

Liverpool N.U.T.

# Prevalence of Homophobia Survey

May 2010



With a foreword by Ms Gill Goodswen  
National President  
of the National Union of Teachers.

## Foreword by Ms. Gill Goodswen

President of the National Union of Teachers

I am delighted to have this opportunity to endorse the prevalence of Homophobia Survey by Liverpool NUT.

Promoting equal opportunities in all its manifestations is very important to me and whilst we are right to recognise the many advances to celebrate human diversity and quality over the last 30 years, no one can doubt that there is still so much to do. During my presidential year I am committed to beginning to ensure that all our young people and their teachers are protected from homophobic bullying and that we empower everyone to challenge and eradicate this prejudice from our schools.



It is clear from the results of the surveys undertaken so far that teachers know of this discrimination, they recognise it for the serious issue it is and overwhelmingly ask for the training and practical material so they can get on with challenging such ignorance. We know that child protection is at the heart of all schools and that safe and inclusive school environments are essential for learning. Challenging ignorance is a core function of teachers and there is no place for fear of difference in our schools. I do hope this survey helps all concerned with child protection and safer schools and communities re-double their efforts to making our schools and colleges safer environments where homophobia and prejudice is challenged and eradicated.

I am personally very proud of being the President of a union with such a principled and ongoing commitment to equality work, of which this report is a fine example. It is decades since the NUT nailed its equality colours to the mast by making a stand for equal pay for women teachers and that campaign for human equality continues with this ground breaking work. Congratulations to the members and officials of Liverpool NUT for producing this report and I await news of further developments with keen interest.

Gill Goodswen



## ***Introduction***

The creation of a safe environment for productive teaching is a must in the education of our children. The sign of a more tolerant society is that the systematic abuse of individuals and especially young people, because of their real or perceived human difference, is increasingly recognized and challenged. Equality campaigns inform us that addressing bigotry and ignorance is not an easy or swift exercise. However ignoring such discrimination or doing nothing is not an option in our school system today.

It now seems incredible that it is only a handful of years since the discriminatory and offensive 'clause 28' of the Local Government Act was the law of the land, now struck-off the statute books. A law, which demanded that the political propaganda of human inequality be taught to all students and that there was only one 'proper', form of family.

This survey adds further evidence to the growing academic research, into the serious consequences for pupils, students and school staff by unchallenged homophobia. There is a sample bibliography below.

The government in 2003 made a good start in addressing this bigotry in schools. The Department of Children, Schools and Families sent out guidance entitled '*Safe to Learn*' to all schools recommending measures that each school should take to protect its pupils and staff. This has been followed by a series of highly practical guidance documents together with encouraging comments by government ministers and politicians from all of the main political parties.

Along with the support from the government; teaching unions including the NUT, and groups such as Stonewall and Schools Out continue to offer a wealth and range of professional support and encouragement.

The recent election of two English MEP's whose admiration of the horrendous and genocide policies of Hitler's Germany, including the murder of thousands of gay men is perhaps instructive of the urgency of such work as this.

This survey again highlights that in the area of protecting children, students and staff from homophobia the message and action has not been implemented with enough urgency or leadership. We need now to take away that deadly silence and inaction by challenging such bigotry and celebrating our wonderful human diversity

The pressing question is does the leadership of Liverpool schools also share that view?

Julie Lyon-Taylor  
Secretary for Liverpool NUT:

Sophie Caines  
Liverpool NUT Equality Officer

**Background:** this project by local NUT divisions and associations is to help highlight the discrimination and prejudice directed at our pupils, students and colleagues in our schools and colleges. This survey is the first attempt to measure the prevalence of cultures of homophobia in our schools and to learn of the attitudes of our members to this issue and what professional support they might need to better protect their pupils, students and colleagues from such bigotry.

**Data collection method:** a questionnaire was distributed to union members working in secondary school schools from which a there was a significant return of approximately 9%. The questionnaire is in two sections: '*Prevalence of homophobia*' and secondly '*Responses to homophobia*' as follows:

- (i) Prevalence of homophobia section; invited teachers to report their professional assessment of homophobia. Namely if they had encountered such discrimination and to give a measure of frequently to homophobic behaviours that they had directly observed within their classroom and more generally within their school. The teachers were asked to grade any observed homophobia on a wide sliding scale from '*never*' (i.e. no incidence) to '*common*' (i.e. daily incidence). Judgements were invited on three aspects of homophobia namely:-
  - General climate,
  - inter-pupil homophobia & finally
  - Homophobic bullying of staff by pupils.
- (ii) Responses to homophobia section; invited teachers to report on how they professionally assessed the seriousness of the challenge afforded by the school by homophobic discrimination/bullying. Assessment was measured by a simple yes/no response to five statements that concentrated on:-
  - Teachers' attitude towards the issue of homophobia,
  - the perceived response of schools' management to the challenge of homophobia ,
  - training needs

**The results;** the results confirm the growing body of evidence from both academic research, human rights and LGBT groups indicating the cultural prevalence of homophobia in our schools. The overall reported incidence of homophobic abuse/ hate crime in Liverpool secondary schools is disturbingly high. In fact it is to be hoped that if any other form of criminalised discrimination was reported at this level (e.g. racism, sexism) there would be formal governmental demands for the immediate implementation of child protection measures. However; a note of optimism is the consistent professionalism of our teaching colleagues request for CPD to allow them to effectively address this area of discrimination.

It is the intention that this report will be shared with our members and schools' management and governors as a prompt for action, preparatory to publication to the general public.

Results: Section 1 ~ Prevalence of homophobia

Question 1. Climate of homophobic abuse in the schools	
65% (53)	...of teachers that had overheard/observed homophobic abuse in their school on a <b>daily/weekly basis</b>
89% (73)	...of teachers that overheard/observed homophobic abuse in their school on at least a <b>termly basis</b>

Question 2. Prevalence of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying of pupils by pupils	
56% (45)	...of teachers who have observed/overheard specific pupils being the subject of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying on a <b>daily/weekly basis</b> .
77% (62)	...of teachers who have observed/overheard specific pupils being the subject of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying at least on a <b>termly basis</b> .

Question 3. homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying of staff by pupils	
5% (4)	...of teachers have themselves been the subject of homophobic abuse on at least a <b>termly basis</b> .
40% (32)	...of teachers have themselves been the subject of homophobic abuse at within the <b>school year</b> .

Results: **Section 2** ~ Professional responses to homophobia

<b>Statement 1.</b> Attitude toward the seriousness of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying.	
88% (71)	of teachers believe Homophobia is a serious issue demanding action
42% (34)	of teachers consider that their school is vigorously addressing homophobia

Teachers' attitudes towards challenging Homophobic abuse and discrimination and training

<b>Statement 3.</b> Do you feel confident to challenge homophobic abuse/discrimination in your classroom?	
46% (37)	Of teachers feel confident about addressing homophobia in their classroom.
<b>Statement 4.</b> Would you welcome specific training to better address homophobic abuse/discrimination in your classroom	
89% (72)	Of teachers would welcome specific training to help them better address homophobia in their classroom.
<b>Statement 5.</b> Would you welcome whole school training to better address homophobia in your school?	
90% (73)	Of teachers would welcome whole school training to better address homophobic with their school.

Liverpool NUT ~ Prevalence of Homophobia Survey – IDAHO  
**Liverpool NUT Raw Returns**

**1. Climate/Culture of Discrimination.** *Question asked:* Have you overheard or seen any general derogatory reference to same-sex relationships in your classroom or about school by pupils

88 replies	Never	Rarely Once or twice a year	Occasional Once or twice a term	Sometimes Once or twice a week	Common Nearly every day
Raw return	1	6	19	25	28
Expressed as a % of total return	1%	7%	23%	31%	35%

**2. Homophobic abuse of students/pupils.** *Question asked:* Have you heard or seen any specific homophobic abuse by one pupil of another pupil [e.g. one pupil derogatory referring to another as being “gay”]?

	Never	Rarely Once or twice a year	Occasional Once or twice a term	Sometimes Once or twice a week	Common Nearly every day
Raw return	3	15	17	27	18
Expressed as a % of total return	4%	19%	21%	33%	22%

**3. Homophobic abuse of teachers.** *Question asked:* Have you been subject to any homophobic abuse [verbal or non-verbal] by a pupil? [E.g. derogatory reference to your real or imaginary sexuality]

	Never	Rarely Once or twice a year	Occasional Once or twice a term	Sometimes Once or twice a week	Common Nearly every day
Raw return	48	28	4	0	0
Expressed as a % of total return	59%	35%	5%	0%	0%

**Q4. Addressing Homophobia?** *Question asked:* Please read the following statements and tick the adjacent box to those statements with which you agree:-

S1. I consider that homophobia is a serious issue that should not be allowed to go unchallenged in school.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Raw return		71			
Expressed as a % of total return		88%			

S2. I consider the school vigorously discourages homophobia in all its activities.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Raw return		34			
% of total return		34%			

S3. I feel sufficiently confident about the issue to challenge pupils on the issue.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Raw return		37			
Expressed as a % of total return		46%			

S4. I would welcome practical training on the issue of addressing homophobia in the classroom.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Raw return		72			
Expressed as a % of total return		89%			

S5. I would welcome the adoption of a whole-school approach on the issue of addressing homophobia in the school.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Raw return		73			
Expressed as a % of total return		90%			

**Interim North West NUT Survey Raw Returns**

**1. Climate/Culture of Discrimination.** *Question asked:* Have you overheard or seen any general derogatory reference to same-sex relationships in your classroom or about school by pupils

	Never	Rarely Once or twice a year	Occasional Once or twice a term	Sometimes Once or twice a week	Common Nearly every day
Raw return	31	80	174	228	227
Expressed as a % of total return	4%	11%	24%	31%	31%

**2. Homophobic abuse of students/pupils.** *Question asked:* Have you heard or seen any specific homophobic abuse by one pupil of another pupil [e.g. one pupil derogatory referring to another as being “gay”]?

	Never	Rarely Once or twice a year	Occasional Once or twice a term	Sometimes Once or twice a week	Common Nearly every day
Raw return	68	149	220	185	107
Expressed as a % of total return	9%	20%	30%	25%	15%

**3. Homophobic abuse of teachers.** *Question asked:* Have you been subject to any homophobic abuse [verbal or non-verbal] by a pupil? [E.g. derogatory reference to your real or imaginary sexuality]

	Never	Rarely Once or twice a year	Occasional Once or twice a term	Sometimes Once or twice a week	Common Nearly every day
Raw return	396	135	78	32	17
Expressed as a % of total return	70%	24%	14%	6%	3%

**Q4. Addressing Homophobia?** *Question asked:* Please read the following statements and tick the adjacent box to those statements with which you agree:-

<b>S1. I consider that homophobia is a serious issue that should not be allowed to go unchallenged in school.</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Raw return	107	494	3	3	121
Expressed as a % of total return	14%	67%	0%	0%	16%

<b>S2. I consider the school vigorously discourages homophobia in all its activities.</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Raw return	40	196	5	5	458
% of total return	5%	26%	1%	1%	62%

<b>S3. I feel sufficiently confident about the issue to challenge pupils on the issue.</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Raw return	83	333	12	0	299
Expressed as a % of total return	11%	45%	2%	0%	40%

<b>S4. I would welcome practical training on the issue of addressing homophobia in the classroom.</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Raw return	58	311	2	1	336
Expressed as a % of total return	8%	42%	0%	0%	45%

<b>S5. I would welcome the adoption of a whole-school approach on the issue of addressing homophobia in the school.</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Raw return	99	414	3	1	208
Expressed as a % of total return	13%	56%	0%	0%	28%

The empirical evidence contained in this is Prevalence of Homophobia survey of secondary school teachers endorses the disturbing advice from academics working in this field, human rights and child protection agencies (both statutory and voluntary). This survey also endorses the urgent adoption of government guidance and legislation, which enjoyed cross party support. Guidance and legislation aimed at challenging discrimination and hate crimes against children, young people and staff in our communities and in particular; schools.

Despite the highly disturbing insight into the ‘endemic’ discrimination and abuse described by teachers in this survey there is also a most encouraging message. That is the overwhelming demand by those teachers for the professional advice, skills and resources so they might most effectively and sensitively protect their students and colleagues. This clearly has resource implications for schools and government. However this union of teachers believes there is not tenable argument that supports the continuation of the abusive and discriminatory reality increasingly described by the growing corpus of evidence of which this survey provided an indicative local reading.

It is hope that this report will cause all interest in young people’s health and welfare and that of their teachers and other staff. Liverpool NUT believes that such teaching and learning environments should not harbour ignorance and bigoted views. We trust that this survey can and will add vigour to the implementation of the statutory and moral imperatives to practically and effectively address such harmful and appalling endemic bigotry revealed in this survey.

**Sample Bibliography** of the more recent academic contributions to the debate on the reality of homophobia in schools and consequent homophobic bullying and other child/staff protection issues.

- Anderson, E. (2000) *Trailblazing Alyson*, Irvine, LA
- Atria, M., Strohmeier, D., & Spiel, C. (2007). The relevance of the school class as social unit for the prevalence of bullying and victimization. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 4, 372–387.
- Ball, H. A., Arseneault, L., Taylor, A., Maughan, B., & Moffitt, T. E. (2008). Genetic and environmental influences on victims, bullies and bully-victims in childhood. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49, 104–112.
- Camodeca, M., Goossens, F. A., Meerum, Terwogt M., & Schuengel, C. (2002). Bullying and victimization among school-aged children: Stability and links to proactive and reactive aggression. *Social Development*, 11, 332–345.
- Card, N. A., & Hodges, E. V. E. (2008). Peer victimization among schoolchildren: Correlations, causes, consequences, and considerations in assessment and intervention. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23, 451–461.
- D'Augelli, A. R., Pilkington, N. W., & Hershberger, S. L. (2002). Incidence and mental health impact of sexual orientation victimization of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths in high school. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 17, 148–167.
- Ellis, V. and High, S. (2004) Something more to tell you. *British Educational Research Journal* 30:(2) , pp. 213-225.
- Epstein, D. and Johnson, R. (1998) *Schooling sexualities* Open University Press , Buckingham
- Eron, L. D., Huesmann, L. R., Dubow, E., Romanoff, R., & Yarnel, P. W. (1987). Aggression and its correlates over 22 years. In D. H. Crowell & I. M. Evans (Eds.), *Childhood aggression and violence: Sources of influence, prevention, and control* (pp. 249–262). New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Espelage, D. L., & Holt, M. L. (2001). Bullying and victimization during early adolescence: Peer influences and psychosocial correlates. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 2, 123–142.
- Froyum, C. M. (2007) 'At least I'm not gay': heterosexual identity making among poor Black teens. *Sexualities* 10:(5) , pp. 603-622.
- Grossman, D. and D'Augelli, A. (2006) Transgender youth. *Journal of Homosexuality* 51:(1) , pp. 111-128.
- Hillier, L. and Harrison, L. (2004) Homophobia and the production of shame. *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 6:(1) , pp. 79-94.
- Horn, S. S. (2006). Heterosexual adolescents' and young adults' beliefs and attitudes about homosexuality and gay and lesbian peers. *Cognitive Development*, 21, 420–440.
- Kehily, M. J. (2002) *Sexuality, gender and schooling* Routledge , London
- Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., & Diaz, E. M. (2009). Who, what, where, when, and why: Demographic and ecological factors contributing to hostile school climates for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38, 976–988.
- Lopez, C., & DuBois, D. L. (2005). Peer victimization and rejection: Investigation of an integrative model of effects on emotional, behavioral, and academic adjustment in early adolescence. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 34, 25–36.
- Mac an Ghaill, M. (1994) *The making of men* Open University Press , Buckingham
- Martino, W. and Pallotta-Chiarolli, M. (2003) *So what's a boy?* Open University Press , Maidenhead
- Nayak, A. and Kehily, M. J. (2006) Gender undone: subversion, regulation and embodiment in the work of Judith Butler. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 27:(4) , pp. 459-472.
- Poteat, V. P., & Espelage, D. L. (2005). Exploring the relation between bullying and homophobic verbal content: The Homophobic Content Agent Target (HCAT) scale. *Violence and Victims*, 20, 513–528.
- Pronger, B. (1990) *The arena of masculinity* St. Martin's Press , New York
- Rivers, I. (2001). The bullying of sexual minorities at school: Its nature and long-term correlates. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 18, 32–46.
- Rivers, I., & Cowie, H. A. (2007). Bullying and homophobia in UK schools: A perspective on factors affecting resiliency and recovery. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education*, 3, 11–43.
- Salmivalli, C., & Voeten, M. (2004). Connections between attitudes, group norms, and behaviour in bullying situations. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 28, 246–258.
- Skelton, C. (2001) *Schooling the boys* Open University Press , Buckingham
- Smith, P. K., & Sharp, S. (1994). *School bullying: Insights and perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S., & Tippett, N. (2008). Cyberbullying: Its nature and impact on secondary school pupils. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49, 376–385.
- Solberg, M. E., Olweus, D., & Endresen, I. M. (2007). Bullies and victims at school: Are they the same pupils? *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77, 441–464.
- Stoudt, B. G. (2006) You're either in or you're out. *Men and Masculinities* 8:(3) , pp. 273-287.
- Swain, J. (2006) Reflections on patterns of masculinity in school settings. *Men and Masculinities* 8:(3)
- Swearer, S. M., Turner, R. K., Givens, J. E., & Pollack, W. S. (2008). “You're so gay!”: Do different forms of bullying matter for adolescent males? *School Psychology Review*, 37, 160–173.
- Thurlow, C. (2001) Naming the 'outsider within': homophobic pejoratives and the verbal abuse of LGB high-school pupils. *Journal of Adolescence* 24
- Thurlow, C. (2001). Naming the “outsider within”: Homophobic pejoratives and the verbal abuse of lesbian, gay and bisexual high-school pupils. *Journal of Adolescence*, 24, 25–38.
- Vicars, M. (2006) Who are you calling queer?. *British Educational Research Journal* 32:(3)
- Weston, K. Hesse-Biber, S. N. and Yaiser, M. L. (eds) (2004) Fieldwork in lesbian and gay communities. *Feminist perspectives on social research* Oxford University Press , Oxford
- Williams, T., Connolly, J., Pepler, D., & Craig, W. (2005). Peer victimization, social support, and psychosocial adjustment of sexual minority adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 34, 471–482.

Survey

**Practical Support and Assistance**

*Organisations practically supporting classroom teachers protect their pupils, students and colleagues by challenging homophobia and transphobia.*



Homophobic bullying: Preventing and responding to homophobic bullying in schools Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/homophobicbullying/>

'Schools Out' is the premier teachers' organisation working in partnership with teaching colleagues, schools, colleges, universities, local and national government to deliver practical solutions to homophobic child abuse and discrimination against school staff.



<http://www.schools-out.org.uk/index.htm>



**Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans History Month** takes place every year in **February**. It celebrates the lives and achievements of the LGBT community. We are committed to celebrate its diversity and that of the society as a whole.

<http://www.lgbtyouthnorthwest.org.uk/>

GYRO provides a safe, comfortable space where young people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, or are questioning their sexual identity (LGBQ), can get to know other LGBQ young people.



<http://www.gyro.org.uk/>



**NO OUTSIDERS: RESEARCHING APPROACHES TO SEXUALITIES EQUALITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

*'Everyone is an insider, there are no outsiders – whatever their beliefs, whatever their colour, gender or sexuality.'*

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, February 2004

<http://www.nooutsiders.sunderland.ac.uk/>

Survey

*Liverpool NUT is a federated member of the National **Union of Teachers (NUT)** and is a trade union for school teachers in England and Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. It is a member of the Trades Union Congress. The Union recruits only qualified teachers and those training to be qualified teachers into membership and currently has almost 294,000 members, making it the largest teachers' union in Europe.*

---

**Joining the National Union of Teachers** is both a professional association and a trade union. It is the largest and most influential teachers' organisation in Europe, recruiting only qualified teachers, or those who are on courses or in posts that will lead to teacher qualification.

**Complete Protection:** Being a member of the NUT brings access to the very best legal and professional protection. It gives you a service unrivalled in the teaching profession.

**Support and Advice:** The NUT has a network of regional offices in England and NUT Cymru in Wales. Each office has experienced casework officers and solicitors, as well as other expert staff to give confidential advice, information or assistance on employment rights and other matters relating to your professional life.

**Campaigning:** The NUT campaigns for a reduction in working hours, the removal of excessive workload, and a better work-life balance. We also campaign for fair pay and reform of the assessment system.

**Experts in Education:** We work on curriculum issues as well as pay and conditions of service.

**Continuing Professional Development:** Our continuing professional development programme is recognised as one of the best in the country.

**Benefits and Services:** We offer a wide range of membership benefits and services. Our members save hundreds of pounds a year by accessing discounts available through their membership.

**Equal Opportunities:** Our groundbreaking policy work on equalities issues has been adopted by schools, local authorities and other government institutions.

**Young Teachers:** We have a thriving young teachers' section for all full members under 36. To find out more, visit our website [www.teachers.org.uk](http://www.teachers.org.uk).

**One Union for all Teachers:** The NUT campaigns consistently for professional unity in the teaching profession. We believe that a single professional body, articulating the views of the profession, would benefit both children and teachers.

**Education for All:** We campaign for a good local school for every child and for every community. We are also a member of the Global Campaign for Education, working for every child in the world to have a primary school education by 2015.

For more information <http://www.teachers.org.uk>

Liverpool NUT contact: NUT Office, The Business Dock, 8, Grosvenor Street, Liverpool L3 3BB

Tel: 0150 298 9700 Email: [secretary@liverpool.nut.org.uk](mailto:secretary@liverpool.nut.org.uk)

