



# Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview (Scrutiny) Committee Review Scoping Report

## ***Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying***

### **1. REVIEW OBJECTIVES**

#### **Aim and background to review**

At the Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee meeting on 25 July 2017, a presentation was given to Members from Stonewall regarding homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools.

The presentation highlighted the worrying figures regarding bullying, the effects of bullying on young people and how schools combat these forms of bullying. Members expressed their concern regarding the disturbing impact that this bullying had on the lives of young lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (LGBT) people in Hillingdon Borough.

It is estimated that five to seven percent of the population are LGBT and they are at a higher risk of mental disorder, suicidal tendencies, substances abuse and deliberate self-harm compared to the heterosexual population. This is due to social exclusion, homophobia and discrimination in society.

Following the meeting, officers confirmed that "An assessment of homophobic bullying and health and wellbeing amongst young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in Hillingdon" took place at the Council in 2013.

This report confirmed bullying was experienced by a large proportion of the LGBT community, with much higher rates of mental disorder, substance misuse, self-harm and suicidal tendencies than the population's average.

Therefore, it was suggested by Members that a minor review be undertaken to further investigate this issue and improve ways to both prevent and tackle this bullying and the social problems that arise from it within the Borough.

### **Terms of Reference**

- 1. To examine how the Council services, schools, and other relevant departments identify and support those who are experiencing, or have experienced, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying.*
- 2. To examine relevant work by this Council, other Councils, and voluntary sectors to identify opportunities and methods to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in support of the Council's wider equality objectives and the aims of the review.*
- 3. To make practical, prudent recommendations to Cabinet (and other bodies if applicable) from the Committee's findings to support residents experiencing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, and reduce instances of bullying within the Borough.*

## **2. INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **Current context**

Existing local, national and global research has continued to show that the LGBT community is amongst the higher risk group in terms of substance misuse, self-harm, suicide, involvement in teenage pregnancies, truancy, homelessness and educational underachievement. This is due to a high prevalence of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in society, social exclusion, and a general lack of awareness and understanding of the needs of the LGBT community. In turn, this can lead to a lack of dedicated service provision across all public services.

It is first important to consider how to define instances of Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic (HBT) behaviour. As such, these instances of hostility can be identified using a shared definition that was devised by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Police, when dealing with hate crimes within the CPS guidance, '*Hate Crime: Public statement on prosecuting homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime*'.

This document states that "*in order to identify cases involving HBT hostility, we have ... a definition wider than the legal definition of a hate crime within the Criminal Justice Act 2003 to ensure we capture all relevant cases: 'Any incident / crime which is perceived by*

*the victim of any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards a person because of their sexual orientation or transgender identity or perceived sexual orientation of transgender identity by the victim or any other person".*

Furthermore, there is a raft of legislation that enables local authorities and the Police to tackle incidents of harassment or hate crime, and the Council must fulfil its legal obligations and statutory duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty, Equality Act 2010, Harassment Act 1997, Public Order Act 1986, Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA 2004), and by acting in accordance with the European Convention of Human Rights (Human Rights Act 1998).

Additionally, the London Borough of Hillingdon's own "Equality and Diversity Policy" states that the Council *"recognises that different people will have different needs and our aim is to provide services in a way that responds to those needs"*.

The document confirms that the Council *"is committed to promote fair and equal access to services and equality in employment"* and that *"we aim to recognise and value the differences in the people we serve and employ"*, including sexual orientation.

## **Key Information**

As part of the Council's aim to achieve its commitment to equality and diversity, it carried out *"an assessment of homophobic bullying and health and wellbeing amongst young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in Hillingdon"* in 2012. This research was commissioned by the Public Health Team, aiming to document and assess LGBT people's needs in order to inform future commissioning, collate evidence of best practice from existing LGBT youth work, and draw recommendations on making the Borough more inclusive to young LGBT people.

The research was conducted using a participatory approach where members of the young LGBT community, professionals, other young people and school staff contributed to the evidence base and development of recommendations. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected through two web-based surveys, focus groups, and conversations with individuals, and in total, 1,661 people took part in the research; 168 professionals and 1,493 young people. The demographics of the respondents were representative of the population of Hillingdon. Of the students who completed the survey, 65 (4.6%) identified themselves as LGB, and 13 of the staff (10%) identified as LGB. (As previously mentioned, it should be noted that current estimates have between five and seven percent of the population now identifying themselves as LGBT).

Some important figures from the survey were as follows:

### ***Effects of Homophobic Bullying***

- Two thirds (58%-69%) of LGB students say that homophobic bullying makes them feel lonely and isolated, gives them poor self-esteem, makes them depressed and makes them self-harm.
- Half (49%) of students and three quarter (75%) of staff have not reported homophobic bullying.

### *Experiences of Homophobic Bullying*

- LGB students are nine times more likely to have experienced homophobic bullying, and LGB staff 16 times more likely, than their straight colleagues.
- One in three (31%) LGB students have experienced sexual bullying compared to one in twenty-five (4%) of straight students.
- Of those who report that they have experienced bullying, nearly all students have experienced verbal bullying (83%-94%) and about a third have experienced physical bullying; 39% of LGB students, in comparison with 28% of straight students.

### *Level of Homophobic Bullying*

- More than one third (38%) of LGB students reported witnessing homophobic bullying every day, while only 9% of the straight students and no staff reported the same.
- Over half (54%) of LGB students and over a third (38%) of LGB staff heard the word gay in a negative term every day.
- The majority of LGB staff reported witnessing homophobic bullying between students (76%) and students to staff (43%).
- A third (31%) of LGB staff said that homophobic bullying has increased during their time in education, compared to 8% of straight staff.

### *Staff's confidence to challenge Homophobic Bullying*

- LGB staff were twice as likely to challenge homophobic behaviour from staff and students, compared to straight staff members.
- 80% of the straight staff members felt comfortable to challenge homophobic behaviour, but only 38% of them challenged it every time.
- LGB staff were twice less likely to think that homophobic bullying is addressed in the same way as other forms of bullying than straight staff.

The research led to the following five recommendations:

1. For partners to commit to making Hillingdon a LGBT-inclusive and affirmative Borough;
2. To support schools and services to proactively create a LGBT-inclusive and affirmative environment;
3. To collect and analyse data on LGBT in schools, health and other services in order to identify and meet the needs of LGBT people;
4. To offer a support group for young LGBT people in a safe environment; and,
5. To explore the option of a designated equality youth support worker to proactively promote LGBT fights for young people and be a support for relevant professionals, families and relatives.

With the exception of latter two recommendations, it is unclear whether these recommendations were followed-up on.

The project culminated in an event in January 2013, the aim of which was to raise awareness of the needs of young LGBT people. This event aimed to engage professionals to meet these needs by presenting the results from the research of various LGBT people's needs, hear from speakers who raise awareness on various aspects of LGBT people's needs and how to meet these needs, and present the idea of an LGBT consortium in Hillingdon, that was created by and for professionals, to address young LGBT people's needs in service delivery.

More recently, Stonewall's 2017 School Report, which investigated the experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain's schools in 2017, outlined the following key statistics:

- Nearly half of LGBT pupils (45%) - including 64% of trans pupils - are bullied for being LGBT at school.
- Almost half (45%) of LGBT students who are bullied for being LGBT never tell anyone.
- 52% of LGBT pupils hear homophobic language 'frequently' or 'often' at school; these figures fall to 46% for transphobic, and 36% for biphobic language. 86% of LGBT pupils regularly hear phrases such as "that's / you're so gay" at school".
- 9% of trans pupils are subjected to death threats at school.
- One in three LGB students have experienced sexual bullying, compared with one in 25 straight students.
- Just 29% of bullied LGBT pupils say that teachers intervened when they were present during the bullying.
- More than half of LGBT (53%) of pupils say that there isn't an adult at school they can talk to about being LGBT.
- 40% of LGBT young people have an adult at home they can talk to about being LGBT.
- Nearly all (97%) of LGBT young people see HBT content online.
- 40% of LGBT students bullied have skipped school because of bullying.
- 84% of trans young people have self-harmed. For LGB young people who aren't trans, 61% have self-harmed.
- Nearly half (45%) of trans young people have attempted to take their own life; among LGB young people who aren't trans, this figure is 22%.

In addition to the findings listed above, the Government recently announced the launch of a national survey on Sunday 23 July 2017, asking members of the LGBT community to share their views on public services to inform Government policy.

The consultation aims to find out more *"about the experiences that LGBT people have living in the UK"*, and the survey asks the LGBT community to anonymously share *"experiences of accessing and using public services in the UK"* and *"any experiences of discrimination you may have faced throughout your life"*. The experiences in question include work, in healthcare, and regarding personal safety.

It is noted that once the survey closes, the Government intend to "*analyse the results and use them to inform our plans to improve LGBT equality*" with findings being published online once the analysis is complete. As such, the findings of this national research could be helpful to inform future service delivery at the Council.

## **Background Information & Connected Activity**

The obligation for schools to log and report any equalities based bullying incidents was removed by the Department for Education in 2010.

In October 2012, a Hillingdon Adult LGBT Forum launch event was held at Brunel University, which was coordinated by Peter Vittles at Ealing Community and Voluntary Service. The intention was to bring together LGBT people and provide a support network and social opportunities. It was agreed to be a self-sufficient group, but unfortunately the group no longer meets in a formal capacity.

There is an active LGBT+ Society at Brunel University, which is primarily a support network and offers events for its members.

In September 2014, a partnership was established between the Council and MOSAIC Youth Centre, a London-based charity that specialised in the delivery of services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ) young people, in partnership with other local authorities in West London. Within the partnership agreement, Hillingdon Council committed two youth work practitioners, free access to Fountains Mill Young People's Centre in Uxbridge for one session per week, and a revenue budget for programme delivery costs. MOSAIC Youth Centre committed a senior member of staff to lead and develop the programme. The programme was branded as 'MOSAIC Hillingdon'.

In 2015, Early Intervention and Prevention Services and MOSAIC Youth Centre agreed to terminate their partnership, and the MOSAIC Hillingdon programme was closed in 2016, to be replaced by a directly-delivered Council service.

The new service, provisionally branded as 'OUTreach LGBTIQ Programme' was established in the spring of 2017. The programme is delivered by Early Intervention and Prevention Services' Sexual Health and Wellbeing Programmes unit, and is located at Fountains Mill Young People's Centre. To date, seven young people aged between 13 and 17 have been engaged on a sustained basis. In autumn 2017, the programme offer will expand to a weekly session at Fountains Mill Young People's Centre, to be delivered in accordance to the consultation outcomes with current service users.

The Sexual Health and Wellbeing Programmes unit is also working with the Student Union at Uxbridge College to establish an on-campus element to the OUTreach programme offer.

## Responsibilities

The portfolio Cabinet Member responsible is Councillor Richard Lewis, as Cabinet Member for Central Services, Culture and Heritage. Councillor David Simmonds CBE would also have some responsibility, with his portfolio as Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services.

## Current intelligence, best practice and research

London Borough of Hillingdon report: *"An assessment of homophobic bullying and health and wellbeing amongst young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in Hillingdon"*, printed in January 2013

Stonewall's *"School Report 2017"*: <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-report-2017>

Stonewall's *"The Teacher's Report 2014"*:  
[http://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/teachers\\_report\\_2014.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/teachers_report_2014.pdf)

Ofsted briefing paper: *"Exploring the school's actions to prevent and tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying"*, September 2013:  
[http://www.schools-out.org.uk/wp-content/files\\_mf/1384363550OFSTEDexploringschoolsactionstopreventhomophobicbullying.pdf](http://www.schools-out.org.uk/wp-content/files_mf/1384363550OFSTEDexploringschoolsactionstopreventhomophobicbullying.pdf)

## Further information

London Borough of Hillingdon's *"Equality and Diversity Policy"* (June 2013)

London Borough of Hillingdon's *"Harassment Policy Statement"* (2015)

Equality Act 2010:  
[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga\\_20100015\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf)

Hillingdon Council and the Public Sector Equality Duty (March 2017):  
<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/24029/Public-Sector-Equality-Duty>

Department for Education guidance: *"Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies"*, July 2017:  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/623895/Preventing\\_and\\_tackling\\_bullying\\_advice.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)

Government Equalities Office news story: *"New Action to Promote LGBT Equality"*, 23 July 2017: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-action-to-promote-lgbt-equality>

Crown Prosecution Service guidance, "Hate Crime: Public statement on prosecuting homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime", August 2017:

<http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/homophobic-biphobic-transphobic-hate-crime-public-statement-2017.pdf>

Bullying UK, "Advice for schools on bullying": <http://www.bullying.co.uk/advice-for-schools/>

### **3. EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY**

#### **Lines of Enquiry and Witness Testimony**

Lines of enquiry and potential witnesses could include:

- Testimony from charities supporting LGBT young people;
- Testimony from Headteachers;
- Testimony from youth service workers;
- Testimony from LBH Officers;
- Possible private testimony from a member of the public who has suffered bullying in the past (this could be done in a private setting with a couple of Councillors and officers present);
- A review of what services are currently available through other Local Authorities;
- A review of what training is available for Council workers or teachers;
- A review of how effective schools and teachers are at dealing with bullying;
- A review of what partners are doing on this agenda, e.g. Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL): Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the voluntary sector (Hillingdon MIND).

#### **Emerging conclusions or themes for development**

These will emerge and become apparent as the review progresses.

### **4. REVIEW PLANNING & ASSESSMENT**

*Proposed timeframe & milestones for the review up to Cabinet and beyond in terms of monitoring:*

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Purpose / Outcome</b>
21 September 2017	Agree Scoping Report	Information and analysis
10 October 2017	Witness Session 1	Evidence & enquiry



7 November 2017	Draft Final Report	Proposals – agree recommendations and final draft report
TBC	Cabinet - Consider Final Report	Agree recommendations and final report

*\* Specific meetings can be shortened or extended to suit the review topic and needs of the Committee*

### **Resource requirements**

None.

### **Equalities impact**

To be confirmed.