

**Policing hate and bridging communities: a qualitative evaluation of relations between LGBT+ people and the police within the North East of England**

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This document is the Accepted Version [AM]

**Citation:**

PICKLES, James (2019). Policing hate and bridging communities: a qualitative evaluation of relations between LGBT+ people and the police within the North East of England. Policing and society. [Article]

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## **Abstract**

The history of policing minority populations has been fraught with persecution and prejudice, which has led to an ingrained mistrust of police forces amongst lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) people. This study uses interview and survey data from LGBT+ participants in the North East of England, to examine perceptions of the police and explore LGBT+ interactions with police officers. Additionally, it draws on interviews taken with criminal justice workers, including LGB&T liaison officers, to scrutinise the effectiveness of efforts made by the police to build trusting relationships. Liaison strategies have been effective in building relationships with LGBT+ community workers. LGBT+ people generally have little to no awareness of the LGB&T liaison role, minimising the roles overall effectiveness and demonstrating a lack of engagement to the wider community.

## **Introduction**

Relationships between the police and minority groups have historically been fractured and hostile (Chakraborti and Garland, 2009, 2015; Macpherson, 1999; Manning, 2010). Drawing on 32 semi-structured interviews and two surveys - face-to-face (n=100) and online (n=142) - this paper examines the relationship between the police and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) communities in the North East of England. LGBT+ will be the acronym adopted throughout this paper, unless LGB&T liaison officers - the title of these roles - are being discussed. The history of policing in relation to LGBT+ people will be examined in order to explore the transition from prejudicial policing - the practice of the police persecuting LGBT+ people - to the policing of prejudice and hate. The literature on hate crime, including an appraisal of legislation underpinning the policing of hate, will then be provided. The approach taken in this article is influenced by queer criminology, an emerging branch of criminology that seeks to examine queer experiences of crime and criminal justice, by prioritising the standpoints and narratives of queer people. There is little data on efforts to repair the relationship between the police and LGBT+ people, with few studies examining the nature of these fractures. This paper argues that police LGB&T liaison officers work consistently with LGBT+ voluntary sector organisations, in an attempt to remedy previous hostilities. It concludes that due to a lack of communication being transmitted to the wider LGBT+ community, the effectiveness of these attempts is minimised.

## **Policing LGBT+ Communities**

Owing to the fragmented past of LGBT+ history, it is difficult to determine when the policing of sexuality began in England and Wales. The term 'policing' can be used to refer to social, cultural, and societal regulations. Policing is used in this article when referring to formal forms of policing, enacted by the criminal justice matrix of England and Wales. The Buggery Act (1553) was the first legislative attempt to regulate same-sex activity. The sovereign criminalised 'unnatural' sex acts outlined in ecclesiastical frameworks - anal sex and bestiality - tying biblical prohibitions of sexuality to legal charters (Asal, Sommer, and Harwood, 2012). Without a formal police force (see Jones and Stockdale, 2017) to fully regulate and

enforce this law - the first force being established in 1829 - it is disputed that same-sex acts were policed formally in this era, with evidence suggesting same-sex activity was regulated locally through social opprobrium (see Moran, 2012).

Influenced by a shift in philosophical paradigms, moving from Enlightenment to logical positivism, the emerging scientific method in early 20<sup>th</sup> century society 'blended' legislative regulations of male same-sex activity with scientific organisations seeking to cure same-sex attraction; homosexuality was thus medicalised. Hart and Wellings (2002) argue that the authority of the medical sector determined how same-sex activity and gender non-conformity was regulated. Chemical castration (Bremer, 1959), electric shock therapy (Owensby, 1941), and aversion and apomorphine therapy (Callahan and Cameron, 1973) - a type of therapy that caused vomiting when aroused - were commonly used on those who expressed same-sex desire. Smith, Bartlett, and King (2004) reason that homosexual 'offenders', 'perverts', and 'deviants' were often coerced into undergoing these treatments in order to avoid imprisonment. The most infamous of these incidents is the case of Alan Turing, who was prosecuted on grounds of 'gross indecency'. He was given the option between imprisonment and probation, with the latter carrying conditions to undergo medical treatment. 'Alan Turing's homosexuality was interpreted by the legal system as a crime, by the medical profession as a malfunction, and by the government as a liability' (Halberstam, 1991: 444). Thus, there was a blending of medical and criminal justice responses to same-sex desire. It is important to note the androcentric application of such legislative and scientific scrutiny. Whilst women were subject to social restrictions, they were not (as) subject to the harms of the medical and legislative sectors as what men were.

Such repression did not go without resistance. Gay spaces - bars, pubs, and restaurants - existing within the night-time economy have long been associated with counter-cultural resistance to anti-LGBT+ persecution. In particular, districts in Berlin such as Nollendorfplatz, London's Soho area, and areas surrounding the Stonewall Inn in New York were the most prolific and populous sites of queer culture and resistance, beginning in the 1930's (Andersson, 2011). Bathhouses, saunas, and public toilets, colloquially known as tearooms, were also prominent spaces where same-sex - usually male - activity was engaged in (Bérubé, 2003). These spaces were habitually raided, respectively, by police forces driven on a moral crusade to curb homosexuality. Many officers committed violence against LGBT+ people, with blackmail, coercion, and threats to out 'offenders' being commonplace (Bérubé, 2003; Humphreys, 1970). The customary raids eventually prompted the much mythologised 'Stonewall Riots' where a raid on the now iconic bar, the Stonewall Inn, resulted in queer people of colour fighting the raiding police officers. This marked a form of resistance against the sustained violence perpetrated by the police (Armstrong and Crag, 2006), prompting the Gay Liberation and later Pride movement.

A string of high profile homosexual convictions in Britain - *inter alia* Alan Turing, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, and Michael Pitt-Rivers - prompted the then Conservative government to establish the Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution, overseen by Sir John Wolfenden. The publication of the Wolfenden Report (1957) recommended that homosexuality be legalised between consenting (male) adults above the age of 21.

Wolfenden's recommendations were enacted ten years later, in 1967, and 'sodomy' was legalised for men over the age of 21. British movements such as the Gay Liberation Front mirrored this legislative change with radical activism by campaigning for political, social, and legal change; fighting for the end of persecutory policing and for equalising the legal age of consent for same-sex adult (Gay Liberation Front, 1971). Little attention has been paid to policing relations with LGBT+ people between 1970 and 1990, as the focus of attention was fixed, justifiably, upon race relations. Considerable evidence 'had mounted of black men (especially black youths) being disproportionately involved in arrests for certain offences, partly (though not only) because of police discrimination' (Reiner, 2010: 94). Indeed, prejudicial policing was regularly practiced in Britain throughout the 1970's and 1980's, the most significant of which can be seen in the 1981 disorders in Brixton and the subsequent Scarman Inquiry (Rowe, 2014). Whilst the literature focuses on race in relation to prejudicial policing, there is no doubt that the climate of persecuting minority groups continued the oppression of LGBT+ people.

1993 saw the murder of Stephen Lawrence; a black man killed in a racially motivated attack. The mishandling of his case by the Metropolitan police prompted an inquiry into his death and the subsequent publication of the Macpherson (1999) report. Macpherson concluded that the Metropolitan police, and the wider criminal justice system, were institutionally racist and prejudiced. 70 recommendations were highlighted in the report, many of which were aimed towards repairing the harms caused to groups that the police had mistreated and persecuted. Although this report focused specifically on race and racism, Jones (2015) and Jones and Williams (2013) argue that Macpherson was the impetus for much wider workplace change across other identity strands. In an era they call post-Macpherson policing, attempts to rebuild fractured relationships with groups once persecuted by the police, such as LGBT+ people, have been made. The emergence of protective legislation, such as hate crime protections, marks such an attempt. Dwyer (2014) suggests that articulating a marked shift from policing LGBT+ people to positive LGBT+-police relations would be erroneous and simplistic, due to the complexities in community sociality and policing practices. Nevertheless, in England and Wales, the emergence of hate crime legislation - designed to protect LGBT+ people and other marginalised groups - marks a legislative shift in reframing a once persecuted group of people to those that need protection by the police from persecution.

## **Hate and Hate Crime**

According to the CPS (2012: 8) hate crime is defined as targeted crimes 'motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or...a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.' These are colloquially known as the five-strands of hate crime in England and Wales (Duggan and Heap, 2014). Whether 'hate' is the most appropriate term for these crimes is subject to much discussion and debate. Critics argue that there is a lack of clarity on whether 'hate' accounts for only extreme, emotional hostility or encompasses prejudice, discrimination, and bias also (Hall, 2013). Indeed, some scholars prefer the phrase 'bias crime' (McDevitt, et al., 2001; Perry, 2003a; Rowe, 2004; Stotzer, 2014) in order to symbolise the spectrum of emotions responsible for 'hate'. However, the term 'hate' is used

operationally by police forces in England and Wales. Currently, hate is bifurcated into two strands: hate *crimes* and hate *incidents*. Hate *crimes* are illegal acts that are aggravated by hostility towards any of the five strands. Hate *incidents* are acts that do not constitute a crime, such as micro-aggressions - everyday cues and indignities which communicate negative biases, pejoratives, and hostilities towards minority groups - (see Nadal, et al., 2011; Roffee and Waling, 2016; Sue, et al., 2007) but are, nevertheless, aggravated by hostility towards the protected strands.

Section 146 of the Criminal Justice Act (2003) empowers courts to increase the sentences of those who are found guilty of committing a hate crime against sexual orientation and transgender identity; operationally called sentence uplifting. There is a wealth of evidence demonstrating that hate crimes hurt more, psychologically and emotionally, than non-hate crimes (see *inter alia* Bachmann and Gooch, 2017; Frost and Meyer, 2009; Hall, 2013; Herek, et al., 1999; McDevitt, et al., 2001; Meyer, 2010; Poteat, et al., 2011; Robinson and Espelage, 2011; Stotzer, 2014) leading Iganski (2001) to argue that sentence increases for hate crimes are justified. Thus, a National Policing Hate Crime Strategy was developed to advise police forces, nationally, on how they can assist in 'reducing the harm caused by hate crime; increasing the trust and confidence in the policing of communities which fear they may be targeted by such crime' (College of Policing, 2014b: 2). 'Every hate crime conveys a symbolic message to both the victim and others like him or her' (Walters and Tumath, 2014: 574), thus victims of hate crime are attacked because of who they are. The recognition of persecuted identities within criminal justice frameworks is therefore symbolic in easing the specific harms associated with hate crime (Perry, 2003b) by reframing previously persecuted groups - persecuted by the police - to those requiring police support and protection. The effectiveness of this protection is questionable however.

Research conducted by the Gay British Crime Survey (2013) found that 78% of hate victims did not report their victimisation to the police. Recent evidence shows that one in five (21%) LGBT+ people experienced a hate crime or incident between 2016-17 (Bachmann and Gooch, 2017). Further, 81% of those victimised did not report it to the police, choosing to reconcile their experiences of victimisation themselves. Respondents in both reports held negative perceptions of the police, stating that they would not be taken seriously. Establishing and securing positive relationships between police forces and LGBT+ communities is therefore a vital step to securing both an increase in hate reporting and an effective, positive strategy to support LGBT+ people.

### **Policing Anti-LGBT+ Hate Crime**

Again prompted by Macpherson (1999), the dawn of the millennium saw an outcry for greater accountability and transparency within the police (Joyce, 2017), establishing a new era for LGBT+-policing relationships. Jones (2015) argues that the era of post-Macpherson policing saw the modern practice of diversity inclusion. Specialist roles emerged in the form of LGB&T liaison officers with the aim of overcoming social barriers between LGBT+ people and the police, by building trust and closing divides. LGB&T liaison officers are police officers who undertake the additional, voluntary responsibility of liaising with local

communities within their local territory. They also specialise in LGBT+ issues such as anti-LGBT+ hate. Promoted by the National LGBT Police Network, the Metropolitan Police offer an LGBT Liaison Officer's Manual of Guidance, which provides national advice and assistance for police staff dealing with LGBT+ issues (see Pakouta and Forsyth, n.d.). Given the paucity of research into LGBT+ policing liaison, the vastly differential operational practices across all 43 police forces of England and Wales (Jones and Stockdale, 2017), and longstanding austerity cuts to police services, it is currently unknown whether each police force employs a team of dedicated LGB&T liaison officers. The officers involved in this research were all police constable rank and were distributed across each policing neighbourhood area within the force's regional area. Further research is required to scrutinise this initiative nationally.

The key responsibilities of the liaison role include: the investigation of hate crimes/incidents; liaising internally, by providing advice and support to non-liaison officers dealing with LGBT+ issues and supporting officers who are LGBT+; liaising externally with wider LGBT+ networks; promoting awareness of LGBT+ matters; and increasing the trust and confidence of LGBT+ people (Pakouta and Forsyth, n.d.).

The College of Policing (2014a) recognises that in order to achieve effective community liaison, a sensitive, well-informed policing approach is required. For example, the national Hate Crime Operational Guidance acknowledges that LGBT+ people, who experience a hate crime, may not be open about their sexuality or gender identity with family, friends, peers, and work colleagues. Thus, efforts need to be taken, by police dealing with the incident, to avoid outing victims to their families. Disclosing and outing someone's sexuality and gender identity can arguably have a detrimental impact on LGBT+ people (College of Policing, 2014a). This guidance also recommends that police engage consistently with local LGBT+ groups in order to overcome this issue. Further, community engagement with trans individuals, by getting to know them personally, can assist LGB&T liaison officers in accurately using the correct language adopted by the trans victim, such as the persons pronouns and gender identity markers (College of Policing, 2014a, 2014b). These roles signify a stark change from historic police cultures and policing objectives. However, there has been little research conducted on the effectiveness of these officers. Australian research undertaken primarily by Dwyer and colleagues indicates that LGBT+ people have low levels of interaction with liaison officers despite having high awareness levels of liaison officer programmes (Dwyer, et al., 2017). It is currently unknown how LGBT+ communities in England engage with liaison officers when experiencing hate crime or violence, or whether they have achieved their purpose in rebuilding community trust (Dwyer and Ball, 2012; Dwyer, 2014). This research provides clarity on these questions.

## **Methodology**

### ***Design***

This qualitatively driven study utilised a mixed-methods approach in order to examine the community layered responses to hate crime and explore the role of policing in supporting

LGBT+ people. To understand the lived experiences of LGBT+ people and their relationship with the police, 24 semi-structured interviews were conducted with LGBT+ people who identified as having experienced a hate crime. In order to understand policing practices and the lived experiences of police officers, 8 semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff from one regional police force in the North East. The focus of this research is drawn from interview data. A face-to-face survey (n=100) was also conducted at Pride events and replicated online using social media platforms in the North East (n=142) in order to gain a quantifiable understanding of policing-LGBT+ relationships. Survey data supplements the narratives gained from interview data.

### ***Participants and Recruitment***

A mixture of snowballing and time-space sampling (TSS) techniques were utilised to recruit participants. 'TSS techniques seek to recruit respondents in places and at times where they would reasonably be expected to gather and to ask them about their experiences within the place or space.' (Muhib, 2001: 217). Information about the research was distributed to managers of voluntary sector LGBT+ community groups and members of student societies who disseminated requests for recruitment amongst their group's networks. One manager of an LGBT+ charity regularly liaised with an LGB&T liaison officer in the North East. Through a snowball method, this manager contacted this officer, distributing information of the research and requests for recruitment. From this point, officers and I contacted each other. To my knowledge, officers did not seek permission from their Superintendent to participate. Participants were separated into three cohorts, for sampling purposes: Students (n=7), Voluntary Sector (n=17), and Criminal Justice workers (n=8). As indicated in Table 1, their identity markers were recorded. Participants were an average 34.5 years old. All except 4 police workers identified as LGBT+. One police worker did not hold a law enforcement rank as they were a civilian who worked internally within the criminal justice system. Their comments were included in the overall analysis due to their role of informing police practice and working with the police workforce, within the force area.

[Table 1 near here]

It is sensible for research that involves LGBT+ participants to consider that they are not homogenous and have demographically different markers (Wheeler, 2009). The survey focused on identity markers (as indicated in Table 2) and did not record income level, education, and employment. 11 interview participants identified as men (10 cisgender, 1 transgender), 12 as women (9 cisgender, 3 transgender), 9 as neither male nor female (non-binary, genderfluid, neutral). 14 were gay, 6 lesbian, 2 bisexual, 4 pansexual, 6 were other sexualities (included straight). All were white except one Asian participant.

### ***Procedures***

#### ***Qualitative Data Collection***

In order to encourage participation and recruitment, participants were interviewed in venues that they were familiar and comfortable with; police in their force stations, LGBT+ students

on their university campus, and LGBT+ service users in the charity buildings they attended for youth and community groups. Informed consent, safeguarding, and confidentiality were discussed with all participants prior to interview. Consent to participate was obtained by co-signing consent agreements in accordance with the university ethics committee guidance.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, with three separate interview guides being adapted, across the three sampling cohorts. For example, participants from the criminal justice cohort were asked questions relating to police workplace culture and police practice around hate crime. These questions would have been inappropriate to ask to LGBT+ students who were instead asked about their university experiences. All questions were designed to understand the impact of hate crime towards LGBT+ people and how it is responded to by a) voluntary and community organisations, and b) the criminal justice system, specifically the police. Mid-fieldwork (2016), a mass anti-LGBT+ terror event occurred in Orlando, Florida where 49 people were killed and a further 53 injured via mass shooting in the LGBT+ nightclub Pulse. Following this event, questions were added to all interview guides in order to understand participant's feelings towards this event and to ensure that the research remained topical. Interviews lasted between 35 and 75 minutes, were digitally recorded using a Dictaphone device, and transcribed verbatim. Participants were asked to choose their own pseudonym so that personal and identifiable information could be anonymised.

### *Survey*

Participants were randomly approached during a Pride event in the North East and asked to self-identify their age, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality. They were then asked 7 questions in relation to anti-LGBT+ hate crime and policing, such as: have you ever experienced anti-LGBT+ hate crime? Did you report it to the police? Do you think that the police take hate crime seriously? This survey was replicated online using Bristol Online Survey technology and distributed among online LGBT+ social networking groups. Responses were coded and analysed using SPSS software.

[Table 2 near here]

### *Interview Analysis*

Following transcription, interview data was manually coded using a thematic analysis. Charmaz (2006) conceptualises the thematic coding process as an individualised procedure of separating, selecting, and organising data. Although strategic, there is no systematic or precise recipe for how one engages with this process. Being framed in grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) the data emerged by making consistent comparisons between data and theory. Broadly, thematic coding allows the researcher to identify overarching categories, which the themes can fall under or be organised together. Three overarching themes emerged from this data, which were assembled based on how often they were discussed, into a coding framework. Organising themes into a coding framework allowed for meaningful patterns to be discerned by comparing and contrasting key themes and subthemes across the dataset. Police workers discussed their workplace at length and relayed the internal dynamics of their professional practice.



## Findings

### *Key Theme 1: Perception of police*

Participants from all cohorts described how the police were, on the whole, perceived negatively by LGBT+ people, in part due to the historic baggage surrounding the police as a repressive agency of persecution. Participants felt that this perception maintained numerous barriers to justice for LGBT+ people.

#### *Historic Relationships*

Having directly witnessed and experienced a historically fractious relationship with the police, prior to Macpherson, participants over the age of 40 were more likely than younger participants to reflect on police persecution, using vignettes of this history. One participant (gay, cis man, aged 47) who utilised voluntary sector services, remarked

I know most of the people here who are my age will remember that it was dangerous and it wasn't just...you know it was people of all ages. And it was from the police. It was everywhere and if you appeared overt you were in for a difficult time. I think a lot of that homophobia was overt 20 years ago whereas now it is more discreet I think a lot of it is still there.

Another participant (pansexual, trans woman, aged 54) who ran an LGBT service recounted

There is still that historic baggage; there are still people who remember kids being taken off lesbians and police prosecuting gay men in the cottages and the cruising grounds and remember the police raid in pubs and bars and hanging around known gay venues. There is a huge historic relationship. I know a gay man who is 75 years old who gets twitchy around the police. He is terrified because of what that uniform represents, not the officer, it's what the uniform is.

Others similarly remarked that the iconography - the uniform - that represented the police symbolised an era of repression and persecution. Indeed, 'the police' as a whole was frequently described as one entity rather than individual forces. Participants felt that the entire policing matrix, defined by Jones and Stockdale (2017: 210) as 'a complex matrix of organisations and practices that are concerned with the regulation of crime and social order', was one entity that persecuted them. Whilst younger participants did not draw on historical vignettes, they still perceived the police as an agency that did not understand them, had the potential to be hostile to them, and would not take their experiences seriously.

It was common for police officers to reflect on the legacy left by their predecessors and emphasised their efforts of overcoming the historical fractures. They maintained that this history should never be forgotten and understood why LGBT+ people are mistrustful of the police. Officers frequently cited examples of LGBT+ people being arrested, such as Peter Tatchell, and recognised that they had to negotiate this legacy of police persecution when contemporarily interacting with LGBT+ communities. One officer (straight, cis woman, aged 35) said

I think previously where you identified with certain parts of the LGBT community you were ostracised and that has damaged the relationship between the police and that will take years to repair, but we are trying.

Another officer (straight, cis man, aged 34) said

I wish for communities to understand that they are dealing with a new force with new ideas. People have massive perceptions about the police, before they even use the service, they might never have used the service, and I think there always is going to be that stigma of the police, but I mean you know we are trying... I think there is always room for improvement, I think we need to get out there more in the community, and I think we need to install the trust by any means. But we also need feedback.

This perception of the police also affected new LGBT+ recruits going into the police, as one officer (straight, cis woman, aged 35) relayed

We are still stuck in that perception of what the police were like 20 years ago. Like one of my colleagues who is gay did not feel he could come out until he spent about 12 weeks on shift, and that is such a shame

Thus, police officers were determined in overcoming this historic legacy as this was frequently recognised as the main barrier that limited their ability to build trust with LGBT+ people. Liaising with community groups more and having positive community dialogue were suggested as small steps in building a trusting relationship with LGBT+ communities.

### *Hate Crime Reporting*

Participants from all cohorts discussed how the negative perception of the police hindered hate crime reporting. The majority of participants outlined that previous contact with the police was negative, which disincentivised any future contact. The importance of successful first time contact and liaison was recognised by officers, as one police worker (straight, cis woman, aged 34) expressed

I would like to think that I am a very easy person to talk to, but I also understand that not all of my colleagues do and sometimes you get a negative experience with one police officer, because they have come as it like a bull in a china shop, and that puts you off contacting the police again.

The survey of 242 LGBT+ people revealed that whilst a staggering 71% had experienced a hate crime or incident, only 4% had reported their victimisation to the police. Additionally, 4% stated that they would *always* report their victimisation whilst 11% said *only on some occasions*. 60% of survey respondents believed that the police do not treat hate crime as a serious issue. There is a disparity between the emphasis placed on hate crime by police participants and how LGBT+ people perceive the police. This indicates that negative perceptions of the police contribute to such low level reporting. Interview participants discussed that they normalised their experiences, with the majority stating they would only

report hate crime if it was extreme, such as a physical attack. One participant (lesbian, cis woman, aged 48) who worked for an LGBT+ service, stated

People say to me, particularly trans people, "well what's the point? I'd be at the police station every day." You know a lot of people have really horrible things said and done to them, but they don't necessarily want a legislative or justice/judicial response to something like that, they just want it not to happen again. And sometimes these things happen so quickly that you don't really see them [perpetrators], it could be anyone.

Interestingly, despite the overall desire of police participants to increase reporting, several LGB officers recounted their own experiences of hate and admitted that they themselves did not report this through their policing channels. One police officer (gay, cis woman, aged 36) said

I have had abuse walking down the street...and I didn't report it. I think that's where we as a police force might need to check and change things. I think it is difficult because how can we expect the public to report things when we as police officers don't necessarily report. You know, we know that it is going to be taken seriously, but you just normalise it.

Thus, whilst negative perceptions of the police did contribute to the overall lack of reporting, it was apparent that for many participants, including officers, criminal justice pathways were not appealing in overcoming or dealing with their experiences.

### *Reporting and Disconnected Interventions*

Although a high percentage of respondents surveyed stated that they would not report their hate experiences to the police, 76% stated that they would be incentivised to report their hate experiences to the police if they knew that the perpetrator would be sent on an LGBT+ awareness course. Although this bears no practical weight and was purely a theoretical exercise, it demonstrates that LGBT+ people require a different rationale for reporting their hate experience than criminal justice pathways currently offer. Interview participants shed light on this. One participant (gay, cis man, aged 23) articulated that he would not report, unless the crime was extremely physical

If I was physically assaulted, like say if they broke my leg I would probably report it, but if they just punched me I probably wouldn't.

This participant later went on to describe how he was once followed home by a man who hurled homophobic abuse at him.

I didn't report the guy who followed me. It's a lot of hassle you know because you can just brush it off which is just what I wanted to do. You would have to go through weeks and weeks and weeks of the courts like and you would have to find out who he was and you know he was a young lad he could change his mind. Is giving him a criminal record the best solution or is that just going to reinforce his hatred to gay people because they have given him a criminal record?

Participants were unconvinced that a criminal justice response was effective in tackling the root cause of 'hate'. Reporting their experiences to the police, they felt, would not specifically scrutinise anti-LGBT+ violence, prejudice, ignorance, and bigotry. Pursuing a punitive outcome through the prosecution of perpetrators was not desirable. Reducing homophobia/transphobia, preventing future LGBT+ people from victimisation, and increasing awareness were highlighted as being more desirable. Participants claimed that reporting for the 'greater good' of the LGBT+ community was a more attractive incentive. Criminal justice participants were generally punitive in their approach to hate perpetrators as demonstrated by one worker (lesbian, cis woman, aged 58)

When the Crown Prosecution Service prosecutes someone they are prosecuting on behalf of the State, because the State says that this is not acceptable. So it needs to be punitive. It needs to be said that you have not only committed a crime but you have done so against a personal characteristic of the victim and we are not having it and so you will be dealt with more harshly.

This act of punitivism and denunciation (see Joyce, 2017) marks a significant shift in policing practice towards LGBT+ people and the people that persecute them. However, the rationale for reporting differed between criminal justice participants and other participant cohorts, showing a disconnect between police officers and LGBT+ communities. Criminal justice workers, whilst being concerned with safeguarding, also naturally desired successful prosecutions. The reality for gaining sentence uplifts in hate crime cases is very stark. In 2015/6 7,194 hate crimes against sexual orientation were recorded by the police, with only 1,151 securing successful prosecutions. Of these successful prosecutions, 38% received a sentence uplift. Similarly, 858 hate crimes against transgender identity were recorded by the police, with only 68 securing prosecutions; 35% of these received a sentence uplift (Walters, et al., 2017). Thus, the desire for criminal justice workers to achieve successful prosecutions carrying a sentence uplift is disconnected from the reality.

### ***Key Theme 2: LGB&T Liaison Officers***

Voluntary sector and criminal justice workers talked extensively about the role of LGB&T liaison officers. Participants from the student cohort and participants who utilised voluntary sector services were unaware of the liaison officer role; when prompted they articulated a desire to learn more about the role.

#### ***Liaison and Engagement***

LGB&T liaison officers are police officers that voluntarily take up the specialism of LGBT+ community engagement alongside their regular policing duties. One police worker (straight, cis woman, aged 34) summarised the importance of this role being voluntary

We have a team of LGB&T liaison officers and we have tried to include different age ranges to make the role as diverse as possible. The role is assigned on a voluntary basis so not all of them identify as LGBT+, a lot of them are straight allies. The voluntary aspect is key because I would rather have someone that is keen and

interested and passionate about LGBT+ issues, eager to learn, and already works with the community anyway.

In order to avoid the role being tokenistic or assigned to LGBT+ officers against their wishes, the role is an additional, voluntary duty one undertakes alongside regular policing duties. Liaison officers relayed that they retained their uniforms yet their primary focus, in terms of their liaison duties, was to break down barriers with the community. In order to do this, they had been given (unspecified) training around LGB and gender identity issues. They offered advice internally - within the police force to other officers - and it was mandated that they had two liaison officers per local team. Several officers, such as this officer (gay, cis woman, aged 36) stated

I won't necessarily investigate every homophobic or transphobic crime that occurs because otherwise I would never do anything else. I try to fit it as best as I can around my work so I will approach community engagement officers as that is their main role. They can put more effort into it and more time.

Community engagement officers are non-uniformed police who work in tandem, concurrently, with liaison officers. There were several reported successes to these roles. Voluntary sector workers consistently worked with liaison officers and reported close working relationships with them. The success of this role being translated into the wider community is questionable. Participants who were aware of this role maintained it was vital for building relationships with LGBT+ people; however, they also expressed frustrations about the overall lack of awareness of the role, within the LGBT+ community. The quick turnaround of officers minimised the overall quality of service. One voluntary worker (lesbian, cis woman, aged 44) who worked closely with liaison officers remarked

Over the past 11-12 years that there have been liaison officers there is a frustration, but it is with the police structure, that people will move on at a very short notice and everything you have put into getting that officers up to speed just disappears with them. Some officers, no matter how much you say to them just do not get it. I would say though, that every time there has been one officer that is useless there are been two that are brilliant. Most of them really care about having equitable access to use the police service for all LGBT+ people...but I will say that all bits of the system don't work the same.

There is clear determination from LGB&T liaison officers in building better relationships with LGBT+ people and supporting them around criminal justice issues. However, the lack of awareness of this role undermines its overall effectiveness. The majority of participants were not aware such a role existed. Indeed, it was suggested numerous times by participants that the police should have specialist LGBT+ officers, in order to combat hate crime and support the community, not knowing that these were already established. Additionally, 60% of respondents from the survey did not believe that the police viewed LGBT+ hate crime as a serious issue, highlighting a huge fissure between the police and LGBT+ people.

All police workers argued that they - as a force - should promote their engagement more and highlight positive outcomes in hate crime cases. Utilising social media and the local media were suggested as mediums to promote a positive police message; participants stressed that it was important for LGBT+ people to feel that the police were on their side. One officer (straight, cis woman, aged 42) argued

We need to be publicising successful prosecutions, because it's become circular. One of the reasons why people don't report is that they do not see the point. So if we are really pushing out there that this person was prosecuted, this is how we supported the community, and this was the sentence they got, it makes people think that there is a point.

### *Language*

Perhaps one of the most significant barriers in carrying out the liaison role was the lack of linguistic capital that officers possessed. Many were unfamiliar with the cultural language used by LGBT+ people, such as gendered pronouns, identity markers/labels, slang words, and appropriate terminology. Officers expressed insecurity over how to address transgender people and were fearful of saying the wrong thing. All officers acknowledged this, with one (straight, cis woman, aged 42) saying 'I think we need to improve our knowledge around the use of language, a lot of officers don't want to say anything because they are too scared of saying the wrong thing.' Another officer (straight, cis woman, aged 35) said 'a lot of my colleagues don't say anything because they're scared of coming across as homophobic or transphobic for saying the wrong thing.' The fear of saying the wrong thing or offending an LGBT+ person made officers reluctant to engage. A lack of confidence in this area was exhibited by all officers. Further, non-police LGBT+ participants expressed their trepidation towards engaging with the police, due to the likelihood that they would have to explain their pronouns, gender identity, and the appropriate terminology to use. Whilst officers' concerns about causing unintended offence are valid, the implications of this insecurity can mean disengagement with LGBT+ people, raising the potential for increased distrust and mistrust of the police. This insecurity may also mean officers overlook the emotional harms of hate crime in relation to the specific identities that are targeted.

Language is important within policing practice as it determines how crimes are reported, recorded, and monitored. During investigation, testimonies are gathered as evidence that can be used to assemble a case for future prosecution purposes. Language and communication is therefore quintessentially important to policing practice. Developments in language, prompted by community sensitivities - e.g. moving away from 'coloured' to black, or 'lady' to woman - change operational standards and mechanisms of policing. Future research into liaison policing should take note of this relationship between language and police practice.

### ***Key Theme 3: Police Workplace***

The final key theme that came out of the analysis revolved around the police workplace, with police officer participants describing the police matrix as a male, heterosexually dominated culture with a hierarchical structure organised around police officer 'ranks'. Non-police

participants discussed how their perception of police culture - white, male, heterosexual - inhibited any desire to approach or be involved with policing practice. On balance, police officer participants outlined that inclusionary practices were present in their workplace, primarily in the form of an LGBT staff network.

### *Culture of Policing*

All police participants adamantly believed that the police workforce, in this research, was free from homophobia. They reinforced that they had never experienced or witnessed homophobic comments or practices. Indeed, it was reinforced that their force actively engaged with LGBT+ affirmative organisations, for example one participant (straight, cis woman, aged 34) stated

We often consult with the LGB&T liaison officers to utilise their expertise....we have chosen to participate in the workplace and equality index. We have signed up to Stonewall and their membership is about two grand a year, but they run a lot of free workshops and help organise training, and we're trying to put procedures in place to make it a lot more accessible and friendly to minority groups.

When probed further, participants acknowledged that whilst they had not witnessed any homophobia, they certainly knew of 'old dinosaurs' in the force, whom they described as veteran officers, close to retirement age, who believed in hard styles of policing and did not understand diversity or the importance of liaison. They also acknowledged that the police workplace was very procedural, rigid, and dominated by a macho, male ethos. However, officers who were LGBT+ maintained that they had not experienced homophobia, with one officer (gay, cis man, aged 22) stating 'I have not had one whiff of homophobia, it is genuinely a held belief that homophobia is wrong.' However, liaison officers did express that due to the hierarchical culture of policing, their roles were not valued as highly as senior ranking officers. One participant (gay, cis woman, aged 36) expressed

The hierarchy is very rigid. We need to recognise that certain people have specialisms. Just because a person may be a PC (police constable) does not mean that they shouldn't be valued as equal as a chief inspector, because what does a straight chief inspector know about being gay. The hierarchy is really rigid and it needs to soften more and be more fluid. We need to have flexibility at saying 'regardless of your level, we'll look down the ladder and value your specialism'. I don't think LGBT roles are as valued, at the time they were created I felt like they were more of a tick in the box.

Three officers felt that the training they had to undergo, in order to carry out liaison responsibilities, was essential to the role, but noted that it was often carried out when they were off duty. Thus, they were required to attend unpaid, using their own time. With no financial recompense for these hours, officers felt that further support was needed for them to complete their training. The workplace expectation of attending training outside of hours made officers in this sample feel devalued. Indeed, one officer (gay, cis man, aged 34) stated 'as passionate as I am about LGBT issues, I value my own time. I feel that we need to have

more support.' It was also noted by two police workers that there was minimal representation of LGBT+ officers in senior ranks, which they felt conveyed a message that it was less acceptable to be LGBT+ at senior levels.

Externally, the ways in which the police respond to incidents reflect a change in ethos, with an emphasis to move away from authoritarian and repressive policing styles, towards softer styles of policing. An officer (straight, cis woman, aged 35) reflected on this

So we have stopped being the police who are like "Hi, we are the police and you are going to do what we tell you" to "Hi, we are the police, how can we keep you safe and what can we do to support you?" That's all that matters to us now; how you feel, whether you feel support, and whether you can go about your life without it being impacted. What is important for my role is knowing what safeguarding to deliver and what to look out for, and having training about the diverse groups within the LGBT community.

Indeed, all police officers emphasised that their approach to policing was first and foremost victim-centric, where safeguarding and support needs of victims were prioritised. They described how the policing practice had culturally changed, moving away from a crime fighting 'macho' profession to a service that tries to support people who are victimised by crime. Despite this, it was acknowledged from all policing participants that police recruitment mainly consisted of young, straight, white men and outlined that although policing practices had changed, the workplace culture was still white, straight, male, and machismo. They noted that the machismo image was an additional barrier in recruiting LGBT+ people into the police force, remarking that LGBT+ communities perceive police culture as exclusionary to them. LGBT+ participants confirmed this. Whilst an overall positive message was articulated in relation to changes in police culture, all police staff acknowledged that significant changes were still required.

#### *LGBT Association/Network*

In order to support and include LGBT+ officers, the police force I sampled was attempting to establish an LGBT+ network whilst fieldwork was being conducted. One participant (straight, cis woman, aged 34) briefly summarised the history of this network

We used to have the Gay Police Association but that is no longer nationally supported because of the exclusive terminology, so we are relaunching that as the LGBT+ association which is nationally supported

Another officer (gay, cis man, aged 34) who was leading this relaunch said

It is going to serve a variety of purposes. One is to identify and offer support for officers who identify as LGBT in the force, so for staff. Two, to bring in LGB&T liaison officers so we can be feeding their knowledge in a lot more and learn from each other, from one pool of information. So we can have one pool of knowledge that can be accessed by everyone on offer, regardless of whether they are LGBT or not.



This network was being designed to streamline information, specific to the regional LGBT+ communities, throughout the whole force. Thus, straight, non-liaison officers, who rarely interact with LGBT+ people, would have a central network that they could approach for advice and information if they were dealing with an incident involving LGBT+ people. It was hoped that this could build confidence in police officers, when interacting with LGBT+ people, and aid in breaking down the cultural language barriers highlighted earlier.

## **Discussion**

This study contributes to our knowledge of LGBT+ people's relationship with the police and vice versa. It does this by examining how LGBT+ people perceive the police and by highlighting how police workers respond to incidents, specifically hate events, involving LGBT+ people. These findings suggest that positive steps have been taken to liaise with LGBT+ communities, such as the implementation of specific LGB&T liaison roles. However, the negative perception of the police and the lack of awareness of these positive improvements, amongst LGBT+ participants, minimised the potential of these roles.

### ***LGBT+ Policing Relations***

Interview data from police worker participants demonstrate a pro-active approach in improving relationships with LGBT+ communities in the North East. LGB&T liaison officers admonished historical policing practices that persecuted LGBT+ people and actively tried to make links with youth and community groups in the North East. The current practice underpinning liaison approaches prioritise safeguarding and the needs of victims. Unlike Dwyer et al.'s (2017) respondents who had high awareness levels of liaison programmes, interview data from LGBT+ people in this research indicates that the role of LGB&T liaison has not been translated to large sections of the LGBT+ community, in the North East, as the majority of participants had little to no knowledge of this specialist role. Further, the survey data demonstrates that a high percentage of LGBT+ people have an overall negative perception of the police, believing that they do not take anti-LGBT+ hate seriously. However, in line with Dwyer et al.'s (2017) research, participants reported that the historical mistrust of the police was a key factor in non-engagement.

Most research on minority relations with the police has focused on race and religion, thus there is very little existing data examining these relations from an LGBT+ perspective. Ethnic minorities, particular black communities, have similarly experienced persecution from the police in the form of stop-and-search abuses, ethnic profiling, and racist violence (Delsol and Shiner, 2006; Goodey, 2006). Using a qualitative study Barrett, Fletcher and Patel (2014) likewise found that police forces in the North of England take a proactive approach in trying to foster positive relations with local black and minority ethnic (BME) groups; however, young BME individuals report low levels of satisfaction with the police. The research also found that BME communities wanted more communication on policing practice, community needs, and crime prevention. The study concerning this article demonstrates similar findings pertinent to LGBT+ relations. Participants in this study demonstrated an overwhelmingly negative perception of the police, influencing how they interact with police channels.

It is clear however, from the evidence highlighted, that LGBT+ identities are no longer regarded as a crime. Lamble (2009) argues that there is still a danger of police officers regarding them as a perversion by neglecting, erasing, and 'othering' them (considering a group or individual as 'not one of us'). There is no evidence in this study of the police treating LGBT+ identities as perversion. The findings suggest that police staff have little knowledge about LGBT+ identity, resulting in a lack of confidence or awareness of how to engage with LGBT+ people. Overall, participants shared that their colleagues, who did not have specific LGBT+ training, were reluctant to engage with LGBT+ people for fear of using incorrect terminology, misgendering trans people, or coming across as offensive.

The lack of understanding around LGBT+ identity indicates a heteronormative knowledge base (Yep, 2002) - an assumption that regards heterosexuality as the 'norm' (Richardson, 1996) - within the police, indirectly 'othering' queerness. LGBT+ participants held negative perceptions pertaining to this heteronormative knowledge base; they frequently emphasised that they did not want to educate police officers about their identities. International research indicates a more hostile relationship than what was found in this study. For example, according to Dwyer (2012; 2015) police forces in Queensland, Australia have been found to regulate queerness within public spaces, with some officers separating LGBT+ people, reprimanding same-sex hand holding, and avoiding people who looked queer (Dwyer, 2012). LGBT+ people who 'pass' as straight are found to have easier relations with the police. Interviewees in Dwyer's research also relayed that certain police officers used homophobic language towards them for 'flaunting' their queerness: 'You fucking faggot, I'll fuck you like a bitch that you are' (Dwyer, 2012: 19). Indeed, a third of Dwyer et al.'s (2017) sample reported negative experiences with the police, including misconduct, abuse, and discrimination. Overt and direct homophobia such as this was not found in this study. However, the reluctance of the wider police force to engage with LGBT+ people due to the lack of confidence and knowledge in LGBT+ identity indicates heteronormative biases within the police force. Normalising queer identity within the police force - a heteronormative, straight dominated workplace - is one solution to overcome this barrier and foster positive relations.

### ***Police Culture***

In this study, police workplace culture was found to be hierarchical in its composition and male dominated. Police staff found it to be broadly inclusive, with all staff acknowledging that they did not experience overt homophobia. Affirmative steps were being taken, such as attempts to establish an internal LGBT network, with the aim of supporting and including LGBT+ staff. Dwyer (2014; 2015) however suggests caution when examining police culture, arguing that the workplace is not free from heterosexist attitudes and heteronormative practices. She maintains that an overt masculinised police culture reinforces heteronormative values - values that promote heterosexuality as being the natural norm - within the police. Indeed, the data presented in this paper highlights that knowledge of LGBT+ identity was not present within the broader police force, with participants reporting that their colleagues were reluctant to engage with LGBT+ people due to this lack of knowledge.

Rumens and Broomfield's (2012) study found that whilst there was a greater acceptance of LGB officers, with many feeling included by their heterosexual peers, officers consistently had to manage their LGB identities within a heteronormative milieu (environments where non-queerness is privileged as the norm). In their sample, many LGB officers developed strategies to look 'hard enough' to handle work seen as more masculine lest they be reluctantly moved to service units requiring a stereotypically more 'feminine' approach (Rumens and Broomfield, 2012) such as liaising and talking with communities. The voluntary nature of the LGB&T liaison role was central. Volunteerism, in theory, prevented the role being relegated to LGBT+ identifying officers who did not wish to pursue this role. As a side note, although this study did not specifically examine the strategies employed by officers to negotiate the workplace, several participants conveyed that the force sampled was pushing to destigmatise mental health, as many staff had anxiety and depression but were worried about disclosing their emotional struggles for, as stated by one participant, 'not being this image of a male, robotic police officer'. Although not linked directly to sexuality, mental health issues are routinely seen as 'weak' and 'feminine' by men (Syzdek, et al., 2016) whilst suicide is a gendered issue, affecting men more than women (Hunt, et al., 2017). Thus, police culture has changed significantly post-Macpherson, with the force sampled taking affirmative and inclusive steps. Patriarchal and heteronormative biases are still present throughout however.

Heteronormative constraints within the police workplace act as a catalyst for LGB officers to weigh up the benefits and costs for 'coming out' or disclosing their sexuality to their peers (Colvin, 2014). Recent research (see Mennicke, et al., 2018) supports these previous findings, concluding that LGBT+ people face both overt and covert discrimination within the police workforce. Research on police-LGBT+ workforce dynamics is largely American or Australian centric (see *inter alia* Belkin and McNichol, 2002; Dwyer, 2014; Dwyer and Ball, 2014; Dwyer, et al., 2017; Mennicke, et al., 2018). Jones and Williams (2013), however, offer one of the largest ever surveys of LGB police officers, in England and Wales, finding that under one fifth experience discrimination in their workplace, with the majority of LGB officers feeling supported by their force workplace. LGB police workers, in this study, similarly felt personally supported. LGB&T liaison officers reported that they required more professional support in relation to their liaison role. The perception of the police as homophobic to LGBT+ people, by LGBT+ participants, continued the fractious relationship outlined throughout and inhibited positive interactions with the police. These findings suggest that bridging this divide is necessary for positive and affirmative police-LGBT+ relationships to be formed.

### ***Implications***

This research reinforces the need for individual police forces to adopt community based strategies that aim to liaise with local LGBT+ groups and communities. Although this is already present in the form of liaison officers, the functionality of this liaison is minimised due to LGBT+ people showing little awareness of their existence. Individual police forces have the opportunity to establish internal networks and LGBT+ associations that can be utilised by all officers. Normalising issues, internally, may help build officers confidence in

LGBT+ identity, language, and culture. Building the confidence of officers can increase the level of engagement they provide to LGBT+ communities and improve the overall service offered to those victimised by hate. Comparatively, sexual health research has found that practitioners who utilise gender-neutral language or speak about sex using the same language as gay men are able to overcome some of the barriers to health care for these individuals (Department of Health, 2009; Qiao, et al., 2018). Training police staff to become familiar in LGBT+ language can assist in overcoming the language - and confidence - barriers highlighted in this paper.

The data reveal that police liaison and engagement is a positive step in repairing the historically fractious relationship. It has built a trusting relationship with some LGBT+ people, specifically those who work in LGBT+ services. However, this engagement needs to have a much wider reach with LGBT+ people in order to foster a more trusting dynamic. In line with previous research conducted by Jones (2015) and Jones and Williams (2015), an emphasis to recruit a higher demographic of LGBT+ people, within the force, in order to have positive representation, is a key step in building positive relations with local LGBT+ communities. Although it is reported that the Metropolitan police force are driving to recruit more trans officers (Dwyer, 2015), police participants consistently identified that their weakest area of diversity was with trans people. Promoting LGBT+ representation within the workforce is an opportunity to reduce heteronormative practices and ideas. Using inclusive imagery of LGBT+ people within individual police forces literature and recruiting advertisements are active and visible steps in promoting LGBT+ representation within the workforce. Furthermore, 'beyond incorporating LGBT-friendly policies and procedures, criminal justice agencies should also work to value contributions across genders instead of just valuing masculinity' (Mennicke, et al., 2016: 726). The data shows that the perception of the police as a male dominated, machismo profession prevents LGBT+ people from wanting to involve themselves in police practices.

Although in principle it is ideal to recruit specialist liaison officers to support LGBT+ people, encourage them to report their victimisation, and develop community links, it is operationally difficult to assign and deploy these officers to all incidents involving LGBT+ people as soon as they are reported. Having a centralised network where non-liaison officers can seek advice, gain support, and increase their knowledge of LGBT+ issues can be a useful, internal mechanism that is operationally effective to use.

### ***Limitations***

Data presented in this research provide only a snapshot of the experiences of participants and are specific to the LGBT+ communities and groups in the North East of England. Given the specialist nature of liaison officers, only a small number of officers participated in this research. Further, police workers were recruited from one police force in the North East. Their workplace experiences of working with LGBT+ people may be very different from other police forces in England and Wales. Findings from this research should therefore be applied cautiously, particularly when policing-minority relations are an international

conversation. Future research that focuses specifically on LGB&T liaison officers across England and Wales may yield richer insights by obtaining a wider cross-section of officers.

Another point to consider, when examining the data, is the regional context of participants in the North East. The North East of England has historically been a place where tensions between its inhabitants and the police were exacerbated by the mining strikes of 1984 (Hencke and Beckett, 2009). Violent confrontations between the police and trade unionist protesters maintained the year long strike, ultimately ending in victory for the then Conservative government. The repressive actions taken by the police in the 1980's have arguably shaped policing relations. This background may also have influenced how LGBT+ participants in the research respond to the police. Conducting cross-regional research in the future, with the potential for cross comparison across regional police forces, could remedy this limitation.

The sample skews young and white demographics, limiting an intersectional analysis within the research. This raises the question - particularly as race has been the focus of prejudicial policing literature - how the results would vary if there were a broader age span and greater racial diversity. By targeting the perspectives of LGBT+ people of colour, future research should seek to examine how race and sexuality intersect, specifically, in relation to their perceptions of police officers.

## Conclusion

Despite efforts by police officers to engage with communities and build trusting relations, LGBT+ people experience significant mistrusting's of police officers. Overwhelmingly participants have a negative perception of the police, with very few LGBT+ people being aware of specialised LGB&T liaison officers. Those who worked in voluntary sector LGBT+ organisations were the only participants aware of these officers. Although improvements in policing practice have improved, the lack of awareness of specialist roles and policing practice limits the effectiveness of these roles and inhibits positive relations. I argue that the disjuncture between the police and LGBT+ communities is caused by the historical legacy left from previous forces that engaged in prejudicial policing. The lack of communication and transmission of community liaison inhibits the bridging of this divide. I recommend that further research into LGBT+ liaison be conducted nationally, for a fuller analysis of this role's effectiveness in building community ties.

## Tables

Table 1: Interview participants' characteristic demographics (n=32)

	<i>n</i>	%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	31	99
Asian	1	1
Age		
<18	2	6

18-25	12	38
26-35	5	16
36-45	5	16
46-55	4	13
56>	4	13
Sexuality		
Gay	14	44
Lesbian	6	19
Bisexual	2	6
Pansexual	4	13
Other (incl. straight)	6	19
Gender		
Cis woman	9	29
Cis man	10	31
Trans binary (male/female)	3	9
Trans non-binary	10	31

Table 2: Survey respondents' characteristic demographics (n=242)

	<i>n</i>	%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	220	94
Black	2	1
Chinese	3	1
Other	8	3
Age (years)		
<18	31	13
18-25	125	52
26-35	41	17
36-45	27	11
46-55	12	5
56>	6	2
Sexuality		
Gay	69	29
Lesbian	53	22
Bisexual	47	20
Queer	17	7
Other (incl. pansexual)	55	23
Gender		
Cis male	84	35
Cis female	116	48
Trans binary (male/female)	12	5

Trans non-binary	30	12
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