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**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender  
Safety in Liverpool  
A Report on the  
Research Findings  
December 2006**

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# 1. Executive Summary and Recommendations

## Introduction

At the end of 2005, Citysafe commissioned Stormbreak Ltd., a specialist consultancy in gay related research, to conduct a study into perceived levels of safety of the LGB+T community in Liverpool.

The overall aim of the study was to explore perceived and actual incidence of homophobic and transphobic crime and potential ways of making Liverpool more 'gay-friendly'.

## Research Methodology

The research methodology adopted was principally along the lines of:

- An initial workshop amongst stakeholders to determine key priority areas of investigation
- A qualitative exploration conducted mainly by means of in-depth interviews amongst 33 stakeholders, victims of homophobic and trans-phobic crime, the police and representatives of organisations providing services to local LGB+T people.
- A quantitative survey conducted amongst 210 local LGB+T people who either lived, worked, socialised or studied in the city of Liverpool.

The questionnaire used for the survey is available on request.

In addition, observational methods were employed based on:

- Contact with the local gay scene
- A series of conversations with parents of LGB+T people
- A half day session spent with violent young offenders at a local Youth Offending Team Centre (to gain a perpetrator perspective).

The quantitative survey was undertaken by means of an interviewer-administered self-completion questionnaire with respondents largely recruited according to set demographic quotas.

The survey was also advertised by means of the LCC website, the Liverpool Echo and a poster campaign distributed across a variety of local venues and organisations. LGB+T groups were also contacted to maximise reach across types of respondent.

Fieldwork was conducted between February and October 2006.

## **Main Findings**

### **Liverpool Cultural Context**

Liverpool was commonly seen by participants at the qualitative stage of research to be characterised by a predominantly working class culture, with a strong religious (and specifically Catholic) influence, quite conformist/conservative with a small 'c' and quite unconfident. This underpinned a cultural environment that was generally seen as homophobic both expressly by being 'unsafe' in a physical sense, and implicitly through a general lack of recognition of LGB+T issues, such that a large section of community remains invisible or is ignored. LGB+T safety needs to be understood in the broader context of people being able to feel 'normal' (i.e. recognised, included and at ease). This has major implications for council policy formulation and execution in terms of 'mainstreaming' LGB+T issues.

There is an evident gay scene in Liverpool, which is both defined by, and reflects, the general culture of the city.

Gay venues clustered around the Stanley Street area tend to be basement based, with very little to offer the middle class component of the LGB+T community, or lesbians in general. There is evidence that a proportion of the local LGB+T community does not use the local gay scene at all because it is felt it has nothing to offer them (although this could be said to be the case amongst a contingent of the LBG population in all UK towns and cities). The Liverpool gay scene very much lives in the shadow of that of Manchester, with some preferring to use Manchester facilities rather than those on offer more locally.

There is also reasonable evidence to suggest that a proportion of the LGB+T community does not intend to remain in Liverpool long term specifically on account of the perceived lack of safety within the city and the general lack of facilities within the city specifically for them.

There is a plethora of local LGB+T groups servicing a variety of needs, but these appear to be quite fragmented. For example, there are 4 separate organisations running youth groups (1 or even 2 of which possibly for reasons of geography), with little interaction as to their common aims or purpose.

Importantly, there appears to be insufficient funding of LGB+T groups, diminishing their impact. This places pressure on the Armistead Centre to take on the de facto role of the Liverpool LGB+T Centre, without the remit (or, possibly, according to some, the range of specialisms) to do so.

Much LGB+T community activity appears to be sexual health related, with a focus on gay men.

The local LGB forum, although by no means inactive, was commonly perceived to need focus and direction.

Liverpool City Council, whilst perceived to be making recent positive efforts towards the LGB+T community, was commonly perceived as quite tokenistic in its gestures and yet to show any serious commitment.

Liverpool was nevertheless seen to have much to offer in terms of its general sense of sociability and cultural heritage. Moreover, the existing LGB+T social infrastructure is not insignificant and is a basis upon which to build.

### **Perceived Levels of LGB+T Safety in Liverpool**

Over half of survey participants feared being victims of crime in general, and around the same proportion feared being victims of specifically homophobic or transphobic crime.

No area of Liverpool was identified as being entirely safe from homophobic or transphobic attack, although the city centre (retail and night) district was most commonly singled out as the area where such was most likely to occur.

There was a general view that homophobic and transphobic crime was on the increase in Liverpool or, at least, was not getting any better.

Substantial numbers of the LGB+T community felt that they had to take preventative measures to maximise levels of safety within the city, which commonly precluded the use of general public facilities.

Many users of the gay scene felt unsafe not only around, but actually in, gay venues.

There was a common perceived need to address public attitudes towards the LGB+T community in general, as well as the need for an increased police presence (especially in the city centre, as well as in general), but specifically with officers with the appropriate training and attitudes to deal with homophobic and transphobic crime.

It is critical to note that homophobic crime exists because of LGB+T discrimination in society at large. People commit homophobic and transphobic crimes because they feel they have the right to on account of believing LGB+T people to be lesser human beings. This goes far beyond a 'simple' (without using this term pejoratively) policing matter.

### **Experience of Homophobic and Transphobic Crime**

As many as 59% of local LGB+T people interviewed recorded experiencing a homophobic crime, largely within the Liverpool area. This is somewhat higher than recorded in both London surveys conducted by Stormbreak (amongst 1,100 LGB+T people), although not dramatically so. Compared with London overall (where HO crime incidence amongst 521 LGB+T people was at 47%), such findings for Liverpool are statistically significant, but not, when compared with the East London survey (of 602 LGB+T people where HO crime incidence was at 53%).

In addition, well over half of participants had witnessed a homophobic or transphobic crime being committed against somebody else.

Such crimes had most commonly occurred outside of the city centre area, although this nevertheless emerged as the area of highest concentration of homophobic or transphobic crimes (in terms of geographic size relative to incidence). The 'gay area' around Stanley Street emerged as a specific area of targeted homophobic or transphobic attack.

Sectors of the LGB+T community of most vulnerability (e.g. disabled, older, trans. etc.) emerged as most susceptible to being victims of homophobic or transphobic crime.

Verbal abuse was the most common reportable offence experienced. However, 1 in 3 of *all* survey participants had experienced either an actual physical assault or threats of violence. This is, again, somewhat higher than recorded in London, where incidence of physical assault was around 1 in 5 of LGB+T people. Violent attack and threats of violence against the LGB+T community appear to be relatively high in Liverpool and this *is* a statistically significant finding.

A range of other homophobic or transphobic crime (from burglary to sexual assault) was also recorded by smaller, but not insignificant, numbers of survey participants.

A total of 3162 homophobic or transphobic crimes had been committed against 210 LGB+T survey participants over a lifetime. It is therefore possible to deduce that the community experiences an average of 15 transphobic or homophobic crimes per person. This is somewhat higher than that recorded for London (at an average of 12 per person).

The large percentage of homophobic or transphobic crimes had occurred just in the street, around the person's home and in a variety of other public settings (including gay venues).

Furthermore, almost half had experienced homophobic or transphobic crimes during daytime hours (7am to 5pm), although these more commonly occurred at night.

A substantial number also recorded that at some point a homophobic or transphobic crime committed against them had been witnessed by somebody else.

Moreover, at least 1 in 4 had been able to identify the perpetrator of homophobic or transphobic crimes committed against them.

The main perpetrators of homophobic or transphobic crimes were identified as youths/teenagers; however, it could be just anyone – 14% claimed to have been victimised by neighbours and 5% by family members.

As many as 3 in 5 victims of homophobic or transphobic crimes had had such an experience in the past year.

### **Awareness HO Crime Reporting Systems**

A high number of survey participants, 2 in 3, recorded being aware of police officers with specific HO (i.e. homophobic or transphobic) crime reporting and liaison roles (LGBTLOs). Such was overwhelmingly thought to be a good idea, especially given the need for sensitivity and understanding of the specific nature of HO crime. It was also felt that such a role would encourage the LGB+T community to come forward to report HO crime.

The very large majority was also strongly in support of 3rd Party reporting systems, although only 14% had actually reported an HO crime on somebody else's behalf (despite over half of the sample claiming to have witnessed one).

Only half of those who had reported an HO crime as a 3<sup>rd</sup> party claimed to have been satisfied with the outcome of so doing (which is reasonable but demonstrates more effort is needed on the part of the police).



## **Incidence of Homophobic and Transphobic Crime Reporting**

Only 40% of those who had experienced a homophobic or transphobic crime had reported one to the police. The likelihood to report HO crime was directly correlated with its level of seriousness - people were much more likely to have reported an actual physical assault than verbal abuse, for example.

The large majority (80%) had felt able to report the specifically HO nature of the crime experienced. However, only 2 in 3 of those who had done so felt the police were prepared to record the crime as having a homophobic/transphobic motivation.

Almost half (48%) felt that the police had had a positive attitude towards the crime being identified as homophobic/transphobic, compared with 20% who had felt police reaction had been negative.

Furthermore, 2 in 3 had found the police officer to be professional in dealing with the homophobic/transphobic crime (at both initial and subsequent points of police contact).

## **Outcomes of Reporting Homophobic and Transphobic Crime**

Concerning the last HO crime reported, 1 in 3 claimed to have been able to identify the perpetrator to the police, but only 1 in 3 (i.e. 1/3<sup>rd</sup>) of these claimed that they received adequate support from the police to press charges.

On the basis of 60 crimes reported to the police recorded in the questionnaire, 21 of them resulted in a verbal caution, on 26 occasions no action was taken, 1 of the cases was recorded as continuing, and charges were pressed on 12 occasions (i.e. in 1 in 5 cases reported).

Of the 12 cases where charges had been pressed, a total of 7 convictions had been made.

Despite criticisms leveled against the police by survey respondents, the majority (2 in 3) who had reported HO crimes were left with a more positive perception of the force than before. This is an important message to communicate both to the police force and to the LGB+T community.

## **Reasons for Not Reporting Homophobic and Transphobic Crime**

Only 13% of HO crime victims recorded reporting all HO crimes that had been committed against them. Commonly, this was because the crime had not been seen as serious enough to report. This is often the case for verbal abuse, that many simply tolerate as a common fact of daily life.

Other major barriers to reporting were: the belief that the police could not do anything about the crime and that the police would not be sympathetic to the victim. Despite acknowledged and welcomed recent efforts on the part of the police, there remains some considerable bridge building to be accomplished on its part with the LGB+T community.

HO crime victims also commonly feared recrimination.

## **Perceptions of Public Services**

On balance, reasonable scores were recorded for a variety of public services used by the Liverpool LGB+T community, with voluntary HIV support services and NHS sexual health services scoring highest, and social services lowest (but still above average).

Criticisms were mainly leveled against the overall lack of recognition/acknowledgement and general invisibility of the LGB+T community in terms of statutory body policy and practice. There was also resentment of a perceived tendency to define difficulties experienced (e.g. depression or problems with neighbours) to be a direct consequence of a person's transgender or sexual orientation (i.e. a blame the victim mentality).

Overall slowness of response from statutory services was acknowledged to be a common frustration for all service users (both 'gay' and 'straight').

There was general appreciation when services were offered 'by the community, for the community' (which is possibly why perceived voluntary sexual health organisations - notably the Armistead and Jigsaw Centres - scored highest of all services).

## **Experience of Homophobic Bullying in Education**

Experience of homophobic bullying on the part of those who had very recently left full time education was found to be widespread and commonly not acknowledged by staff. Rarely was the specifically homophobic nature of the bullying identified to staff.

The common response by staff in schools was noted to be largely inadequate, if not actually punitive, to the person experiencing homophobia.

The consequence of this is that often LGB(+T) pupils drop out of school early, display behavioural difficulties or under-perform.

There is a clear need for the education department to take more seriously issues of homophobia; with forthcoming goods and services legislation under the Equality Act 2006 (making it illegal to discriminate either directly or indirectly in the provision of goods and services on grounds of sexual orientation) providing a particularly important opportunity to do so. **If** goods and services legislation is ultimately applied to schools, discriminatory practices against LGB pupils will, effectively, be unlawful. This has quite major implications for staff training and the general need to confront religious intolerance of LGB+T issues which was considered by a number of stakeholders, recent LGBT school leavers, FE students and parents of local LGB+T people at the qualitative stage of research to hold considerable sway within Liverpool establishments of education.

## 1.1 Recommendations

### General

1. There is a general need for the council to comprehend LGB+T safety in its broadest context, and not simply to treat the issue as a policing matter. This has major implications for the council's overall approach to the issue, policy formulation and execution.
2. There is a need to resource any council LGB+T (safety) strategy in a serious, committed and sustained way. Raising the profile of LGB+T issues will inevitably result in greater attention being placed on the community, with at least some (and possibly much) of this being negative attention. To raise the profile of the LGB+T community in the absence of resource to subsequently protect it may well do more harm than good.
3. There is a need to understand that the LGB+T community is not homogeneous. Issues for lesbians, trans. people (especially) and gay men are often quite distinct.
4. Services for lesbians in Liverpool are particularly under-resourced and the imbalance of the focus on the gay male 'scene' needs to be addressed.
5. In an ideal situation, trans. issues should be treated as quite distinct from LGB issues. However, if this is likely to result in trans. issues being even further de-prioritised, then it is important to retain the LGB+T grouping when formulating strategy and policy (but to acknowledge that the grouping is LGB+T, not simply LGBT).
6. Whilst the issue of men's sexual health is important, this should not be the exclusive or paramount focus of targeted LGB+T (including gay male) activity.
7. The results of this survey should be disseminated as widely as possible (as considerable interest in it has been expressed on the part of stakeholders and a variety of service providers).

## **Local LGB+T Groups**

8. There is a need for a greater cohesiveness and sense of united LGB+T community purpose across the variety of (voluntary) LGB+T groups within Liverpool, which is not currently being achieved through the existing Forum. The Forum needs re-energising if it is to become an effective force within the local LGB+T community, although, recently, there is evidence that this is occurring.
9. There is a general need for more resourcing of LGB+T groups which currently appear to be quite dependent upon PCT funding and this restricts the remit of permissible community activity. More direct council funding could help re-address the (sexual) health focus imbalance, although services delivered by the community itself tend to be generally better focused and appreciated by users.

## **Physical Safety**

10. Street lighting in the 'gay quarter' needs to be improved.
11. A police presence in the 'gay quarter' needs to be enhanced (especially around pub closing times).
12. Continued efforts need to be made to 'gate' the alley which is a cruising area off Victoria Street (apparently not achieved to date because it is privately owned) as this is a common target of homophobic attack.
13. It should be noted that several areas of outer Liverpool are unsafe for LGB+T people, such that the Stanley Street area should not become the exclusive focus of targeted activity to improve safety.
14. Pedestrianising Stanley Street and the establishment of a 'gay village' warrants serious consideration. This would be generally welcomed by the LGB+T community and would be likely to enhance safety.
15. Pressure should be placed on publicans of gay venues to uphold stricter door policies for heterosexual males and to monitor their behaviour more closely once inside.

## **Policing**

16. Positive efforts made by the police regarding LGB+T issues have been acknowledged and are appreciated by the local community. This should be communicated to the force.
17. There is evidence of continuing negative attitudes towards the LGB+T community within sections of the police force which needs to be addressed in a serious and committed way.
18. There is a continued need for bridge-building between the police force and the LGB+T community to generate and enhance the community's trust in the force.
19. The lesbian and gay liaison officer role is very much welcomed and found useful by the LGB+T community, yet a good deal of activities appear to be carried out outside of official working hours, which suggests the role is under-resourced.
20. There is a continued need for LGB+T training for all officers to ensure standards of good practice are upheld throughout the force.
21. There is some evidence to suggest fairly common insensitive police response in matters of reporting same-sex domestic violence which needs to be addressed. Please note that criticism was **not** leveled at appointed DV officers who were commended as highly professional.
22. Given strong evidence of the widespread incidence of HO crime, and particularly given it's quite violent nature, greater police resource appears to be required to protect the LGB+T community.

## **Reporting HO Crime**

23. There is strong evidence of massive under-reporting of HO crime and continued efforts are required to encourage the LGB+T community to come forward to report both for themselves and as witnesses. Continued publicity, and simplicity and anonymity of reporting formats may help.
24. There appears to be little usage of 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Reporting Centres which could be further developed and publicised to the LGB+T community.
25. The finding that the majority of people reporting HO crime recorded this *enhanced* their perceptions of the police is an important message to communicate to the force and to the LGB+T community.

## **Local Services**

26. See general recommendations pertaining to the need to mainstream LGB+T issues.
27. Training on LGB+T issues at all levels should be undertaken as a general matter of staff induction and continuous professional development.
28. Council services policies should be scrutinised to ensure compliance with forthcoming goods and services legislation covered by the Equality Act 2006 which makes it illegal to victimise or discriminate, either directly or indirectly, in the provision of goods and services on grounds of sexual orientation.
29. Given the high incidence of LGB+T people in private rented accommodation, pressure should be placed on landlords to adopt and implement non-discriminatory tenancy policies.

## **Education**

30. There is a pressing need to bring on board the education department to address LGB+T issues generally.
31. A city-wide anti-homophobic bullying policy needs to be developed and applied across all educational establishments.
32. Educational establishments should investigate the implications of the goods and services legislation covered by the 2006 Equality Act on how LGB+T pupils are treated.
33. Any religious intolerance of LGB(+T) issues within the education system needs to be challenged from the standpoint of council commitments to diversity and equal opportunities.

## **2. Background and Objectives**

At the end of 2005, Citysafe commissioned Stormbreak Ltd, a research consultancy that specialises in researching lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) issues, to conduct a survey into LGB&T safety in Liverpool.

The main objectives of the survey were:

- To understand the levels of perceived safety of the local LGB&T community
- To determine the impact of homophobia and transphobia on peoples' lives
- To determine the incidence and nature of homophobic and transphobic (HO) crime
- To explore the impact of HO crime on the lives of victims
- To determine levels of reporting HO crime
- To understand reasons for non-reporting of HO crime
- To elicit perceptions of the police on the part of the LGB&T community
- To understand how to encourage reporting
- To gauge usage and perceptions of local LGB&T community organisations
- To gauge usage and perceptions of statutory services
- To explore means of making Liverpool more gay-friendly.

Fieldwork was carried out between February and October 2006.



## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Methodological Approach**

The survey was undertaken in 3 main stages.

1. A stakeholder workshop
2. An initial qualitative stage of research
3. A quantitative survey. The questionnaire used in the survey is available on request.

The stakeholder one day workshop took place in February 2006 and was attended by 15 local stakeholders from a range of local statutory services and LGB&T groups, as well as a local councillor.

The principal objective of the workshop was to scope the survey in terms of its specific objectives and main areas of investigation, and to give local organisations an input into the design of the project.

Following on from this, a phase of primary qualitative research was undertaken principally in the form of in-depth interviews. Against a quota of 15 in-depth interviews, a total of 33 was achieved. Interviews were conducted with:

- A range of local lesbians, gay men, bi-sexuals, transvestites and trans-sexuals who had experienced homophobic or transphobic attacks/abuse
- Stakeholders and service providers for the LGB&T community (including voluntary services)
- Representatives of statutory services
- The police and youth offending services.

In addition, this exploratory phase included general observation of the local Liverpool environment and LGB&T scene, involving discussions with a range of people including bar staff and managers of gay venues, local LGB&T people, parents of young LGB&T people, the police, local LGB&T service providers and religious community representatives.

As a supplement to the qualitative phase of research, a half day session was undertaken with violent young offenders, organised through the Youth Offending Team, in an attempt to gain a greater insight into the perpetrator perspective.

The final phase of the study took the form of a quantitative survey conducted amongst 210 LGB&T people (of 16 years+) living, working, studying and/or socialising in Liverpool. In order to determine the incidence of homophobic and transphobic crime, no quotas were set for actual experience of being a victim of such crimes.

The survey was undertaken by means of an interviewer administered self-completion questionnaire. This enabled people to be specifically targeted against quotas set (e.g. by age, gender, etc.), but allowed participants to complete the questionnaire in private.

Efforts were made to ensure that the survey did not principally focus on gay pubs and clubs as a means of recruiting participants. To ensure maximum reach, the following measures were employed to achieve the sample:

- A wide range of organisations were contacted to enlist support and provide contacts to complete a questionnaire, These included:
  - The Armistead Project
  - Gay Youth R Out (GYRO)
  - Sahir House
  - Liverpool Students Union LGB&T Society
  - The Lesbian and Gay Community Forum
  - Trans-Wirral
  - The Gender Trust
  - Homotopia
  - Alert
  - Jigsaw Centre
  - Gay groups within local Trade Unions.

Stormbreak wishes to extend a warm gesture of thanks to all organisations and participants who helped contribute to this survey.

- Local LGB&T people were recruited to network 'harder to reach' groups (e.g. the elderly, people who were not out at all etc.)

- An advertisement about the survey inviting people to take part was placed in the Liverpool Echo
- The survey was publicised on the Liverpool City Council website
- Posters about the survey were displayed in a range of establishments (specifically gay and non-gay including: bookshops, sexual health clinics, drop-in centres, libraries, gay saunas, hairdressers and bars/clubs).

### 3.2 Qualitative Sample Design

The qualitative phase of the research focused primarily on:

- Victims of homophobic crime in Liverpool
- Groups within the LGB+T community of particular interest (e.g. teenagers, BME, people with a disability)
- Local stakeholders
- Representatives from the local police force (with LGB+T remits)
- LCC council staff
- Representatives of services aimed at/used by the local LGB+T population.

**A total of 33 in-depth interviews were conducted.**

Ages ranged from 16+ to 50+.

In addition, a half day was spent with violent young offenders at a local Youth Offending Team site, as well a number of 'conversations' held with a variety of Liverpool people, including bar staff, trade union representatives, staff in gay saunas and local LGB+T people in general.

The sample design below is over-lapping (for example an interviewee may have been both lesbian and a member of the local police force), so numbers in the table below do not add to 33 in total.

In-depth interviews conducted	No. of interviews
Gay men	18
Lesbians	11
Police	3
Stakeholders/ providers of LGB+T services	8
Disabled	3
BME	2
TS/TV	4

### 3.3 Quantitative Sample Size and Structure

All participants had to either **live, work, study and / or socialise** in Liverpool in order to qualify to take part in the survey. Areas of Liverpool where each of these activities took place are recorded below in **Table 3.3.1**. Survey participants were found to live and work across a range of areas of Liverpool (although with reasonable clusters in Mossley Hill and Wavertree, as well as Aigburth, Toxteth and Kensington – in that order), but to socialise predominantly in the retail and night time areas of the city centre, as well as areas South Central and South Suburbs.

Outside of Liverpool, survey participants lived most predominantly in Brikenhead/ the Wirral and Sefton.

<b>Table 3.3.1 Connection with each area of Liverpool: - Resident - Work/Study - Socialise Base = Total sample (210)</b>	Area of residence %	Area(s) where work/study %	Area(s) where socialise %
1 South Central	10	6	13
2 Eastern Link	10	7	5
3 Alt Valley	7	6	4
4 North Liverpool	11	5	5
5 South Liverpool	3	5	4
6 South Suburbs	15	7	23
7 City Centre	6	16	52
7a City Centre (retail & night)	8	18	77
Outside of Liverpool/None	30	38	4

1

For the remaining social demographics, comparisons have been made with the Liverpool population where possible (i.e. directly comparable).

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of the fieldwork Liverpool City Council operated 7 Neighbourhood Management areas that were used to define boundaries in this project. Since that time, the Authority has moved to 5 areas.

According to quotas specified, women made up around 2 in 5 of survey participants, and men 1 in 3. The trans. community was also represented - TV and TS, both male to female and female to male.

<b>Table 3.3.2 Gender</b>	<b>LGB&amp;T survey sample Base = Total sample (210) %</b>	<b>Liverpool population</b>
Female	38	53
Male	58	48
TV/TS	4	Not known

Most survey participants identified themselves as 'gay', including 90% of males and 16% of females. Those identifying themselves as bi-sexual were from a mix of gay male, lesbian and trans. gender categories. Bi-sexuals tended to be more commonly not 'out' and non-scene. One in 4 trans. survey participants identified as heterosexual.

<b>Table 3.3.2 Sexual orientation</b>	<b>LGB&amp;T survey sample Base = Total sample (210) %</b>
Bisexual	12
Gay	59
Heterosexual	1
Lesbian	26
Other	1

Given that homosexuality has only begun to be 'tolerated' quite recently by society - male homosexuality was only decriminalised in 1967 - it is not really feasible to attain LGB survey samples that match the population as a whole in terms of age structure. Older people tend to remain quite 'closeted' and young LGB people tend to spend a sustained period coming to terms with their sexuality, generally not being 'out' (possibly even to themselves) in their teenage years.

Despite this, efforts were made to ensure a spread of ages within the sample, with quotas set to ensure LGB&T people both below and above the age of 35 could be analysed separately in a statistically robust way.

<b>Table 3.3.3 Age</b>	<b>LGB&amp;T Survey (210) %</b>	<b>Liverpool Overall %</b>
16-18	3	6
19-24	22	37
25-34	27	
35-44	30	
45-54	12	22
55-64	4	15
65+	1	
Average age	34 years	

Liverpool's black and minority ethnic (BME) population is around 6% and efforts were made to ensure the sample included non-white British LGB&T people. Given acknowledged additional issues of LGB&T discrimination amongst BME groups, not every BME group (notably Asians) was represented in the sample in proportion to incidence in the Liverpool population as a whole. (Note that an Asian male was, nevertheless included at the qualitative stage of research.)

<b>Table 3.3.4 Ethnicity</b>	LGB&T Survey (210) % (x) = Actual numbers
Black British	2
Caribbean	0 (1)
Gypsy/Traveller	0 (1)
White and black Caribbean	1
Other mixed background	1
White British	89
White Irish	3
Other white background	2
Other	1



Efforts were made to include disabled LGB&T people, including those who were hearing or sight impaired and wheelchair users. Whilst no-one actually raised a complaint about the question in the questionnaire: *Do you consider yourself to be disabled?*, this could have been taken to mean 'on account of being LGBT' by some participants, and therefore may need re-phrasing in any subsequent LGB&T survey commissioned by LCC.

Census figures for Liverpool overall are not comparable as the question used to obtain incidence in the Census is broader (asking about disability or long term sickness).

<b>Table 3.3.5</b> <b>Whether or not disabled</b>	LGB&T Survey (210) %
Yes	11
No	89

Considering the type of residential accommodation, it is important to note the high percentage of LGB&T who rent from private landlords which is likely to give rise to quite specific housing needs. The local LGB+T population would appear to be under-serviced by local council housing and more reliant on private renting. One reason for discrepancies in the housing situation of the LGB+T population and the population of Liverpool overall is due to the relatively young profile of the survey sample.

<b>Table 3.3.6</b> <b>Type of residential accommodation</b>	LGB&T Survey (210) % (x) = Actual numbers	Liverpool Overall %
Owner occupier – owned outright	11	21
Owner occupier – with mortgage	22	31
Rented from council	9	17
Rented from housing association	13	15
Rented from private landlord	32	12
Accommodation with job	0 (1)	No figure available
Other	13	3

It is also important to note the quite high percentage of LGB+T who were found to live alone, particularly given the quite young age profile of the sample (i.e. this not being on account of deceased elderly partners).

<b>Table 3.3.7</b> <b>With whom, if anyone, live</b>	LGB&T Survey (210) %
Partner	27
Friend(s)	16
Family	23
Other shared accommodation	1
Live on own	32

Efforts were made to ensure LGB+T people with a range of religious beliefs took part, but again, related to the issue of black and minority ethnic LGB+T people raised earlier, it was not possible to cover all faiths that exist within Liverpool.

It is worth noting the high percentage of LGB+T people who do not follow a faith at all, in part at least, on grounds of discrimination experienced from established religions (and resultant disillusionment).

<b>Table 3.3.8</b> <b>Religion</b>	LGB&T Survey (210) %	Liverpool population overall %
None	47	10
Christian	49	80
Jewish	1	1
Other	3*	2

\*This figure does not include Moslems and Hindus who were not present in the survey sample.

Efforts were made to ensure a spread of participants by social class. We note the relatively high percentage of participants in ABC1 categories, which is typical in LGB&T surveys, given specific added difficulties of being gay in a manual labour environment.

<b>Table 3.3.9 Social Class</b>	<b>LGB&amp;T Survey (210) %</b>
A	5
B	18
C1	23
C2	-
D	7
E	1
Unemployed/Sick	10
Student	10
Homemaker	0
Retired	2
Not answered/Other	23

The income ranges reflect the diversity of the sample by socio-economic category. Average income was £19,010 per year, significantly higher for ABC1s (at £24,000), males, those aged 35+, white British, those without a disability, and (probably related to social class) infrequent users of the local gay scene. This compares with an average **household** income in Liverpool of approximately £22.5K per annum.

<b>Table 3.3.10 Income</b>	LGB&T Survey (210) % (x) = Actual numbers
Under £10,000	28
£10,000 - £14,999	16
£15,000 - £19,999	17
£20,000 - £29,000	22
£30,000 - £39,999	8
£40,000 - £49,000	3
£50,000 - £59,999	2
£60,000+	0 (1)
Refused	3
Average income	19K

Although it is the most visible element of the LGB+T community, the gay scene represents only one element of it (and probably only the minority). Therefore, efforts were made to ensure inclusion of LGB+T people who did not base their social lives around commercial gay venues, even though such groups are generally quite difficult to locate.

Somewhat fewer than 1 in 3 survey participants attended gay venues only once a month or less often. The gay scene tends to be younger and male-dominated.

<b>Table 3.3.11</b> <b>Frequency of attending gay venues</b>	LGB&T Survey (210) %
More than once a week	37
About once a week	21
About every fortnight	12
About once a month	12
About every 2-3 months	6
About 2 or 3 times a year	4
About once a year	1
Less often	4
Never	2

Somewhat just under than 1 in 3 survey participants was not fully 'out' as gay – many may have been out to friends but not family or work colleagues. Those hardly or not out at all are an extremely difficult group to include in LGB+T surveys and their participation in the survey was achieved through local networking.

<b>Table 3.3.12</b> <b>Level of being 'out'</b>	LGB&T Survey (210) %
To all, including family	69
To all, excluding family	6
To most	9
To some	9
To hardly anyone	4
Not out at all	3

## 4. General Perceptions of Levels of Safety in Liverpool

Perceptions of safety of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans. community in Liverpool need to be contextualised within the overall cultural setting of the city.

The culture of Liverpool was noted by a number of respondents at the qualitative stage of research and by many during the general observational work conducted, to be predominantly working class, machismo, white, conservative with a small 'c', quite narrow-minded (or, as one participant explained 'conformist'), having a strong catholic (as well as general Christian) influence, as well as being somewhat 'unconfident'. These characteristics both define and are reflected in the local gay scene.

*“Very homophobic and aggressive ... an ‘ist’ culture of all descriptions ... not just homophobic ... if you’re different, then, as they would say: ‘There’s nothing doing for you’.”*

*It is not just the Roman Catholic Church which is very strong here. The Bishop is very outspoken ... letter to the Telegraph which was really very nasty. Religion is quite strong in Liverpool, a historic problem from more sectarian times. Local politicians are probably weary of the churches as, in the past, sermons did literally change councils!*

Liverpool was seen to be very much in the shadow of neighbouring Manchester, the gay 'capital' of the North.

*“Gay lifestyle in Liverpool is like Manchester 15 years ago.”*

There is, nevertheless, a evident local 'gay scene', largely clustered around the Stanley Street area, as well as a number of support and network groups for all elements of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans. population (although, like so many other areas of the UK, with an emphasis on gay men).

The various social groups appear to be quite fragmented, with little sense of social cohesion or community purpose - there is no gay pride event in Liverpool (which is unusual for a city of its size). LGB&T community activity

is based around the Armistead Project in the city centre as well as Jigsaw in Birkenhead. A key focus of these organisations, certainly the Armistead Centre, is mens' sexual health, despite efforts on their part to address a broader remit. This is no doubt dictated by funding streams, which are largely health service generated. On one hand, this is seen to be too narrow a focus; on the other, criticism was levelled against attempts to address wider remits without the resources or, possibly, the specialisms to do so. The LGB forum was commonly noted to have lost impetus currently and to be quite ineffective.

*"It's amazing what you cannot achieve when you don't want to."  
(LGB Forum member)*

However, very recent activity does suggest the Forum is gaining momentum again.

Whilst addressing HIV issues is, of course, extremely important, there is resentment, and not just on the part of women, that this has become the over-riding focus of any intervention/relationship building exercise with the LGB&T community.

*"If ever there is a gay event, you get them standing outside giving out condoms. Its so f\*\*\*king invasive, because why should we have condoms thrust on us just because we are gay. It's just this assumption that all gay people do is f\*\*k about and we need to have free condoms given to us at any remotely relevant event."*

Gay commercial venues are 'visible', but tend to be basement located in alleys off the main streets (notably Victoria Street), giving a ghettoised, half-hidden image of the local gay scene.

Whilst Liverpool's overall BME population is not major, the presence of non-white people in local gay bars is quite thin on the ground (although not entirely absent).

There is very little provision for lesbians, and no specifically female venues. Some lesbians felt they were only grudgingly tolerated by gay men in bars.

*"The majority don't really like us."*



Feelings of lack of safety on the part of lesbians were underpinned by feelings of lack of safety as women per se.

*"I do not feel safe as a woman, before you even get to being a lesbian."*  
People with a disability appear to be poorly catered for - even the Armistead Centre has difficulties accommodating wheelchair users (being on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor in a building with a small lift). One wheelchair user noted being refused entry to a gay venue by door staff explicitly on account of being *'a fire hazard'* - the term actually used by the door-keeper.

The culture of the gay scene seems to be quite distinctly working class, with an emphasis on alcohol, and an undertone that can be quite violent.

In addition, the local gay community often complained about the presence of straight people in gay bars who were clearly not gay-friendly and contributed to a sense of feeling unsafe. Some gay venues are not gay-owned/managed and there is a belief that licensees tolerate their gay clientele just because of the revenue this brings in.

*"They make money out of us."*

Any evidence of homosexuality is clearly unwelcome in many straight venues.

*"This is a straight club and you are offending people."*

*"We don't want your kind in here."*

Aside from Homotopia (a gay cultural festival with an emphasis on film), which is only a yearly event, there is little to entice Liverpool's middle class lesbians and gays to show a visible public presence. Feedback on Homotopia was extremely positive, especially amongst this contingent of the local LGB+T population.

On account of gay bars existing alongside the main centre of heterosexual night-life, lesbians and gay men are often targets of abuse and attack, especially, but by no means exclusively, around closing time.

*“On a Friday night, walking through  
the heterosexual bit is nerve-racking.”*

Consequently, there is a groundswell of opinion amongst local gay people about the need to pedestrianise the Stanley Street area, in this way establishing a local gay village (along the lines of Canal Street in Manchester).

In the light of all of this, there is evidence to suggest that a substantial proportion of Liverpool’s gay community choose not to frequent the local gay scene, with some opting to socialise in Manchester (or elsewhere) instead. Some of the (especially younger) local gay community interviewed did not plan to remain in Liverpool long term. Others (especially women) had already moved outside of Liverpool, specifically on account of homophobia experienced.

*“My inclination to stay in Liverpool long term is not really there,”*

The perceived ‘backwardness’ of the city in terms of general ‘gay-friendliness’ was commented upon by a number of interviewees, noted as particularly problematic in the context of 2007 when Liverpool will become the cultural capital of Europe. How will Liverpool come across to LGB+T visitors and what will they be able to take away from the city?

There remains an almost ‘crusading’ dimension to being ‘out and proud’ in Liverpool, carrying significant risk.

It is also important to note that ‘safety’ carries wider connotations than just fear of attack or abuse; it is about the LGB+T community wanting simply to be able to feel ‘normal’ and not to have to feel that any interface with the general public is a potential ordeal. Such impacts in detrimental ways on people’s mental and physical well-being, and general social behaviour. This is especially the case for trans. people, whose gender identity is often evident, sometimes resulting in people only going out when they absolutely have to.

*“When you are not safe, it impacts on  
how you present as a human being.”*

*"I am always looking over my shoulder and I don't feel comfortable. I avoid Matthew Street. I avoid Concert Square."*

Others noted that the problems in Liverpool experienced by the LGBT community were likely to be in evidence in any major city (which has proved to be the case on the basis of London surveys conducted by Stormbreak).

*"I wouldn't say it was any more homophobic than any other built up area."*

Furthermore, unsafe areas identified tended to be those characterised by general social deprivation, such that problems experienced were of a more widespread nature, not necessarily homophobic specific: it is more a question of the overall vulnerability of specific groups in specific areas.

*"Some parts of the city feel quite unsafe. I suppose those areas would be in the ... poorer ... areas, and I think they are going to be more difficult for everybody. "*

There is also the mistaken assumption that the 'grass is greener on the other side'.

*"If you went to London, people wouldn't look twice at 2 men holding hands, but if you did that in Liverpool, people would, wouldn't they ."*

A common perception exists that LGB and (especially) T issues are near to the bottom of the LCC agenda. The perceived emphasis of race issues on the Liverpool diversity and equalities agenda at times would appear to be causing an element of resentment and an unhealthy backlash from the LGBT community.

*"The problems of gay men is undoubtedly greater than (for) ... people from black and racial minorities. The balance needs to be addressed."*

This said, Liverpool was also commonly noted for its sociability, the friendliness, good humour, generosity, helpfulness and general welcome, as, indeed, was found to be the case by the research team.

The above commentary provides the backcloth to the following survey findings about perceptions of safety on the part of Liverpool's lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans. community.

Half of survey participants (51%) feared becoming victims of crime in general (i.e. not specifically homo/transphobically motivated) in Liverpool, although only a small minority did so to 'a great extent'.

Generally, participants who feared crime most were those who had already experienced a homophobic or transphobic crime and who also tended to perceive crime rates in Liverpool to be increasing.

In addition, fear of crime appeared to be most prevalent amongst groups experiencing higher levels of social deprivation, including those in manual occupations or not working as well as disabled people.

In terms of LGB&T specific demographic differences, those who were non-scene, the least 'out' (as lesbian/gay) and trans. participants (whose **visibility** tends to make them especially vulnerable to attack) also emerged as more fearful of crime than on average, although such findings may be more indicative than statistically robust. Lesbians **did not** emerge as more fearful of crime in general than gay men.

<b>Table 4.1</b> <b>Extent to which fear becoming a victim of crime</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
To a great extent	8
To some extent	43
Not to any great extent	35
Not at all	14

The clear majority of those who feared crime generally (56%) additionally feared being victims of specifically homophobic or transphobic crime. This was most notably amongst those who had already experienced a homophobic crime (especially in Liverpool itself), those who were somewhat older (35+ years) and disabled survey participants.

Furthermore, 4 of the 6 survey participants who didn't socialise in Liverpool *at all* were fearful of HO crimes being committed against them, suggesting that this may be a reason for avoiding the city as a place to go out. Those who worked specifically outside of the city centre were also more fearful of HO crimes being committed against them than on average.

The need to offer protection to the LGB&T community outside of the city centre and not just around the gay scene was highlighted in this study as well as referenced in a qualitative survey commissioned by the Merseyside police in 2005.

As one survey participant noted:

*“The community doesn't live on the scene. The gay community lives across the city – everywhere in the city and it is not physically identifiable. If we are talking about people being safe, safe means, do people feel safe where they live?, do people feel safe where they go out?, do people feel safe where they go to work?  
“That doesn't mean on the scene.”*

<b>Table 4.2</b> <b>Whether fear that crimes would be homo/transphobically motivated</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
Yes	56
No	27
Don't know	17

Areas where HO crimes were seen as most likely to be committed were South Central, Alt Valley and the specifically 'retail and night' area of the city centre.

A number of people recorded on their questionnaires that **no** area of Liverpool was safe from HO crime.

Main specific neighbourhoods where HO crime was more feared were recorded as (in order of frequency of mention):

- Bellevalle
- Toxteth
- Anfield
- Kensington
- Dingle
- Everton
- Speke.

<b>Table 4.3</b> <b>Areas where <u>most</u> fear</b> <b>homo/transphobic crime being</b> <b>committed</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
1 South Central	41
2 Eastern Link	37
3 Alt Valley	36
4 North Liverpool	40
5 South Liverpool	22
6 South Suburbs	17
7 City Centre	21
7a City Centre (retail & night)	39
Nowhere	5
Not specified	5

The safest area of Liverpool for LGB+T people by far was identified as South Suburbs (but excluding Otterspool - the promenade being a renowned cruising area where gay may be vulnerable to attack).

Other safe areas most commonly identified were generally up-market parts of Liverpool notably (in order of mention):

- Mossley Hill
- Aigburth
- Grassendale.

Few, if any, parts of Liverpool were considered to be entirely safe for LGB&T people.

<b>Table 4.4</b> <b>Areas where <u>least</u> fear</b> <b>homo/transphobic crime being</b> <b>committed</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
1 South Central	16
2 Eastern Link	10
3 Alt Valley	6
4 North Liverpool	10
5 South Liverpool	20
6 South Suburbs	44
7 City Centre	21
7a City Centre (retail & night)	23
Nowhere	17
Not specified	11

Only around 1 in 5 felt that HO crime had in any way decreased in the last couple of years, and over 1 in 4 felt that there had been an actual increase, although there is no evidence to suggest a major perceived recent upsurge in HO crime incidence. Any recent experience of HO crime in Liverpool had an obvious impact on perceived increasing levels of crime.

Whilst efforts on the part of the police to combat HO crime have been acknowledged by the LGB&T community, findings strongly indicate that these should be maintained, and probably increased, given that only a fairly small minority believed the homophobic crime rate to be going down.

<b>Table 4.5</b> <b>Perceptions of changes in recent levels of homo/transphobic crime</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
Increased greatly	8
Increased slightly	20
Stayed the same	32
Decreased slightly	15
Decreased greatly	4
Don't know	21
Increased (net)	28
Decreased (net)	19

It may seem remarkable that the majority recorded their lives not being affected by fear of HO crime, but this is likely to be primarily because people want *and have to* continue with their day to day lives regardless of whatever problems they are confronted with. One trans-sexual was insistent about continuing to use the local swimming pool on a regular basis in spite of negative reaction from both pool attendants and other users. The refusal to feel compromised, despite the potential dangers this places people in, is in many senses, commendable. This was especially noted especially amongst younger LGB&T survey participants, particularly in circumstances where support networks from family, friends and local LGB&T groups were in place.

This said, over **2 in 5 of survey participants did feel they had to take preventative measures** in their daily lives to avoid transphobic or homophobic attack.

This most commonly involved **general vigilance and caution**, and not obviating one's sexual orientation (e.g. by **not showing affection** to partners/friends in public and modifying appearance) - see **Table 4.6**. Such is evidently more difficult for members of the trans. community who are often, in many respects, 'out' every time they 'face the public'.



Only the main avoidance strategies have been recorded in **Table 4.6**. As many as 33 other avoidance strategies were mentioned by smaller numbers of survey participants, including:

- Avoiding using public transport and only using private transport or taking taxis everywhere
- Carrying panic alarms and tape recorders and/or always carrying mobiles
- Avoiding socialising or going out at all or avoiding going out specifically in Liverpool
- Self-defense courses
- Enhanced safety measures installed in home
- Avoidance of the gay scene (for fear of targeted attacks)
- Avoidance of straight venues and public places generally
- Exercising caution when leaving specific venues.

Such fears were also noted to impact on daily life through experiences of:

- General anxiety, depression and mental illness
- Fear of certain groups of people
- Feelings of isolation
- The inability to feel 'normal'/feelings of being constantly 'under threat'
- Impaired physical health.

<b>Table 4.6</b> <b>Impact of fears of homo/transphobic crime on daily life</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
Life not affected	56
Avoid being out late	7
Don't show affection in public	7
Need to be alert/vigilant	7
Modify behaviour/appearance in public	7
Avoid certain areas/take detours	6
Avoid going out unaccompanied	4
Fear of certain areas	3

All other comments = 2% or less

Survey participants recorded as many as **50 different suggestions** for ways of improving LGB&T safety in Liverpool, the main ones of which are recorded in **Table 4.7**.

The essential messages are for:

- **A greater police presence** (especially in the city centre),
- A (partially segregated/pedestrianised?) gay village (akin to Manchester's Canal Street area),
- Improved police attitudes/LGB&T perceptions of police attitudes
- Efforts to educate the young to have more positive attitudes to LGB&T issues,
- A cultural change in attitudes generally on LGB&T matters.

These 2 latter issues are, of course, more easily said than done. The overriding request of the LGB&T community - mentioned 2 ½ times more than any other issue - it should be noted, is for greater police protection established through a general street presence.

The full range of suggestions to make Liverpool a safer place for LGB&T people have been provided in a separate document of the data tabulations. Some suggestions worth noting in this context are:

- A perceived need for the police to take HO crime seriously, possibly involving more police LGB&T training
- A greater visibility of gay venues (making them easier to locate, but also raising the LGB&T profile in Liverpool)
- 'Safer spaces' and more venues specifically for lesbians
- More gay groups, greater co-operation between existing ones and more consultation with them
- A Liverpool Pride March
- Better street lighting.

It is also worth noting that a number of references were made, at both qualitative and quantitative stages of research, about the perceived **lack of safety/comfort in and around gay venues** in Liverpool. This was not seen as simply a problem with passers-by and lack of police presence to deal with aggressors.

LGB&T people commonly did **not feel safe in their own designated spaces** (i.e. certain gay bars) on account of straight people with homophobic attitudes being let through the door by security staff and tolerated by managers once inside: the commercial imperative being seen to hold sway over the overall safety of the venue's main clientele and revenue providers.

A minority was cynical about Liverpool **ever** being a safe city for LGB&T people.

<b>Table 4.8</b> <b>Main suggestions for how Liverpool could be made a safer place for LGB&amp;T people</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
Greater police presence in city centre	24
Gay village	10
Education (of the young)	9
Increased awareness of LGB&T issues	5
Cultural change (in attitudes)	4
Gay (friendly) police	4
Nothing!	4

All other responses = 3% or less

## 5 Experience of Homo/Transphobic Crime

Overall, 59% of LGB&T people interviewed had experienced an HO crime that they were **fairly certain** - this term being explicitly used in the questionnaire - was committed on grounds of their trans-gender identity or sexual orientation. (Survey participants were reminded in the questionnaire that **verbal abuse** was a reportable offence.)

**Incidence of HO crime is somewhat higher than found in two London surveys (of 1,100 LGB&T people) recently conducted by Stormbreak.** Compared with the London survey overall (of 521 LGB&T people, where HO crime incidence was at 47%), findings are statistically significant. However, compared with the East London survey (of 610 LGB+T people, where HO crime incidence was at 53%), findings are not statistically significant. We can be certain, statistically speaking, that incidence of HO crime is not lower (and, in fact, probably higher) in Liverpool, than in London, including East London (which is considered to be a relatively more dangerous part of the capital than in general).

Experience of HO crime was also largely restricted to Liverpool - i.e. the high incidence of HO crime cannot be accounted for by experiences outside of the city.

The majority of people experiencing HO crimes recorded them as occurring outside of the city centre. However, the city centre geographically makes up only a small part of Liverpool, such that it should still be considered as the area of **most concentration** of HO crime experienced.

Gay men and especially TV/TS survey participants, those fully out, people with a disability and somewhat older survey participants (35+), showed a rather higher propensity to have experienced an HO crime than on average, although this is indicative rather than statistically conclusive.

<b>Table 5.1</b> <b>Whether ever experienced a homo/transphobic crime</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
Yes - Liverpool city centre	38
Yes - Liverpool outside city centre	60
Yes – only outside of Liverpool	35
None experienced	41

The central city retail / night time area, followed by the broader city centre area, were most commonly cited as the areas where HO crime was likely to have been experienced, with South Liverpool being least referenced. This said, HO crime had been experienced in all areas of Liverpool.

Within the city centre, locations most commonly referenced were around Victoria Street, Matthew Street, Bold Street and Stanley Street (i.e. the gay quarter), in addition to Concert Square and Lime Street. A range of other specific locations across the city were noted, especially in Anfield and Dingle. Cruising areas were referenced (e.g. Otterspool Promenade and Sefton Park), but not as commonly as specific neighbourhoods noted for their widespread deprivation.

This indicates that HO crime is not so much to do with a hardened contingent of ‘queer bashers’ preying on pockets of people engaged in ‘illicit activity’, but encompasses wider and deeper social issues that give rise to crime, typically perpetrated against (perceived or defined) vulnerable sectors of the community. (This issue has been revisited later in this report.)

Almost 1 in 3 had experienced an HO crime outside of Liverpool. Such crimes had most commonly been experienced in Manchester, Birkenhead, London and Leeds (in that order), followed by a range of other (especially city) locations around the country, as well as abroad.

<b>Table 5.2</b> <b>Areas where homo/transphobic crime committed in Liverpool</b>	Base = Homo/transphobic crime victims in Liverpool (111) %
1 South Central	27
2 Eastern Link	15
3 Alt Valley	12
4 North Liverpool	16
5 South Liverpool	8
6 South Suburbs	15
7 City Centre	27
7a City Centre (retail & night)	51
Outside of Liverpool	31

Over half of survey participants (54%) recorded witnessing an HO crime being committed against somebody else, of whom 48% recorded such crimes being witnessed in Liverpool itself.

<b>Table 5.3</b> <b>Whether ever <u>witnessed</u> a homo/transphobic crime against somebody else</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
Yes - Liverpool city centre	40
Yes - Liverpool outside city centre	24
Yes – only outside of Liverpool	6
None witnessed	46

The main areas where HO crimes had been witnessed were the city centre retail / night time district, followed by the broader city centre area and South Central. Again, HO crimes had been witnessed in all areas of Liverpool.

Manchester was, again, most commonly cited as the area outside of Liverpool where most other HO crime had been witnessed (by 13 people in total or 5% of the total sample).

<b>Table 5.4</b> <b>Areas where witnessed</b> <b>homo/transphobic crime</b> <b>against somebody else</b> <b>committed in Liverpool</b>	Base = Homo/transphobic crime witnesses in Liverpool (101) %
1 South Central	20
2 Eastern Link	10
3 Alt Valley	13
4 North Liverpool	12
5 South Liverpool	6
6 South Suburbs	17
7 City Centre	29
7a City Centre (retail & night)	50

The main types of HO crimes experienced have been recorded in **Table 5.5**. The percentage figures are for the **whole sample of survey participants**, not just those experiencing HO crime (i.e. 59% of all who took part in the survey had experienced verbal abuse, although as many as 90% specifically experiencing HO crime had been verbally abused).

It is remarkable that **1 in 3 had actually experienced being beaten up and/or had threats of violence**. This is noticeably higher than found in 2 London surveys of over 1,100 LGB+T people, where violent incidence was **only at around 1 in 5 of people interviewed**. This *is* a statistically significant finding at high levels of confidence.

The incidence of sexual assault is also higher than might be expected and is not restricted to lesbians.

Although not presented as a cause of the high incidence of sexual assault, the recent practice of 'dogging' - essentially heterosexual cruising - in traditional gay cruising areas, was reported by a stakeholder (working in the area of sexual health) to lead to possibly unwanted and ultimately problematic sexual interactions initiated by 'straight' to gay men who frequent these areas for casual sex. This is an apparently new phenomenon that may need to be more closely monitored in terms of HO (sexual assault) crime incidence.



<b>Table 5.5 Main types of HO crime experienced</b>	Base = Total Sample (210) %
Verbal abuse	53
Physical assault	33
Threats of violence	32
Damage to home	16
Damage to (other) property	15
Threats to life	14
Theft	9
Sexual assault	8
Mugging/robbery	7
GBH	7
Blackmail	6
Extortion	6
Burglary	5
Hate mail	5
Other	3

The experience of HO crime was multiple and varied.

*“I’ve had practically every type of homophobic abuse going.”*

**Table 5.6** shows the average number of times each crime had been committed. This was then grossed up on the basis of the actual number people experiencing such a crime.

(The total and average number of HO crimes committed have been arrived at by adding all crimes committed and then dividing this figure up by the total sample of survey participants.)

A total number of **3,162 HO crimes had been committed against 210 LGB&T people who took part in the survey**, which gives an average of **15 per person**. Again, **this is somewhat higher than recorded in the 2 London surveys of over 1,100 LGB+T people, where the average number of HO crimes recorded was 12 per person.**

Whilst verbal abuse has emerged as the largest percentage of HO crime experienced, 45% of incidents were more serious than this. In any case,

the impact of repeated verbal abuse should not be under-estimated in terms of its consequences on general psychological well-being.

*“It eats away at you.”*

<b>Table 5.6 Average and total number of times HO crimes ever committed</b>	Average number of times	Total number of crimes
Verbal abuse (112)*	15.5	1736
Physical assault (69)	2.4	166
Threats of violence (68)	6.9	469
Damage to home (34)	3.6	122
Damage to (other) property (31)	4.7	146
Threats to life (29)	5.7	165
Theft (19)	1.9	36
Sexual assault (17)	1.4	24
Mugging/robbery (14)	1.8	25
GBH (15)	2.0	30
Blackmail (23)	2.6	60
Extortion (13)	1.9	25
Burglary (10)	8.7	87
Hate mail (10)	3.7	37
Other (7)	4.9	34
<b>Total HO crimes experienced by 210 LGB&amp;T people living, working, studying or socialising in Liverpool</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3162</b>

\*(x) = total number of survey participants experiencing crime.

Most HO crimes had been experienced just ‘in the street’. Moreover, it is alarming that for 45% of LGB&T people experiencing HO crimes, such had occurred **near their homes**. This obviously exacerbates feelings of insecurity and impacts in a major way of day to day living, given that people are at risk even when they are indoors or when leaving /returning home.

The range of places where HO crimes had commonly taken place also serves to demonstrate the vulnerability of LGB&T people when in public generally.

The high incidence of attacks in or around gay venues further serves to show an absence of safe spaces for LGB&T people in Liverpool.

It is the case that HO crime occurs in cruising areas and public toilets (cottages), but incidence is quite insignificant here when compared with HO crimes that take place in the general public arena. On the basis of the survey evidence, it is simply not possible to maintain that LGB&T people are at risk primarily because they place themselves in vulnerable situations.

<b>Table 5.7</b> <b>Locations where HO crimes occurred</b>	Base = Total experiencing HO crime (124) %
In the street	68
At or around my home	45
At or around a gay venue	38
At or around a straight venue	35
At a bus stop/train station	27
On a bus/train	23
In a shopping area	20
At another public venue	20
At work	12
In a cruising area/cottage	12
At home of friend/relative	12
At a taxi rank/in a taxi	10
At a cashpoint	5
At a place of religious worship	1
Other	11

Whilst HO crimes were most commonly found to have occurred at night, the findings in **Table 5.8** serve to show that these regularly take place in broad daylight and at any point in the day. One transsexual interviewed specifically avoided going out around school closing time on account of the likely abuse to be experienced specifically from youths.

<b>Table 5.8</b> <b>Time of day HO crimes occurred</b>	Base = Total experiencing HO crime (124) %
Daytime (7am - 5pm)	46
Evening (5.30pm -8.30pm)	57
Night-time (9pm -10.30 pm)	59
Late at night (11pm-6am)	59

Moreover, 2 in 3 victims of HO crime recorded that at least 1 HO crime incident had definitely been witnessed by somebody else, with a further 1 in 5 not being sure if this had or not (such that it could have been).

<b>Table 5.9</b> <b>Whether or not any witnesses to HO crimes</b>	Base = Total experiencing HO crime (124) %
Yes, crime witnessed	65
No, crime not witnessed	15
Don't know	19

Whilst in the large majority of cases crimes had been committed by strangers, a quarter of HO crime victims claimed to know the perpetrators on 1 or more occasions.

Youths/teenagers were most commonly singled out as the main perpetrators of HO crimes, but it is worth noting that just anyone could be a potential aggressor, notably neighbours or even family members.

As referenced earlier, it would be misleading to assume that perpetrators of HO crime are a hardened minority criminal element.

This was the main lesson learned from the half day spent observing and participating in a session with youth violent offenders. Indeed, attendees at the centre dismissed 'queer bashers' who singled out an element of the community on grounds of being unlikely to defend itself as insufficiently

macho. Ironically, for this reason, perpetrators of HO crimes were referred to as ‘faggots’!

<b>Table 5.10 Perpetrators of HO crimes</b>	Base = Total experiencing HO crime (124) %
People not known to me	75
Youths/teenagers	56
People known to me	19
Neighbours	14
Partner	5
Family/relatives	5
Family/relatives of partner	2
Other	7
Don't know	2

The central retail / night time area, followed by the broader city centre and South Central, were most commonly cited as the areas where HO crime was likely to have been experienced, with South Liverpool being least referenced.

This said, HO crime had been experienced in all areas of Liverpool. Specific areas in Liverpool of HO crime experience most commonly referenced were:

- The Stanley Street area
- Anfield
- Otterspool
- Sefton Park.

<b>Table 5.11</b> <b>Areas where homo/transphobic crimes occurred</b>	Base = Total experiencing HO crime (124) %
1 South Central	27
2 Eastern Link	15
3 Alt Valley	12
4 North Liverpool	16
5 South Liverpool	8
6 South Suburbs	15
7 City Centre	27
7a City Centre (retail & night)	51
Outside of Liverpool	31

As many as 3 in 5 HO crime victims (which amounts to over 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of **all** LGB&T people surveyed) had experienced an HO crime during the past year.

<b>Table 5.12</b> <b>When last HO crime occurred</b>	Base = Total experiencing HO crime (124) %
During the last week	5
During the last month	10
During the last 3 months	12
During the last 6 months	15
During the last year	19
More than 1 year ago	39

Locations cited in Liverpool where the most recent HO crime had occurred follow the same pattern as for HO crimes experienced in general. This was similarly the case for crimes committed outside of Liverpool.

<b>Table 5.13</b> <b>Areas where most recent homo/transphobic crime occurred</b>	Base = Total experiencing HO crime (124) %
1 South Central	11
2 Eastern Link	9
3 Alt Valley	6
4 North Liverpool	9
5 South Liverpool	3
6 South Suburbs	7
7 City Centre	13
7a City Centre (retail & night)	32
Outside of Liverpool	21

Again, the incidence of the types of last crime committed in large part follows the same pattern as for crimes ever experienced, with verbal abuse, physical assault and threats of violence featuring prominently.

<b>Table 5.14</b> <b>Main types of <u>last</u> HO crime experienced</b>	Base = Total experiencing HO crime (124) %
Verbal abuse	60
Physical assault	18
Threats of violence	11
Threats to life	2
Theft	2
Sexual assault	2
Mugging/robbery	2
GBH	1
Extortion	1
Burglary	2
Other	1

In terms of perpetrators of the last HO crime, again youths and teenagers were singled out. It is also worth noting that in at least 18% of cases, the victim knew the perpetrator.

<b>Table 5.15</b> <b>Perpetrators of <u>last</u> HO crime</b>	Base = Total experiencing HO crime (124) %
People not known to me	43
Youths/teenagers	34
Other people known to me	9
Neighbours	3
Partner	4
Family/relatives	1
Family/relatives of partner	1
Other	3
Don't know	2



## 6. Awareness of HO Crime Reporting Systems

Around 2/3s of LGB&T survey participants recorded being aware of the local Liverpool Police Liaison Officer role especially assigned to LGB&T matters (LGBTLO).

Those most likely to be **unaware** of this role were the most socially disadvantaged, notably those in social classes C2DE and not working, disabled people, as well as lesbians, younger LGB&T people and those with least contact with the gay scene and/or who were not 'out'.

There is evidently more work to be done in publicising the LGBTLO role to those harder to reach sectors of the LGB&T community and lesbians in general.

<b>Table 6.1</b> <b>Level of awareness of Police LGBTLO</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
Yes, aware	65
No, not aware	35

The LGBTLO role was overwhelming thought to be a good idea by survey participants.

<b>Table 6.2</b> <b>Perceptions of police LGBTLO role</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
A very good idea	79
Quite a good idea	16
Not a very good idea	2
Not a good idea at all	1
Don't know	1

A total of 28 different reasons were recorded as to why such a role was considered to be a good idea, the main ones of which are recorded below in **Table 6.3**.

<b>Table 6.3 Main reasons why police LGBTLO positively/negatively perceived</b>	Base = Total responding (208) %
Sensitivity/Understanding Sympathy/Empathy	21
Encourages reporting	9
Specially trained	9
Specialist area of crime	7
LGB&T community will feel more at ease with such an officer	6
Need to recognise extent of HO crime/raise profile	6
May help prevent HO crime	4
Increases sense of safety	4
A dedicated point of contact	4

All other responses 3% or less

Other reasons cited by smaller numbers of survey participants included:

- This makes the police appear less homophobic
- Homophobic crime is more likely to be taken seriously
- The role may reduce the stigma of HO crime.

Negative comments about the LGBTLO role included:

- The possible tokenism of the role especially in the light of perceived homophobia on the part of some officers
- The need to train all officers and not to section the issue off to those with designated areas of responsibility
- The need to build greater awareness of the LGBTLO role amongst the gay community.

The overwhelming majority of survey participants (94%) were also strongly in support of 3<sup>rd</sup> party reporting systems whereby people can report HO crimes on behalf of a victim. However, only 14% of survey participants claimed to have ever used a 3<sup>rd</sup> party reporting system to report an HO crime, despite 54% claiming to have been witness to one.

<b>Table 6.4</b> <b>Perceptions of 3<sup>rd</sup> party reporting schemes</b>	Base = Total sample (210) %
Yes, good idea	94
No, not good idea	5
Don't know	1

Areas where 3<sup>rd</sup> party HO crimes had been reported were spread across Liverpool, but most commonly in the city centre retail and night time district.

<b>Table 6.5</b> <b>Areas where homo/transphobic crime committed against somebody else in Liverpool reported</b>	Base = Homo/transphobic crime witnesses in Liverpool reporting HO crime (30)* <b>Actual numbers</b> * <b>Caution: Low base</b>
1 South Central	6
2 Eastern Link	3
3 Alt Valley	3
4 North Liverpool	4
5 South Liverpool	-
6 South Suburbs	4
7 City Centre	2
7a City Centre (retail & night)	8

Of those reporting a 3<sup>rd</sup> party HO crime, half (15 in total) claimed to have been happy with the outcome.

The range of reasons for satisfaction with the outcome of reporting an HO crime 3<sup>rd</sup> party are listed below:

- Police were helpful
- Police were sensitive/sympathetic/understanding
- Police were efficient
- Police resolved problem
- Police did all that was possible
- Police took crime seriously
- Police activity caused homophobia to stop
- Resulted in subsequent police surveillance
- Support was offered
- Officer was a trained specialist
- Treated with respect
- Police were professional
- Charges were pressed
- LGBTLO officer was involved.

The reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of reporting an HO crime 3<sup>rd</sup> party were:

- No or poor response
- Police were unhelpful
- Police station was not local
- Police were unsympathetic/insensitive/lacked understanding
- No conviction was made
- Police response was variable.

Few had used agencies other than the police for reporting crime. Those organisations listed that had been used were:

- Victim support
- YPAS
- True Vision
- Alert
- Armistead
- Local councilor
- LGF Manchester
- University LGBT Committee.

## 7. Incidence and Experience of Homo/Transphobic Crime Reporting

Only 40% of those who had experienced HO crimes had ever reported one to the police.

Records supplied by the Merseyside police show that only 174 HO crimes were reported to the Merseyside police as a force in 2005 (with partial 2006 figures showing some, but not huge, increase). On the basis of evidence supplied in this survey (notably that 35% of all survey participants interviewed claimed to have experienced an HO crime in the past year), it is possible to deduce that there is massive under-reporting of such crime.

Actual physical assault was most likely to be reported, followed by threats of violence (although these were also the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> most common HO crimes experienced). Compared with incidence, verbal abuse is hardly ever reported (given that 90% of all HO crime victims had experienced it and only 10% had reported it).

<b>Table 7.1 Incidence and types of HO crime ever reported to police</b>	Base = Total experiencing HO crime (124) %
<b>None</b>	<b>60</b>
Physical assault	23
Threats of violence	13
Verbal abuse	*10
Damage to personal property	9
Damage to home	9
Theft	6
Threats to life	6
Burglary	4
Mugging/robbery	3
Sexual assault	3
GBH	2
Extortion	2
Blackmail	2
Other	2

\*This is the percentage of people experiencing verbal abuse only (and not in conjunction with a more serious crime committed against them at the same time) who went on to report it to the police.

Areas where crimes were reported follow location of crime, notably the city centre retail and night time district and South Central.

<b>Table 7.2</b> <b>Areas where HO crime reported</b>	Base = Total reporting HO crime (49) % Caution: Low base
1 South Central	18
2 Eastern Link	10
3 Alt Valley	6
4 North Liverpool	12
5 South Liverpool	4
6 South Suburbs	10
7 City Centre	16
7a City Centre (retail & night)	22
Outside of Liverpool	31

Of those reporting crime, 47% actually went to a police station to report the crime whilst 53% called the police or the police arrived on the scene of the crime.

Specific police stations where reporting had taken place were recorded by a few respondents as:

- Kensington
- Toxteth
- Newsham Park
- Anfield
- Victoria Street
- Admiral Street
- Dingle
- Broad Green
- Bellevalle
- Allerton
- Eaton road
- Bromsborough
- Wallasey.

The large majority of those reporting an HO crime to the police, 80%, had felt able to inform the police of its homophobic/transphobic nature.

However, of those, only 69% felt that the officer was willing to record the crime as homophobic. There appears to be some resistance on the part of police officers to record homophobic and transphobic crimes as specifically HO.

A police officer interviewed during the qualitative stage of research noted that this may be because such incurs a greater administrative police workload. It is also worth noting in this context that the police may be too embarrassed to specifically enquire into the HO nature of a crime, which has implications for police training on this matter.

Given that, unlike for racially motivated crime, there is no actual law specifically against HO crime (it merely constitutes aggravating circumstances), it was noted (by a police officer) that the police may not feel it is beneficial to explore HO issues with victims. (This may also be a reason for not disclosing HO crime on the part of victims.)

It was also noted by a local stakeholder that the police have on occasions not publicised the HO nature of very serious crimes in circumstances where the victim was not 'out' (to save 'public face' for the family). This is quite a different matter to exercising discretion to protect the victim from family exposure/embarrassment (as was also noted and appreciated by one survey participant).

The police appear to be reluctant to enforce the Harassment Act in HO crime cases, this apparently being more specifically reserved for cases of stalking.

Just under half of those who had felt able to disclose the transphobic or homophobic nature of the crime at the point of reporting it felt that the attitude of the officer had been positive. This is reasonably good news, but, nevertheless, 1 in 5 felt the attitude of the police officer had been negative.

<b>Table 7.3</b> <b>Perceptions of officer's attitude to crime being disclosed as homo/transphobic</b>	Base = Total disclosing crime as HO (39) % Caution: Low base
Very positive	33
Quite positive	15
Neutral	31
Quite negative	15
Very negative	5
<b>Positive (net)</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Negative (net)</b>	<b>20</b>

Of those disclosing the crime as HO, only 18% indicated that an LGBTLO had at any point been involved in the case (and 10% were not sure). In part at least, this is likely to be on account of a substantial proportion of crimes being reported before such a role actually existed.

In the small number of cases recorded where the LGBTLO had been involved, **all** (100%) had found the officer helpful (with 71% recording 'very helpful'). Whilst sample bases here are too low to be considered statistically robust, the findings strongly indicate the perceived usefulness of the LGBTLO role from the victim perspective.

The LGBTLO officer was commented on as helpful, supportive, caring, understanding and being able to offer useful advice.

Around 2 in 3 had found the **police in general** to be either quite or very professional at both initial and subsequent points of contact (with the first point of police contact being a somewhat more positive experience than subsequent police contact).

However, a substantial minority (of around 1 in 3 and 1 in 4 across stages of police contact) were unimpressed by levels of police professionalism.



<b>Table 7.4</b> <b>Perceptions of the police levels of professionalism during first and subsequent contact</b>	First contact Base = Total reporting HO crime (49) %	Subsequent contact Base = Total reporting HO crime (49) %
Very professional	41	27
Quite professional	24	39
Not very professional	29	18
Not at all professional	6	6
No follow up contact	N/A	10
Professional (net)	N/A	66
Not professional (net)	N/A	16

The main positive and negative comments on police professionalism are recorded in **Table 7.5**. Essentially, HO crime victims want a sympathetic, respectful and efficient response from officers who will take what has happened to them seriously. They are unimpressed when such a service is not provided. It is also important that officers should not show shock or surprise at what is being reported to them (as, according to both victims and a police officer, can often be the case in situations of same-sex domestic violence).

Only just over half, 53%, of HO crime victims who had disclosed the homophobic or transphobic nature of the crime to the police recorded that they were provided with details of external support agencies.

<b>Table 7.5</b> <b>Reasons for perceptions of police levels of professionalism</b>	Base = Total reporting HO crime (49) %
Main <u>positive</u> responses	
Police were sympathetic/understanding/empathetic	18
Police were polite/courteous/respectful	14
Police were helpful/caring/sincere	12
Police took crime seriously	6
Efficient police response	4
Police were fair/professional	4
Main <u>negative</u> responses	
Police were unsympathetic	10
Police were uninterested	6
Police did not acknowledge homophobic element of crime	4
Police did not take crime seriously	4
Told by police crime was not serious	4
Police were shocked/surprised	4

In almost 1 in 3 occasions of reporting an HO crime (31%), the victim was able to identify the perpetrator to the police. However, of these, only 1 in 3 felt they had received adequate support from the police to press charges.

The police response to 60 HO crimes reported to them is recorded in **Table 7.6**. Most commonly, no action was taken or, if it was, this took the form of a verbal caution only.

<b>Table 7.6</b> <b>Outcome of perpetrator being identified or arrested</b>	Base = Victims for whom HO crime perpetrator was identified to or arrested by the police (15) <b>Actual numbers of types of police response</b>
Verbal caution	21
Charges pressed	12
No action taken	26
Case continues	1

Of the 12 cases where charges were pressed, a total of 7 convictions were actually made. On the basis of evidence provided, this amounts to an infinitesimally small proportion of specifically HO crime perpetrated against the LGB&T community.

On balance, and despite recorded dissatisfaction and criticisms (referenced earlier), a very substantial majority (2 in 3) LGB&T people reporting HO crime to the police were left with a more positive attitude towards the police as a result of doing so. This is an important message to be transmitted both to the LGB&T community and the police.

<b>Table 7.7</b> <b>View of police based on HO crime reporting experience</b>	Base = Total reporting HO crime (49) %
Much more positive	24
A little more positive	41
A little more negative	18
Much more negative	16
More positive (net)	65
More negative (net)	34

Only 10% of the total sample had reported HO crimes to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, of whom 7% reported a crime committed against themselves, and 3% for crimes they had witnessed being committed against somebody else.

## 8. Reasons for Non-reporting of HO Crime

**Only 13% had reported all HO crimes** committed against them. The main reasons for not reporting HO crimes to the police are provided in **Table 8.1**.

For many, especially those who may experience verbal abuse as a daily occurrence, HO crimes perpetrated against them did **not seem serious enough** to report to the police.

It is also important to note that some substantial bridge building is needed between the police and the LGB&T community before victims and witnesses are prepared to trust the police enough to come forward and report HO crime.

There is also considerable cynicism about the possibility of HO crimes committed being ultimately brought to justice, reinforced by conviction rates established by this survey relative to HO crime incidence.

This said, recent police efforts, particularly around surgeries at gay venues and anti-homophobic publicity, have been acknowledged and appreciated by the LGB+T community.

*“The police have got a lot better.”*

However, it was noted that at least some of the efforts made have been accomplished by specific police officer outside of working hours.

Non-reporting of HO crime must also be understood in the wider context of LGB&T discrimination in society at large. People will inevitably be reluctant to report HO crime if the increased social exposure this may incur has the potential to result in further discrimination and victimisation.

<b>Table 8.1 Main reasons for non-reporting of HO crime</b>	Base = All experiencing HO crime (124) %
<b>All crime reported</b>	13
Didn't think it was serious enough	48
Didn't think police could do anything	43
Didn't think police would be sympathetic	32
Fear of retribution	20
Wanted to forget the experience	15
Didn't want to be a victim	11
Didn't want police to know I was gay	10
Didn't want family/friends to find out	10
Didn't want to be officially recorded as gay	8
Not out	6
Other	11

The findings above have been reinforced by responses to the question about what would make people more likely to report HO crimes in the future.

Whilst much would depend on the level of seriousness of the crime, being convinced the police would have a positive attitude and take the crime seriously, as well as that reporting it would result in some form of satisfactory outcome, are critical.

<b>Table 8.2 Main factors to encourage future HO crime reporting</b>	Base = All who had not reported a HO crime experienced (108) %
Seriousness of crime	15
Physical injury	9
Police taking crime seriously	9
Reporting to have an impact/result	6
Sympathetic/understanding police	5
Assurances of confidentiality	4
More confidence in police force	4
Gay (friendly) police	4

All other responses 3% or less

## 9. Experience of Local Public Services

**Liverpool residents** were asked to score levels of satisfaction with a range of mainly statutory, as well as some voluntary, local services. Mean average scores, out of a maximum of 5, are recorded below.

Scores recorded are reasonable (and, in fact, generally higher than those recorded in the East London LGB&T Safety survey of 602 LGB+T people), although it should be noted that a substantial percentage of Liverpool residents were unable to score every service on the basis of little or no actual experience.

The highest score recorded was for voluntary HIV support services and the lowest for social services.

<b>Table 9.1 LGB&amp;T experience of local services</b>	<b>Base = All living in Liverpool (n=136) Means scores Max. = 5</b>
GPs	3.6
Dental practices	3.5
NHS community support professionals	3.6
NHS sexual health services	4.0
Housing services	3.3
<b>Social services</b>	<b>3.1 (Lowest score)</b>
General council services	3.3
Youth services	3.4
Voluntary HIV support services	<b>4.1 (Highest score)</b>
<b>Overall average mean score for services</b>	<b>3.5</b>

Survey participants were also invited to comment on each of the services to elicit reasons for the scores awarded. The main issues raised have been recorded below, supplemented, where possible, by information provided through in-depth interviewing.

## 9.1 GPs.

Some recorded very positive reaction from GPs when their sexual identity had been disclosed.

*“I have a very good, understanding GP”*

*“My GP practice is pro-actively gay friendly”*

A request was made to have a list of GPs who were specifically gay-friendly.

Some simply didn't see the relevance of disclosing their sexuality to their GP.

Some felt unable to be 'out' to their GP for fear of a negative reaction or official recording of their sexuality (which may subsequently impact of life chances, e.g. mortgage applications). This was sometimes assumed on the basis of the GP's religious beliefs.

*“I know what lesbians are treated like by Muslims.  
His attitude confirms it.”*

Some specific criticisms made of GPs were:

- A lack of understanding of sexual health needs of lesbians (e.g. assuming smear tests were not necessary)
- Assumptions that mental health problems are a direct consequence of sexual orientation/transgender identity

*“His reaction was: ‘Well, if you are so unhappy, why don't you go back to being a man’. This really upset me.”*

- A lack of understanding of mental health issues generally
- Unsympathetic response to transgender issues (delaying the re-assignment process).



## 9.2 Dental Practices

Generally, most did not have any specific issues with dentists (although dental practices emerged as a major problem in the East London survey). The majority did not see the relevance of disclosing their sexual orientation to dentists.

*Why does my dentist need to know?*

Some very good experiences were recorded.

*“Sexuality has never really been an issue, my dentist knows I’m gay and is always friendly and professional with me.”*

*“My dentist was very understanding when I changed my gender.”*

A reluctance was expressed to disclose sexuality to dentists on account of assumptions made about HIV status.

*“Dentists used to apply more precautions in case of blood spillage, without establishing whether you are HIV+ or not.”*

## 9.3 Community Support Professionals

An even balance of both positive and negative reaction was recorded, although community nurses tended to be more positively viewed than social workers. Positive comments tended to be around general professionalism.

*“Very good staff.”*

Negative comments concerned perceptions of being processed rather than treated as an individual, homophobic attitudes on the part of staff, and treating sexual orientation as a root cause of problems being experienced.

*“Nurses only treated me as a number. I felt I was being sidelined because I was gay.”*

*“The Community Psychiatric Nurse treated me like my illness was being a lesbian.”*

#### **9.4 NHS Sexual Health Services**

Some very positive comments were made about sexual health services, noting the professionalism, good service and respectfulness of staff.

*“The STI drop in unit at The Royal – a very good service with excellent staff.”*

*“They were understanding about me not being out, made me feel at ease.”*

However, this was not across the board. Some felt they had been merely processed and others that staff had ridiculed them. The STI unit at the Royal was also seen as difficult to access and in a generally poor physical condition. There is no specific GUM clinic for gay men, and one gay male STI health worker reported on gay men receiving abuse from heterosexual patients.

*Royal - poor service & not very professional. Caused me real distress. Never go there again. Poor confidentiality, and they treat patients like cattle or worse.”*

*“Rotten, dirty and giggling staff. Don’t use Liverpool Royal again!”*

It was also noted that lists were closing at the local Gender Re-assignment clinic (meaning that new patients could not register).

#### **9.5 Housing**

Again, mixed reactions were reported about housing services, with housing associations tending to be better viewed than general council services.

Some felt they had been sympathetically and appropriately dealt with by staff.

*“The Housing Association were very supportive.”*

*“Equality is their priority.”*

*“They embrace gay tenants.”*

Others did not think homophobia was taken seriously, efforts made by housing authorities were just tokenistic or that they were slow to react to problems experienced. There was a tendency to see homophobia as merely an element of anti-social behaviour, which detracted from its seriousness.

*“I think they pay lip service to diversity but are not committed to actively making a difference. They just tick the boxes.”*

*“I was EVENTUALLY moved on harassment following my whole family being pulled into the street and attacked because I’m gay.”*

## **9.6 Social Services**

The same sorts of issues were again referred to when assessing social services, although generally, in a more negative light. Occasional positive comments were made, however.

*“Brilliant”*

*“No problems with my gender change.”*

But also ... !

*“Possibly one of the most entrenched agencies in terms of homophobia. I have never had a positive experience with Social Services.”*

## 9.7 General Council Services

There was recognition that the council is making improvements regarding LGB+T issues, although there remains more to do.

*“Liverpool Council is getting better at promoting gay issues, but much more to do!”*

*“There is a positive movement in Liverpool.”*

The general service provided and attitude of council staff at a civil partnership ceremony was reported as really quite exemplary.

*“They were wonderful.”*

Negative comments were made about general council inefficiency and problems perceived to be caused by contracting out services to private companies (which affects everyone).

Some felt the council continued to ignore LGB+T people.

*“LGBT people are ignored by Liverpool City Council.”*

Another negative comment was made about the actual level of openness of EO policies when it came to employment.

*“I applied for employment at LCC but have always been unsuccessful. Do they employ transsexuals?”*

Some council employees claimed they were reluctant to challenge homophobic issues for fear of the impact of this on their careers and general bad atmosphere this may cause within their teams.

*“You don’t really have any rights.”*

## 9.8 Youth Services

Work carried out by Gay Youth R Out, the Armistead, Jigsaw and another youth group based in Sefton, was positively referenced. Counselling work offered by the Armistead had been found to be very helpful by young LBG people.

*“I accessed youth services which were excellent.”*

There was a feeling that generally more funding was needed in this area (especially in view of poor response within the education system overall), and that there was little LGB+T information provided at ‘mainstream’ youth groups.

*“Outside of GYRO, youth services are poorly equipped to support LGB young people or challenge homophobia.”*

## 9.9 Voluntary Sexual Health Services

Both Sahir House and the Armistead Centre were positively referenced in this context.

*“Both Sahir House and the Armistead are very good.”*

*“Armistead Centre – they are a gay organisation who really cared about me and my situation.”*

*“Always seem to keep a good high profile.”*

Negative comment with regards to the Armistead Centre was around:

- Attempts to broaden its remit too widely
- The lack of resource specifically for lesbians
- The lack of general resource when compared with Manchester
- The need for reassurance about issues of confidentiality.

*“Armistead are trying to be all things to all people.”*

## 10. Experience of Homophobic Bullying in Education

Those who had recently left full-time education (either school or college within the past 3 years ) were asked to comment on any experience of homophobic bullying they had experienced. The results are recorded in **Table 10.1**.

The results need to be understood in the context of those who may not have been 'out' at school/college and not 'suspected' of being (or, did not even know themselves they were) gay'/lesbian.

Even given this, homophobic bullying was recorded as being widespread, with around 2 in 3 survey participants who had left full-time education recently being subject to homophobic bullying, the majority of them frequently.

<b>Table 10.1</b> <b>Experience of homophobic bullying</b>	Base = All recently in full-time education (46) % Caution: Low base
Yes, frequently	39
Yes, occasionally	24
No, not experienced	37

It is important to acknowledge that abuse was not merely on the level of name-calling.

*"At school I used to get the s\*\*t kicked out of me."*

Only around 1 in 3, 59%, of those experiencing homophobic bullying said that staff had been aware of it. Hardly any student (1 person in total) had tried to bring the bullying to the attention of staff. Furthermore, this person did not feel able to disclose the specifically homophobic nature of the bullying to staff.

The response of schools to homophobic bullying was commonly perceived to be one of effectively blaming and even, on occasions, penalising the victim for being gay.

*“They told my parents the school did not have the facilities to deal with the problem.”*

*“I went to a school for, like, bad children because there was nowhere else for me. I felt I was in the wrong place because I wasn’t a bully. I was (the one) victimised.”*

The common consequence of experiencing homophobic bullying in school is that young LGB+T people simply drop out early or leave at the earliest possible occasion.

The main suggestions for dealing with homophobia in schools/colleges have been recorded in **Table 10.2** below. Principal messages to emerge concern the need to address LGB&T issues within education generally which has implications for:

- The necessary dialogue that needs to take place between the Liverpool education department with the LGB&T community
- Addressing staff attitudes
- Staff training on LGB&T issues
- The importance of policies to combat specifically homophobic bullying in schools.

<b>Table 10.2</b> <b>Main suggestions for ways of preventing homophobic bullying in education</b>	Base = All recently in full-time education (46) % Caution: Low base
LGB&T education (amongst youth)	39
Greater awareness of LGB&T issues	17
Staff training	11
Action on homophobic bullying	9
More dialogue with LGB&T community	7
Promotion of LGB&T acceptance	7
Support from staff	4

It is worth noting in this context that the local education authority was considered at the qualitative stage of research by a number of stakeholders, recent LGB school leavers and their parents to have made very little effort in addressing issues of homophobia within Liverpool.

This was considered, in part, to be accounted for by the religious influence within LCC schools, although it has been noted subsequently that there has been no major countervailing influence in addressing homophobic bullying from non-faith schools (i.e. such that the issue does not just refer to a religious one but the LEA and schools per se). At Hope University, it was reported by a student officer that LGB society posters were often ripped down (by other students) and that the LGB society had met with considerable official resistance in promoting the use of condoms in safe sex campaigns.

*Liverpool is a very backward city for people. There is no city-wide anti-homophobic bullying policy whatsoever. Faith schools will not have one.*

Unfortunately, no member of the LEA/officer with an LEA remit contributed to this piece of research, although efforts were made by the research team to include the LEA. It was also mentioned by a member of the LGB Forum that there is virtually never any representation from the LEA at forum meetings.

This said, we understand that recent relevant efforts are being made within the context of the anti-bullying forum for LGB inclusion.

With the abolition of Section 28, there is now the possibility to raise the issue of homosexuality in schools (possibly within the PSHE curriculum) without it necessarily being referenced in a negative light. This would decrease the sense of isolation of LGB&T young people and permit homophobic attitudes on the part of others to be sensibly challenged.

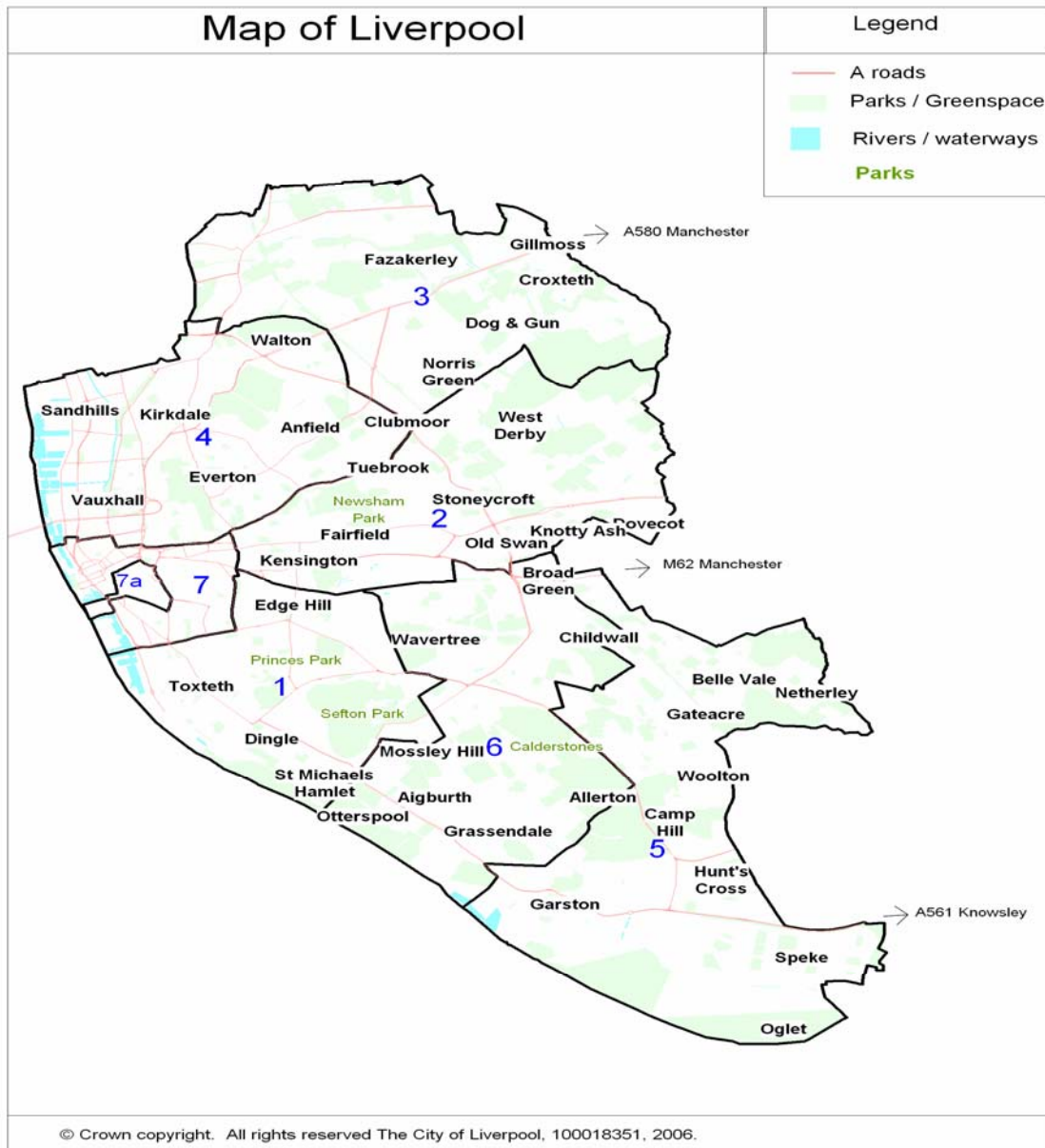
**The Equality Act (2006)** which comes into effect in April of 2007, making it unlawful to discriminate, either directly or indirectly, in the provision of goods and services on grounds of sexual orientation, **if** extended to schools, offers an enormous opportunity for young LGB&T pupils to receive adequate recognition in an educational context that is currently **very** much lacking.



*“I never knew there was any such thing as a gay life until I saw Queer as Folk on the telly. When I saw Queer as Folk, I felt so sad, so depressed. It was like there was this life going on without me. And about 5 months later I told my mum I was gay and that I wanted that life.”*

## **Appendix I**

### **Map of Liverpool Neighbourhood Management Areas**



The above map was distributed with the self-completion questionnaire.

## **Appendix II**

### **Testimonials**

*I don't believe Liverpool is safe at all for lesbians. At best we are invisible or ignored with statutory and government bodies still using the excuse that lesbians are impossible to contact in any numbers so therefore we won't address their issues or concerns at all. At worst we are targeted and harassed just for being who we are with little or no support from the police, housing associations, council etc.*

*Transgender always gets lumped in with LGB issues. We are different – this has been recognised by Merseyside police with their separation policies and officers.*

*I haven't really had any problems about being gay in Liverpool. I think it's because I don't look gay so I can become invisible in certain situations.*

*I feel that gay men are more likely to experience homophobic incidents in Liverpool city centre. My friends and I tend to stick to places where we know there will be other gay people, although I have witnessed incidents in gay pubs/clubs. I feel that if there was a designated gay area then it would encourage more people to go out in Liverpool rather than going elsewhere such as Manchester for example. I feel Liverpool is very narrow-minded and ignorant concerning homosexuality. They accept we are there and yet at the same time pretend we don't exist. I think the general feeling among gay people is : Capital of culture – what a joke!*

*There is a lack of tolerance of the gay community in Liverpool as a whole, in comparison with Manchester in particular. Although I have never been a victim of a homophobic incident, I fear the day it will happen, as I anticipate it is a certainty that it will occur. My partner has been the subject of a homophobic assault. The offender received a prison sentence and was dealt with appropriately by the police, but I have friends who have had terrible negative attitudes from the police.*

*I think in general, Liverpool would be as any other city in terms of prejudice. Social awareness and acceptance is all that's needed from my experience. Prejudice within the gay community i.e. gay men towards lesbians, is also a worry for me on the Liverpool gay scene. I have only been 'out' for around a year now and, in general, my 'gay*

*experience' is most definitely a good one! And apart from a select few blinkered idiots, the people of Liverpool are lovely.*

*It's about time the council did something for lesbians. We have been completely ignored for years. I know there are many lesbian and gay men who work for Liverpool city council who are just not happy to be out at work for fear of discrimination. I am concerned that 'safety' for the LGBT community seems to focus on physical safety in and around nightclubs and the scene. Being predominantly invisible, lesbians' safety and security depends much more on housing, medical, mental health, the council, social services policies and training than on the police. Ultimately, the only way things will change on a grand scale is when a law is passed to protect lesbians and gay men. Transexuals are now protected in law as are black and minority ethnic and disabled people. Until there is one clear message – homophobia is against the law – small concessions, like civil partnerships, will not do a thing to change the inveterate bigotry that is ingrained in so much of Liverpool's population.*

*Police do not seem to care when dealing with such attacks. My last experience, even though I pleaded with them not to show the attackers my identity, they still forced me to get into their police car and point people out. As a further consequence, I was attacked two more times.*

*Some parts of outer Liverpool are very dangerous for gay men and women. The police have no policies to reach them.*

*With the issue of creating a 'gay village', I think it would be a great idea as it would make the LGBT community feel more safe. Also, if the gay village was established, maybe they could incorporate a drop in centre.*