



# **Sandwell LGBTQ+ Community**

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## **Health Needs Report**

# Foreword

Myself and Cllr Bill Gavan were approached last year to take part in the initial consultation by Public Health into local health inequalities of LGBTQ+ people in Sandwell. We are pleased to jointly write this foreword to the findings of the report.

Both myself and Cllr Gavan are advocates and campaigners for LGBTQ+ rights and equalities. Often LGBTQ+ people have faced discrimination, hate crimes or poor mental health in the past. We both are approached regularly by members of the LGBTQ+ community about their experiences of living in Sandwell and the inequality that they can face. We are constantly working towards changing that locally and are pleased that as a council this is increasingly becoming a priority. We still have some way to go though.

Often in the past the LGBTQ+ community have felt on the outskirts of society, that their needs are not valid or important. We want everyone in Sandwell to feel a sense of belonging, to feel included and engaged and this work goes towards the start of recognising the struggles that most of the LGBTQ+ community face.

Myself and Cllr Gavan are both openly gay local councillors and we hope that by being open and our authentic selves we will help those who are struggling to accept themselves in Sandwell.

Sandwell is a diverse borough and we were pleased that the Public Health team were investigating and opening up consultation about the health needs of the local LGBTQ+ communities.

The report details the many inequalities that LGBTQ+ people face when accessing health care. The findings have not come as a surprise to us as we have seen and lived these inequalities and barriers. We hope that this hard evidence will now go towards righting the imbalances and removing those barriers that the LGBTQ+ community experience in Sandwell. We both will continue to fight for equality for all.

Finally, I would like to thank the Public Health Team for taking a proactive approach to look at local inequalities for all minorities in Sandwell, spearheading equality, diversity and inclusion.

Thank you



**Richard Jones -  
Mayor**



**Cllr Bill Gavan**



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# Introduction

The Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council Public Health Team is working to reduce health inequalities across all demographics and is especially looking at narrowing the health gap in groups with protected characteristics.

This report summarises the key findings following an engagement exercise carried out between September and November 2022, in which the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community provided details of their lived experience with healthcare using surveys, interviews and informal events.

We had a fantastic response from the community which was amazingly transparent with the information shared. It was a very rewarding experience to speak with the many LGBTQ+ community groups across Sandwell, and the work they do is vital in supporting the community with the many issues facing them.

We hope our findings contribute towards positive improvement in healthcare in the Sandwell area and help to amplify the voices that can be seldom heard within minority communities.

Thank you to everyone within the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community; this work could not have been done without them, and we are very grateful.

# Background and National Context

There is national evidence that the LGBTQ+ community has disproportionately worse health outcomes and experiences of healthcare. The statistics below, compiled from existing national reports, help to highlight the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community:

- 70% of respondents reported being impacted by transphobia when accessing general healthcare services.
- 98% of respondents described the transition-related healthcare available on the NHS as inadequate, with 47% responding that it is 'not at all adequate'. A more significant proportion of disabled trans people reported inadequacy of service.[1]
- 14% of LGBTQ+ people have avoided accessing healthcare for fear of being discriminated against because of their LGBTQ+ identity.[2]
- 28% of respondents who had accessed or tried to access mental health services in the 12 months preceding the survey said it had not been easy.[3]
- LGBTQ+ young people are twice as likely to feel lonely and more than twice as likely to worry daily about their mental health than their non-LGBTQ+ peers, with over half (55%) of LGBTQ+ young people worrying daily about their mental health.[4]
- 25% of LGBTQ+ secondary school pupils are experiencing daily tensions in the place they are living, while half (48%) say they have received little to zero positive messaging at school about being LGBTQ+ in the last 12 months.[4]

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council Public Health Team engaged Autrac to help understand the health needs of the LGBTQ+ population in Sandwell and uncover the individual lived experiences. The information contained within this report will help begin to address health inequalities within the LGBTQ+ community

[1]Trans Lives Survey 2021

[2]LGBTQ+ Foundation Findings

[3]National LGBTQ+ Survey

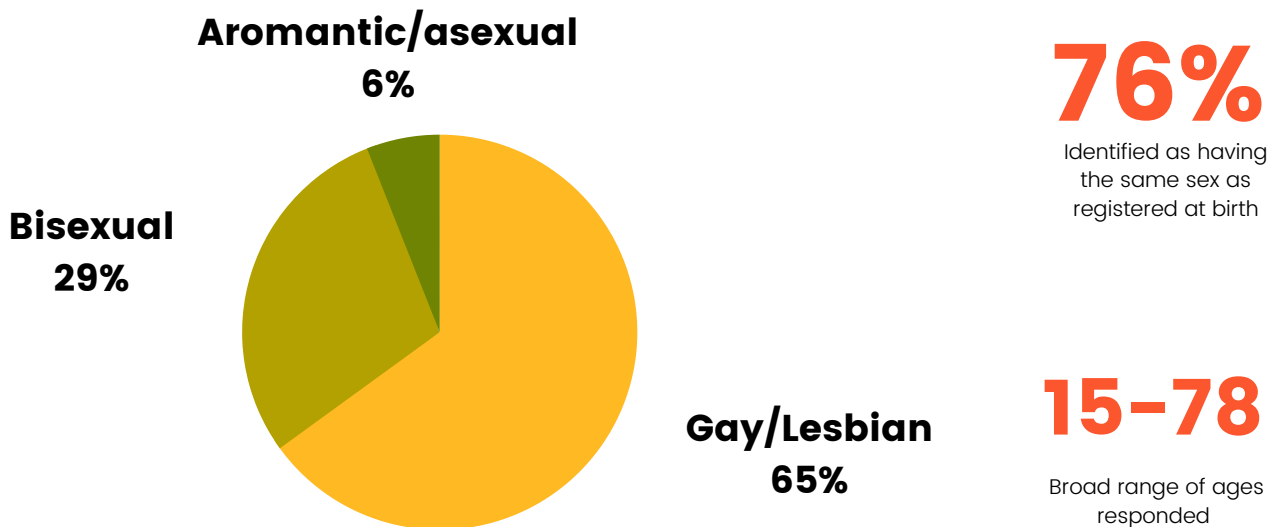
[4]Just Like Us, the LGBTQ+ young people's charity's report 'Growing Up LGBTQ+: the impact of school, home and coronavirus on LGBTQ+ young people'

# Methodology

We completed this engagement exercise between September–November 2022 within the LGBTQ+ community of Sandwell.

The LGBTQ+ community is a minority group and, as such, it can be difficult to uncover the voices within the community in order to understand the challenges they face. Our engagement approach was to work with the many LGBTQ+ community groups within Sandwell, asking for their support to share the information with their membership.

This approach led to a wonderfully diverse demographic range which is demonstrated below:



We received responses from all towns of Sandwell including Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich

We were particularly interested in hearing from the younger community and, as such, designed a different question set and engagement process tailored to the younger generation. The young people's insights are interwoven within the report as well as presented within a separate section.

This engagement exercise was completed through two significant phases:

**Phase 1:** Digital survey of 45 questions delivered to the LGBTQ+ community through identified LGBTQ+ community groups.

**Phase 2:** Discussions with community groups and individuals focusing on their experiences with healthcare.

The voices of young people were accessed through a separate bespoke survey administered through young people's groups and educational establishments.

The phase 2 discussions were framed by the following principles:

- What are your experiences with healthcare in the Sandwell area relating to your LGBTQ+ identity?
- What else would you like to see within Sandwell to support the LGBTQ+ community?

We let the conversations evolve naturally to understand the lived experiences of the community. This approach allowed us to understand the challenges the community face and identify additional help and resources that would further support the LGBTQ+ community.

Approximately 75 contacts were established through this exercise, which included a discussion with Chairs of community groups who provided information on behalf of their group and members.

We have anonymised the quotations within this report, changing the names and adding an age range to ensure no information is personally identifiable.

This engagement exercise was commissioned and supported by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and delivered by Autrac.



# Key Findings

We approached the engagement exercise by asking the community four key lines of enquiry around an individual's:

- physical health and health behaviours
- mental health and well-being
- feelings toward health services and access to health services
- social health and social capital

This approach allowed us to gather a full range of information from the community and triggered interesting conversations that were a valuable part of this engagement exercise. Although the quantitative data is vital to any information-gathering exercise, we were keen to understand the communities' lived experiences.

We have tried to amplify the voices of the community, including their struggles, feelings on the Sandwell health care services, and what services would benefit them moving forwards.

<b>Age Range</b>			
<b>16-18</b>	12%	<b>45-54</b>	6%
<b>19-24</b>	12%	<b>55-68</b>	18%
<b>25-35</b>	0%	<b>69-78</b>	11%
<b>35-44</b>	41%	<b>79+</b>	0%
<b>Religion</b>			
<b>No religion</b>			65%
<b>Christian</b>			29%
<b>Prefer not to say</b>			6%
<b>Sexual orientation</b>			
<b>Gay/lesbian</b>			65%
<b>Bisexual</b>			29%
<b>Other</b>			6%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
<b>English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British</b>			94%
<b>Prefer not to say</b>			6%
<b>Gender identity</b>			
<b>Male</b>			54%
<b>Female</b>			46%



## **What did we learn about an individual's physical health and health behaviours?**

The respondents answered broadly about their physical health and health behaviours, helping to paint a picture of the health of the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community.



## **What were the key themes?**

Strong themes emerged around how important community support is. A majority of the conversations involved individuals explaining how the health challenges relating to the LGBTQ+ community could be a struggle.

The LGBTQ+ community found group activities both motivating and supportive. Peer activities provide the space for discussion around issues, helping them to understand what LGBTQ+ services are available within Sandwell.

Community activities are found to help on two levels: first, the surface benefit of improving an individual's health and second, helping to reduce anxiety around issues and the accessibility of services by providing a structured time and place for the community to discuss issues important to them.





## What did the findings tell us?

**40%**

of individuals explained how they have a physical or mental impairment which has had a substantial long-term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

Questions about addictive behaviours were asked as part of this engagement study and, unfortunately, **four out of ten** respondents felt they were becoming dependent on something and couldn't stop. This behaviour ranged from smoking, to spending money and self-harm.

Of the engagement participants:

- 40% of individuals describe themselves as 'non-drinkers'
- 80% of individuals reported never taking recreational drugs
  - 80% identify as non-smokers

Amongst the community, physical exercise and an active lifestyle were identified as behaviour that helped contribute to overall well-being.

**7%**

of individuals described never undertaking physical activity

**47%**

of respondents undertake physical activity twice or more a week.



Individual and group walking was one of the most popular activities mentioned by the community, with many enjoying group walks arranged by independent LGBTQ+ community groups. These walks offer the community the dual benefits of physical exercise and a social value, with members meeting new people and having an opportunity to discuss issues with LGBTQ+ peers.



## What actions could help?

**To improve the engagement with central activities and groups and to improve the communication methods and literature.**

Individuals described difficulties in reading and understanding the literature coming from healthcare organisations and councils. Requests were made for sharing the importance of accessibility considerations in communications, such as using plain English and easy-to-read font sizes and colours.

**Increase support to existing LGBTQ+ active groups.**

Individuals explained how peer community support groups have previously helped to identify and tackle health issues and are essential to providing well-being support to struggling individuals. Supporting these groups where possible will help these groups to flourish and improve access for the LGBTQ+ community.





## **An individual's mental health and well-being**

Although mental well-being is closely associated with an individual's physical and health behaviours, we wanted to carry out a 'deeper dive' with the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community to understand the specific well-being challenges associated with an LGBTQ+ identity.



## **What were the key themes?**

From discussions, key themes arose around the limitations of specific LGBTQ+ mental health and well-being support. The community felt that access to mental health and well-being services was difficult, with very little provision to support specific LGBTQ+ issues.

There is a high prevalence of mental health issues within the LGBTQ+ community and a feeling that these issues have increased during the COVID pandemic. Independent LGBTQ+ community groups are a valuable resource for peer support and often are able to help with mental health and well-being issues at an early stage.

It can be difficult for the LGBTQ+ community groups to support, due to a lack of clarity on what LGBTQ+ specific services are available to Sandwell residents.





## What did the findings tell us?

Our engagement with the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community showed that:

- 20% of individuals described their mental health as poor, with 50% being diagnosed/experiencing depression and anxiety.
- 14% of individuals have hurt themselves over the past 12 months, with 50% having considered taking their own lives at some point.
- Encouragingly, 64% of individuals knew how to access support, but further work is required to ensure that the other 36% are also able to access essential mental health services.

**"Access to diagnosis and mental health support has been terrible over the last 2-3 years. I have experienced some challenging times and have been left to muddle along. The community group has helped get me through it, but these are independent and struggling to continue without wider support."**

Brian, 35-44, identifies as a gay man.

A particular concern was raised around domestic abuse issues: it was felt that the guidance focused on male/female relationships and that gay relationships were often overlooked. The respondent described in his experience how domestic abuse in gay relationships is often hidden and, unfortunately, very widespread. It was felt that targeted support would help many in an often missed aspect of mental well-being.

**A higher percentage of young people commented on concerns over their eating habits, with**

# 50%

**of respondents explaining that they – or someone close to them – has been concerned with their eating habits over the past 12 months.**

Young people also expressed a higher percentage of occasions of hurting themselves on purpose over the past 12 months.



## What actions could help?

### Focused young persons' support networks

Young people described support networks within their colleges and schools but suggested these were very limited and only available to students. The young LGBTQ+ community within Sandwell feel they need a more comprehensive support network or youth service independent from educational establishments.

**"Having a hub would be helpful as it would be in one place, and I would get used to the people there."**

Sam, young person

Young people also feel a 'one hub' approach would be beneficial, offering access to all support, advice and guidance in one place. Accessing services can be intimidating for young people and having a central hub will help reduce anxieties whilst accessing healthcare.



### Clear signposting for LGBTQ+ mental health and well-being services.

LGBTQ+ community groups would like clear guidance on what is available to the community. This will help correctly support individuals who are seeking help and cannot access formal support due to long waiting times.

**LGBTQ+ considerations when mental health and well-being support offers are provided.** Issues raised above highlights how considering LGBTQ+ aspects within services will help to support the community and improve access.

**Access to mental health and well-being support guidance for community group leaders.** Discussions showed that community group leaders are often asked for mental health and well-being support directly by individuals. A base level of support and guidance will allow for a consistent and supportive response to be provided, which may offer much-needed intervention while individuals await formal health and well-being support.





## **An individual's health services and access to health services**

With the previous Sandwell local responses in mind, good access to health services is essential and this section of the engagement exercise focused on how the local Sandwell LGBTQ+ community engages with health services and their experiences with them.



## **What were the key themes?**

Key themes emerged from discussions around the general LGBTQ+ knowledge within healthcare, with the community feeling that the level of LGBTQ+ understanding amongst healthcare professionals was inconsistent. This lack of awareness contributes towards unfair treatment and the community shared experiences which included misgendering by healthcare professionals, occasions of feeling unheard, and experiences of homophobic treatment within healthcare.

The community described poorer experiences when accessing services within general practice surgeries, as opposed to larger healthcare Trusts. A general lack of understanding of LGBTQ+ issues and poor awareness from GPs and limited services available for the community, led to negative experiences.

It was felt that there was a considerable lack of knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues within GP surgeries.

The community raised issues with the location of services, feeling that they have to travel too far for essential services, which has a negative impact on access. Particular examples around gender reassignment have been given in the following sections.



## What did the findings tell us?

Our engagement exercise into the LGBTQ+ communities' experience with health services found that 29% of respondents described being mistreated by healthcare staff regarding their LGBTQ+ identity. This was more prevalent in young people, with 50% describing being unjustly treated.

A third of respondents feel healthcare professionals' behaviour has been inappropriate at some point during treatment. This was echoed in the young people's responses, with one young person commenting:

**"I got told by a nurse that I was confused, when asked about my relationship status and finding out I was with a girl."**

Anna, young person, identifies as bisexual

Experiences and incidents like these can shape a young person's future engagement with health services and could completely isolate the young people from health care.

An individual shared a time when, while being admitted to an accident and emergency in a Sandwell hospital, they overheard offensive, homophobic language by healthcare professionals, which made them feel very uncomfortable and led to a formal complaint.

The community felt a lack of confidence in GP surgeries, with 80% of respondents rating their experience with GPs as poor, which was over twice as negative as experiences with mental health, sexual health, maternity and in-patient services.

Situations where GP practice receptionists have been insensitive to LGBTQ+ issues were uncovered as part of this engagement exercise, with respondents having experienced a lack of understanding and use of derogatory language within GP practices.

There was general confusion on what services are available to the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community and participants shared experiences in which GP surgeries are unclear on what referral options are available.

**14%** of respondents expressed concern about being denied services due to their LGBTQ+ identity.

"GP surgeries should be a hub, helping us to understand what is out there; they don't seem to know, which makes getting help a very stressful and confusing process."

Simon, 45-54

"I feel like a second-class citizen when I visit my GP with LGBTQ+ issues."

Diane, 55-68, identifies as lesbian

"My GP actively refrained from referring me to a gender identity clinic."

Ryan, 35-44

"Waiting times for gender dysphoria diagnosis are ridiculously long. The aim is 18 weeks to be seen for non-urgent care. I am now at about 19 months after the referral and expect at least another year to wait. It is difficult not to interpret this as deliberate withholding of treatment by the NHS."

Jo, Trans woman, 35-44

Gender reassignment patients are having to travel to Nottingham for treatment and this long distance travel is an access barrier to Sandwell residents.

The Sandwell LGBTQ+ community is unclear if there is a central strategy for services, and it is unclear to a majority where and how to access support.



A third of respondents do not make their LGBTQ+ status known to healthcare professionals when undertaking treatment, with 15% of respondents describing avoiding treatment due to the worry of LGBTQ+ discrimination and a lack of understanding of LGBTQ+ issues within healthcare.



## What actions could help?

Greater LGBTQ+ awareness within general practice. The Sandwell LGBTQ+ community groups are keen to ensure GP services are aware of support groups and LGBTQ+ services in the area and are able to promote and signpost their services. From discussions, there are very different levels of LGBTQ+ awareness within GP practices.

Focused work to identify what LGBTQ+ services are required within Sandwell. The community feels a review of what is needed within the Sandwell area will help to support the community better and increase access to healthcare services.





## **Individual health and social capital**

An essential part of this engagement exercise was to understand where and how the LGBTQ+ community finds support and whether this is professional support or more informal support from friends and the local community.



## **What were the key themes?**

Although great strides have been taken towards equality over the years, evidence of abusive behaviour towards those who identify as LGBTQ+ has been seen during this engagement process. The community still experiences physical and verbal violence and aggression which can impact mental health and well-being.

Once again, the importance of LGBTQ+ community networks was a key theme through this section of the engagement process: the community groups act as a forum to understand and process occasions of targeted aggression and community group members pull together to offer support.

It is encouraging to see the LGBTQ+ community receiving support from multiple avenues, including friends, families, community organisations, faith organisations and the wider Sandwell community. However, the community feels they have to travel too far to access more formal groups, which seem to be Birmingham-focused.

The adverse effects of social isolation have been the strongest theme that has emerged from this engagement process, with individuals from all demographics expressing the need for more local community hubs.



## What did the findings tell us?

Through the engagement process, we found the following:

Half of the respondents have experienced or witnessed targeted physical or non-physical abuse due to LGBTQ+ behaviour, with young people in particular describing incidents of online abuse, incidents at school or college and a general feeling of not being supported by these establishments.



I have been spat at, sworn at...there have been attempts at burning down my house...my car and van have been vandalised.

Lisa, 55-68, Identifies as lesbian



"I have been assaulted twice".

Nick, 55-68, Identifies as Gay



Young people recounted that they are able to access support through education, youth clubs, and family and friends. However, the educational support can be limited to attendees of the specific location, leaving limited options to those who do not attend or feel comfortable with these groups.

Many vibrant LGBTQ+ community groups exist within Sandwell and respondents have expressed how important these are in supporting LGBTQ+ issues.

The community explained how the groups and their organisers are a critical focal point for signposting towards healthcare services and these groups are very valued within the community.

However, it was mentioned how individuals have to travel outside of Sandwell to access more formal groups. A local LGBTQ+ community centre previously located in Wolverhampton, has been closed for over a decade, leaving many groups relocating to Birmingham, thus presenting access issues to the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community.

Seeing the community groups moving to virtual platforms over the pandemic was rewarding but the community expressed how this has often made them feel socially isolated and lonely. A strong message from the community is that they find the return of face-to-face meetings beneficial and would like more opportunities to meet with their peers.

We spoke directly with a prominent member of the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community who has worked to support the community with many initiatives over five decades, helping individuals through difficult times.

This individual spoke very positively about the changes in LGBTQ+ acceptance over the years and explained how isolation and loneliness were their most significant concerns for the community, especially amongst the 50yrs+ demographic, where much time is spent supporting individuals to access support and guidance.



The community was clear on what would benefit the LGBTQ+ community in the Sandwell area, with most individuals suggesting more local provisions.

“

More localised services for the community are needed so that travel is not an issue...to feel looked after on your doorstep, which is not too much to ask

”

Steve, 35-44, identifies as gay

“

It would be good to have switchboard help, particularly for parents of children identifying as gay

”

Julie, 69-78, Identifies as lesbian

“

Assistance and advice around the legal requirements of changing your identity seem unavailable on any organised level unless you can pay a lawyer

”

Jo, 35-44, Trans woman

“

Specific community groups, specific elderly support for LGBTQ+ people

”

Mick, 35-44, identifies as gay

“

More awareness or support  
for elderly members

”

Gilbert, 55-68, identifies as gay

“

Doesn't feel like it's specific  
to Sandwell; need more  
groups in Sandwell

”

Guy, 35-44, Identifies as gay

“

Help for parents of children  
questioning their sexual identity  
and a safe place for counselling

”

Claudia, 69-78, Identifies as lesbian

“

My college does a drop-in, but other  
than that, I do not know of anything.  
The college provision is also only  
available to students at the college

”

Sam, young person, identifies as asexual

“

Support for Transgender  
people

”

Annie, young person



## What actions could help?

**Further support for community groups:** A similar theme has emerged from the community where access to LGBTQ+ community groups offers peer support to help with issues of targeted aggression. The Sandwell community groups offer a very vital and valued service and would benefit from formal support.

**Enhanced guidance and support for specific LGBTQ+ issues:** the community often encounters issues that require more specialist support – be it from parental support, to legal guidance – and the community feels that a central hub through a formal local authority supported network would help to improve the access to specialist LGBTQ+ services.

**Methods to help address social isolation:** the community feels that isolation within the LGBTQ+ community is ever more prevalent living in a post-pandemic world. Individuals are still shielding or facing anxiety in returning to face-to-face interactions. Support to help reach the isolated members of the community would be a beneficial addition to the support provided by local authorities.





## **LGBTQ+ Engagement – The Young Persons' Voice**

Throughout this engagement exercise we have attempted to retain the voice of the young LGBTQ+ community within Sandwell. As a unique demographic with unique requirements we feel it is important to present separately the findings relating specifically to young people.



### **What were the key themes that were unique to young people within the LGBTQ+ Sandwell community?**

The general findings remained consistent across both the adults' and young people's demographics. However, the young people within the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community demonstrated more occasions of self-harm and eating disorders.

They felt the LGBTQ+ focused mental health and well-being support to help these concerns are isolated to schools and colleges, with a feeling that there isn't much available outside of educational establishments.

The young people's community expressed an interest in having a wider community network to discuss issues, find guidance and to meet other LGBTQ+ young people within Sandwell. Encouragingly, young people were aware of national online support but a more local provision would be beneficial.

This engagement exercise found specific occasions of online abuse and aggressive incidents at school, demonstrating the unique challenges young people face.

Young people also shared experiences of unfair treatment by healthcare staff at higher rates than the adults. In a similar theme to the adult LGBTQ+ community, young people felt healthcare professionals demonstrate a lack of awareness of LGBTQ+ issues and would benefit from targeted awareness training.



## What actions could help?

This report identifies general actions that will benefit both the adult's and young people's LGBTQ+ communities within Sandwell, but the following suggestions are unique to supporting young people:

A formal LGBTQ+ young people's support group. The young people felt a support group outside of educational establishments would be a great help to the challenges they face and would provide a neutral, safe space to meet people and discuss issues close to their heart.

One place to access LGBTQ+ specific healthcare guidance and support. The young people felt confused by what support is available and how to access it. They expressed anxiety around finding these services and felt a 'single hub' would help reduce anxiety around accessing services.



# What is working?

It was apparent there is a lot of valuable 'good practice' occurring within the community.



It is encouraging to see the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community having a varied selection of support networks, including friends, family, the workplace and vibrant, independent, organised community groups.



Throughout this engagement exercise, it has been apparent that, as an often-marginalised group, the LGBTQ+ community within Sandwell encourages peer support, with many fantastic individuals doing essential work within the community.



Individuals described that awareness of LGBTQ+ issues within healthcare is improving, and campaigns within the NHS have helped to support inclusiveness

# What are the Key Takeaways

From our time with the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community, we have summarised the information we have received into the following takeaways:

## **The importance of community groups and a peer network**

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- The work of the independent LGBTQ+ community groups is valued and vital. These groups act as a support network, reduce social isolation and provide valuable information on healthcare to members of the community. Many community groups are struggling with funding and the administration for managing their charitable status.
- The need for more local groups is apparent, with individuals travelling outside Sandwell to access specific groups. The young LGBTQ+ community within Sandwell has expressed the need for more specific groups outside of educational establishments to help them meet their peers and support each other.
- These community groups are vital in signposting individuals to LGBTQ+ healthcare services and act as a central information hub for the community. But they are struggling and need support.

## **The importance of raising LGBTQ+ awareness within healthcare, in particular within general practice.**

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- It has been apparent that there is a lack of consistency in LGBTQ+ knowledge and understanding within health services. The Sandwell LGBTQ+ community has demonstrated the differing standards in healthcare organisations which can reduce the willingness to engage with health services and subsequently increase the anxiety of accessing support.
- The community feels that increased awareness of LGBTQ+ issues will help to reduce the awkwardness of encounters, lower anxiety and lead to greater healthcare access for the community.
- Individuals mentioned that standardised training or targeted campaigns to help professionals understand LGBTQ+ issues will help to improve communication, increasing the community's engagement levels with healthcare.



## Support with mental health and well-being

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- Mental well-being issues are rising dramatically across the nation. The LGBTQ+ community has a disproportionate level of vulnerability and our engagement exercise shows Sandwell is not an exception.
- Alongside the more general improvements to mental health services required, a large percentage of the Sandwell LGBTQ+ community is experiencing challenging times.
- As a 'difficult to reach' demographic for many social reasons, the community requires bespoke and more specific LGBTQ+ well-being support, with a particular focus on engaging with the Sandwell LGBTQ+ young people's community.