

**Waltham Forest LGBT matters
the needs and experiences of
lesbians, gay men, bisexual and trans
men and women in Waltham Forest**

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**Research by Sigma Research
on behalf of Waltham Forest
Council and its partners**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Waltham Forest LGBT Matters was commissioned by Waltham Forest Council to gain a greater understanding of local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people's experiences and perceptions on community safety, community cohesion and customer service issues.

A total of 270 lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered people who lived, worked or socialised in Waltham Forest completed a survey that explored perceptions and experiences of community safety and crime, perceptions of social cohesion and social involvement, and experiences of using the services provided by Waltham Forest Council and its partners.

Thirty-nine of the survey respondents took part in six focus groups that explored in more depth the issues facing LGBT people living in Waltham Forest. Interviews were held with four key stakeholders to help with interpretation of the findings.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME

Personal safety and fear of crime were major concerns for many survey respondents, though no more so than they are likely to be in many other London boroughs. To maintain their personal safety many LGBT people "passed as straight" in their everyday life.

- The majority of LGBT respondents (83%) felt safe outside in Waltham Forest during the daytime, but only 36% felt safe after dark.
- More than half (57%) of all respondents felt that homophobic and transphobic harassment was a problem in Waltham Forest, including one-in-eight (13%) who felt it was a very big problem.
- Fear of homophobic or transphobic attack had led 30% to avoid certain areas, streets or parks in the borough. This fear was often exacerbated by the presence of homophobic graffiti that many perceived was not removed quickly enough.
- Fear of harassment, abuse or assault had led many to modify their behaviour when in public so as not to appear obviously lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- 10% of survey respondents had been physically attacked, and 36% had been verbally abused because of their LGBT identity in Waltham Forest. Abuse and attacks most commonly occurred in the street.
- Less than half (44%) of those physically attacked, and only 7% of those verbally abused, reported the incident to the police. While half of those who experienced physical attack and reported it to the police were satisfied with their response, of those verbally abused only 40% were satisfied with the police response.
- Many of those who took part in focus groups, and the survey, believed that the police would act professionally, and in a non-prejudiced manner, but that they were unlikely to take homophobic abuse seriously, or be able to do much about it.
- Only 30% of respondents were aware that Waltham Forest police had an LGBT liaison officer, although knowing this did make the majority more confident that the police would treat them fairly.
- Awareness of all the alternative hate crime reporting services was uniformly low.

COMMUNITY COHESION, INVOLVEMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Many participants reported little or no sense of LGBT community within the borough, which was exacerbated by the absence of LGBT community infrastructure. Notions of community cohesion were not very meaningful to most LGBT people in the borough.

- Just under two-thirds (61%) of all respondents were satisfied with Waltham Forest as a place to live, although a small proportion (9%) reported being very satisfied.
- Almost half of respondents believed that their local area had not changed much (47%) in recent years, while 39% believed it had got worse.
- Around a third (36%) of respondents were proud of their local area.
- Half of respondents felt that Waltham Forest was an area where differences between people (such as age, gender, race or sexual orientation) were respected.
- Many respondents felt that some faith groups were hostile to LGBT people and that their homophobia was rarely challenged.
- Almost two thirds (62%) of survey respondents had recent experience of engagement with a range of political, social or sporting infrastructure in the borough.
- A third (33%) of survey respondents felt that they could influence decisions affecting their local area.

USING THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY WALTHAM FOREST COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNERS

While most participants felt that the Council effectively engaged in LGBT issues when prompted to do so (such as the IDAHO event), the Council and its partners were widely perceived to do too little to promote the well-being of LGBT people in the borough.

- 30% of survey respondents felt that the Council was doing a good job, but only 12% felt that it was making the local area a better place for LGBT people to live.
- The majority of respondents had not experienced verbal abuse or physical assault when using sports or recreational facilities, or NHS services in Waltham Forest.
- Significant minorities had experienced discrimination using bars or restaurants, out shopping, or while using public transport or taxis.
- While focus group participants perceived some excellent work being done to address LGBT issues in schools, they felt that this best practice needed to be shared widely.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Many LGBT people believed themselves to be an invisible minority in Waltham Forest, a perception exacerbated by an absence of LGBT people within promotional materials, publications, or websites produced by Waltham Forest Council and its partners.

The lack of a commercial LGBT infrastructure was seen by some as disappointing, adding to a perception that the needs of LGBT people in the borough was often ignored by authorities.

While the key to achieving a greater sense of community cohesion may lie in interaction between different ethnic, faith, age, and sexuality populations within Waltham Forest, given their fears of the harassment that may ensue if they were to more openly display their identity, many LGBT people feel reluctant to initiate such interaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was commissioned by the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The overall aim was to gain a greater understanding of local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people's experience and perceptions on community safety, community cohesion and customer access. Specifically, the study sought insight into the extent, type and location of homophobic or transphobic hate crime experienced by LGBT people, their experience of reporting crime, awareness and use of crime reporting services, and perceptions of anti-social behaviour in the borough. In addition, it sought to describe how LGBT people in the borough perceive different communities, how different communities interact, their level of engagement with local community activities, and their experience of using the services provided by Waltham Forest Council and its partners. Findings were compared with other recent local surveys, including the PLACE survey (Ipsos Mori 2009) and an investigation of social cohesion in the borough (BMG 2009).

We start estimating the size of the LGBT population in Waltham Forest, before providing a brief overview of previous research into LGBT hate-crime and a consideration of existing equalities legislation and policy frameworks.

1.2 ESTIMATING THE SIZE OF THE LGBT POPULATION

It is difficult to estimate the size of the Waltham Forest LGBT population due to the absence of national data. Information pertaining to sexual orientation or trans status is not collected as part of the national census, nor in most other large-scale random household surveys. Lobbying by gay and lesbian organisations to change this situation is ongoing.

The second *National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles* (Johnson *et al.* 2001) found that 3.9% of women and 5.5% of men aged 16 to 44 and living in London had a same gender sex partner in the last five years. The figures were lower in the rest of the UK for both women (2.4%) and men (2.1%), confirming that sexual minorities migrate to large cities, especially London. Within London, sexual minorities are concentrated in inner rather than outer London. Hickman *et al.* (1997) found that 8.6% of the male population of Inner London had a male sex partner in the last five years. This figure may apply to some areas of Central London but not Waltham Forest. In the 2001 Census, 21% of people in Waltham Forest (WF) were under the age of 16 years. Hence there were 171,473 adults in WF in 2001, or an estimated 175,617 in 2007. If the proportion of people who are homosexually active is between 4% and 6% this would suggest a lesbian, gay or bisexual population of Waltham Forest in 2007 of somewhere between 7,000 and 10,000 people.

The number of transgender individuals living in Waltham Forest is much harder to estimate, largely due to the difficulty in defining transgender / gender identity. There exists no national data pertaining to the number of trans people in the UK, making it difficult to generate an estimate for Waltham Forest. However, The Gender Identity Research and Education Society (Reed *et al.* 2009) estimates that there are around 10,000 people in the UK who have presented to medical services with gender dysphoria, of whom 6,000 have undergone gender transition. Taking their estimate of 20 in every 100,000 people, we might assume there are somewhere in the region of 30-40 transgender persons living in Waltham Forest. This is likely to be a conservative estimate as it includes only those individuals who have presented with gender dysphoria, and not the larger proportion of the population who experience some form of gender variance, but have never presented to dedicated services.

1.3 A NATIONAL PICTURE OF LGBT HATE CRIME

In 2008, Stonewall published the *Gay British Crime Survey*, which canvassed 1721 lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the UK on their experiences of hate crime. They report that 1-in-5 had experienced hate crime within the last three years, and 1-in-8 in the last year. Three quarters of those who had been the victim of crime did not report the incident to the police. Experience of hate crime was significantly more common among those who belong to black and other minority ethnicities.

Data from the 2005 *Gay Men's Sex Survey* (GMSS, Hickson *et al.* 2007) showed that homosexually active men commonly suffer verbal and physical abuse associated with their sexuality, and experience substantial discrimination in their everyday lives. In the year preceding the survey, 8.3% (1345/16252) reported being physically attacked and 31.7% had been verbally abused because of their sexuality. Only 36% of physical attacks and 8% of verbal abuse was reported to the police. In GMSS 2002 (Hickson *et al.* 2003) 26% of respondents had experienced homophobic discrimination from strangers in the street in the last year; 13% from work colleagues; 5% on public transport; and 5% while shopping.

While research suggests men are more likely to be abused or attacked as a consequence of their sexuality (D'Augelli & Grossman 2001) our own work suggests women are more likely to fear attack (Sigma Research, Lesbian & Gay Foundation and National AIDS Trust 2000). In our recent research with Stonewall on the health needs of lesbian and bisexual women (Hunt *et al.* 2008), 25% of women living in Waltham Forest had ever experienced domestic abuse, including 20% who had experienced it in a relationship with a woman.

Homophobic abuse and discrimination varies both in its extent and nature, depending on a range of demographic and cultural factors (see our own review, Dodds *et al.* 2005). While school bullying is a particularly pernicious form of homophobia, it also takes on other forms within different ethnic communities. Moreover, all LGBT people are vulnerable to homophobic discrimination at work and in institutional and service settings. The capacity to resist homophobia is likely to be influenced by the relative social capital of the individual (that is, capacity for resistance is influenced by education, social class, age, ethnicity, income, living conditions *etc.*).

It is likely that the ways in which social exclusion operates among LGBT people will be very different from other equality groups. Moreover, we cannot assume that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities are homogeneous in terms of the levels of social exclusion and victimisation they experience. For example, the diverse population of gay and bisexual men is riven with internal social inequalities along the lines of ethnicity, education, migrancy status *etc.* (see Hickson *et al.* 2004, Keogh *et al.* 2004a, 2004b, 2004c).

The greatest social need amongst LGBT people is probably evident among those LGBT people who are members of already disadvantaged groups. For example, lesbians will have greater need than gay men because in society, men are generally more powerful than women. Likewise black gay men will have greater need than white gay men because BME groups are on the whole less powerful than the white majority and black men are particularly disadvantaged. Research appears to support these assumptions. However, we need to be wary of concluding that all LGBT social need resides in those LGBT people who are members of other disadvantaged groups.

1.4 THE LEGISLATIVE CLIMATE

LGBT populations have benefited from significant legislative changes over the last decade. The age of consent was equalised in 2001 and in 2002, equal rights were granted to same sex couples applying for adoption. In 2003 Section 28 was repealed and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations made it illegal to discriminate against lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in the workplace. The Civil Partnership Act which gives same-sex couples the same rights and responsibilities as married heterosexual couples was passed in 2004 and in 2005, the implementation of the Criminal Justice Act empowered courts to impose tougher sentences for offences aggravated or motivated by the victim's sexual orientation. The implementation of The Adoption and Children Act now enables same sex couples to apply to adopt a child jointly. The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations in 2007 outlaws discrimination in the provision of goods, services, education and public functions on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Moreover, the Single Equalities Bill currently making its way through Parliament proposes to make it a legal requirement for public bodies to consider the needs of LGBT people who use their services or work for them. It proposes to also allow employers to choose to make their workforce more diverse when selecting between two job candidates who are equally suitable. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission provides institutional support for new laws on age, religion, disability, gender and sexual orientation. It acts to ensure that sexual orientation cannot be used as grounds for discrimination.

The legislative environment for transgender people has also changed. Transgender people now receive statutory protection against employment discrimination under the Sex Discrimination Act (1999 amendment). However, currently transgender people who have not undergone gender reassignment surgery are in a weaker position than those who have. This is because it does not follow that pre-operative transgender people are entitled immediately to be treated as members of the sex that they wish to be. The Gender Recognition Act (2004) has the capacity to resolve such anomalies as it provides transgender people with legal recognition in their assigned gender in English and Welsh law for all purposes including the criminal law, entitlement to state benefits and occupational pension schemes. They can also be issued with a new birth certificate reflecting the assigned gender and marry someone of the opposite sex or enter into a civil partnership with someone of the same sex. The Sex Discrimination (Amendment of Legislation) Regulations 2008 adds protection from discrimination for trans people in the provision of goods, services, facilities and premises.

Also the forthcoming Single Equalities Bill currently will place a duty on local authorities to ensure there are adequate support services available in their area for transgender people.

2. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

This chapter provides an overview of the data collection methods utilised in our Waltham Forest LGBT matters study. There were two main components: firstly a large-scale, quantitative survey of LGBT people who lived, worked, studied or socialised in Waltham Forest within the previous year, and a series of six focus groups convened to add more context and detail to the survey findings. To inform conclusions and recommendations emerging from this study, we also held face-to-face interviews with four people identified by Waltham Forest Council as key stakeholders in the local LGBT community. While these interviews were important to this report they are not reported independently from the other data collection methods.

2.1 QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

A draft survey was compiled, attending to the original aims outlined by the project steering committee, using pre-existing items (whose validity had already been established) wherever possible. This draft was made available to the project steering committee and amended in line with their comments. After piloting the survey for clarity with LGBT people, it was made available online and in paper format.

The Waltham Forest LGBT Matters survey was available for completion online at a specific website <www.walthamforestLGBTmatters.com>. The survey was promoted on the Waltham Forest Borough Council website homepage, and the WFM residents magazine, and via the plasma screens in various Council locations. In addition, small (A8) promotional cards and A4 posters were sent to libraries, general practitioners, community organisations, recreational facilities, support groups and commercial venues across the borough. Paid advertising was used to promote the survey on www.gingerbeer.co.uk - an online forum and news website for homosexually active women. The survey was available for completion online for eighteen weeks from 25th February to 30th June 2009. Advertising material also stressed that a paper version of the survey was available and provided details of how this could be obtained. A large print version was also made available on request.

To be eligible to take part in the study, people had to identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (or use another term associated with non-heterosexual identities) and have either lived, worked, studied or socialised within Waltham Forest in the preceding 12 months.

Overall, we received 294 online responses and 7 paper copies (301 in total). Seven returns were excluded for technical reasons: 4 were blank, 1 was a duplicate which had been submitted twice online; 2 were repeat respondents (who indicated at the end of their survey they had previously completed it). A further 11 questionnaires revealed no evidence of living, working, studying or socialising in Waltham Forest. Finally 5 questionnaires were excluded on the basis that they were completed by (non-Trans) heterosexuals (1 male and 4 females) and a further eight gave no evidence of their sexuality.

This left a final sample of 270 LGBT people who lived, worked, studied or socialised in Waltham Forest in the last year. Of these 270 responses, 7 completed a paper copy of the questionnaire and 263 completed it online. Of those that completed the survey online 6% (n=16) had been invited to do so by someone who had already completed the survey (ie. had been snowballed). A full demographic breakdown of the survey sample can be found in Appendix A.

2.2 QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUPS

So that the experiences and needs of LGBT people in Waltham Forest could be explored in more detail, we convened a series of six focus groups with residents of the Borough. Towards the end of the survey, all respondents who lived in Waltham Forest were asked whether they would be willing to take part in a discussion group about their experiences. Those respondents that agreed to participate were forwarded to a secondary survey page, unconnected to the data they had already provided, and asked to provide contact information, and details of their gender and age. Those taking part in the survey on paper were provided with a separate focus group volunteer form and asked to return it to Sigma Research in a second freepost envelope provided.

As a result of these recruitment activities, 77 people volunteered to take part in a focus group. So that we could engage a range of needs or experiences, a series of six focus groups were convened along the following demographic lines:

- An elder persons group (5 people, aged 50+)
- A younger persons group (6 people aged 17-23)
- A men only group (9 men)
- A women only group (6 women)
- Two mixed gender groups (including 7 and 6 people respectively)

As the number of people who volunteered to take part in the focus groups exceeded capacity for this phase of the project, the gender specific and mixed gender groups were recruited by random sampling of the contacts held on our database. However as their numbers were fewer, all younger and older persons who had volunteered to take part were invited to attend. Targeted additional recruitment for the younger persons group was helped by engagement with the Youth Service at Waltham Forest Council, and a similar service run by Newham Council who also had contact with younger LGBT residents of Waltham Forest. A full description of the qualitative sample is provided in Appendix B.

Focus group participants were asked to discuss their perceptions of personal safety, community cohesion, social capital, and the inclusiveness of services offered by the Council and its partners. An interim analysis of survey data was undertaken prior to the groups, to identify areas or issues that warranted further investigation within the groups. In the remainder of this report data obtained from the quantitative survey and qualitative focus groups are presented alongside one another to provide a detailed insight into the experiences of LGBT people in Waltham Forest. Statistical data is presented and augmented with qualitative responses to help provide a context for that data.

Each group discussed: their perceptions of crime, both generally and with specific reference to LGBT people in Waltham Forest; their feelings about reporting homophobic or transphobic hate crime to the police; their perceptions of cohesion between different ethnic or religious communities and the LGBT population in the Borough; and their experience of using services provided by Waltham Forest Council and its partners. All participants were paid £20 for their time. All groups were digitally recorded and all relevant content was transcribed for use in a comprehensive content analysis. Quotes from participants appear in bold in chapters 3-5.

3. COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME

This chapter starts by exploring perceptions and fear of crime in the area, both generic and that specifically relating to homophobic or transphobic harassment. We then move to discuss experiences of crime, and finally reporting of crime.

Where possible, results from the survey are compared according to gender and age. Age groups for comparison were comprised: under 30, 30s, 40s and over 50. Mean ages were also compared. Significant findings are commented on underneath the data tables.

3.1 PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME AND FEELINGS OF SAFETY

3.1.1 General fears and concerns

Survey respondents were asked a range of questions relating to how safe they felt in Waltham Forest.

| Community safety and crime (n=269, missing 1) | % Very safe | % Fairly safe | % Neither safe or unsafe | % Fairly unsafe | % Very unsafe |
|---|-------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in WF in the daytime? | 25 | 58 | 10 | 6 | 0 |
| How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in WF after dark? | 3 | 33 | 29 | 26 | 11 |
| How safe or unsafe do you feel when using public transport in WF? | 9 | 51 | 22 | 13 | 3 |

The majority of LGBT respondents (83%) felt safe outside in Waltham Forest during the daytime, but only 36% felt safe after dark.

One-in-six (16%) did not feel safe when using public transport in the borough.

Perceptions of safety did not vary by gender or age.

The recent **Place Survey** (Ipsos Mori 2009) of a cross-section of all Waltham Forest residents revealed that a higher proportion (11%) of all Waltham Forest residents felt *very* or *fairly unsafe* when outside in Waltham Forest in the daytime compared to LGBT people in our study (6%). Likewise, a higher proportion (50%) of all Waltham Forest residents felt very or fairly unsafe when outside in Waltham Forest after dark, compared to 37% of LGBT people.

3.1.2 Concern for homophobic or transphobic harassment

Respondents were asked specifically how big a problem they considered homophobic or transphobic harassment to be within the borough, even if they had not been affected by it personally.

| Community safety and crime problems (n=268, missing 2) | % Very big problem | % Fairly big problem | % Not a very big problem | % Not a problem at all |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| How big a problem do you consider homophobic or transphobic harassment in WF, even if it doesn't affect you personally? | 13 | 44 | 40 | 3 |

More than half (57%) of all respondents felt that homophobic and transphobic harassment was a problem in Waltham Forest, including one-in-eight (13%) who felt it was a *very big problem*. Perceptions of harassment did not vary by gender or age.

When asked, 75% of respondents felt that homophobic or transphobic harassment was as much of a problem in Waltham Forest as it was compared to anywhere else in London. A fifth (21%) believed it was more of a problem in Waltham Forest than the rest of London, with the remainder (4%) believing it to be less of a problem.

3.1.3 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour

Respondents were asked to comment on their perceptions of anti-social behaviour within the borough. For each of the listed specific items, respondents were asked to say how much of a problem they were in Waltham Forest.

| Community safety and crime (n=260, missing 10) | % very big problem | % fairly big problem | % not a very big problem | % not a problem |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Rubbish or litter lying around | 49 | 38 | 10 | 2 |
| Teenagers hanging around on the streets | 18 | 36 | 36 | 9 |
| People using or dealing drugs | 14 | 39 | 42 | 6 |
| Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles | 12 | 48 | 33 | 6 |
| People being drunk or rowdy in public places | 12 | 36 | 46 | 6 |
| Noisy neighbours or loud parties | 8 | 27 | 46 | 18 |
| Abandoned or burn out cars | 3 | 8 | 57 | 32 |

Rubbish or litter lying around was cited as a problem by nearly 90% of respondents, a finding reinforced by focus group discussions. Vandalism and graffiti, as well as teenagers hanging around the streets also arose as significant concerns for the many respondents.

Follow-on questions relating to anti-social behaviour (ASB) demonstrated that 39% of people completing the survey were very or fairly confident that authorities were effective at reducing ASB. The remainder were not confident that efforts to reduce ASB were effective, or simply did not know. Nearly half (44%) felt well informed about the actions being taken by the Council and its partners to reduce anti-social behaviour in the borough. Ratings for problems associated with anti-social behaviour did not significantly vary by gender or age.

3.1.4 Fear restrictions on freedom of movement and expression

Respondents were asked *in public spaces in Waltham Forest do you ever avoid same-sex affection because of fear of the consequences?* Overall, 82% indicated they had, 11% indicated they had not, while 7% felt the question was not applicable to them (n= 267, missing 3). These results did not vary by gender.

Most commonly, people reported a fear of verbal or physical abuse, general harassment and generalised (unspecified) abuse. These concerns had lead a number of respondents to avoid certain activities, as the following table demonstrates.

| Has fear of homophobia or transphobia led you to avoid any of the following? (n=268, missing 2) | Number | % |
|--|---------------|-----------|
| Going to certain areas, streets, parks etc. in WF | 80 | 30 |
| Using the LGBT scene in WF | 56 | 21 |
| Going out at certain times of day/night in WF | 48 | 18 |
| Using public transport in WF | 23 | 9 |
| Accessing Council Services | 19 | 7 |
| Attending social groups or visiting friends in WF | 16 | 6 |
| Leaving you home | 13 | 5 |
| Going to work, college or school in WF. | 7 | 3 |
| None of these | 151 | 56 |

Fear of homophobia when using transport differed by gender - 13% of men and 3% of women reported this fear. There were no other significant gender differences. Those over 40 were more likely to fear using public transport. Those who feared going to work, college or school in Waltham Forest were, on average, younger.

3.1.5 Focus group discussion of crime and feelings of safety

Focus group discussion reinforced many of the findings of the survey, as well as providing useful context. All of the LGBT residents who took part in focus groups were concerned, to varying degrees, about the level and nature of crime in Waltham Forest. This concern had been heightened in recent months following several violent attacks that had featured in the local media. There was a general perception that violent crime against the person was fairly common within the Borough, as was burglary or theft, and anti-social behaviour. Only a small proportion of focus group participants stated they had been the victim of violent crime.

Of particular concern was the extent of anti-social behaviour in the Borough. Nearly every group discussed feeling threatened by gangs of youths congregating on the streets and acting in a boisterous manner. Walthamstow Central Station, Leyton High Road and Priory Court were repeatedly singled out as of particular concern and branded by some as 'no go' areas after dark. Several residents described feeling intimidated by the dogs that often travelled with some groups or gangs and felt that their presence was deterring them from entering areas which should be open to all residents, such as the parks and other green spaces.

Those fighting dogs in the parks though are becoming a real big issue. They are being trained to fight and attack you. They are more terrifying than the youths hanging around. They are used as a weapon. It's just the same as wielding a knife if you ask me.

Several of the longer-term residents felt that conditions in Waltham Forest had deteriorated in recent years, although some recognised that their perception may be linked to greater reporting of crime in the press, rather than an actual increase in offences. Their sentiments were echoed by others who acknowledged their perception of crime, and their fear of gangs of youths in particular, may not be wholly appropriate. Importantly, nearly all felt that the extent and nature of crime within Waltham Forest generally was no different from any other London borough, or major conurbation. In fact, several participants described worse experiences of crime, and a heightened fear of crime, when they had lived in other areas.

People's concern about crime was often associated with their own perceived ability to deal with an attack should it occur. Many of the younger participants, particularly those from black and minority ethnicities, felt confident in their ability to handle any aggressive situation they might find themselves in.

But we aren't your average faggots or pussies. If you push us in a way that makes me feel threatened then something's gonna go down. There's gonna be a problem [...] Don't think we're just gonna bend over and take whatever from you.

This was not the case for older residents, and a large proportion of women, many of whom felt very vulnerable to violent attack, which had an impact on their willingness to frequent certain parts of the Borough.

I think this fear of safety has changed over the last 4 or 5 years. And I must say, myself as an older women, feel more unsafe than I did when I was a sprightly 45 year old when I came to the Borough. And it has changed where I go and what I do. Whether I go out in the dark or whether I go to different areas. But even coming here. I came on the bus and saw this dead end street and thought, 'Oh, I'll turn back'. A few years ago I wouldn't have hesitated.

Around a fifth of focus group participants reported that they had been the victim of homophobic or transphobic hate crime in Waltham Forest (such personal experiences were not elicited by the facilitators, but did arise in discussions). On nearly all occasions this was verbal in nature, and incidents usually occurred on public transport. While many people were wary of crime on buses, none perceived more of a problem in Waltham Forest than on public transport in any other part of London. There were, as well, a significant minority of participants who were concerned at the *possibility* of being abused because of their LGBT identity. Fear of hate crime was exacerbated by homophobic or transphobic graffiti which many people felt was common throughout the Borough. Many participants believed the Council routinely failed to address the removal of homophobic graffiti within an appropriate time-frame.

There was a big Stonewall poster at the end of my street that said 'Some people are gay. Get over it' and at first I don't think people understood what it said. But then people started writing on it like and it got to a point when I used to dread walking past it every day [...] And it stressed me out in the end [...] And I was so glad when the Council finally came and it took it away. It made me feel very vulnerable because all this abuse was starting to be written on it.

Some of the participants who had neither experienced homophobic or transphobic hate crime, nor were overly concerned about it happening in the future, felt that they were not identifiable as an LGBT person. However, most reported that this may be a direct result of deliberate action to make their sexuality less visible.

Even though I do feel generally safe I would modify my behaviour so as not to become a target. When you blend in to the background then you probably feel more safe.

Descriptions of modification of everyday behaviour was very common-place, and many participants felt that they could never safely be themselves in public, routinely avoiding any display of their sexuality, for fear of homophobic attack.

Neither of us [self and partner] has ever drawn attention to ourselves, or held hands [...] I think we're become accepted by our community, but perhaps we have become accepted because we don't overly draw attention to ourselves. We don't walk down the street holding hands or whatever. I mean, I don't think we feel safe doing that anywhere.

Others simply felt that the general population were more accepting of LGBT people nowadays, and so believed they had little to fear in terms of LGBT-related hate crime. Several participants described receiving 'looks' from passers by, but had never experienced any abuse. An increase in the visibility of police or police community support officers in the central areas of the Borough had also done a lot to calm peoples' fears about becoming the victim of a hate crime. Several participants, particularly those from black and minority ethnic communities, felt that people in the area would often watch out for one another, and in doing so ensure that crime did not occur.

I feel like someone is always looking in Walthamstow, in the central part. There's always somebody who can see something in a sense and that's always a comfort. Like no one's going to 'jack you if there are three other people watching.

However, this perspective was not shared by all, with others concerned that no one would care to intervene, or be able to intervene if they observed another person in trouble.

I don't know if this is a feeling that anyone else has but I don't feel that there is much of a sense of community that I'm part of here. So if anything were to ever happen to me I'm not sure that I would be protected by the community. I've had a few [...] altercations on buses where they get angry with you and I've had that a couple of times and I haven't felt particularly reinforced by anyone.

As with perceptions of crime generally, several participants felt more safe from LGBT-related hate crime in Waltham Forest when compared to areas they had previously lived.

Coming from a Caribbean culture with so many people on such a small island then you might as well have a sign on your head saying you're gay and the homophobia there is through the roof. So compare that to coming to London and to Walthamstow where, you know, you just see everything. You see the goths and the dykes and the queens and we're all just living with each other and it just feels, kind of, comfortable to me.

In summary, focus group discussions relating to perception and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour reinforced most of the survey findings. Perceptions of anti-social behaviour as a particular concern was common across both samples, as was concern about using public transport. The finding from the focus groups that many people modified their behaviour so as not to appear obviously lesbian or gay is an important one and should be taken into consideration when viewing survey data about concern for homophobic harassment (section 3.1.2) and avoidance of specific activities (section 3.1.4).

3.2 EXPERIENCES OF CRIME

3.2.1 Prevalence of abuse and assault

Respondents were asked, *Have you ever been physically assaulted because of your sexual or transgender identity?* They were then asked if they had ever experienced such an assault in Waltham Forest.

| Have you ever been physically attacked or assaulted because of your sexual or transgender identity? (n=269, missing 1) | % (number) All | % (n) by gender identity | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| | | Male | Female |
| No | 69 (185) | 59 (88) | 81 (97) |
| Yes | 31 (84) | 41 (61) | 19 (23) |
| Have you ever been physically attacked or assaulted because of your sexual or transgender identity in Waltham Forest? (n=269, missing 1) | | | |
| No | 90 (242) | 88 (131) | 93 (111) |
| Yes | 10 (27) | 12 (18) | 8 (9) |

While men were more likely to report ever having been physically assaulted because of their gender or transgender identity, compared to women, they were no more likely to report the assault as being in Waltham Forest. This suggests that either LGBT people were equally likely to have been physically assaulted in Waltham Forest, or that women were more likely to be physical assaulted in Waltham Forest compared to elsewhere. Follow-on questions for respondents who had been physically attacked in Waltham Forest showed that 30% of cases had occurred in the last year, 63% in the last three years, and 85% in the last five years. No significant differences in terms of age were observed.

Respondents were also asked similar questions about their experience of verbal abuse (generally and specifically in Waltham Forest).

| Have you been verbally abused because of your sexual or transgender identity? (n=265, missing 5) | % (n) All | % (n) by gender identity | |
|---|--------------|--------------------------|---------|
| | | Male | Female |
| No | 25 (67) | 26 (39) | 24 (67) |
| Yes | 75 (198) | 74 (109) | 76 (89) |
| Have you been verbally abuse because of your sexual or transgender identity in Waltham Forest? (n=265, missing 5) | | | |
| No | 61 (162) | 61 (90) | 62 (72) |
| Yes | 39 (103) | 39 (58) | 39 (45) |

Likelihood of having ever been verbally abused because of sexual or transgender identity, and of having been abused in Waltham Forest, did not vary by gender or age. While only 10% of respondents had ever been physically assaulted or abused in Waltham, 39% had experienced verbal assault in the borough.

Follow-on questions for respondents who had been verbally abused, because of sexual or transgender identity, in Waltham Forest showed that half (49%) of cases had occurred in the last year, 81% in the last three years, and 95% in the last five years.

3.2.2 Location of abuse and assault

Those individuals who had experienced homophobic or transphobic verbal abuse or physical assault in Waltham Forest were asked to indicate where it had occurred.

| Location of abuse and / or assault (the last time this happened) | % (number) Verbal abuse | % (number) Physical attack |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| In the street | 67 (69/103) | 56 (15/27) |
| At your home | 9 (9/103) | 15 (4/27) |
| On public transport | 5 (5/103) | - |
| In a park / common or open space | 5 (5/103) | 19 (5/27) |
| At your place of work/college/school | 5 (5/103) | 8 (2/27) |
| In a straight pub or club | 4 (4/103) | - |
| In a taxi/minicab | 1 (1/103) | - |
| At someone else's home | - | 4 (1/27) |
| In an LGBT scene venue | <1 (1/103) | - |
| In a Council run recreation centre or public library | - | - |
| Somewhere else | 4 (4/103) | 4 (1/27) |

Verbal abuse and physical assault usually occurred in the street (67% / 56%). No one had experienced abuse or assault in Council-run recreation facilities or libraries. No gender or age differences were observed. Those who said *somewhere else* (verbal abuse) included: 'in a shop'; 'central bus station'; 'in school'; 'tube station'. The individual who said *somewhere else* (physical assault) did not provide any further detail.

3.2.3 Experience of domestic violence

Participants were asked if they had ever experienced domestic violence. Respondents were allowed to tick as many answers as applied.

| Ever experienced domestic violence (n=269, missing 1) | % (n) Total | % (n) Male | % (n) Female |
|---|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| No, never | 78 (210) | 85 (127) | 69 (83) |
| Yes, from a partner of the same sex | 15 (40) | 13 (19) | 17 (21) |
| Yes, from a partner of the opposite sex | 3 (9) | 0 (0) | 7 (9) |
| Yes, from a family member | 6 (17) | 3 (4) | 11 (13) |

Over a fifth (22%) of all respondents had experienced some form of domestic violence, most commonly from a partner of the same gender. Women were more likely to have ever experienced domestic violence compared to men. When they had experienced it, women were more likely to have experienced domestic violence from an opposite sex partner and a family member. No significant age differences were observed.

3.2.4 Perceptions of the police

All respondents (regardless of whether that had been the victim of homophobic or transphobic attack or abuse) were asked to agree or disagree with two statements concerning confidence in the police. For both verbal abuse and physical assault they were asked *If I were [verbally abused / physically assaulted] because of my sexual or transgender identity I am confident the police would deal with it seriously.*

| Confidence in the police (n=267, missing 3) | % Strongly agree | % Agree | % Neither agree nor disagree | % Disagree | % Strongly disagree |
|--|------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Physical assault | 8 | 36 | 28 | 22 | 6 |
| Verbal abuse | 3 | 15 | 29 | 35 | 18 |

Respondents were far less likely to feel confident that the police would take them seriously when reporting verbal abuse (53%), as compared to reporting physical assault (28%). The overall level of agreement did not vary by gender or age.

Due to their sensitive nature, personal experiences of crime were not directly addressed in focus groups. However, individual experiences of crime were raised and fed into section 3.1.5, on current perceptions of crime.

3.3 REPORTING CRIME

3.3.1 Experiences of reporting homophobic or transphobic hate crime

Those respondents who *had* experienced verbal abuse or physical assault were asked:

- The last time this happened, did you report it to the police?*
- If so, Did you tell the police it was a homophobic or transphobic attack?*
- If so, How well do you think they responded?*

| Reporting hate crime to the Police and the response | % (n) Reported to the police | % (n) Told police it was homo- or transphobic | % (number) satisfied with response | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| | | | Very satisfied | Quite satisfied | Neither | Quite dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied |
| Physical attack | 44 (12/27) | 50 (6/12) | 17 (1) | 33 (2) | 17 (1) | 33 (2) | 0 (0) |
| Verbal abuse | 7 (7/102) | 100 (7/7) | 29 (2) | 14 (1) | 0 (0) | 29 (2) | 29 (2) |

Nearly half of those who had been the victim of physical attack (44%) reported the incident to the police, compared to only 7% of those who were the victim of verbal abuse. Men were more likely to report physical assault to the police compared to women. No other gender or age differences were observed.

Half of those physically attacked told the police it was homophobic or transphobic, with 50% feeling that the police responded to this information very or quite well. Nearly 60% of respondents who had reported verbal abuse felt that the police had responded poorly when they were told it was homophobic or transphobic in nature.

3.3.2 Reasons for not reporting homophobic or transphobic hate crime

Respondents who did not report physical assault or verbal abuse to the police, or who did not tell the police they felt it was homophobic or transphobic in nature were asked *Why did you not report the incident to the police as a homophobic or transphobic incident?*

| Reasons for not reporting hate-crimes as homophobic or transphobic among people suffering physical attack or verbal abuse | % (n) Verbal abuse (n=95) | % (n) Physical assault (n=21) |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| I did not think there was anything the Police could do | 52 (49) | 38 (8) |
| I did not feel it was serious enough to bother with | 48 (46) | 29 (6) |
| I did not think the police would take me seriously | 47 (45) | 33 (7) |
| The police are homophobic/transphobic | 13 (12) | 19 (4) |
| I did not have any faith in the criminal justice system | 21 (20) | 29 (6) |
| I am not out / was not out at the time | 1 (1) | 0 (0) |
| <i>Other reasons</i> | 8 (8) | 38 (8) |

The main reasons for not reporting verbal abuse to the police was a belief that there was nothing the police could do (52%), or a feeling that it was not serious enough to bother with (48%) or a belief that the police would not take the matter seriously (47%). Men were no more likely to have reported verbal abuse to the police, compared to women.

Other reasons for not reporting verbal abuse to the police included a fear that reporting the incident might exacerbate the issue; a concern for the mental health of the perpetrators; a feeling that it was a 'no win' situation; previous negative experience of hate crime reporting; and not being able to contact the LGBT liaison officer.

In total, 78% of those respondents who had experienced physical assault in Waltham Forest did not report it to the police as homophobic or transphobic in nature. The main reasons for this was the belief that there was nothing the police could do (38%), or that they would not be taken seriously (33%). Compared to women, men were more likely to have reported any physical assault as homophobic or transphobic in nature.

Other reasons for not reporting physical assault to the police included more pressing concerns at the time ("just getting away"); previous negative experience of reporting crime to the police; a belief that the legal process cannot change views about homosexuality; and one respondent who felt their sexuality was irrelevant when reporting crime.

3.3.3 Awareness of hate crime reporting services

All respondents were asked a series of questions about their awareness of the different opportunities that exist for reporting homophobic or transphobic crime with Waltham Forest.

Only 30% of all respondents knew that Waltham Forest police had an LGBT liaison officer. No gender or age differences were observed in awareness of an LGBT liaison officer in Waltham Forest. All respondents were then asked follow-on questions about how Waltham Forest having an LGBT liaison officer might influence their future engagement with the police.

| Reporting Crime (n=269, missing 1) | % More confident | % Neither more nor less confident | % Less confident |
|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Does knowing that this service exists make you more or less confident that the police will treat you fairly? | 60 | 39 | 1 |
| Reporting Crime (n=269, missing 1) | % More willing | % Neither more nor less willing | % Less willing |
| Does it make you more or less willing to report a homophobic or transphobic hate crime to the police? | 65 | 35 | <1 |
| Does knowing that this service exists make you more or less willing to report any crime to the police? | 49 | 50 | 1 |

Almost two thirds (60%) reported that knowing that an LGBT officer exists in Waltham Forest made them more confident that the police would treat them fairly. A similar proportion (65%) reported it made them more willing to report a homophobic or transphobic hate crime to the police, and half (49%) reported knowing this service exists made them more willing to report any crime to the police. No gender or age differences were observed in these findings.

All respondents were told about the existence of homophobic and transphobic hate crime reporting sites where they could report crime anonymously, and about the opportunity to report hate crimes via the Waltham Forest Council website, and *Report It*. They were asked about their prior awareness of reporting opportunities, and whether they would make use of them in the future if they needed to report an incident.

| Reporting opportunity | % Awareness | % (n) who would you use service | | |
|---|--------------------|--|-----------|-----------------|
| | | Yes | No | Not Sure |
| Hate crime reporting sites (n=265, missing 6) | 19 | 56 (149) | 8 (22) | 36 (94) |
| Council website hate crime reporting form (n=266, missing 4) | 8 | 66 (176) | 7 (19) | 26 (70) |
| Report It (n= 268, missing 2) | 5 | 49 (130) | 12 (32) | 40 (106) |

Awareness of the range of opportunities for reporting homophobic or transphobic hate crime was low. Less than twenty per cent of respondents were aware of community hate crime reporting sites, 8% were aware of being able to report hate crimes via the Waltham Forest Council website, and only 5% had heard of *Report It*. Of the three, the Council website hate crime reporting form appeared as the most likely to be used in the future (66%). Less than half (49%) of respondents said they would use *Report It*, while just over half (56%) said they might use the community hate crime reporting sites.

Men were more likely than women to know about, and potentially use, the hate crime reporting sites. No other gender differences were significant. Those people who were aware of hate crime reporting sites in general, and the Council website, were on average older.

3.3.4 Focus group discussions about reporting crime

Participants were asked to discuss their perception of policing within Waltham Forest, and their willingness to approach the police if they were victim to a homophobic or transphobic hate crime. Very few participants reported that they would hesitate in approaching the police for fear of not being taken seriously, and those who did were largely older and had experienced discrimination by the police prior to the enactment of equality legislation.

I don't have any issue about it now. Years ago I would have been very guarded about being open about my sexuality with them [the police], but now I don't think it would be much of an issue at all. Things have moved on. The police are no longer the bogey men out to get gay people. They are now a bit more mature.

However, that is not to say that all expressed a willingness to approach the police were they ever to be a victim of homophobic or transphobic abuse. Most participants felt that while the police may take the issue seriously, it was unlikely any police action or prosecution would ever result from them reporting a crime. People believed that the police simply had more important things to be dealing with, particularly given the recent spate of violent crime in the area. One participant described the police response in terms of thresholds: the crime or abuse against her had to be significant enough to warrant her contacting the police in the first instance, and then had to fall above a priority threshold to elicit any kind of response from the police. While the police may wish to investigate and deal with all aspects of crime, most people believed this was not likely given the limited resources at their disposal.

It would be easy to rubbish the police but in a Borough like this, crime against the person has got to be way down the list of things. I mean this is a Borough, there's a lot of bad activity in this Borough and maybe me getting mugged at a cash point isn't necessarily their top priority. I don't want to rubbish the police because their community engagement is a lot better than if you went back even five years ago, but ...

However, concern was expressed as to where exactly that threshold for police response actually lay. Several participants described how they had been the victim of (non LGBT related) crime in the past and the police response had been limited. Some described burglary, harassment, or violent attack which, they felt, had not been effectively investigated and had not resulted in prosecution, hence they had no reason to believe a report of homophobic or transphobic abuse would be investigated in an effective manner either.

Quite recently [an acquaintance] had their car broke into outside my house, right in view of some CCTV cameras. And we rang the police and basically they wanted us to do the investigation and get the CCTV footage. And this was like property theft, and it makes you think if it was homophobic verbal abuse or something, would you necessarily go to the police. If they're not going to investigate a theft, are they going to investigate [homophobic hate crime]?

One participant, from a minority ethnic community, described the homophobic hate crime he had experienced. Despite speaking directly to the LGBT police liaison officer, and providing lots of evidence in an attempt to ensure the police proceeded to investigate the altercation, no action was taken. The poor response from the police had left him unwilling to approach them if he was ever the victim of similar abuse again, and suggested to him that alternative responses may be more effective.

And I have to say I just think it's really, really important for some gay guys like ourselves that when we lose faith in the police it can create a really dangerous situation because, you know, you have already held animosity and homophobia towards us [in the past] and then now when something does happen and we go to you to deal with it, it's always just some paperwork and nothing else. So you're like, 'well I'm going to protect myself. I'm going to kick the shit out of this guy'.

Prior to the focus groups, interim analysis of survey findings had shown limited awareness of the homophobic hate crime reporting services in Waltham Forest. As a result, focus group participants were asked directly to discuss their view of reporting opportunities. Some participants were aware of the LGBT liaison officer, but few had heard of third-party reporting sites, online hate crime reporting or of *Report It*. However, many felt confident they could find the information about reporting should they ever need it. The information was, some believed, only appropriate on a 'need to know' basis.

I guess part of it is, it's a need to know. Because I've never been a victim of hate crime I have no idea how I'd go about reporting it. I'm not going to go looking for it and it's not going to be on my radar either.

Regardless of their general lack of awareness, nearly all participants felt that the homophobic or transphobic hate crime reporting services could be valuable, in terms of providing an accessible means of reporting for LGBT people. Several participants also highlighted what could be considered other benefits of advertising these services more widely.

I think it would be good to publicise it more, both for the general confidence of lesbian and gay people, but also the public generally. The homophobic part of the public needs to know that it is not sanctioned. It might not stop a specific attack but the more legitimate and the more things like that are out there, the more they know this is not acceptable behaviour. Or those people are part of your community whether you like it or not.

However, there were a minority of participants who were sceptical about these services. A small number had used third party reporting sites before and were dissatisfied with the response they received, while others were concerned that the crime might not be treated in the same manner if it were reported by means other than attendance at a police station.

My concern is that if you're writing into one of these websites are they really going to take it seriously? If you're not bothered enough to go to the police station? It just doesn't seem like a medium that people are going to take you seriously in. And although I would use it but I wouldn't expect any result from it. With these things you email someone and you never get any result.

Despite the concerns raised by some about the way in which third-party reported crimes might be treated, nearly all participants expressed a belief that the additional crime reporting services might raise the profile of LGBT hate crime in the police force, thus ensuring that it moved further up their perceived 'list of priorities'. It was also felt that any service that could keep the police better informed about the nature of local crime should be widely publicised.

Findings from the focus groups suggest that while the police were generally perceived as approachable and professional in relation to LGBT hate crime, they were unlikely to ever make any meaningful or effective response. This was seen either as the result of a lack of resources, or a perception that the police had other more important issues to attend to. This may in part help to explain relatively low rates of hate crime reporting identified in the survey. The potential consequences of this, in terms of a lack of confidence in the police, and the possibility of

individuals wishing to take the law into their own hands, warrant attention.

3.3.5 Open survey responses about crime and personal safety

At the end of the section of the survey on crime and personal safety, respondents were given the opportunity to record any other comments they had pertaining to crime in Waltham Forest. Eighty seven respondents (32% of all) chose to do so.

To a large extent, the concerns and issues raised were similar to those expressed during focus group discussions. A feeling that homophobic or transphobic hate crime was low on the list of priorities for the police, meaning that they did not deal with seriously, was commonly reported. There was a concern from many that not enough was being done to tackle 'low-level' crime (such as theft or DVD piracy), which was leading to more serious crime taking hold in the borough. Some believed that reporting experiences of hate crime would have little impact on the cause of such crime, which they felt was caused by widespread negative attitudes and beliefs about LGBT people held by the general public, and by faith groups and young people in particular. It was, however, good for the police to be seen to be engaging with issues important to LGBT people in the borough, and increased visibility of efforts such as police and PCSO patrols in busy areas was encouraged.

3.4 SUMMARY

Respondents from both the survey and focus groups perceived crime in Waltham Forest as a significant concern. The majority felt that homophobic or transphobic harassment was a problem in the borough, although not necessarily any more so than in other London boroughs. Many people avoided certain areas, streets, or parks, or avoided using public transport. Fear of homophobic or transphobic harassment was heightened among those who felt less able to deal with a threatening situation should it arise, such as elder persons. It was also exacerbated by homophobic graffiti that many perceived was not removed quickly enough. Fear of harassment, abuse or assault had led many to modify their behaviour when in public so as not to appear obviously lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Significant numbers of survey respondents had been physically attacked (10%) or verbally abused (39%) because of their LGBT identity in Waltham Forest. However, the majority of incidents were not reported to the police and few were aware of, or had ever used, alternative reporting mechanism (such as third party reporting sites). While those who took part in focus groups believed that the police would act professionally, and in a non-prejudiced manner, they (and the majority of survey respondents) believed that the police were unlikely to take the matter seriously, or be able to do anything about it. Many perceived that the police had more important issues to deal with, and that LGBT harassment fell low on their list of priorities. Prior negative experience of reporting other types of crime had caused many to question the police's ability to deal effectively with crime should they report it again. However, it was accepted that not reporting of LGBT harassment would do little to raise the profile of the issue with the police.

4. COMMUNITY COHESION, INVOLVEMENT & SOCIAL CAPITAL

This chapter details survey responses and focus group discussions relating to issues of community cohesion, social capital, and involvement with local social and political infrastructure. Only survey respondents who had lived in Waltham Forest within the last year (n=236), were asked these questions. As analysis did not uncover any significant differences between men and women, data in this and the subsequent chapter are presented in terms of frequency and percentages only.

Social cohesion as a concept can be difficult to explore via quantitative means, and so significant attention was paid to residents' perceptions of it during the focus group phase of the study. We start by discussing respondents' general views about living in Waltham Forest, before going on to discuss interaction with existing social or political infrastructure. Findings from focus groups draw the chapter to a close, focussing primarily on issues of community cohesion.

4.1 LIVING IN WALTHAM FOREST

4.1.1 Satisfaction with local area

Survey respondents were asked *How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this LOCAL AREA, as a place to live?*

| How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this LOCAL AREA, as a place to live? (n=235, missing 1) | Number | % |
|--|--------|----|
| Very satisfied | 21 | 9 |
| Fairly satisfied | 122 | 52 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 32 | 14 |
| Fairly dissatisfied | 49 | 21 |
| Very dissatisfied | 11 | 5 |

In total, just under two-thirds (61%) of all respondents were satisfied with Waltham Forest as a place to live, although a relatively small proportion of these (9%) reported that they were *very satisfied*.

We found no evidence of an association between gender or age and satisfaction with the local area as a place to live.

Respondents were also asked *In recent years, do you think your local area has got better or worse to live in?* Almost half of all respondents believed that their local area had not changed much (47%, n=109) in recent years. Of the remainder, more reported that the borough had *got worse* (39%, n=90) than reported the feeling that it had *got better* (14%, n=19). No association was observed between gender or age and perception of changes in the local area.

In the recent **Place Survey** (Ipsos Mori 2009) of a cross-section of all Waltham Forest residents, a similar proportion (64%) reported being satisfied with Waltham Forest as a place to live.

In the **Social Cohesion survey** (BMG 2009) of all Waltham Forest residents, almost four fifths (79%) of residents reported being satisfied with Waltham Forest as a place to live. However, this survey used face-to-face interviews which probably increases reported satisfaction with the borough.

In a follow-on question, 31% of respondents had plans to leave Waltham Forest, or had done so already.

4.1.2 Pride in local area

Respondents were also asked, *Taking everything into account, how proud are you of your local area?* Around a third (36%) said they were proud of their local area, another third (32%) were not proud, and the remainder were neither proud or not. We observed no association between gender or age and pride in their local area.

| Taking everything into account, how proud are you of your local area? (n=235, missing 1) | Number | % |
|---|---------------|----------|
| Very proud of the local area | 4 | 2 |
| Fairly proud of the local area | 79 | 34 |
| Neither proud or not of the local area | 78 | 33 |
| Not very proud of the local area | 51 | 22 |
| Not at all proud of the local area | 23 | 10 |

4.2 INTERACTION WITH OTHERS IN WALTHAM FOREST

4.2.1 Socialising with other LGBT people

Respondents were asked whether they socialised with other LGBT people in Waltham Forest. Only just over half (53%, n=123) indicated that they socialised with other LGBT people in Waltham Forest. We observed no gender differences in socialising with other LGBT people but older people were more likely to socialise with other LGBT people locally, than younger people.

4.2.2 Respect for others

Respondents were asked *Do you think that your local area is a place where differences between people, eg. age, ethnicity, sexuality or religion, are respected?* Only one-in-ten (10%) of our LGBT respondents answered *yes definitely*, though another 40% answered *most of the time*. We observed no association between gender or age and perception of respect for difference between communities in Waltham Forest.

| Do you think that your local area is a place where differences between people, eg. age, ethnicity, sexuality or religion, are respected? (n=235, missing 1) | Number | % |
|--|---------------|----------|
| Yes definitely | 23 | 10 |
| Most of the time | 95 | 40 |
| Sometimes | 84 | 36 |
| Not at all | 33 | 14 |

In a recent **Community Cohesion survey** of all Waltham Forest residents (BMG 2009), more than three quarters (77%) of all respondents reported that their local area was a place where differences between people are respected (either *definitely* or *most of the time*), compared to only half (50%) of LGBT respondents in our survey.

Similarly, in the recent **Place survey** (Ipsos Mori 2009) of Waltham Forest residents, only 15% answered *sometimes* to this question and 8% said *not at all*. In comparison 36% of our LGBT respondents answered *sometimes*, and 14% answered *not at all*.

4.2.3 Interaction with Waltham Forest Council and other local activities

Respondents were asked whether they had participated in any of the following activities in the last year. These measures sought to examine the extent to which LGBT residents of the borough were engaged in local community and political (and social) processes.

| In the last year have you ... (n=225, missing 1) | Number | % |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Contacted a politician, government or local government official | 72 | 32 |
| Volunteered for a local charity or a group | 51 | 23 |
| Taken part in a Waltham Forest Council consultation exercise | 47 | 21 |
| Spoken to your Waltham Forest Councillor about an issue of concern | 41 | 18 |
| Attended an LGBT forum or public meeting | 28 | 12 |
| Taken part in a local sports club or team | 21 | 9 |
| Attended a WF town centre area or scrutiny committee meeting | 11 | 5 |
| Taken part in a Community Council meeting | 12 | 5 |
| Taken part in a Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel | 8 | 4 |
| Attended a service user of patient forum | 8 | 4 |
| Attended a meeting in relation to your housing | 9 | 4 |
| Taken part in a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme meeting | 7 | 3 |
| None of these | 85 | 38 |

Almost two thirds (62%) of respondents had experience of engagement with one or more of the listed political, social or sporting infrastructures in the borough in the last year. Volunteering (23%) and participation in Council consultation exercises (21%) was relatively common, as was contact with local elected officials (18%).

There were few gender differences, but women were more likely to participate in a patient or service user forum, or to volunteer for charities. Men were marginally less likely to participate in any of these listed activities. With increasing age came greater participation in consultation exercises, Community Council meetings, and neighbourhood watch and Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels.

4.2.4 Influence in the local area

Respondents were asked *To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?*

| To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area? (n=236, missing 3) | Number | % |
|---|--------|----|
| Strongly agree | 8 | 3 |
| Agree | 71 | 30 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 89 | 38 |
| Disagree | 50 | 21 |
| Strongly disagree | 18 | 8 |

A nearly equal proportion of people felt that could influence decisions affecting their local area (33%) as those that felt they could not (29%). We found no evidence of an association between gender or age and the perceived ability to influence local decisions.

The proportion we report as agreeing they could influence local decisions (33%) was marginally lower than in the recent local **Place survey** (Ipsos Mori, 2009), when 36% of a cross-section of all Waltham Forest residents were in agreement, in line with an average for all other outer London boroughs of 34%.

The figure of 33% for LGBT residents is substantially lower than the half of all Waltham Forest residents (51%) who agreed that they are able to influence local decision-making in the recent **Community Cohesion survey** (BMG 2009). However, the community cohesion survey used face-to-face interviews which are likely to increase agreement.

4.3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ABOUT COMMUNITY COHESION, INVOLVEMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

While there were some exceptions, the majority of people who took part in the focus groups enjoyed living in Waltham Forest. Many described how they had moved from central London for want of a quieter life, which Waltham Forest was perceived to provide. Nearly all praised the excellent transport links to central London, but were also grateful that many green, open spaces, such as Epping Forest, were easily accessible from the Borough. The ethnic and cultural diversity of Waltham Forest was valued by nearly all participants.

I like walking up and down the market on a Saturday morning. And for me, hearing about ten different languages is a good thing. It may not be everyone's thing, but I like it. And all the different vegetables there. I don't know what they are but I like the look of them! It's that kind of diversity that sometimes gets overlooked.

However, positive reflections on life in the Borough were generally countered by significant and repeated concerns about the state of the physical environment. Every group included discussion of the problem with litter and graffiti which, many felt, gave the impression of an area in terminal decline. This impression could have an impact beyond the purely aesthetic.

It is recently really, really dirty. And there's piles of rubbish that are there for months and not cleaned up. It looks and feels tatty and that's what makes people perceive that its unsafe. If you don't have respect for your Borough then you don't have respect for anyone.

The general lack of entertainment infrastructure, such as cinemas or theatres, was also a concern to many participants, particularly when the Victoria Line was suspended and access to central London was difficult.

Focus group participants held diverse views about the nature of community cohesion within the London Borough of Waltham Forest. They were asked to comment on the cohesiveness of the LGBT population of the Borough, and on how LGBT people interacted with the array of other communities. There was a general belief that a large number of LGBT people live or work in Waltham Forest, but there is no focal point for them to meet and interact. While a number of small social groups were identified during the course of the research, no commercial LGBT venue existed in the Borough, at that time. Demand for such a space was unclear. While older residents were generally keen to see a gay bar or social centre open in or around Walthamstow, younger residents were often content with the current arrangement, commuting to central London to access LGB commercial venues. A few individuals were concerned that using a local LGB venue might make visible their sexual orientation, and make them vulnerable to hate crime. Others felt that the infinitely diverse nature of the local LGBT population would make it very difficult to open an LGBT social space that met the needs of all.

However, a significant number expressed an interest in non-commercial LGBT activities, provided or organised locally. They wanted an opportunity to meet and socialise with other LGBT people, but did not necessarily feel that had to be within the confines of a licensed venue. Several described how they had experienced the mainstream 'gay' scene in central London, and were now keen to engage in other activities. This view was particularly strong among the older residents who felt under-served by the usual LGBT venues and services.

I have to say, a lot of provision is geared towards younger people and I think there is a real case to cater for older people, whatever age you want to take that from or to. I think there is a real case for an older persons group.

Younger participants also expressed an interest in LGBT social activities such as swimming clubs, outdoor or adventure societies, or sporting events in Waltham Forest, which would enable them to meet other young LGBT people.

Focus group participants were also asked to consider community cohesion more generally in the Borough, including engagement with ethnic or faith communities. Participants often began discussion of this issue by highlighting what they perceived as a highly transient population in Waltham Forest. The establishment of a sense of community was made difficult by constant population movement. That said, the overwhelming majority of participants did not perceive any tension between different ethnic, cultural or religious communities. Participants frequently described living alongside people of diverse backgrounds, and reported positive experiences of interacting with them in social spaces across the Borough. There was general acceptance that people with different cultural or ethnic backgrounds may wish to live and associate with people from similar backgrounds, but that did not necessarily result in conflict between communities.

And what you find for example is that on Saturday morning at the market it really brings everybody together. Whether they realise it or not. But certain things like that there is a common interest point and it can bring people together.

A significant minority of participants voiced concern about relations between the local LGBT population and varying faith groups based in the Borough. They perceived there to be a large number of evangelical Christian and Muslim people in Waltham Forest, many of whom were critical of LGBT people. Combatting perceived homophobia and transphobia from these faith

groups was perceived to be very difficult.

But they're religious, you can't touch them. They can do what they like. They can get away with murder. And you can't say anything about Muslims, because that's racist.

Several people raised concern about groups of young Muslim men congregating in public, particularly around the shopping centre in Central Walthamstow, preaching and making what they considered homophobic comments. These groups, and others like them, had recently been handing stickers printed with words to the effect of, 'Islamic values: honour, respect, decency. Western values: homosexuality'. This had caused a great deal of distress to those who had observed their actions, and disbelief that they were able to so openly preach such discriminatory messages.

I couldn't understand how these guys could stand there distributing all this nonsense, coming out with it as well, and seemingly weren't being challenged by the police. There's isn't a freedom of speech that overrides everything else. I was quite shocked with that.

Concern that nothing was being done by the police or Council to challenge or curb such activity was expressed by many other participants, particularly given recent efforts to combat discrimination against other communities.

You definitely feel that Islamophobia takes a higher priority over homophobia, and everything takes a higher priority over disabled people.

Some felt that the homophobic or transphobic positions adopted by some people were historic in nature and arose due to an ignorance of LGBT people and a lack of familiarity with them. Fostering a greater sense of community cohesion therefore relies on greater interaction between individuals from different faith, ethnic, cultural, sexual orientation, or gender identity perspectives.

A lot of people don't interact with gay people or don't think they know any. And so they have this perception of what they're like. As you get further in to the centre of London and the West End, people are more likely to know and interact with LGBT people and start to think 'they're quite nice people really'. There are some groups or communities that have no experience of them.

However, such interaction may be difficult to facilitate in an environment where many LGBT people feel unable to be open about their sexual orientation or transgender identity for fear of being the victim of an LGBT hate crime. It would be inappropriate to expect victims of harassment or abuse to engage directly, with those who are hostile towards them.

While widespread representation of inter-community conflict often occurred in the media, many participants felt that the main threat of homophobia and transphobia still came from the majority white British population. Many felt that although great strides had been taken in recent years to breakdown stereotypes and foster a degree of acceptance for LGBT people, a significant proportion of the wider population still expressed homophobic or transphobic views that went largely unchallenged. One participant contrasted positions on homophobic and racist chants at Leyton Orient football ground, a football team based in Waltham Forest.

The club is really shit-hot on racism and all this 'keep racism out of football'. And they've put up all these notices saying 'We will not accept racist chanting'. But they do nothing about the homophobic stuff. And I think that's something the Council can get involved with.

Focus group participants were keen to express their view that, in the search for greater community cohesiveness, homophobic views held by the white British majority in the Borough should not go unchallenged.

4.4 SUMMARY

The majority of survey respondents, and focus group participants, were satisfied with Waltham Forest as a place to live, although some felt it had got worse in recent years. There was little sense of an LGBT 'community' within the borough, although many focus group participants believed that there were a sizeable number of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered persons living locally. The lack of a commercial LGBT infrastructure was seen by some as disappointing, adding to a perception that the needs, and indeed existence, of LGBT people in the borough was often ignored by authorities.

Some faith groups were seen as openly hostile to LGBT people and many focus group participants felt that their homophobic messages were not challenged by the police or the Council. Tackling Islamophobia was perceived by many as a greater priority for the Council than addressing homophobia.

Many focus group participants believed that the key to achieving a greater sense of community cohesion lay in interaction between the different ethnic, faith, age, and sexuality populations within Waltham Forest. However, given their fear of harassment if they were to more openly display their LGBT identity, many felt reluctant to initiate such interaction.

5. USING THE SERVICES OF WALTHAM FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNERS

Survey respondents who lived in Waltham Forest, or had done so in the last year, were asked a series of questions about their perceptions and experiences of services provided by Waltham Forest Council and its partners.

We start by outlining general awareness and perception of services, before describing respondents' use of these services, and others provided by partners of the Council, including experiences of homophobic or transphobic abuse. Focus group discussions about the services provided by the Council and its partners centred more around perceptions of Council engagement with LGBT issues, rather than personal experience of using services.

5.1 THE WORK OF WALTHAM FOREST COUNCIL

5.1.1 Awareness of Council activities

Respondents were asked *How much, if anything, do you feel you know about the work of Waltham Forest Council?*

| How much if anything, do you know about the work of Waltham Forest Council? (n=236, missing 0) | Number | % |
|--|--------|----|
| A great deal | 18 | 8 |
| A fair amount | 99 | 42 |
| Not very much | 106 | 45 |
| Nothing at all | 13 | 6 |

Half of all respondents report knowing *a great deal* (8%) or *a fair amount* (42%). We found no evidence of gender or age differences in self-reported knowledge of the Council's work.

5.1.2 General perceptions of the Council

Respondents were provided with a list of six statements about Waltham Forest Council and asked how much they agreed or disagreed with each. The first three statements were intended to assess general satisfaction with the Council, while the latter three were more specific to LGBT people. Based on our previous work for Lambeth Council (Keogh *et al.* 2006), we expected respondents to feel more positive about Waltham Forest Council in general terms, than they did in specific relation to LGBT issues.

In all instances, between 40% and 53% of all respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with statements about Waltham Forest Council. However, disagreement with the statements about how well the Council was doing was less common for the first three generic statements (23% to 30% disagreed), and more common for the LGBT specific statements (35% to 39% disagreed). For example, 28% of respondents disagreed that the Council was making the local area a better place to live, but 36% disagreed that the Council was making the local area a better place for LGBT people to live.

| Opinions of Waltham Forest Council (n=202, missing 34) | % Strongly agree | % Agree | % Neither agree nor disagree | % Disagree | % Strongly disagree |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Waltham Forest Council is doing a good job. | 1 | 29 | 48 | 16 | 7 |
| Waltham Forest Council involve residents when making decisions | 1 | 28 | 42 | 21 | 9 |
| Waltham Forest Council is making the local area a better place for people to live | 1 | 32 | 40 | 19 | 9 |
| Waltham Forest Council does enough for people like me | 1 | 14 | 46 | 27 | 12 |
| Waltham Forest Council involves LGBT people when making decisions | 1 | 12 | 53 | 22 | 13 |
| Waltham Forest Council is making the local area a better place for LGBT people to live. | 1 | 11 | 52 | 24 | 12 |

We found no evidence of gender differences in relation to perceptions of the Council. People over 40 were less likely to agree that the Council was making the area a better place to live, and were involving them in decision making, but no other age effects were observed.

5.2 EXPERIENCE OF USING SERVICES OFFERED BY THE COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNERS

Respondents were first asked whether they had used any sports or recreational facilities in Waltham Forest in the last 5 years, and secondly whether they had ever experienced any homophobic or transphobic verbal abuse or physical assault while doing so.

| In the last 5 years have you used any sports or recreational facilities in Waltham Forest? (n=235, missing 1) | Number | % |
|--|---------------|-----------|
| No | 107 | 46 |
| Yes | 128 | 55 |
| In the last 5 years have you experienced any of the following problems in a sports or recreational facility in Waltham Forest? (Among those who had used a sports facility) (n=128, missing 0) | Number | % |
| Homophobic or transphobic physical or verbal abuse from staff | 4 | 3 |
| Homophobic or transphobic physical or verbal abuse from other users | 9 | 7 |
| Looks, stares or gestures which you think were motivated by homophobia or transphobia | 32 | 25 |
| Changing/ other facilities inappropriate to your transgender identity | 1 | 1 |
| None of these | 92 | 72 |

Of respondents who had used sports or recreational facilities in the Borough, 7% had experienced homophobic or transphobic abuse from other users, and 3% had received similar treatment from staff. In addition, a quarter (25%) of users had experienced looks, stares or gestures that they believed were motivated by homophobia or transphobia. Women were more likely to have used recreational facilities compared to men (67% vs. 45%) but there were no gender differences among those who had experienced problems. No age differences in use, or problems experienced, were observed.

Respondents were also asked whether they had experienced discrimination because of their sexual or transgender identity (within the last five years) in relation to a list of other services offered by the Council, its partners and other organisations or businesses operating within Waltham Forest.

| In Waltham Forest in the last 5 years have you experienced discrimination because of your sexual or transgender identity in relation to...? (n=232, missing 4) | Number | % |
|---|---------------|-----------|
| Using bars or restaurants | 23 | 10 |
| Shopping | 20 | 9 |
| Using public transport and taxis | 20 | 9 |
| Dealing with health professionals | 20 | 9 |
| Work | 10 | 5 |
| Housing and living conditions | 10 | 4 |
| Access to information about health social services. | 7 | 3 |
| Dealing with the police | 8 | 4 |
| Dealing with tradespeople and business services | 4 | 4 |
| Earnings and benefits . sig | 4 | 2 |
| Dealing with Council services | 5 | 2 |
| Using mental health services | 4 | 2 |
| Looking after children | 3 | 1 |
| Skills, training and job opportunities | 1 | <1 |
| using alcohol and drug treatment services | 0 | 0 |
| Using relationship guidance services | 0 | 0 |
| Immigration services | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 9 | 4 |
| None of these | 166 | 72 |

Almost three quarters (72%) of respondents had not experienced any kind of discrimination while using these services, or interacting with these organisations, in the last five years. However, 10% had experienced discrimination in bars and restaurants, 9% while shopping, 9% when using public transport or taxis, and 9% when dealing with health professionals.

5.3 EXPERIENCE OF USING NHS SERVICES IN WALTHAM FOREST

Respondents were also asked about their experiences of utilising NHS services within Waltham Forest in the last five years. Again they were asked whether they had experienced any homophobic or transphobic abuse or assault while doing so.

| In the last 5 years have you used any NHS services in Waltham Forest? (n=235, missing 1) | Number | % |
|--|---------------|-----------|
| No | 36 | 15 |
| Yes | 199 | 85 |
| In the last 5 years have you experienced any of the following problems in NHS services in Waltham Forest? (Among those who had used an NHS service) (n=198, missing 1) | Number | % |
| Looks, stares or gestures which you think were motivated by homophobia or transphobia | 15 | 8 |
| Homophobic or transphobic physical or verbal abuse from staff | 9 | 5 |
| Homophobic or transphobic physical or verbal abuse from other users | 5 | 3 |
| Failure to be offered or get referrals to services appropriate to you transgender identity | 3 | 2 |
| None of these | 173 | 87 |

Of respondents who had used NHS facilities in Waltham Forest, 3% of users had experienced homophobic or transphobic abuse from other users, and 5% had received similar treatment from staff. In addition, 8% of users had experienced looks, stares or gestures that they believed were motivated by homophobia or transphobia. We observed no gender or age differences in use of NHS services, or problems when using such services.

5.4. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ABOUT USING THE SERVICES OF WALTHAM FOREST COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNERS

Focus group participants were also asked their thoughts about the Council and its engagement with LGBT issues, and prompted specifically to discuss their experiences of accessing a range of services provided by the Council and its partners.

The majority of participants were satisfied with the services the Council offered, and with its engagement with LGBT issues. Leisure services and parks, adoption & fostering services, and housing services were all highlighted as exemplars of good practice for LGBT inclusion. Nearly all those who had accessed these services, and disclosed their sexual orientation or identity, had been well treated and had not experienced discrimination of any kind. A great deal of praise was also voiced for the Education division of the Council and its partners for its supportive position during press coverage of the 'Romeo and Julian' event at a Waltham Forest school in February 2009. The Councils support for the school, they felt, was a powerful message of support for the local LGBT population more generally. However, that is not to say that some people did not still perceive further room for improvement.

Yeah, the policies are in place, they're all there. Signing up to Stonewall was a really good thing but actually the implementation of them on the day-to-day level, teachers just don't feel equipped.

Some members of the younger persons group had now left education, but expressed disappointment that little was done to raise LGBT issues when they were in school.

When I was at school I would have really liked to have been part of something and had people to talk to, but I had no idea what to do because the Council were not advertising in school. They weren't saying, 'these are the LGBT youth groups', or, 'these are the lines that you can call'. And that would have been really nice if it was there. They did stuff on sexual health but that was all straight stuff.

While a small number of homophobic, transphobic or discriminatory events were described by participants, the majority of these occurred several years ago. Where negative experiences had been more recent, there was a general perception that these stemmed from individual staff members' personal views on LGBT people, and did not reflect institutional homophobia or transphobia within the Council or any of its partners.

Where significant concern was raised about engagement with Council services this generally related to inappropriate assumptions of sexual orientation or gender identity by Council employees. People described how the default position in many services, particularly social services and nursery education, was that anyone approaching them must be heterosexual.

The main problem is invisibility really. Because you're perceived to be straight. It's just the assumption really and I think that misses the point because you become invisible and they don't recognise that there are different needs and they're not meeting them.

Such a position has been reinforced by a perceived absence of LGBT people from Council-produced written information and promotional materials, including Waltham Forest Magazine. Many participants were disappointed that while diverse ethnicities were always represented in photographs or videos produced by the Council, there was never obvious inclusion of people who were gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered.

Finally, many focus group participants felt that while the Council and its partners often responded well to LGBT issues when they arose, they did little to promote or develop the LGBT community more generally. A few individuals had noticed the LGBT history month display in Walthamstow library, and the raising of the rainbow flag to acknowledge the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO), but many felt the Council and its partners could do more to proactively engage with LGBT relevant events or activities. The absence of a Waltham Forest float at the annual London Pride event was a disappointment for some, but many acknowledged any action would require the support of LGBT residents. However, in the absence of a local LGBT infrastructure of any kind, they looked to the Council for assistance in the coordination and development of a sustainable LGBT community.

5.5 OPEN SURVEY COMMENTS ABOUT LIVING IN WALTHAM FOREST

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to record any other comments that had about living in Waltham Forest. One hundred and two (43%) chose to do so.

To a large extent, the concerns and issues raised were similar to those expressed during focus group discussions, or have already been highlighted from the survey results. The lack of a cinema, theatre or other significant arts scene was lamented by many. Others felt that both commercial venues (such as pubs and clubs) and NHS services could do more to reassure users of their commitment to LGBT equality. Such a move on their part would, to some extent, negate the need for specific LGBT services or venues.

The East London Out Project (ELOP) was highlighted as a great advocate of LGBT well-being in the borough but also criticised by others for not promoting a wider range of activities for all LGBT people.

5.6 SUMMARY

While a third of survey respondents felt that Waltham Forest Council was doing a good job, few felt that the Council was making the local area a better place for LGBT people to live.

The majority of respondents had not experienced verbal abuse or physical assault when using sports or recreational facilities, or NHS services in Waltham Forest. However, there is still room for improvement in ensuring that LGBT residents are not subject to homophobic or transphobic motivated stares or gestures when using these services. Significant minorities (about one-in-ten) had experienced discrimination in the last five years, when using bars or restaurants, when out shopping, while using public transport or taxis, or from health professionals. .

A great many people praised the Council for support of the 'Romeo and Julian' event at a local school during LGBT history month in 2019, but still felt that there was room for best practice in tackling LGBT issues to be shared across schools in the borough. While most perceived that the Council effectively engaged in LGBT issues when prompted to do so (such as the IDAHO event), they do little to proactively further the cause of LGBT people in the borough.

Many LGBT people believed themselves to be an invisible minority, a perception exacerbated by an absence of LGBT people within promotional material, publications, or websites produced by the Council and its partners.

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APPENDIX A: QUANTITATIVE SURVEY SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Of the 270 valid responses 236 had lived in Waltham Forest in the last year; 17 had worked in Waltham Forest and the remaining 17 all socialised in Waltham Forest in the last year. Among the 17 respondents who worked in Waltham Forest but did not live there, 15 visited at least once a week. Among the 17 who did not live in the borough but who socialised there, 7 did so around once a week, 8 did so once a month, and 2 less often. None of the respondents studied in the borough, but did not live or work in Waltham Forest.

A1. Gender identity

Gender was explored with four questions:

- *Are you...? male / female / intersex*
- *Is that the sex you were born into? no / yes*
- *Are you a Trans person (transsexual / transgender)? no / yes*
[If yes] You said you are a Trans person. How do you describe yourself?

More than half (n=149, 55%) of all respondents identified as male, and marginally less (n=121, 45%) as female. None identified as intersex. Two (<1% of all) indicated that their current sex was not the sex they were born into (1 male and 1 female).

Seven respondents (2.5% of all) identified as trans (5 males, 2 females). They gave further detail, including:

- A-sexual • female to male transsexual • Female bodied with part masculine identity • I identify as transgendered but am still living as my birth gender • Semi-closet transvestite • Transvestite • Trans.

A2. Sexual Identity

Respondents were asked *What term best describes your sexual identity?* and offered the five options in the table below.

| Sexual identity by gender (n=270, missing 0) | % (n) All | % (n) by gender identity | |
|---|--------------|--------------------------|---------|
| | | Male | Female |
| Lesbian | 36 (97) | 0 (0) | 80 (97) |
| Gay | 53 (144) | 94 (140) | 3 (4) |
| Bisexual | 7 (19) | 3 (5) | 12 (14) |
| Heterosexual | <1 (1) | <1 (1) | 0 (0) |
| <i>Other</i> | 3 (9) | 2 (3) | 5 (6) |

The majority of men (94%) identified as gay, and the majority of women identified as lesbian (80%). Bisexual identities were more common among the women than the men. The *other* sexual identities which suggested sexual minority status included: dyke; queer; queer / dyke; homosexual; bi curious and non-heterosexual.

Of the seven trans people, 1 identified as heterosexual. The remaining trans respondents identified as lesbian (n=1); gay (n=2); bisexual (n=2) and *other* (n=1).

A3. Age

The average (median) age of participants was 38 years (range 19-63). Age did not vary by gender or sexual identity.

| Age by gender (n= 217, missing 53) | % (n) All | % (n) by gender identity | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------|
| | | Male | Female |
| <30 | 19 (42) | 20 (24) | 19 (18) |
| 30s | 38 (82) | 37 (45) | 39 (37) |
| 40s | 30 (66) | 31 (38) | 30 (28) |
| 50+ | 12 (27) | 12 (15) | 13 (12) |

A4. Education

Respondents were asked their highest educational qualification. There was no significant difference in educational qualifications by age, gender or ethnicity.

| Educational attainment by gender (n=270, missing 0) | % (n) All | % (n) by gender identity | |
|--|--------------|--------------------------|---------|
| | | Male | Female |
| No educational qualification | 1 (3) | 1 (2) | 1 (1) |
| O-levels / CSEs / GCSEs | 10 (28) | 13 (20) | 7 (8) |
| A-levels or equivalent | 18 (48) | 19 (28) | 17 (20) |
| Degree of higher | 67 (182) | 62 (93) | 74 (89) |
| Other | 3 (9) | 4 (6) | 3 (3) |

A5. Country of Birth

The majority (80%) of respondents were UK-born. Country of birth did not vary significantly by whether they lived in Waltham Forest, or by gender or education.

| Country of birth by gender (n=266, missing 4) | % (n) All | % (n) by gender identity | |
|--|--------------|--------------------------|---------|
| | | Male | Female |
| England | 72 (192) | 71 (103) | 74 (89) |
| Wales | 5 (13) | 5 (7) | 5 (6) |
| Scotland | 2 (4) | 1 (2) | 2 (2) |
| Northern Ireland | 2 (4) | 0 (0) | 3 (4) |
| Elsewhere | 20 (53) | 23 (34) | 16 (19) |

A fifth (20%) were born outside the UK. These 53 respondents were born in 29 different countries including 50% born in Europe, 19% in Africa, 9% in Oceania, 9% in North America, 9% in South America and 4% in Asia. The most common countries of birth were Republic of Ireland (6 respondents), Spain (5), South Africa (4), Australia (3) and Germany (3).

A6. Ethnic group

Respondents were asked *What is your ethnic group?* and offered the 16 categories from the 2001 UK Census. This has been collapsed to five groups in the table below with mixed Asian-White background going with Asian and mixed black-white background going with black.

| Ethnic group by gender (n=268, missing 2) | % (n) All | % (n) by gender identity | |
|--|--------------|--------------------------|---------|
| | | Male | Female |
| White British | 67 (179) | 68 (101) | 65 (78) |
| White other | 18 (49) | 18 (27) | 18 (22) |
| Black | 4 (11) | 3 (4) | 6 (7) |
| Asian | 2 (6) | 3 (4) | 2 (2) |
| All others | 9 (23) | 8 (12) | 9 (11) |

Other ethnicities included mixed backgrounds (15), and Latin American (2), Latin, Chinese, Semite / Jew, British / Jewish / Israeli, Celtic prydish, and Kenyan Indian.

A7. Religion

Respondents were asked *What religion do you currently practice?* They were offered six religions as well as *none* and other.

| Religion currently practised (n=270) | % (n) Total | % (n) Male | % (n) Female |
|---|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| None | 62 (167) | 64 (96) | 59 (71) |
| Christian | 30 (80) | 28 (41) | 32 (39) |
| Buddhist | 2 (6) | 0 (0) | 5 (6) |
| Jewish | 2 (4) | 2 (3) | <1 (1) |
| Muslim | 1 (3) | 1 (2) | <1 (1) |
| Hindu | <1 (1) | <1 (1) | 0 (0) |
| Other | 3 (9) | 4 (6) | 3 (3) |

Two thirds reported no religion and most of the rest were Christian. *Others* included "A mixture of Buddhism, Christianity, Hindu and new age", Agnostic, Gnostic, Mormon, Pagan, Spiritual faith / Kabala, and Spiritualist Wiccan. Religious practice did not differ by gender.

A8. Disability

Respondents were asked *Do you have a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?*

| Long-term illness or disability (n=260, missing 10) | % (n) Total | % (n) Male | % (n) Female |
|--|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| No | 87 (225) | 91 (131) | 81 (94) |
| Yes | 13 (35) | 9 (13) | 19 (22) |

Women were significantly more likely to report an long-term illness or health problem, compared to men. Those reporting a health problem or disability were older, on average.

Illnesses reported included mental health problems (7), HIV (7), depression (5), arthritis (4), M.E. (3), diabetes (3), back problems (3), mobility problems (2), obsessive compulsive disorder, eating disorder, muscular problems, joint problems, hearing impairment, meningitis, sleep problems, sight problems, asthma, brain injury, memory problems, endocrine problems, dyslexia.

A9. Current housing

Respondents were asked *What type of housing are you living in now?* They were offered the seven options outlined below and *other*.

| Housing type (n=270, missing 0) | % (n) Total | % (n) Male | % (n) Female |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Owned on a mortgage | 54 (147) | 52 (78) | 57 (69) |
| Owned outright | 9 (23) | 10 (15) | 7 (8) |
| Rented from private landlord | 24 (66) | 24 (36) | 25 (30) |
| Rented from Council | 5 (14) | 6 (9) | 4 (5) |
| Rented from Housing Association / Trust | 4 (11) | 4 (6) | 4 (5) |
| Hostel or temporary accommodation | <1 (1) | 0 (0) | <1 (1) |
| Sheltered housing | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | <1 (1) |
| Other | 3 (8) | 3 (5) | 3 (3) |

Just over half (54%) owned their own home on a mortgage and a further (9%) owned it outright. While a third rented accommodation, only 5% were council tenants. The 8 people who answered *other* included four who lived with parents, 1 with a brother, 1 with a partner, 1 shared ownership and one on a university campus.

A10. Area and length of time at current residence

Overall 227 respondents (85% of the total) currently lived in Waltham Forest (135 males, 92 females). Another nine (3% of total) had lived in Waltham Forest in the preceding year, but did not when they completed the survey.

The average (median) length of time people had lived in Waltham Forest was nine years and 1 month. The average (median) length of residence was different for males (8 years 10 months) and females (10 years) but there was no difference in neighbourhood of residence for males and females. However, length of residence in Waltham Forest significantly varied by neighbourhood of residence as shown in the table overleaf, which also shows the proportion of respondents living in each neighbourhood.

| Length of residence in Waltham Forest by current neighbourhood | No. | % of Waltham Forest residents | Length of residence in Waltham Forest (in months) | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------|---|---------|-------|--------------------|
| | | | median | range | mean | standard deviation |
| Cann Hall | 17 | 8 | 93 | 7-564 | 138.1 | 150.5 |
| Cathall | 6 | 3 | 50 | 14-122 | 58.8 | 36.3 |
| Chapel End | 19 | 9 | 84 | 12-608 | 162.2 | 162.7 |
| Chingford Green | 1 | 1 | 444 | 444 | 444 | -- |
| Forest | 4 | 2 | 204 | 39916 | 234.5 | 208.9 |
| Grove Green | 20 | 9 | 85.5 | 17-420 | 131.2 | 118.1 |
| Hale End & Highams Park | 1 | 1 | 540 | 540-540 | 540 | -- |
| Higham Hill | 14 | 7 | 114 | 9-612 | 195 | 193.8 |
| High Street | 24 | 11 | 138 | 6-504 | 153.1 | 122.6 |
| Hoe Street | 31 | 14 | 66 | 3-453 | 106.1 | 112.4 |
| Larkswood | 2 | 1 | 289.5 | 271-308 | 289.5 | 26.2 |
| Lea Bridge | 7 | 3 | 24 | 6-84 | 36 | 29.4 |
| Leytonstone | 16 | 7 | 143.5 | 6-458 | 166.6 | 146.8 |
| Markhouse | 12 | 6 | 123 | 86-240 | 153.4 | 60.2 |
| Valley | 1 | 1 | 553 | 553-553 | 553 | -- |
| William Morris | 22 | 10 | 78 | 39970 | 95.3 | 71.7 |
| Wood Street | 18 | 8 | 202 | 3-666 | 202.2 | 162.4 |
| Insufficient information to allocate to ward | 21 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

APPENDIX B: QUALITATIVE SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

At the start of each focus group a brief demographic questionnaire was circulated to all participants. Of the 39 people who took part in the groups, 16 were female, and 23 were male. Two individuals identified as transgender, but both were living as their birth gender. The average age of participants was 41 years (range 18-67). Participants had, on average, been living in Waltham Forest for 13 years (range 6 months - 66 years).

The majority of female focus group participants described themselves as lesbian (81%, n=13) rather than bisexual (n=1), gay (n=1) or dyke (n=1). Ninety-one per cent (n=21) of men described themselves as gay, rather than bisexual (9%, n=2).

Among all participants, 64% (n=25) described themselves as white British and a further 13% (n=5) were of other white ethnicities. Seven per cent (n=3) were of black or black British Caribbean origin, 5% (n=2) identified as Jewish and the remainder individually described themselves as mixed white and black African, mixed white and Asian, Asian or British Pakistani, and Chinese black.