

Tameside N.U.T



Prevalence of Homophobia Survey of Teachers in Tameside Schools

“Everyone is an insider, there are no outsiders, whatever their beliefs whatever their colour, gender, or sexuality.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Spring 2011

*With a forward by Professor Sheila Rowbotham
(University of Manchester)*

Forward by Professor Sheila Rowbotham

The NUT's Homophobic Survey demonstrates an impressive resolve among teachers to challenge homophobia.

Legislation is crucial in protecting human rights. It can also shift the framework of attitudes. However laws alone do not tackle the hostility and contempt which can persist and be expressed in hurtful remarks, distressing behaviour and physical attacks.

Teachers are in a crucial position for they can put forward arguments which undermine the ignorant acceptance of homophobia. They can show how views have emerged historically and how they have varied culturally. They can also explain how small thoughtless cruelties can have terrible psychological and social effects such as individual suicides or the acceptance of state executions and mass extermination.

Respect for a teacher who raises the issue of homophobia can make young people prepared to consider not simply facts but assumptions they might otherwise take for granted. Looking consciously at homophobia can enable them to think through to the emotional anxieties which sustain victimising others. Of course fears about sexuality or fears about being branded as different or an outsider do not vanish simply by examining what is behind your own antagonisms. But this habit of considering implicit motives, once developed, helps in dealing critically with feelings and opinions which sustain the dehumanising of others.

Homophobia thrives in the unexplained shadows. By casting light on what is happening the NUT survey takes a step towards ending the unnecessary suffering of countless young people in our schools. It is part of a wider process of ensuring that a new generation of citizens will grow up able and ready to challenge prejudice and persecution.

Sheila Rowbotham

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Patron of LGBT History Month*



Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a growing awareness and an increase in research into homophobic bullying in schools. Homophobic bullying is now recognised as one of the most destructive social processes that young people can experience in schools, and one of the most difficult challenges for teachers to tackle.

It is perhaps the sign of a more tolerant and responsible society that the systematic abuse of individuals and especially young people, because of their real or perceived differences, is increasingly recognized and challenged. Equality campaigns such as that against racism inform us that addressing bigotry and ignorance is not an easy or swift exercise but also that doing nothing or ignoring such discrimination is in itself part of the problem.

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, was 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 sexual activity and family.

This survey adds further evidence to the growing corpus of academic research into the widespread and often serious consequences for pupils, students and school staff by unchallenged homophobia. The government in 2003 made a good start to addressing this blight on the lives of our children. 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. The recent election of two English MEPs whose admiration of the fascist anti-politics of inequality and denial of human rights is perhaps instructive as to the urgency of the work required.

Teaching unions including the NUT and groups such as Stonewall and Schools Out along with Government support, continue to offer a wealth and range of professional advice and encouragement. However, as this survey again highlights in this area of protecting children, students and staff from homophobia, the message and concomitant action has not been implemented with enough urgency or leadership. The question now for us all is do we add to that silence and inaction or do we challenge bigotry and protect and celebrate our wonderful human diversity? We hope that this survey will help Salford’s school leaders to take up the gauntlet and challenge homophobia in our schools.

Derek Clark

Tameside NUT Secretary

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 sent out to all members homes from which a there was a highly significant return of approximately 10% response rate. 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 Tamesides 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.

Headline Results: Section 1 ~ Prevalence of homophobia

Question 1. Climate of homophobic abuse in the schools

59% (55)	...of teachers that had overheard/observed homophobic abuse in their school on a daily/weekly basis.
86% (81)	...of teachers that overheard/observed homophobic abuse in their school on at least a termly basis.
98% (92)	...of teachers that overheard/observed homophobic abuse in their school during the schools year.

Question 2. Prevalence of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying of pupils by pupils

44% (41)	...of teachers who have observed/overheard specific pupils being the subject of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying on a daily/weekly basis.
74% (70)	...of teachers who observed/overheard specific pupils being the subject of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying at least on a termly basis.
89% (84)	...of teachers who observed/overheard specific pupils being the subject of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying during the school year.

Question 3. homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying of staff by pupils

12% (11)	...of teachers have themselves been the subject of homophobic abuse on at least a termly basis.
29% (27)	...of teachers have themselves been the subject of homophobic abuse at within the school year.

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

Statement 1. Attitudes toward the seriousness of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying.

89% (84)	of teachers 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that Homophobia is a serious issue demanding action
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Statement 2. Is your school vigorously addressing homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying.

49% (46)	of teachers 'agree' or 'strongly agree' consider that their school is vigorously addressing homophobia
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Members' attitudes towards professional needs for challenging homophobic abuse & discrimination.

Statement 3. Do you feel confident to challenge homophobic abuse/discrimination in your classroom?

78% (73)	Of teachers feel confident about addressing homophobia in their classroom.
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Statement 4. Would you welcome specific training to better address homophobic abuse/discrimination in your classroom

53% (50)	Of teachers would welcome specific training to help them better address homophobia in their classroom.
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Statement 5. Would you welcome whole school training to better address homophobia in your school?

76% (71)	Of teachers would welcome whole school training to better address homophobia with their school.
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Based on the returns from 53 members/teachers or 5% return (i.e. statistically significant)

Q1. General Climate. Have you overheard or seen any general derogatory reference to same-sex relationships in your classroom or about school by pupils? (e.g. “this is gay!”)?

	Returns	Never	Rarely Once or twice a year	Occasional Once or twice a term	Sometimes 1 or twice a week	Common Nearly every day
% of total return		2%	12%	28%	24%	34%
Total Raw return	94	2	11	26	23	32
Primary Raw return	21	1	6	9	2	3
Secondary Raw return	64	1	2	12	20	29
Tertiary Raw return	3	0	1	2	0	0
>1 Sector Raw return	6	0	2	3	1	0

Q2. Specific pupil to pupil abuse. 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 1 or twice a week	Common Nearly every day
% of total return	11%	15%	31%	24%	19%
Total return	10	14	29	23	18
Primary return	5	4	7	4	1
Secondary return	4	5	20	18	17
Tertiary return	0	2	1	0	0
More than one sector Raw return	1	3	1	1	0

Q3. Specific homophobic abuse of members? Have you been subject to any homophobic abuse [verbal or non-verbal] by a pupil? [e.g. being referred to as being “gay” etc]

	Never	Rarely Once or twice a year	Occasional Once or twice a term	Sometimes 1 or twice a week	Common Nearly every day
% of total return	71%	17%	9%	1%	2%
Total Raw return	67	16	8	1	2
Primary Raw return	20	1	0	0	0
Secondary Raw return	39	14	8	1	2
Tertiary Raw return	3	0	0	0	0
>1 Sector Raw return	5	1	0	0	0

Prevalence of Homophobia Survey
Tameside NUT Survey - Raw Returns

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

2.1. "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
% of total return	32%	57%	2%	1%	7%
Total Raw return	30	54	2	1	7
Primary Raw return	8	11	1	0	1
Secondary Raw return	19	38	1	1	5
Tertiary Raw return	2	1	0	0	0
>1 Sector Raw return	1	4	0	0	1
2.2. "I consider the school vigorously discourages homophobia in all its activities."	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
% of total return	9%	40%	12%	1%	38%
Total Raw return	8	38	11	1	36
Primary Raw return	2	10	1	0	8
Secondary Raw return	5	22	10	1	26
Tertiary Raw return	1	2	0	0	0
>1 Sector Raw return	0	4	0	0	2
2.3. "I feel sufficiently confident about the issue to challenge pupils on the issue."	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
% of total return	17%	61%	6%	0%	19%
Total Raw return	16	57	6	0	18
Primary Raw return	4	13	0	0	4
Secondary Raw return	10	39	5	0	13
Tertiary Raw return	1	2	0	0	0
>1 Sector Raw return	1	3	1	0	1
2.4. "I would welcome practical training on the issue of addressing homophobia in the classroom."	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
% of total return	17%	36%	5%	4%	36%
Total Raw return	16	34	5	4	34
Primary Raw return	3	8	1	0	9
Secondary Raw return	11	23	4	3	22
Tertiary Raw return	1	1	0	0	1
>1 Sector Raw return	1	2	0	1	2
2.5. "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
% of total return	30%	46%	5%	1%	16%
Total Raw return	28	43	5	1	15
Primary Raw return	4	11	1	0	5
Secondary Raw return	22	29	4	1	7
Tertiary Raw return	0	1	0	0	1
>1 Sector Raw return	2	2	0	0	2

Synopsis prepared by Jeff Evans Equality Rep. (Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Trans) **Oldham Division NUT**
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Prevalence of Homophobia Survey
North West Interim 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:-

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 Tameside school teachers endorses nationwide evidence of homophobic bullying being embedded into the culture of schools. It is a view endorsed by a range of authorities from academics working in this field to child protection agencies (both statutory and voluntary) and human rights groups. This survey also endorses the urgent need for the adoption of government safeguarding guidance and legislation first published 2003. Who doesn't support child protection? Such a question might appear a rhetorical device until viewed against the growing evidence of widespread homophobic bullying to which this survey of Tameside classroom teachers provides a unique local insight.

Despite the highly disturbing insight into the 'endemic' discrimination and abuse described by teachers in this survey there is also a most encouraging message. The teachers surveyed request to 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 further raise awareness and occasion action among those charged with safeguarding our children health and welfare and that of their teachers and other school staff. Tameside 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 practical inclusive strategy to better address such harmful and endemic bigotry.

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Survey of teachers into the prevalence, or otherwise of homophobia by TamesideNUT

Practical Support and Assistance

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

Department for
Education

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.

and

<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.

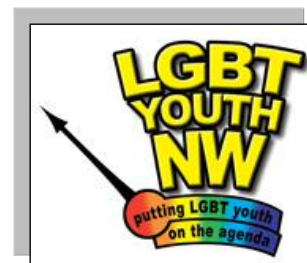
<http://www.lgbtyouthnorthwest.org.uk/>



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/>

Stonewall is renowned for its campaigning and lobbying. Some successes include helping achieve the equalisation of the age of consent, lifting the ban on lesbians and gay men serving in the military, securing legislation allowing same-sex couples to adopt and



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the

repeal of Section 28. More recently Stonewall has helped secure civil partnerships and ensured the recent Equality Act protected lesbians and gay men in terms of goods and services.

Stonewall also works with a whole range of agencies to address the needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in the wider community. Stonewall's Education for All campaign, launched in January 2005, helps tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools and works with a wide coalition of groups.

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



Survey of teachers into the prevalence, or otherwise of homophobia by TamesideNUT

*TamesideNUT 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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Protecting, learning about and celebrating the wondrous joy of human diversity. Creating less abusive, more inclusive learning and teaching environments for pupil, students & staff through the constructive challenge of bigotry.

