reported bullying. The results are displayed below.

Figure 5:16 Staff response to bullying



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Only those who answered ‘Yes’ (had reported bullying as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity) to Q31 (n=99) could answer this question and one respondent skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 98.

***Caution small numbers

The majority of the respondents (54.1%, n=53, base=98) who had been bullied because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and had reported this to a member of staff indicated that they felt ‘very unsupported’ or ‘unsupported’ by the member of staff’s response. A minority (23.5%, n=23) of respondents felt ‘supported’ or ‘very supported’ by the member of staff’s response to the reported bullying.

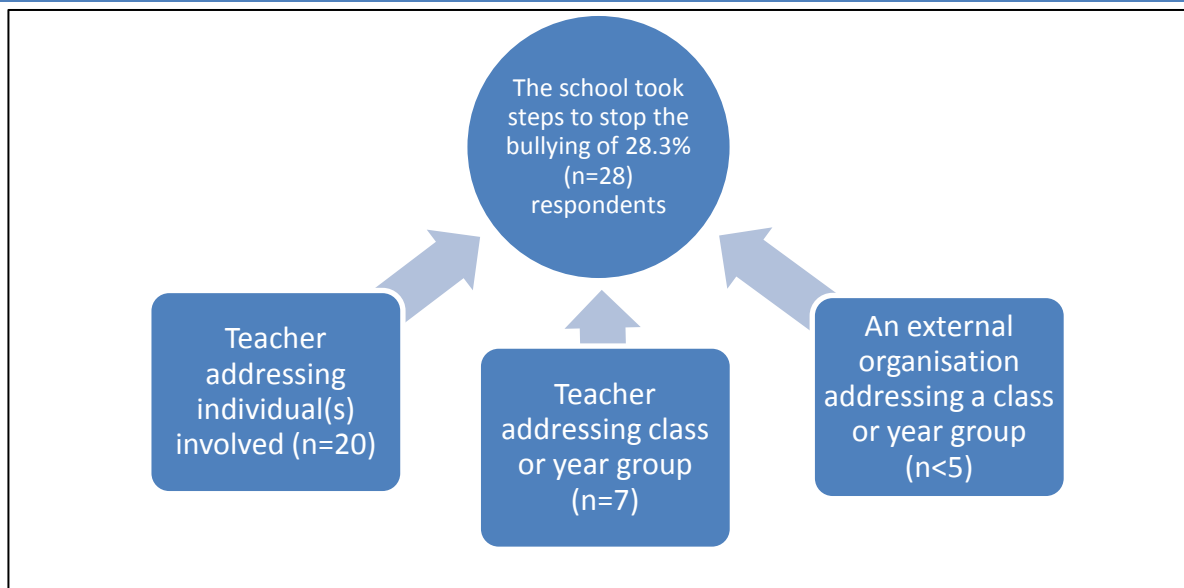
The majority (80.8%, n=80, base=99, ***Caution small numbers) of those who had reported an incident of bullying because of sexual orientation or gender identity indicated that the school handled the bullying incident ‘not well’ or ‘badly’.

Steps taken to stop / prevent bullying of LGB&T young people

We asked respondents who had been bullied if they were aware of any steps their Post-primary school had taken to stop or prevent bullying of LGB&T young people. The majority (71.7%, n=71, base=99, ***Caution small numbers) indicated that they were not aware of any steps being taken, whilst 28.3% (n=28) of pupils were aware of the steps taken to stop or prevent bullying of LGB&T young people.

The steps being taken are displayed in the diagram below.

Figure 5:17 Steps taken to stop LGB&T bullying in Post-primary schools



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Only those who answered ‘Yes’ (had reported bullying as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity) to Q31 (n=99) could answer this question. Therefore, the base is 98. The 28 respondents who indicated the school had taken steps to stop the bullying were then asked what the steps taken by the school were. The base for this part of the question is 28.

***Caution small numbers

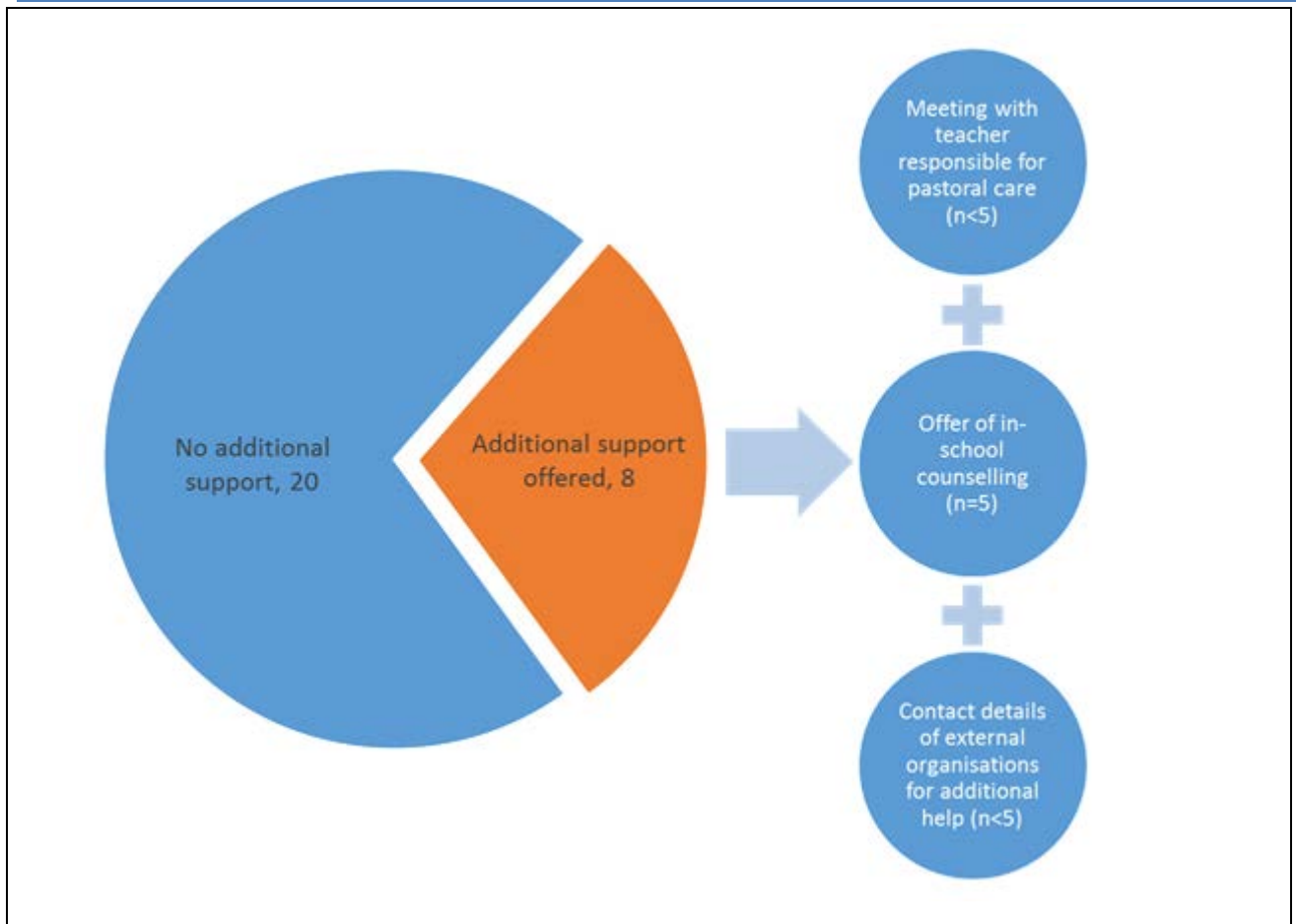
The main steps taken included:

- Teacher addressing the individual(s) involved (n=20);
- Teacher addressing class or year group (n=7); and
- An external organisation addressing the class or year group (n<5).

Additional Support for LGB&T Pupils who Experienced Bullying in Post-Primary School

For those students who had reported the bullying and whose Post-primary school had taken steps to address this we asked whether any additional support had been offered to them. Their responses are summarised below.

Figure 5:18 Additional support for LGB&T students



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

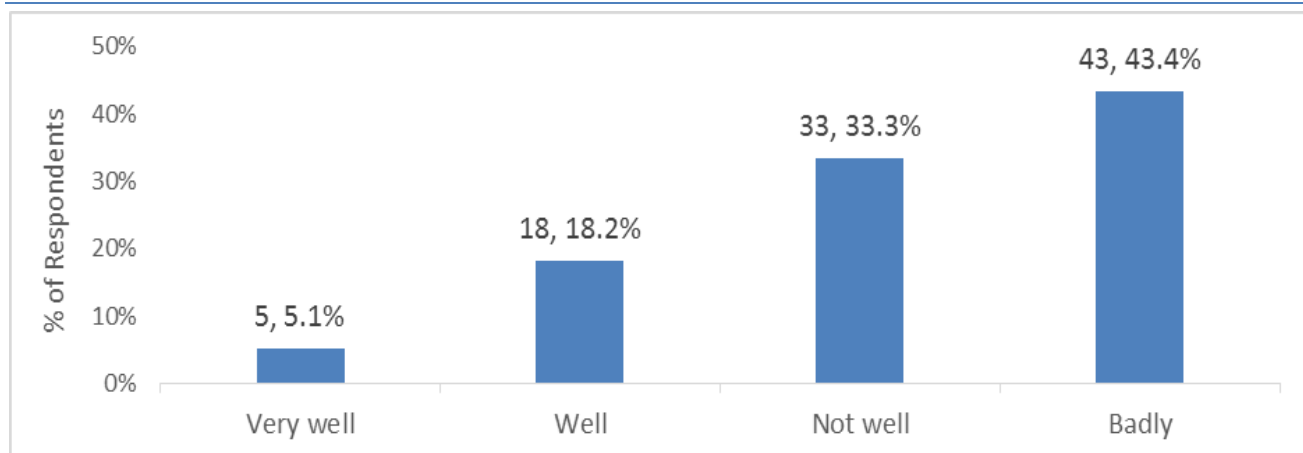
Note: Only those who answered ‘Yes’ (school had taken steps to stop bullying) to Q35 (n=28) could answer this question. Therefore, the base is 28. The 8 respondents who received additional support were then asked what form this additional support took and the results of this are also displayed in the figure, base=8.

Eight respondents were offered additional support after telling a member of staff about their LGB&T identity; this additional support took the forms listed in Figure 5:18 above, with the offer of in-school counselling again being the most common method of additional support offered.

Overall Experience of How Post-Primary School Dealt with Bullying

We asked the respondents who had been bullied in Post-primary school to rate overall how the school had dealt with this. The results are displayed below.

Figure 5:19 Overall how respondents Post-primary schools have dealt with bullying



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Only those who answered ‘Yes’ to Q31 could answer this question. Therefore, the base is 99.

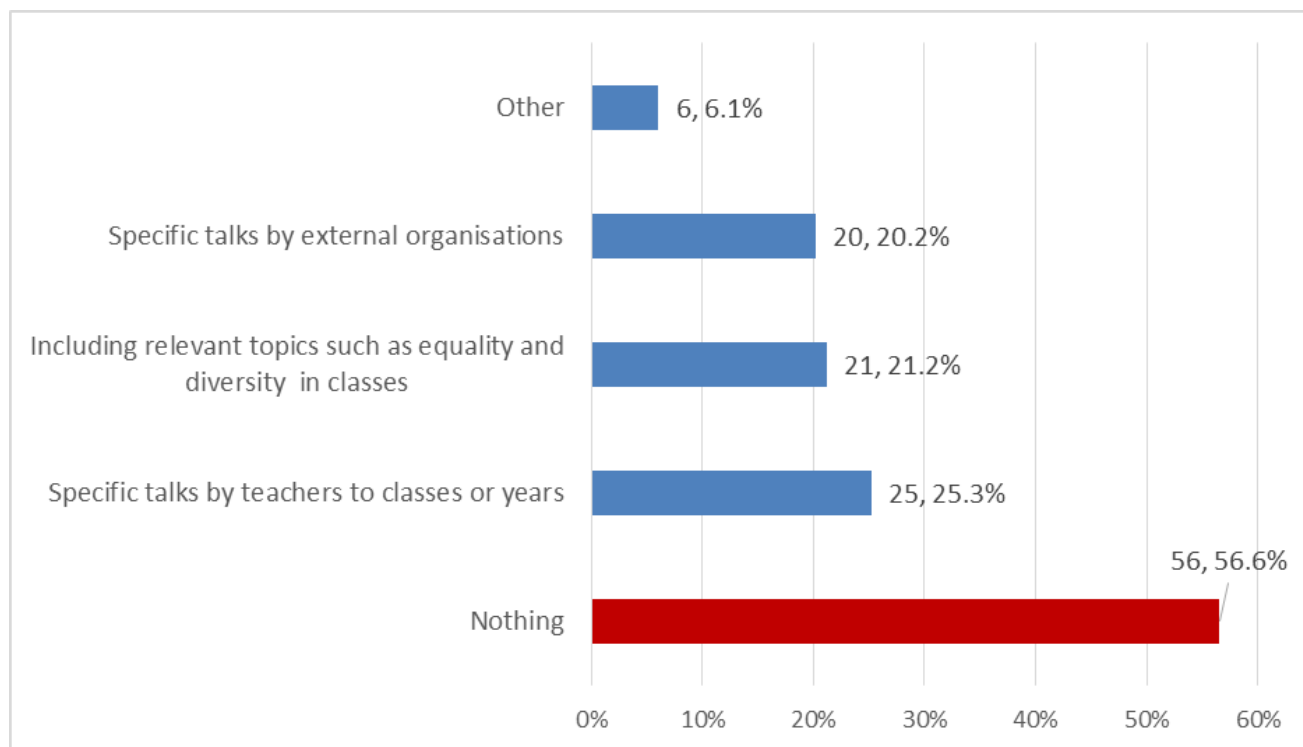
***Caution small numbers

76.6% of respondents (n=76, base=99) indicated that overall they thought the school dealt with the bullying ‘not well’ or ‘badly’. Only 18.2% (n=18) felt the school had dealt ‘well’ with the bullying whilst five respondents (5.1%) thought their school had dealt ‘very well’ with the bullying.

Post-Primary Schools’ Effort to Deal with LGB&T Bullying

We asked respondents to indicate the specific activities that their Post-primary school had undertaken to deal with LGB&T bullying. The results are displayed below.

Figure 5:20 Post-primary schools’ activities to deal with LGB&T bullying



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Respondents could select more than one option. Only those who answered ‘Yes’ to Q31 could answer this question. Therefore, the base is 99.

***Caution small numbers

A majority (56.6%, n=56) of respondents indicated that their Post-primary school do/did nothing to deal with LGB&T bullying. Of the schools which had made an effort to deal with LGB&T bullying some of the main mechanisms included:

- Specific talks by teachers to classes or years (25.3%, n=25);
- Including relevant topics such as equality and diversity in classes (21.2%, n=21);
- Specific talks by external organisations (21.2%, n=21)

Amongst the ‘Other’ category (n=6) a number of respondents provided details of steps their Post-primary school had taken, including one school which had established a Gay Straight Alliance group. Other respondents said that while steps were taken to deal with bullying, these were not specific to LGB&T students. Some additional remarks included:

‘Talks by teachers/external organisations about bullying but not specific to LGBT’
 ‘Diversity was discussed but no mention of LGBT diversity. It included other religions and race only’
 ‘Very superficial and unreal. No connections made to relevant issues in society. It’s like they need to do it to tick a box’

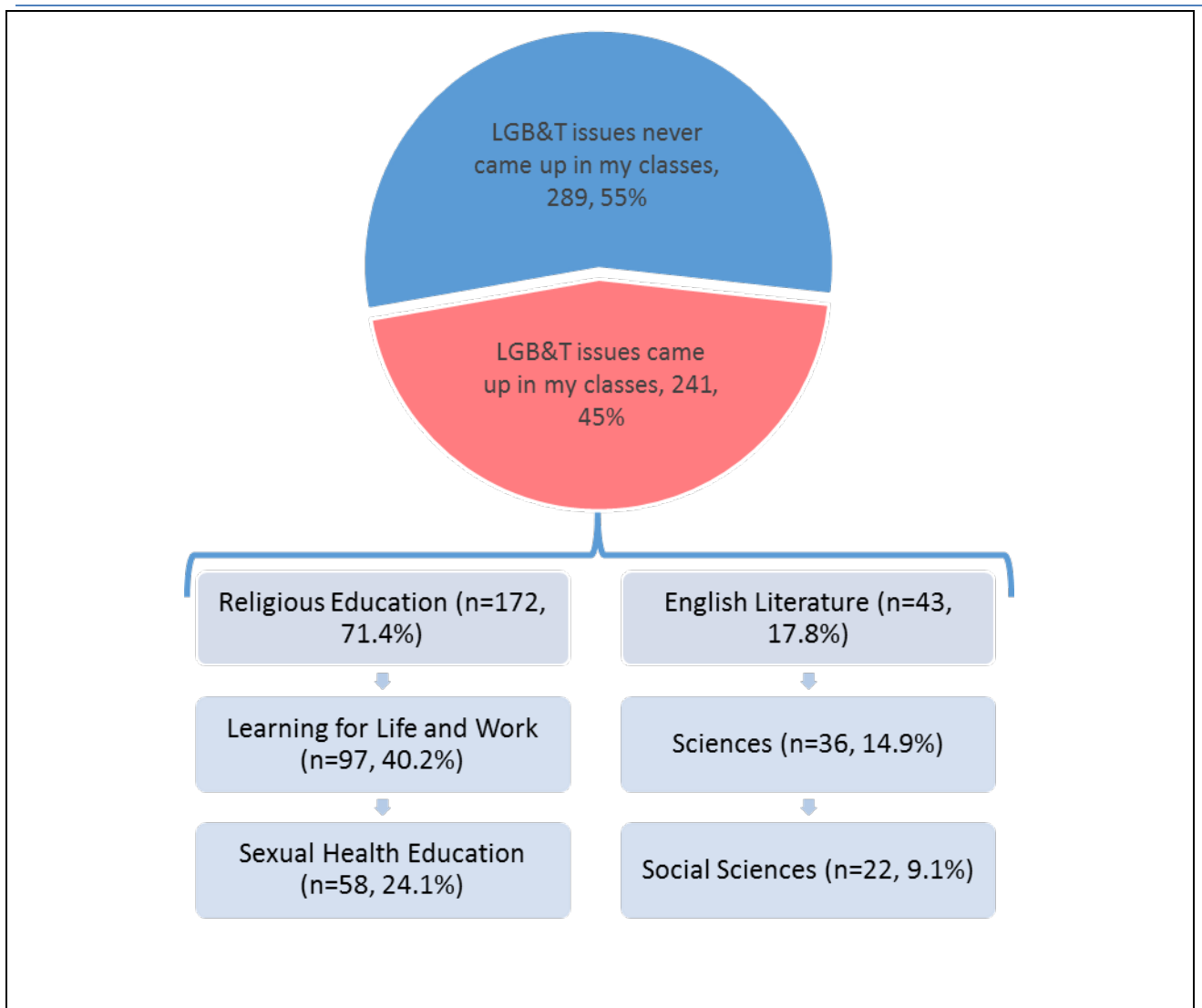
5.8 Teaching and Learning in Post-Primary Schools

This section considers teaching and learning on LGB&T issues in Post-primary school.

Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity Issues covered in Classes

We asked respondents whether sexual orientation or gender identity issues had been covered in any classes. For those who responded positively, we asked for details of which classes and subjects this occurred in. The responses are displayed below.

Figure 5:21 Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity issues in class



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Two respondents skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 530. The 241 respondents who said LGB&T issues had come up in their classes were asked to indicate in which class; the results of this are also shown in the figure, base=241.

Issues regarding sexual orientation or gender identity came up in just 45.5% (n=241) of respondents' classes. 54.5% (n=289) of respondents reported that such issues had not come up in any of their classes.

Of those who reported sexual orientation or gender identity being covered in classes, the subject that most respondents said these issues came up in was Religious Education (71.4%, n=172 of those respondents said these issues came up in a class), followed by Learning for Life and Work (n=97, 40.2%). Of those who said sexual orientation or gender identity issues came up in class, only 24.1% (n=58) said that this was during Sexual Health Education. Other classes these issues came up in included English Literature (17.8%, n=43), Sciences (14.9%, n=36) and Social Sciences (9.1%, n=22). Furthermore, 10.8% (n=26) of respondents gave 'Other' responses and of these Sociology (2.5%, n=6) was the most common followed by Government/Politics (1.7%, n<5).

Responses regarding the coverage of sexual orientation or gender identity issues in class have also been examined for two sub-groups of respondents: those who identified as transgender and those who identified as LGB and not transgender. The results of this are shown below.

Table 5:6 Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity Issues in Class, by Transgender and LGB respondents

	LGB		Transgender	
	N	%	N	%
LGB&T issues came up in class	201	43.2%	40	61.5%
LGB&T issues never came up in class	264	56.8%	25	38.5%
Total Respondents	465	100.0%	65	100.0%

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Two LGB respondents skipped this question, therefore the base for LGB respondents is 465. The base for transgender respondents is 65.

Respondents who said sexual orientation or gender identity issues came up in class were then asked which classes these issues came up in; the table below details responses from those who identified as transgender as well as those who identified as LGB (and not transgender).

Table 5:7 Classes LGB&T issues came up in, by Transgender and LGB respondents

	LGB		Transgender	
	N	%	N	%
Religious Education	144	71.6%	28	70.0%
Learning for Life and Work	80	39.8%	17	42.5%
Sexual Health Education	48	23.9%	10	25.0%
English Literature	35	17.4%	8	20.0%
Sciences	31	15.4%	#	#
Social sciences (Geography / History)	21	10.4%	*	*
Total Respondents	201	-	40	-

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

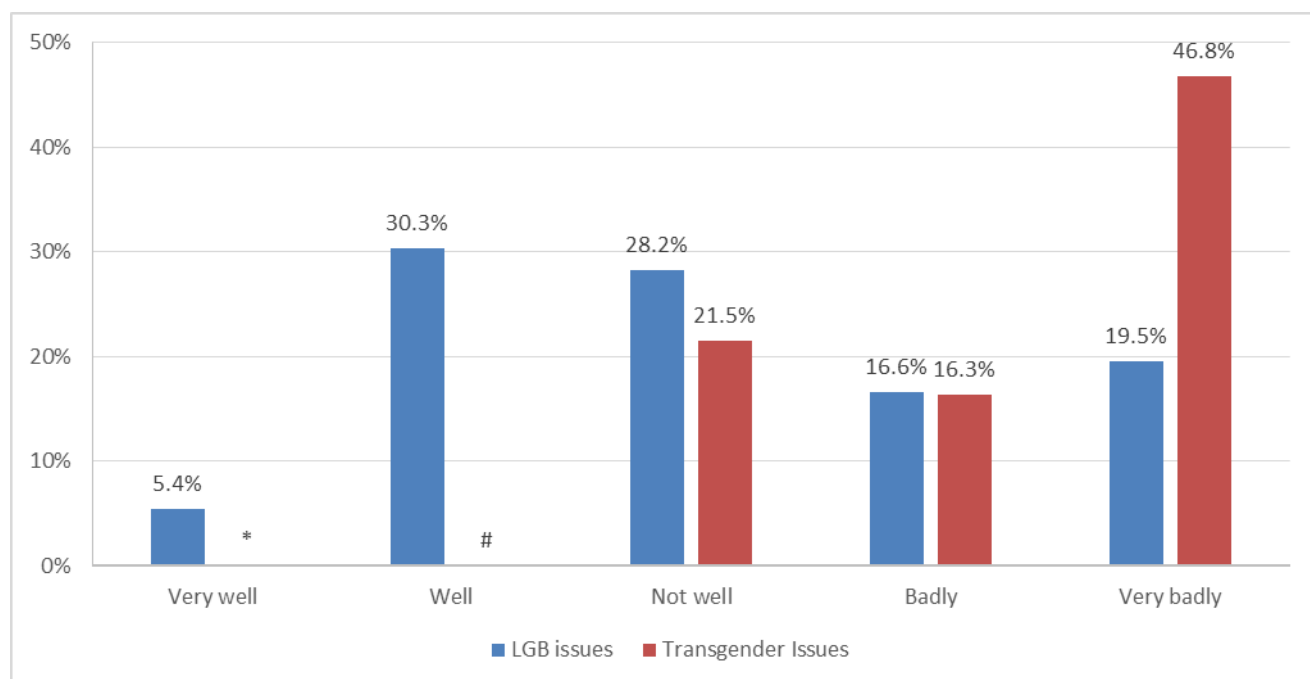
** - to denote fewer than 5 cases; and

- to denote a number (5 or greater) which has been suppressed to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals.

Approach to LGB and Transgender Issues in Class by Teachers in Post-Primary School

We asked respondents how well they thought teachers presented LGB&T issues and how well they managed the discussions in classes. The results are displayed below.

Figure 5:22 Approach to LGB and transgender issues by teachers in Post-primary school



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: LGB Issues: Only those who answered ‘Yes’ to Q41 (n=241) provided answers to this question i.e. this question was open to all respondents who answered ‘Yes’ to Q41, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Therefore, the base is 241.

Note: Transgender Issues: Only those who answered ‘Yes’ to Q41 could answer this question i.e. this question was open to all respondents who answered ‘Yes’ to Q41, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Of the 241 who answered ‘Yes’ to Q41, eight respondents went on to skip this question. Therefore, the base is 233.

‘*’ - to denote fewer than 5 cases; and

‘#’ - to denote a number (5 or greater) which has been suppressed to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals.

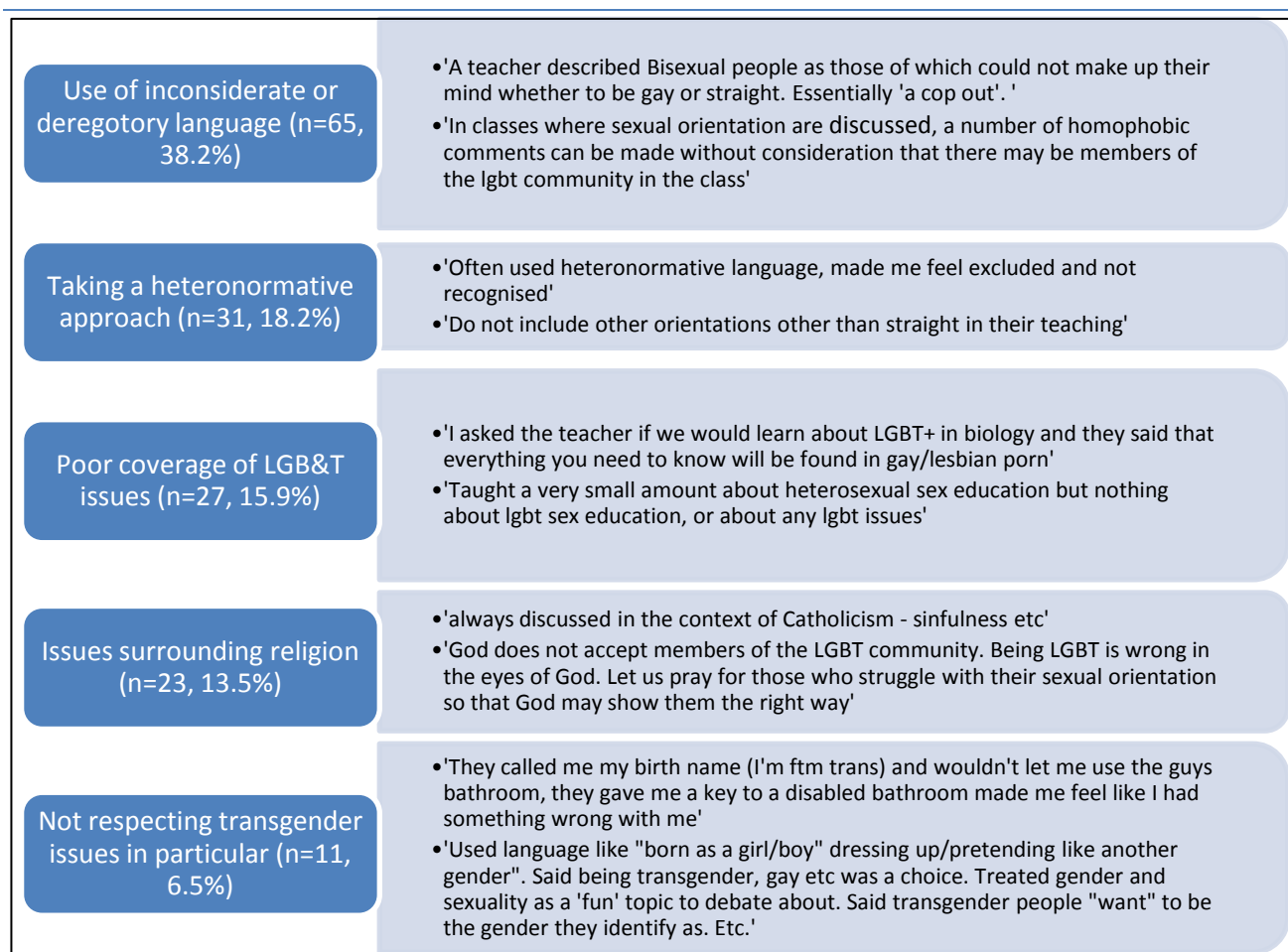
36.1% of respondents (n=87, base=241) said LGB issues were handled ‘badly’ or ‘very badly’. However, on a positive note, over 35% of LGB respondents (n=86) stated that teachers had handled LGB issues ‘well’ or ‘very well’.

A less positive view is evident in relation to transgender issues: the majority of respondents (63.1%, n=147, base=233) believed that transgender issues were handled ‘badly’ or ‘very badly’. Only 36 respondents (15.5%) believed that teachers handled transgender issues ‘well’ or ‘very well’.

Language and approaches to Learning in Post-Primary School

We asked respondents if teachers had used language or approaches to learning that have made LGB&T pupils feel uncomfortable or excluded. Overall, 38.2% (n=203, base=531²¹) stated that teachers had used language and approaches to learning that made them feel uncomfortable or excluded. 170 respondents provided more detail on what teachers did that made them feel uncomfortable; these were grouped as shown in the figure below.

Figure 5:23 Language or approaches to learning that have made respondents uncomfortable



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Of the 203 respondents who said teachers had used language or approaches to learning that had made them feel uncomfortable, 170 provided qualitative feedback on this and responses were categorised into the topics shown in the figure above (for further detail see Appendix). Therefore, the base is 170.

²¹ One respondent skipped this question.

The language and approach to learning within Post-primary school that made respondents feel uncomfortable have also been examined for those who identified as transgender and those who identified as LGB and not transgender; the results of this are shown in the table below.

Table 5:8 Language or approaches to learning that have made respondents uncomfortable, by Transgender and LGB respondents

Category	Transgender***	LGB
	N	N
Use of inconsiderate or derogatory language	13	52
Taking a heteronormative approach	*	29
Poor coverage of issues	5	22
Issues surrounding Religion	*	22
Ignoring bullying	0	5
General Negative view	0	*
Other	0	*
Not respecting transgender issues (e.g. names and pronouns)	8	*
Total	29	141

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

***Caution small numbers

* - to denote fewer than 5 cases; and

- to denote a number (5 or greater) which has been suppressed to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals.

Sexual Health Education²² in Post-Primary School

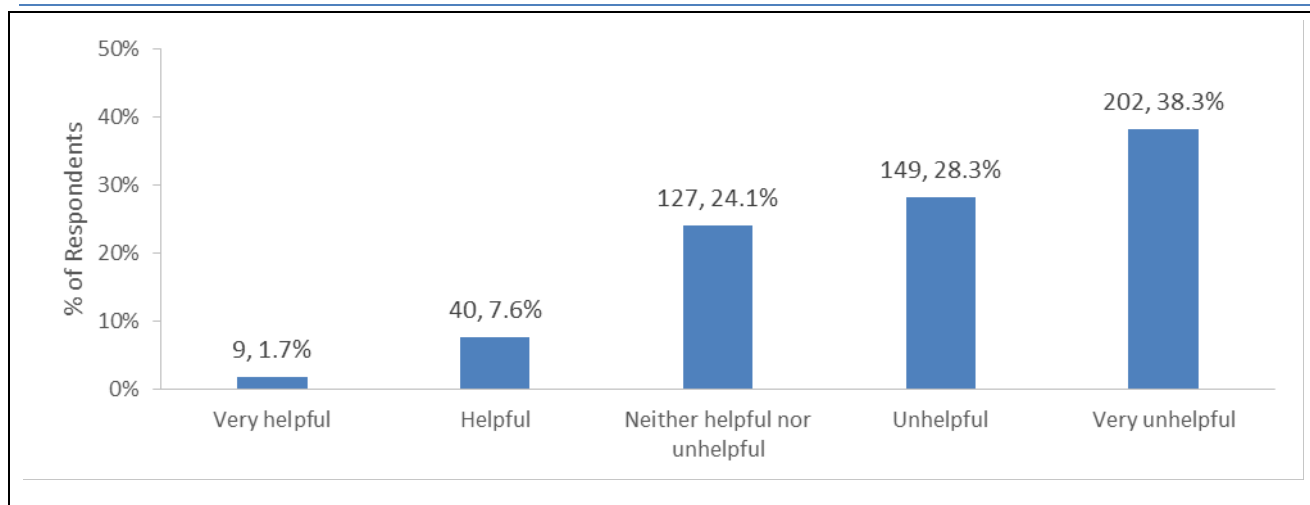
We asked respondents if LGB&T relationships had been discussed as part of Sexual Health Education²². Nearly all respondents (90.4%, n=480, base=531²³) indicated that LGB&T relationships had not been discussed; 9.6% of respondents (n =51) indicated that these had been discussed as part of the Sexual Health Education.

We asked all respondents how helpful they found Sexual Health Education. The responses are displayed below.

²² Please note that 'sexual health education' is the wording that was used in the survey; this is the same as Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE).

²³ One respondent skipped this question.

Figure 5:24 How helpful respondents found the sexual health education delivered in their Post-primary school



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Five respondents skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 527.

Overall 38.3% (n=202 of respondents) said that the sexual health education delivered in their Post-primary school was very unhelpful with a further 28.3% (n=149) saying it was unhelpful. At the other end of the scale, just 1.7% (n=9) felt that sexual health education in their school was very helpful and 7.6% (n=40) said it was helpful.

5.9 School Environment

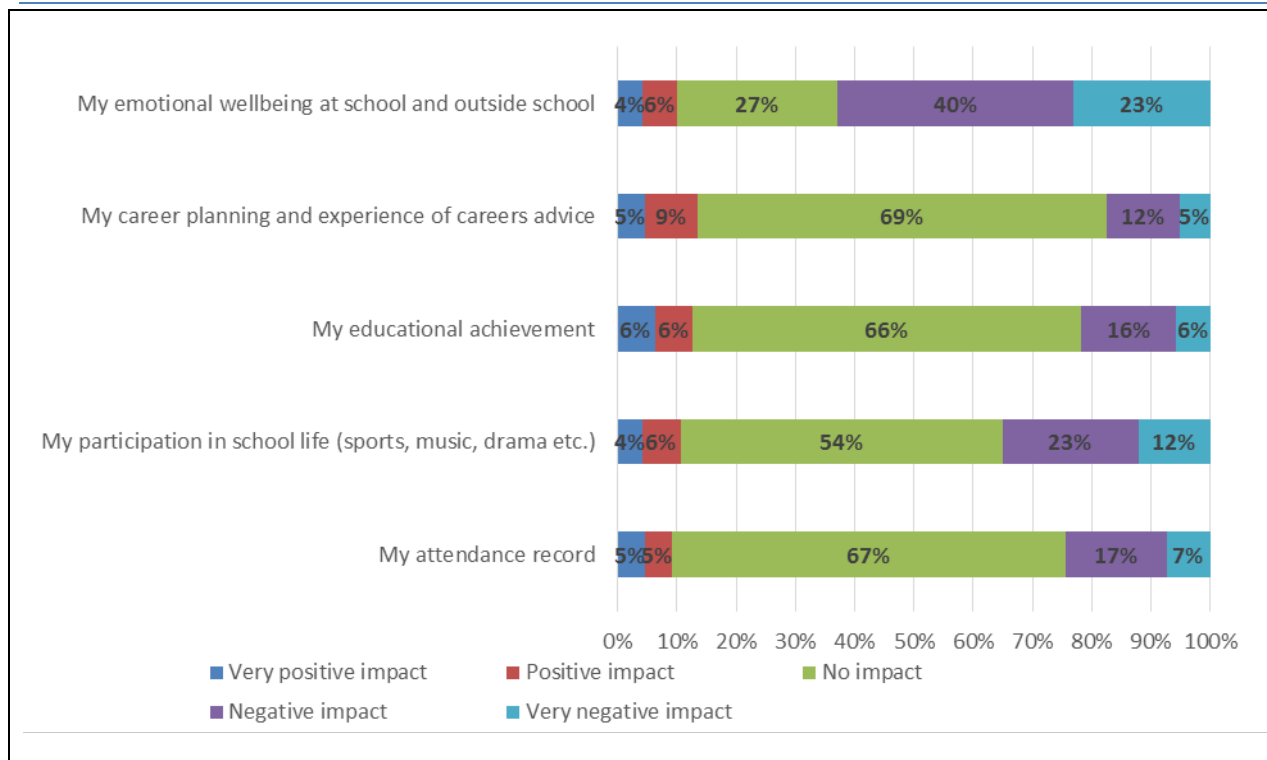
Impact of Experience as an LGB or T young person in Post-Primary school on a range of issues

We asked respondents to explain the impact that their experience as an LGB or T young person in a Post-primary school environment had on them across a number of areas including:

- Emotional well-being;
- Career Planning and careers advice;
- Educational achievement;
- Participation in school life; and
- Attendance at school.

The results are displayed below.

Figure 5:25 Impact experiences as an LGB&T student has had on respondent



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: All 532 respondents were brought to this question. There are five parts to this question: 2 respondents skipped part one, 3 skipped part two, 4 skipped part three, 2 skipped part four and 2 skipped part five. Therefore the bases for part 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are 530, 529, 528, 530 and 530 respectively.

The evidence shows that overall the experience as an LGB or T young person in a Post-primary school environment had a negative or very negative impact on the majority (62.8%, n=333) of respondents in relation to their emotional well-being at school and outside of school.

The majority of respondents (at least 54%) said that their experience in Post-primary school as an LGB&T student has not had any impact on their career planning, educational achievement, participation in school life or attendance record. Having said this, a minority of respondents indicated that the experience as an LGB or T young person in a Post-primary school environment had a negative or very negative impact on:

- their participation in school (24.4%, n=129, base=529);
- their attendance at school (24.3%, n=129, base=530); and
- their educational achievement (21.8%, n=115, base=528); and
- their career planning and experience of advice (17.5%, n=93, base=530).

The impact of pupils' experience within Post-primary school have also been examined for those that identified as transgender and those that identified as LGB and not transgender; the results are shown below.

Table 5:9 Impact of LGB&T students’ experiences, by Transgender and LGB

Proportion of respondents who said the impact of their experiences as an LGB&T student had a negative impact on...	LGB (n=467)	Transgender (n=65)**
Attendance	21.9% (n=102, base=465) of respondents	41.5% (n=27, base=65) of respondents
Participation in school life	32.0% (n=149, base=465) of respondents	56.3% (n=36, base=64) of respondents
Educational achievement	19.4% (n=90, base=463) of respondents	38.5% (n=25, base=65) of respondents
Career planning	15.0% (n=70, base=466) of respondents	35.9% (n=23, base=64) of respondents
Emotional wellbeing inside and outside of school	61.3% (n=285, base=465) of respondents	73.8% (n=48, base=65) of respondents

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

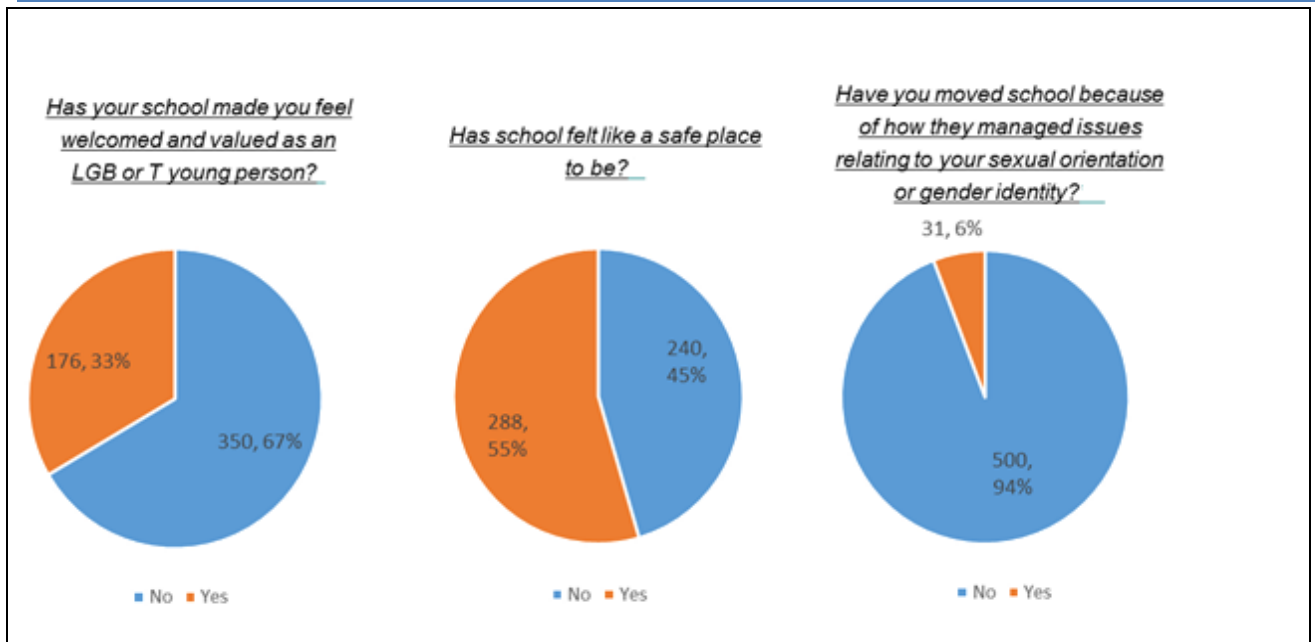
Note: See Appendix

***Caution small numbers.

Perception of School Environment

We asked respondents about their wider experiences of Post-primary school including how welcome they felt in school as an LBG or T young person, and if they considered school a safe place. In addition we asked respondents if they ever had to move school due to issues related to their sexual orientation or gender identity. The results are displayed below.

Figure 5:26 Perception of School Environment



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: For ‘Has your school made you feel welcomed and valued’: Six respondents skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 526.

Note: For ‘Has school felt like a safe place to be?’ Four respondents skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 528.

Note: For ‘Have you moved school...’ One respondent skipped this question. Therefore, the base is 531.

In summary, the majority of respondents said their Post-primary school has not made them feel welcomed and valued as an LGB or transgender young person, with just over a third saying they do feel welcomed and valued (33%, n=176). However, Post-primary school has felt like a safe place to be for over half (55%, n=288) of respondents and just thirty-one respondents (6%) moved their post-primary school due to a lack of satisfaction with how that school managed issues relating to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The respondents’ perception of the Post-primary school environment have also been examined for those who identified as transgender and those who identified as LGB and not transgender; the results of this are shown below.

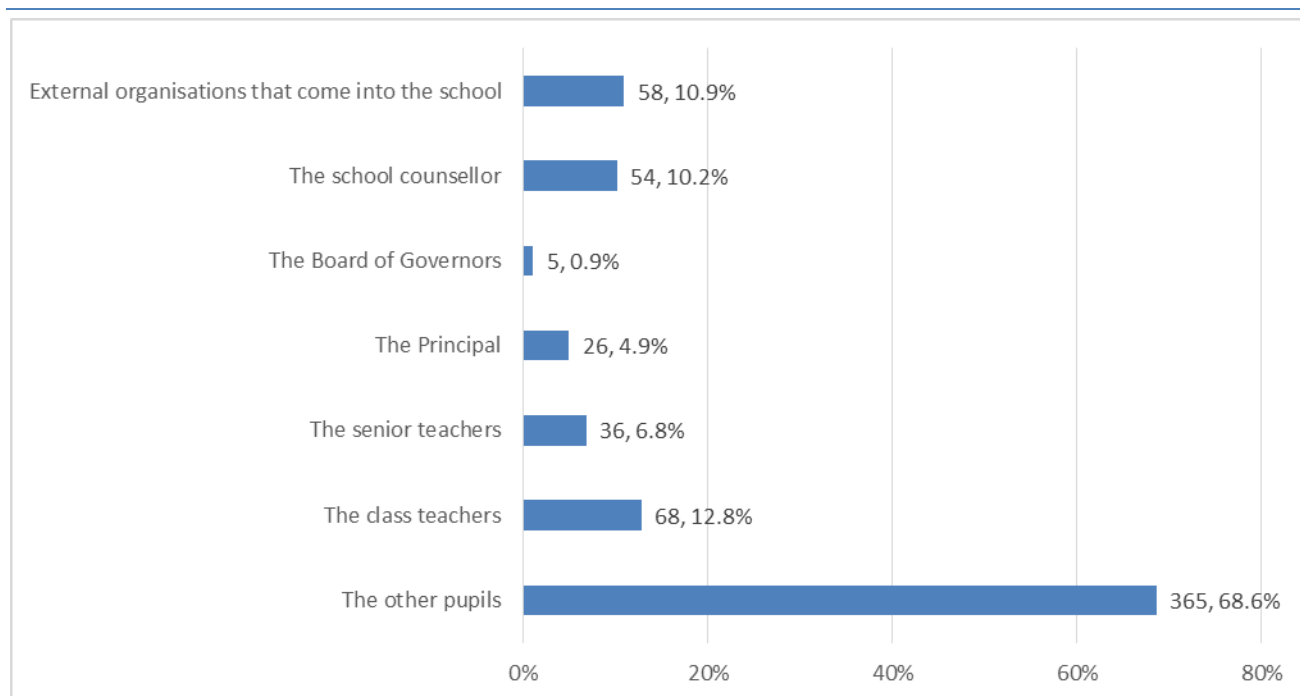
Table 5:10 Perception of School Environment, by Transgender and LGB

Proportion of respondents who...	LGB (n=467)	Transgender (n=65)**
say that overall school has felt like a safe place for them to be	56.4% (n=261, base=463) of respondents	41.5% (n=27, base=65) of respondents
say that their school has made them feel welcome and valued as an LGB or transgender pupil	33.3% (n=154, base=462) of respondents	34.4% (n=22, base=64) of respondents
have moved school because of how the school managed issues relating to gender identity or sexual orientation	4.7% (n=22, base=466) of respondents	13.8% (n=9, base=65) of respondents

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

***Caution small numbers.

Figure 5:27 The most supportive and understanding people at school



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: The base is 532.

Overall, respondents found the other pupils to be the most supportive (n=365, 68.6%), followed by class teachers (n=68, 12.8%).

The most supportive and understanding people within Post-primary school have also been examined for those who identified as transgender and those who identified as LGB and not transgender; the results of this are shown in the Table below.

Table 5:11 The most supportive and understanding people at school, by LGB and transgender

	LGB		Transgender***	
	N	%	N	%
The other pupils	323	69.2%	42	64.6%
The class teachers	55	11.8%	13	20.0%
The senior teachers	30	6.4%	6	9.2%
The Principal	#	#	#	#
The Board of Governors	*	*	*	*
The school counsellor	47	10.1%	7	10.8%
External organisations that come into the school	46	9.9%	12	18.5%
Total Respondents	467	-	65	-

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

The base is 467 for LGB respondents and 65 for transgender respondents.

***Caution small numbers

** - to denote fewer than 5 cases; and

- to denote a number (5 or greater) which has been suppressed to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals.

Activities to Promote LGB&T Issues in Post-Primary School

Respondents were asked about the level of information available to them in relation to LGB&T issues within Post-primary school. Nearly all respondents (92.1%, n=488, base=530²⁴) indicated that there was not sufficient information within school on LGB&T issues. Only 42 respondents (7.9%) indicated that there was material available to students relating to LGB&T issues.

²⁴ One respondent skipped this question.

Some of their responses included:

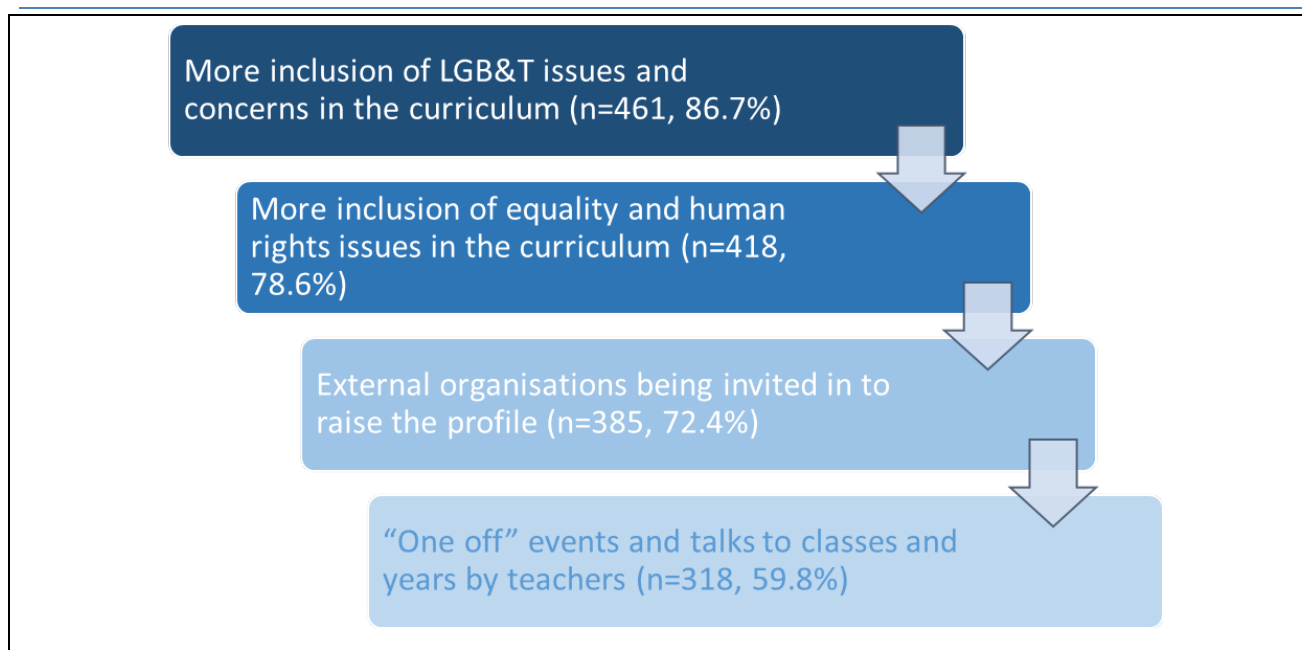
'A few posters saying "he's gay and we're cool with that"

'A group was started to help combat homophobia and transphobia'

'A list of helplines, websites and support groups for pupils bullied about issues including sexual orientation'

Respondents were asked what activities they would like to see introduced in Post-primary school to better promote LGB&T needs and concerns. The results are displayed below.

Figure 5:28 Activities pupils would you like to see the Post-primary school introduce to better promote LGB&T needs and concerns



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: Base = 532.

9.4% (n=50) of respondents gave 'Other' answers and these are summarised under the following:

- Better sexual education including coverage of LGB&T education (3.4%, n=18)

'Better and more open sexual education. Teachers need to be more open and honest about sex and it's ridiculous that there's absolutely no mention of how sex actually happens.'

- Setting up of LGB&T groups in Post-primary schools (1.5%, n=8)

'Support group for LGBT kids or straight allies would be nice'

- Educate teachers in LGB&T issues (0.9%, n=5)

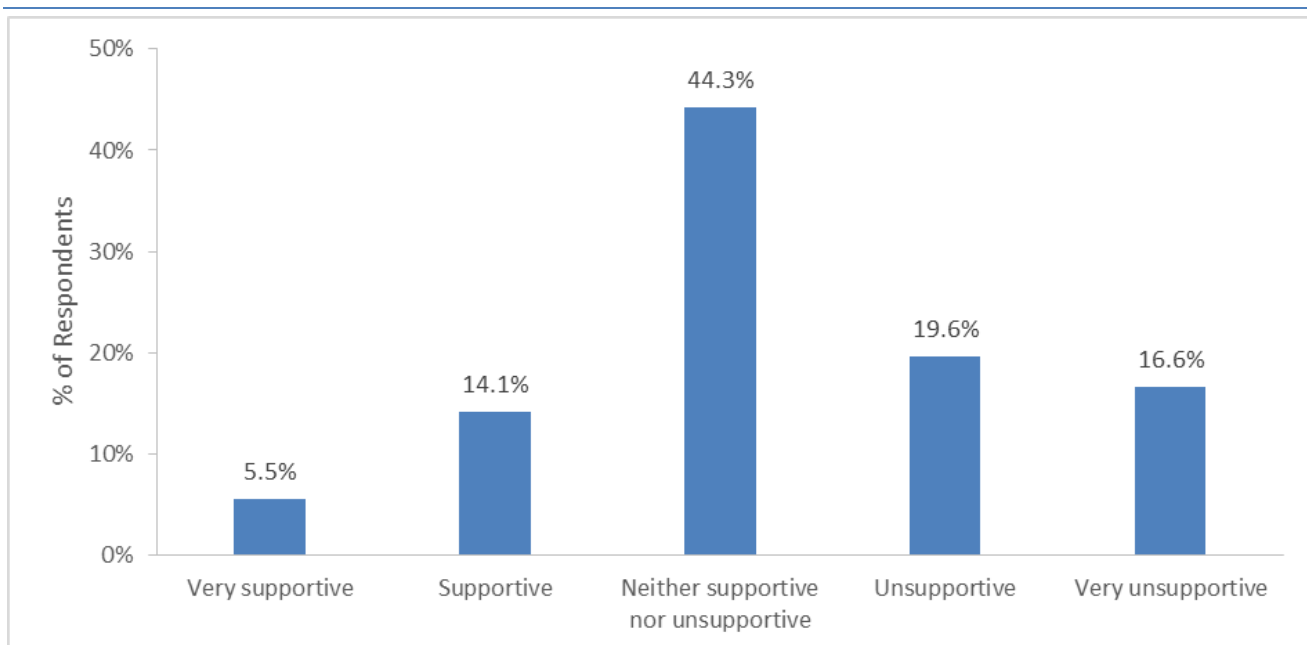
'The teachers themselves need to be educated far better on LGBT issues and how to approach and talk about them.'

- Fewer than five respondents stated that there should not be any actions taken by schools and that LGB&T students do not need special treatment

'How about nothing? We don't special treatment, and we certainly don't have extra 'needs' than any other student...'

'[In reference to external LGBT groups giving presentation in school] this alienates me further. In 20 years that statement will be seen as shocking.'

Figure 5:29 Schools' overall approach to pupils who are LGB&T



Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: One respondent skipped this question therefore the base is 531.

Overall, 44.3% of pupils found their school to be neither supportive nor unsupportive of LGB&T pupils. In addition, a larger proportion (36.2%) of respondents found their school's approach to be unsupportive than supportive.

Schools' overall approach to pupils who are LGB&T within Post-primary school have also been examined for those who identified as transgender and those who identified as LGB and not transgender. The results of this are shown in the table below.

Table 5:12 Schools’ overall approach to pupils who are LGB&T, by Transgender and LGB respondents

	LGB		Transgender***	
	N	%	N	%
Very supportive	27	5.8%	*	*
Supportive	62	13.3%	13	20.0%
Neither supportive nor unsupportive	208	44.6%	#	#
Unsupportive	92	19.7%	12	18.5%
Very unsupportive	77	16.5%	11	16.9%
Total	466	100.0%	65	100.0%

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

One LGB respondents skipped this question therefore the base is 466 for LGB respondents and 65 for transgender respondents.

***Caution small numbers

* - to denote fewer than 5 cases; and

- to denote a number (5 or greater) which has been suppressed to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals.

6 FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY OF LGB&T YOUNG PEOPLE: FURTHER EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS

6.1 Exploratory Analysis – Introduction

Building on the analysis presented in the preceding sections we have carried out further detailed analysis, examining the data from a number of different perspectives. This includes exploring:

Experiences by:

- age of the respondent;
- gender of the respondent;
- sexual orientation of the respondent; and
- those who identify as transgender or LGB.

The following sections summarise the main points arising from these analyses.

Notation: The same approach is adopted in this Section as that described in Section 5.2.

The following key applies to all tables in Section 6.

Figure 6:1 Key

Cells shaded red indicate a less favourable response than overall
Cells shaded green indicate a more favourable response than overall
Cells shaded grey indicate a response at or close to the overall

6.2 Comparing experiences by various characteristics

Experiences by Age

Respondents to the survey may be categorized by age as follows: 16-17; 18-19; and 20-21. Analysis has been carried out to explore the level of bullying experienced by age.

The table shows that within the age categories 16-17 and 18-19, the proportion of respondents who experienced bullying due to their sexual orientation or gender identity is slightly lower than the overall response - with the proportion of 16-17 year olds experiencing bullying being the lowest. However the proportion of 20-21 year olds who have experienced bullying is 14.4 percentage points above the overall proportion. In addition, a higher proportion of 20-21 year olds report having been bullied at post-primary school frequently (at least once a week) than reported by respondents overall and considerably greater than amongst 16-17 year olds. The table also shows that a higher proportion of 16-17 year olds felt welcomed and valued by their Post-primary school than 20-21 year olds.

Figure 6:2 Experiences in Post-Primary School by Age

	16-17 (n=261)	18-19 (n=150)	20-21 (n=121)
Experienced Bullying <i>Proportion experienced bullying due to their sexual orientation or gender identity</i>	42.7% (n=111) of respondents	46.7% (n=70) of respondents	62.8% (n=76) of respondents
Frequency of Bullying <i>Frequency of LGB&T bullying experienced – once a week or more</i>	34.2% (n=38) of respondents	46.3% (n=31) of respondents	62.7% (n=47) of respondents
Welcome <i>Proportion that overall feel welcome and valued at their school as an LGB or transgender pupil</i>	38.1% (n=98) of respondents	35.1% (n=52) of respondents	21.5% (n=26) of respondents

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

***Caution small numbers

In summary, the experiences of bullying appear to be lesser and the feeling of being welcomed or valued in school greater amongst younger respondents relative to older respondents. This may indicate that the environment within Post-primary school has improved for those currently in school compared to those who left school a number of years ago. On the other hand, those in the older age-group (20-21) may have a different perspective on their school years, reflecting on these from a 2-3 year distance and with perhaps a greater level of maturity. This could indicate that overall experiences and the environment within schools have not changed substantially but that the perspective of young people has changed, as they have grown older and/or with the benefit of hindsight.

Experience by Gender

To compare the experiences of students by gender, respondents were categorised as follows: Male; Female; and Other gender identity. Analysis has been carried out to investigate whether there is any variation on the level of bullying experienced by gender.

The proportion of females who experienced bullying because of their LGB&T identity was lower than overall, whereas the proportion of males who experienced bullying was higher than overall. Similarly, a lower proportion of females reported that they were bullied at least once a week whereas a higher proportion of males reported that they were bullied at least once a week.

In contrast, however, a larger proportion of males said they felt welcomed and valued as an LGB&T young person in Post-primary school whereas a lower proportion of females did.

Relatively few respondents identified their gender as 'Other': a similar proportion of these experienced bullying compared to overall; however a higher proportion experienced bullying at least once a week. Within this group, a lower proportion reported feeling welcome at Post-primary school compared to overall.

Figure 6:3 Proportion of students experiencing bullying because of their LGB or transgender identity, by gender

	Male (n=240)	Female (n=250)	Other (n=42)
Experienced Bullying <i>Proportion experienced bullying due to their sexual orientation or gender identity</i>	59.0% (n=141) of respondents	38.4% (n=96) of respondents	20 (base=42) respondents
Frequency of Bullying <i>Frequency of LGB&T bullying experienced – once a week or more</i>	48.2% (n=68) of respondents	39.8% (n=37) of respondents	11 (base=19) respondents
Welcome <i>Proportion that overall feel welcome and valued at their school as an LGB or transgender pupil</i>	39.9% (n=95) of respondents	28.7% (n=71) of respondents	10 (base=41) of respondents

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

***Caution small numbers

Experience by Sexual Orientation

To consider the experiences of pupils by sexual orientation, respondents were categorized as follows²⁵: gay; lesbian and bisexual . (These were the most common categories though a number of others were also reported – see Section 5.3.3).

Compared to overall responses, a higher proportion of **gay pupils** experienced being bullied, and a higher proportion reported being bullied at least once per week. However, despite the greater incidence of bullying, a higher proportion also reported feeling welcome and valued in school.

Compared to overall responses, a lower proportion of **lesbian pupils** experienced being bullied, though a higher proportion reported being bullied at least once per week. A lower proportion also reported feeling welcome and valued in school.

The experience of **bisexual pupils** appears to be more positive with a lower proportion who experienced being bullied, and a lower proportion who reported being bullied at least once per week. The proportion who reported feeling welcome and valued in school was similar to the overall response.

²⁵ Please note that 27 respondents who identified as an 'other' sexual orientation have not been included as a subsection; however these respondents are included in the Overall column

Figure 6:4 Proportion that experienced bullying at Post-primary school because of sexual orientation or gender identity by sexual orientation

	Gay (n=181)	Lesbian (n=88)	Bisexual (n=197)
Experienced Bullying <i>Proportion experienced bullying due to their sexual orientation or gender identity</i>	60.8% (n=110) of respondents	38.6% (n=34) of respondents	44.9% (n=88) of respondents
Frequency of Bullying <i>Frequency of LGB&T bullying experienced – once a week or more</i>	47.4% (n=52) of respondents	52.9% (n=18) of respondents	37.2% (n=32) of respondents
Welcome <i>Proportion that overall feel welcome and valued at their school as an LGB or transgender pupil</i>	39.9% (n=71) of respondents	25.3% (n=22) of respondents	32.8% (n=64) of respondents

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

Note: most, but not all survey respondents were categorized as gay, lesbian or bisexual therefore not all are included in this table above.

***Caution small numbers

Experiences of LGB and T pupils

We reviewed responses to various questions for LGB&T respondents with regards to bullying. Responses for those who identified as LGB were broadly in line with overall responses. Responses from those who identified as transgender were mostly consistent with overall responses, though a higher proportion experienced bullying and a lower proportion felt that school was a safe place to be. Due to a relatively low number of responses from transgender respondents, results in this section should be treated with caution.

Table 6:1: Experiences by identity

	LGB (n=467)	Transgender (n=65)
Experienced Bullying <i>Proportion that have experienced bullying due to their sexual orientation or gender identity</i>	46.9% (n=219) of respondents	59.4% (n=38) of respondents
Frequency of Bullying <i>Frequency of LGB&T bullying experienced - once a week or more</i>	45.8% (n=99) of respondents	45.9% (n=17) of respondents
How well the school deals with bullying <i>Proportion of students who feel their school deals with bullying well or very well</i>	24.1% (n=21) of respondents	28.6% (n=4) of respondents

Source: Survey of Post-Primary School Experiences of 16-21 year old Young People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender, PACEC 2016

***Caution small numbers

6.3 Other exploratory analysis

A number of other analyses were carried out including variations in experience by: level of educational attainment; those with a disability; and ethnic minority backgrounds. However, due to low numbers of respondents with a disability and respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds providing feedback these analyses are not robust and we have therefore not included them in this report. In addition, having examined variation by educational attainment, we found little evidence of any differences with the overall feedback.

6.4 Summary

The exploratory analysis in this section shows that there is considerable variation in the experiences of young LGB&T people in Post-primary school – the variation is evident across a number of characteristics including school type, geography, age, whether still attending or having left school, gender and sexual orientation. There are also differences in the experiences of those who are LGB and those who identify as transgender.

This suggests that there may be scope to identify approaches which would help to encourage a more progressive and welcoming environment for young LGB&T people leading to more positive outcomes. These could be shared as good practice across all schools. It is also important any proposed policy/approach includes some flexibility so that schools can adapt it to their own environment and particular set of circumstances. There may also be a need to target specific support towards particular types of settings which are less progressive and welcoming, leading to negative outcomes for LGB&T pupils.

7 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS WITH LGB&T YOUNG PEOPLE

7.1 Introduction / Approach

This section sets out the findings from the five focus groups conducted with LGB&T young people; where appropriate, quotations from participants are included to illustrate specific points. The section is structured around the key headings within the topic guides. Full details of the methodology and topic guides can be found in Appendix 3. A summary is included in Section 3.4 of this report.

Overall five focus groups were conducted with a total attendance of 28 young people (though as two people attended two groups there were 26 unique individuals).

Table 7:1 Focus group details

Date / Time	Venue	Attendees
01/02/16 / 5:30-7pm	Belfast LGBT Centre	6
02/02/16 / 5:30-7pm	Newry Youth Resource Centre	4
03/02/16 / 5:30-7pm	Foyle LGBT Centre	11
09/02/16 / 5:30-7pm	Belfast LGBT Centre (Transgender Only)	4 Δ
10/02/16 / 5:30-7pm	Dungannon Youth Resource Centre	3 Δ

Source: PACEC, March 2016

Δ Note: two people attended both the focus group on 9 Feb (Belfast) and the focus group on 10 Feb (Dungannon).

The number of participants (28) is small relative to the population of young people aged 16–21 years who are are LGB&T. Whilst the size of this population is not known, previous research suggested that there are between 36,217 and 181,086 people under 25 who identify as LGB&T in Northern Ireland²⁶. If we assume an even distribution by age, then we estimate the number who are aged 16 to 21 is between 20,121 and 100,603.

7.2 Experience of Being an LGB&T Pupil in Post-Primary School

Key areas that were explored:

Are you out? If so, how did you come out? At what age? To whom? What was their reaction? How comfortable did you feel being out in school?

If not out, is there a reason? Is there anything that would have made you more comfortable to be out in school?

Do you know of other LGB&T young people at school?

What sources of information/support/advice did you use when you thought you might be LGBT? How useful was this?

Have/had you access to any societies or groups in school?

²⁶ Department of Education (2003) – Research into the needs of young people in Northern Ireland who identify as LGB&T (YouthNet)

Did your experiences of being LGBT at school impact upon your attendance?
Did your experiences of being LGBT at school impact upon your attainment?
Did your experiences of being LGBT at school impact upon your mental health and well-being?

This introductory question asked the young people to consider their overall experiences of being LGB&T in school, whether or not they were out in school and if there were any particular reasons for this. It also asked young people to consider whether or not their experiences of being LGB&T in school had any impact on them (including on attendance, attainment or mental health and wellbeing).

Overall Experience

Young people participating in the focus groups outlined negative experiences of school relating to their sexual orientation or gender identity. A small number of participants could highlight specific incidents which they would regard as positive, such as a teacher effectively intervening when they witnessed homophobic language or a teacher's positive response to a young person coming out. However, overall, experiences described by the young people indicate that LGB&T issues were largely invisible during their education and that this had a negative impact on their educational experiences.

The young people identified the lack of opportunities to learn about LGB&T issues, as well as the frequent use of homophobic and transphobic language from other pupils and the general lack of understanding from teaching staff on sexual orientation and gender issues as contributing to their negative experiences in school. The young people indicated that they would not feel comfortable seeking support about their sexual orientation or gender within the school because they did not think that their school was able to provide them with adequate or suitable support and because there were very few visible signs within their schools which communicated messages of support to LGB&T young people.

Some specific examples illustrate the experiences summarised above:

When asked about their experiences of being LGB&T in school, one of the young men indicated that he had generally had quite a positive experience in school and that he felt his school had made efforts to be inclusive of LGB&T people, even though he had been outed by a peer via social media. Many of the young people participating in the focus groups identified specific negative experiences from their time in school. These tended to focus on experiences of homophobic and transphobic language and attitudes from other pupils. The young people noted that a lot of the negativity they had experienced from other pupils had stemmed from a lack of understanding on the part of the pupils and that if schools had more proactively addressed sexual orientation and gender issues, these experiences would not be so commonplace.

The transgender participants noted a number of issues which impacted on their general experiences in school such as the lack of awareness or understanding of transgender issues and the improper use of names and pronouns and restrictive and gendered school uniforms. However, the issue which the transgender young people raised as being most troublesome for them was around the use of toilets.

Approaches to LGB&T Issues

Some of the young people noted strong distinctions between the approaches of schools and further/higher education institutions with regard to LGB&T issues. Of the young people who had attended or were attending further/higher education colleges, many noted that LGB&T issues were much more visible on campus, with posters, flyers and information highly visible as well as many colleges having LGB&T peer and social support groups. Those young people in further/higher education colleges also noted less frequent use of homophobic and transphobic language from other students and they felt that homophobic and transphobic language was more frequently challenged in college than it had been in Post-primary school.

A number of the young people who were now attending or had attended further/higher education colleges noted that their experiences in college had a positive impact on their emotional health and wellbeing.

Coming Out in School

Many of participants who attended focus groups were out about their sexual orientation or gender to some degree; however, those who were not out cited the prevalence of homophobic and transphobic language, concerns over potential fallout and negativity, as well as the fear of word of their sexual orientation or gender getting back to family members before they felt able to come out at home, as reasons for not coming out in school.

Some of the young people who were out in school noted a number of reasons for their decision to come out including: supportive friends and family members or that they had gained a sense of ownership of their sexual orientation or gender and were unafraid of potentially negative reactions from others.

Impact of Experiences in Post-Primary School

When asked how their experiences in school had affected their **mental health**, none of the participants identified that school had had a positive impact on their mental health. The general consensus of the young people was that their experiences of being LGB&T in school had a negative impact on their mental health or no impact at all. Most of the young people indicated that the prevalence of homophobic and transphobic language in their school contributed to these negative impacts.

One of the young people noted that, for them, school was a welcome reprieve from the tensions they felt at home and that by focussing on their school work, they had less time to worry about the tensions they were experiencing in their family life.

A few of the young people indicated that the stresses they faced in school had an impact on their **attendance** or **how well they did in exams**. A small number of young people indicated that attending school in an unsupportive environment was very stressful for them and compelled them to take absences from the school, and that this loss of class time had an impact on how well they had performed in exams. These seemed to be experiences that young people in the Foyle area had articulated more than young people in other localities across Northern Ireland.

The young people noted that the things which caused them the most stress and that contributed to their absence from school were tensions around the use of changing facilities, toilets, uniforms and being inappropriately named or gendered with pronouns.

7.3 Coverage of LGB&T / Sexual Orientation Issues with the Post-Primary School Curriculum

Key areas that were explored:

- What classes covered these issues?
- What LGB&T issues were discussed?
- Did you find this helpful/ informative?
- How were you directed to any additional resources/guidance?

When asked how their schools approached LGB&T issues, the participants indicated that they had very few opportunities to learn about LGB&T issues and that the limited opportunities they had were largely negative. The young people particularly singled out the sex education that was provided to them by Education for Love and Love for Life as being very poor. Young people indicated that LGB&T issues had been raised in Learning for Life and Work, Biology and assemblies. However, the curricular class most frequently cited by the young people was Religious Education; although they claimed that this frequently focussed on the negative opinions of the main Christian churches towards LGB&T people.

Many of the young people who attended the focus groups indicated that LGB&T issues were never discussed in their school at all. Some young people felt that this was because of the particular religious ethos of the school or because of the religious beliefs of individual teachers.

Many of the transgender young people who attended the focus groups indicated that although references to sexual orientation were scarce and frequently negative, there were generally no references to transgender or gender issues.

Some young people identified that, in the absence of learning anything about themselves and other LGB&T people in school, they engaged in self-learning about LGB&T issues, usually relying on the internet as a resource.

One respondent indicated that their school had encouraged learning about LGB&T issues by inviting a guest speaker into school to conduct special assemblies. This ensured that the whole school, including staff, were present to hear and learn about LGB&T issues and rights. This could lead to a more positive environment for LGB&T pupils within school.

7.4 Experience of Bullying because of your Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation

Key areas that were explored:

- Are you familiar with your school's bullying policy?
- How would you describe your school's approach to bullying?
- If you experienced bullying, did you report it? If not, why not?
- What support was provided to you?

Is there a way you would do it differently?
Do you think the school could have handled it differently?

Young people in the focus groups fell into three broad categories:

- Those who were bullied directly as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Those who witnessed bullying of other pupils because of their sexual orientation or gender identity; and
- Those who had not experienced bullying.

During the focus groups we explored some of these experiences in more detail.

Anti-Bullying Policies

Many of the young people knew that their school had an anti-bullying policy but were unsure if the policy included specific references to homophobic and transphobic bullying or the rights of LGB&T young people in education.

Experiences of Bullying

Many participants had never experienced bullying within Post-primary school directly because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. A few of the participants described bullying they had experienced: this included behaviours such as deliberate exclusion, inappropriate or intrusive questioning, jokes and ‘banter.’ In a small number of cases the bullying became violent and pupils had been attacked, assaulted and injured by bullies within school.

For many others, whilst they had not been bullied directly because of their sexual orientation or gender, the use of slurs and other casual language within school did make them feel uncomfortable.

Reporting Bullying because of Sexual Orientation or Gender

Of those young people who had been bullied, most did not report the bullying to the school. This lack of reporting was due to two main reasons:

Either the young person did not think the school would handle it appropriately; or
They were afraid that they would be outed to their parents before they were ready.

Young people who did report bullying to the school were largely dissatisfied with the way the school responded to their complaint.

7.5 Dealing with Problems in School related to your Sexual Orientation or Gender and the School’s Response

Key areas that were explored:

Did you have a particular teacher/pastoral care teacher who you could approach to discuss any problems you may have?
If yes. Did you find them helpful?

Did they direct you to available resources/organisations?

When asked if they could identify anyone within the school who they (the young people) could approach if they were experiencing a problem related to their sexual orientation or gender, many of the participants indicated that they would not seek help within their school.

Whilst the reasons for this were varied they included:

The young people acknowledge the challenges that the schools face in dealing with verbal bullying. It is more difficult to monitor and deal with this than instances of physical bullying;

Some felt that there were no teachers within school who they could approach or that they felt comfortable talking to about these issues;

Some had no access to a school counsellor; and

Some were scared of the repercussions of them having being seen visiting a teacher or school counsellor.

It was also highlighted that the experience of young people varied depending on the schools and teachers. Some schools did have in place better systems and processes to deal with issues related to LGB&T.

Those who would feel comfortable seeking help in school generally could identify a single teacher with whom the young person had an existing relationship.

For transgendered pupils, reporting or approaching teachers could be very difficult and in some circumstances it was a very serious issue. For example, one transgender respondent who attended an all-boys school had issues relating to e.g. uniform, toilets, changing rooms etc., however the school could not provide any support because they were not equipped to deal with these situations.

7.6 Suggestions to Improve Experiences of LGB&T Young People in Post-Primary School

Key areas that were explored:

Suggestions to improve the experiences of LGB&T young people in Post-primary school.

The participants identified simple changes which would make schools better for LGB&T young people – these are described below. Some schools were reported to be taking a very progressive lead on issues related to LGB&T, with one respondent indicating that the Principal of their school took representatives from the school, in uniform, to the Belfast Pride Festival.

Increased Visibility of LGB&T Issues

Providing a more welcome environment for LGB&T students with more visibility of the issues impacting on them within school, both in the teaching and learning environment but also in everyday life within school;

More visible support within school for LGB&T young people e.g. posters in notice boards, leaflets and information available.

Wider discussion of LGB&T issues in school to avoid LGB&T young people having to specifically seek information relevant to them because this relies on them having to come out to access information.

Greater visibility and mainstreaming of LGB&T issues including opportunities to learn about LGB&T issues including: history, rights and particular needs, specifically relationships and sexuality education.

Making Schools Safer and More Welcoming

More proactive approach to homophobic and transphobic bullying;

Making communal spaces safer for LGB&T young people e.g. corridors, playgrounds;

Providing a safe space for LGB&T to go if feeling stressed or anxious;

Provision of after school groups for LGB&T young people and allies, like the Gay Straight Alliance in Shimna Integrated College.

Allowing students to set up LGB&T societies within school whilst ensuring that they abide by the rules and requirements for all groups within school;

Allowing an LGB&T person in school to act as a peer support contact for other LGB&T pupils so that they don't always have to approach a teacher;

Anonymous reporting mechanism would encourage more LGB&T young people to report bullying, for example: developing an online (using C2K) bullying reporting system that can be anonymised so that pupils feel more able to report bullying;

Developing an online chat tool so that pupils could speak to a school counsellor after core school hours; and

Specific support for transgender and gender variant young people in school including: being known by their preferred name, having the correct pronouns used, having access to appropriate toilet and changing facilities, appropriate uniform policy, etc.

Training and Guidance for Teachers and Schools

Access to training for teachers and other school staff on sexual orientation and gender to raise awareness so that they are better informed and therefore more able to support LGB&T young people and challenge homophobic and transphobic attitudes;

Bring in speakers from external organisations (as appropriate) to discuss LGB&T issues in a forum including staff and pupils to help them understand the issues;

Hold special assemblies which discuss LGB&T issues;

Develop guidance for schools which sets out the approach to take in relation to issues affecting LGB&T pupils including bullying, use of slurs and transgender specific issues; and

Train teachers on how to spot signs of distress in pupils through mental health and first aid training.

Teaching and Learning

Need for a more balanced and informed discussion regarding LGB&T issues particularly in relation to Religious Education; and

Sexual Health Education needs to be reformed to provide relevant, factual and informative sessions for LGB&T pupils who need to understand issues related to sex and health.

7.7 LGB&T– Differences and Similarities in Experiences and Feedback

One of the focus groups was designed to focus solely on transgender issues. It sought to provide transgender young people with an opportunity to discuss their particular experiences in education in a context where all of the other young people in the focus group were transgender and also to determine if the experiences and needs of the transgender young people correlated with the cisgender²⁷ LGB young people. The experiences of the transgender young people largely correlated with those of their LGB cisgender peers in terms of the lack of visibility and affirming messages within their schools. However, as expected, the transgender young people identified particular needs which they do not generally share with the LGB cisgender peers such as: being appropriately named and gendered with pronouns, tensions over restrictive uniform policies, concerns around gender-segregated activities and the use of toilets and changing facilities.

7.8 Emerging Themes

Emerging Findings – Predominantly Negative Experiences

As described in the preceding sections, much of the feedback from young people in the focus groups related to their negative experiences at school. The key themes emerging from this are detailed below.

Visibility

LGB&T issues and people were largely absent from their education. Participants noted that this not only impacted on their ability to come to terms with their sexual orientations and genders in safe and supportive environments but also contributed to the high levels of homophobic and transphobic language and attitudes they witnessed in formal education.

Teaching and Learning

Participants indicated that their teachers had been unwilling or unable to adequately educate them about issues relevant to their lives. Participants indicated that training on LGB&T issues for teachers is an important step in improving education for LGB&T young people.

Sexual Health Education

The participants felt that the relationships and sexuality education which was provided to them either by teachers or Love for Life either ignored the needs of LGB&T young people or actively advocated against their interests. The participants had largely taught themselves about sex and relationships using the internet as a resource.

²⁷ Cisgender (often abbreviated to simply cis) is a descriptor for those whose experiences of their own gender agree with the sex they were assigned at birth. It may also be defined as those who have "a gender identity or perform a gender role society considers appropriate for one's sex."

Transgender Specific Needs

Participants recognised that transgender young people were significantly disadvantaged by schools not understanding them or their needs and that particular attention needs to be paid to: names, pronouns, uniform, toilets and changing facilities.

Issues related to Confidentiality

Participants noted that their concerns around confidentiality were a significant barrier to them accessing support and reporting negative experiences within their schools. They articulated concerns about how parents and carers could be informed of a child's sexual orientation or gender by school authorities without their consent and how this could be a risk for some young people.

Positive Experiences

However as previously documented, there were some positive experiences, for example:

A young person noted that in primary school a teacher had intervened when they had heard a homophobic comment.

Another young person had a positive experience of coming out to a teacher and indicated that his school was attempting to include LGB&T issues in school policies.

A young person highlighted that his school was seeking to develop a policy on LGB&T issues within the school.

Some young people noted that there were specific teachers who they would feel able to approach if they were experiencing bullying.

Suggestions for Improvement

It is also encouraging to note that some of the young people consulted suggested improvements that could be considered – these could broadly be grouped in the following areas: Increased visibility of LGB&T issues; Making schools safer and more welcoming; Training and guidance for teachers and schools; and Teaching and learning.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

This research focused on the experiences of young LGB&T people in Post-primary education. The target group for the research was LGB&T people in the 16-21 age range. This was to ensure that their experiences of Post-primary education were relatively recent and likely to reflect the current educational environment. The methodology for this research comprised a mix of primary and desk based research, addressing the aims of the research, namely

- *the effect the school environment can have on young LGB&T people and the impact on their well-being and educational attainment;*
- *the extent to which the school curriculum reflects the needs of LGB&T pupils and the issues that they face; and*
- *how school policies/resources/curriculum/teaching/support can better reflect the needs of LGB&T pupils and the issues that they face.*

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the findings of this research report are robust, there are a number of limitations that should be taken into account when reading the findings (see part 5 and part 6 of this report).

8.2 Impact of the School Environment

A minority of LGB respondents stated that their experience as an LGB pupil had a negative impact on attainment, attendance or career planning. However, a majority of LGB respondents stated it had had a negative impact on emotional wellbeing. A significant minority of transgender respondents stated that their experience as a transgender pupil had a negative impact on attainment, attendance and career planning, whilst a majority of transgender respondents experienced a negative impact on emotional wellbeing. Due to the small number of transgender respondents, percentages need to be treated with caution.

8.3 Findings from LGB Respondents

More than half of respondents came out as LGB while in Post-primary school. A majority of respondents had spoken to other pupils about their LGB identity; however less than 15% of respondents had spoken about these issues with a member of staff, suggesting students are a lot less willing to discuss their LGB identity with members of staff than they are with fellow students. It is also clear that the more senior the member of staff within school becomes, the less likely the respondent was to have spoken to them about these issues. Of particular note is that over a quarter of respondents had not told anyone in Post-primary school about their LGB identity or how they felt about this.

42 respondents (60.9%) indicated that they felt 'very supported' or 'supported' by the reaction of the member of staff and 19 (27.5%) stated that they felt 'neither supported nor unsupported' by the member of staff. 65% of LGB respondents (n=300) agreed or strongly agreed that they had a supportive group of friends at school.

A quarter of respondents were offered additional support after telling a member of staff about their LGB identity. The support provided varied but included in-school counselling, the offer of a meeting with the teacher responsible for pastoral care and the provision of contact details for external organisations for additional support.

LGB respondents identified a number of challenges and issues they had experienced in Post-primary school. These included low levels of recognition of LGB&T issues, bullying, lack of teacher support and issues with religion.

8.4 Findings from Transgender Respondents

In total 65 respondents identified as transgender²⁸. Almost one third of respondents had not spoken to anyone in school about issues related to their identity.

The most common response was that respondents had spoken to other pupils in school regarding their transgender identity. Whilst some respondents had spoken to members of staff, it is clear that the more senior the member of staff becomes within school, the less likely the respondent was to have spoken to them about these issues. Staff with regular contact with the pupil, e.g. class teacher, were perceived as the most approachable.

The most common challenges faced by transgender pupils in Post-primary school relate to:

Binary-gender classification (i.e. events and practicalities in school which are related to the male/female gender or binary gender paradigms) e.g. school activities including sports which are arranged according to the participants' gender; and

Language and the use of names in school – many transgender pupils have a preferred name which is not their birth name and there were/are challenges faced in getting teaching staff, other pupils and non-teaching staff to use the respondents' preferred forename.

Other issues highlighted included attending residential and going on school trips.

A number of respondents highlighted other issues they experienced in Post-primary school including a lack of education in LGB&T issues, concerns over outing themselves as transgender and '*Transphobic remarks by teachers*'. However, a majority (n=40, 61.5%) of respondents identified that issues about sexual orientation or gender identity had been covered in their classes. Only five respondents said they had no concerns and faced no challenges in Post-primary school.

Particular arrangements were put in place to help some transgender respondents deal with the challenges they face/faced as a transgender pupil; these included name change, uniform change, use of alternative bathroom/changing room and being excused from PE.

Approximately half of transgender respondents did not feel particularly well understood by either teachers or other pupils. A minority of respondents (n=23, 35.4 %) felt that their schools overall approach to pupils who are transgender was unsupportive or very unsupportive.

²⁸ According to figures from SAIL NI, the estimated number of transgender young people in the education system is around 100; therefore this represents a high proportion of that group.

8.5 Conclusion

There is considerable variation in the experiences of young LGB&T people in Post-primary school – the variation is evident across a number of characteristics including school type, geography, age, whether still attending or having left school, gender and sexual orientation. There are also differences in the experiences of those who are LGB and those who identify as transgender.

This suggests that there may be scope to identify approaches which would help to encourage a more progressive and welcoming environment for young LGB&T people, leading to more positive outcomes. These approaches could be shared as good practice across all schools. It is also important that any proposed policy /approach includes some flexibility so that schools can adapt it to their own environment and particular set of circumstances.



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Research cannot make decisions for policy makers and others concerned with improving the quality of education. Nor can it by itself bring about change. But it can create a better basis for decisions, by providing information and explanation about educational practice and by clarifying and challenging ideas and assumptions.

Any views expressed in the Research Report are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of Education.