

Oldham N.U.T.

2nd 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 Oldham 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 Oldham NUT for producing this report and I await news of further developments with keen interest.

Gill Goodswen



Introduction

It is now over eighteen months since Oldham teachers first completed a survey of the prevalence of homophobic child abuse. The results suggested disturbing levels of discrimination and invite questions with regard to the priority of comprehensive child safeguarding within our community. The new council administration welcomed this initiative and the publishing of the result in Nov. 2008. The council also committed themselves in partnership with the union to vigorously address the culture of bigotry and ignorance highlighted. An aim championed by the teachers surveyed who stated the need for specific training to better protect their students. Regrettably these Oldham results are not unique but common to many communities as is highlighted by the regional returns below.

A three year child protection strategy was agreed with the council that would greatly improve the safeguarding of our children in schools and encourage a more inclusive teaching and learning environment for all. In June 2009 the council, together with the NUT, held the first training events to help staff better challenge homophobia in our schools. Over 50% of secondary schools and 23% of the borough primary schools were represented and it was judged a great success by all involved. Unfortunately since the summer 2009 to our knowledge no further progress has been made on the agreed strategy. The working party that was established to oversee that safeguarding work has also been closed down again without explanation. The next scheduled Oldham MBC conference *'Protecting children – Challenging homophobia in our schools conference June 2010'* has also been cancelled. Whether this is connected with recent re-organisational and senior personnel changes at the councils Children's department is not yet clear.

This second survey of a different set of Oldham secondary teachers unfortunately reinforces the findings of the original survey. What is also of note is that even fewer teachers judged their school's strategy in this area of bullying adequate! However again teachers re-state their commitment to safer more inclusive teaching and learning environments

Mindful of the attempts by far right and neo nazi groups to divide society and sow hatred and ignorance within our community the need to address and challenge such discrimination is all the more pressing. The question now for us all is do we encourage hatred and abuse by silence and inaction or do we challenge bigotry and protect children and school staff and celebrate the wonderful diversity of all communities? We hope that this survey will help inform the debate encouraging all those concerned with children's safeguarding and cohesive communities to make further improvements to challenge to homophobia in our schools.

Tony Harrison
Teacher & Secretary of Oldham NUT

Jeff Evans
Teacher & Equality Rep. (LGBT) Oldham NUT

Background: this project undertaken by Oldham NUT division is an attempt to assess progress or otherwise, since the 2008 survey, to challenging homophobia in schools.

Data collection method: The survey targeted teachers from Oldham secondary schools not previously included. Questionnaires were sent to member's home addresses and seventy-three were completed and returned (approximately 12 %) making the results in statistical terms '*highly significant*'. 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 an open 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 challenge or otherwise homophobia presented to their school and possible solutions. 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; 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 Oldham primary 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.

Headline Results: Section 1 ~ Prevalence of Homophobia

Question 1. Climate of homophobic abuse in the schools	
76.6% (56)	...of teachers that had overheard/observed homophobic abuse in their school on a daily/weekly basis
94% (69)	...of teachers that overheard/observed homophobic abuse in their school on at least a termly basis

Question 2. Prevalence of homophobic discrimination/bullying of pupils by pupils	
40% (29)	...of teachers have witnessed specific pupils being the subject of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying on a daily/weekly basis .
76.6% (56)	...of teachers have witnessed specific pupils being the subject of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying on a termly basis .

Question 3. homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying of staff by pupils	
31.5% (23)	...of teachers reported being the subject of homophobic abuse on at least a termly basis .
50.7% (37)	...of teachers reported being the subject of homophobic abuse at least once within the school year .

Headline Results: **Section 2** ~ Professional assessment to homophobia

Statement 1. Re; the seriousness of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying.	
72.6% (53)	of teachers believe Homophobia is a serious issue demanding action
Statement 2. Does your school vigorously discourage homophobia?	
8.2% (6)	of teachers consider that there school is vigorously addressing homophobia
Statement 3. Do you feel confident to challenge homophobic abuse/discrimination in your classroom?	
53.4% (39)	Of teachers feel confident about addressing homophobia in their classroom.
Statement 4. Would you welcome specific training to better address homophobic abuse/discrimination in your classroom	
49.3% (36)	Of teachers would welcome specific training to help them better address homophobia in their classroom.
Statement 5. Would you welcome whole school training to better address homophobia in your school?	
78.1% (57)	Of teachers would welcome whole school training to better address homophobia within their school.

Oldham NUT Raw Returns

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

73 replies	Never	Rarely Once or twice a year	Occasional Once or twice a term	Sometimes Once or twice a week	Common Nearly every day
Expressed as a % of total return	2.7%	2.7%	17.8%	41.1%	35.6%
Raw return	2	2	13	30	26

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
Expressed as a % of total return	0.0%	1.2%	13.3%	22.9%	62.7%
Raw return	0	1	11	19	52

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 assumed sexuality]

	Never	Rarely Once or twice a year	Occasional Once or twice a term	Sometimes Once or twice a week	Common Nearly every day
Expressed as a % of total return	42.4%	24.7%	16.5%	11.8%	2.4%
Raw return	36	21	14	10	2

Q4. Addressing Homophobia? *Question asked:* Please read the following statements and tick the appropriate box adjacent 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.	Agree	2008 results
Expressed as a % of total return	72%	77.1%
Raw return	53	64
S2. I consider the school vigorously discourages homophobia in all its activities.	Strongly Agree	2008 results
Expressed as a % of total return	8.2%	14.5%
Raw return	6	12
S3. I feel sufficiently confident about the issue to challenge pupils on the issue.	Strongly Agree	2008 results
Expressed as a % of total return	53.4%	45.8%
Raw return	39	38
S4. I would welcome practical training on the issue of addressing homophobia in the classroom.	Strongly Agree	2008 results
Expressed as a % of total return	49.3%	42.2%
Raw return	36	35
S5. I would welcome the adoption of a whole-school approach on the issue of addressing homophobia in the school.	Strongly Agree	2008 results
Expressed as a % of total return	78.1%	74.7%
Raw return	57	62

Prevalence of Homophobia Survey
Interim North West NUT Survey Raw Returns

1. Climate/Culture of Discrimination. Question asked: Have you overheard or seen any 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 imagined 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:-

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	107	494	3	3	121
Expressed as a % of total return	14%	67%	0%	0%	16%

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

S3. I feel sufficiently confident about the issue to challenge pupils on the issue.	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%

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	58	311	2	1	336
Expressed as a % of total return	8%	42%	0%	0%	45%

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	99	414	3	1	208
Expressed as a % of total return	13%	56%	0%	0%	28%

The empirical evidence contained in this Prevalence of Homophobia survey of Oldham school teachers endorses the disturbing advice from academics working in this field of 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 school staff.

Despite the disturbing insight into the ‘endemic’ discrimination and abuse described by teachers in this survey there is also a most encouraging message. The teachers surveyed overwhelming request access to 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 the NUT believes there is no tenable argument that supports the continuation of the abusive and discriminatory reality.

It is hoped that this report will help raise further awareness of the scale of the problem faced by too many young people and their teachers. Oldham NUT believes that teaching and learning environments should not harbour ignorance and bigoted views. We trust that this survey will add vigour to the implementation of the practical safeguarding measures needed to address such harmful and endemic intolerance.

We hope and trust that the commitment that first prompted Oldham MBC to prioritise child protection in this area of work again comes to the fore. We look forward to offering every assistance to such initiatives to make our schools safer and more inclusive environments in which to teach and learn.

Oldham NUT ~ Prevalence of Homophobia Survey

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Practical Support and Assistance

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



department for
children, schools and families

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>

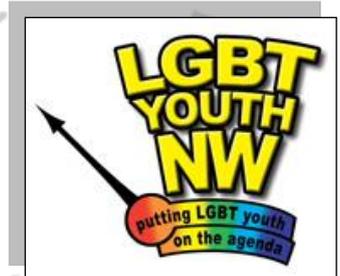


Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans History Month takes place every year in **February**. It celebrates the lives and achievements of the LGBT community. We are committed to celebrate its diversity and that of the society as a whole.

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

LGBT Youth North West is a regional organisation supporting LGBT young people and LGBT Youth organisations in the North West of England. The organisation is made up of existing LGBT Youth providers across the region covering Greater Manchester, Greater Merseyside, Lancashire, Cheshire and Cumbria.

<http://www.lgbtyouthnorthwest.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/>

*Oldham 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.

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>

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