

Health Care Experience for LGBTQ+ Communities

2018



SEPTEMBER 2018

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Commissioned by: Healthwatch Hampshire



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**
The MBE for volunteer groups

healthwatch
Hampshire

Introduction

With the first Eastleigh Pride event hosted in September 2018, One Community wanted to use this opportunity to understand the LGBTQ+ communities' interactions with health professionals and providers within the Borough.

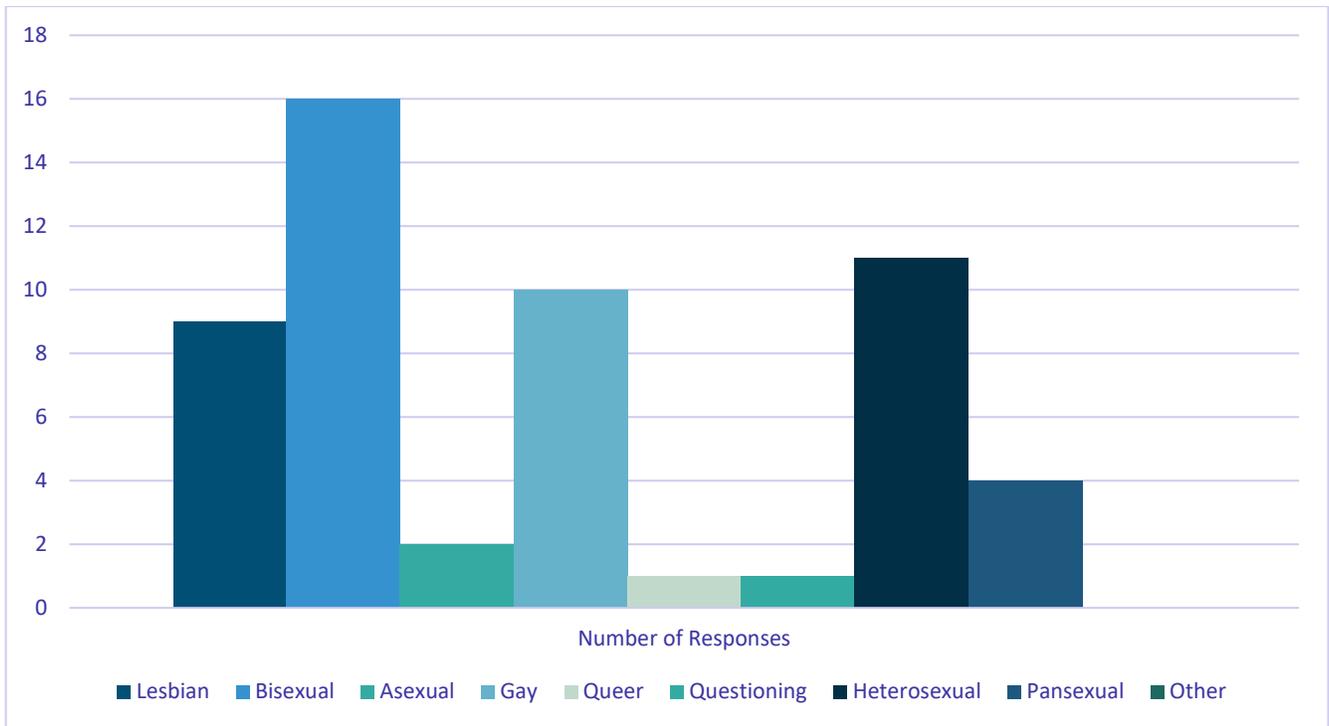
The questionnaire was designed to ask for examples of engagement (poor as well as positive) with health professionals from the LGBTQ+ community. The questionnaires also provided people with an opportunity to explain what could have been done differently in health settings to be sensitive to their needs. One Community understands that LGBTQ+ people can often face stigma when it comes to health, for example of a woman who identifies as a lesbian and who has been in a long term lesbian relationship, reported to us that she had been asked repeatedly to take a pregnancy test which she found upsetting.

The questionnaire consisted of 9 questions and was carried out face to face during the event. There were a total of 54 responses. The event was full of life and had a great vibe which we believed to play a part in the openness of those who took part in the survey.



**Picture of Railway Man & Charlotte Yonge statues in rainbow scarves,
knitted by local Knit & Natter group based in Eastleigh Library**

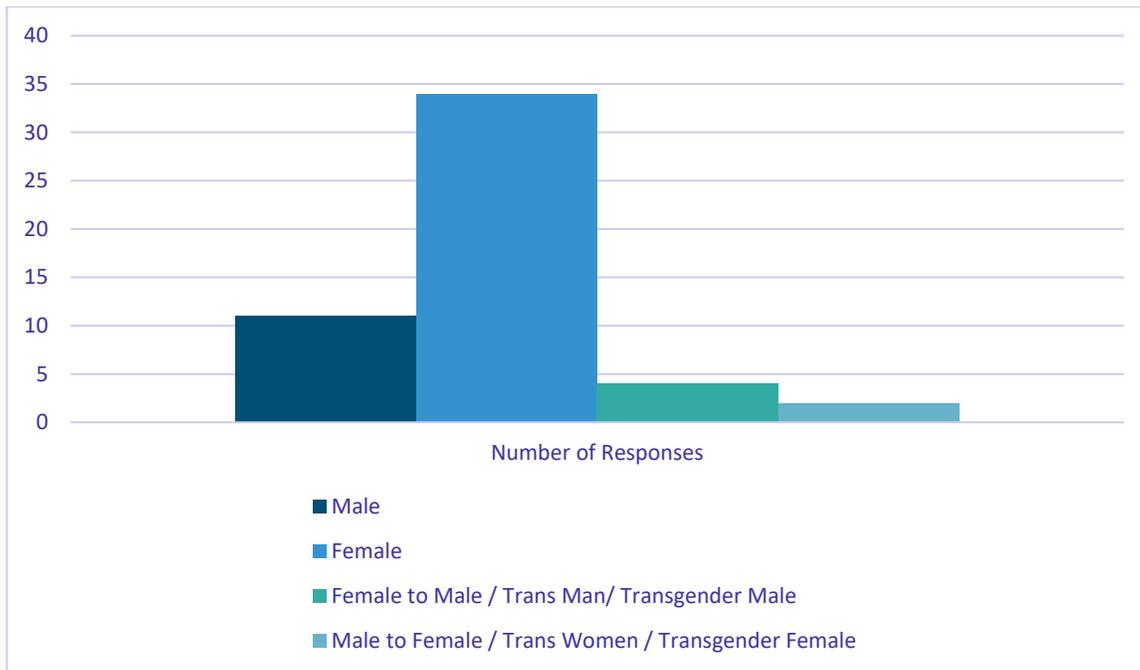
1. How would you describe your sexual orientation?



Of the 54 surveyed:

- 29% identified as bisexual
- 20% identified as heterosexual
- 18% identified as gay
- 16% identified as lesbian

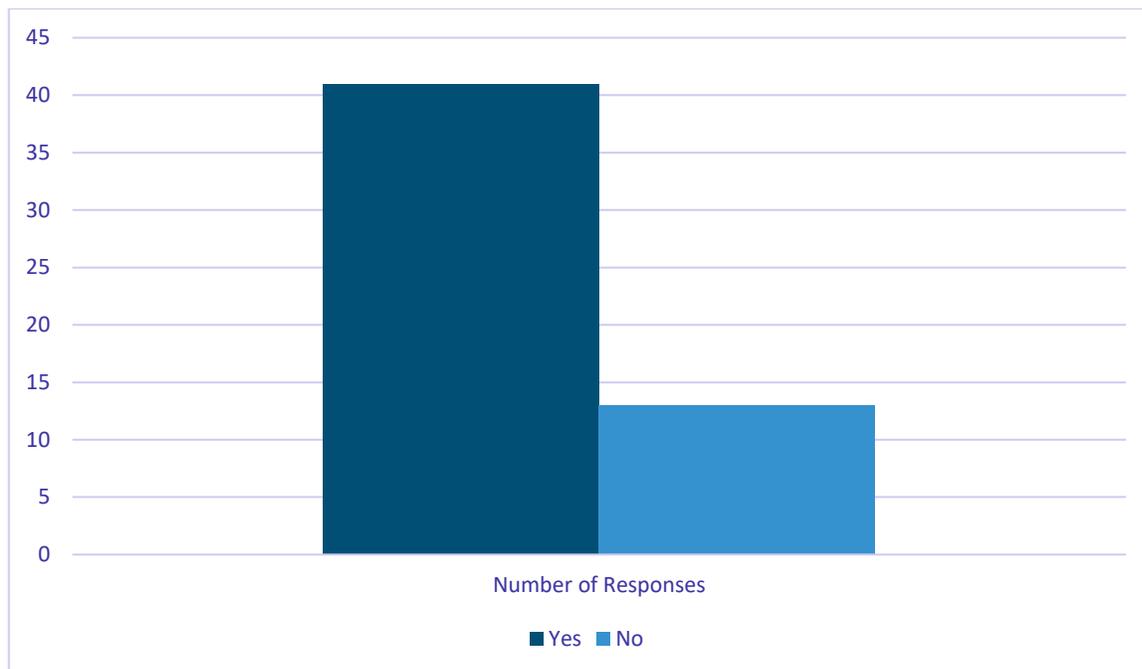
2. What would you describe as your gender identity?



Of the 54 people surveyed:

- 64% identified as female
- 21% identified as male
- 8% identified as Female to Male / Trans Man / Transgender Male
- 4% identified as Male to Female / Trans Women / Transgender Female
- 3% identified as Gender Neutral

3. Is your GP/ healthcare provider aware of your sexual orientation?



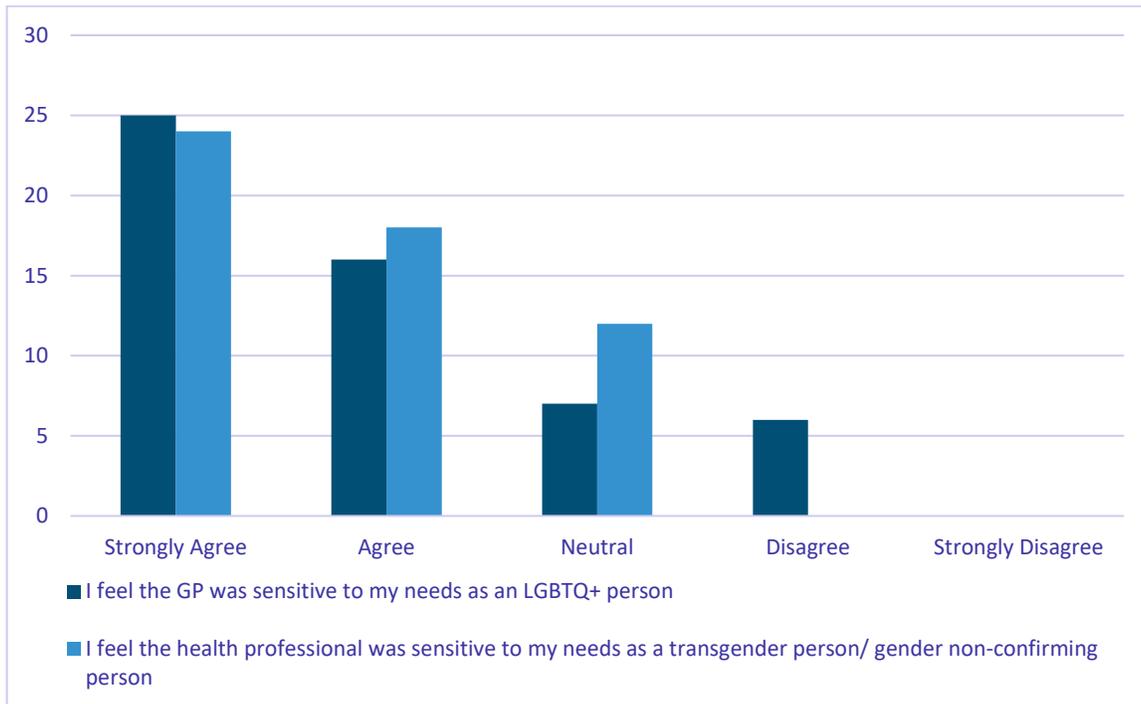
Of the 54 people surveyed:

- 76% said that their GP/healthcare professional is aware of their sexual orientation

This was higher than expected from initial research. People reported an openness with their healthcare professional, however, there was feedback around assumptions initially made by the healthcare professional that were 'put straight' by the patient.

For those whose GP/healthcare professional is not aware, the comments made included 'it's just not come up', lack of openness from the patient and GPs making assumptions about sexual orientations.

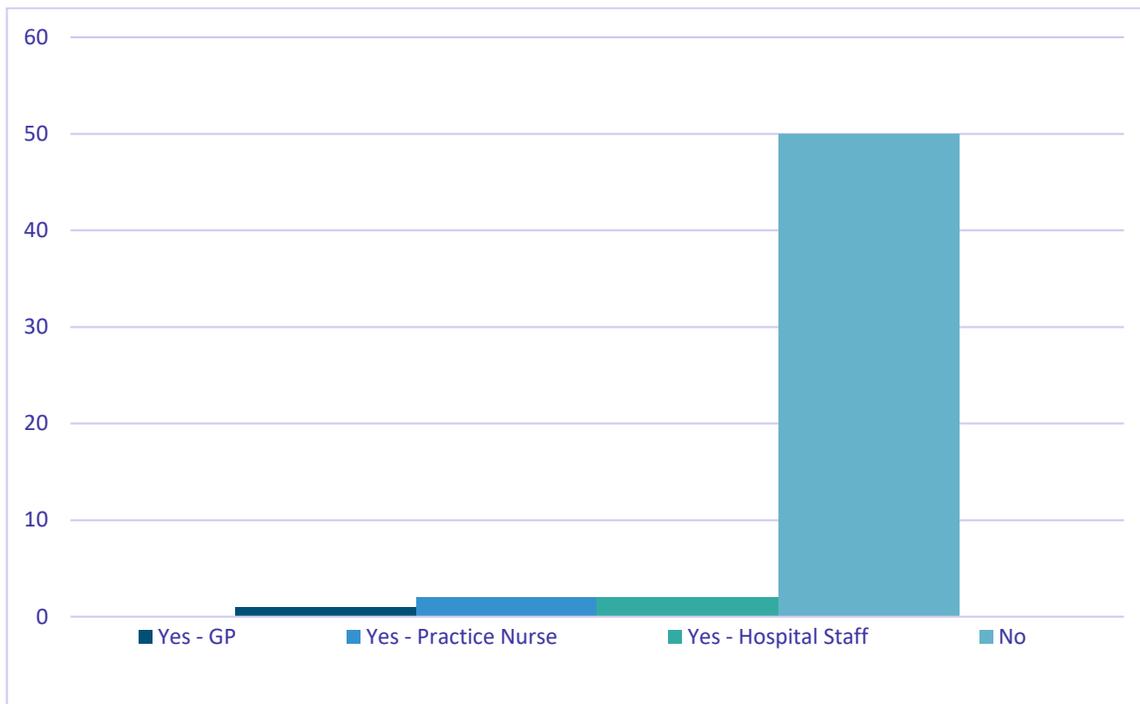
4. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding your interaction with healthcare providers?



This question made it evident that healthcare providers are making patients feel that they are sensitive to their needs with 44 – 46% strongly agreeing with the question. Interestingly none of those surveyed strongly disagreed, therefore, this initial research indicates that healthcare professionals are caring for their patients in a positive way and being sensitive to their needs.

Those who selected neutral said that they could neither agree nor disagree because their healthcare professionals were not aware of their sexual orientation.

5. Have you been discriminated against by a healthcare professional due to your sexual orientation and/or gender identity and if so who?



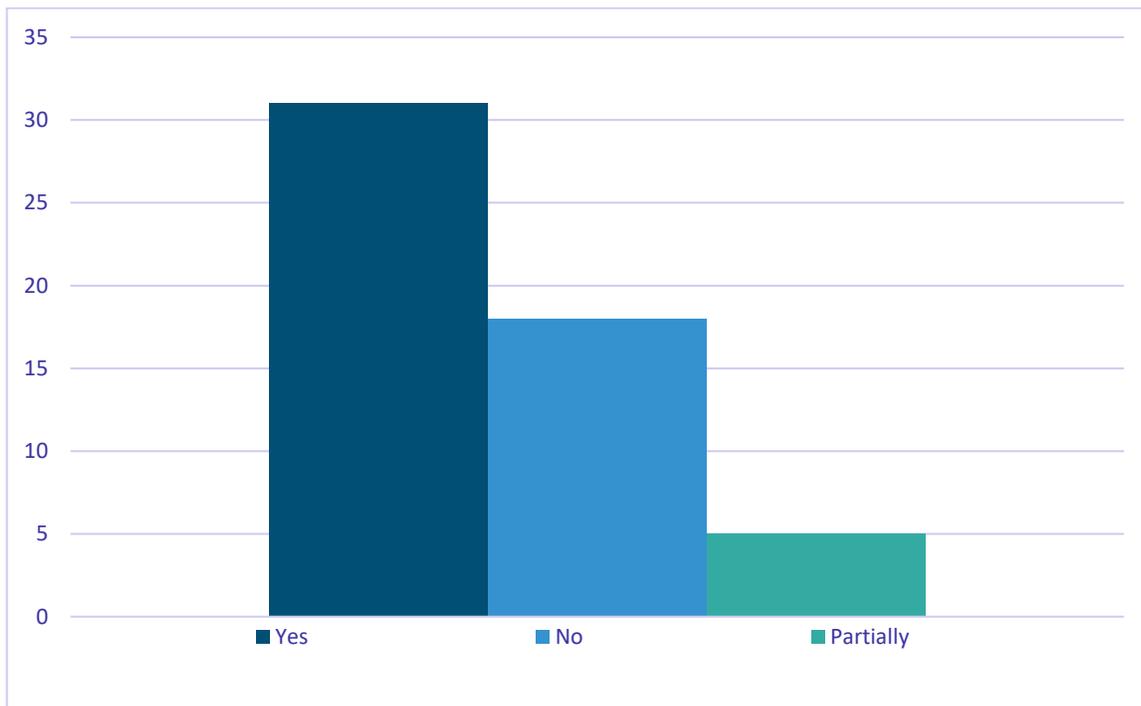
93% said that they have never been discriminated against due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Of those 7% that had been discriminated against the issues were:

- When giving birth staff tried to claim that I had HIV because I was bisexual
- My consultant was rude
- The language used was offensive and discriminatory
- Have not asked about sexual orientation and assumed I could be pregnant which I am definitely not after explaining I am in a relationship with a women. The GP still insisted on a test

Although 7% did feel discriminated against, initial findings seem to be positive however we cannot ignore lessons to be learnt around language, sensitivity and awareness when caring for patients.

6. Do you feel you have been given health information relevant to your sexual orientation and/or gender identity?

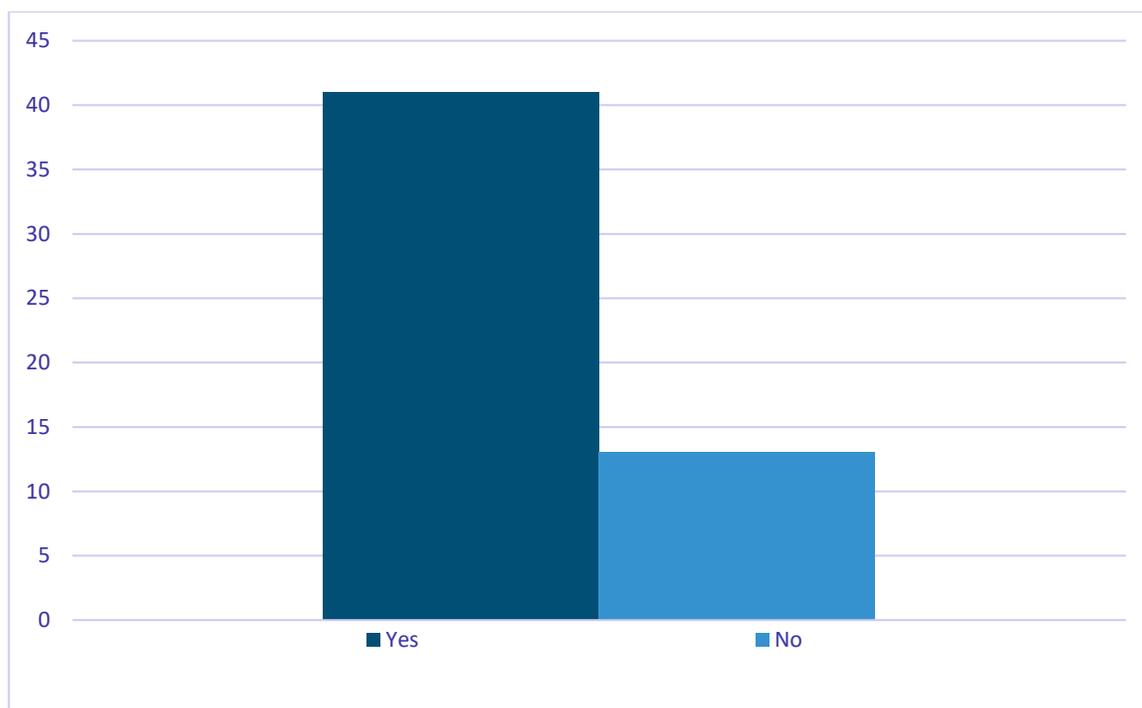


58% of those surveyed reported that they had received health information regarding their sexual orientation and/or their gender identity.

34% said that they had not received health information, however, of those that answered this question, many said that it was because of a lack of awareness and that they hadn't requested information.

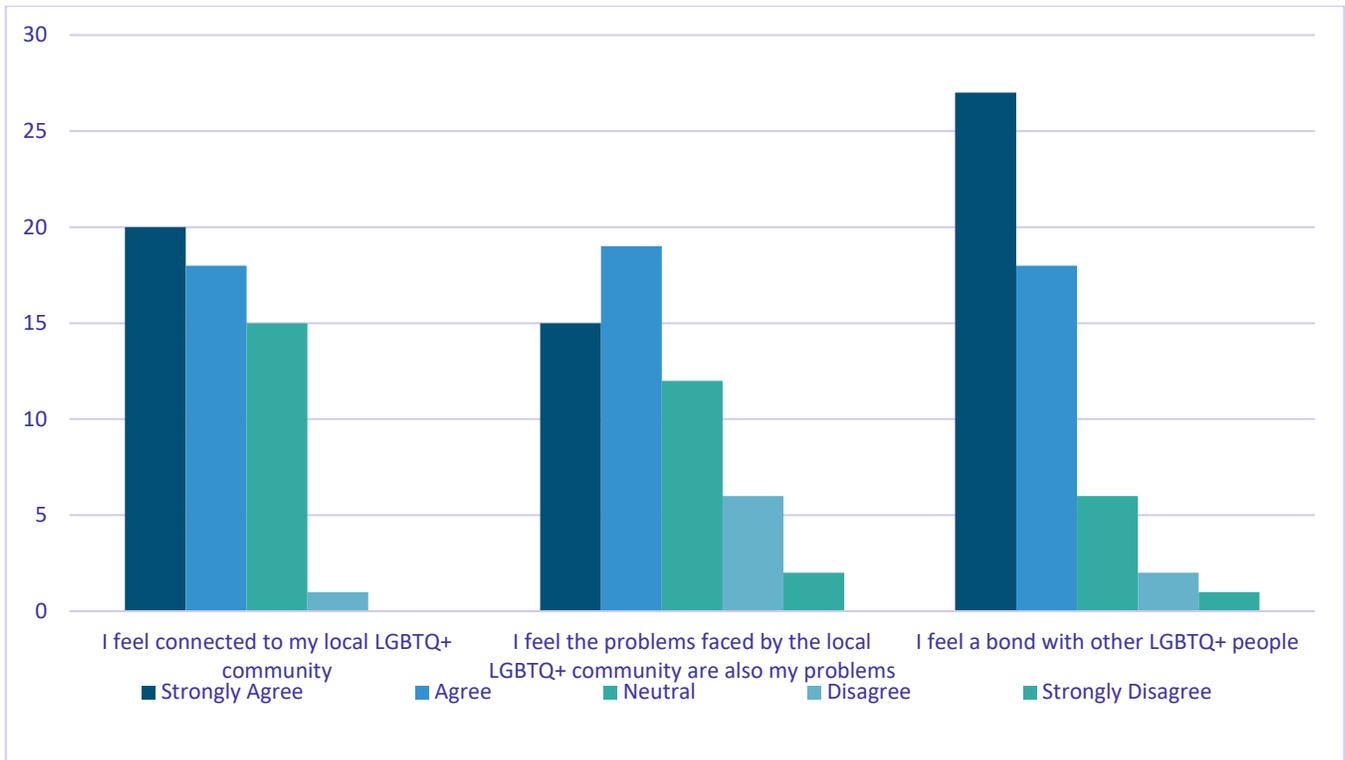
The 8% who had partially received information felt that the healthcare professional did not have the specific knowledge to support them and therefore directed them to online resources.

7. Do you feel you have been supported as well as you could have been by healthcare professionals?



The response to this question was positive with 76% agreeing that their healthcare provider has been supportive. Of the 14% who reported that they did not feel the healthcare provider had been as supportive as they could have been comments were around providing more information, more awareness and understanding of what support is available within the community.

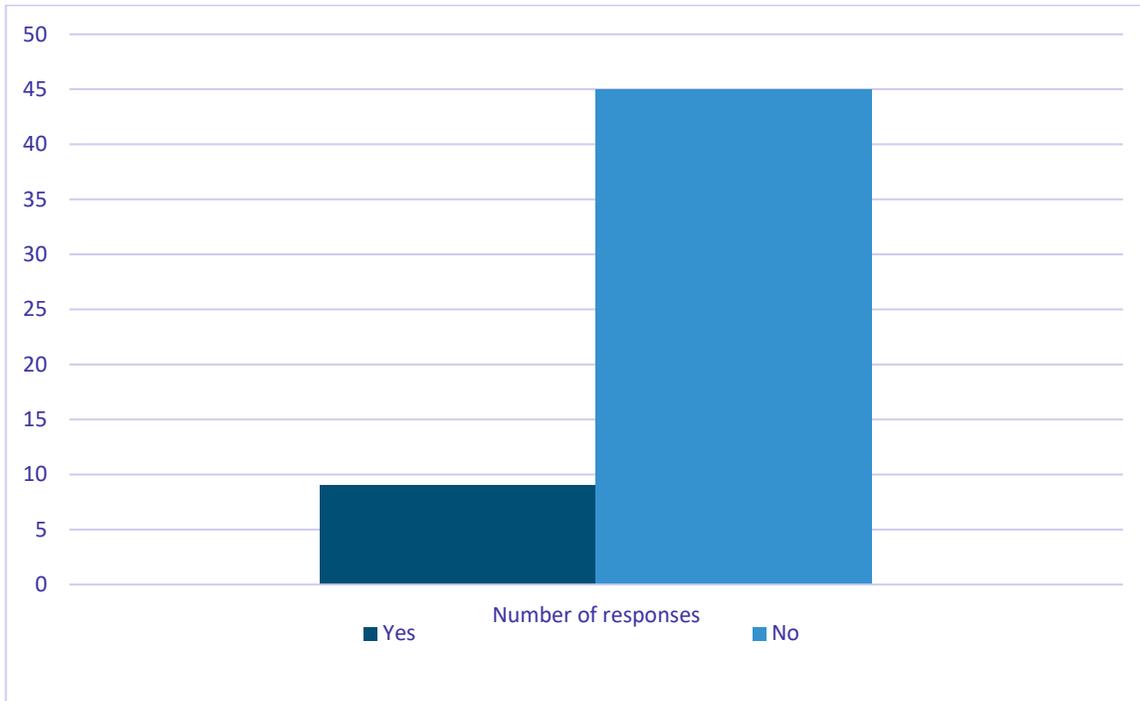
8. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements



Again, all of these statements are weighted positively, showing that awareness is growing around the issues surrounding gender identity and sexual orientation. The community spirit of those who identify as LGBTQ+ is encouraging, with a strong bond and support within this community for those who are involved.

However, it needs to be seen in the context of the questionnaire being answered by attendees of a PRIDE event where there is a spirit of openness, and attendees were encouraged to engage with others in a community atmosphere.

9. Do you have any suggestions for healthcare providers when providing a service for LGBTQ+ people?



84% did not have any suggestions from healthcare providers. 16% did have comments:

- Listen and learn
- My surgery is very supportive
- In this day and age why do you assume I am straight?
- Make more leaflets for all identities
- Learn to understand and do not make assumptions
- Don't be ignorant
- More group services that are age appropriate and with times that are accessible for those who work in the day
- Be accepting, more aware and educated on the subject
- Understand us

Conclusion

The overall response was positive from those who participated in the survey with a consistency in the positive responses throughout the survey.

Respondents felt that when healthcare professionals are aware then they are sensitive to needs and supportive.

For those who did not respond positively the key issues were:

- Awareness and understanding
- Information and support
- Sensitivity

This report will be circulated to all Clinical Commissioning Groups in Hampshire and One Community welcomes comments.

One Community is grateful to Hampshire Healthwatch for their support and pleased to announce that Eastleigh has a multi-agency planning group already working on the plans for a follow up event in 2019.



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