

SNAPSHOT OF NEW YOUTH GROUP MEMBERS, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2011

Demographics

- 10 young people: 3 aged 18 years; 2 aged 17 years; 3 aged 16 years; 1 aged 15 years; 1 aged 14 years.
- Six female, four male.
- All white British
- 3 lesbian, 2 gay, 5 bisexual
- 4 have disabilities, including, mental illness; learning difficulty; dyslexia (4); asthma and other.
- 3 have religious families 2 Roman Catholic, 1 Lutheran; two of their families attend church regularly.
- 4 are attending school, 3 are at college, 1 is training and 2 are not in education, employment or training.

Mean age	1998 N15	2008 N50	2010 N20	2011 N10
	23	17.8	16.2	16.5

Housing

- 8 live with their parents; one with their sister, one with their partner. Of those who live with their parents 5 own their house, the remainder are rented properties.
- 5 feel safe from homophobia where they live. Of the five who do not feel safe, they say this is because:
 - “My brother makes negative comments about my sexuality.”
 - “Dad is homophobic and I visit him once a week.”
 - “I live near a council estate with lots of chavs around.”
 - “I live in a mixed race community, lots of gangs of boys, mum doesn’t like it if I take the dog out at night.”
 - “I get remarks from homophobic neighbours.”
- 2 have been in a position where they have had to stay with friends because they couldn’t find anything else; of these both said their sexuality was very much related.
- 2 have been homeless, of these one was somewhat related to their sexuality the other said it was not related at all.

Homelessness	1998 N15	2008 N50	2010 N20	2011 N10
	27%	26%	20%	20%

Family Background

Two mothers don’t work, six are employed in middle class jobs such as management, nursing, school, bank, two are disabled.

Two fathers are disabled and don't work, another one is the carer for his wife who is disabled, another is unemployed, three work in factories, and two have their own businesses.

Self Esteem

The Rosenberg Self Esteem survey is used to assess the self-esteem of members. The maximum score is 30 points; the higher the score, the higher the self-esteem. Here are the points scored by members:

- 24 points x 1
- 19 points x 1
- 18 points x 2
- 16 points x 1
- 15 points x 1
- 14 points x 1
- 13 points x 1
- 12 points x 1
- 8 points x 1

In the Calderdale School Survey the majority (94%) of students had moderate self esteem.

Anger

A series of questions are used to ascertain levels of anger. The maximum score is 30 points (the higher the score the more of an anger management problem). Here are the findings:

- 8 points x 1
- 10 points x 1
- 11 points x 1
- 13 points x 1
- 14 points x 1
- 17 points x 2
- 25 points x 1
- 26 points x 2

In the Calderdale School Survey, the majority of students had low aggression.

Coming Out

- 2 first realised they were LGB when they were aged 11 years; 2 at 12 years; 2 at 13 years; 3 at 14 years; 1 at 15 years.
- 9 had come out to someone before they accessed GALYIC.
- 2 had come out to someone when they were 13 years old; 3 when they were 14 years old; 3 when they were 15 years old; 2 when they were 16 years old. Of these, 9 had full acceptance from the person they told whereas one got a 'half-and-half' response.
- 1 has lost a friend because they found out they were LGB.
- 3 are out to their teachers, all were supportive.

Coming Out	1998 15n	2008 50n	2010 20n	2011 10n
First Told	17.2	14.8	14	14.5

Coming out to Family

- 9 are out to their mothers; their mother's initial responses included, 4 refused to accept them; 2 'half-and-half'; 3 got full acceptance. Their mother's response now included, 1 refused to accept; 3 half and half; 5 full acceptance. This is what they said about their mother's attitude towards them being LGBT:
 - "At first she refused to accept it and said it was a phase."
 - "Good response."
 - "She's a selective homophobe: ok when it suits her, sometimes she uses it against me."
 - "She's alright with it. We chat about guys."
 - "She accepts it but she isn't pleased with it."
 - "She doesn't believe me."
 - "She doesn't mind now but she was shocked at first."
 - "She says it makes her sick to her stomach."
 - "She sees it as 'the norm' and loves it."
- 7 are out to their fathers; of these, 2 said his initial response was half and half; 5 had full acceptance. Now his response was: 2 half and half, 5 full acceptance. Here is what they felt their father's attitude was towards them being LGBT:
 - "He's alright as long as I'm happy."
 - "He doesn't care as long as I'm happy, he's happy."
 - "He's already got grand-kids whilst my mum hasn't"
 - "He's not concerned so long as I'm happy."
 - "OK at times."
 - "Said he loved me no matter what, doesn't change who I am."
 - "Treats me the same."
 - "Whenever we're having arguments he says 'just because you're a diva doesn't mean you can get away with it.'"

Parental Rejection	1998 N15	2008 N50	2010 N20 mum	2010 N 20 dad	2011 N10 mum	2011 N10 dad
Out to Parents	93%	88%	80%	55%	90%	70%
Negative Parents	14%	71%	44%	45%	66%	29%

School

Schools are identified in the individual NATs but for confidentiality they have been omitted.

- None of them had access to positive information about homosexuality at school.

- 3 said they felt able to go to an adult at school for support about their sexual orientation.
- 9 said they witnessed homophobic bullying: 1 once; 3, 5-10 times; 5 20+ times.
- 6 said they experienced homophobic bullying: 2 on a daily basis; 2 on a weekly basis; 2 less than monthly basis.
- 1 said it began 3 months ago; 1 4-12 months ago; 2 1-2 years ago; 1, 3-5 years ago; 1 5-10 years ago. So the majority had been experiencing homophobic bullying over a sustained period of time.
- The type of bullying experienced included: name-calling/verbal abuse 6; threats/intimidation 3; harassment, 4; arson, 1; blackmail, 1; theft, 1; damage to property, 1; physical assault, 2.
- Only 2 reported the incidents to someone at school and both said nothing was done about it.
- 8 were bullied for other reasons as well, these included: disability (1); size (5); plus, because older sister was lesbian, because I was smart, because of my hair colour, because of my looks. 4 of these reported the incidents and of these, 3 said it was successfully dealt with, one said it was dealt with but not successfully. This clearly suggests that young people are more likely to report bullying for reasons other than homophobia.
- 6 said they either truanted or dropped out of school early because of the bullying (only one was because of homophobic bullying).

School	1998 N15	2008 N50	2010 N20	2011 N10
Knew about sexuality	80%	90%	100%	100%
Experienced homophobic abuse	67%	76%	70%	60%
Witnessed homophobic abuse	80%	74%	80%	90%
Truanted/dropped out	13%	28%	43%	60%
Supportive teacher	7%	73%	45%	30%
Positive Information	13%	18%	35%	0%

In the Calderdale School survey, 42.1% had said they were the victim of bullying.

Homophobic Hate Incidents

7 have experienced a hate incident outside of school, e.g. on the streets, on a bus, outside of home, etc. All said it was related to their sexual orientation, although 2 also experienced incidents related to their gender (one young woman was assumed to be a lad) and 1 to their size. This abuse included:

- Name-calling/verbal abuse, 7
- Threats/intimidation, 4

- Harassment, 1
- Blackmail, 2
- Theft, 1
- Physical assault, 3
- Other: sniggering on bus, 1

The majority of these incidents were not one-off events, only 1 experienced it once; 1, up to 5 incidents; 1 between 5 and 10 incidents; 4 20+ incidents. Only 1 reported it to the police and they said nothing happened.

8 had witnessed a homophobic incident against another person. Again, only two had witnessed an incident once; 1 up to 5 incidents; 1 between 5 and 10 incidents; 2 between 10 and 20 incidents; 2 20+ incidents. None reported any of the incidents to the police.

Homophobic Hate Incidents	1998 N15	2008 N50	2010 N20	2011 N10
Experienced	60%	68%	50%	70%

Alcohol

Using the national AUDIT questionnaire, which suggests that anyone who scores under 8 points does not have an alcohol problem, anyone who scores 8-15 has a medium level of alcohol problem whilst anyone with a score of 16+ has a high level of alcohol problem.

- Only 1 member did not have an alcohol problem.
- 5 members have a medium level of alcohol problem.
- 4 have a high level of alcohol problem.

It is worth noting that Calderdale has a higher than national average for under 18s being admitted to hospital for alcohol-related issues.

Smoking

- 8 use tobacco

Drugs

- 4 had used marijuana
- 2 had used poppers
- 1 had used ecstasy tablets
- 1 had used ketamine
- 1 had used legal highs

Substance Use	1998 N15	2008 N50	2010 N20	2011 N10
Tobacco	40%	46%	65%	80%
Alcohol	33%	58%	24%	40%
Drugs	33%	44%	30%	70%

In the Calderdale School Survey 2010, 25% had smoked; 12.4% had used illegal drugs and 20% regularly used alcohol.

Safer Sex

- 8 said they had information about safer sex regarding same sex relationships. Of these, 1 got the information from a clinic in Manchester; 1 from the Pink Picnic; 6 from GALYIC; 2 from Connexions.
- 8 have had sexual intercourse with someone of the same-sex.
- 6 have had sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite-sex.
- 5 are regularly tested for STIs
- 8 said they practiced safer sex although this dropped to 2 when asked if they practiced it when they were drunk.
- 4 had had unprotected sex with the opposite sex.
- 5 said they worried about getting STIs
- Majority of partners are either the same age or a couple of years older or younger; only one had had a relationship with someone who was 4 years older.
- None had had STIs
- None had either hepatitis A or B injections
- 1 of the boys admitted to getting a girl pregnant and 1 of the girls had been pregnant.

Sexual Vulnerability	1998 N15	2008 N50	2010 N20	2011 N10
Rape	27%	24%	5%	0%
Sexual Abuse	20%	32%	10%	10%
Not Practice Safer Sex when Drunk	47%	54%	70%	80%

Abuse Whilst Growing Up

- 1 had been sexually abused whilst growing up, this was committed by their father. It happened 5-6 years ago but it wasn't officially reported. The young person concerned has had counselling about it.
- 2 had been physically abused whilst growing up, both were abused by their fathers, both happened more than 5 years ago, both said it was not related to their sexual orientation and both said it was not reported officially.
- 5 said they had experienced emotional abuse whilst growing up in the family, these included:
 - 1 said they had experienced restriction of movement within the family
 - 4 had experienced patterns of belittling, denigrating, name-calling
 - 4 said they had experienced scape-goating
 - 4 said they had experienced threats
 - 5 said they had experienced intimidation
 - 4 said they had been frightened
 - 2 said they experienced discrimination

- 4 said they had been ridiculed
- 4 said they had experienced constant criticism
- 3 said they had experienced rejection
- 4 said they had experienced love, support and guidance being withheld
- The abuse was carried out by their mother (3), father (2), sibling (2).
- For 3 of the members, this abuse was still happening, one said it happened a year ago, another 5 or more years ago.
- 3 said the abuse was related to their sexual orientation.
- None of them reported the abuse.
- 1 had had counselling about it.

Abuse by Partner

- None had experienced sexual abuse by a partner.
- 3 had experienced physical abuse by a partner, all in a same-sex relationship, it was no longer happening. 1 reported the abuse to the police and it was successfully dealt with. None have had any counselling about it.
- 5 had experienced some form of emotional abuse by a partner; for 3 this was in a same-sex relationship, for 2 it was in an opposite-sex relationship and for 1 it was in both a same-sex and opposite sex relationship. None of the incidents are happening now and none of them were reported. None of them had had counselling as a result. They include:
 - 2 said they had experienced restriction of movement
 - 1 had experienced patterns of belittling, denigrating, name-calling
 - 1 said they had experienced scape-goating
 - 3 said they had experienced threats
 - 1 said they had experienced intimidation
 - 1 said they had been frightened
 - 1 said they had experienced constant criticism
 - 1 said they had experienced rejection
 - 1 said they had experienced love, support and guidance being withheld.

GP and Health

- 3 were out to their GP, 1 GP responded positively, 1 said nothing.
- 2 have a general health concerns
- 3 do some strenuous physical exercise that makes them get out of breath for 30 minutes a day.
- 10 think that a healthy diet is important but only 1 has the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day.

Mental Health

Eating

- Only 1 said they never overeat, 4 said they rarely overeat, 4 said they sometimes overeat and 1 said they often overeat.

- Only 1 said they never undereat, 4 said they undereat sometimes, 5 said they often undereat.
- 8 said they never overeat then vomit.
- 1 has been diagnosed as anorexic or bulimic.
- Of those who under-over-ate, 2 said it was related to their sexual orientation

Phobias

- 4 said they had suffered from agoraphobia
- 3 said they had suffered from social phobia
- 2 said they had suffered from school phobia
- Of the 5 who said they had phobias, 2 said it was somewhat related to their sexual orientation, 1 not very related, 1 not at all related.

Self Harm

- Only 1 said they had never self harmed. 1 said they rarely self-harm, 3 sometimes, 5 often. These included:
 - Cutting, 9
 - Biting self, 3
 - Throwing self against wall, 1
 - Banging head against wall, 5
 - Burning, 3
 - Scratching, 6
 - Hitting wall with fist, 7

For 2 this began when they were 12 years old, 1 when they were 13 years old, 3 when they were 14 years old, 2 when they were 15 years old, 1 when they were 17 years old.

1 said their self-harm was very related to their sexual orientation, 5 said it was somewhat related, 3 said it was not related at all to their sexual orientation but that it was to do with “clinical depression and school bullying”, “father’s controlling, sexual abuse, anger,” “mum dying, hostel living and partner cheating on me.”

In the Calderdale School Survey, 15.7% had self-harmed; the highest rate was amongst girls in year 10: 23.5%.

Depression

- 8 said they had experienced long periods of depression. Of these, 1 began when they were 9 years old, 1 when they were 13 years old; 2 when they were 14 years old; 2 when they were 15 years old; 1 when they were 16 years old and 1 when they were 17 years old.
- Of these, 3 said their depression was somewhat related to their sexual orientation, 3 said it was not very related to it whilst 2 said it was not at all related to it. For those who said it wasn’t related to their sexual orientation they said it was caused through, “My dad passed away,” “I lost three people last year, my mum and two of my grandparents,” “My dad being the way he is,” “Since I’ve been at college I have been diagnosed as first stage psychosis,

bipolar, plus the crap with my mother and everything in general”, “abuse I went through a few years ago.”

Anxiety

- 8 said they had suffered from anxiety; 4 said they experienced it when they were 13 years old; 1 when they were 14 years old; 2 when they were 15 years old; 1 when they were 17 years old.
- 2 said it was somewhat related to their sexual orientation, 4 that it was not very related to their sexual orientation, 2 that it was not related at all to their sexual orientation. In response to the question, ‘If your anxiety was not related to your sexual orientation, what was it related to,’ members said, “Dad”, “Don’t know what started it. Still get anxious but only when I get angry, when my step-brother shouts at me.”
- 10 said they had felt worthless. When asked if they felt worthless recently, 5 said not at all; 2 sometimes; 1 usually; 2 much more than usual.
- 9 said they had had the feeling that life was completely hopeless, when asked if they felt this recently, 5 said not at all, 3 said sometimes, 1 said much more than usual.
- 9 said they had wished to be dead and to get away from everything. When asked if they felt this recently, 6 said not at all, 2 said sometimes, 1 said much more than usual.
- 8 had thought seriously about taking their own life. 4 said they rarely thought about it, 2 sometimes and 2 often. Their ages when they first thought about taking their own life were: 11, 1; 13, 1; 14, 2; 15, 1; 16, 3. When asked if these thoughts were related to their sexual orientation, 1 said very much related, 1 somewhat related, 2 not very related, 4 not at all related. If their suicidal thoughts were not related to sexual orientation, what were they related to? “Because of mental health, when I’m really unhappy everything in my head goes negative; if I’m unhappy and someone annoys me I go for them then feel worse.” “Being bullied about being bisexual.” “Deaths in my family.” “Depression caused through abuse.” “Losing people, generally not being happy with life.” “School bullying, depression, anxiety issues.” “Confusion about my emotions, no specific reason, just a lot of emotions overwhelm me.” “Abuse.”
- 1 said they currently had suicidal thoughts.
- 6 said they had tried to kill themselves, 2 once; 1 twice; 2 three times; 1 four times. Methods included overdose with tablets (5), slitting wrists (5), drowning (1). The age at which they first made a suicide attempt was: 13 years (2); 15 years (2); 16 years (1); 17years (1). When asked if it was related to them being LGB, 1 said it was very much related, 1 said it was very related, 2 said it was somewhat related, 2 said it wasn’t related at all, they added “Abuse that happened in the past.” “I wanted to get away from life because I hated life, no-one liked me and I was losing people, not wanting anything to do with me anymore, partly because they suddenly decided they didn’t like me. Don’t know, can be an idiot sometimes.”

Mental Health	1998 N15	2008 N50	2010 N20	2011 N10
Depression	82%	72%	60%	80%
Anxiety	67%	56%	50%	80%
Suicidal thoughts	80%	72%	50%	80%
Suicide attempts	13%	56%	40%	60%

Self harm	40%	74%	75%	90%
Phobias	13%	20%	30%	50%

Current Worries

- 6 said they had current worries:
 - “crowds, social phobic.”
 - “Feel like crap. Sick of being played around. My head has started playing up again. Getting more violent. Seems like my life is going nowhere at the moment and feels like my depression is coming back. Trying to keep myself happy.”
 - “Losing new boyfriend, he might be getting back with his ex.”
 - “Overwhelming emotions, relationships, worry about what partners will think about me; everytime I get close to them I never go out with them again. I get scared and say the wrong things, then I feel bad when people like me and I don’t like them back.”
 - “STI’s”
 - “Worried about a lump.”

Support

- Before accessing this service, did any of these apply to you?
 - There was someone who will give you advice and information in case you needed this? 2 yes, 8 no
 - There was someone you could talk to if you were agitated, worried, nervous, or depressed? 7 yes, 3 no
 - There was someone to turn to if you needed advice in taking a decision? 6 yes 4 no
 - There was someone to turn to if you have an important personal problems? 6 yes 4 no
 - There were people who approve of what you do? 7 yes 3 no
 - There were people who give you the feeling that it is all right to feel as you do? 6 yes 4 no
- Before accessing GALYIC, 5 members said they had 4+ LGBT friends; 1 had 3; 1 had 2 and 2 didn’t have any. Since accessing GALYIC 9 now have 4+ LGBT friends.
- 5 members had accessed GALYIC more than 6 months ago, 4 in the last 3 months and 1 in the last month..
- 9 heard about GALYIC through a friend, 1 was referred by the Information Shop.
- When asked what they hoped to get from GALYIC, members said:
 - “Friends”
 - “Friendships, knowing there are group leaders you can talk to about anything.”
 - “Have fun, you can’t be yourself elsewhere.”
 - “Meet new people, more people to turn to for support.”
 - “More self confidence.”
 - “Not too sure.”
 - “Place I can go and be myself. Keeps me off the streets, stops me getting in trouble with the police – they move me on from hanging around bus station.”
 - “Support, friends, understanding.”

- “Support, nice to be around people who re the same.”
- “Support, social interaction.”

Debt

Only 2 members owed money to someone and this wasn't a huge amount; only 1 of them gambles but isn't addicted to gambling.

DISCUSSION

We must be wary of drawing conclusions about such small samples. With a sample of 10 the confidence interval for 40%, for example is 30% to 83%. Therefore we should simply take the findings to reflect a snapshot of those young people accessing GALYIC at the time the assessments were taken. Having said this, the findings are similar to previous GALYIC findings, which strongly suggests that LGBT young people continue to be a high risk group.

The most recent Needs Assessment Tool (NAT) has been amended this year in light of the previous year, with new questions added to seek further clarification.

We have experienced an increase in the number of young women accessing GALYIC over the past year and this is reflected in the demographics. The mean age of members continues to be around 16 years and the number of young people with disabilities seems to remain steady at 40%.

This year we have included religion for the first time as this has the potential to have a negative impact on the lives of young LGBTs, especially if the religion is fundamentalist. Nearly a third of this group come from families with a religion.

This year we have changed the format to try and identify the class background of members by asking about the occupations of their parents. It seems likely that a significant proportion, as much as 80%, of the members who completed the NAT are working class (or 50% if we take the occupations of their mothers into account).

At least half of members do not feel safe from homophobia where they live: there are three lots of data to substantiate this: 1) we added a question about whether members felt safe where they lived; 2) the levels of parental non-acceptance remains high; and 3) half of the members had experienced emotional abuse whilst growing up with three of the five saying this was related to their sexual orientation.

Homophobic bullying is still rife in schools with the majority of members either witnessing it and/or experiencing it. There was little support available for LGBT young people in school either in the form of positive information or supportive teachers.

Again, the majority of members had either witnessed or experienced homophobic abuse on the streets.

There is significant research from abroad which has found that LGBT young people are more likely to misuse alcohol and drugs and smoke than heterosexual youth.ⁱ It seems likely that this is the case here too. 40% of our members have high risk alcohol problems compared with 26% of young people in a local school studyⁱⁱ who actually use alcohol let alone have a problem with it.

Similarly, there are significantly higher levels of tobacco use: 80% compared with 10.2% of the school survey; as well as illegal drug use, 70% compared with 5.6% of the local school survey.

It is hardly surprising that half of the members have low self-esteem; similarly, half have anger management problems. Nor is it surprising that the majority have mental health problems including depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and behaviour, self-harm and phobias. Again, research from abroad confirms that LGBT young people are significantly more likely to have mental health problems than heterosexual youth and that this is related to the homophobic abuse they experience.ⁱⁱⁱ And, again, the levels of self-harm, 90%, are significantly higher than those from the local school study, 15.7%.

GPs would be the first port of call for most people with health problems; only three of our members were out to their GPs and only one responded positively. Current members have accessed other health and support services but only a few were thought of as LGBT-friendly and meeting the needs of members. The most notable of these was Insight, an early psychosis intervention project. GALYIC are currently working with this project to raise their awareness of LGBT issues in return for Insight providing some anger management training for our members. Several members had accessed the local CAMHS but none of them felt that their needs were met.

Jan Bridget

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Gay and Lesbian Youth in Calderdale

September 2011

ⁱ See http://www.gaynz.com/articles/publish/2/article_10802.php
<http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/ARTICLE.php?AID=33657>

ⁱⁱ ReSURV, the company who have put the GALYIC NAT on the internet also conduct health surveys in Calderdale schools for the PCT. These are collected in years 7 and 10 and the results for alcohol, tobacco, drugs and self-harm are all mostly from year 10 findings. The data is available in the draft Joint Health Needs Assessment document.

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://sdgln.com/health/2011/09/05/new-studyanti-gay-prejudice-increases-health-risks-gays-lesbians-and-bisexuals>