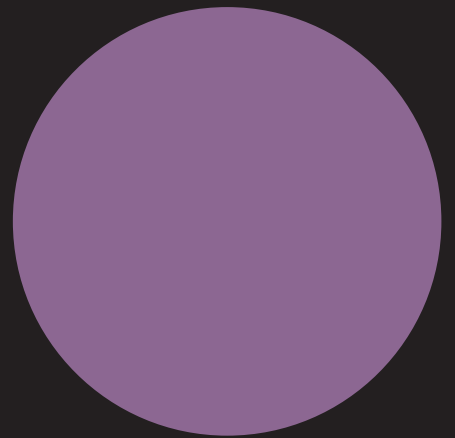
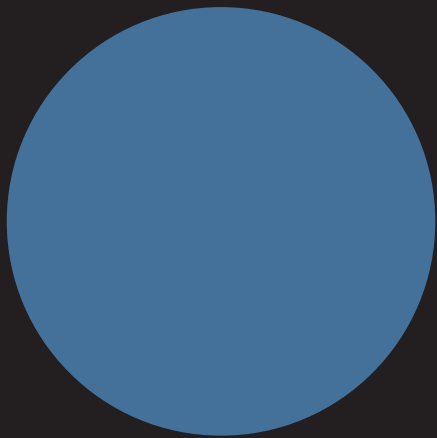


THE SCHOOL REPORT

SCOTLAND
CORNERSTONE
DOCUMENT

The experiences of gay young people in Scotland's schools in 2012



Introduction

As part of the School Report 2012, Stonewall Scotland is able, for the first time, to present Scottish specific data which shows us at first hand the experience of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Scottish schools.

Since the repeal of Section 28 in Scotland twelve years ago, Stonewall Scotland, with the vital support of the Monument Trust, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland and Big Lottery Fund amongst others, produced a range of pioneering, high quality and age-appropriate resources to help local authorities, schools and teachers to tackle homophobic bullying. We've also worked with key education agencies and directly with schools and colleges around Scotland to ensure that for the first time teachers have the support they need to combat homophobic bullying in the classroom.

This latest study leaves little room for complacency. More than half of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people still report experiencing homophobic bullying and its damaging impact is just as pronounced. One in four gay pupils who experience homophobic bullying attempt or think about taking their own life as a direct consequence. Less than three in five lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland report that their schools say homophobic bullying is wrong. As policymakers look for ways to boost attainment and raise aspiration it's clear that tackling homophobic bullying should be close to the top of their agenda.

If we are to create a Scotland where every child and young person matters then it's critical that all the key players – from the Scottish Government Learning Directorate, to Members of the Scottish Parliament, to local authorities, to individual schools – don't lose sight of their own role in tackling homophobic bullying. Building on the good work already being done, learning from the best and pushing others to improve, we can continue the progress of the last five years in creating learning environments across Scotland where *all* young people are able to achieve their full potential. This was our vision when Stonewall was created in response to Section 28. It remains our top priority today.



Colin Macfarlane
Director **Stonewall Scotland**

... the boys on the way to and from school threw things at me, threatened me, and tried to set fire to the school bus seat I was sitting on... LEAH, 16

Findings for Scotland

PREVALENCE OF HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING

More than half (52 per cent) of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people experience homophobic bullying behaviour in Scotland's schools.

Every day of my secondary school experience I have had some sort of verbal abuse because of my sexuality. Glen, 17, secondary school (Scotland)

I was walking along the street one day with my friend. A boy came at me shouting abuse. He pulled out a knife and was getting everyone to encourage him to hurt me. Luckily I had a friend with me and she pushed him away and we both got away physically safe, but mentally very scarred. Following that, the boys on the way to and from school threw things at me, threatened me, and tried to set fire to the school bus seat I was sitting on. It's still going on.

Leah, 16, secondary school (Scotland)

Almost all (99 per cent) lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland hear phrases such as 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' in school. Ninety seven per cent of gay pupils hear other insulting homophobic remarks, such as 'poof' or 'lezza'.

They happen far too often and are rarely dealt with. Pupils are ignorant to the hurt they cause and are never made to understand what they are saying is offensive. Wayne, 16, faith secondary school (Scotland)

Less than three in five (57 per cent) lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland report that their schools say homophobic bullying is wrong.

Less than a third (31 per cent) of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils say their school responds quickly to homophobic bullying behaviour when it occurs.

Mostly I think that if the abuse I was getting was because I was from an ethnic background, for example, then it would be dealt with quicker and taken more seriously. I feel the reaction from most people is 'well you chose to be gay, you're gonna have to deal with the consequences', which is clearly unhelpful and untrue.

Kate, 17, secondary school (Scotland)

RESPONSES TO HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING

Only 11 per cent of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland report that teachers challenge homophobic language every time they hear it. **One in four** (26 per cent) report that teachers who hear homophobic language never challenge it.

More than half (55 per cent) of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils say other pupils never challenge homophobic language when they hear it.

Almost half (48 per cent) of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland are never taught anything about lesbian, gay and bisexual issues in their lessons.

More than four in five (83 per cent) lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in Scotland are never taught in school about biological or physical aspects of same-sex relationships. **Four in five** (80 per cent) are never taught in school about where to go for help and advice about same-sex relationships.

There's not enough discussion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans issues in Social Education classes or anywhere. I feel there is a distinct lack of awareness regarding these issues.

Tristan, 17, secondary school (Scotland)

We didn't even get taught that same-sex female couples could spread sexually transmitted infections or get told about any protection for same-sex couples.

Lauren, 17, secondary school (Scotland)

CONSEQUENCES FOR GAY PUPILS

More than half (53 per cent) of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils don't feel there is an adult at school who they can talk to about their sexual orientation. **One in four** (25 per cent) don't have an adult at school, home or elsewhere they can talk to.

Just more than one in ten (11 per cent) lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland say their school has a club specifically for them and their friends.

More than half (54 per cent) of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland don't feel 'part of their school community'.

It's taken for granted that bullying over sexuality, like race, is wrong. Teachers when discussing bullying always mention that it's wrong. KIERAN

More than two in five (44 per cent) disagree that their school is 'an accepting, tolerant place where I feel welcome'.

Half (49 per cent) of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland don't feel that they are achieving their best at school.

Seven in ten (71 per cent) lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland skip school at some point.

It has really demotivated me to strive and reach for my dreams. It's knocked my confidence completely! It's made me angry at my school for not taking it seriously so I stopped trying the work.

Leah, 16, secondary school (Scotland)

One in four (26 per cent) lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in Scotland have tried to take their own life at some point. More than half (54 per cent) deliberately harm themselves, which can include cutting or burning themselves.

Almost one in three (31 per cent) lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in Scotland have seen Stonewall's anti-homophobic bullying posters (*Some People Are Gay Get Over It!*) in schools.

Just more than one in four (27 per cent) lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland say a teacher has spoken with them about how homophobic bullying is wrong.

Just 12 per cent have assemblies in their schools that address homophobic bullying.

Only seven per cent of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland receive messages about homophobic bullying from their headteachers. Just one per cent say their parents are sent information on this.

My school has never addressed LGB students.

Helena, 12, private secondary school (Scotland)

THE STUDY

Stonewall commissioned the Centre for Family Research at the University of Cambridge to conduct a survey with young people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (or think they might be) on their experiences in secondary schools and colleges across Britain. Between November 2011 and February 2012, 1,614 lesbian, gay and bisexual young people completed an online survey.

These findings are specific to the 158 lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in Scotland who took part. Participants in Scotland are aged between 12 and 19. Fifty six per cent of Scottish respondents are girls and 42 per cent are boys. Two per cent (three young people) identify as transgender. Thirty four per cent of respondents identify as gay males and 27 per cent as gay females. Eighteen per cent identify as bisexual females and six per cent as bisexual males. Ten per cent of female respondents and five per cent of males don't define their sexual

orientation as any of the preceding, which includes young people who are unsure or questioning their sexual orientation. Ninety seven per cent of respondents in Scotland are white and three per cent (five young people) are black or minority ethnic. Twenty six per cent of respondents identify as having a disability or long-term physical or mental health issue. Twenty five per cent of respondents say they have a religious belief.

Eighty nine per cent of respondents in Scotland attended a secondary school and ten per cent an FE college. Nine per cent were in private schools or colleges. Ten per cent attended a faith school.

Please visit www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/atschool to see the full report *The School Report: The experiences of gay young people in Britain's schools in 2012*.

Recommendations for Scotland: Schools

1 GO BACK TO BASICS

Homophobic bullying behaviour towards lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils is lower in schools that explicitly state that such behaviour is wrong. In schools where homophobic remarks are rarely or never heard, there are nearly half as many incidents of homophobic bullying behaviour.

- **Schools should have clear and promoted policies on tackling homophobia, which takes place in the classroom, the corridor and beyond the school gates. All instances of homophobic language should be challenged and pupils made to understand why using it is wrong.**

3 LEAD FROM THE TOP

Only seven per cent of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland have had messages about homophobic behaviour from their headteachers.

- **Headteachers and other school leaders should make sure tackling homophobia is the responsibility of the entire school community. As a priority, school leaders should make sure homophobic language is not used by members of staff.**

2 DEAL WITH INCIDENTS SWIFTLY AND CLEARLY

Less than a third of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland say their school responds quickly to homophobic bullying behaviour when it occurs. When young people tell someone about the behaviour, in almost two thirds of cases nothing is done to stop it.

- **Every incident of homophobia should be taken seriously and quickly acted upon, with clear and consistent sanctions for those responsible. Persistent bullying behaviour should be referred up the school hierarchy – involving senior management and parents as necessary.**

4 REMEMBER THE BIGGER PICTURE

Seven in ten lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland skip school at some point and fifty four per cent say they don't feel part of their school community.

- **Education Scotland specifically evaluates the extent to which all young people are cared for, treated fairly and with respect, and listened to. Inspectors should also continue to evaluate how the learning needs of all young people are being met. Schools should see tackling homophobic bullying as part of their wider drive to improve the health and wellbeing of pupils and to help ensure they are successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.**

5 EQUIP YOUR STAFF

Only eleven per cent of Scottish pupils report that teachers challenge homophobic language every time they hear it. Twenty six per cent say that teachers never challenge it.

- **Schools should make sure teachers are trained on how to combat homophobic behaviour and to support lesbian, gay and bisexual young people. This should also be part of continuing professional development (CPD) – schools should make sure external CPD providers are equipped to train staff on combatting homophobic bullying behaviour. Schools should look to and learn from schools that are already tackling homophobic bullying successfully.**

7 ENCOURAGE ROLE MODELS

More than half of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in Scotland don't feel there is an adult at school who they can talk to about their sexual orientation.

- **Teachers and school staff who visibly challenge homophobic behaviour and language and who positively address sexual orientation issues will make young people confident to approach adults at school. Schools should also support lesbian, gay and bisexual staff who want to be open about their sexual orientation.**

9 PROVIDE SUPPORT

One in four lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in Scotland have tried to take their own life at some point. More than half deliberately harm themselves, which can include cutting or burning themselves.

- **School staff should make clear that young people can speak to them in confidence about their sexual orientation. Staff should be trained to support the specific needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people and be aware of the particular mental health issues which they may face.**

6 INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE

More than half (fifty five per cent) of these pupils say other pupils never challenge homophobic language when they hear it.

- **Schools should actively involve young people in the design of anti-bullying policies and encourage them to take ownership of anti-bullying initiatives to create an environment in which young people themselves reject and challenge homophobic behaviour.**

8 BROADEN THE CURRICULUM

Almost half (forty eight per cent) of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scotland are never taught anything about sexual orientation in their lessons. More than four in five are never taught in school about biological or physical aspects of same-sex relationships.

- **Schools should exercise their flexibility over the Curriculum for Excellence as an opportunity to integrate sexual orientation issues across their teaching. Schools should also provide young people with information and support to help them stay healthy and safe.**

10 GO BEYOND TACKLING BULLYING

Pupils who are taught positively about lesbian, gay and bisexual issues are much more likely to feel part of their school community and to feel that their school is 'an accepting, tolerant place where I feel welcome'.

- **Good schools do much more than just tackle homophobic bullying behaviour. They create a school environment in which difference and diversity are promoted and celebrated across the whole school community.**

Recommendations for Scotland: Key partners

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT LEARNING DIRECTORATE:

- Continue to prioritise tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour and signpost schools to appropriate support and guidance. This should include sample policies, advice on monitoring and recording incidents and good practice case studies.
- Encourage schools to use their flexibility within the Curriculum for Excellence to integrate sexual orientation issues into teaching and learning.
- Promote the *FIT* resource alongside other government funded resources and services to tackle homophobia in education and signpost schools to support and guidance.
- Support primary schools to discuss ‘different families’ as part of their teaching, enabling pupils to gain age appropriate awareness of the diversity of family life before entering secondary school.
- The Scottish Parliament Education Committee should carry out an inquiry into homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour in Scottish schools, and to bring forward its findings and recommendations to the Scottish Parliament and Government.

EDUCATION SCOTLAND:

- Continue to make sure that a school’s effectiveness in combatting homophobic behaviour and creating a safe learning environment for all young people is part of the inspection framework and that schools deliver a zero tolerance approach to homophobic and transphobic behaviour.
- Continue including good practice in LGB and T equality on the Journey to Excellence website in order to give schools goals for the future and allow them to learn from the success of others.
- Make sure that all inspectors are trained on sexual orientation issues and on how to measure a school’s effectiveness in combatting homophobia and transphobia.
- When inspecting initial teacher training providers make sure they are delivering training which prepares new teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to combat homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour in the classroom and beyond.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

- Make sure that all of their schools are explicitly aware of the importance of tackling homophobic and transphobic language and bullying behaviour.
- Facilitate opportunities for schools to support one another in this area and identify good practice primary and secondary schools which can share their expertise.
- Provide guidance to their schools on recording and monitoring incidents of homophobia and transphobia and measure progress at an authority or organisation wide level.
- Develop links with those public and private sector services which can support their schools in combatting homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour.
- Link up with lesbian, gay and bisexual groups and youth groups that provide support for schools and individuals on how to tackle bullying behaviour.
- Make sure that their schools have access to support, training and advice in dealing with homophobia and transphobia and supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual young people.
- Support primary schools to discuss ‘different families’ as part of their teaching, enabling pupils to gain age appropriate awareness of the diversity of family life before entering secondary school.

Resources and Support

Stonewall Scotland run two bespoke programmes designed to specifically help schools and local authorities address many of the issues raised in this report:



Stonewall Scotland's **School Champions** programme provides tailored support and guidance to individual primary and secondary schools, helping them to develop strategies to challenge homophobic bullying behaviour and celebrate difference. Schools which are part of the programme work with Stonewall Scotland and each other to address homophobic behaviour and promote a safe and inclusive learning environment for all children and young people. For more information visit www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/schoolchampions or email education@stonewallscotland.org.uk

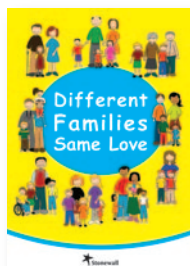


Our **Education Champions Scotland** programme provides tailored support to local authorities in their work to prevent and tackle homophobic bullying in their schools. Through this programme, local authorities work with Stonewall Scotland and each other to establish ways in which they can address homophobic bullying and promote a safe and inclusive learning environment for all young people. For more information www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/educationchampions or email education@stonewallscotland.org.uk

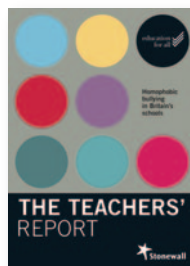
Stonewall also has a wide range of resources available to schools which can help address homophobic bullying and support lesbian, gay and bisexual young people and help to tackle many of the issues outlined in here.



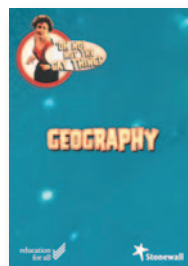
Different Families: the experiences of children with gay parents (2010)



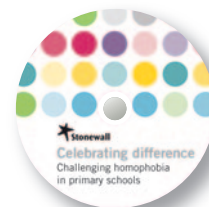
Different Families posters help schools to celebrate difference



The Teachers' Report (2009) YouGov polling of over 2,000 primary and secondary school staff about homophobic bullying



'Oh no! Not the gay thing!' – a pack with ideas on how to address lesbian, gay and bisexual issues through the curriculum



Celebrating difference: Challenging homophobia in primary schools (2011) 28 minute primary school staff training DVD



Spell It Out – our secondary school staff training DVD



FIT – Stonewall's feature-film for secondary schools



Role Models – A collection of 17 personal stories from successful and inspiring lesbian, gay and bisexual role models leading in a range of industries



Some People Are Gay. Get Over It! posters, postcards and stickers



Education Guides – including *Challenging homophobic language*; *Supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual young people*; *Including different families*; *Working with faith communities* and *Effective school leadership*

For more information or to order any of these resources visit www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/atschool