

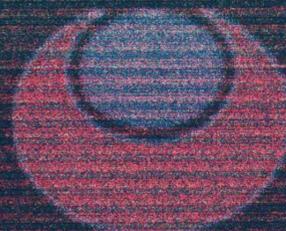
10074

# survey results 2004



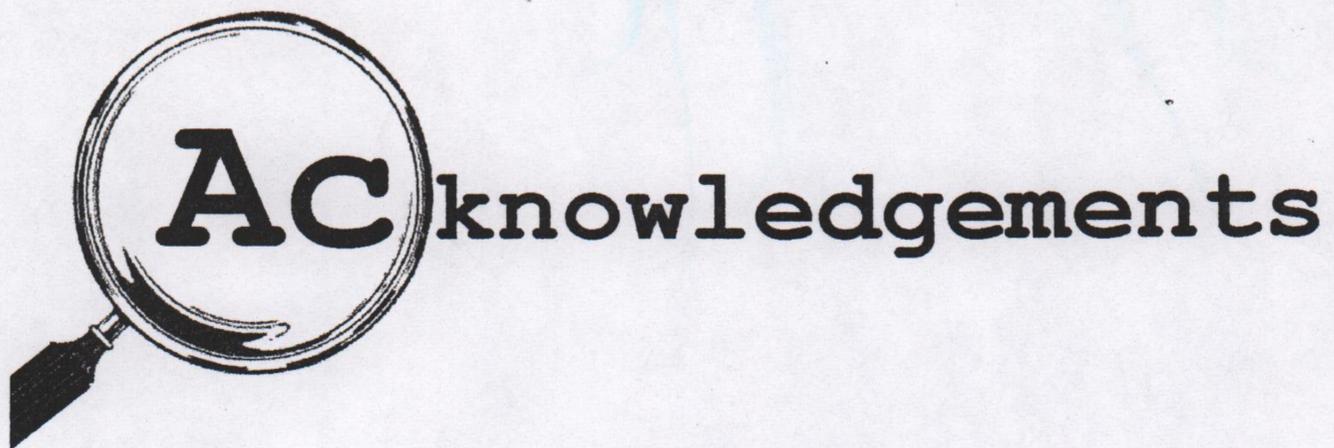
## ...i cOUnT

Identifying the needs of  
Nottinghamshire's LGBT Communities



Neighbourhood  
Renewal Unit





# AC knowledgements

*For completion by Bidy...*

Outhouse logo  
Funder logos

All those who filled in questionnaires

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

All the volunteers

Cover design by Hannah

Data analysed by Gudrun Limbrick MA (Bham) BA (Hons) Oxon



# Contents

*Page numbers to be added on completion*

Introduction and methodology

Summary

Recommendations

Mental health

Health

Employment

Alcohol

Smoking

Drugs

Safety

Services and information

Disability

Being transgendered

Being bisexual

Socialising

Relationships

Having children

About the respondents

References



# **I**ntrOduction

*For completion by Bidy...*

***Continuation of introduction including...  
Gudrun to add to link in with Bidy's introduction***

Brighton project

Methods of questionnaire distribution

No. respondents

Response rate

This report endeavours to cover the key areas in respondents' lives - work, relationships, health, social lives and safety

Throughout the report, the community is referred to as LGBT - lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered.



# Summary

## **Mental health**

Two-thirds of respondents have experienced depression

18% have attempted suicide

## **Health**

Only 10% of female respondents of appropriate age have had a cervical smear in the last 3 years

Only 38% of lesbian respondents have ever had a sexual health check

## **Employment**

Nearly a third of respondents have experienced harassment at work in relation to their sexuality

Half of part-time workers do not know if their employer has an equal opportunities policy.

## **Alcohol, smoking and drugs**

89% of respondents drink alcohol

Half of female respondents aged under 25 drink more than 20 units a week

45% of respondents smoke, many more than in the general population

Two-thirds of these have tried (unsuccessfully) to give up

40% of respondents stated they used recreational drugs

The survey respondents showed consistently, and significantly, higher drug use than the general population

## **Safety**

43% of respondents have experienced abuse, harassment or violence because of their sexual orientation or trans identity

Only 14% of women harassed or attacked reported it to the police

More than half of respondents avoid affection with same sex partners in public because of fear of homophobia

### **Services and information**

9% of respondents said fear of homophobia had prevented them using public services in the last 12 months

Half of respondents looking for legal advice had experienced difficulties

### **Disability**

A third of respondents with a disability have been prevented from using LGBT commercial venues

16% have been prevented from using LGBT community services

### **Transgendered respondents**

39% of trans respondents had experienced discrimination by the LGBT community in Notts

Amongst all respondents, trans people formed the least popular group

### **Bisexual respondents**

Bisexual respondents demonstrated higher levels of mental health problems than other respondents

46% of female bisexual respondents had experienced discrimination by LGBT people in Notts because of their sexual orientation

### **Relationships**

Half of respondents were in a relationship at the time of the survey

Having multiple partners is most common amongst bisexual male respondents

### **Having children**

15% of respondents are thinking of having children

19% of respondents already have children



# Recommendations

## **1. Information**

For members of the community who both use and do not use the LGBT Scene, and those in the future, greater information is needed about events and services. A directory is a popular idea but, to be accessible to all, this needs to be available more widely than simply to those already in contact with venues and services. A web-based version would be ideal. Putting together such a directory will need joint-working with a wide variety of agencies and venues. Once functional, the site could also be used to convey palatable and appropriate health information, for example.

## **2. Health**

There are a number of important health issues many of which affect primarily (although by no means exclusively) women under the age of 25. Tackling these issues and the complex array of causal factors effectively warrants joint working between the community and primary care trust and the health education authority.

## **3. Safety – *awaiting police-based survey***

## **4. Inclusion**

Joint work between existing LGBT groups, venues and other service providers to improve inclusion of groups such as transgendered people, bisexual people, members of black and ethnic minority communities, people with disabilities and other minority groups within the LGBT communities. Effective consultation will be needed with groups to establish their needs and views on inclusion.

## **5. Task co-ordination**

The four recommendations listed represent a considerable amount of work and will warrant effective joint working with a wide range of agencies. A dedicated post is needed to co-ordinate the activity and support the necessary capacity building within the LGBT voluntary and community sector.



# Me ntal health

**Two-thirds of respondents have experienced depression**

**18% have attempted suicide**

-----

The Depression Alliance (2004) estimates that 1 in 5 people (approximately 20%) will experience depression at some point in their lives. 62% of our respondents said that they had ever suffered from depression. Taking bisexual men alone, this rises to an astonishing 88%. There are, of course, many factors involved in experiencing depression, those related to sexuality or homo/transphobia may be just one element. However, the extremely high level of depression experienced by our respondents is unlikely to be simply a coincidence.

### ***Suicide and self-harm***

43% of respondents said that they had had thoughts of suicide. For 18% of these, thoughts had turned into action with the respondents attempting suicide. Attempted suicide was most common amongst lesbian respondents (26%) and bisexual male respondents (18%). 16% of gay men and 8% of both female bisexual respondents and transgendered respondents had attempted suicide.

Carrying out self-harm was also more common amongst lesbian respondents (18%). It was also high amongst transgendered respondents (15%) and bisexual female respondents (12%). Overall, 12% of respondents had ever self-harmed. In comparison, the Mental Health Foundation (2003) estimate that 1 in every 130 people in the general population have ever self-harmed.

### ***Mental health services***

22% of respondents feel that they need counselling or therapy now - a further 12% are unsure about whether they do or not. Of those who do feel they need counselling, 44% would prefer a service which is specifically for the

LGBT communities.

47% of respondents had seen a counsellor or a therapist in the past. 30% of them felt that being LGBT had been inappropriately seen as contributing to their problems.

A Mind (1996) fact sheet on lesbians, gay men, bisexual and mental health makes the case that it is not being lesbian, gay or bisexual which is, in itself the cause of mental health issues:

*“Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals face particular pressures living in a heterosexist society but this does not mean that they are generally vulnerable or unstable. It does, however, mean that discrimination is one issue which can be highly detrimental to lesbian and gay mental health.”*

### ***Mental health institutions***

8% of respondents had been admitted to a mental health institution. 1% of all respondents had been admitted to a mental health institution against their will. There is little difference between female and male respondents in this issue but there appears to be a significant difference between those respondents who are transgendered. 23% had been admitted to a mental health institution, for 15% of transgendered respondents, this was against their will.



Only 10% of female respondents of appropriate age have had a cervical smear in the last 3 years

Only 38% of lesbian respondents have ever had a sexual health check

-----

### ***Women's sexual health***

It is recommended that women aged between 20 and 64 have a cervical screen (a smear) every three years. Of the female respondents aged between 25 and 64, only 10% had done so in the last three years.

It can also be noted that 29% of lesbian respondents have had a relationship with a member of the opposite sex in the past and 21% of female respondents are bisexual. Thus, while there is disagreement about the precise risks of cervical cancer for women who have never had sex with men, we know that 40% of our respondents have had, or may have, sex with men and 30% have not had cervical smears.

*"Lesbians are often told that they do not need smears, and do not see themselves at risk of cervical cancer. This idea amongst health care workers springs from studies which found that nuns have a very low risk of cervical cancer. The assumption is that nuns do not have sex, and if lesbians do not have sex with men, they are somehow equivalent to nuns in their risk of developing cervical cancer... The wart virus can be passed on in woman to woman sex"*

Bailey 1996

Women who do not have children (specifically who do not breast feed children) are at greater risk of breast and ovarian cancer. 49% of respondents who have not had children were not aware of this.

62% of lesbian respondents have never had a sexual health check in comparison with 15% of female bisexual respondents. However, this does not mean that sexually transmitted or vaginal infections are not in the lesbian community as can be seen from the table on the following page and for bisexual respondents, the levels of STIs are higher.

**% of female respondents:**

	Lesbian respondents	Female bisexual respondents
Thrush	34.4	34.6
Chlamydia	1.1	19.2
Cystitis	10.8	11.5
Gonorrhoea	2.2	11.5
Bacterial vaginosis	2.2	11.5
Genital warts	4.3	7.7
Syphilis	2.2	7.7
NSU	1.1	7.7
Hepatitis A	1.1	3.8
Hepatitis B	1.1	3.8
Hepatitis C	1.1	3.8
PID	1.1	3.8
Trichomoniasis	1.1	3.8
HIV	0	3.8

It is important to note that many STIs, such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea may have no symptoms for women and so they may be completely unaware they have it without formal testing.

24% of the lesbian respondents and 42% of the female bisexual respondents had ever had an HIV antibody test. Of all the female respondents, one reported having had a positive test, a bisexual woman.

60% of female respondents would like to know more about sexual health for lesbians and other women who have sex with women. 17% worry about HIV when they have sex with women and 24% worry about STIs when they have sex with women.

***Men's health***

75% of the male bisexual respondents had ever had an HIV antibody test. For gay male respondents, the percentage falls to 58%. None of the male bisexual respondents reported having had a positive test in comparison with 4% of the gay male respondents.

50% of male respondents have been vaccinated against Hepatitis B or know that they are immune. 30% have not been vaccinated or are unsure.

30% have been vaccinated against hepatitis A.

2,000 men are diagnosed with testicular cancer each year in the UK. It is the commonest cancer affecting young men between 20 and 34 years old. 66% of male respondents have examined their testicles for lumps within the last year. 58% said that their GP or practice nurse had not raised the issue of testicular cancer with them.

### ***GP practices***

31% of female respondents have told their GP about their sexuality. This compares with 53% of male and transgender respondents. Additionally, a further 14% are not sure if they are out to their GP or not.

50% of respondents would prefer a GP practice that was specifically geared up to LGBT people. However, only 15% felt that LGBT friendliness was a factor in selecting their current GP practice.

Interestingly, it is the bisexual male respondents who, as a group, are most keen on a specific LGBT GP service with 56% stating a preference. Only 23% of transgendered respondents wanted a specific LGBT GP service.

19% of respondents are not confident that their GP has a non-judgmental approach to LGBT people and 28% have not confident that their GP wouldn't disclose their LGBT details to life assurance companies or employers.

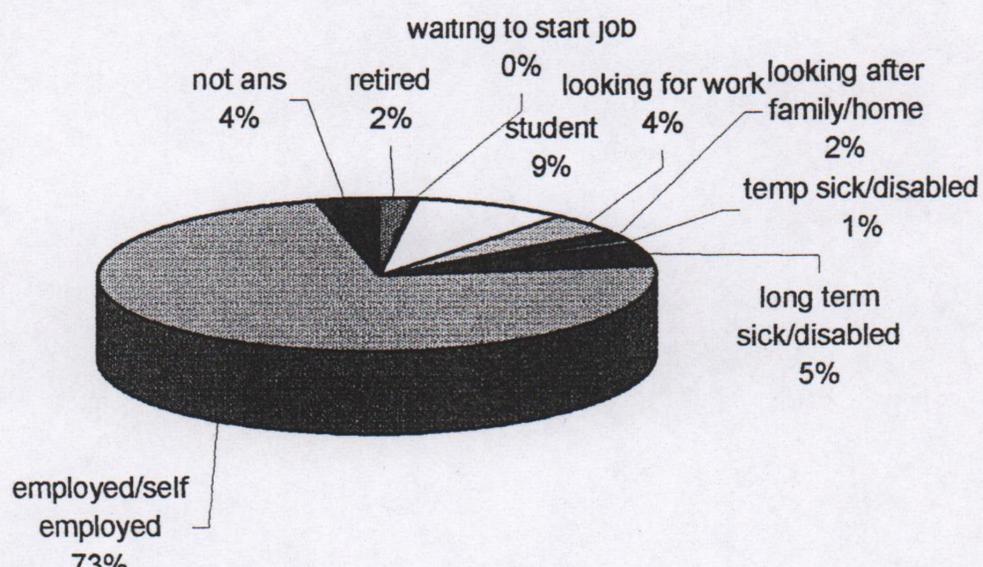
# Employment

Nearly a third of respondents have experienced harassment at work in relation to their sexuality

Half of part-time workers do not know if their employer has an equal opportunities policy.

Work is a key area of the lives of most people at some point during their life. Because of the amount of time spent at work and the importance of earning an income, any problem can have a very significant impact on an individual. It is also important to recognise that, in many work situations, people work in close physical proximity to others for a large proportion of the day. If there are problems in terms of getting on, this can be immense.

Amongst our respondents, 73% were in employment at the time of completing the questionnaire.



## Work-based harassment and abuse

Harassment and abuse at work can take many forms from offensive jokes in the staff canteen, for example, to being passed over for promotion or being pressured to leave a team.

27% of respondents said that they had experienced abuse, harassment or discrimination at work because of being LGBT. Taking only the female

respondents, the proportion rises slightly - to 30%.

In total, 48% of those respondents experiencing harassment, abuse or discrimination had reported it to their employees. However, there is a significant difference between the genders. Only 34% of male respondents reported in comparison with 60% of female respondents.

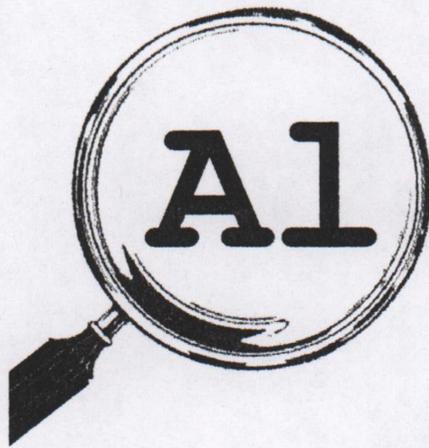
### ***Equal opportunities policies***

63% of respondents know that their employers have equal opportunities policies that, specifically, would protect them as an LGBT person. However, this proportion falls to 50% for part-time workers suggesting that they may have less protection in the work-place.

A significant 80% of respondents did not feel that the terms and conditions of their employment offered equal benefits to same-sex partners as to heterosexual partners or were unsure that they did so. This covers key considerations such as special leave and pensions.

### ***Union membership***

37% of respondents were members of a union or professional body. However, those that were member had confidence that their union would support them in relation to LGBT issues - 75% felt they would have their union's support. Additionally, 53% said that their union had an active group for LGBT people or LGBT issues.



# Alcohol

89% of respondents drink alcohol

Half of female respondents aged under 25  
drink more than 20 units a week

-----

The Health Survey for England (2002) gives a very clear picture of the drinking patterns of the general population. It is thus possible to make a comparison between the LGBT respondents' answers in this survey and the general population. The result suggests that there is some cause for concern.

Taking the general population of women, 13% stated that they do not drink alcohol. For the female respondents in this survey, only 4% said that they did not drink. For the general population of men, the percentage not drinking was 9%, for this survey, it was 3% suggesting that there are higher levels of alcohol use overall in the LGBT population of Notts.

### ***Drinking to excess***

The recommended weekly alcohol limit for women is 14 units (7 pints of lager, 14 glasses of wine). For men, the limit is 21 units (10 and a half pints of lager or 12 glass of wine or single spirits). 41% of the respondents in this survey were drinking more than 20 units - 43% of female respondents and 42% of male respondents. In the general population of England, 9% of women and 30% of men were drinking more than 21 units a week. The differences in these higher levels of alcohol consumptions between the survey respondents and the general population are striking, but more so amongst females. Amongst survey respondents, 12% of women and 5% of men gave drinking levels of more than 60 units a week.

"I am hoping to see a day and night LGBT venue for people who want an alternative to drinking and smoking. A juice bar with games?"

25-34 yr old male respondent

It is younger respondents who exhibit the highest alcohol use and particular younger women. 51% of female respondents and 44% of male respondents aged under 25 gave levels of more than 20 units a week in comparison with 34% of the general male population aged under 25 and 16% of the general female population aged under 25.

Many reasons have been put forward in other research studies for high levels of drinking including the fact that safe social spaces for LGBT communities are generally pubs and clubs; the stress of living in a homophobic society and the stress of hiding one's own sexuality from family, friends and colleagues.

There are also theories about the high level of drinking amongst lesbians which include lesbian safe spaces being focused on pubs but also other ideas:

*"lesbians are less accepting of socially ascribed gender roles. In white western society women are not supposed to get drunk or to drink very much; they are not supposed to drink certain drinks in certain contexts or behave in certain ways when they do drink. Lesbians tend to break these taboos.*

*"Research suggests that heterosexual women significantly reduce the amount they drink as they get older. This seems to be another area in which lesbians confront role definition because their drinking does not reduce in this way"*

Malley 1994



# Smoking

45% of respondents smoke, many more than in the general population

Two-thirds of these have tried (unsuccessfully) to give up

-----

As with alcohol use, the Health Survey for England (2002) gives us comparative figures with which to examine the answers of our respondents in Notts.

45% of this survey's respondents smoke regularly - 47% of female respondents and 41% of male respondents. In the general population, the equivalent figures are 26% for women and 27% for men.

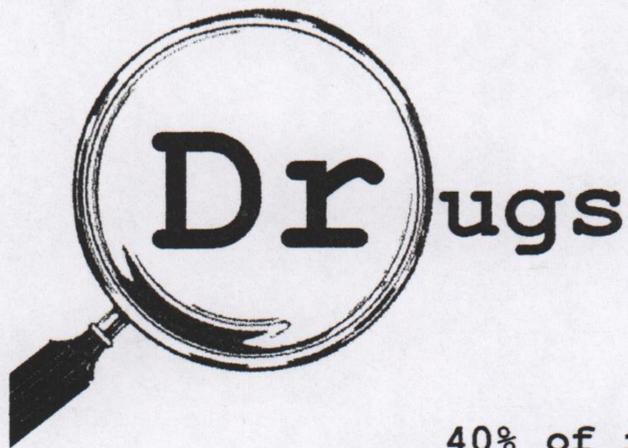
And this pattern of higher than average levels of smokers is also true when looking only at those aged under 25. In the general population, 35% of women aged under 25 smoke as do 33% of men. Amongst the respondents in this survey, 58% of the women aged under 25 smoke as do 50% of the male respondents.

67% of respondents had tried to give up and failed, 40% had given up and started again. 37% said that they would be interested in an LGBT 'stop smoking' course.

## ***Patterns and causes***

This is a very similar pattern to that of alcohol use. While levels, in comparison to the general population, are higher for both genders and across all age groups, it is in the young female population that differences are most pronounced.

This is certainly not exclusive to this survey as high levels of alcohol use and smoking have been found in other region-based LGBT studies (in Birmingham and Brighton, for example). It may well be the reason behind high levels of smoking are closely linked to those which have been put forward to explain high levels of alcohol use - safe social spaces being gay pubs and clubs and the stress of homophobia.



# Drugs

40% of respondents stated they used recreational drugs

The survey respondents showed consistently, and significantly, higher drug use than the general population

-----

**Declared drug use in last month (% of total):**

	General population all age groups	LGBT Notts all age groups	General population 16-24 yr olds	LGBT Notts 16-24 yr olds
amphetamines	0.6	7.0	1.7	10.9
amyl nitrite (poppers)	0.6	14.7	1.7	21.9
cannabis	6.7	25.3	16.2	37.5
cocaine	0.9	3.7	1.9	9.4
ecstasy	0.9	10.6	2.6	14.1
heroin	0.1	1.1	0.1	1.6
LSD	0.1	2.6	0.3	4.7
magic mushrooms	0.1	4.0	0.5	9.4

The table shows respondents' answers when asked which drugs they had taken in the previous month and a comparison with findings from the general population (British Crime Survey 2003/4).

Without exception, in the drugs listed, this survey found *much* higher levels of drug use than in the general population. For example, in terms of cocaine, 0.9% of the general population had used it in the previous month, 3.7% of the LGBT Notts respondents had used it. For those aged under 25, the figures are 1.9% and 9.4% respectively.

Learning more about the drug use of under 25 year olds and reducing it is a issue. The government published a ten-year strategy to tackle drug use in 1998, which included the following targets:

*To reduce the proportion of people under the age of 25 reporting the*

*use of Class A drugs by 25 per cent by 2005 (and by 50 per cent by 2008).*

*To reduce the availability of Class A drugs by 25 per cent by 2005 (and by 50 per cent by 2008).*

It is important to note that the 'i count' questionnaire listed a bogus drug. This was to measure over-reporting. None of the respondents said that they had used this bogus drug in the last month. This does not indicate any over-reporting by respondents.

In addition to the very high levels of drug use shown in the table above, 4% of respondents said that they had used viagra in the last month, 1% said they had used steroids, 1% ketamine and 1% ghb.



43% of respondents have experienced abuse, harassment or violence because of their sexual orientation or trans identity

Only 14% of women harassed or attacked reported it to the police

More than half of respondents avoid affection with same sex partners in public because of fear of homophobia

- - - - -

50% of female respondents, 37% of male respondents and 46% of trans respondents have experienced abuse, violence or harassment outside the home due to their sexual orientation or trans identity at some point over the last five years.

While a high percentage, 40%, of the male respondents reported the matter to the police, only 14% of the female respondents did so. Of those who did reports matters related to sexual orientation or trans identity to the police, views on the police response was mixed. 22% of respondents thought the police responded poorly, 32% thought they responded very well.

*"I don't think the police are really bothered about homophobic attacks. I would personally have found it beneficial if when reporting an incident I had been given info relating to some sort of support service for LGBT."*

30% of those experiencing such incidents felt that they had no support at all - either from informal support networks or formal support services. 10% felt that they did receive support from formal services.

The most common reason given for not reporting matters to the police was a fear of a homophobic reaction (49%). Additionally, 47% said they believed they would not be taken seriously by the police.

Asked what change they would like to see that would encourage reporting, 47% felt an LGBT liaison officer was needed.

### ***Fear of homophobia***

56% of female respondents and 53% of male respondents said they avoid physical affection with their same sex partner in public because they fear homophobia. Further 11% of respondents felt that fear of homophobia had affected their health.

"Better police and security systems needed in venues and on the scene"

20% of female respondents (and 8% of male respondents) said that they felt unsafe in their own neighbourhood at night. 12% said that fear of homophobia had lead them to avoid taking part in local neighbourhood activities.

"Have to be careful walking at night esp if not in a gay group of people."

Male respondent

Additionally, 17% of female respondents and 9% of male respondents said that they felt unsafe around LGBT venues - when arriving or leaving.

### ***Places to be avoided***

When asked if there were areas in town which were avoided because respondents considered them to be dangerous or intimidating, 52% of respondents said that there were (59% of female respondents).

Of areas mentioned, St Ann's is the most commonly avoided (by 17% of respondents); followed by the whole of the city centre (11%) and Meadows (9%).



# Services & communication

9% of respondents said fear of homophobia had prevented them using public services in the last 12 months

Half of respondents looking for legal advice had experienced difficulties

-----

## *Services*

Asked whether a fear of homophobia had prevented them from accessing public services over the previous 12 months, 9% said that it had. And 49% of respondents who had sought legal advice on LGBT issues had experienced difficulties.

25% of respondents have used an LGBT support service, wither in Nottingham or elsewhere. The majority of respondents, 80%, said that they would find a directory of LGBT services useful.

"I tend to feel that when you are discussing services that statutory authorities provide for LGBT people, you tend to get what you are given rather than what you need"

## *Consultation*

Apart from funding for LGBT services, one of the most common ideas for improvement from respondents was having consultation with the LGBT so that services and policy-makers could learn from the LGBT community.

As respondents were asked through a questionnaire in this survey, it is perhaps unsurprising that this group felt that future consultation should be carried out by questionnaire (58%). 45% also said that they would like consultation through LGBT meetings and forums.

## ***Voting***

For a minority groups which experiences a degree of homophobia and fear of homophobia it could, perhaps, that this would be a group which, more than others, exercises its democratic right to vote. However, this does not appear to be the case.

A high proportion are registered to vote - 83% of respondents overall. Respondents were asked how they had voted in the last general, council and European elections in Nottinghamshire and so, to incorporate these elections, only those respondents who have lived in Nottinghamshire for the last 4 years have been taken into account.

Voting in the last European elections is low - 16% but it increases for local and general elections. 22% of 22 - 25 year olds voted in the last general elections together with 36% of those aged between 25 and 34.

33% of 22 - 25 year olds voted in the last council elections along with 36% of those aged between 25 and 34.

## ***Information***

"There is difficulty in communication. No form of media available. You have to go to a LGBT venue to get info openly. Lots of people don't like this and don't like the scene so don't get info. A mailing list / website would be good."

### ***The most commonly cited sources of LGBT information:***

Pink Paper	33%	(free national weekly – mixed readership)
Diva	21%	(national monthly - female readership)
I'm Free	20%	(free local newsletter - mixed readership)
Gay Times	16%	(national monthly - mainly male readership)
Midland Zone	10%	(free regional monthly - mixed readership)

Not more than a third of respondents get their information from any single source which can bring difficulties of communication.

Preferred sources of information were local LGBT press (40%); a local LGBT website (40%); friends (35%) and fliers and newsletters (33%).



# Disability

A third of respondents with a disability have been prevented from using LGBT commercial venues

16% have been prevented from using LGBT community services

-----

11% of respondents considered themselves to be in some way disabled. In total, 6% of respondents were not working because of their illness or disability.

Of those respondents with a disability, 29% said that they had been prevented from using LGBT commercial venues - gay pubs and clubs - because of their disability. The most common reasons were given as smoke filled environments and the lack of toilets suitable for people with disabilities.

Additionally, 16% said that they had been prevented from joining LGBT community groups or using the services they provided because of their disability. The most common reasons given was the physical inaccessibility of the venue—ramps or lifts being needed.

4% of respondents said that they felt they had experienced discrimination by other LGBT people because of their disability.

*"Pride this year was excellent, one of the few times I felt the whole community had been included. Even though disabled needs are starting to be recognised it can still improve on the basics of accessibility and inclusivity - can learn from the Pride Committee."*



# Being transgendered

39% of trans respondents had experienced discrimination by the LGBT community in Notts

Amongst all respondents, trans people formed the least popular group

-----

*“Gender Identity Disorder is a tragically misunderstood medical condition ... it's treatment is highly successful and cost-effective when properly managed ... but ignorance and the false stereotypes of decades have led to a legal and social framework which is unjust to the point of pure spitefulness”*

Press for Change 2004

This survey attracted 13 transgendered respondents. This is a low number - representing 5% of the total number of respondents. However disappointing we may regard such a low proportion, this survey has fared relatively well in terms of the trans representation in comparison with other surveys.

For example the 2001 Brighton survey (Count Me In), achieved a trans representation of just 3%. The Birmingham 2002 report (Pink Shield) achieved only 1%. What this suggests is that these surveys are not adequately reaching out to, or accessible to, trans people and so we still have much to learn.

A key factor is that, while the abbreviation 'LGBT' has gained credence in some areas and organisations, this does not necessarily mean that the four strands - lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender - always sit well together. A transgender person who is straight, for example, may not wish to frequent gay venues and organisations and thus will not be reached by surveys which focus on users of gay community services. A common mistake is the idea that if we add the 'T' to 'LGBT', the service, organisation or survey, will be as accessible to transgendered people as it is to others and that transgendered people will actively want to use it..

### **Complex issues**

The other factor is that, for a society so used to their being people born women and people born men and nothing else, the issue of transgenderism is extremely complex. In our small sample, we have people who are transgender male to female, transgender female to male and those who do not wish to use those structured labels. We have people who are planning for or waiting for operations, those who have had operations and those who have no intention of having operations but who live as someone of what we simplistically call 'the opposite sex'. We have people for whom being transgendered is a key part of their life and others for who it is a side issue. We have trans respondents who are bisexual, straight, lesbian and gay. We have some people who terms themselves transgendered, some transsexual and some trans and others who would not use those terms about themselves. Trying to put all these people together into one homogeneous group is not realistic.

However, that said, the role of this survey is to bring out issues to aid our understanding. For this reason, we have, on occasion, made broad generalisations about transgendered respondents where it seems appropriate as we have for other groups of respondents.

*"There are already some good services and support groups for transgender people. I would like to see these groups and other gay community groups come together in a holistic community more, like at Pride".*

Trans respondent

### **Stereotypes**

There is a broad belief that all trans people are unhappy people beset by problems. This did not come through in this survey. The people who did respond listed very few problem areas in their lives, showed relatively low levels of depression (31% in comparison with 39% of non-trans lesbian respondents for example), experienced relatively low levels of harassment and discrimination at work. This does not mean that this does not happen, simply that it is entirely possible to be both trans and to reach a good place in your life!

What the sample does suggest however, is that it is not always easy to get to

that place. None of the trans respondents, for example, said that they found it easy to build their own friendship networks. This compares with 17% of all respondents who said they found it easy.

Another misconception is that many trans people in Nottingham, move to Nottingham because of the services available there. Again, this was not demonstrated by our small sample, 80% of whom were born in Nottingham.

### ***Relationship with the LGB community***

A key area of concern is the relationship with the LGB community. As has already been said, adding 'T' to 'LGB' does not necessarily make an inclusive community and this survey bore this out.

All respondents were asked what their sense of community attachment was to other groups of people. Trans respondents said they felt a strong sense of attachment to all other groups, particularly lesbians, bisexuals and straight women. All the other groups - lesbians, bisexuals and gay men, did not feel a strong sense of community attachment to trans people. In fact, no other group was as unpopular - including straight people. Perhaps demonstrating this 'unpopularity', 39% of trans respondents said that they had experienced discrimination from LGBT people because of being transgendered.

"Nottingham services would benefit from listening to the community and putting better resources in place"

Trans respondent



# Being bisexual

**Bisexual respondents demonstrated higher levels of mental health problems than other respondents**

**46% of female bisexual respondents had experienced discrimination by LGBT people in Notts because of their sexual orientation**

-----

17% of the survey respondents described themselves as bisexual - 36% being male, 58% female and 7% transgender (male to female). While this proportion may not reflect the bisexual community as a whole, this is, a greater proportion than other similar surveys have achieved. For example, in the Brighton 2001 survey 7% identified as bisexual and in the Birmingham 2002 survey 6% identified as such.

*"Good to see this survey is being done. Bi invisibility a problem, even in this questionnaire. Bi invisibility is probably much more noticeable to those of us who identify as bi."*

Female bisexual respondent

## **Myths**

There are many myths about the bisexual community. One of these is that bisexual people simply do not have the same levels of problems as lesbian and gay people because they can 'blend into the background'. They can identify as straight when need be so they don't have to face the harassment and discrimination that gay people face.

This survey suggests that this simply isn't the case. For example, 19% of bisexual respondents experienced harassment, abuse or discrimination in the workplace. 31% of bisexual respondents had experienced abuse, violence or harassment outside the home because of their sexuality. These figures may not be as high as for the rest of the LGBT communities but they are still disturbingly high.

### ***Mental health***

62% of respondents experienced depression. The highest level (88%) was found amongst male bisexual respondents. The level of female bisexual respondents experiencing depression (67%) was marginally higher than for lesbian respondents. Similarly, bisexual men were the group with the highest level of mental health services use (38%) and they also demonstrated high levels of attempted suicide (19%). Far from finding an easy way through life, bisexual people appear to be experiencing higher levels of depression than in the rest of the LGBT communities.

### ***LGBT specific services***

56% of male bisexual respondents and 42% of female bisexual respondents wanted GP services specific to them as an LGBT person. This compares with 44% of lesbian respondents and 53% of gay male respondents wanting LGBT specific GP services.

### ***Relationship with the rest of the LGBT community***

Only 17% of lesbian respondents and 26% of gay male respondents felt a strong sense of community attachment with bisexual people. While these are higher proportions than those who felt a strong sense of community attachment to trans people, they remain lower than, for example, the sense of community attachment felt with straight women. The fact that lesbians and gay men feel a stronger sense of community attachment with a group outside the LGBT label than bisexual people who are ostensibly within the LGBT net suggests that there is not such good integration within the LGBT group as one might hope or expect.

*"Commercial Scene in Nottingham caters mainly for the gay male audience. Should be more inclusive not only of women but also bisexuals"*

Bisexual female respondent

Further to this, 46% of female bisexual respondents and 25% of male bisexual respondents have experienced discrimination by LGBT people in Notts because of their sexuality.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that much of the animosity between bisexual

people and lesbian and gay people comes from suspicion based on the following stereotypes:

- Bisexual people can show their heterosexual side to avoid homophobia
- Bisexual people simply haven't made up their mind yet
- Bisexual people are not monogamous

We have already looked at, and exploded, the first of these myths. The second is difficult to test but this survey but, as the sample of bisexual respondents was generally older than the other respondents, it does seem that bisexuality is not simply a staging post for young people who haven't come out as gay yet.

"I'm bi so I think I'm only aware of and affected by homophobia when I go out with a woman. Mostly I see men as it's less hassle. Homophobia stops me having relations with women."

Female bisexual respondent

This survey has, however, shown that polyamory (having more than one partner at a time) is more common amongst our bisexual respondents than other respondents although it is by no means universal amongst the bisexual respondents. Even for those in more than one relationship, it does not mean that bisexual people are always on the look-out for someone new, they may be settled with the relationships they already have.



# So cialising

88% of respondents under 25 use the gay Scene at least once a month

A quarter of female respondents feel very unsafe in 'straight' pubs and clubs

-----

This survey suggests that there is strong reliance on the commercial LGBT scene (gay pubs and clubs) for people's social lives. 66% of respondents go to these at least once a month. For those aged under 25, this percentage increases to 88%. In comparison, 46% visit straight pubs and clubs at least once a month. For those aged under 25, this falls to 44%.

Interestingly, there is little difference in monthly use of the gay scene between lesbian, gay male and bisexual respondents. However, there is greater difference between the groups visiting straight pubs and clubs at least monthly:

Lesbian respondents	39%
Bisexual male respondents	44%
Gay male respondents	46%
Female bisexual respondents	73%

This suggests that, while each group gains something from visiting the commercial gay scene, less than half of lesbian, male bisexual and gay male respondents feel they gain from visiting the commercial straight scene. Few respondents actually felt very unsafe on the commercial straight scene - 11% of female respondents and 3% of male respondents. However, there is another factor at play - 46% of female bisexual respondents had experienced discrimination by other LGBT people in Notts because of their sexuality. Perhaps that is a pull towards straight venues.

*"LGBT community can be hostile. Would be nice if people were more friendly and less judgmental, we get enough of that from homophobes."*

Lesbian respondent

There are also other feelings of discrimination at play from LGBT people in Notts. For example, 18% of gay male respondents felt they had experienced

discrimination based on age, 11% of lesbian respondents cited discrimination based on gender, 39% of trans respondents cited discrimination based on their trans identity and 32% of respondents from black and ethnic minority communities said they had experienced discrimination based on race.

However, despite the apparent faults of LGBT venues, 70% of respondents said that they would be more likely to use venues which had some sign of LGBT friendliness - such as a rainbow flag.

### ***Alternatives to the Scene***

Through the quotes respondents made, a number of criticisms were made of the gay Scene. They raised the following issues:

*The Scene focuses on young people*

*The Scene may not be appropriate for very young people*

*The Scene is dominated by gay men*

*More variety is needed - alternatives to pubs and clubs*

*The Scene is not inclusive of members of black and ethnic minority community*

Pride was praised as being an inclusive event offering variety and a community feeling. A common suggestion for improving amenities generally was a community centre which would act as a focal point and information resource for the community without being another source of alcohol and smoking. In all 26% of respondents felt a community centre would be beneficial.

*"Commercial interests are losing interest in serving the LGBT community, consequently there's been a reduction in available amenities. An LGBT centre would be a much better, safer, and more acceptable venue for inexperienced and uninformed young or new members of the LGBT community in Notts."*

*"Commercial scene in Notts caters mainly for the gay male audience. Should be more inclusive not only of women but also bisexuals. Also the spaces available are all drink and smoke filled. Should be a move to provide an alcohol and smoke free environment."*

### ***Black and minority ethnic community members***

*"Am I the only Chinese lesbian in Nottinghamshire??"*

The answer to the respondent's question, according to this survey, is 'no' but the fact that the question had to be asked at all tell us something.

While there are too few BME respondents in this survey to be able to bring out any meaningful data, it is worth bringing up the role of members of Black and ethnic minority communities on the LGBT scene.

Comments were made about the Scene not being accessible or welcoming to all, and it seems that some BME respondents feels that it is not always inclusive of BME people.

*"Only one club worth going to. Should be more for ethnic gays"*

Four respondents stated, in an unrelated question, that they would like groups relating specifically to BME community members to exist in Notts.



# Re relationships

Half of respondents were in a relationship at the time of the survey

Having multiple partners is most common amongst bisexual male respondents

-----

In a sense, relationships are very much part of what defines the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. It is also what divides them as, in terms of stereotypes, lesbian, gay and bisexual people are thought to have very different relationship patterns.

The stereotype is that gay men are promiscuous and don't settle down while lesbians move in with each other before the end of the second date. But how true is this?

### ***Being in a relationship***

This survey found that 51% of respondents were in a relationship at the time of completing the questionnaire. This included 61% of lesbians and 48% of bisexual men which may suggest that the stereotype of gay men not settling down may need to be revised. Interestingly, the proportions are not significantly different for those who are younger. 52% of those aged under 25 were also in a relationship. The highest proportion in a relationship were the transgendered respondents - 62% of whom were in a relationship.

The groups of respondents who showed different trends were the bisexual respondents. 39% of female bisexual respondents and 25% of bisexual male respondents were in a relationships - significantly lower than their gay and transgendered counterparts.

### ***Polyamory***

Overall, 7% of respondents said that they were in a non-monogamous relationship - 5% of gay men (questioning that stereotype again) and 3% of lesbians. The picture for bisexual respondents is different. 15% of female bisexual respondents and 31% of male bisexual respondents said that they

were in non-monogamous relationships. In the interests of accurate representation, it has to be emphasised that by no means all bisexual respondents were in non-monogamous relationships.

### **Living with a partner**

37% of respondents were living with their partner at the time of the survey - 40% of lesbian respondents which perhaps compounds the lesbian stereotype but, again, the gay male respondents were not complying with the stereotype - 38% of gay male respondents were living with a partner. This is no different to the lesbian picture.

Again, however, it is bisexual respondents who demonstrate different relationship patterns. 23% of bisexual female respondents and 25% of bisexual male respondents were living with a partner.

### **Buying sex**

Respondents were asked if, during the previous year, they had paid to have sex or had been paid to have sex. Positive responses for both were very low. 3% of male respondents and none of the female respondents said they had paid to have sex. Those who had themselves *been* paid to have sex were slightly higher in number - 3% of the female respondents and 4% of the male respondents.

This does not necessarily suggest a formal prostitution arrangement, paying for sex can occur within casual or serious relationships of any persuasion.

### **Women's sexual partners**

Female respondents were asked about their sexual partners in the previous year. 2% of those who defined as lesbian had had sex with both men and women in the previous year. 13% had had no sexual partners. The majority, 84%, had had sex with women only.

For those defining as bisexual, 23% had had sex only with men in the previous year, and the same proportion had had sex only with women. 42% had had sexual partners of both genders, 8% had had no sexual partners.



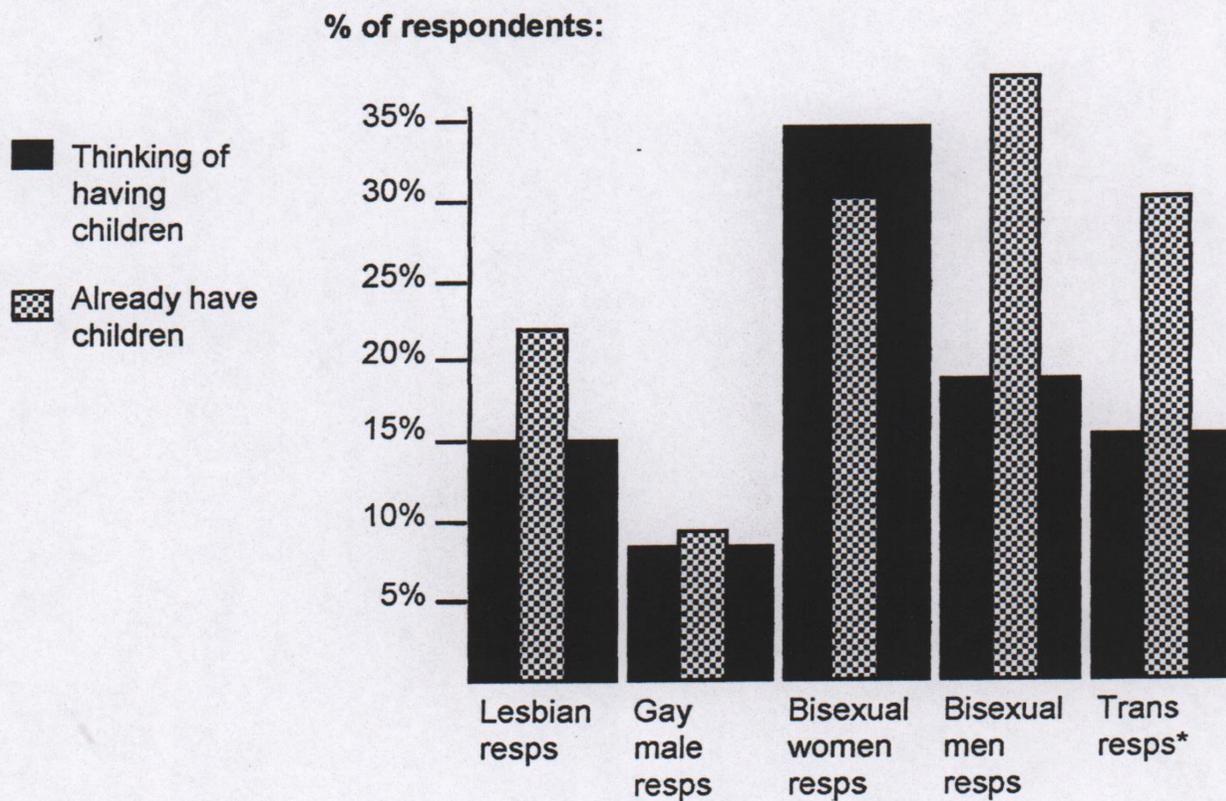
# Children

15% of respondents are thinking of having children

19% of respondents already have children

-----

This survey has established that 51% of respondents are in a relationship and for 37% respondents, they live with their partners. For some respondents, having children is on the agenda. 15% said that they were thinking of having children.



*\* The low number of trans respondents means that this may only be an indicator of the sample and not have implications for the wider community of trans people.*

### Having children

For lesbians, the most popular method of having children under consideration is artificial insemination, for gay men and trans respondents it is fostering and adoption. For the majority of bisexual respondents the preferred method of having children is sexual intercourse.

### ***Respondents with children***

For 84% of those with children already, the respondent is the biological parent. For further 12%, the respondents is a co-parent - the partner of the biological parent.

10% of those with children said that they were aware their child had been, or was currently, bullied because of their family structure. For 8%, they have experienced custody or access fought on the basis of their sexuality (including lesbian respondents, gay male respondents and bisexual male respondents).

*"I would like to see more done in the community to include family units. Pride was one step and hopefully can continue and improve."*

Female respondent

### ***Sperm donation***

15% of bisexual male respondents and 5% of gay male respondents have donated sperm in the past. 9% of gay male respondents and 19% of bisexual male respondents are thinking of donating sperm in the future.

43% of those thinking about donating sperm in the future would like to have a role in the upbringing of the child.



# About the respondents

## **Gender**

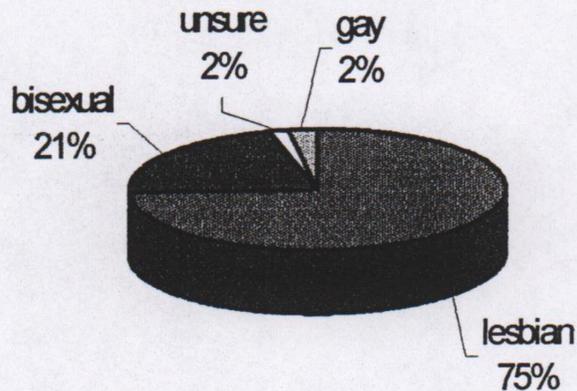
44% of respondents were female and 51% were male. While it is still not perfect, this project is very proud to have achieved such close parity - this has been achieved in very few other surveys of this nature.

## **Trans respondents**

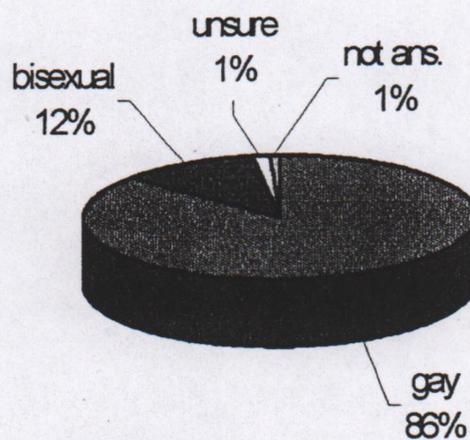
5% of respondents were transgendered. It would be useful in future surveys to have greater inclusion of the transgender community.

## **Sexuality**

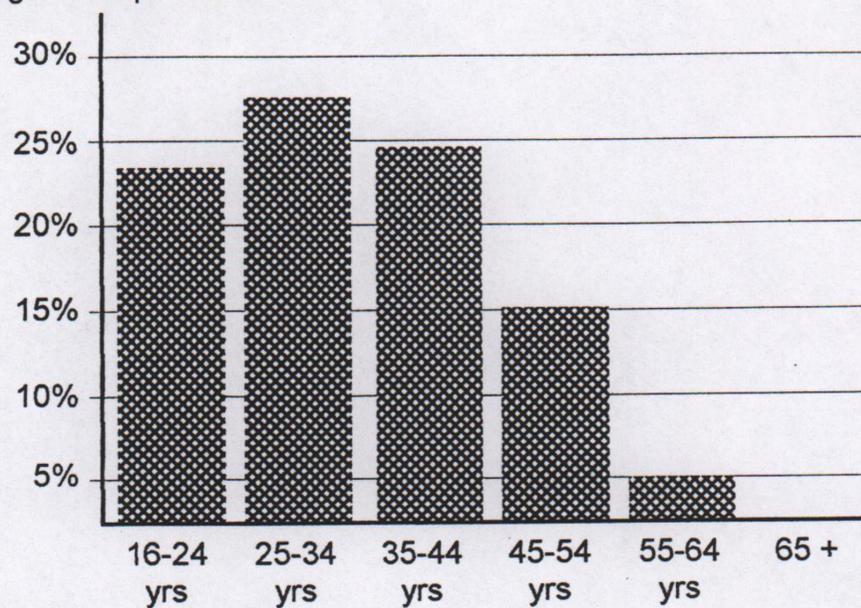
### **Female respondents:**



### **Male respondents:**



Age of respondents:



### **Age**

In terms of the ages of respondents, there is a bias towards those who are younger - aged under 35 years. Looking at where respondents were accessed for the survey, those who were accessed through the Scene tended to be primarily younger in age whereas those who came through the Outhouse mailing list covered a broader age range.

### **Ethnic origin**

78% of respondents described themselves as white British. The other 22% breaks down as follows (using the census classification):

White Irish	4%	Asian Indian	2%
White other	4%	Asian Pakistani	2%
Mixed white/black	6%	Black Caribbean	1%
Mixed Caribbean	less than 1%	Chinese	1%
Mixed white/Asian	less than 1%		
Mixed other	less than 1%	Other	1%

It is a fault of this survey that sufficient respondents from black and minority ethnic communities were not recruited to enable analysis of the data based on the ethnic origin of the respondent. The numbers involved are simply too small to be able to draw meaningful conclusions.

### **Geographical area**

52% of respondents lived in Nottingham City. 31% lived elsewhere in Nottinghamshire. 10% lived outside the county but socialised or worked in Nottinghamshire.



# References

- Bailey J, 1996  
Screening for cervical cancer: do lesbians need smear tests? in Women's Health newsletter 29 June 1996
- Corteen K et al, 2000  
Citizens' Inquiry reports: Lancaster and Manchester 2000. The Violence, Sexuality & Space Research project
- Count me in, 2001  
Count me in: findings from the LGBT community needs assessment 2000
- Department of Health, 2002  
Health Survey for England
- The Gender Trust, 2002  
Transsexualism and gender reassignment: recommendations and guidelines for employees
- Home Office, 2002  
The 2002/2003 British Crime Survey
- Limbrick G, 2002  
A Matter of Trust - recommendations from the Pink Shield Project
- Limbrick G, 2000  
Access & Inclusion – mapping Birmingham's LGB communities, Birmingham LGB Forum
- Malley, M, 1994  
Lesbians and Alcohol, in Women's Health Newsletter 22 May 1994
- Mason A and Palmer A, 1996  
Queerbashing – a national survey of hate crimes against lesbians and gay men, Stonewall
- Mind, 1996  
Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and mental health factsheet
- Summers Y, 2002  
Making visible the invisible: the experiences and needs of Sandwell's LGB young people, Space project



# ...i cOUnt

June 2004

Outhouse Project  
Suite A, 40 George Street  
Nottingham NG1 3BG