LANCASHIRE LGBT COVID-19 LOCKDOWN SURVEY REPORT

lancashire labb



July 2020









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Introduction

The LGBT population of Lancashire is around 73,000¹ (Lancashire and South Cumbria around 97,000) yet it is a hidden population in two ways: LGBT people are not visible and easily identifiable in daily life and there is little or no data available due to lack of inclusion in routine monitoring. This can mean that LGBT people are a 'forgotten' section of the population and often not included in strategic planning of services. We hope that the dissemination of this report will raise awareness about LGBT health and well-being and lead to LGBT inclusion in post-Covid planning and decision making.

About Lancashire LGBT

We support lesbian gay bisexual and trans (LGBT) people² and their families across Lancashire to be happier, healthier and better connected, through a range of activities. We also promote equality and inclusion of all LGBT people by providing awareness training, research and consultancy, guidance for service providers and employers and through our Quality Mark award scheme.

Community Support: We regularly consult with community members to understand what the issues for local LGBT people are and this informs our activities. We run the following:

- a support and information service direct to community members via email or by phone
- support and activity groups to improve health and well-being and reduce social isolation including a volunteer-run support group for parents and family members of trans people
- a volunteer-led walking group; and LGBT-only swimming sessions.
- a flagship programme of support for trans people including a residential weekend followed by events and activities to ensure continued ongoing group and one-to-one support.

Partnership: We have a partnership with Leeds and York NHS Partnership Trust Gender Identity Service. We host their satellite clinic at our charity offices twice a month and



¹ Based on LGBT people being 5% of the population. The estimate of 4.5% of the population identifying as LGB is guided by the Public Health England document on producing modelled estimates of the size of the LGB population:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/585349/PHE Final report FINAL DRAFT 14.12.2016NB230117v2.pdf (accessed 08.07.20) and our estimate that trans people are 0.5% of the population is guided by research conducted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission:

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research_report_27_trans_research_review.pdf (accessed 08.07.20)

² We are inclusive of all people on the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans+ spectrum



their Gender Outreach Worker who supports local people on their waiting list, is embedded with us part-time.

Improving services and raising awareness: We support other local organisations across the Education, Health and Criminal Justice sectors to understand the needs of LGBT people better through consultancy and research. We regularly deliver

training to raise awareness about the needs of LGBT people to ensure inclusive service provision – the most popular being our CPD accredited trans awareness package.

The CPD Standards Office

CPD PROVIDER: 21342
2018 - 2020
www.cpdstandards.com



Our Chief Executive is a member of the UK Government LGBT Advisory Panel. He also chairs a Trans Critical Friend group for Lancashire Constabulary. We have been members of project groups for many pan-Lancashire Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and often act in an advisory capacity with the Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit, local Hospital Trusts, local Education providers as well as Criminal Justice agencies.



Lancashire LGBT Quality Mark: We have our own 'kite mark' scheme to support organisations to be more inclusive of LGBT people as employers and as service providers.

Over 50 local organisations have participated in the last 3 years including Medical Centres, Health Trusts, Primary Care Networks and Voluntary Sector Organisations.

For more information see https://lancslgbt.org.uk/quality-mark/

The research

This research was conducted by Lancashire LGBT following the UK Government 'lockdown' restrictions announced on March 23rd, 2020 as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We wanted to understand the impact of the 'stay at home' rule on LGBT people in Lancashire. From the beginning of lockdown all our social, support and activity groups stopped, as well as forthcoming activities for our trans support programme. The Leeds and York Partnership NHS Trust Gender Identity Service also paused their services as staff were redeployed. Working from home, we maintained our 'one-stop-shop' information and support service offering telephone, email or online support. The online survey was launched online on the 4th week of the restrictions (April 17th, 2020) and kept open for 4 weeks (until week 8 of the lockdown). The final number of respondents at the close of the survey was 187.

³ We know that these activities have a significant positive impact on health and well-being – see our latest annual report: https://lancslgbt.org.uk/lgbt/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Lancashire-LGBT-EOY-Report-2019-20-1.pdf (accessed 06/07/20)



At the same time that this research was conducted, the LGBT Foundation based in Manchester and Healthwatch Together (Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Cumbria and Lancashire) also conducted their own research into the impact of the pandemic on LGBT people.



Key findings

Mental health: 72% of respondents were concerned about their mental health the most. The respondents in the 'under 19' grouping and the 'trans other' grouping were the most concerned about their mental health.

Well-being: The majority of respondents reported negative changes in well-being since lockdown. BAME people reported the most negative impact, followed by those aged under 19, trans men and cisgender women* – closely followed by trans 'other' gender.

Home/Living environment: 34% of respondents were not able to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity in their home/living environment all of the time

Accessing non-Covid-19 related healthcare: 33% had not been able to access routine healthcare – this figure rose to 49% for trans people.

Accessing Gender Clinic health care pathway: 62% of trans people reported a delay in their care pathway

Domestic Abuse: 8% reported experiencing domestic abuse, with young people reporting the most domestic abuse, followed by disabled people.

Hate Crime: 7% reported experiencing hate incidents, with trans women reporting the most hate incidents followed by disabled people.

Social Isolation: 60% of respondents were not keeping in contact with people from LGBT groups that they attended before lockdown, this rose to 70% of respondents aged 55+.

^{*}Cisgender is a term for non-trans people



Findings in detail

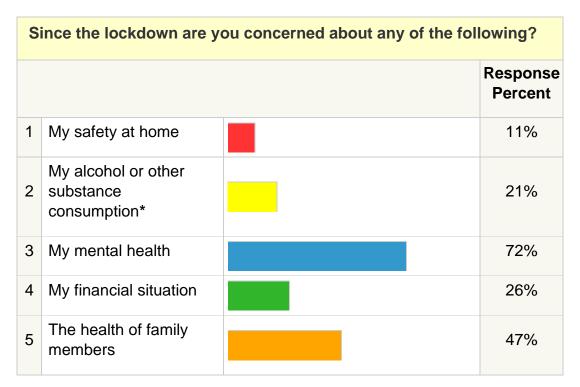
Mental Health

Key finding: 72% of respondents were concerned about their mental health the most

Why we asked this question: There is an abundance of research evidence that LGBT people have poorer mental health than the rest of the population (including research in Lancashire).⁴ This evidence includes higher rates of attempted suicide, suicidal ideation and self-harm than the rest of the population.⁵

There is also research evidence that LGBT people experience a lower quality of life and are less satisfied with their lives than the rest of the UK population, which puts them at risk of poorer health. ^{6 7}

Concerns of ALL respondents:



⁴ Locally, the Health Behaviours in Lancashire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2016) identified LGBT people as one of the groups at higher risk of poor physical and mental health:

https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/901322/20170425-health-behaviours-in-lancashire-final-v18.pdf (accessed 06/07/20)

⁵ Liu, R., & Mustanski, B. (2012). Suicidal Ideation and Self-Harm in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 42(3), 221–228.

⁶ Office for National Statistics:

https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/articles/lesbiangayandbisexualpeoplesaytheyexperiencealowerqualityoflife/2017-07-05 (accessed 06/07/20)

⁷ Government LGBT Survey report:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722314/ GEO-LGBT-Survey-Report.pdf (accessed 06/07/20)



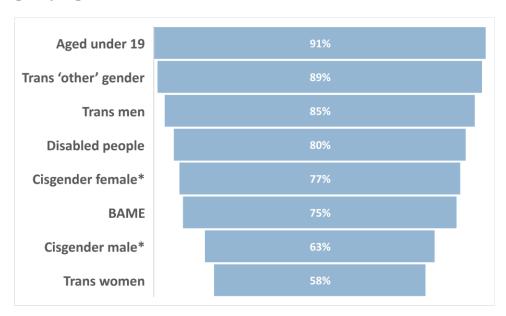
Since the lockdown are you concerned about any of the following?			
	Response Percent		Response Percent
6	Connecting with friends and social support		55%
7	Other (please specify):		9%

The results indicate significant negative effects on mental health being reported by the survey respondents, with the majority of respondents concerned about their mental health the most, followed by 'connecting with friends and social support'.

*We asked the question about substance misuse as there is much research evidence that drug use is higher amongst LGBT people than heterosexual people.8

We then compared and contrasted respondents by age and gender and found significant differences.

Concerns about mental health: comparisons between different demographic groupings



^{*}Cisgender is a term for non-trans people

⁸ See UK Drug Policy Commission report 2010: https://tinyurl.com/y85phebg (accessed 06/07/2020)



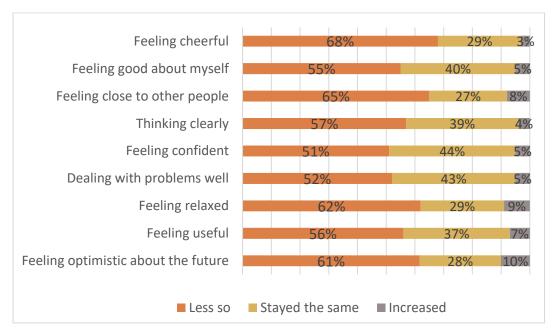
The respondents in the 'under 19' grouping and the 'trans other' grouping were most concerned about their mental health, followed by trans men and disabled people, with cisgender men and trans women the least concerned.

Changes in well-being

Key finding: The majority of respondents reported negative changes in wellbeing since lockdown

Using questions from the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scales, we asked respondents to measure any changes in well-being since lockdown.⁹

Measuring changes in well-being since lockdown – all respondents



The majority of respondents reported negative changes in well-being since lockdown.

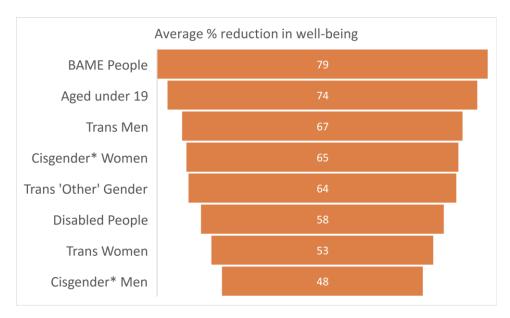
We then compared and contrasted responses from different demographic groups.

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⁹ https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/ (accessed 06/07/20)



Measuring changes in well-being since lockdown – negative impact - respondents from different demographic groupings



^{*}Cisgender is a term for non-trans people

The well-being indicator questions found that BAME people reported the most negative impact, followed by people aged under 19, trans men and cisgender women – closely followed by trans 'other' gender.

A disabled respondent commented:

The Covid-19 lockdown has caused my anxiety levels to increase with frequent panic attacks and feeling weepy.

Home/Living environment

Key finding: 34% of respondents did not feel able to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity in their home/living environment all of the time

Why we asked this question: This question was particularly significant in the context of the 'lockdown' rules where people were told to 'stay at home'. Not all LGBT people can be open about their identities in their home/living environments. Research conducted nationally found that only half of LGBT people feel able to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity to everyone in their family and



that one in five LGBT people have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. ¹⁰

Can you be open about your sexual orientation and/or gender identity in your living environment, if you are living with other people?		Response Percent	
1	Yes, all of the time		50%
2	Some of the time		21%
3	Not at all		13%
4	Not applicable - I live alone		16%

We asked about who the respondents were living with:

- 28% said they lived alone
- 65% lived with a partner and/or other family members
- 7% lived with other people not related to themselves
- 57% of our survey respondents who were aged 55+ lived alone

The majority of cisgender women* lived with partners; most cisgender men lived alone or with a partner; the majority of trans women lived with family members or with a partner; the majority of young people (aged under 19), those who described their gender as 'other' and trans men, lived with family members.

*Cisgender is a term for non-trans people

Accessing non-Covid-19 related Healthcare

Key finding: 33% had not been able to access routine healthcare – this figure rose to 49% for trans people

Why we asked this question: National research ¹¹ as well as research we have conducted locally has found that LGBT people experience barriers accessing

https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/lgbt in britain home and communities.pdf (accessed 06/07/20)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722314/ GEO-LGBT-Survey-Report.pdf. (accessed 06/07/20)

¹⁰ Stonewall 2018

 $^{^{11}}$ See Health section in Government Equalities Office LGBT 2017 survey



healthcare. ¹² ¹³ ¹⁴ This is primarily because LGBT people have experienced or expect discrimination or intolerant attitudes from healthcare professionals. ¹⁵ In this context, we were interested to find out what non-Covid-19 related healthcare respondents had accessed – for example routine blood tests or prescriptions from their Primary Care services.

Accessing non-Covid-19 related healthcare

he ble	Have you been able to access the (non Covid-19 related) healthcare you need since lockdown? For example, blood tests, hormone injections or other ongoing health care		Response Percent
1	Yes		67%
2	No - please specify		33%

Some of the comments included:

- GP is closed and I need an appointment for my medication for my mental illness.
- The pharmacy can't get my usual inhaler and it took two weeks for they and the drs to sort out an alternative. I spent 10 days with no preventative inhaler and ended up barely sleeping and unable to even move from room to room without breathlessness (not covid19 just uncontrolled asthma).
- I have mental health problems before the lockdown severe anxiety not getting any support as my CPN is sick.
- Unable to be seen by my GP for next steps to initiate HRT, because I had suspected covid-19 they won't see me.
- I've been scared to make repeat prescriptions for drugs I need.

Accessing the Gender Clinic care pathway

Key finding: 62% of trans people reported a delay in progress on the care pathway

¹² https://lancslgbt.org.uk/lgbt/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2015_05_LGBTReport.pdf (accessed 06/07/20)

¹³ https://lancslgbt.org.uk/lgbt/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/LGBT-Report-FINAL.pdf (accessed 06/07/20)

¹⁴ https://lancslgbt.org.uk/lgbt/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/LGBT-Report-BwD-Final.pdf (accessed 06/07/20)

¹⁵ Following the Government Equalities Office report (see footnote 9), the first Advisor for LGBT Health was appointed. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-appoints-first-national-adviser-for-lgbt-health (accessed 06/07/20)



Why we asked this question: All NHS Gender Identity Clinics across the country had stopped routine appointments as staff were redeployed. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, there was already a crisis in waiting lists for Gender Identity Clinics, with the average waiting time for a first appointment being 18 months. ¹⁶

We asked respondents how the suspension of Gender Identity Services had affected their progress on the care pathway. This question elicited responses from nearly half of trans respondents. 62% reported a delay or a total lack of contact from their gender clinic since lockdown began.

Comments included:

- The waiting time to first appointment is getting longer, I am looking into self-medicating with T. (testosterone)
- I've been on the waiting list for 28 months, have had no update from them since the outbreak.
- I was supposed to have an initial screening test over the phone on the 27th of April but was cancelled due to the situation.
- I assume my top surgery will be delayed but I haven't heard anything.
- Longer waiting. Frustrating. Affecting mental health.

Domestic abuse

Key finding: 8% had experienced domestic abuse and 7% had experienced a hate incident, with people aged under 19 and disabled people reporting the highest.

Why we asked this question: LGBT people experience domestic abuse at a similar rate to the rest of the population ¹⁷ and charities supporting victims of domestic abuse reported an increase in calls to helplines during lockdown. ¹⁸ ¹⁹ LGBT people also experience barriers in seeking support as often domestic abuse is assumed to be male on female in a heterosexual relationship.²⁰

¹⁶ https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-51006264 (accessed 06/07/20)

¹⁷ Stonewall's research has found that 25% of lesbians have experienced domestic abuse in a relationship and 49% of gay and bisexual men have experienced domestic abuse from a family member or partner: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/criminal-law/domestic-violence. (accessed 06/07/20). Research conducted by the Scottish Transgender Alliance found that 80% of trans people had experienced some form of domestic abuse from a partner or ex-partner:

https://www.scottishtrans.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/03/trans_domestic_abuse.pdf_ (accessed 06/07/20)

¹⁸ https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52433520 (accessed 09/06/2020)

¹⁹ Our research conducted in 2015 found that 40% of lesbians/gay women, 29% of gay men and 58% of bisexual people reported experiencing domestic abuse in the home.

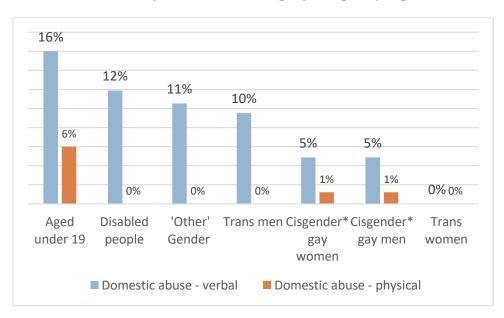
²⁰ http://www.galop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/For-Service-Providers-Barriers.pdf (accessed 09/06/2020)



	Since the lockdown began, have you experienced any of the following? All respondents		Response Percent
1	Domestic abuse - verbal		6%
2	Domestic abuse - physical		2%

We then looked at responses from different demographic groupings.

Domestic Abuse by different demographic groupings



^{*}Cisgender is a term for non-trans people

Young people reported the most domestic abuse, followed by disabled people. None of the BAME respondents reported experiencing domestic abuse.

Hate incidents

Key finding: 7% reported experiencing hate incidents, with trans women reporting the most hate incidents followed by disabled people.

Why we asked this question. LGBT people experience hate crimes and hate incidents, with homophobic hate crime being the second most reported after race hate crime.²¹ We had also heard anecdotally that the hate crime charity Stop Hate UK had received reports of same sex couples experiencing abuse from members of

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/839172/hate-crime-1819-hosb2419.pdf (accessed 06/07/20)

²¹

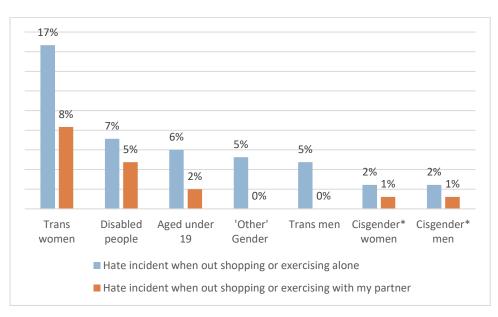


the public or being challenged by police while out taking exercise. This may be because of unconscious bias – for example, the assumption that two people of the same sex and a similar age out exercising together may not be from the same household (which was the restriction during the lockdown period).

	Since the lockdown began, have you experienced any of the following? All respondents		Response Percent
1	Hate incident when out shopping or exercising alone		5%
2	Hate incident when out shopping or exercising with my partner		2%

We then looked at responses from different demographic groupings.

Hate incidents by different demographic groupings



^{*}Cisgender is a term for non-trans people

Trans women reported the most hate incidents followed by disabled people.

A respondent who described themselves as hard of hearing commented:

I work for the NHS and It's been incredibly difficult due to masks. I lip read so it's very frustrating when at work or out shopping. Get a lot of abuse and humiliation.



Like I'm been ignorant. But when I can't hear them and my partner does, they then turn to my sexuality.

None of the BAME respondents reported experiencing hate incidents

Social isolation

Key finding 60% of respondents were not keeping in contact with people from LGBT groups. This rose to 70% of respondents aged 55+.

Why we asked this question: LGBT people in Lancashire are socially isolated - LGBT people are geographically dispersed and hidden in their communities, with some living in rural areas. In research that we previously conducted we found that over 50% did not feel part of an LGBT community, nearly 70% said there was no visible LGBT community where they lived; over 70% were not part of a group of LGBT people that meet up and nearly 50% were not 'out' as LGBT to their neighbours. ²²

Our information and support service also saw an increase during this period of people who were socially isolated contacting us for support.

In addition, research we conducted with Age UK Lancashire found that LGBT people aged 55+ in Lancashire were in the bottom fifth of the Age UK Index of Well-being in later life. ²³ The research also found that the living circumstances of respondents fulfilled the criteria for the drivers of isolation identified in the Essex isolation index. ²⁴

36% of respondents attended LGBT groups before lockdown and we asked if they were keeping in touch with people from these groups.

Are you keeping in contact with people you know from the groups?		Response Percent	
1	Yes		40%
2	No		60%

This figure rose to 70% for respondents aged 55+

A gay male respondent aged 75+ years commented:

²² 21st century LGBT Life in Lancashire unpublished. 2015

²³ https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/policy-research/wellbeing-research/index-of-wellbeing/ (accessed 06/07/20)

²⁴ Loneliness and isolation. A special JSNA topic paper, Dawkes, A. and Simpkin, S. Essex County Council. Jan 2012



I miss going out it's been 6 1/2 weeks since I've been out, I like to go out for a cup of tea with [friend] and the over 60s club on a Friday and Saturday afternoons I miss people generally.



Conclusion

LGBT people are an invisible section of the population and often get 'forgotten' in strategic planning. This is partly due to the lack of monitoring of LGBT status in service provision - it is not routinely recorded and therefore the specificity of LGBT people is 'lost' in the data stored – data which then informs strategy.

The restrictions of lockdown have negatively impacted the mental health and well-being of LGBT people in Lancashire - and it is worth bearing in mind that they were already experiencing health inequalities before the Covid-19 pandemic. These findings correspond with the research conducted by Healthwatch Together (Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Cumbria and Lancashire) and the LGBT Foundation based in Manchester. It is vital, given the findings from this report that the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions on LGBT people is considered – particularly the impact on mental health, which we foresee requiring extra resources in the future.

It is important that this impact informs forward planning for post-Covid strategies. For example, health and well-being, crime, victim services and social care. We welcome any invitations to be involved in this planning.

Dr Lewis Turner
Chief Executive Lancashire LGBT
July 2020

Recommendations

Recommendation 1.

It is predicted that mental health services will need more resources to deal with the extra workload post Covid-19 ²⁵ and these resources need to take into account the huge negative impact on LGBT people's mental health and well-being. Commissioning specifications for mental health services should include proven competencies and experience of working with LGBT people.

²⁵ See Royal College of Psychiatrists: https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/news-and-features/latest-news/detail/2020/05/15/psychiatrists-see-alarming-rise-in-patients-needing-urgent-and-emergency-care (accessed 08.07.20)



Recommendation 2.

Post-Covid-19 health strategies should include robust plans to reduce LGBT health inequalities as well as actions to reduce barriers LGBT people experience accessing healthcare.

Recommendation 3.

Service providers and Commissioners need to be mindful that LGBT people are also BAME and disabled and that, as evidenced in this report, these intersectionalities can increase health inequalities as well as impact personal safety. Additionally, as the mandatory or advisory wearing of face masks becomes more widespread, we urge service providers to consider speech-to-text apps as well as clear face masks.²⁶

Recommendation 4.

This report has shown that younger LGBT people are disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions in terms of health and well-being as well as safety at home. It is vital that post-Covid-19 commissioning aimed at young people is LGBT inclusive.

Recommendation 5.

Planning for future waves of Covid-19 needs to include actions to mitigate the disproportionate impact on LGBT people as evidenced by this research in terms of mental health and well-being, social isolation and personal safety.

²⁶ https://www.independent.co.uk/extras/indybest/face-mask-covering-transparent-deaf-clear-plastic-coronavirus-a9569331.html (accessed 08.07.20)



Appendix: Statistics on diversity and residence

187 respondents completed the survey.

GENDER

Male (including trans man)	104	56%
Female (including trans	64	34%
woman)		
Other gender	19	10%

GENDER IDENTITY

Gender the same as original birth certificate	135	72%
Gender different from original birth	47	25%
certificate		
Prefer not to say	5	3%

AREA OF RESIDENCE

Blackburn with Darwen	15	8%
Blackpool	20	11%
Burnley	10	5%
Chorley	7	4%
Fylde	5	3%
Hyndburn	3	2%
Lancaster	27	15%
Pendle	10	6%
Preston	23	12%
Ribble Valley	9	5%
Rossendale	7	4%
South Ribble	12	6%
West Lancashire	10	5%
Wyre	8	4%
Calder Valley	1	0.5%
Cumbria /South Lakes	2	1%
Greater Manchester	15	8%
Merseyside	3	2%

ETHNICITY

White British	173	93%
White Irish	4	2%
Other White	3	2%
Asian British	1	1%
Dual or Mixed ethnicity	4	2%
Rather not say	2	1%



DISABILITY – do respondents consider themselves to be disabled?

Yes	42	22%
No	132	71%
Rather Not	13	7%
Say		

AGE

Under 19	50	27%
20-25	19	10%
25-34	30	16%
35-44	22	12%
45-54	33	18%
55-64	21	11%
65-74	6	3%
75-84	5	3%
Rather Not	1	1%
Say		

FAITH

No religion	136	73%
Christian	34	18%
Buddhist	2	1%
Jewish	1	0.5%
Muslim	1	0.5%
Pagan	3	2%
Other	7	4%
Rather Not	3	2%
Say		

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Gay male	80	43%
Lesbian	29	16%
Bisexual	49	26%
Pansexual	11	6%
Heterosexual	6	3%
Other	10	5%
Rather Not	2	1%
Say		



If you would like a large print copy of this report, please contact us hello@lancslgbt.org.uk

Website: https://lancslgbt.org.uk

Facebook – www.facebook.com/lancashirelgbt

E Twitter – www.twitter.com/lancslgbt



Lancashire LGBT is a registered charity No. 1137578