

Kirklees Prevalence of Homophobia Survey 2012

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

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

**Foreword by Councillor Cath Harris,
Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services**



***Councillor Cath Harris,
Cabinet Portfolio Holder
for Children's Services
and Ward Councillor for
Ashbrow***



I welcome this report by the NUT, supported by other teacher unions and professionals as well as Kirklees Council. The number of responses is indicative of the level of concern staff in our

schools feel about the issue of homophobia, and also their commitment to address this particular form of bullying, whether that arises from ignorance, fear or prejudice. I am pleased to see many feel confident about addressing homophobic bullying, and that so many wish to further develop their skills in this area. I am sure this report will make a major contribution towards planning that work.

Bullying in any form is always unacceptable, and should be challenged in ways appropriate to the age and understanding of the perpetrator, whether child or adult. Nor should the needs of the victim be ignored: support and practical action is essential. Understanding the reasons behind the bullying will ensure that this can be done. Hate or prejudice in any form is not conducive to the kinds of communities I would wish all our schools and educational settings to be.

We have a rich diversity of people and cultures in Kirklees, which we should always be proud of and celebrate. Living together harmoniously comes through understanding and acceptance of that diversity and richness.

Introduction

We would like to thank Head Teachers and staff in Kirklees schools for their overwhelmingly positive response to this survey. We have received nearly 900 responses - an outstanding return. It is reassuring to find that 93% of all those who responded agree that homophobia is a serious issue demanding action, and that 74% of those expressing an opinion agree that schools in Kirklees are already vigorously addressing homophobia.

Nonetheless, with 66% of those responding hearing homophobic abuse (for example, the 'gay' word used as an insult) on a termly basis during the school year, it is clear that we all need to be concerned about its prevalence. 61% (nearly 2/3) of respondents hear specific pupils being abused in this way during the school year, and more than 25% on a termly basis. 10% of the teachers who responded have themselves been subject to homophobic abuse by pupils within the school year.

We know that schools across Kirklees work hard, and very successfully, to develop and maintain an inclusive and welcoming ethos, but the survey results show that, as always, there is more work to do. Although 87% of teachers say they feel confident about addressing homophobia, many have also said they would welcome training to help them better address homophobia in their classrooms.

Much good work already goes on in our schools, and together we are building on this all the time. Anti-Bullying training and support continues to be offered by the Traded Learning Service, in conjunction with our partners - Stonewall, the Anti-Bullying Alliance and Schools Out. Bullying has been a regular item on the Agenda of Behaviour & Attendance, SEAL, PHSCE, and now Inclusion, Networks for the last few years, and LGBT pupils are amongst those featured as vulnerable groups on training offered for the Kirklees Inclusion Quality Standard – an award that is being achieved by increasing numbers of our schools. Current Equality Act training has been hugely over-subscribed by schools keen to demonstrate their compliance with the Single Equality Duty.

The Equality Act 2010, to which we are all bound by law, requires us to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation in our schools and communities. The Act also affords specific protection to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people - and to those who may be perceived as LGB or T.

We hope that the insights offered by this survey will allow us to identify and share the good practice that exists in our schools, and help us all work together to support **all** our children and young people to feel included and to be successful in their learning.

Headline Results: Section 1 ~ Prevalence of homophobia

Question 1: Climate of homophobic abuse in schools

14% Of teachers had overheard/observed homophobic abuse in their school on a **daily/weekly basis**

37% Of teachers had overheard/observed homophobic abuse in their school on at least a **termly basis**

66% Of teachers had overheard/observed homophobic abuse in their school during the **school year**

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

10% Of teachers had overheard/observed specific pupils being the subject of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying on a **daily/weekly basis**

28% Of teachers had overheard/observed specific pupils being the subject of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying on a **termly basis**

61% Of teachers had overheard / observed specific pupils being the subject of homophobic abuse/discrimination/bullying during the **school year**

Question 3: Homophobic abuse/discrimination/ bullying of staff by pupils

2% Of teachers have themselves been the subject of homophobic abuse on at least a **termly basis**

8% Of teachers have themselves been the subject of homophobic abuse within the **school year**

Headline Results: Section 2~ Professional responses to homophobia

1) Attitudes toward the seriousness of homophobia

93% *Of teachers 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that homophobia is a serious issue demanding attention*

2) Opinions of schools' effectiveness in dealing with homophobia

74% *Of teachers 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that their school is vigorously addressing homophobia*

3) Individual teachers' confidence in tackling homophobia

87% *Of teachers feel reasonably confident about addressing homophobia in their classroom*

4) Training Opportunities

48% *of Kirklees teachers would welcome specific training to help them better address homophobia in their classrooms*

5) Confronting Heterosexism

35% *of Kirklees teachers agreed that some schools are reluctant to confront the issues of same-sex relationships and heterosexist assumptions*

44% did not express an opinion

Conclusion

This survey was made possible by the collaboration of colleagues from the NUT, Kirklees Learning Service and the Police Hate Crime Unit in Kirklees. We would particularly like to thank the headteachers who ensured that their staff received the survey, and the staff themselves for filling it in and returning it to us. A final thank-you to Jeff Evans who designed the questionnaire and whose commitment to protecting our children from this form of bullying and abuse is untiring.

John Edwards, Assistant Director for Learning, supports this work. He said:

'The report is very interesting, and provides data which can help inform schools as they seek to address this particular form of bullying. I was quite encouraged by particular aspects of the data - in the section on the professional response it was good to see staff expressing their wish to have professional development in this area, and also good to see that only 5% of respondents felt that their school does not vigorously discourage homophobia in all its activities; clearly, we would all like this to have been nil, but I think this is evidence of action being taken in schools - our collective role is to guard against complacency in this and add further support to the efforts schools are already making.'

Emma Harrison, Hate Incident Co-ordinator for Kirklees Police, said:

'In partnership with Kirklees Council we are working extremely hard to raise awareness around homophobic Hate Incidents which are under-reported in comparison to other strands of our work. Having worked in Education for many years I know that, nationally, homophobic bullying is a problem in schools and this is reflected in the results of our survey. I am thrilled at the response from teachers in Kirklees which has far exceeded my expectations and demonstrates our shared commitment to address this particular form of bullying. I fully support and look forward to working with my colleagues in Education to continue this important work.'

Actions for the Future:

The data collected will inform future action and work with appropriate staff in schools. We hope to develop an Authority-wide approach to tackling homophobic bullying and invite schools' participation in an audit of the good practice that already exists in Kirklees. The results of such an audit will help us support colleagues in developing further the safe and inclusive environment that all parents, pupils, staff and the public expect in our schools.

Support and Assistance

Some organisations which support classroom teachers in protecting their pupils, students and colleagues against homophobia and transphobia

'Schools Out' is the premier teachers' organisation working in partnership with teaching colleagues, schools, colleges, universities and local and national government to deliver practical solutions to homophobic child abuse and discrimination against school staff. Check out the [Schools OUT Classroom](#) where you'll find everything you need to help you include the LGBT experience in the classroom.. Whatever your subject area or the age of your students, these **free education tools and resources** are tailor-made and good to go



<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, its diversity and that of society as a whole

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

Show Racism the Red Card launched the following resources in May 2012. The films come with an accompanying education pack and the resources are designed to educate young people and adults about the damage homophobia can do and to provide people with a range of information and skills to enable them to challenge it effectively.

"**Homophobia: Let's Tackle it!**" features a wide range of top sporting personalities talking about the issues of homophobia. Their powerful interviews have created an emotive and dynamic resource to combat homophobia and homophobic language in society.



"**Talking about Homophobia**" is a powerful selection of interviews, featuring Hollyoaks' **Kieron Richardson**, comedian and author **Rhona Cameron**, and England rugby star **Ben Cohen**. They, alongside gay equality campaigners, share their experiences of homophobia

<http://www.theredcard.org>



Stonewall is renowned for its campaigning and lobbying. Some major 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 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's '**Education for All campaign**', helps tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools and works with a wide coalition of groups. Kirklees Traded Learning Service is a member of the **Education Champions Programme** on behalf of our schools.

Kirklees is in the top 100 employers in the Stonewall list.

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

Kirklees NUT contact: Gill Goodswen : gillgoodswen@googlemail.com

Kirklees Learning Service contact: Judith McCarter: judith.mccarter@kirklees.gov.uk

Kirklees Safeguarding Unit (Hate Crime) Contact: Emma Harrison
emma.harrison@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk

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