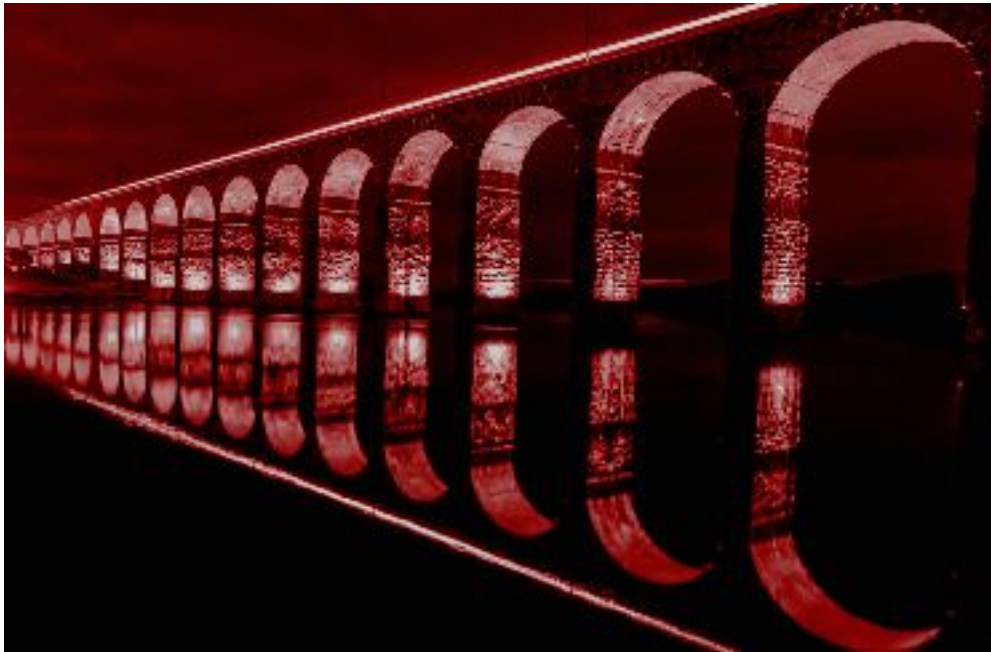


Berwick LGBT+ Community Survey

Executive Summary



Background

Under the 2010 Equality Act any public body not only has to treat members of the public with demonstrable equality, but has a duty to consider how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Act (known as “protected characteristics”).

Sexual orientation and gender identity (being transgender) are protected characteristics, as defined by the Act. In order to both meet the requirements, as a public body, and ensure that all residents are heard and represented it is first vital to understand the lives of those who may be impacted by policies and decisions.

So, it was decided in the Spring of 2018 to undertake research into the LGBT+ community who live, work in, visit, and come from Berwick Upon Tweed. By being

willing to listen organisations ensure they move away from assumptions into “organisational humility” which is a core corporate value of Berwick Town Council

In order to keep costs to a minimum, and because research shows that the “disinhibition effect” on the internet means people are more willing to talk about sensitive subjects, it was decided to distribute the survey largely online, with the Berwick Youth Project being offered hard copies for the LGBT+ young people who attended to complete.

The survey had a number of aims

- To paint a picture of the LGBT+ community in Berwick
- To better understand its needs
- To inform future policy including documentation and public facing communications
- To see where the Town Council could work in partnership to improve the wellbeing of all of its residents
- To meet the statutory Equality Duty



Demographics

Location

53% of respondents were current residents of Berwick, with a further 20% considering themselves from Berwick, even if they no longer lived here. A break down of the postcode data confirmed that despite stereotypes of LGBT+ people moving away from small towns and rural areas, the majority of respondents live or work in Berwick and the surrounding area, 82% in total.

70% of respondents came from the TD15 postcode



Age Range

74% were in the 30-59 age range. This may mean that younger and older people were missed, which will be analysed in the full report.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

71% of the respondents identified as LGBT+

7% of respondents use the pronouns they/them usually associated with non binary gender identity

2% of respondents use the title Mx usually associated with transgender identity.

This does not mean that all of the people who use he/him she/her Mr/Miss/Ms/Mrs are not trans, but does mean that consideration may need to be given to the design of documentation issued by and on behalf of Berwick Town Council.



Health and Wellbeing

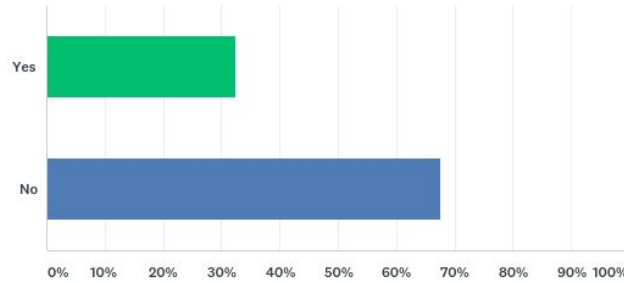
A number of questions were asked to explore not only the experiences of LGBT+ people living, working in, and visiting Berwick, but also how this might impact their physical and mental wellbeing. In a section of the survey limited only to LGBT+ respondents they were asked to scale their physical and mental health from 1 (being very poor) to 10 (being excellent). The average for physical health was 7.5 but the average for mental health was only 6.5

It is known that LGBT+ people experience worse mental health than the wider population, and this is linked by research to their experiences as LGBT+ particularly around negative treatment, hate crimes and abuse. This pattern was reflected in the survey.

Hate Crimes and Abuse

32% of LGBT+ people had experienced a hate crime in Berwick.

Q10 Hate incidents and hate crime are acts of violence, hostility or verbal abuse directed at people because of who they are or who someone thinks they are. For example, you may have been verbally abused by someone in the street because you're trans or someone thought you were gay. It is important to us to be able to get a clear picture of the incidences of hate crimes in Berwick experienced by LGBT+ people. Have you been a victim of a hate crime directed at you because you are LGBT+ in Berwick?



There was an option to describe individual experiences of hate crimes, some of the responses were;

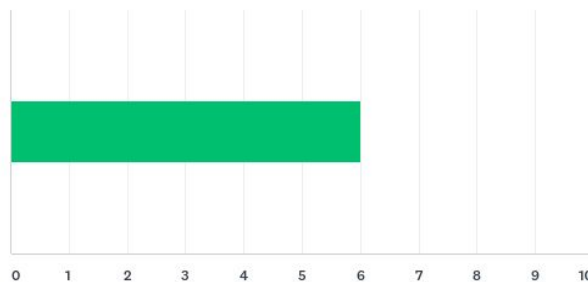
“Out in pubs with girlfriend been shouted abuse at and spat on”

“Mostly verbal abuse, some instances of being spat at and having things thrown at me”

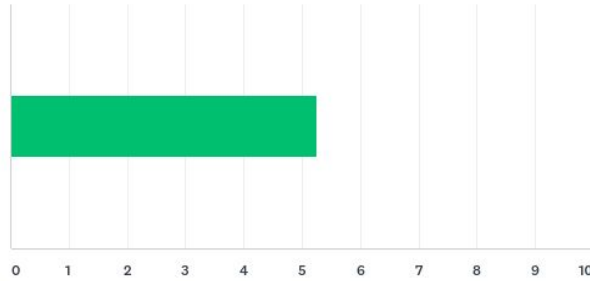
“referred to as poof and arse bandit”

This may explain why when asked to rate how safe Berwick was to be out in (again on a range of 1-10) the average score was just 6. The score for how safe people felt socializing was even lower at 5.

Q7 How safe do you feel it is to be out as an LGBT+ person in Berwick? Where 1 is not at all safe, and 10 is very safe.

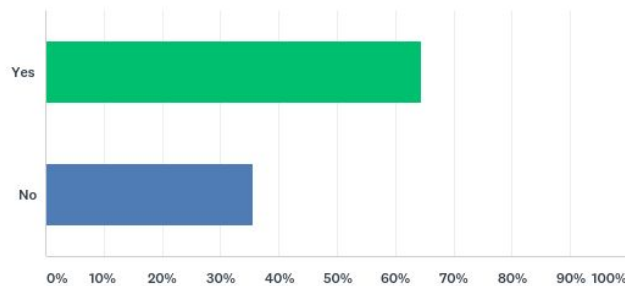


Q8 How safe is Berwick to socialize as an LGBT+ person? Where 1 is not at all safe, and 10 is very safe



It may also explain why a significant minority of the respondents were not out. Research shows being “in the closet” has a detrimental effect on the mental wellbeing of LGBT+ people.

Q9 If you are LGBT+ are you out in your workplace/at school/college



On a positive note very few respondents had experienced discrimination whilst using services (including shopping in Berwick. Less than 10% reported experiencing this.



Support Services

Given the negative experiences of many LGBT+ people, it is important to know which support services they are able to access, partly in order to see if there is a shortfall, and also to see how Berwick Town council may help by either signposting or supporting provision.

People were asked which organisations they knew which provided support (in any form) for LGBT+ people.

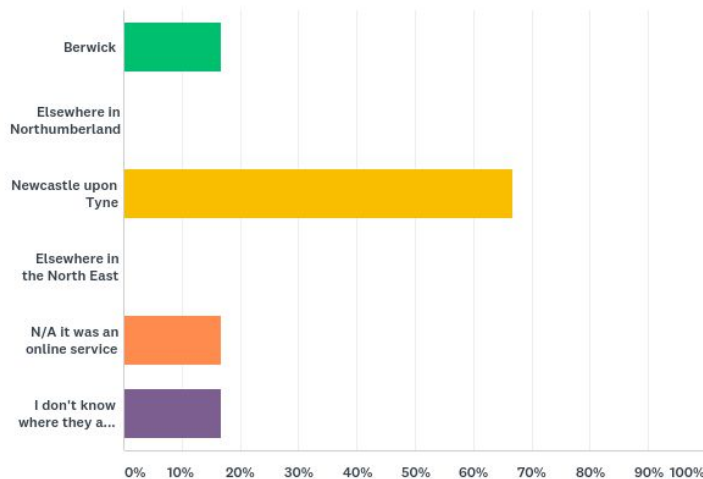
Q12 Which organisations do you know of who offer help and support to LGBT+ people?

Mesmac Berwick Youth Project NHS Stonewall

They were then asked which services they had accessed, and how. Be Trans Support and Development and Mesmac, both based in Newcastle were the most commonly accessed support services. The only Berwick based service mentioned was the Berwick Youth Project.

Despite most respondents living in Berwick or the surrounding area most were travelling to Newcastle or using the internet to access support. Whilst this may be through choice for some, for young people, older people, the disabled and the economically disadvantaged this may mean they are not able to access the help, community and support they need.

Q16 Where were the support services you contacted located? Please tick all that apply



There is a direct health and wellbeing impact here, as 38% of respondents did not feel they could access the Health Services they needed. On a positive note 60% could access the leisure services they need. This suggests that specific, targeted services, such as GUM, mental health, services for MWHSWM and WHHSWW may be needed in the area.

The LGBT+ community themselves seem to have identified this as one of the changes they would like to see. When asked what improvements they would like to see suggestions included; classes for LGBT+ people, more inclusive churches, specific LGBT+ mental health support and better youth provision.

Glossary

LGBT lesbian gay bisexual transgender

LGBT+ a wider term to include other identities beyond LGBT including queer, asexual, ect

Out - open about being LGBT+ to friends, family, workmates

Non Binary - identifies as neither a man or a woman

MWHSWM - men who have sex with men, the preferred NHS term for sexual health purposes

WWHSWW women who have sex with women , the preferred NHS term for sexual health purposes