LBGTQ+ Experience Report

July
2025

Contents

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All data has been handled, stored, and shared in line with GDPR guidance. For further information, please see our the Guild's privacy policy.

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Referencing

If you wish to reference this report, please use 'Exeter Students' Guild' as the author/organisation.

Key Dates

Survey Window: 02/06/2025 – 15/06/2025
Focus Groups: 24/06/2025 – 25/06/2025
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Introduction

Exeter's LBGTQ+ Society identified a need for more information about the LGBTQ+ experience at the University of Exeter. Working alongside the society, the Guild conducted research over June 2025 – Pride Month – aimed at better understanding not only the LGBTQ+ experience as a student but also how they and the University can better support the LGBTQ+ student community.

This research was conducted in two stages:

- A survey running from 02/06/2025-15/06/2025
- Two focus groups running on 24/06/2025 and 25/06/2025 respectively, with the latter focused specifically on the experience of those students who identify as transgender

Students who filled out the survey had a chance to win one of three prizes – a Bluetooth speaker, noise-cancelling headphones, or a polaroid camera – whilst those who attend the focus groups were each given a £20 voucher as a thank you for sharing their thoughts.

The survey received 119 responses with 100 of those being complete and the focus groups had 8 attendees.

This report analyses their feedback in an effort to build a picture of what challenges the LGBTQ+ student community face and what support they need, as well as offering recommendations on how the University and the Guild can work to improve the LGBTQ+ experience at Exeter University.

Analysis

Demographics

What best describes your gender?
Please choose all that apply

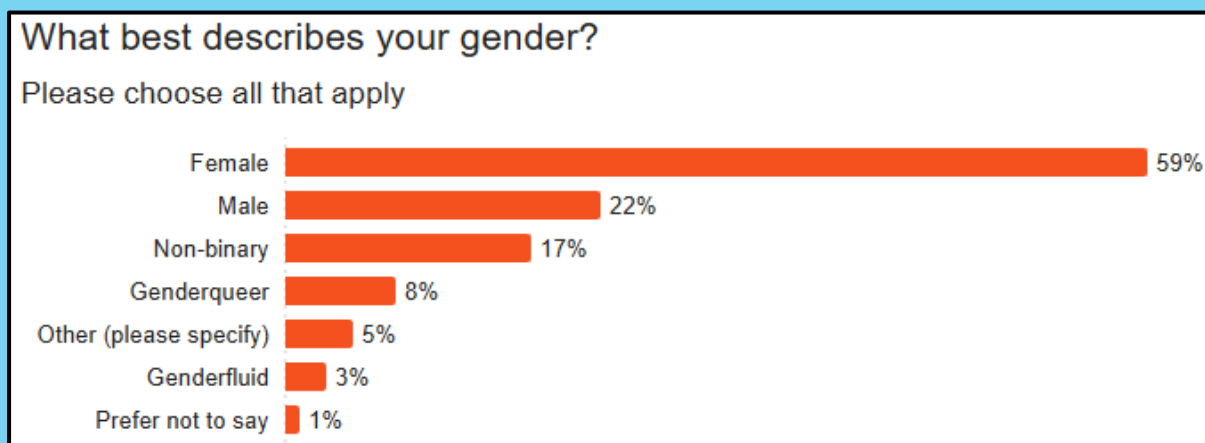|	
Female	59%
Male	22%
Non-binary	17%
Genderqueer	8%
Other (please specify)	5%
Genderfluid	3%
Prefer not to say	1%

Figure 1 – Question 2: What best describes your gender?

When asked what best describes their gender, 59% of respondents said they identified as female, with another 22% male, and 17% non-binary. Another 8% identify as genderqueer, 5% said 'other', with most in this category identifying themselves as transgender, 3% genderfluid and 1% preferring not to say (Fig. 1).
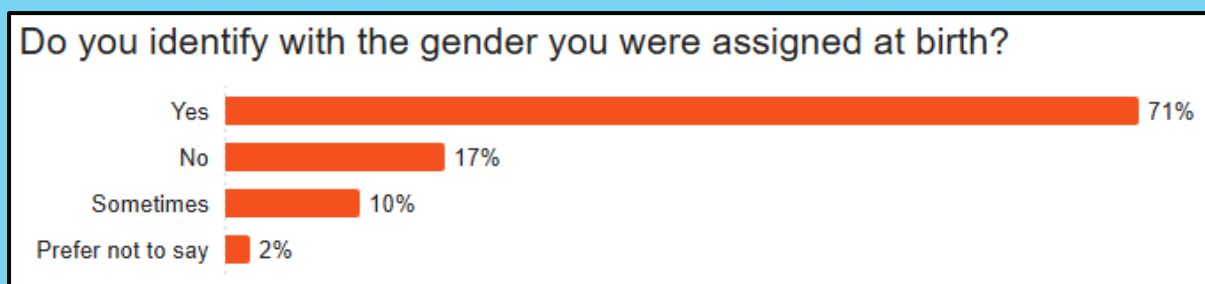
Do you identify with the gender you were assigned at birth?

Yes	71%
No	17%
Sometimes	10%
Prefer not to say	2%

Figure 2 – Question 3: Do you identify with the gender you were assigned at birth?

When asked if they identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, 71% said yes, 17% said no, and 10% said sometimes; 2% of students also said they'd prefer not to say (Fig. 2).
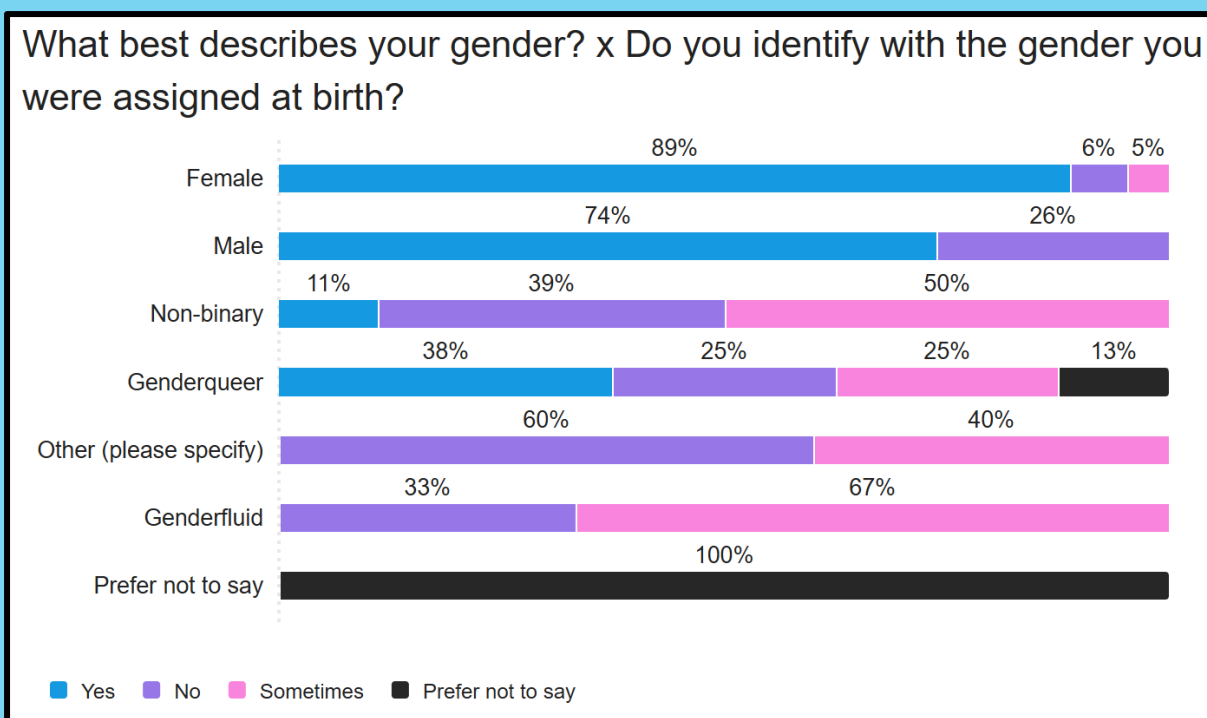
What best describes your gender? x Do you identify with the gender you were assigned at birth?

Figure 3 – Question 2: What best describes your gender? X Question 3: Do you identify with the gender you were assigned at birth?

89% of those who said they were female also identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, 74% of male students also said the same, as did 11% of non-binary students and 28% of genderqueer students (Fig. 3).

6% of female students said they did not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, as did 26% of male students, 39% of non-binary students, 25% of genderqueer students, 60% of students who identify with another gender, and 33% of genderfluid students (Fig. 3).

5% of female students said they sometimes identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, 50% of non-binary students, 25% of genderqueer students, 40% of students who identify with another gender, and 67% of genderfluid students (Fig. 3).

Finally, 13% of students who are genderqueer preferred not to say, as did 100% of students who preferred not to say what best described their gender (Fig. 3).
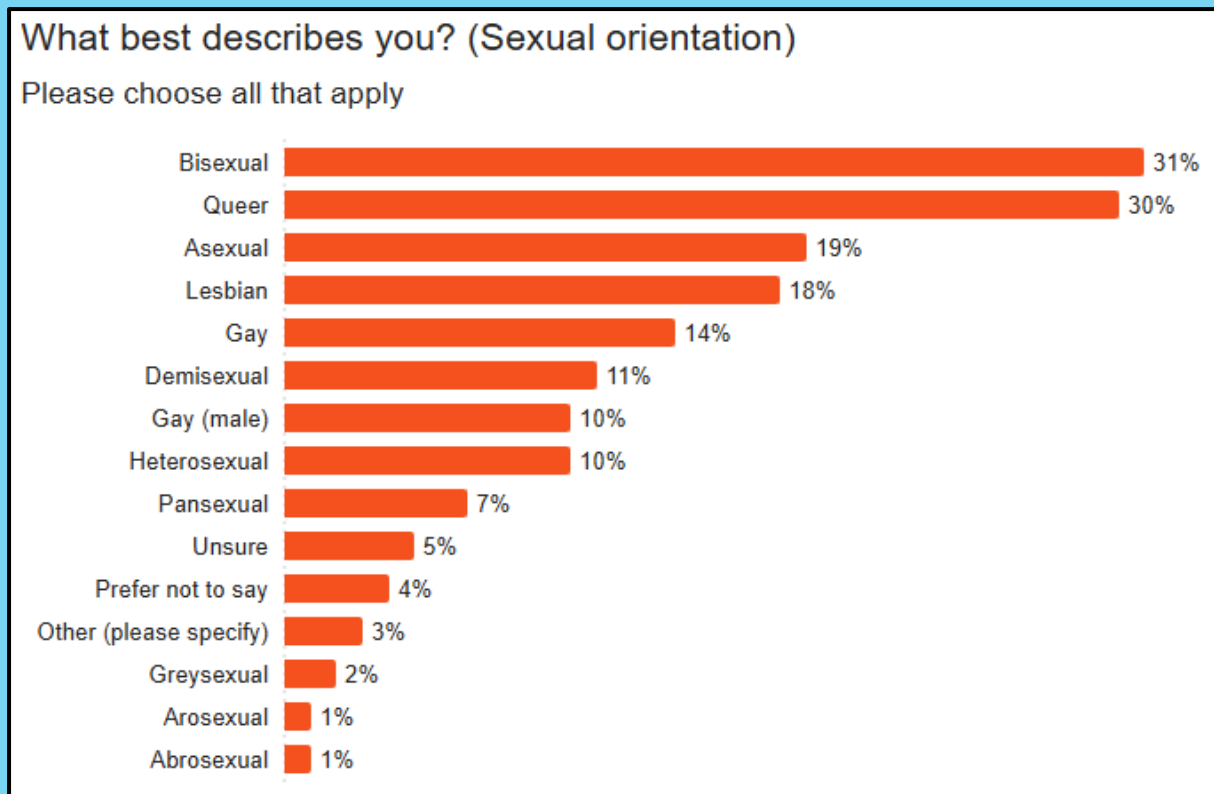
What best describes you? (Sexual orientation)

Please choose all that apply

Orientation	Percentage
Bisexual	31%
Queer	30%
Asexual	19%
Lesbian	18%
Gay	14%
Demisexual	11%
Gay (male)	10%
Heterosexual	10%
Pansexual	7%
Unsure	5%
Prefer not to say	4%
Other (please specify)	3%
Greysexual	2%
Arosexual	1%
Abrosexual	1%

Figure 4 – Question 4a: What best describes you? (Sexual orientation)

When asked what best describes their sexuality, 31% of students said they identify as bisexual, with another 30% saying they identify more broadly as queer. 19% said they are asexual, 18% lesbian, and 14% gay with another 10% specifically saying gay (male). 11% said demisexual, 10% heterosexual, 7% pansexual, and 5% unsure (Fig. 4).

Smaller percentages preferred not to say at 4%, 3% said other, 2% graysexual, 1% arosexual, and 1% abrosexual (Fig. 4).
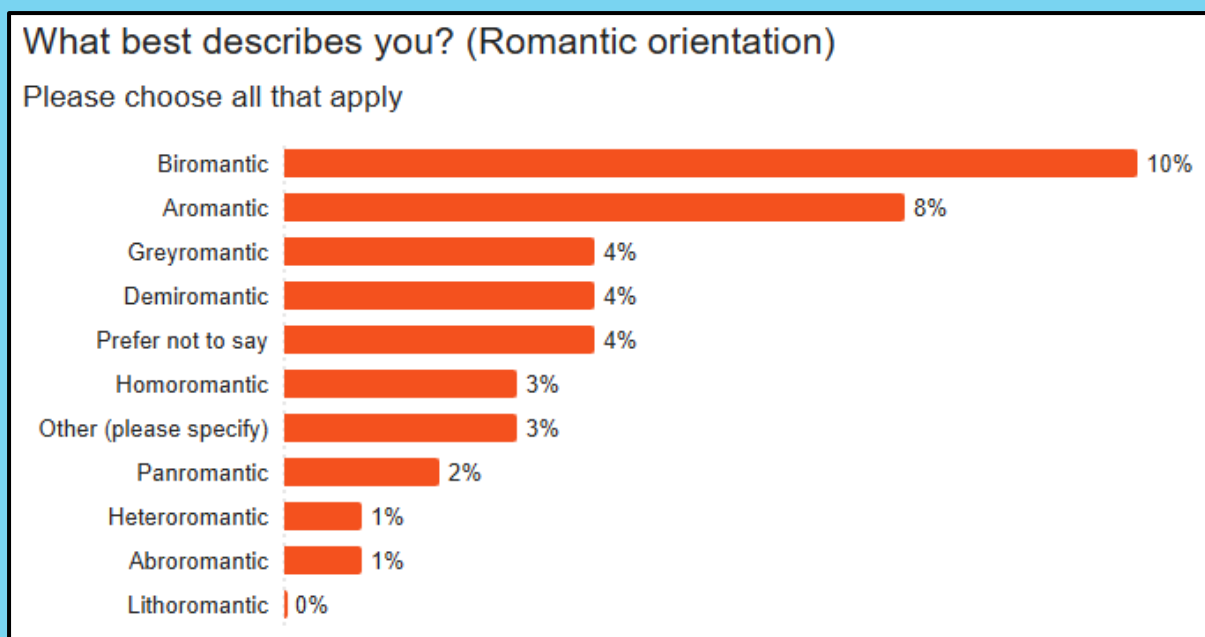
What best describes you? (Romantic orientation)

Please choose all that apply

Label	%
Biromantic	10%
Aromantic	8%
Greyromantic	4%
Demiromantic	4%
Prefer not to say	4%
Homoromantic	3%
Other (please specify)	3%
Panromantic	2%
Heteroromantic	1%
Abroromantic	1%
Lithoromantic	0%

Figure 5 – 4b: What best describes you (Romantic orientation)

When asked what best described their romantic orientation, only 40% of respondents chose any of the options, suggesting that romantic orientation is something less students find identification with (Fig. 5).

Of those who responded, 10% said they were biromantic, 8% aromantic, 4% greyromantic, 4% demiromantic, and 4% preferring not to say. Another 3% said they were homoromantic, 3% saying other, 2% panromantic, 1% heteroromantic, and 1% abroromantic (Fig. 5).

LGBTQ+ Society

Do you have membership to the LGBTQ+ Society at Exeter?

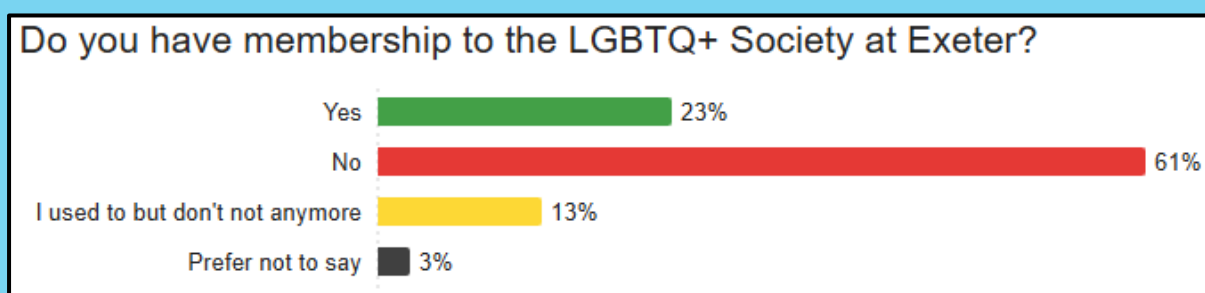| Label	%
Yes	23%
No	61%
I used to but don't not anymore	13%
Prefer not to say	3%

Figure 6 – Question 12: Do you have membership to the LGBTQ+ Society at Exeter?

When asked if they have membership to the LGBTQ+ Society, 23% of respondents said yes whilst 13% said they used to but don't anymore. 61% said that they do not have membership, whilst the remaining 3% preferred not to say (Fig. 6).
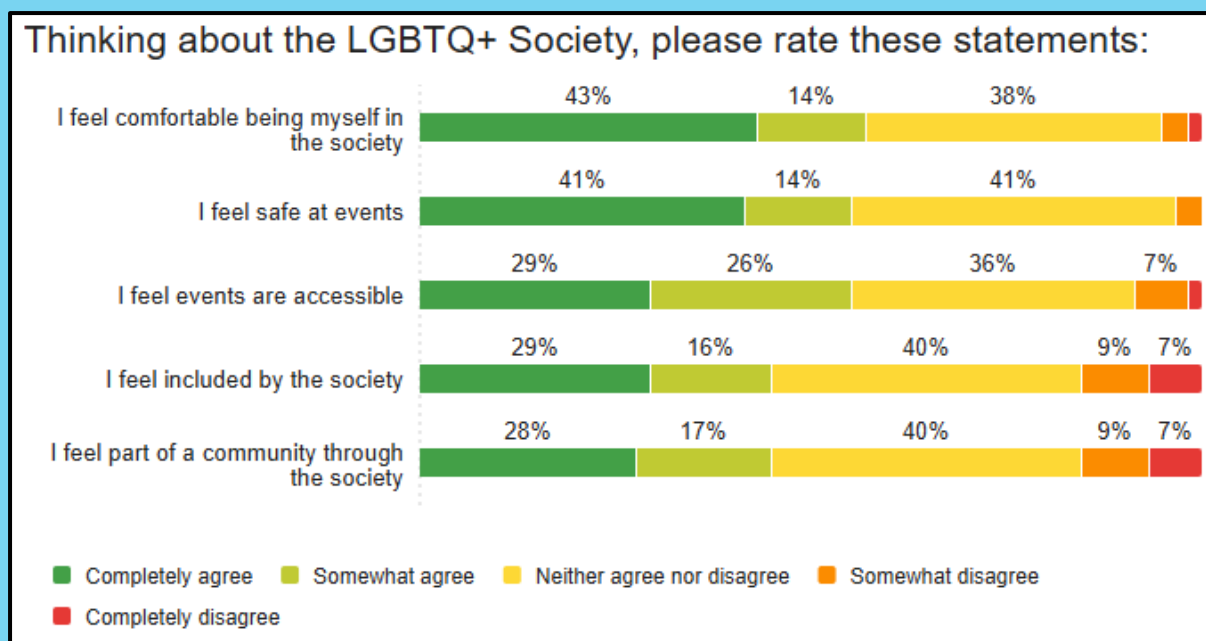
Thinking about the LGBTQ+ Society, please rate these statements:

Statement	Completely agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Completely disagree
I feel comfortable being myself in the society	43%	14%	38%		
I feel safe at events	41%	14%	41%		
I feel events are accessible	29%	26%	36%	7%	
I feel included by the society	29%	16%	40%	9%	7%
I feel part of a community through the society	28%	17%	40%	9%	7%

Figure 7 – Question 14: Thinking about the LGBTQ+ Society, please rate these statements.

When we asked those who do or did have membership to rate a series of statements, 57% agreed that they feel comfortable being themselves in the society, with only 5% disagreeing, making this the statement most agreed with overall. 56% of students agreed that they feel safe at events whilst 3% disagreed making this the least disagreed with statement (Fig. 7).

55% of students also agreed that events are accessible with 9% disagreeing; 45% feel included in the society whilst 16% do not, and 45% also feel that the society allows them to be part of a community whilst 16% do not. This makes the latter two statements the most disagreed with overall (Fig. 7).
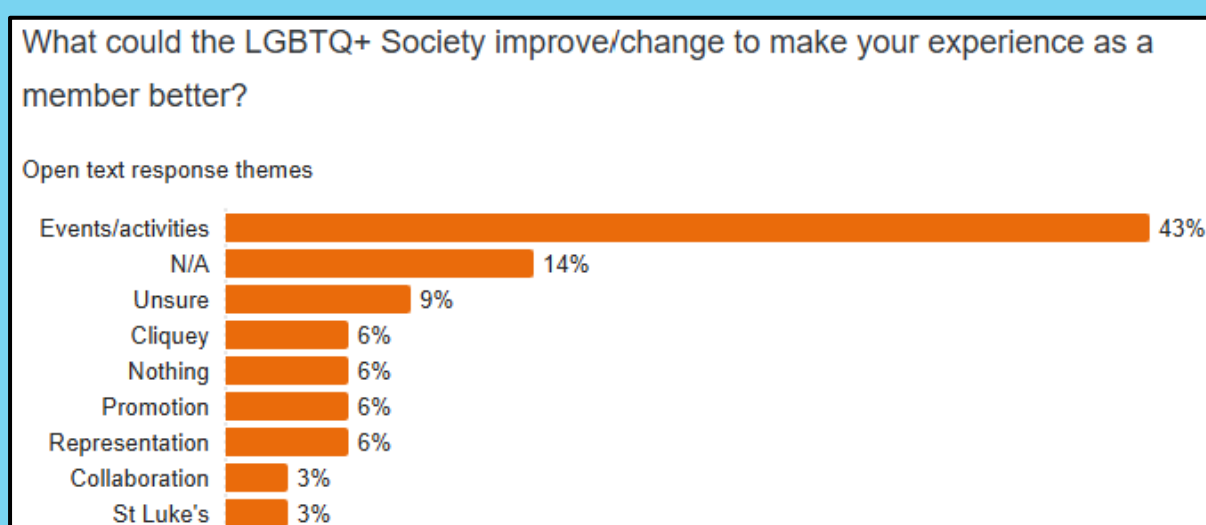

What could the LGBTQ+ Society improve/change to make your experience as a member better?

Open text response themes

Theme	Percentage
Events/activities	43%
N/A	14%
Unsure	9%
Cliquey	6%
Nothing	6%
Promotion	6%
Representation	6%
Collaboration	3%
St Luke's	3%

Figure 8 – Question 15: What could the LGBTQ+ Society improve/change to make your experience better?

When asked what students' felt could be done to make their experience as a member of the society better, 43% mentioned events (Fig. 8).

"I joined at the start of the year, attending a couple of the welcome events, but I felt that unless you were very outgoing yourself the events weren't hugely conducive to establishing a place in the society. More structured events with a focus, e.g. an escape room or quiz night where teams are chosen at random rather than a picnic, would probably help to foster a better sense of community cohesion and inclusion."

"I only attended in my first year (I'm in second year now) so things might have changed already - but when I went to some of the socials, the society felt very cliquey and I struggled to mesh with people especially if they had already formed groups. I think I learnt that just being queer isn't common enough ground to also then be friends. More activity focused socials could be fun for finding that common ground, and the committee and work to mitigate cliques, especially if those cliques start with them."

14% of students responded with 'N/A' whilst another 9% said they were unsure. 6% of students also said that they couldn't think of anything that could be done to improve the society (Fig. 8).

6% of students said that they found the society to be too cliquey and another 3% said they would like to see broader representation (Fig. 8).

"It is far too cliquey and not a comfortable environmental for the average queer person - you are immediately interrogated about your pronouns and sexuality as if these are your only defining traits (and that you have to tell people) and generally I found it quite intense and focused on personality politics of a dating pool rather than a community."

"Equal representation for ALL identities not just a few, ALL as now certain demographics are left behind and forgotten especially niche ones, run more queer nights at Monkey suit as they were really popular for everyone to get a chance to meet people and express themselves."

Other smaller suggestions included 6% of students saying they would like to see more promotion, with 3% specifically saying they'd like to see more presence on St Luke's, and another 3% saying they'd like to see more collaboration with other societies (Fig. 8).
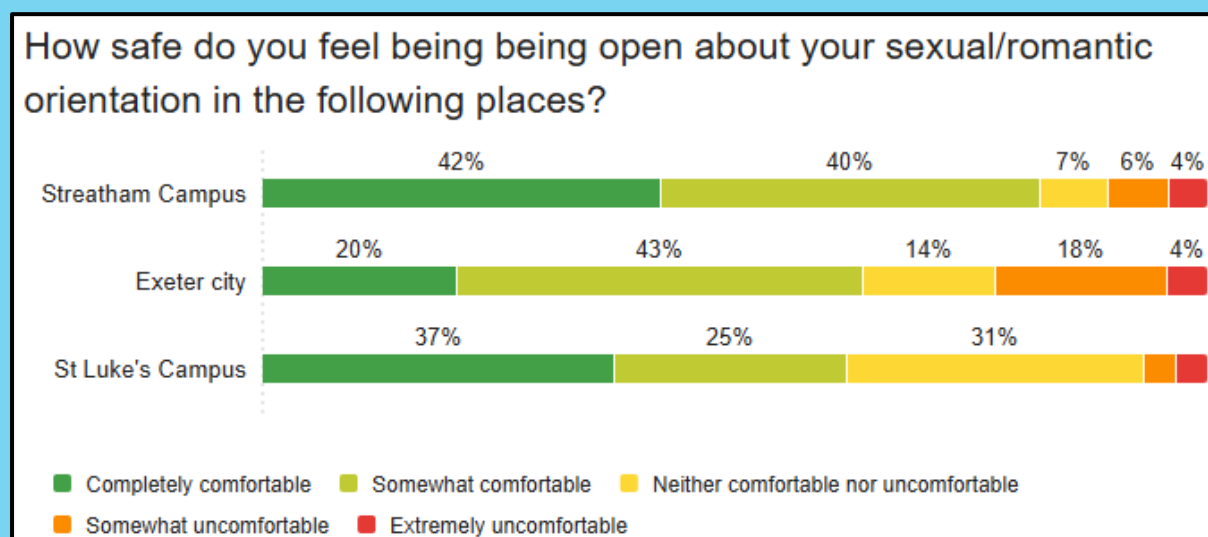
Student Experience

Figure 9 - 5a: How safe do you feel being open about your sexual/romantic orientation in the following places?

When asked how safe they feel being open about their sexual/romantic orientation in the following places, 82% said they feel safe on Streatham Campus with 10% disagreeing, 63% felt sage Exeter City with 22% disagreeing, and 62% felt safe St Luke's Campus with 7% disagreeing.

Streatham, then, has the highest agreement whilst Exeter City has the highest disagreement and St Luke's has the highest neutral response (Fig. 9).

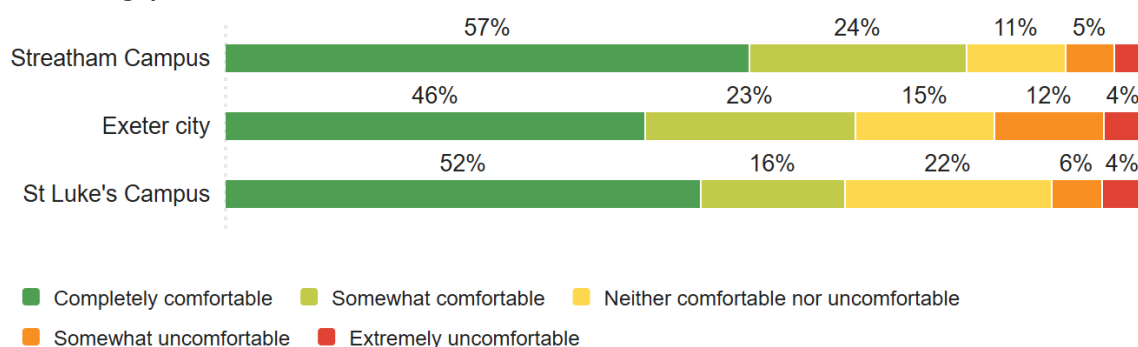**How safe do you feel being being open about your gender identity in the following places?**

Streatham Campus: 57% | 24% | 11% | 5%
Exeter city: 46% | 23% | 15% | 12% | 4%
St Luke's Campus: 52% | 16% | 22% | 6% | 4%

Legend:
- Completely comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Extremely uncomfortable

Figure 10 – Question 6a: How safe do you feel being open about your gender identity in the following places?

When asked how safe they feel being open about their gender identity in certain places, 81% of students said they feel safe on Streatham Campus, with 8% of students feeling unsafe, 69% feel safe in Exeter City with 16% disagreeing, and 68% feel safe on St Luke's Campus with 10% disagreeing (Fig. 10).

Streatham again, then, has the highest agreement, Exeter city the highest disagreement, and St Luke's the highest neutral response (Fig. 10).

How safe do you feel being being open about your gender identity in the following places?

Filter: Do not identify with gender assigned at birth

Streatham Campus: 17% | 45% | 21% | 14%
St Luke's Campus: 15% | 41% | 26% | 15% | 4%
Exeter city: 34% | 31% | 28%

Legend:
- Completely comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
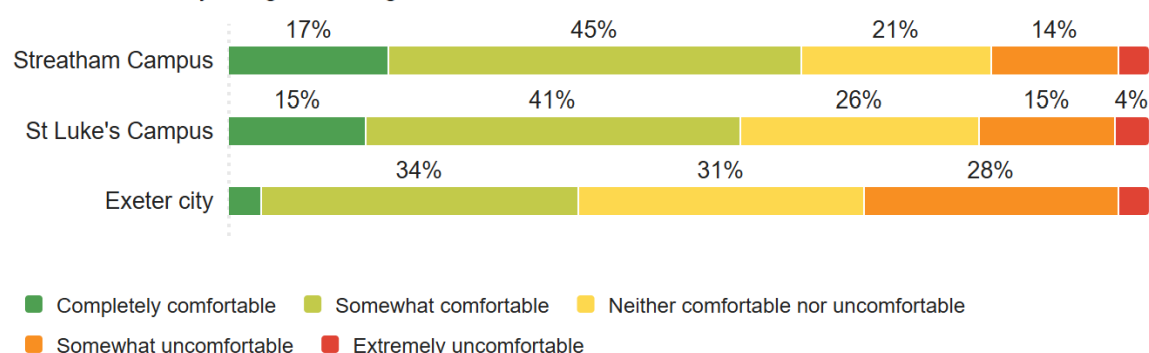- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Extremely uncomfortable

Figure 11 – Question 6b: How safe do you feel being open about your gender identity in the following places? (Filter: Do not identify with gender assigned at birth)

When we look at this filtered for students who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, we find that agreement overall lowers and disagreement rises. Only 62% of students agreed that they feel safe on Streatham Campus (-19pp to average) and 17% disagree (+9pp to average); 56% feel safe on St Lukes (-12pp to average) and 19% disagree (+9pp to average); and only 38% of students agreed that they feel safe in Exeter City (-28pp to average) and 31% disagree (+15pp to average) (Fig. 11; Fig. 10).
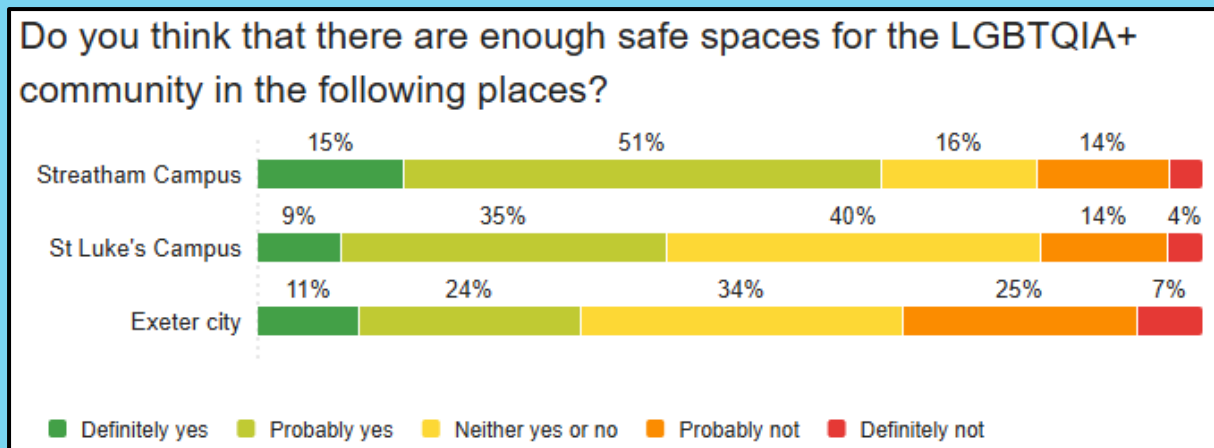
Do you think that there are enough safe spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community in the following places?

Streatham Campus	15%	51%	16%	14%	
St Luke's Campus	9%	35%	40%	14%	4%
Exeter city	11%	24%	34%	25%	7%

■ Definitely yes ■ Probably yes ■ Neither yes or no ■ Probably not ■ Definitely not

Figure 12 – Question 7: Do you think that there are enough safe spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community in the following places?

When asked if they think there are enough safe spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community in certain areas, 66% of students agreed that there are enough spaces on Streatham Campus, with 18% disagreeing; 44% agreed that there are enough spaces on St Luke's Campus with 18% disagreeing; and 35% agreed that there are enough spaces in Exeter City with 32% disagreeing (Fig. 12).

Overall, Streatham Campus again had the highest agreement and Exeter City the highest disagreement, whilst St Luke's had the highest neutral response (Fig. 12).

When we asked students about the repeating disparity between feelings of safety on campus compared to the city and why they thought this might be occurring, the prevailing theme was the sense of unknown when going into the city compared to being on campus. Students said that when they're on campus they're "amongst peers" and "like-minded people" whereas in the city there is more "uncertainty about the general public's attitude". Students also said that the presence of the university as a security measure might impact their feelings of safety because it can intervene if there is discrimination but "nothing can be done outside of the campus unless it is serious enough for police involvement".

"The uni community feels like its own society, separate from the city; the environment feels a lot less exposed than the city does, because you are surrounded by like-minded people."

"Some areas of town can feel less safe generally and if you are visibly queer it could make you a target or bring more attention to yourself."
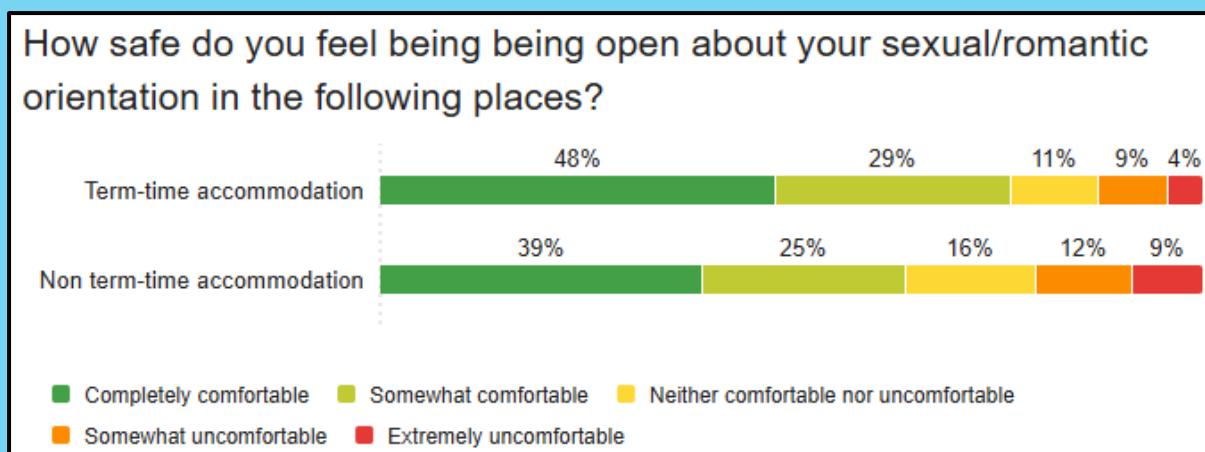
How safe do you feel being being open about your sexual/romantic orientation in the following places?

	Completely comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	Somewhat uncomfortable	Extremely uncomfortable
Term-time accommodation	48%	29%	11%	9%	4%
Non term-time accommodation	39%	25%	16%	12%	9%

Figure 13 – 5b: How safe do you feel being open about your sexual/romantic orientation in the following places?

When asked how safe they feel being open about their sexual/romantic orientation, 77% of students said they feel safe in their term-time accommodation with 13% feeling unsafe, and 54% feel safe in their non term-time accommodation whilst 21% do not (Fig. 13).

How safe do you feel being being open about your gender identity in the following places?

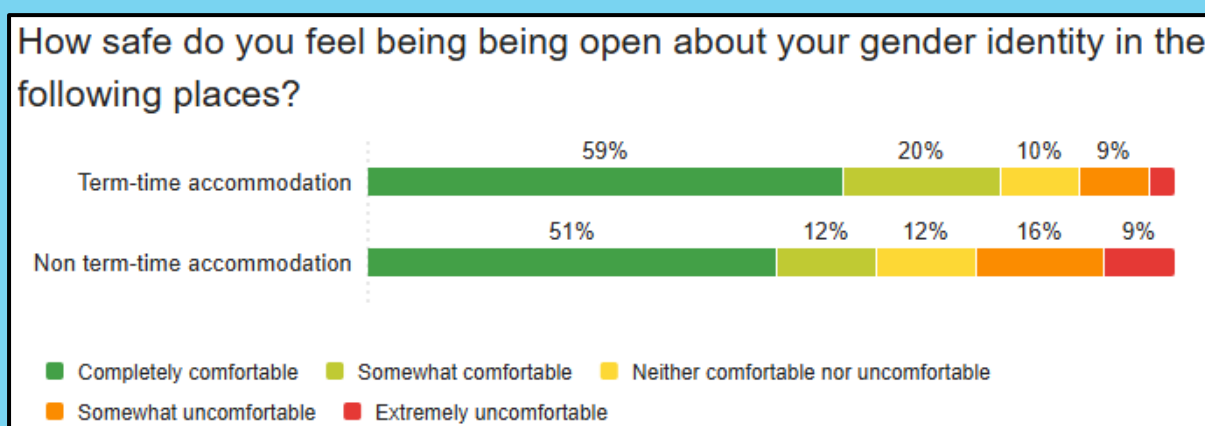|	Completely comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	Somewhat uncomfortable	Extremely uncomfortable
Term-time accommodation	59%	20%	10%	9%	
Non term-time accommodation	51%	12%	12%	16%	9%

Figure 14 - Question 6a: How safe do you feel being open about your gender identity in the following places?

When we asked how safe students feel being open about their gender, 79% said they feel safe in their term-time accommodation with 11% feeling unsafe, and 63% feel safe in their non term-time accommodation whilst 25% feel unsafe (Fig. 14).
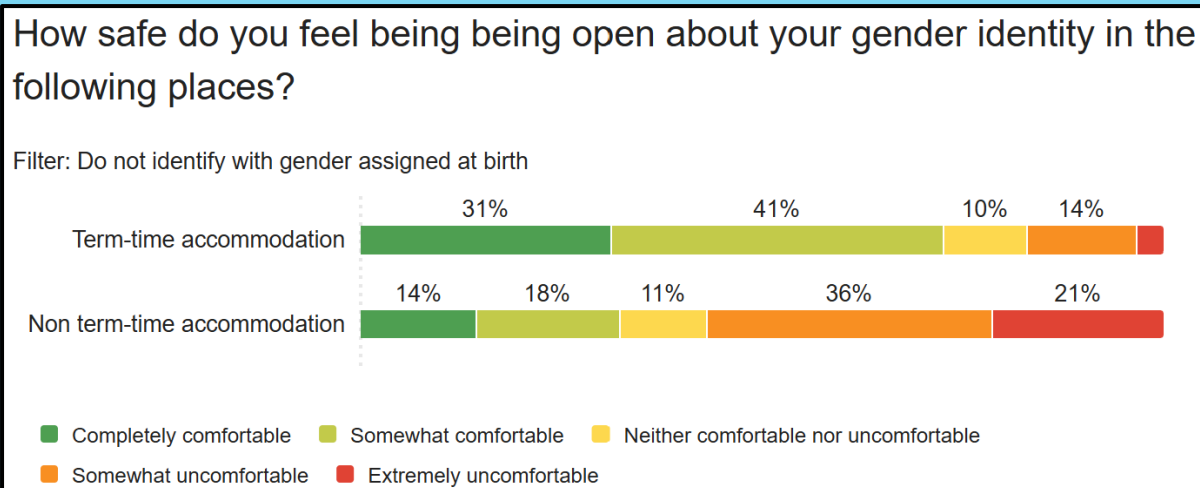
How safe do you feel being being open about your gender identity in the following places?

Filter: Do not identify with gender assigned at birth

Term-time accommodation	31%	41%	10%	14%	
Non term-time accommodation	14%	18%	11%	36%	21%

■ Completely comfortable ■ Somewhat comfortable ■ Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
■ Somewhat uncomfortable ■ Extremely uncomfortable

Figure 15 - Question 6a: How safe do you feel being open about your gender identity in the following places? (Filter: Do not identify with gender assigned at birth)

When we look at this filtered for students who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, we find that agreement overall lowers and disagreement rises. 72% feel safe being open about their gender identity in their term-time accommodation (-7pp to average), whilst 16% feel unsafe (+5pp to average). For non term-time accommodation, only 32% feel safe being open about their gender identity (-31pp to average) whilst 47% feel unsafe (+22pp to average) (Fig. 15; Fig. 14).

We can see in these question, then, a similar pattern to that of safety on campus versus in Exeter city, again suggesting that the university atmosphere/community provides a safer space for LGBTQIA+ students than elsewhere.
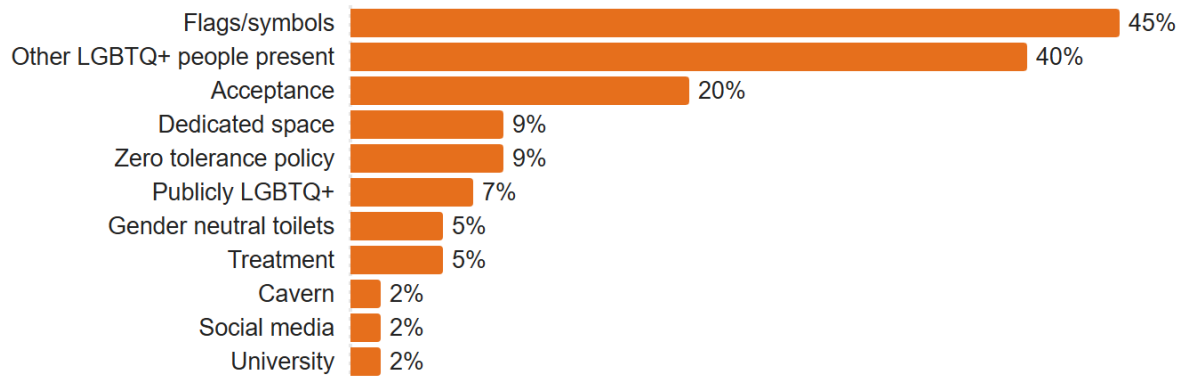
Figure 16 - Question 8: What lets you know that a space is safe for you as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

45% of students said that things like flags and symbols helped them to feel like a safe is space for the LGBTQ+ community, with another 7% mentioning other public displays of support for the community (Fig. 16).

40% said that seeing other LGBTQ+ people present let them know that a safe was space with another 20% mentioning just knowing that a space was accepting of them being enough (Fig. 16).

9% said that having a dedicated space was important and another 9% said knowing a space has a zero tolerance policy towards harassment and discrimination helped them to feel safe (Fig. 16).

Other, smaller topics, included spaces having gender neutral bathrooms (5%), knowing that others have been treated positively there (5%), and that they have openly supported LGBTQIA+ people/organisations on social media (2%) (Fig. 16).

Public-facing support, then, seems to be the most prevalent factor in enabling LGBTQ+ students to feel safe as well as word-of-mouth/reputation.
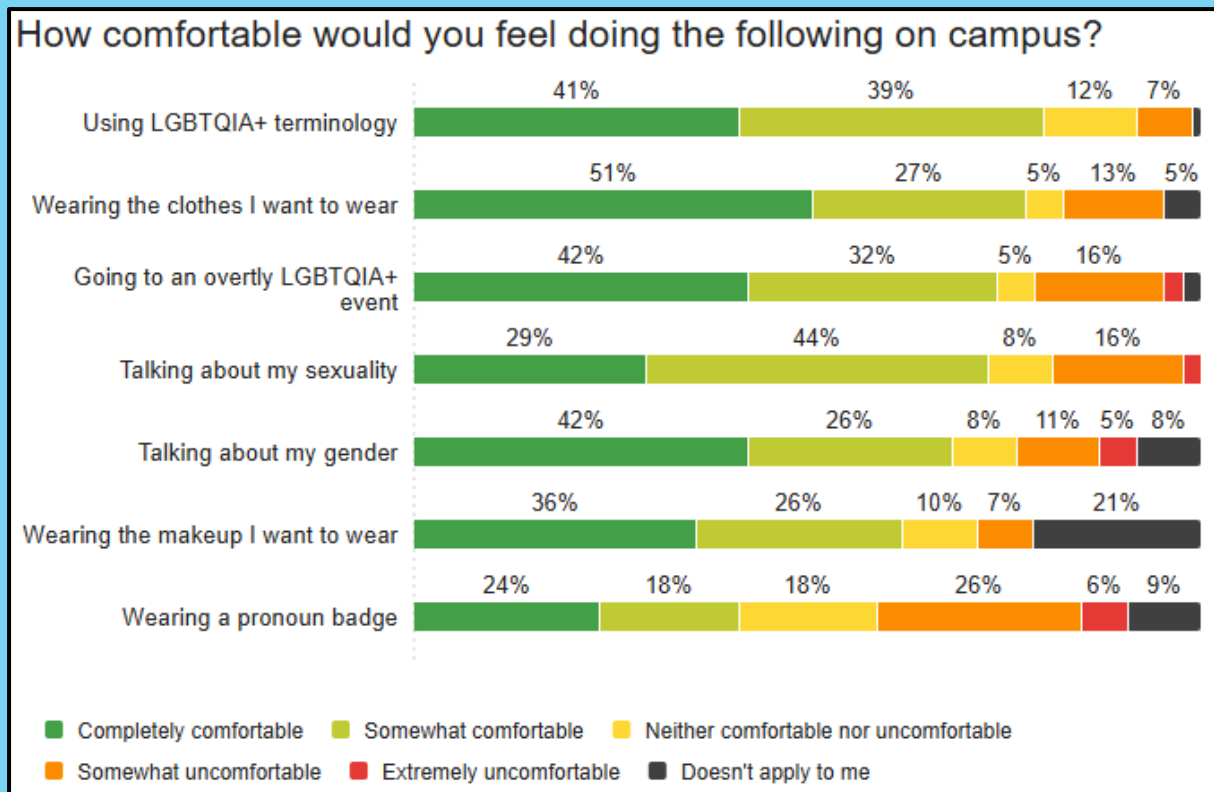
Figure 17 - Question 9: How comfortable would you feel doing the following on campus?

We can average from Question's 5a and 6a that 73% of students feel comfortable being open about their LGBTQ+ identity on campus whilst 9% do not. However, when we asked about individual actions that might inform that openness, students' comfortability varied.

80% said they would feel comfortable using LGBTQ+ terminology on campus whilst 7% would not; 78% would feel comfortable wearing the clothes they want to wear whilst 13% would not; 74% would feel comfortable going to an overtly LGBTQ+ event although 18% would not; and 73% would feel comfortable talking about their sexuality whilst 19% would not (Fig. 17).

70% of students said they would feel comfortable talking about their gender whilst on campus whilst 16% would not; 62% would feel comfortable wearing the makeup they want to wear whilst 7% would not; and 42% would feel comfortable wearing a pronoun badge whilst 32% would not (Fig. 17).
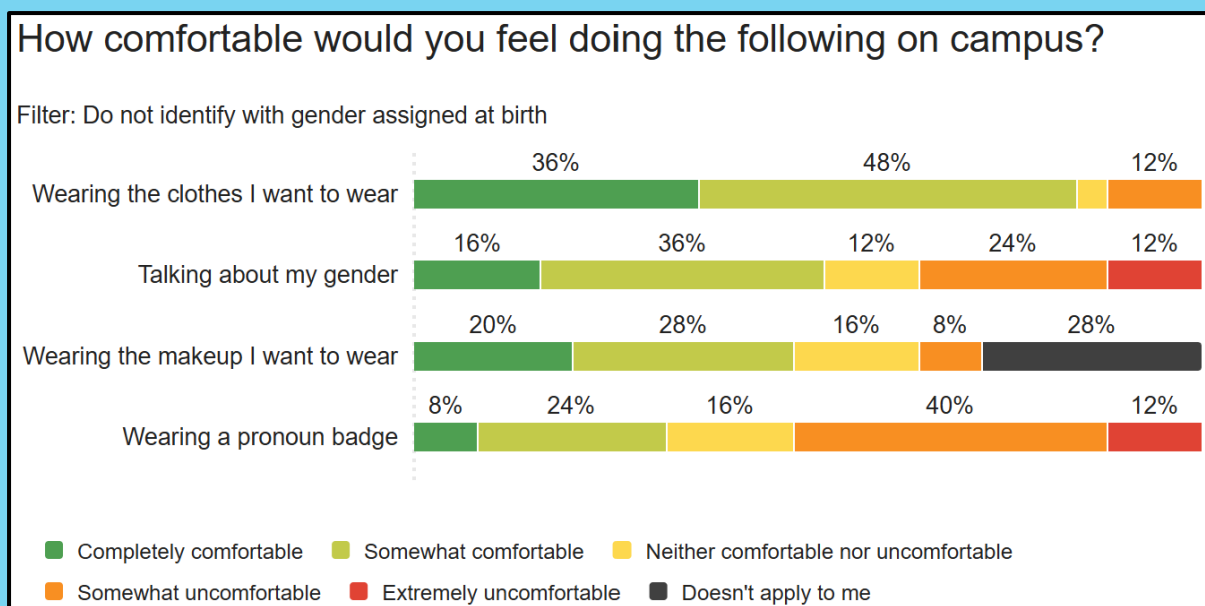
Figure 18 – Question 9: How comfortable would you feel doing the following on campus? (Selected Statements; Filter: Do not identify with gender assigned at birth)

When we look at the statements, however, that pertain particularly to expressions of gender, we can see that comfortability drops for most of the statements.

84% of students who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth said they are comfortable wearing the clothes they want to wear on campus which is above the overall average (+4pp) although disagreement is also higher at 12% (+5pp) (Fig. 18).

Only 52% would be comfortable talking about their gender (-18pp to average) whilst 36% would be uncomfortable; 48% would be comfortable wearing the makeup they want to wear (-14pp to average) whilst 8% would not (+1pp); and only 32% would feel comfortable wearing a pronoun badge (-10pp to average) whilst 52% would not (+20pp to average) (Fig. 18).
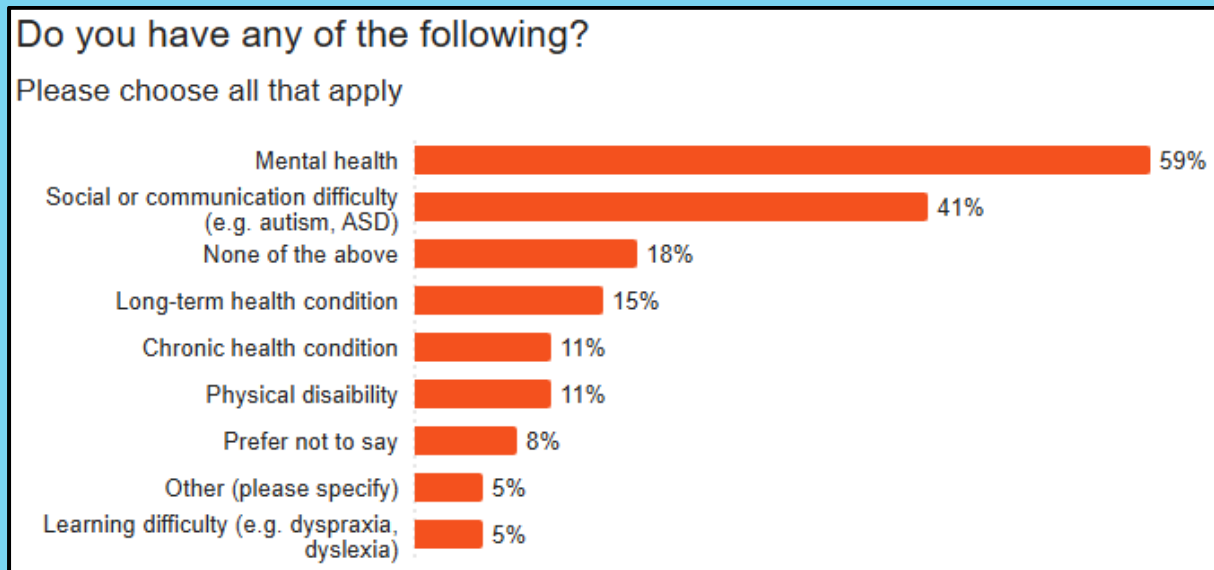
Healthcare

Do you have any of the following?
Please choose all that apply

Condition	Percentage
Mental health	59%
Social or communication difficulty (e.g. autism, ASD)	41%
None of the above	18%
Long-term health condition	15%
Chronic health condition	11%
Physical disaibility	11%
Prefer not to say	8%
Other (please specify)	5%
Learning difficulty (e.g. dyspraxia, dyslexia)	5%

Figure 19 - Question 16: Do you have any of the following?

When asked if they have any of the following conditions, 59% of students said that they experience a mental health condition with another 41% saying they have social or communication difficulties (Fig. 19).

18% said they have none of the conditions listed, whilst 5% reported other conditions, and 8% preferred not to say (Fig. 19).

15% of students said that they have a long-term health condition with another 11% saying they have a chronic health condition; another 11% report having a physical disability and 5% report having a learning difficulty (Fig. 19).
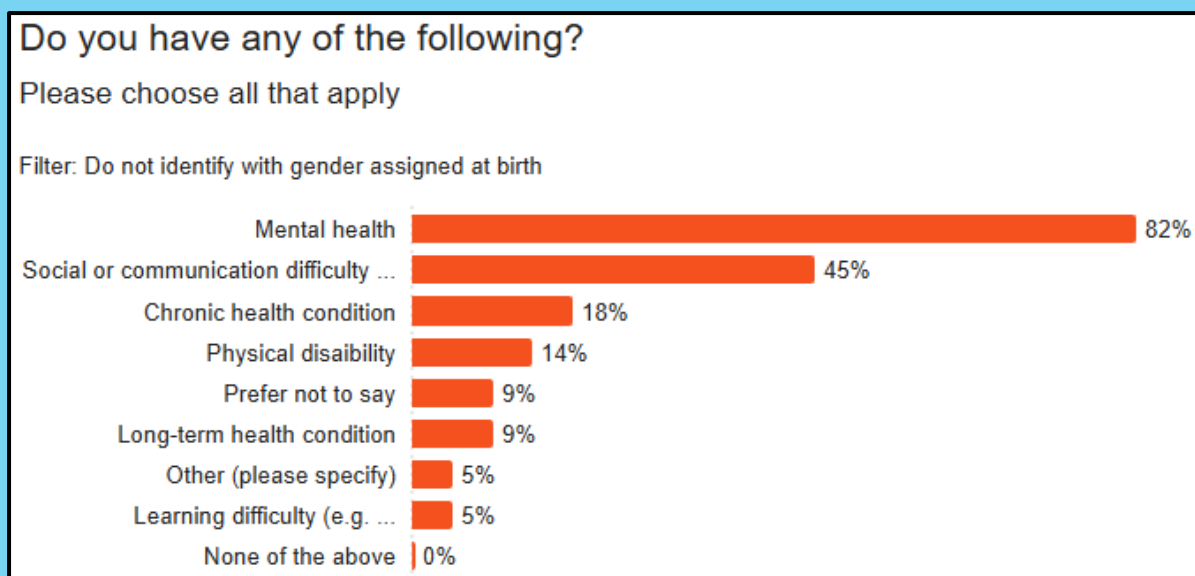
Figure 20 - Question 16: Do you have any of the following? (Filter: Do not identify with gender assigned at birth)

When we filter this to look at only students who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, we can see that mental health rises to 82% (+13pp to average), and social or communication difficulty rises as well (+4pp to average) (Fig. 20).

All students in this group report experiencing one or more of these conditions, with 0% selecting 'none of the above' (Fig. 20).
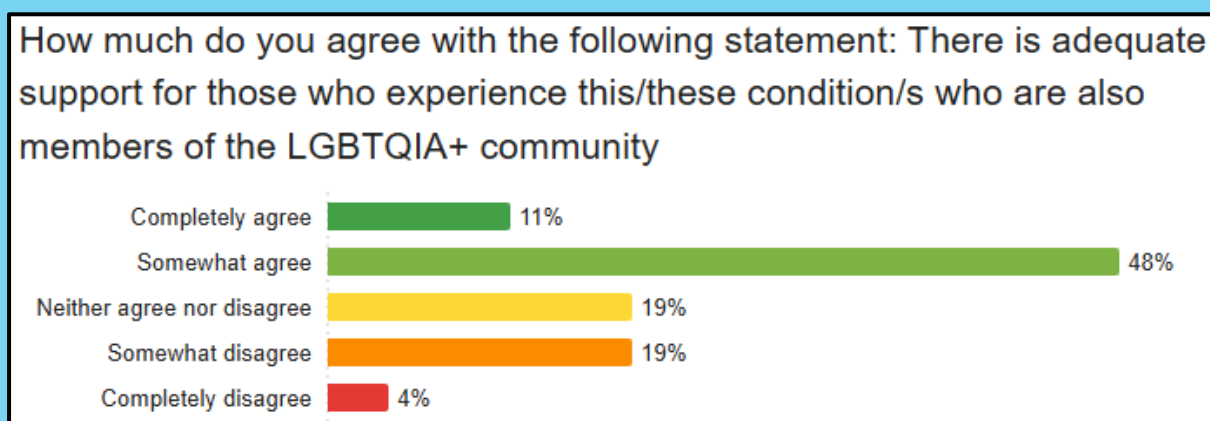

Figure 21 – Question 17: How much do you agree with the following statement: There is adequate support for those who experience this/these condition/s who are also members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

59% of students agree that there is enough support for people with their condition/s who are also members of the LGBTQ+ community, with 25% disagreeing and 19% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (Fig. 21).
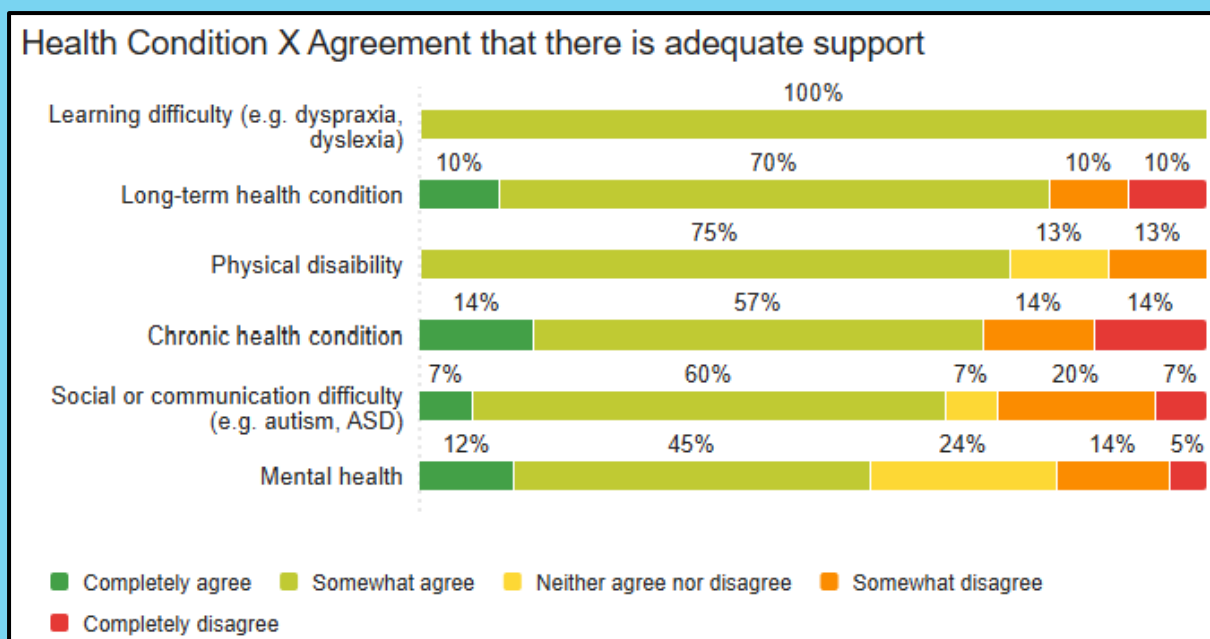
Figure 22 – Question 16: Do you have any of the following? X Question 17: How much do you agree with the following statement: There is adequate support for those who experience this/these condition/s who are also members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

When we look at this by specific condition, we can see that 100% of students who have a learning difficulty agree that there is enough support that takes into account their LGBTQ+ identity; 80% of those who have a long-term health condition also agree, with the remaining 20% disagreeing; and 75% of those who have a physical disability agree there is adequate support whilst 13% disagree (Fig. 22).

72% of students with a chronic health condition agree there is enough support that takes into account their LGBTQ+ identity with the remaining 28% disagreeing; 67% of those with social or communication difficulties agree whilst 27% disagree. Only 57% of students with mental health agree that there is support that takes into account their LGBTQ+ identity whilst 19% disagree (Fig. 22).
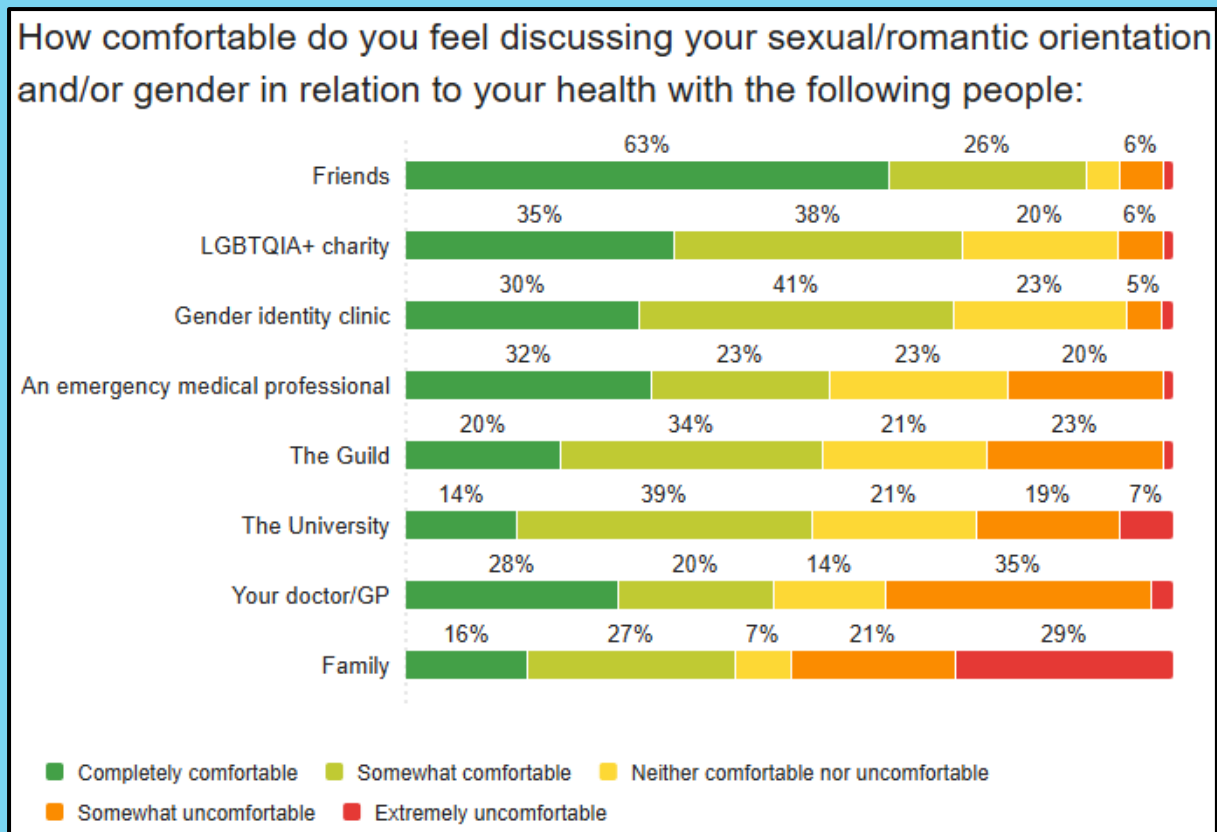
Figure 23 – Question 18: How comfortable do you feel discussing your sexual/romantic orientation and/or gender in relation to your health with the following people?

When asked how comfortable they would be talking to different people/bodies about their sexual/romantic and/or gender in relation to their health, 89% said they would feel comfortable speaking with their friends with only 7% disagreeing making this the statement most agreed with overall (Fig. 23).

73% would feel comfortable talking to an LGBTQ+ charity whilst 7% would not and 71% would feel comfortable at a gender identity clinic whilst 6% would not making this latter statement the least disagreed with overall (Fig. 23).

55% of students would be comfortable talking to an emergency medical professional whilst 22% would not; 54% would be comfortable with the Guild whilst 24% would not; and 53% would feel comfortable with the University whilst 26% would not (Fig. 23).

Only 48% of students said they'd feel comfortable talking about their sexual/romantic orientation and/or gender in relation to their health with their doctor/GP whilst 38% would not. Even fewer, 43% would be comfortable talking about their health with their family whilst 50% would not making this the most disagreed with statement overall and the only statement where disagreement is higher than agreement (Fig. 23).

How comfortable do you feel discussing your sexual/romantic orientation and/or gender in relation to your health with the following people:

Filter: Do not identify with gender assigned at birth

Friends: 55% / 32% / 5% / 9%
Gender identity clinic: 14% / 59% / 18% / 9%
LGBTQIA+ charity: 27% / 41% / 23% / 9%
The University: 5% / 41% / 27% / 23% / 5%
The Guild: 5% / 36% / 23% / 36%
An emergency medical professional: 14% / 23% / 32% / 32%
Your doctor/GP: 9% / 14% / 18% / 55% / 5%
Family: 23% / 9% / 27% / 41%

- Completely comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- Somewhat uncomfortable
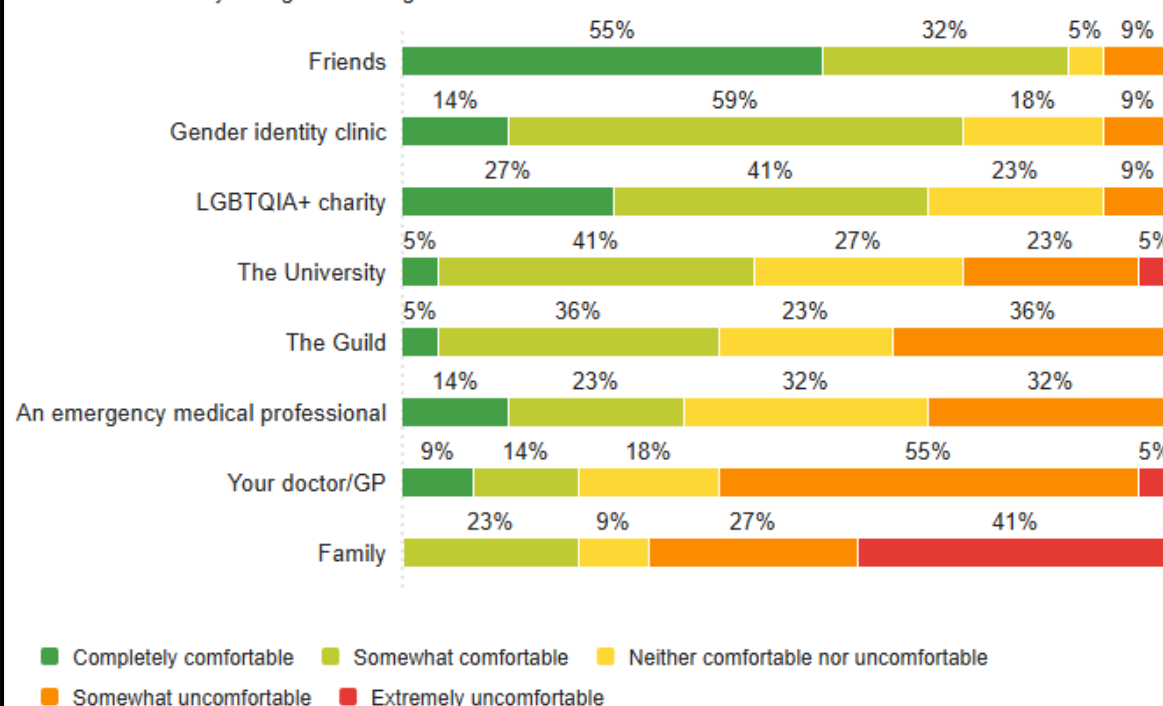- Extremely uncomfortable

Figure 24 - Question 18: How comfortable do you feel discussing your sexual/romantic orientation and/or gender in relation to your health with the following people? (Filter: Do not identify with gender assigned at birth)

When we filter this to look at students who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, 87% said they would feel comfortable speaking with their friends (-2pp to average) with 9% disagreeing (+2pp to average) making this the statement most agreed with overall (Fig. 24).

73% would feel comfortable talking to a gender identity clinic (+2pp to average) whilst 9% would not (+3pp to average), and 68% would feel comfortable at an LGBTQ+ charity whilst 9% again would not (+2pp to average). This means that students in this group, unlike the average, feel more comfortable at a gender identity clinic than a wider LGBTQ+ charity (Fig. 24).

46% of students would be comfortable talking to the University (-6pp to average) whilst 27% would not (+3pp to average) and 41% would feel comfortable with the Guild (-7pp to average) whilst 36% would not (+12pp to average). This means that students in this group feel less comfortable overall with the University and the Guild when it comes to their healthcare, but feel more comfortable talking to these bodies than an emergency medical professional (Fig. 24).

Only 27% of students would feel comfortable talking about their sexual/romantic orientation and/or gender in relation to their health with an emergency medical professional (-18pp to average) whilst 32% would not (+10pp to average). Even

fewer, 23%, would feel comfortable with their doctor/GP (-25pp to average) whilst 60% would not (+22pp to average) (Fig. 24).

23% would be comfortable talking to their family about their health (-20pp to average) whilst 68% would not (+18pp to average) making this the statement most disagreed with overall (Fig. 24).
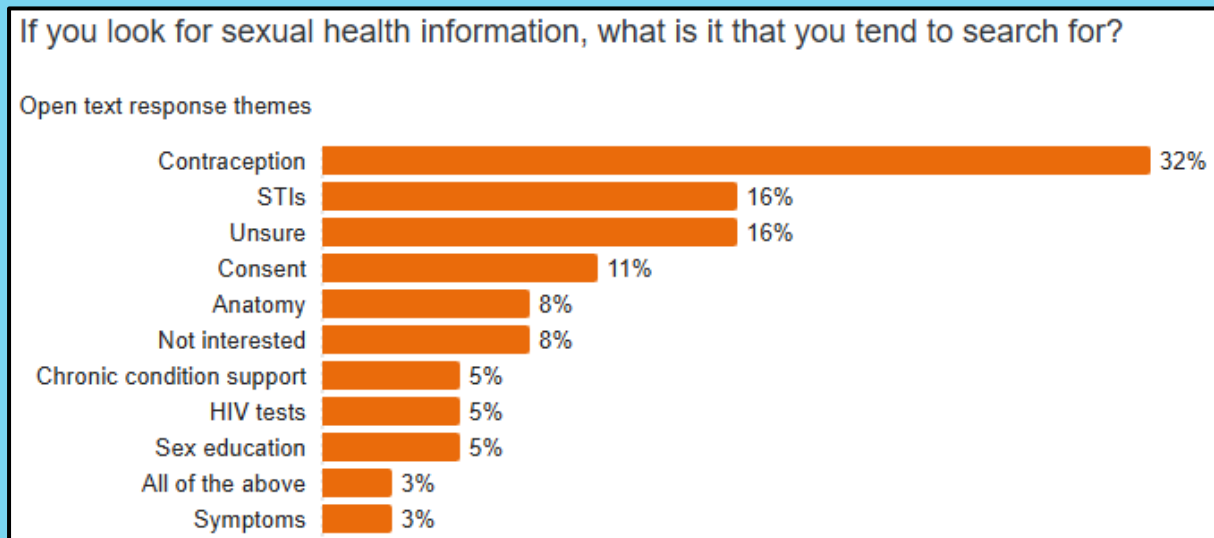
If you look for sexual health information, what is it that you tend to search for?

Open text response themes

Theme	Percentage
Contraception	32%
STIs	16%
Unsure	16%
Consent	11%
Anatomy	8%
Not interested	8%
Chronic condition support	5%
HIV tests	5%
Sex education	5%
All of the above	3%
Symptoms	3%

Figure 25 – Question 19: If you look for sexual health information, what is it that you tend to search for?

When asked what type of sexual health information students are searching for, 16% said they were unsure whilst 8% are uninterested in this information (Fig. 25).

32% said they look for information about contraception making it the most common topic, followed by STI information at 16% and consent at 11% (Fig. 25).

8% search for information about body anatomy, 5% support for those with chronic conditions, 5% HIV tests, and 5% wider/general sex education (Fig. 25).

3% said they search for all of the topics mentioned and another 3% search for symptoms of certain conditions (Fig. 25).

If you needed it, where would you go to get information about sexual health?

Open text response analysis

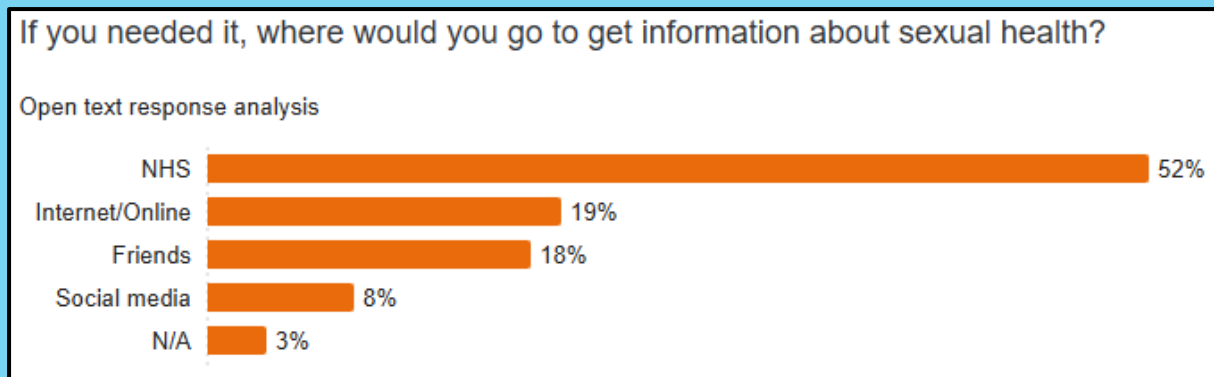|	
NHS	52%
Internet/Online	19%
Friends	18%
Social media	8%
N/A	3%

Figure 26 – Question 20: If you needed it, where would you go to get information about sexual health?

When asked where they go to get this information, 52% of students said they use the NHS (either website, pamphlets, or appointments), 19% the internet more generally, 18% go to their friends, and another 8% use social media (Fig. 26).
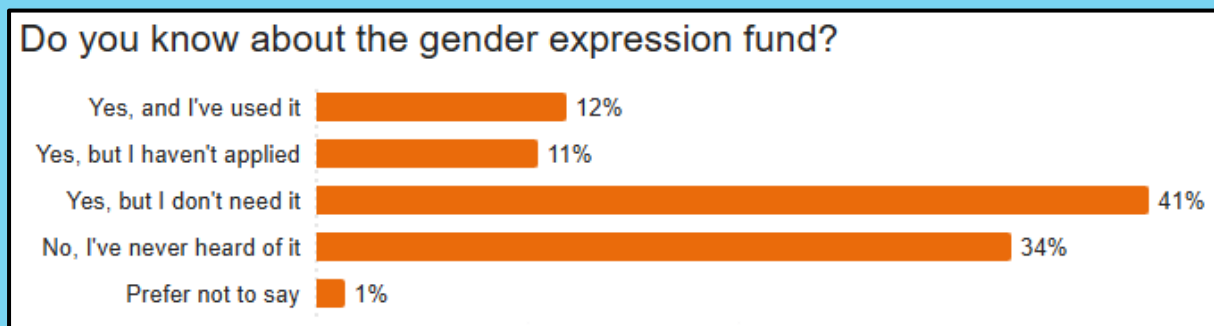
Do you know about the gender expression fund?

Yes, and I've used it	12%
Yes, but I haven't applied	11%
Yes, but I don't need it	41%
No, I've never heard of it	34%
Prefer not to say	1%

Figure 27 - Question 21: Do you know about the gender expression fund?

When asked about their knowledge of the gender expression fund – a fund that can be used by eligible students to purchase gender affirming products such as binders, packers, wigs, makeup, books (etc) – 65% of students have heard of it, with 12% having used it, 11% wanting to use it but having not applied, and 41% saying they know of it but don't need it (Fig. 27).
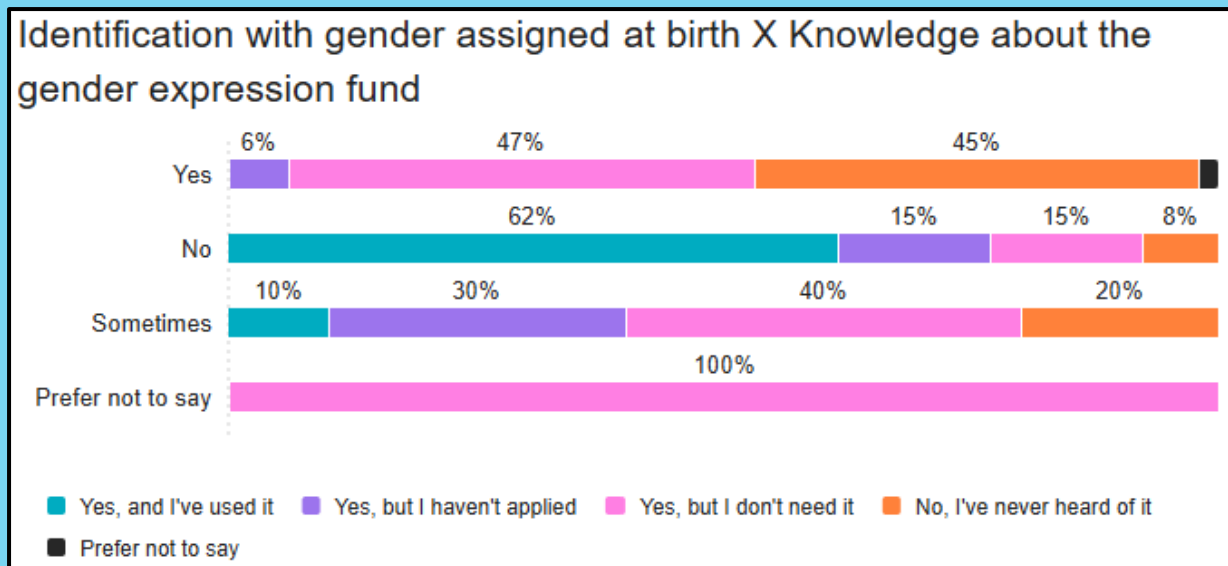
Identification with gender assigned at birth X Knowledge about the gender expression fund

	6%	47%	45%	
Yes				

	62%	15%	15%	8%
No				

	10%	30%	40%	20%
Sometimes				

	100%			
Prefer not to say				

Legend: ■ Yes, and I've used it ■ Yes, but I haven't applied ■ Yes, but I don't need it ■ No, I've never heard of it ■ Prefer not to say

Figure 28 – Question 3: Do you identify with the gender you were assigned at birth? X Question 21: Do you know about the gender expression fund?

When we look at these responses by if students identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, we can see that 92% of those who don't identify with the gender they were assigned have heard of it, with 62% of them having used it, and 80% of those who sometimes identify have heard of it with 10% having applied for it (Fig. 28).

When those who had used the fund were asked about their experience, majority reported finding the experience to be "easy" and "straightforward", with some students mentioning previous issues around clarity of eligibility and management that they feel have since been addressed.

"Amazing. Highly recommend. Needs to be managed well, but recently has been and has been good and able for me to use."
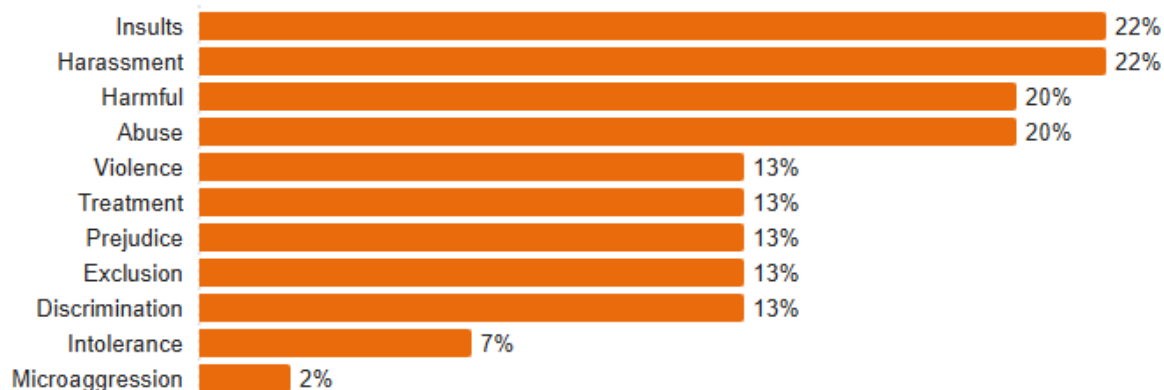
Harassment and Discrimination

Figure 29 - Question 24: What do you think constitutes harassment and/or discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community?

When asked what they think constitutes harassment and/or discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, 22% of students said verbal insults whilst another 22% mentioned general harassment (e.g. being made to feel unwelcome in a space) (Fig. 29).

20% said anything that is intentionally harmful to the LGBTQ+ community with another 20% specifying types of abuse (e.g. physical, verbal) (Fig. 29).

13% of students said that they believe violence towards the community, unequal/different treatment, prejudice, and/or exclusion constitute discrimination. 7% spoke about intolerance and 2% microaggressions (Fig. 29).

"Negative comments, jokes from non-community members who don't understand what it's like to be LGBTQ, harassment & bullying, using slurs."

"Excluding/ harassing people based on their LGBTQ identity or assumed identity."

"Physical abuse, invasive questions you wouldn't ask to a straight person, 'transvestigation', slurs, using someone's identity to ensure they can't access a role or support."
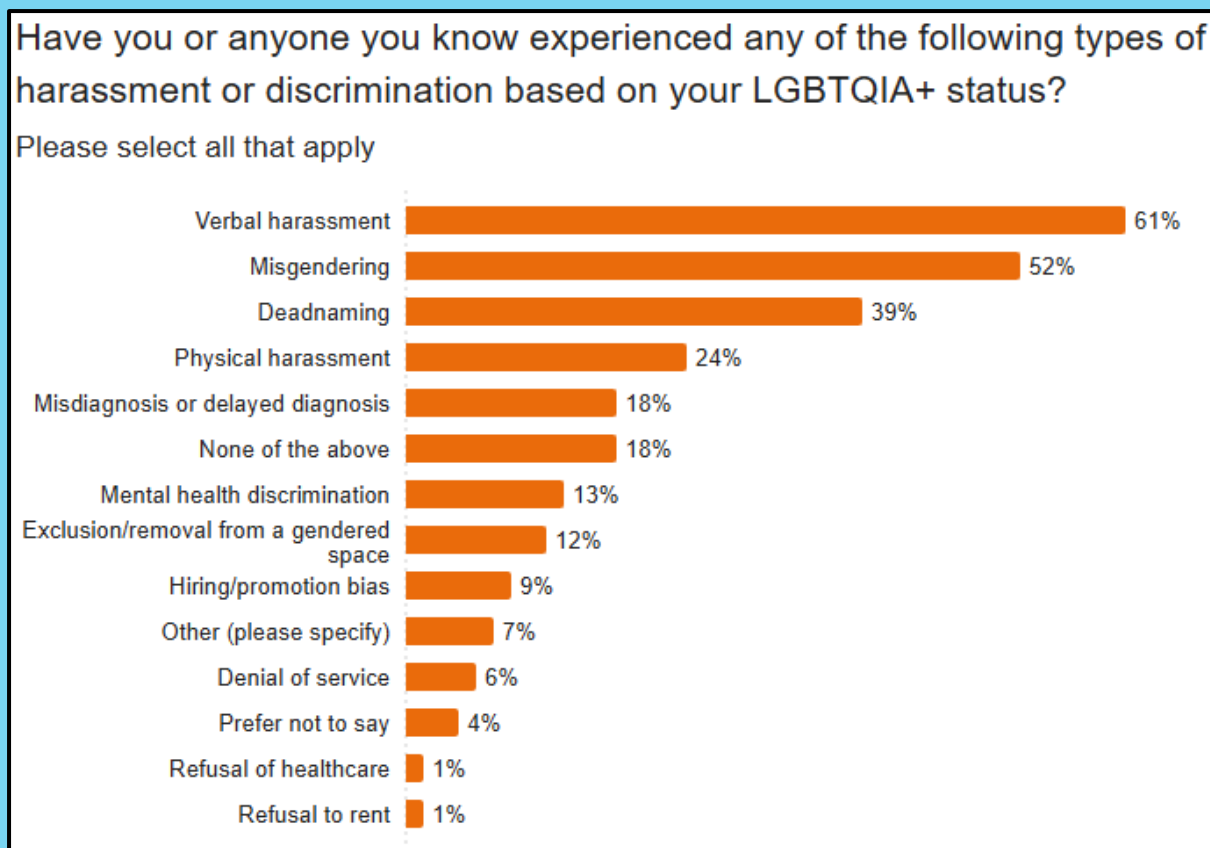
Figure 30 - Question 25: Have you or anyone you know experienced any of the following types of harassment or discrimination based on your LGBTQIA+ status?

When asked if they or anyone they know has experienced harassment or discrimination based on their LGBTQ+ identity, only 18% of students said 'no' (Fig. 30).

61% of students reported having or knowing someone who has experienced verbal harassment, 52% misgendering, 39% deadnaming, and 24% physical harassment (Fig. 30).

18% reported having experience or knowing someone who has experienced misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis and 13% mental health discrimination. 12% reported exclusion/removal from a gendered space, 9% hiring/promotional bias, and 6% denial of service. 1% also reported refusal of healthcare and refusal to rent (Fig. 30).

7% also reported other types of harassment or discrimination whilst 4% preferred not to say (Fig. 30).

When asked what impacts this harassment or discrimination has on their student life, students said it makes them concerned about being identified as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. feeling nervous to be themselves and questioning their ability to participate in social events.

"Heightened concerns about where I can be myself - more second guessing socials and being more vigilant of the people around me."

"Makes me a little nervous to go out alone, makes me feel out of place and can trigger spiralling thoughts like "do I belong anywhere at all?""

Where did this harassment or discrimination take place?

Please choose all that apply

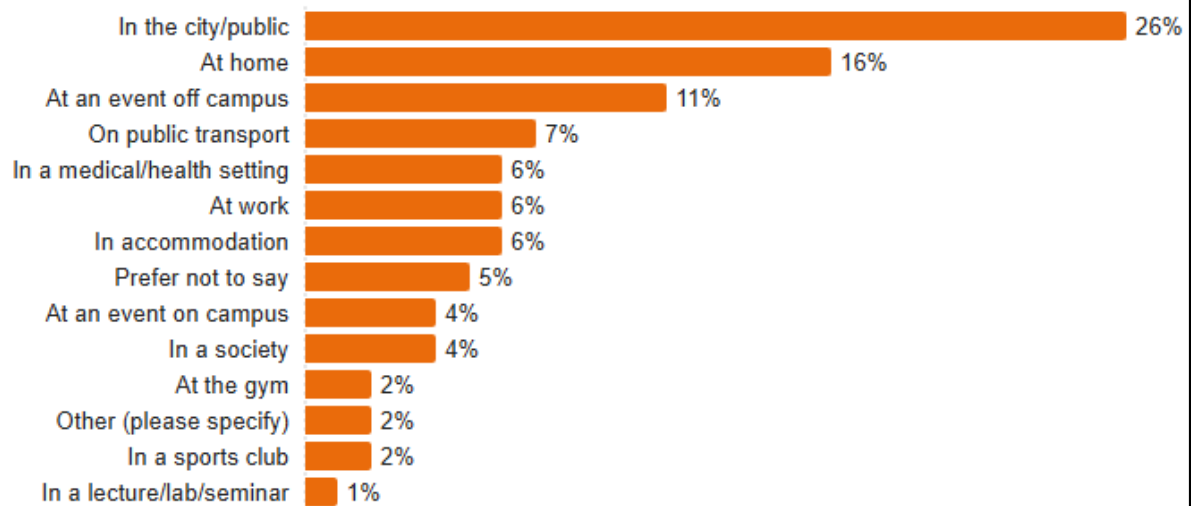| Location	Percentage
In the city/public	26%
At home	16%
At an event off campus	11%
On public transport	7%
In a medical/health setting	6%
At work	6%
In accommodation	6%
Prefer not to say	5%
At an event on campus	4%
In a society	4%
At the gym	2%
Other (please specify)	2%
In a sports club	2%
In a lecture/lab/seminar	1%

Figure 31 - Question 26: Where did harassment or discrimination take place?

When those who had experienced or know someone who has experienced harassment or discrimination where asked where this took place, 26% reported it occurring in the city/in public with another 16% reporting it happening at home. 11% reported harassment or discrimination occurring at an event off campus and 7% on public transport (Fig. 31). This supports and informs our earlier findings that show students feel less comfortable being open about their LGBTQ+ identity in the city and at home than they do on campus (Fig. 9-15).

6% of students reported harassment or discrimination taking place in a medical setting, another 6% at work, and another 6% in accommodation (Fig. 31).

4% reported harassment or discrimination at an event on campus or in a society. 2% reported harassment at the gym, in another location, in a sports club, or in a lecture/seminar (Fig. 31).
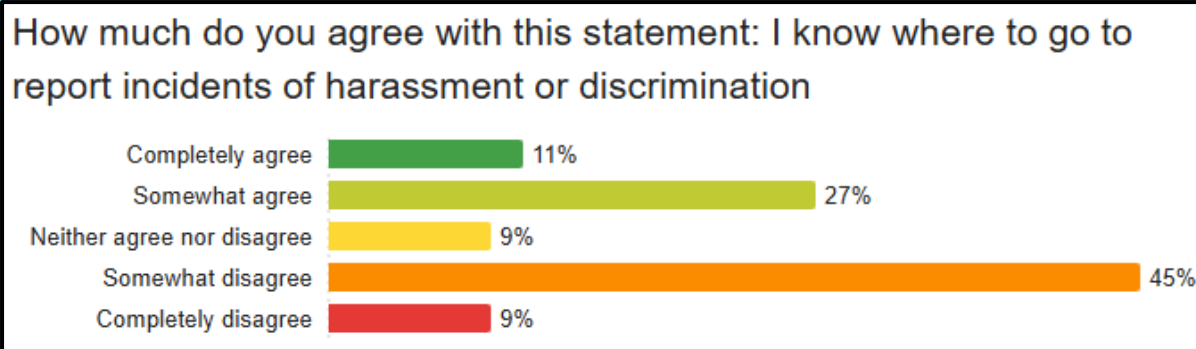
How much do you agree with this statement: I know where to go to report incidents of harassment or discrimination

Response	Percentage
Completely agree	11%
Somewhat agree	27%
Neither agree nor disagree	9%
Somewhat disagree	45%
Completely disagree	9%

Figure 32 – Question 27: How much do you agree with this statement: I know where to go to report incidents of harassment of discrimination

When asked if they knew where to go to report incidents of harassment, only 38% of students agreed that they do, with 54% reporting that they do not (Fig. 32).

Type of harassment of discrimination X Know where to report harassment or discrimination

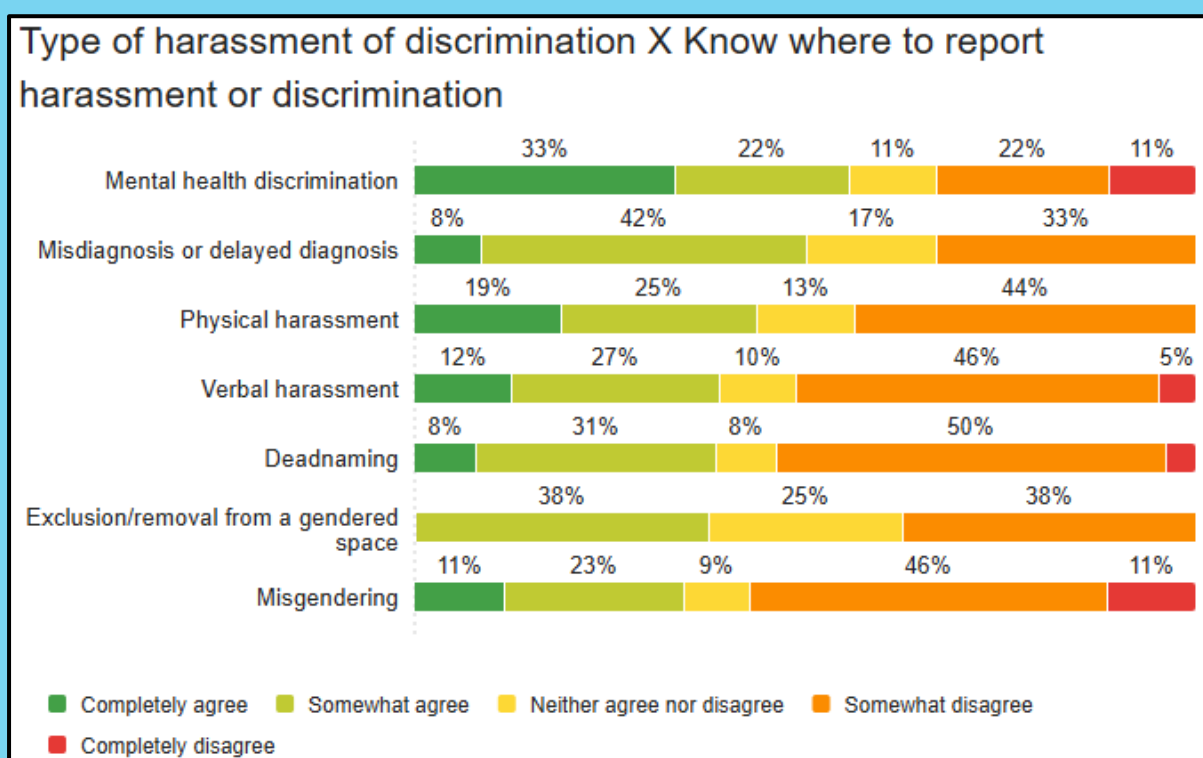|	Completely agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Completely disagree
Mental health discrimination	33%	22%	11%	22%	11%
Misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis	8%	42%	17%	33%	
Physical harassment	19%	25%	13%	44%	
Verbal harassment	12%	27%	10%	46%	5%
Deadnaming	8%	31%	8%	50%	
Exclusion/removal from a gendered space		38%	25%	38%	
Misgendering	11%	23%	9%	46%	11%

Figure 33 - Question 25: Have you or anyone you know experienced any of the following types of harassment or discrimination based on your LGBTQIA+ status? (Types of harassment with more than 10% response) X Question 27: How much do you agree with this statement: I know where to go to report incidents of harassment of discrimination

When we look at this by the types of harassment or discrimination that students have experienced, we can see that at least half of students who have experienced mental health discrimination or misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis know where to go to report harassment. However, at least a third of these students don't know where to go (Fig. 33).

Students who have been deadnamed, excluded/removed from a gendered space, or misgendered report the least knowledge of where to report harassment, with the over half of the first group of students actively saying that they do not know where to go (Fig. 33).
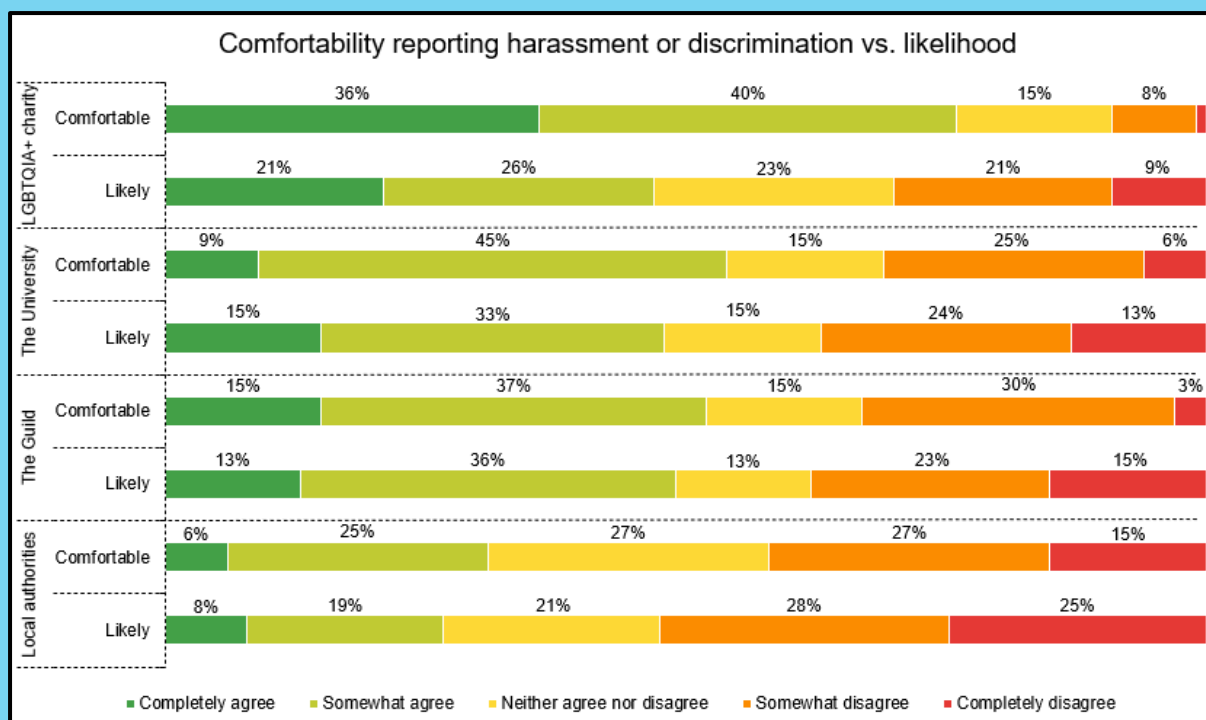
Figure 34 - Question 28: How comfortable would you feel reporting incidents of harassment or discrimination to the following bodies? X Question 29: How likely would you be to report incidents of harassment or discrimination to the following bodies?

When we asked students how comfortable they would feel reporting harassment or discrimination and how likely they would be to report to the same bodies we found that there was disparity in comfortability to likelihood for all options (Fig. 34).

76% of students would be comfortable reporting harassment or discrimination to an LGBTQ+ charity but only 47% say they would be likely to do so (–29pp); 9% said they would not be comfortable whilst 30% said they would not be likely (+21pp). This makes LGBTQ+ charities the places that students are most comfortable with and most likely to report to (Fig. 34).
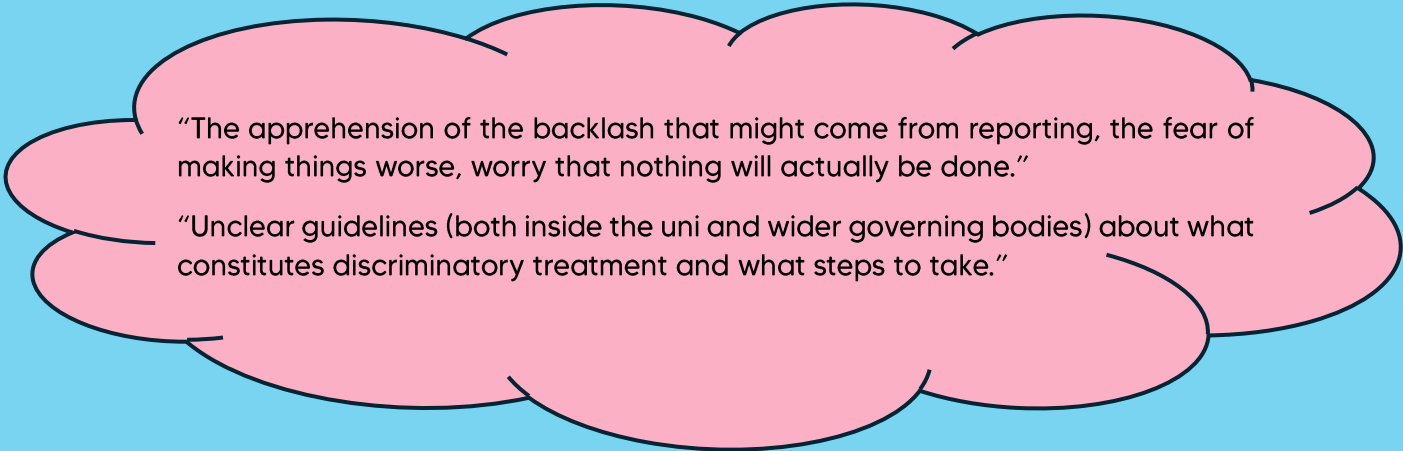
54% of students would be comfortable reporting harassment or discrimination to the University but only 48% would be likely to do so (–6pp): 31% said they would not be comfortable whilst 37% said they would not be likely (+6pp) (Fig. 34).

52% of students would be comfortable reporting harassment or discrimination to the Guild but only 49% would be likely to do so (–3pp); 33% said they would not be comfortable whilst 38% said they would not be likely (+5pp) (Fig. 34).

31% of students would be comfortable reporting harassment or discrimination to the local authorities but only 27% would be likely to do so (–4pp); 42% said they would not be comfortable whilst 53% said they would not be likely (+11pp). This means that the local authorities are the body that students are both the least comfortable with and least likely to report to (Fig. 34).

If we average these scores, we can see that 53% of students would feel comfortable reporting harassment or discrimination, but only 43% would be likely to (Fig. 43). These results are lower when we look at students who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, with only 47% feeling comfortable reporting and only 36% being likely to.

When we asked students why they thought this disparity was present, they said that fear of reporting and a lack of clarity and guidance around how to do so were contributing factors.

"The apprehension of the backlash that might come from reporting, the fear of making things worse, worry that nothing will actually be done."

"Unclear guidelines (both inside the uni and wider governing bodies) about what constitutes discriminatory treatment and what steps to take."

Pride

What makes you proud to be part of the LGBTQIA+ community?

Open text response themes

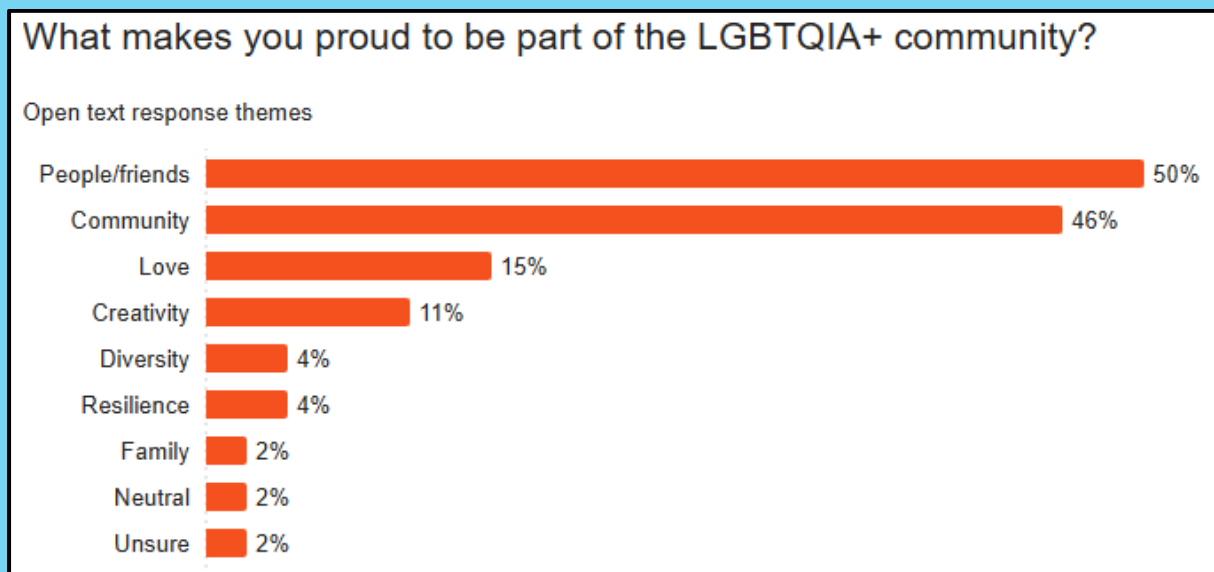| Theme	Percentage
People/friends	50%
Community	46%
Love	15%
Creativity	11%
Diversity	4%
Resilience	4%
Family	2%
Neutral	2%
Unsure	2%

Figure 35 – Question 31: What makes you proud to be part of the LGBTQIA+ community?

When we asked students what makes them proud to be part of the LGBTQ+ community, 2% were neutral or unsure but 50% spoke about the other people in the community and their friends (Fig. 35).

"Being part of the community I get to meet so many cool people who teach me how to be more myself and also the importance of expression in terms of love and identity."

"Seeing other queer people who are proud to be queer. Also, seeing older butch people who are just living their lives. Makes me hopeful for the future!"

"Everything, from how wonderful the people are, to seeing how people embrace themselves and others so wholeheartedly."

"Seeing friends proud to be themselves, being able to be out on public or around other people with my girlfriend and not feel afraid, acts of resistance and seeing queer people support groups like Ele4pal and protesting."

46% of students mentioned the LGBTQ+ community (Fig. 35).

"Being part of the community I get to meet so many cool people who teach me how to be more myself and also the importance of expression in terms of love and identity."

"The openness and welcoming nature of the community. Whilst I don't engage hugely in this side of my identity at the moment, whenever I do I know that I will never be judged for just being and expressing my authentic self. I can wear/act how I like in the knowledge that no one will care, and I'm incredibly grateful for it."

"We experience similar forms of discrimination but what unites us more is our understanding of intersectionality. If it affects one of us in the community, it's only a matter of time until it affects all of us."

15% mentioned love (Fig. 35).

"Realising that you are queer takes a tremendous amount of self-reflection, realisation and courage, especially in the world we currently live in. I am proud that I know who I am and that I am in a situation where I am able to show that person to the world. I enjoy challenging people's perceptions of what it means to be a happy, fulfilled adult, and I enjoy leading a non-normative life where I get to choose what I feel is the best way for me to live and love."

"It's so alive and can be so full of joy. Queer joy and hope and love are so important to talk about as well as queer problems and suffering, and whilst it's necessary to talk about the hard things it's so nice to just be able to talk about the good things as well with other people who get it."

11% of students mentioned creativity, 4% diversity, 4% resilience, and 2% family (Fig. 35).

"Our culture, our vibrancy, our diversity, our compassion, our resilience."

"The ability to see a world beyond and live beyond the binary that has been laid out for us."

"Chosen family, creativity, resilience and strength."

Conclusion

Student Experience

Majority of students feel safe being themselves and expressing their identity on campus as they are amongst their peers; less feel the same about Exeter city where the varying demographic makes students more unsure about their safety. The same can be said about term-time accommodation and non-term-time accommodation, with students feeling safer to be themselves away from home.

On campus, most students feel comfortable speaking freely about the LGBTQ+ community, wearing the clothes they want, and going to events specifically for the community. However, wearing pronoun badges is less comfortable for students, perhaps due to the practices' lack of consistent presence.

Students who don't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, however, feel less safe across the board than the rest of the LGBTQ+ community.

Clear, overt symbols and signage are the most effective ways to let LGBTQ+ students know that a space is safe for them; once a space is known as safe, word-of-mouth within the community or visibly LGBTQ+ people in those spaces also serve as effective signs.

Healthcare

Majority of LGBTQ+ students report having one or more health conditions with over half saying that they have a mental health condition – the latter is considerably higher for students who don't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Over half of students agree that there is enough support for these conditions that takes into account their LGBTQ+ intersectionality, although a quarter disagree.

Majority of students feel more comfortable talking to their friends or LGBTQ+ charities or gender identity clinics about their health than they do emergency medical professionals or their doctor/GP. The University and the Guild sit between the two groups in terms of

comfortability. Again, we see that students who don't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth report lower feelings of safety across the board.

Majority of students, however, would go to the NHS if they needed information about sexual health; students reported looking for information about contraception, STIs, and consent the most.

Three-quarters of students know about the gender-expression fund with this being higher amongst students who don't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Those students who have accessed the service report it being easy to use and having a generally positive experience.

Harassment and Discrimination

Over three-quarters of LGBTQ+ students have experience or know someone who has experienced harassment or discrimination based on their LGBTQ+ identity. Most of this took place off campus, in public, the city or at home, with some students also reporting experiencing this in healthcare settings.

Less than half of students say they would know where to go to report harassment or discrimination with over half saying they don't – this gap is wider for those students who have reported experience gender-based discrimination such as deadnaming and misgendering.

There is also a gap between how comfortable and how likely students would be to report harassment or discrimination with the latter consistently being lower than the former. LGBTQ+ charities are the most trusted in this space by the community whilst local authorities are the least. Students say this is likely due to a lack of clarity around what is severe enough to report, how to report it, and a fear of backlash from reporting or that nothing might be done.

Pride

Students feel proud to be part of the LGBTQ+ community because of the people in the community with them and the friends they have been able to make. They are proud of their ability to be themselves in the face of discrimination and to value the importance of their identity.

Students are proud to be part of a diverse, creative, resilient group of people who value freedom of expression and love.

Recommendations

Student Recommendations

We asked students what they would like to see done to make university a safer, more inclusive place for them.

On courses/in seminars, students would like:

- Wider use of pronoun badges and pride lanyards
- Lecturers introducing themselves with their pronouns if they feel comfortable doing so and asking students for them as well
- Inclusion statements clearly available, as well as inclusion policies
- Clear guidance around the reporting process not just about discrimination perpetrated by peers but also academic staff

In the wider University, students would like:

- More visible support for the LGBTQ+ community, such as pride lanyards being more widely and visibly available or community art instalments to celebrate the community
- More gender neutral bathrooms on campus
- Having wellbeing professionals available who specialise in LGBTQ+ support
- Knowledge of reporting procedures and the possible outcomes to be clearer and more visible
- More pro-active responses to challenges the community faces, such as the recent UK Supreme Court ruling on gender, so that LGBTQ+ students don't have to seek out the University's response
- Clear, supportive policies that enable LGBTQ+ students to be safe and comfortable whilst studying at Exeter

At the Guild, students would like:

- Stronger guidance around inclusion for societies
- Year-round visible support that isn't just limited to pride month
- More open opportunities for LGBTQ+ students to come together and socialise run by the Guild itself rather than just the LGBTQ+ Society
- More pro-active responses to challenges the community faces, such as the recent UK supreme court ruling on gender, so that LGBTQ+ students don't have to seek out the Guild's response

Guild Recommendations

- Work more closely with Exeter City to improve off-campus safety for LGBTQ+ students

- Expand on health support available for LGBTQ+ students, especially around gender-related health
    - Explore expanding and increased promotion of the gender-expression fund
    - Explore the possibility of having LGBTQ+ specific wellbeing support available through the university
- Review and improve the reporting process for harassment and discrimination
    - Improve communication of processes and potential outcomes
    - Improve accessibility of the system
- Increase support for students who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth
    - Work directly with this community to understand the full impact of the recent UK Supreme Court ruling
    - Understand what support these students need from both the Guild and the University
- Increase visibility of support for the LGBTQ+ community on campus to help students feel safer and increase student knowledge

Demographics

What campus are you based at?	Count
Streatham	95 (90%)
St Lukes	9 (8%)
Distance learner/not based at a campus	2 (2%)

What best describes you? Please choose all that apply	No. of Responses	What best describes your gender? Please choose all that apply	No. of Responses
Bisexual	33 (31%)	Female	63 (59%)
Queer	32 (30%)	Male	23 (22%)
Asexual	20 (19%)	Non-binary	18 (17%)
Lesbian	19 (18%)	Genderqueer	8 (8%)
Gay	15 (14%)	Other (please specify)	5 (5%)
Demisexual	12 (11%)	Genderfluid	3 (3%)
Biromantic	11 (10%)	Prefer not to say	1 (1%)
Gay (male)	11 (10%)	Do you identify with the gender you were assigned at birth?	No. of Responses
Heterosexual	11 (10%)	Yes	75 (71%)
Aromantic	8 (8%)	No	18 (17%)
Pansexual	7 (7%)	Sometimes	11 (10%)
Unsure	5 (5%)	Prefer not to say	2 (2%)
Demiromantic	4 (4%)		
Greyromantic	4 (4%)		
Prefer not to say	4 (4%)		
Homoromantic	3 (3%)		
Other (please specify)	3 (3%)		
Greysexual	2 (2%)		
Panromantic	2 (2%)		
Abroromantic	1 (1%)		
Abrosexual	1 (1%)		
Arosexual	1 (1%)		
Heteroromantic	1 (1%)		