



INSPIRING  
EQUALITY  
IN  
EDUCATION

# Tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs

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A GUIDE FOR SCHOOL STAFF



Working with children,  
for children



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# The Programme

**The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) and Education Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) have worked together on a programme to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools.**

The Government Equalities Office and Department for Education awarded funding from a £2m package of support to promote lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) equality and challenge prejudice-based bullying. EACH (working in partnership with ABA) was one of only eight organisations selected nationally and is leading a consortium of local and national charities to work with West of England schools.

A recent report from NatCen<sup>1</sup> found that schools lack confidence in dealing with homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, are unsure how to address it and feel under-resourced. ABA and EACH are working closely together with schools in urban and rural areas across the West of England: building their capacity to challenge and prevent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. It will also equip teachers to feel more confident providing affirmative and accurate representations of gay, bisexual and trans lives in their classroom.

<sup>1</sup> Natcen: Tackling HBT bullying among school-age children and young people (2014)

In 2014 nearly half of gay or trans young people reported that their time at school was affected by discrimination or fear of discrimination and 65% stated that teachers rarely spoke out against homophobia or transphobia in their school. This lack of support and affirmation has devastating consequences for far too many young people with 52% of respondents reporting having engaged in self-harm (Youth Chances, 2014).

The programme is led by EACH in partnership with the ABA, PSHE Association, Off the Record (Bristol) and the Centre for Education and Inclusion Research (CEIR) at Sheffield Hallam University. It features a range of work to build teachers and schools capacity to challenge and prevent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. This includes:

- Trialling innovative school-based initiatives
- Free training events for teachers and school support staff
- New educational multimedia resources for cross-curricular lessons on LGBT+ equality
- Enhanced support raising awareness of gender identity matters
- Ground breaking practice to ensure lessons on sexuality and gender identity are inclusive of disabled pupils and those with SEN
- New evidence based on robust evaluation of what works and why



YOUTH CHANCES, 2014

**“Nearly half of gay or trans young people reported that their time at school was affected by discrimination or fear of discrimination”**

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# Introduction

**The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) spoke to disabled young people, including young people with physical, learning, and sensory impairments, deaf young people, young people with SEN, and young people who had experienced emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. We use 'disabled young people' or 'young people' throughout this briefing to refer to all of the young people we spoke to.**

The young people we spoke to also identified as trans, non-binary, lesbian, gay and bisexual, and young people who had or were questioning their sexuality or gender identity. We also spoke to disabled young people who identified as heterosexual.

Young people told us their views and ideas about:

- sex and relationships education in school and what they learnt about LGBT+ issues, where else they got information about this, and their ideas for how disabled young people should be given better LGBT+ information.
- what schools could do to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying for disabled young people and young people with emotional or mental health difficulties.

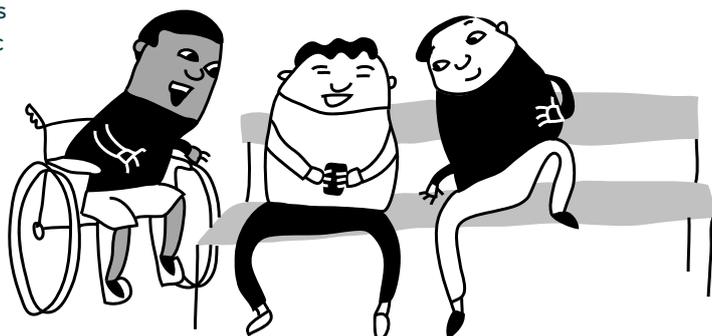
The discussions were held with 33 disabled young people from within existing groups of children and young people who knew each other well and were used to discussing these topics together. This helped to make sure the young people were in an environment where they felt safe and confident to talk about the issues.

Research indicates that disabled children and those with special educational needs (SEN) are at an increased risk of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. A survey of UK LGBT youth found that **two thirds of disabled children and those with SEN had experienced homophobic bullying**, compared to 55% among the sample as a whole (Guasp, 2012). To date, little attention has been paid to this "minority within a minority and the intersectionality of bullying and abuse." As part of this programme, a literature review was commissioned on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying among disabled children and those with SEN.

GUASP, 2012

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## "A survey of UK LGBT youth found that two thirds of disabled children and those with SEN had experienced homophobic bullying"



<sup>2</sup> By LGBT+ we include lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and the + signifies other gender or sexuality identities such as queer, intersex and asexual

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# What does the literature tell us?

**Any form of difference, including being of a different gender, sexual orientation, or being a disabled person and/or having SEN, can increase the risk of children being bullied (Tippett, Houlston, & Smith, 2010).**

This kind of bullying is often directed at the real or perceived differences, and can lead to victims feeling isolated, abandoned, and struggling with self-confidence. Awareness of prejudiced forms of bullying, and the impact it has on victims, is generally increasing, however, some minority groups continue to be under-represented, both in research and social policy. One such group are disabled children and those with SEN, who tend to be defined on the basis of their disability or SEN, while their gender and sexual orientation get overlooked; despite this, disabled children and those with SEN experience the same sexual needs as their non-disabled peers, and are equally as likely to identify as gay or bisexual (Cheng & Udry, 2002). The review examined what is currently known about experiences of bullying among disabled children and those with SEN who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans (LGBT), and identified areas which require further research, and potential avenues for intervention.

## Prejudice based bullying

**Compared to their peers, disabled children and those with SEN are twice as likely to report being bullied at school** (Chatzitheochari et al, 2014 ) and higher rates of victimisation have been found among children with learning disabilities, physical impairments, autism spectrum disorders, sensory impairments, and speech or language difficulties (McLaughlin, Byers, & Peppin Vaughan, 2010). Difficulties in socialising and communicating with others particularly increase the risk of being bullied, and can make it hard for disabled children and those with SEN to respond and cope with being bullied.

Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic (HBT) bullying is any form of bullying directed towards a person because of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, or because of their association with people who are LGBT. HBT bullying is widespread in UK schools; over half of children who identify as LGBT have experienced bullying relating to their gender or sexuality (Guasp, 2012). Furthermore, homophobic language is used in schools on a regular basis, with many children not realising the offence it can cause, and few teachers punishing those who use it (Guasp, 2014).

CHATZITHEOCHARI ET AL, 2014

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**“Compared to their peers, disabled children and those with SEN are twice as likely to report being bullied at school”**

## HBT bullying among disabled children and those with SEN

The limited research available suggests that disabled children and those with SEN are at an increased risk of HBT bullying. A survey of UK LGBT youth found two thirds (66%) of disabled children and those with SEN had experienced homophobic bullying, compared to 55% among the sample as a whole (Guasp, 2012). Another study found that among LGBT adolescents in the US, almost 20% had been verbally bullied because of a real or perceived disability, and 7% physically harassed (Kosciw et al., 2014). Some smaller studies have also found that among victims of homophobic bullying, over a third reported being bullied because of a disability or SEN (Katz, 2009, 2011). To better understand the nature of HBT bullying and the impact it can have on disabled children and those with SEN, further research needs to focus on three key areas...

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## What does the literature tell us?

- **Type of bullying:** HBT bullying includes physical, verbal and relational behaviours, but can also involve unwanted sexual touch. We know disabled children and those with SEN are particularly vulnerable to experiencing sexual abuse. HBT bullying also happens across multiple contexts, including the school, home, in public, and online.
- **Culture of silence:** One third of children do not tell anyone they are being bullied, and this figure is even higher among victims of HBT bullying (Rivers, 2011), who may not feel safe enough to talk about their experiences. Disabled children and those with SEN may struggle to cope with bullying, and in the case of with HBT bullying in particular, may not understand why they are being bullied, and may be unwilling or unable to discuss the problem with parents, friends, or teachers.
- **Impact on those who has been bullied:** All forms of bullying have a damaging and long term impact on the victim's physical and mental health. HBT bullying alone can lead to poorer academic and mental health outcomes, including a greater risk of self-harming (Robinson & Espelage, 2011). Disabled children and those with SEN are likely to experience the same consequences of HBT bullying, and therefore require appropriate help and support to limit the damage that bullying can cause.

SMITH ET AL., 2012

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**“Few anti-bullying policies refer to prejudiced related bullying”**

## A whole school approach

As with all forms of prejudice related bullying, creating an inclusive environment is a major step in tackling HBT bullying among disabled children and those with SEN (Tippett et al., 2010). Achieving this requires a whole school approach that promotes inclusion across all levels of the school community. Two aspects of the whole school approach may be particularly relevant:

**1. Anti-Bullying Policies** should explain what bullying is, how it is prevented and what action will be taken when it occurs, however, few policies refer to all forms of prejudiced related bullying (Smith et al., 2012). Making specific reference to HBT bullying, including that which is directed towards disabled children and those with SEN, can raise awareness and help prevent bullying before it happens.

**2. Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)** provides information and advice on sex, relationships and sexual health. Research has shown that SRE largely focuses on heterosexuality and offers few chances for them to develop positive LGBT+ identities (Duke, 2011). SRE programmes that provide tailored and appropriate advice for disabled children and those with SEN, and are inclusive of all genders and sexual orientations, may be a potential route for reducing rates of HBT bullying, and can also help children cope with the effects of being bullied. We know that more disabled young people than non-disabled young people say they have not received any SRE.





# Young people's views on sex and relationships education, disability and being LGBT+

**"Sex education for disabled young people is c\*\*p. There is none. In the whole 7 years I was at secondary school I had no sex and relationships education at all."**

Disabled young people said they had received little or no sex and relationships education (SRE) at school and:

- what little SRE they had received was limited and narrowly focused on heterosexual sex, safe sex and there was little focus on developing healthy relationships.
- they had learnt little or nothing in SRE about disability or being LGBT+ - and nothing at all that related to being LGBT+ and disabled.
- that they were often withdrawn from SRE lessons to be given additional learning or health support.

**"Mine was ok. They covered a few things but not much detail. Just safe sex. Nothing about disability or LGBTQ."**

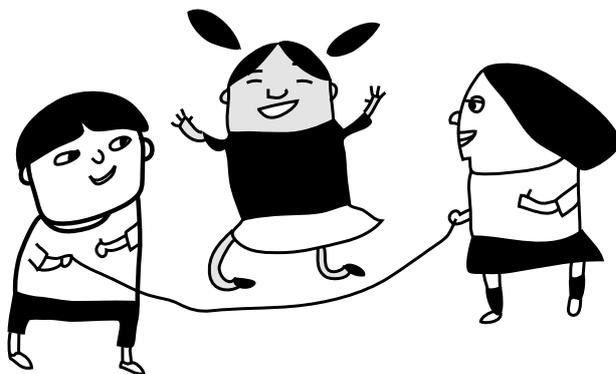
**"Just generic - boys and girls in different rooms. A video, 'this is a penis...' and not much else."**

**"Nothing related to disability or LGBTQ."**

**"Condom on a banana, a leaflet about puberty. That was it."**

**"What sex education there is, is all physical. There's nothing about healthy relationships."**

**"In our [faith] school, the only sex education we got was 'if you have sex before marriage, you're bad and god will hate you.'"**





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## Young people's views on sex and relationships education, disability and LGBT+

Disabled young people told us that SRE that positively addressed disability and the specific issues disabled young people faced was important because:

- If disabled young people are socially isolated or not educated in inclusive schools, then they can miss out on learning about sex and relationships by picking this up from friends, which is how many other young people learn.
- Disabled people are often assumed to be asexual and this can affect young people's confidence and self-esteem. To counter this, young disabled people need clear messages and positive images about disabled people and relationships.
- Their confidence or understanding of relationships can be affected by a lifetime of personal support and/or intimate care.

**“Getting no proper sex and relationships education is disconcerting as you don't know what to do in adult life.”**

**“It meant I was confused. I used sexualised slang but I didn't know what it meant. People would find this amusing.”**

**“Not getting good SRE means disabled young people not knowing about how to keep safe.”**

**“Sometimes, as a disabled young person, you can miss out on learning about things from your friends.”**

**“Non-disabled young people are able to pick things up from each other when they grow up, but some disabled young people might find this harder.”**

**“Why shouldn't disabled young people know about relationships and know that we can have all the same kind of relationships as anyone else?”**

Young people said they had received little or no information at school or in SRE about being LGBT+. What little they had learnt focused on sexuality, with little or no mention of gender identity. Young people said that not hearing or learning about being LGBT+, and especially not hearing about LGBT+ disabled people made them feel invisible.

**“People didn't talk to me about sex, relationships because of my visual impairment. They didn't think I would be attracted to anyone because I couldn't see them, as if all attraction is visual.”**

**“People think disabled people are asexual as it is, so they don't talk to you about any relationships, let alone about being or acknowledging that you are LGBT.”**

**“First time I'd seen anything about trans issues was on TV.”**



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## Young people's views on sex and relationships education, disability and LGBT+

Young people said they had learnt little or nothing about gender identity or being trans at school but rather turned to the internet for information.

**“A teacher mentioned something about having a trans friend. The class just started laughing.”**

**“Nothing at school. I learnt everything on the internet from other trans people on YouTube.”**

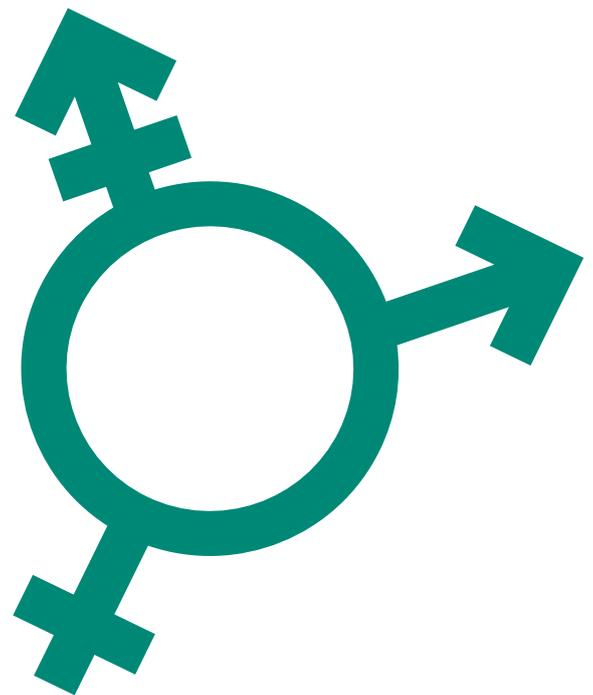
Whilst information on the internet meant they could hear from other trans or non-binary people, they also said:

- that there was also a lot of negative information on the internet, meaning they were unsure what information to trust. For example, young people said there was information about unsafe ways to bind your chest or that gender identity is often represented poorly or mocked in the media.
- that they could often not access this information privately or discreetly as school firewalls often blocked LGBT+ searches or results, and young people were often reluctant to search on their phones or home computers as they were concerned their parents may find out by looking at the search history.

Young people said that not learning about gender identity meant they had not understood their feelings about their gender, had not felt able to tell anyone about their feelings, that they had felt isolated, and this had made them think that being trans was wrong.

**“Means you don't understand why you feel the way you do. Feel wrong, bad.”**

**“Feel isolated. Took me a long time to understand why I felt the way I felt. You know you're different but don't know why. If no one talks about it in school, you don't figure it out until later. It can affect your mental health.”**



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# Young people's views on what schools can do to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying for disabled young people

Young people told us the top issues that schools need to understand to enable them to address and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying for disabled young people. These included:

## 1 'People don't believe us'

Many disabled young people said they were not believed when they reported bullying and that this was even more of an issue if you were also LGBT+. Young people said that being a disabled young person meant they were often not believed on two counts:

- when they reported being bullied.
- about being LGBT+

**"I got bullied for being gay. I told a teacher I trusted and they just said it was a phase I was going through. As if it being a phase made the bullying OK, or any less bad. They didn't do anything about it. They treated it like it was nothing. It really affected me and how I felt about being gay. I thought it must be something bad."**

**"People say 'how do you know you're gay if you can't see anybody?'"**

**"They didn't believe I was trans. They said I was just doing it to be different."**

Young people told us that when they did report bullying, that little or nothing was done about it and that they were often told to change the way they looked or behaved to prevent further bullying. They said this affected how they felt about being LGBT+ and how they felt about being a disabled person.

**They say 'You bring it on yourself' because you look or act different. Instead of doing something to stop it, they just said I needed to learn to fit in, because I looked differently."**



VIEWPOINT

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**"It's like people think you can be disabled or LGBT+ - but not both"**

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## Young people's views on what schools can do to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying for disabled young people.

### 2 'How are we supposed to tell if teachers don't understand LGBT+ or disability?'

Young people told us that many teachers in schools had a poor understanding about disability and/or LGBT+ issues and that some were openly homophobic, biphobic or transphobic. They said this affected their ability and willingness to report bullying.

**"We got taught homosexuality is a sin. When we're then bullied for being gay, how are we supposed to tell?"**

**"A teacher gave me a detention and told me would he would write it in large print with a pink pen."**

**"Told I couldn't be affectionate to my partner even though straight couples could be."**

**"Think they're worried that if being LGBT is talked about then more young people will be gay, as if it's contagious... what does that say?"**

**"They [teachers] can be quite judgmental. I was in an RE class and there was a new teacher. He seemed lovely and everything, and we had to discuss what prejudice we'd faced and I was talking about homophobic bullying. And he [the teacher] said 'you're gay?' and I said yeah. He said it in a way I knew he had a problem with it. He asked me [in front of the class] what my parents thought about it and I said they were quite homophobic too. Then he asked "so is that why you're gay then? Because your parents are homophobic and you've rebelled against it?' I couldn't believe it, and we're talking about prejudice!"**

**"I got sent out of my RE class by my teacher for openly saying I was bisexual and wasn't allowed back for 2 weeks."**

**"The problem is we've got a generation of teachers who grew up when nothing was accepted. Things are different now but they don't understand. It's not just about sexuality or gender. It's about everything, the whole spectrum of identities. They don't understand us."**

**"In the equal marriage debate, all we heard was that god disapproves of gay people getting married. We heard that in school."**

### 3 'Disablist and HBT bullying - It's a double whammy...'

Young people told us that they experienced both HBT and disablist bullying in schools and that "If it's not one thing it's the other. If you're not bullied for being disabled, you're bullied for being gay. Or both"

**"I was badly affected by my autism at school - that's what most of my bullying came from. I wasn't out as trans then, I was trying to hide it, but people also bullied me for being effeminate."**

**"Lots of LGBT young people are much more likely to have mental health issues."**

**"The teachers understood my autism, but the students were unbelievably harsh."**

**"Even in the gay community, they can be stigmatising about disability."**

**"Imagine, you have not one but two stereotypes to contend with! It's a double whammy."**

**"I'm not out as trans at school. But people think I'm gay and bully me because of that."**



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## Young people's views on what schools can do to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying for disabled young people.

### 4 'We have to come out... twice'

**"They say 'you don't look or sound gay'. Then I talk to someone who is gay and they say you don't look disabled."**

Young people said that they often have to come out twice, as they have to come out as a disabled person and come out as LGBT+. They said this was made worse by poor attitudes towards disability, sexuality, and gender identity all of which made them worry about how people would react.

**"You have to come out twice - as disabled person and as LGBT. You choose which one to come out as depending where you are and who you're with."**

**"I have to know someone very well before I will reveal to them my Asperger's. I have to trust them first. I only tell people who I know will understand. I have worries about how they are going to react."**

### 5 'How are we supposed to tell if we see bullying being ignored?'

Young people told us that they had seen other young people and teachers being bullied for being LGBT+ or for being disabled. They said this:

- made them think being LGBT+ was wrong or something to ashamed of.
- affected their confidence to come out about being disabled and/or LGBT+
- made them try to hide that they were disabled and/or LGBT+
- affected their willingness to report bullying.

**"At my school, it was horrible. One person came out as gay and he left really quickly."**

**"Terrified to come out at school."**

**"Our teacher was told they shouldn't be out."**

**"A teacher was transitioning in school, but they left due to abuse from the students."**

### 6 'I've lost count of how many times I've heard people say 'That's so gay.'"

Many young people said that of the use homophobic, transphobic and/or disablist language was rife and that the use of this language was rarely challenged. This affected their identity and self esteem, and their confidence and willingness to report bullying. They told us that they felt that other young people thought it was easier to say 'you're so gay' to disabled young people, than it was to use disablist language.

**"Saying 'That's so gay' is so common I don't think people realise it's homophobic."**

**"It happens both ways. Whether you're gay or not, they say 'you're so gay'. I think they think it's easier to say that than to say something to us about being disabled. Then you hear people saying to gay people 'you're so retarded.'"**

**"If you saying anything, they say it's just a joke. So much harder to do anything about."**

### 7 "It's about who you are, so it affects the way you think and feel about yourself."

Young people said that HBT and disablist bullying could make young people:

- develop a poor self-identity about being disabled person and being LGBT+.
- believe that bullying should be expected due to being disabled, LGBT+ or having mental health issues, rather than something that should be addressed or prevented.
- avoid people, areas of the school, or even going to school at all.
- not feel able to come out.
- try to hide being disabled and/or trying to hide being LGBT+.

# What would help to tackle bullying for LGBT+ disabled young people?

**The young people we spoke to shared ideas about how schools can improve sex and relationships education and how they can tackle bullying of LGBT+ disabled young people.**

## How to improve sex and relationships education

Young people told us that making sex and relationships education inclusive of LGBT+ and disability was important to raise awareness, challenge stigma, make LGBT+ and disability visible, and to enable them to develop a positive self-identity. Young people's ideas to improve SRE for LGBT+ disabled young people include:

1. Make sure all disabled young people have access to SRE and are not removed from lessons for other types of support.
2. Include information about being LGBT+ in SRE and make sure "that LGB&T issues are taken seriously and not made into a joke". This is important for all young people, but make sure this also includes information about and positive images of disabled LGBT+ people. Make sure this is woven throughout the curriculum, rather than one off lessons.

**"More than one lesson a year."**

**"More than one lesson - not just one hour where trans people exist and then they're invisible the rest of the time."**

3. Make sure disabled young people are shown where they can access other sources of information, advice and support for LGBT+ young people.

**"It's important for disabled young people to learn about LGBTQ too. They might not be able to access information in the same way as non-disabled young people."**

4. Use local youth, LGBT+ or disability organisations to facilitate some SRE sessions to enable young people to hear directly from other LGBT+ disabled people. This will normalise and humanise sexuality, gender identity and disability.

**"More videos or talks so you can see young disabled LGBT people like you."**

**"I had no one to talk to at school. I found a local LGBT youth group and the leader was disabled. It was so important to see someone like me. It made such a difference to know I wasn't the only one, that being a gay disabled person was ok."**

**"Get gay or trans people in to come and talk about their experiences, then it humanises it."**

**"Normalise and humanise LGB and T."**

VIEWPOINT

## "Normalise and humanise LGB and T"

## Young people's views on what schools can do to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying for disabled young people.



5. Make sure SRE covers issues that are important to disabled young people. This may include peer advice or support, so that they can learn and ask questions about some of the specific issues disabled people may experience. For example, this may include body confidence and self-esteem, or managing relationships when you have a personal assistant.

**“I’ve learnt more going to a disability sex and relationships youth group, than I did at school. It was a small group, so you feel safe to ask any questions you want. It’s not awkward because you’re with other disabled young people. You don’t feel awkward - you can ask anything.”**

**“If we have PA’s, we have to involve other people in relationships in a way other young people don’t have to do. Need to learn this is ok and earn how to negotiate this.”**

**“A lot of it is confidence, as a disabled young person. There are so many barriers. You feel like a pressure to conform. All you see are images of people that have what people think are perfect bodies. You don’t see any positive images of disabled people. Makes you feel self-conscious, not confident about your body or having relationships.”**

**“They see my physical impairment before they see me. The thought of them having a relationship with someone with a disabled person is too much for them.”**

## Reducing and responding to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying

As well as their suggestions for improving sex and relationships education, young people told us about their ideas for tackling homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying for disabled young people.

1. Make sure that responses to bullying challenge and change the bullying behaviours, not the behaviour of the person being bullied.

A lot of LGBT+ disabled young people told us that they had been told ‘to act differently’ and then bullying will stop. The bullying behaviours should be challenged and changed, not the behaviour of the young person who is being bullied.

**“No victim blaming. Believe young people about the bullying and believe how they identify as LGBT+.”**

2. Include information about sex, relationships and being LGBT+ around the school and make sure this includes positive images of LGBT+ disabled people. This will raise awareness, challenge stigma, and give young people positive images to relate to.

**“Just to hear ‘If you have a boyfriend or girlfriend that’s ok, you’re still you.’”**

**“Have visible information around the school. If it’s visible, it tells you - you - are ok.”**

**“Combat the fear of the unknown - empathy comes from being able to relate to people. Promote healthy, frank discussion.”**

**“They do ‘some people are gay, get over it’, but not very much about trans. It’s invisible. Need to make it more visible so it becomes acceptable.”**

3. Create staff and student LGBT+ disability forums

**“Part of the problem for teachers and students is that no one talks about it.”**

Develop forums for LGBT+ disabled staff and students to enable them to reflect on their experiences, to plan

## Young people's views on what schools can do to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying for disabled young people.

how to improve the experiences of LGBT+ disabled staff and students, and to work with the senior leadership team to plan a whole school approach to tackling and monitoring homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

4. Understanding the level of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and disablist bullying.

Monitor and record homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying incidents and make sure this includes whether the young person is disabled or has mental health difficulties. This will help the school to get a better understanding of the issue.

5. Make sure that information about bullying is displayed around the school and that this includes information about homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist bullying.

6. Make sure that the support available for students who are being bullied is well publicised. Make sure this includes clear information about the different forms of bullying so that young people feel confident that they will be believed (about the bullying and about being LGBT+), and that the people they talk to will understand homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist bullying.

**"You need to know there is someone to talk to and that they will understand about being gay and about disability. It was never brought up in my school. It was so isolating."**

**"School counsellors - but you need to know that they get gender identity, that they understand things like autism."**

7. Challenge homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist language and jokes in schools. Talk to students and school staff so they know what they can say or do to challenge language.

**"Caitlyn Jenner came up. People kept mis-gendering her and calling her 'him' or 'Bruce'. The teacher pulled them up and said she was called Caitlyn. It was the first time I'd heard anyone challenge something."**

**"Challenge young people when they say things like 'That's so gay' or 'That's so retarded. It hurts to hear that. If someone challenges it, it shows you they care about it and it makes you feel more confident."**

8. Make school systems and structures are more inclusive and supportive of trans and non-binary young people. For example, make sure there are gender neutral toilets and address school uniform policies so that they are the same for all students, regardless of gender.

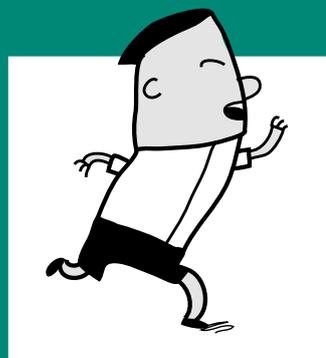
9. Support school staff to understand homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and disability. This is important so that they understand:

- that disabled young people can be LGBT+ too.
- what the issues are for LGBT+ disabled young people.
- what to look out for and how to approach a young person that is struggling or being bullied.
- what they can say or do to tackle bullying or challenge homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or disablist language.

**"If it's obvious you're struggling and they don't do anything it just tells you you're not worth it, that they don't care. You're already feeling isolated, just confirms it."**

**"The teachers understood autism. They just didn't understand my gender identity or the bullying because of it. I just don't think they knew what to say to me, so they said nothing."**

**"They don't need to be counsellors - they have a huge workload as it is, but on teacher training days, they should be trained to understand our issues, what to look out for, how to deal with stuff there and then, what it says to us, and who they can refer us on to."**



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