FOREWORD

We see so many ways that young people step forward and make the difference that counts in Hertfordshire. Our members of the Youth Parliament and the wider Herts1125 group provide leadership and a guiding voice for all young people across the county. Assisted by excellent Youth Connexions support, our young politicians make their voice heard locally, regionally and most definitely nationally. This year from the green benches of the House of Commons no less.

The youth manifesto is the distilling of a lot of passion, inspiration and commitment which has then been voted on by students across the county. The issues raised in this document will be debated further afield but most importantly have become an integral part of the decision making process at Hertfordshire County Council.

The priorities for this coming year will no doubt be challenging but set the bar on our commitment to deliver for young people across the County. Support for good mental health and emotional wellbeing has been a recurring theme from young people and I think the Health and Wellbeing board commitment to a “Year of Mental Health” with committed additional funding has been heavily influenced by the campaign for young people by young people.

Richard Roberts
Cabinet Lead for Children and their services
YOUTH MANIFESTO PRIORITIES FOR 2015/16

CYBER BULLYING: HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF, SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF BULLYING AND SELF-ESTEEM POST BULLYING [2952 VOTES]

YOUNG PEOPLE’S RIGHTS: APPROPRIATE ADULT, CAUTIONS, DOMESTIC ABUSE, WORKING HOURS, PAY, SHARING OF INDECENT IMAGES, RIGHT TO BE HEARD, ETC. [2824]

HATE CRIME: WHAT IS IT? HOW TO REPORT IT? HATE CRIMES ARE CRIMES THAT ARE TARGETED AT A PERSON BECAUSE OF THEIR DISABILITY, RACE OR ETHNICITY, RELIGION OR BELIEF, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR TRANSGENDER IDENTITY [2494]

LGBT+ (LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, PLUS): TACKLING HOMOPHOBIA, REDUCING STIGMA, INCREASING UNDERSTANDING, SUPPORT FOR LGBT+ YOUNG PEOPLE [2299]

FINANCIAL HELP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: 16-19 BURSARY, STUDENT GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS & BURSARIES, STUDENT & APPRENTICESHIP CARDS, ETC. [2127]

HERTS1125 WHO NOT WHAT (YOUNG LGBT+ COMMUNITY)
MENTAL HEALTH: SUPPORT, WHERE TO GO, CONSEQUENCES OF NOT GETTING SUPPORT E.G. SELF-HARM, SPECIFIC SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR YOUNG LGBT+.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT: UNDERSTANDING OF OWN SEXUALITY, ACCEPTANCE OF OWN SEXUALITY, EFFECT ON EMOTIONAL HEALTH, WAS/IS THERE SUPPORT FOR YOU, WHERE DO YOU/DID YOU TURN?

HERTFORDSHIRE YOUNG CARERS
IDENTIFYING YOUNG CARERS: HOW THIS CAN BE DONE CONSIDERATELY, AND THE NEED FOR YOUNG CARERS TO ACCESS SUPPORT AND INFORMATION IN SCHOOLS

LOCAL YOUNG CARER SUPPORT GROUPS: WHAT IS THE NEED FOR LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS, WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO YOUNG CARERS AND WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE AVAILABLE.
MYP Introduction
Introducing Herts1125
History of Herts1125
Aims of Herts1125
What is a Youth Manifesto?
The Consultation Process
What do we hope to achieve?
Update on Hertfordshire Young People’s Manifesto 2014/15
Our Structure
How Herts1125 make decisions

**PRIORITY ONE**
Cyber bullying

**PRIORITY TWO**
Young People’s Rights

**PRIORITY THREE**
Hate crime

**PRIORITY FOUR LGBT+**
(Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, plus)

**PRIORITY FIVE**
Financial help for young people

**Herts1125 WnW**

**PRIORITY ONE**
Mental Health

**PRIORITY TWO**
Individual Support

**Herts Young Carers**

**PRIORITY ONE**
Identifying Young Carers

**PRIORITY TWO**
Local Young Carer support groups

What happens next?

How to find out more & get involved

Consultations, research, analysis & production

Thanks

Glossary
It is a privilege in our second year as members of Herts1125 and elected members of the Youth Parliament to write the foreword to the fourth Hertfordshire Young People’s Manifesto. Firstly, we would like to thank all previous Members of the Youth Parliament who have contributed to the development of the Manifesto, which has become hugely successful in putting across the views of Hertfordshire’s Young People on issues that are important to us as young people.

Herts1125 has grown and is truly the umbrella for Youth Voice across the County and as a testament to its success, the views of nearly 10,000 young people are included in this, the Manifesto for 2015. Several groups of young people have come together with the support of Youth Connexions to make this consultation possible, whether it is us as MYPs, youth councils, the Young Carers’ Council or Herts1125 Who not What.

This Manifesto works to ensure that young people’s voices are heard and that the services provided by the County, by individual boroughs and by other providers, suit our needs and work with us to ensure that they are accessible and relevant to young people.

We look forward to presenting this document to Cllr Richard Roberts at County Hall and following its launch, to other interested parties across the county. Work must then start on teaming up with the relevant bodies in order to achieve the aims set out in the Manifesto.

On behalf of all Members of the Youth Parliament for Hertfordshire and all the Members of Herts 1125, we would like to thank all of those that took part.

INTRODUCING Herts1125

We are Herts1125, a group of Hertfordshire young people who aim to represent the top priorities for young people in the county, and campaign on their behalf to service providers and decision makers to bring about positive change.

This year’s Young People’s Manifesto highlights the top five priorities for young people in the county, as voted for by them alongside the Hertfordshire UK Youth Parliament (HertsUKYP) annual elections. Led by the elected members of HertsUKYP and in consultation with over 9000 young people, the Manifesto outlines the improvements we would like to see to address these priorities.

HISTORY Herts1125

In October 2011, with the support of Youth Connexions, elected members of HertsUKYP set up Herts1125 and produced the first ever Hertfordshire Young People’s Manifesto in 2012. Since then, a new Manifesto is launched annually in October outlining the changes that are called for to improve the lives of all young people living, working or studying in Hertfordshire.

An update on the 2014/15 Manifesto can be found on page 10.

The number of young people feeding into the Manifesto, through the support of schools and youth workers, is growing each year. In our first year, 2012, 600 took part. This increased to 1600 in 2013, 4100 in 2014 and this year, we are very pleased to report that over 9000 young people have had their say on the issues that are important to them.

The response we have had from young people shows their commitment to the process. It also demonstrates the value schools that supported the work, place on having their students’ voices heard on young people’s issues via a countywide consultation.
AIMS OF Herts

We act as a voice for the views and opinions of young people across Hertfordshire by:

- Identifying what we as young people think is important and what we would like to see changed and/or improved.
- Getting involved in the decisions that affect young people and encouraging all to exercise their rights and responsibilities.
- Campaigning to bring about positive change or influence improvements for the benefit of all.
- Encouraging decision-makers to listen to and respond to our needs and wishes.
- Promoting positive images of young people and highlighting the contribution we can all make to the community.

WHAT IS A YOUTH MANIFESTO?

Just like everyone else, young people have opinions about the factors that shape their lives and changes we would like to see. A Manifesto brings these together as a public statement of intent, which means telling people publicly about the important issues for young people and then making recommendations to help improve our lives.

In Hertfordshire, we do this annually through a countywide consultation, and young people are encouraged to participate to get their voices heard.

This year’s Manifesto highlights the top five priorities for young people in the county, as voted for alongside the Hertfordshire UK Youth Parliament (HertsUKYP) annual elections. Led by elected members of HertsUKYP 2015, we have consulted over 9000 young people across Hertfordshire to develop a Manifesto that highlights the key issues and the improvements we would like to see.
At the Herts1125 meeting in March 2015, we debated and discussed the top five priorities voted for in February and decided the direction of each that we wished to concentrate on. We then designed questionnaires, available on paper and online, to survey young people aged 11 – 25 who live, work or are educated in the county.

These were then distributed through schools and youth projects during the summer term of 2015 to find out what our peers thought.

We also felt that it was important to hear from other groups in the county and this year, our Manifesto includes priority issues from the young LGBT+ community and Young Carers.

The two 1125 WnW LGBT+ consultations were led by the newly formed group, Who not What (WnW): members of the young LGBT+ community who came together in October of last year to look at how services and resources for their peers could be improved.

Young Carers in Hertfordshire were supported to carry out consultations with their peers, and those who support them in schools and at local groups, to look at their priority issues.

Questionnaires were designed by each group and distributed across county as well as being made available online.

The findings have now been collated and analysed by members of HertsMYPs, Who not What and Young Carers, and the results form the basis of the 2015/16 Hertfordshire Young People’s Manifesto. These are issues that young people care about, and it is on their behalf that Herts1125 calls for change in the five priority areas that affect young people in Hertfordshire today.
WHAT DO WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE?

Building on previous successes, we call on politicians and decision makers in Hertfordshire to take notice of this Young People’s Manifesto, and work in partnership with Herts1125 to take action on these important issues for young people.

We hope that young people across Hertfordshire will use this Manifesto to stimulate discussion about the things that matter to them and become inspired to get involved in youth democracy. Together, we really can make a difference.

We hope that others will recognise this as an important document and give thorough consideration to the information and ideas contained in it, which we think can be used as a tool for positive change in Hertfordshire.
UPDATE ON HERTFORDSHIRE YOUNG PEOPLE’S MANIFESTO 2014/15
LAUNCHED OCTOBER 2014

Last year, Herts1125 launched the third Young People’s Manifesto which over 4,100 young people took part. The top five priorities as voted for by young people were: preparing young people for work, cheaper bus fares for young people during the school holidays, improving mental health services and education for young people, engaging young people to get their voices heard and tackling youth unemployment.

Since then Herts1125 and HertsUKYP have been involved in a number of changes seeking to improve things in Hertfordshire for young people.

PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR WORK

- Herts1125 is now recognised on the national volunteering website vInspired giving young people who register, the opportunity to gain nationally accredited certification for their volunteering hours.
- Young people taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, Herts1125 Youth Voice and National Citizen Service (NCS) graduates have the opportunity to have hours recognised to develop CVs and portfolios.
- New social media account @HertsYV set up to publicise local volunteering opportunities and benefits of taking part.
- Establishing partnership working to link in to local organisations including ProAction, to enable their members to access the opportunities offered by Youth Connexions.

CHEAPER BUS FARES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

- Hertfordshire Saver Card applications continue to be given out at key points throughout the year in schools.
- Reduction in price if applying online a welcome addition.
- Evidence from 2015 Manifesto shows that there is an increase in the number of young people who are aware of the discount card.
- Online School journey planner easy and accessible to use.
IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND EDUCATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- Fifteen young people from North Herts District and eleven from East Herts District completed their RSPH Mental Health Champions training in 2015.
- Fifteen young people from St Albans District are currently undertaking the Health Champions course.
- MindEd training delivered across county to professional workers from schools, county council and voluntary organisations, with priority to those who work directly with young people.
- Hertfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board leading Hertfordshire’s Year of Mental Health for 2015/16 ‘Help us tackle the mental health stigma and discrimination’.
- Young people at centre of CAMHS review held early in 2015 leading to a number of actions to be taken forward including:
  - Planning services in equal partnership with children, young people and families.
  - Shaping of the local offer by both robust evidence and the wishes of children, young people and families.
  - A new model of delivery named by children and young people in the county to give it a clear and credible brand.
- Hertfordshire Young People’s Manifesto 2014/15 and St Albans Youth Council reports 2010/2014 used as evidence in the CAMHS review
- Evidence from Hertfordshire Young People’s Manifesto 2014/15 presented at the Youth Select Committee in July at Portcullis House to support UK Youth Parliament’s national campaign.
- Herts1125 Who not What [WnW] established and consultations with self-identified young LGBT+ carried out to evidence specific support required. Results from the consultations published in this Manifesto.
- Welwyn and Hatfield Youth Council used the findings from the 2014/2015 Hertfordshire Young People’s Manifesto to support work locally including securing funding for Mental Health First Aid training delivered to school staff.

ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO GET THEIR VOICES HEARD

- Improved co-ordination of staff resources to support the engagement and participation of young people in the county and ensure outcomes from Manifesto taken forward.
- Local links with schools and voluntary organisations strengthening through increased promotion of opportunities.
- Engagement and participation has increased from 600 responses in the first Manifesto in 2012, 1600 in 2013, 4100 in 2014 to 9503 in 2015.

TACKLING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

- Herts Jobs 16-19 website has been updated and there is a strong presence on social media promoting job opportunities in local services and businesses as well as regional and national.
  - The website was incorporated in the Youth Connexions website in 2014; page views are increasing year on year and the jobs and careers section is the most visited.
  - The website now includes a specific section on part time jobs available including information on working hours that is easy to find and accessible to all.
  - Herts Jobs 16 -19 twitter now has 2694 followers.
- Youth Connexions have established productive relationships across county in order to offer relevant and valuable work experience placements to young people, 7217 placements took place in 2014/15.
OUR STRUCTURE

YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11 – 25 WHO LIVE, WORK AND/OR ARE EDUCATED IN THE COUNTY

- HERTS MYPS
- WHO NOT WHAT LGBT+
- INDIVIDUALS
- COUNTYWIDE YOUTH COUNCILS/ FORUMS
- YOUNG CARERS IN HERTS
- SPECIALIST GROUPS *

Identification of Priorities, voting, consultations, evaluation, report writing, presentations and three annual meetings

HERTS YOUNG PEOPLE’S MANIFESTO

- HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
- OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES
- NATIONAL RESEARCH/SURVEYS

YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11 – 18 WHO LIVE, WORK AND/OR ARE EDUCATED IN THE COUNTY

- NATIONAL AGM
- NATIONAL & REGIONAL TRAINING EVENTS
- REGIONAL CONFERENCES
- YOUTH SELECT COMMITTEES
- BRITISH YOUTH COUNCIL
- NATIONAL ANNUAL SITTING MAKE YOUR MARK BALLOT
- NATIONAL UKYP
HOW HERTS1125 MAKE DECISIONS

PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11 – 18 VOTE FOR TOP HERTS1125 PRIORITIES & HERTS MYP CANDIDATES ANNUALLY IN JANUARY/ FEBRUARY

HERTS1125 MARCH/APRIL MEETING
HERTS1125 DEBATE & DISCUSS THE DIRECTION OF EACH CONSULTATION

ONLINE CONSULTATIONS & PAPER QUESTIONNAIRES PREPARED

RESEARCH WITH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS & DECISION MAKERS

FOCUS GROUPS AND SEPARATE ISSUE BASED MEETINGS

APRIL/MAY
SURVEY DESIGN AND ROLL OUT

HERTS1125 JULY MEETING
HERTS1125 MEMBERS DISCUSS & DEBATE EVIDENCE GATHERED SO FAR, AND VOTE ON THE WAY FORWARD LOCAL YOUTH/SCHOOL COUNCILS SHARE BEST PRACTICE

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER
HERTSMYPs MEMBERS CONTINUE WITH MANIFESTO WRITING/EDITING/PROOFING/EDITING/PRINTING

HERTS1125 OCTOBER CONFERENCE
HERTS1125 MANIFESTO PRESENTED TO HERTS COUNTY COUNCIL AND MEMBERS DEBATE ISSUES TO BE PUT FORWARD FOR CONSULTATION IN UPCOMING UKYP ELECTIONS

HERTS1125 JANUARY REVIEW
FEEDBACK FROM HERTS COUNTY COUNCIL RECEIVED ON YOUTH MANIFESTO PRIORITIES

HERTS1125 JANUARY ONWARDS
INFORM YOUNG PEOPLE IN HERTFORDSHIRE ON RESULTS OF THE 2015 MANIFESTO AND CONTINUE TO WORK WITH HERTS COUNTY COUNCIL ON IMPROVING DESIGN & DELIVERY OF SERVICES
how to protect yourself, support for victims of bullying and self-esteem post bullying (2952 votes)
THE TOP PRIORITY FOR 2015, AS VOTED FOR BY 2952 YOUNG PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN 11-18 IN HERTFORDSHIRE, IS CYBERBULLYING.

Almost 45,000 children talked to ChildLine about bullying in 2013 and NSPCC figures suggest that nearly half of children and young people (46%) have been bullied at school at some point in their lives¹. Cyberbullying, the term used to describe incidents of bullying using digital technology, is included within these figures.

Just as there are many forms of traditional bullying, including verbal abuse and physical violence, there are many different forms of cyberbullying, the sophistication of which increases with developing technology. This includes racist and homophobic bullying, sexually motivated bullying and the spreading of gossip, lies and secrets online. Also, with the increasing popularity of sites such as Instagram and Snapchat, cyberbullying can include posting pictures of others online without that person’s permission. One of the main differences between cyberbullying and bullying in person is that bullies have the opportunity to target their victims 24/7 and so can constantly affect every aspect of young people’s lives.

‘IT IS EASIER TO DO IT WHEN IT’S NOT FACE TO FACE AND, GENERALLY, IT’S DIFFICULT FOR THE VICTIM TO IGNORE AND GET AWAY FROM THE BULLYING.’ FEMALE, 14-15, DACORUM

The bullies can range from faceless online ‘trolls’ to people once counted as close friends. Being the target of cyberbullying can damage young people’s trust, confidence, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing, leading to depression, isolation and in extreme cases, suicide. Despite countless media and TV campaigns, reports of cyberbullying continue to grab local and national newspaper headlines. This ranges from teenage campaigns of terror to revenge porn and celebrity online stalking, all of which can happen at any time of the day or night and anywhere in the world.

‘PEOPLE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FACT THAT THEY ARE ANONYMOUS ONLINE AND ARE RUDE OR THREATENING TO EITHER GET BACK AT SOMEONE OR TO FEEL STRONG OR SEEM BIG.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

Herts1125 want to share the findings from this year’s survey, plus make some recommendations for positive change and ask local policy makers and service providers to consider them as an urgent matter.

THE ISSUES

Cyberbullying is on the increase across the UK. Instead of face-to-face bullying, a cyberbully uses increasingly sophisticated forms of digital communication e.g. texts, instant messaging, social media, emails and websites to torment, threaten, harass, humiliate or embarrass someone. Although adults do suffer from this form of bullying, including in the workplace, national statistics show that it is more prevalent amongst children and young people, particularly young women.

In the mobile phone industry, 11-19 year olds of today are termed ‘digital natives’ due to the fact that they have grown up with the internet, social media and smartphones. It is partly this familiarity that enables those who choose to bully to find creative ways to torment whilst remaining anonymous if they choose.

Herts1125 were not surprised to see that 99% (2373) of all the young people who took part in our survey know what cyberbullying is.

‘THE INTERNET WAS ORIGINALLY A GIFT TO HUMANITY FROM ITS CREATOR AND NOW IT IS USED AS A WEAPON.’ FEMALE, NORTH HERTS

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2 An internet ‘troll’ is an abusive or obnoxious user who uses shock value to promote arguments and disharmony in online communities.
4 http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/6621/mcafee_digital-deception_the-online-behaviour-of-teens.pdf
In total, we received 2,471 completed surveys for this priority from young people in schools, youth centres and other youth services across the county. The gender split is even, with 1,182 young women responding (49%) and 1,180 young men (49%). The final 2% represents the views of those who prefer not to share their gender identity.

As LGBT+ issues are Priority Four in this Manifesto we also asked young people if they identified as a member of the LGBT+ community; 136 respondents self-identified. This figure is only slightly under the national statistics for LGBT+ currently estimated by the government to be around 6% of the population,\(^5\) so we believe our survey is a representative sample.

For many young people social networking sites, such as Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram, are a very important part of their life as they offer the ability to talk, share photos, music and interests on the go. In a county like Hertfordshire that has large towns surrounded by smaller villages and rural areas, being in touch with your friends at all times has distinct advantages, especially with lack of transport being highlighted as such a big issue in previous Young People’s Manifestos.

A recent Ofcom report revealed that 47% of those aged 16–24 said that the thing they would miss most in the world if they didn’t have it is their smartphone.\(^6\) This came before partners, family, friends and all other interests. Our survey supports the importance placed on mobile phones, not just as status symbols but also for the apps and access to social media they provide. The majority of young people reported having at least one social media account, with a sizeable proportion reporting to have three or more that they use for

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\(^5\) https://yougov.co.uk/news/2014/07/04/average-brit-knows-31-lesbians-55-gay-men/

\(^6\) http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/other/research-publications/adults/adults-media-lit-14/
different functions and with different levels of regularity. The current most popular sites at the time of this survey (Summer 2015) are Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Facebook.

As with many other things, e.g. clothes, music and places to go, the popularity of different social media changes at different times. For example, currently there is an increase in popularity of photo sharing based sites such as Snapchat and Instagram. Facebook may not be so popular in this snapshot of popular culture (4th place) but a 2014 Ofcom report states that Facebook remains the default, although no longer the sole, social networking site for almost all UK adults (aged 16+) who are online (96%) and it remains relevant in any discussions about online safety and cyberbullying because it is so well known. However, the variety of social media named through the comments in the survey indicate the evolving nature of social media and highlights that adults need to be aware of the vast variety of accounts and apps that are available to young people.

Like the majority of popular social media apps, Facebook has a strict age policy where you must be at least 13 to open an account. This is because Facebook says that the content that may be on the site is inappropriate for young people under the age of 13 due to the fact that most of the content is user-led. This is despite the fact there are workers (moderators) who regularly check through feeds to make sure there isn’t any inappropriate language being used or any physical threats, however it is not possible to monitor all content. Alongside this, Facebook offers a help centre as well as guidance for parents and teachers. This can clearly be found on their website, alongside advice to only accept those you know as friends. Despite this, Herts are aware that many young people open a Facebook account before this age, either with or without with the knowledge and support of a parent/carer. This is not just a Hertfordshire issue, with Facebook statistics recording that last year more than 7.5 million children aged under 13 lied to get around Facebook’s age restrictions.

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7 See glossary for descriptions of the social media mentioned.
8 http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/other/research-publications/adults/adults-media-lit-14/
9 https://www.facebook.com/help/441374602560317/
10 Read more: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2647277/Anger-Facebook-patent-reveals-plans-let-13s-use-social-network-parents-approval.html#ixzz3mAv9jMaj
Early anti-cyberbullying work focused heavily on ‘stranger danger’, i.e. young people accepting friendship requests from people that they don’t know who might pose a risk. Herts1125 are pleased to see that the majority who responded only accept friendship requests from people they know, but are concerned that despite heavy media coverage highlighting the dangers of linking with strangers, and the popularity of TV shows like ‘Catfish’11, which ‘uncovers’ fake social media profiles and online dating frauds, there are still 27% (428) with ‘friends’ they don’t ‘know’.

‘CHILDREN NEED TO BE MADE AWARE OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF WHAT THEY SHARE ONLINE, UNLIKE PREVIOUS GENERATIONS THEIR MISTAKES ARE NOT FORGOTTEN, MUCH LIKE A DIGITAL TATTOO.12’

Herts1125 think that young people must take some responsibility for their own online safety and this includes not accepting ‘friend’ requests on Facebook (or similar) unless they actually know the person in the real world. Whilst it might be tempting to look popular by having hundreds or even thousands of ‘friends’ on your social media page it is worth considering what information strangers are being allowed to access and how this might be misused. This is especially so if photos are being uploaded and Bluetooth or other data roaming systems are on, meaning that total strangers can track your movements with ease.

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11 [http://www.mtv.co.uk/catfish-the-tv-show](http://www.mtv.co.uk/catfish-the-tv-show)

‘YOUNGER USERS ARE LIKELY TO TAKE A MORE LIBERAL APPROACH TO REGULATION AND MODERATION, AND EMPLOY A RANGE OF STRATEGIES TO MANAGE THEIR ONLINE EXPERIENCE PROACTIVELY, WHILE OLDER USERS APPEAR TO PREFER A MORE MODERATED AND REGULATED EXPERIENCE.’ OFCOM REPORT 2013

Although it is reassuring to see that so many young people know how to use the security settings on their profile, Herts1125 think that further surveys should ask who actually uses them. Anecdotally, we have been told that young people often ‘forget’ to update, or do not read the small print when an alert is sent to notify them of changes to the site. This can mean that they miss instructions to change security and privacy settings, or miss important information, e.g. ‘tagging’ people in photos without asking for their permission or knowing their security status, leaving their own profile vulnerable.

This question is probably the most important in the whole survey, but also the most emotionally difficult to answer. 416 (17%) young people said yes, they have been cyberbullied and 6% (150) prefer not to say, but if we assume that this means that they have been involved in bullying in some way, this means that nearly a quarter of young people taking part in this questionnaire have been directly affected by cyberbullying. This reinforces our commitment to campaign for positive change.

http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/other/research-publications/adults/adults-media-lit-14/
During Herts1125 discussions about young people’s knowledge and experience of cyberbullying it became clear that some is done with open malicious intent and is often an extension of face-to-face bullying. Examples of this include bombarding someone with aggressive and offensive messages, posting intimate photos on social media, setting up fake accounts to trick and deceive, isolating people from social media groups and even making physical or sexual threats. This type of bullying is planned to cause maximum misery to the target and can take place persistently over many months.

‘I DIDN’T ALWAYS TELL PEOPLE BECAUSE I DIDN’T THINK IT WOULD CHANGE ANYTHING WHEN I WAS YOUNGER OR BECAUSE I WAS SCARED THAT IT WOULD MAKE IT WORSE WHEN IT WAS PEOPLE THAT I DID KNOW. I WAS WORRIED IT WOULD TURN FROM ONLINE TO FACE TO FACE ATTACKS.’

FEMALE, EAST HERTS

In a 2013 national study, 32% of young people admitted that they had been asked to do something sexually inappropriate online, with most saying that their way of coping with this was to delete the message and/or block the user. 21% in the same survey admit to sending intimate photos they now wish they hadn’t, but only a very small minority told an adult what had happened or reported it via the social media site. Although our survey did not have a specific question about this form of cyberbullying, we have been made aware amongst our peers that it is happening in Hertfordshire too and it needs to be taken into account in any future plans.

Other young people talked in terms of a thoughtless ‘joke’ that quickly spiraled out of control, not realising the speed with which embarrassing pictures or comments can travel in cyberspace. For example, a picture sent on Snapchat can be screenshot and circulated via social media in seconds, all without the knowledge or permission of the owner.

‘WHEN ASKED WHY THEY THINK OTHERS CYBERBULLY, 81 PERCENT SAID THAT CYBERBULLIES THINK IT’S FUNNY.’

‘OUR RESEARCH APPROACHES DON’T ALLOW US TO ACCURATELY DISTINGUISH BETWEEN GOOD-NATURED RIBBING AND MALEVOLENT MEANNESS.’

15  http://www.ncpc.org/topics/cyberbullying/cyberbullying-faq-for-teens
16  http://cyberbullying.org/bullies_or_best_friends/
Some young people seemed unsure as to where the line should be drawn between a few harsh words and behaviour that constitutes bullying. This can prevent them from reporting it, as they are not sure what they have seen and whether it is important enough to do something about. As a rule, the police consider cyberbullying to be something that happens regularly (by the same bullies) over a few weeks, rather than a one off nasty text.

‘I DON’T THINK I HAVE EVER WITNESSED BULLYING ONLY ONE OR TWO MEAN COMMENTS’ FEMALE, 14-14, ST ALBANS

‘EVEN THOUGH SOMEONE’S FEELINGS CAN CERTAINLY BE HURT WITHOUT INTENT, BULLYING BY DEFINITION IS DELIBERATE.’

Others were clear that they believe they have the right to say anything they like online, no matter how offensive this might be to someone else, with comments made about it being a ‘free country’ and suggesting the victims of cyberbullying are ‘taking it too seriously.’

‘YOUNGER USERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO AGREE THAT THEY SHOULD BE FREE TO SAY WHAT THEY LIKE ONLINE (SIX IN TEN (59%)’ OFCOM REPORT 2013

The final excuse that came up a lot was linked to the notion of a ‘joke’ encapsulated in the currently very popular term, ‘banter’.

‘23% WHO CONFESS TO SENDING CRUEL, OFFENSIVE OR MEAN MESSAGES SAY THAT THEY ‘MEANT IT’ WITH MANY BECOMING DEFENSIVE AND CLAIMING IT WAS ‘JUST A JOKE’ OR ‘BANTER THAT HAD BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY THE PERSON THEY SENT IT TO.’

This seeks to diminish the effect the bully’s behaviour has on someone, almost turning the whole issue around so that it is the victim’s fault, because they haven’t got a sense of humour or don’t realise it is a ‘joke’.

‘(BANTER IS) A SLIGHTLY MEAN JOKE BUT FUNNY AND EVERYONE KNOWS IT’S A JOKE.’ FEMALE, 11-13, HERTSMERE

17 http://cyberbullying.org/bullies_or_best_friends/
18 http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/other/research-publications/adults/adults-media-lit-14/
Although a huge majority of respondents to this survey think that ‘banter’ is something funny or having a good time, 64% (1473) of young people asked said that yes, ‘banter’ is used as an excuse for bullying and some young people are not so keen to defend it.

‘EXCUSE FOR INSULTS SAID ‘JOKINGLY’’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

‘BANTER? THE MOST ANNOYING WORD EVER.’ MALE, 16-18, DACORUM

‘AN IRRITATING TERM, WHICH IS OFTEN USED AND IS MEANT TO MEAN SOMETHING IMPRESSIVE OR FUNNY.’ MALE, 11-13, HERTSMERE

A joke is only a joke if everyone, including the subject of it, is laughing equally. All young people should be alerted to think hard before sending or forwarding abusive messages on social media, forwarding offensive emails or adding nasty comments to a photo, even if it is meant as a joke or ‘banter’.

‘SOMETHING BOTH PEOPLE FIND FUNNY - NOT HURTING ANYONE’ FEMALE, 14-15, DACORUM

After all, without the supporters and bystanders that encourage a bully by laughing, forwarding messages or adding nasty comments, they are just an unpleasant single person – it is the others who join in that give power to a bully and help to keep it going.
REPORTING

Of the 416 young people who clearly reported that they have been cyberbullied and the 150 who preferred not to say, 62% (352) say they told someone, which could be interpreted that anti-bullying campaigns that encourage the victims of bullying to tell someone they trust about it, are working. 36% (204) reported keeping it secret and a small minority, 11% (64), said that the reason they did not report being bullied is because they did not know who to tell. This is particularly unacceptable to Herts1125 who want every young person in the county to know where to go for help and support, especially in school. Note: some young people ticked more than one box, hence the following figures do not tally to 100%.

‘BECAUSE I WASN’T SURE WHO TO TRUST.’ FEMALE, 11-13, EAST HERTS

‘I DIDN’T KNOW WHO TO TELL AT THE TIME AND I COULDN’T TALK ABOUT IT’ FEMALE, 14-15, WELWYN & HATFIELD

Young people gave a variety of reasons for not telling someone if they are being bullied, which is likely to include some who have ongoing experience of it. We would also like to see things made easier for those people to come forward, both anonymously and openly, to receive help and support, without the fear of retribution or making it worse in some other way.

‘I DIDN’T WANT ANYONE TO KNOW THAT I CRIED AND PUNCHED WALLS.’ FEMALE, 11-13, NORTH HERTS

‘I DIDN’T WANT TO GET CALLED A SNITCH.’ MALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

‘(I DIDN’T TELL ANYONE) BECAUSE I WAS TOO EMBARRASSED BECAUSE WHAT THEY SAID WAS TRUE.’ MALE, 16-18, STEVENAGE

In our survey, keeping the bullying a secret and sorting it out alone was a recurring comment made by young people, even if this leads to private misery and constant anxiety. By keeping it to themselves young people said there would be no need to have a conversation with adults, and in particular parents, about ‘why you want to be friends again’ with someone who has previously bullied you. This is because ultimately they want everything to be as it was before the bullying and to fit in with their peer group.

‘IT ALWAYS GETS WORSE WITH ‘HELP’ FROM ADULTS’ MALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

‘PEOPLE ALWAYS SAY THEY WOULD DO SOMETHING BUT THEY NEVER DO.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS
‘I WOULD GET A LONG LECTURE FROM MY MUM ABOUT HOW HORRIBLE THEY ARE.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

Despite the high number of comments made about the embarrassment of the specifics of the bullying and general resistance to adult involvement, 238 young people told us that one of the people that they confided in was a relative, and in particular their mum (or someone with a parental role).

Perhaps less surprisingly is that of those that reported cyberbullying, 210 young people said that they would go to their friends, as well as parents and relatives, for help and so it is equally as important for peers to have knowledge of where their friends can go to receive support. However, despite anti-bullying campaigns in most Hertfordshire schools and PSHE lessons where pupils are made aware of different types of bullying, only 92 confided in a member of staff at school about cyberbullying.

‘I DIDN’T WANT THE TEACHERS KNOWING AND TELLING THEM OFF BECAUSE THEY WOULD BE MEANER AND CALL ME NAMES.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

‘THEY WOULDN’T BE ABLE TO HELP. IF ANYTHING, THEY’D MAKE IT WORSE’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS
The overwhelming majority of people who have been bullied told us that they knew their bully, which increased the betrayal they feel. This indicates that although a majority said that people cyber bullied as they could remain anonymous, in actual fact their victims still knew who they were and anonymity was not an instigating factor.

‘MY BULLIES WERE MY FRIENDS.’ YOUNG PERSON IN WATFORD

‘AT FIRST I DIDN’T TELL ANYONE, AND THEN I DID. THE WHOLE CLASS TURNED AGAINST ME.’ FEMALE, 14-15, WATFORD

‘(I DIDN’T TELL ANYONE) BECAUSE I KNEW THE PERSON AND KNEW NOTHING ELSE WOULD HAPPEN.’ FEMALE, 16-18, WELWYN & HATFIELD

Cyberbullies often rely on other young people, usually termed ‘bystanders’ in DfE (Department for Education) anti-bullying resources, to reinforce their bullying behaviour by joining in. Even those young people less involved can help perpetuate the bullying simply by not intervening or offering even minimum support to the victim, when they know what is happening.

Where young people did not know who is bullying them online, the anonymous bully has an additional layer of power with which to frighten and intimidate, seemingly without any risk of being caught. This can make things even worse as young people report becoming suspicious of everyone and unable even to trust their closest friends as they agonise over who might be targeting them.

‘IT CAN BE ANONYMOUS AND THEY (THE BULLIES) CAN HIDE
BEHIND A SCREEN.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

There is a general perception that if the target does not know who is cyberbullying them, they are unlikely to find out. This gives the power to the person doing the bullying.

‘(PEOPLE BULLY ONLINE) SO THEY ARE ANONYMOUS AND WON’T GET CAUGHT’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

‘IN MANY CASES THEY HAVE A CERTAIN LEVEL OF ANONYMITY WHICH MEANS THEY PROBABLY FEEL THEY’RE LESS LIKELY TO GET INTO TROUBLE. IN ADDITION THEY MAY FIND IT EASIER TO SAY THESE THINGS WHEN IT’S ANONYMOUS NOT FACE TO FACE. THEY DO IT MAINLY BECAUSE THERE ARE SEEMINGLY NO CONSEQUENCES.’ FEMALE, NORTH HERTS

It is important that young people know that this is not true and bullies should not feel protected through remaining anonymous. If the police are involved, or a report is made to the social media site, they can be found by tracing the smartphone or IP address of the computer used.

This means that even if they open a new account or use a fake name it won’t matter if they are using the same digital hardware, e.g. laptop, tablet, Xbox or phone to send it from. If physical or sexual threats have been made then the police will take this matter very seriously. Even if the perpetrator claims it is only ‘banter’, one or more laws may have been broken and would be investigated.

Social media sites are likely to respond by closing the account and banning usage on the site and / or reporting it to the police. Ultimately, social media sites want a good reputation for security and safety to encourage wealthy advertisers to place accounts with them to increase their revenue. This is not going to happen if their name is continually linked to cyberbullying and crime.
‘IF IT ISN’T TREATED THE SAME IT WILL STILL MAKE THE VICTIM FEEL BAD ABOUT THEMSELVES AND IF CYBERBULLYING ISN’T TREATED SERIOUS, THE RATE OF IT WILL RISE.’ MALE, 16-18, DACORUM

‘IT CAN HURT SOMEONE JUST AS BAD AND I KNOW THIS FROM EXPERIENCE’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

‘CYBERBULLYING IS EMOTIONALLY DRAINING AND IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL FORM OF ABUSE’ FEMALE, 14-15, DACORUM

Just fewer than 10% (230) believed that cyberbullying and physical bullying should not be treated with the same amount of seriousness. However, some of these stated that cyberbullying should be treated with more severity than physical bullying due to the emotional harm caused.

‘THE VICTIM CAN EASILY TURN THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA OFF BECAUSE IT’S NOT THE LAW TO HAVE SOCIAL MEDIA.’ MALE, 14-15, NORTH HERTS

‘CYBERBULLYING IS A REALLY SERIOUS ISSUE AND COULD EVEN BE MORE DAMAGING TO THE PERSON THAN BEING BULLIED PHYSICALLY’ FEMALE, 16-18, DACORUM
As social media is so important to young people, forming a part of their identity and the way they communicate together, this simplistic view about closing your account, blocking or simply not going online is no longer enough. Instead, Herts1125 want more done to change and address the behaviour of those who choose to cyberbully, rather than punishing the victims further by cutting them off from their social media friends etc.

DfE (Department of Education) requirements mean that all local authority schools in the UK have an anti-bullying policy and guidance notes on how to manage it within school\(^\text{20}\). However, from the comments made in this section it would seem that the majority of young people do not know what is included in them. 646 (29%) of young people also do not know if their schools anti-bullying policy includes cyber bullying. Considering the high profile of cyberbullying amongst young people and the media it is essential that young people know that this is not tolerated within their school. With the majority thinking that cyberbullies are unlikely to get caught or punished it is easy to see why young people have little faith in the system.

Cyberbullying and the law is also a grey area with some young people adamant that it is illegal and others not sure whether the police would be interested, except in extreme cases such as death threats. The main message that came through is that young people think that when something is reported there should be some sort of an impact no matter how big or small it is, and at the moment they don’t think there are any consequences.

‘THE SCHOOL DOESN’T DO ANYTHING AND THE BULLY ALWAYS MAKES UP A LIE AND GETS OFF THE HOOK AND IT DOESN’T GET DEALT WITH PROPERLY.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

Changes we want to see
Cyberbullying is not the fault of the technology or the social media sites, it is the way that it is used that needs tackling to ensure that everyone can enjoy it without the fear of being embarrassed, hounded, victimised or shamed.

This research found that the majority of young people aged 11-13 had one or more social media accounts, which demonstrates why it is essential to start education early. The majority have seen online bullying or been a victim of it so we want schools to hold assemblies on anti-bullying, including cyberbullying, at the beginning of term but also throughout the year to refresh students’ memories.

‘(WE WANT) VICTIMS AND WITNESSES COMFORTABLE TO SPEAK UP AND INCIDENTS TAKEN SERIOUSLY, SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR BULLIES.’ FEMALE, 14-15, ST ALBANS
Herts1125 think cyber bullying awareness and learning to protect yourself online should become compulsory within PSHE lessons. This should raise awareness about different types of digital bullying, including sexual and homophobic online bullying, but must be up-to-date to take into account learning about new and different social media so it remains meaningful.

’THERE ADVICE GIVEN IS ALWAYS THE SAME; BLOCK/ IGNORE THEM.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

Herts1125 ask that if teachers do not have the expertise in teaching cyber awareness, experts are commissioned from local or national cyberbullying support charities and the police or a PCSO comes in to the school to talk openly and honestly about the legal consequences of things like physical threats and enticements to take nude ‘selfies’, both of which are illegal. We think that this will challenge young people’s current attitudes that it is not that important, or that victims are ‘making a fuss’ if they report it by showing that it is taken as seriously as ‘real world’ physical bullying and build empathy about how the targets of online attacks can feel.

‘THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH IT, CONSEQUENCES AREN’T AS SERIOUS AS IN REAL LIFE.’ FEMALE, 14-15, DACORUM

‘THEY THINK IT’S EASY TO HIDE BEHIND A COMPUTER SCREEN AND BULLY.’ MALE, 11-13, DACORUM

Most schools have rules about using mobile phones during school hours, meaning that pupils should be protected from cyberbullying whilst they are on the premises. However, our research demonstrates this is not the case with young people saying that they are anxious or worried despite the rules for phones not to be switched on during school hours. Herts1125 think that this should be tackled as a priority for all schools to send the message that cyberbullying in any form is not tolerated and that there are consequences for anyone found doing so. As one young person commented, ‘people cyberbully because they think it’s fun and without consequence.’

Schools, parents and professionals from all other services for young people need to challenge this assumption to make sure that potential and existing bullies know that it is taken seriously and that there are consequences.

DfE requirements mean that all local authority schools have an anti-bullying policy and guidance notes on how to manage it within school21, but if students don’t know anything about the policy, what it contains or if cyber bullying is included, then it’s not enough. In our survey young people expressed little if any faith in these policies keeping them safe.

‘POLICIES IN PLACE BUT NOTHING STOPS SOMEONE FROM DOING IT.’ FEMALE, 16-18, STEVENAGE

We want to ensure that all schools have a policy with a specific cyberbullying section in it that teaching staff are familiar with and that can be widely publicised to parents/carers and young people in different age ability appropriate formats. Herts1125 propose that young people are involved in the drafting/adaptation of anti-bullying policies either locally within schools with the school council or with members of Herts1125 as a countywide group.

Getting to know a school’s policy can begin when parents start visiting secondary schools with their child in Year 6, and be reinforced at different intervals throughout pupils’ school life. By sharing the policy and explaining what it means in real terms, e.g. reporting procedures, sanctions, the legal consequences; plus the appeal process for anyone who has been excluded for bullying, everyone connected to the school will be aware of what will happen hopefully leading to them making better choices that can be reinforced at home.

Embarrassment was one of the top reasons given for not reporting cyberbullying, with young people saying that they felt ashamed about the cause of the bullying, especially if the thing they are being bullied about is true.

‘FELT IT WAS EMBARRASSING, DIDN’T FEEL COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING IT’ 14-15, HERTSMERE

‘I WAS EMBARRASSED BECAUSE I MADE A MISTAKE AND THOUGHT IT WAS MY FAULT.’ FEMALE, 11-13, NORTH HERTS

This is especially relevant if they have done something that they do not want adults to know about, e.g. alcohol related incidents, inappropriate photos, their sexual orientation or gender identity if they are questioning or have not yet ‘come out’ to parents, or if they feel to blame for starting the argument. Herts1125 understand this and empathise with young people who said that they prefer to put up with the bullying rather than have to answer to parents or teachers if it is reported. However, we believe that a solution to this would be to encourage schools to create a mentor system of older students, who will be trained through an accredited programme to provide one-on-one support with victims of cyberbullying. Teachers who support the mentoring program will also have knowledge of how to support victims of cyberbullying and where to seek further support and advice and they can make safeguarding decisions about when things need to be taken further.
Although our survey demonstrates that lots of young people in Hertfordshire are ‘media-savvy’ and use the security and privacy settings provided by social media and websites, there is still a high percentage that don’t. Herts1125 recommend that clear guidelines on how you can change your privacy settings on social media are designed and publicised in accessible places e.g. common rooms, the back of the door in public toilets, youth projects etc. This could be in paper form, e.g. posters and leaflets, but also as an ‘infographic’ which would be linked to the home page of every school intranet and student computer and youth websites in Hertfordshire to remind people as they log in to update their security and privacy settings. The infographic could also be promoted on ChannelMogo and ‘tweeted’ and text to young people via Herts1125 and other youth groups’ social media, with a message to ‘like’ and ‘share’ it as widely as possible.

Alongside this, Herts1125 would like to propose working on a campaign with Hertfordshire County Council to raise awareness about how to report cyberbullying on the most popular social media accounts [Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook]. This would be promoted in the same way as the infographic across schools, colleges, libraries and youth projects as well as via social media itself.

‘SOCIAL NETWORKING IS LIKE HIDING BEHIND A MASK AND THEY KNOW THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO GET CAUGHT.’
FEMALE, 16-18, DACORUM

Parents/carers should be supported in having at least a basic understanding of the technology and social media that young people use through parents information evenings or a parent-friendly web page on school sites. This includes things like taking the time to read the information and advice provided by social media companies like the Help Centre on Facebook, which tells parents everything they might need to know about reporting inappropriate content etc. Many parents are terrified about online grooming and bullying so these evening workshops could dispel fears and myths about the internet, discuss appropriate behaviour and hopefully reassure and advise parents on how to keep their children safe online. This can advise them to remain curious about the time their children and teenagers spend online by asking questions and checking out what they are doing.

‘WITH A QUARTER OF CHILDREN SPENDING UP TO SIX HOURS A DAY ON THE INTERNET, AND OVER HALF AWAY FROM A PARENT’S WATCHFUL EYE, THERE APPEARS TO BE NO CONTROL OVER WHAT CHILDREN DO ONLINE, OR WHO THEY INTERACT WITH.’

Using basic online filters and blocking software on home computers can help, as well as talking about online protocols and setting clear boundaries that are reinforced about what

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22 Information graphics or infographics are graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge intended to present information quickly and clearly.

23 https://www.facebook.com/help/441374602560317/

is acceptable and what isn’t. They should also encourage young people to report if they are being bullied online and reassure them that they are not going to make things worse, which was a common concern expressed through this survey.

“WE ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO TALK OPENLY ABOUT IT AS SOON AS THEIR CHILDREN START INTERACTING ONLINE – WHICH MAY BE YOUNGER THAN THEY THINK. THIS WILL ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CHILDREN STAY ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE CYBERBULLIES AND OTHER ONLINE NASTIES, RATHER THAN VULNERABLE TO ATTACK DUE TO A LACK OF AWARENESS.”

Equally, parents should be aware that their child or teenager is as likely to be a cyberbully, as a target of cyberbullying, so they should not assume innocence or ignore it if they discover something is going on. Herts think that schools, parents and pupils need to work together to make it clear that aggressive or bullying behaviour online is unacceptable, regardless of who is doing it.

Our research suggests that lots of young people bully online rather than in the real world because they think that they won’t be caught if they remain anonymous.

‘(PEOPLE BULLY ONLINE) BECAUSE THEY THINK THAT IT’S SAFE AND IF SOMEONE WANTS TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE (OVER THE INTERNET) THEY CAN’T.’ MALE, 11-13, DACORUM

As part of the PSHE education campaign we are asking that this message be challenged, hard. This could be done through schools to support and promote National Anti-bullying Week to raise awareness e.g. through age appropriate workshops (including those for years 7 and 8), parents’ information evenings and in curriculum subjects taking the opportunity to debate topics such as ‘What is the difference between bullying and banter?’

All young people should be actively encouraged to report any cyberbullying they witness. Current thinking demonstrated through this survey is that it is not worth it as nothing will happen and you might become a victim yourself, all of which is not very encouraging.

‘THEY WOULDN’T BE ABLE TO HELP. IF ANYTHING, THEY’D MAKE IT WORSE.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

Schools should be proactive and not reactive towards cyberbullying in order to increase the numbers of young people who believe in the punishments set, and so come forward to report information. Herts1125 think that pupils need to believe that if they do report something, there will be an action and a consequence. To aid this, we want every pupil to know that there is a named teacher in every school who has been trained to support both the victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying. This should be done in a way that is confidential, but that demonstrates that the offence is taken seriously.
IN SHORT

• Teachers should have a good knowledge of the apps and social media that young people are using and how they are being used, including some of the lesser known sites such as AskFM, Periscope, YouTube, BBM etc.

• Schools should be encouraged to create a mentor system of older students, which will serve as a one-on-one support system with victims of cyberbullying. A named teacher in each school will support the mentoring program and have wider knowledge of how to support victims of cyberbullying and where to seek further support and advice.

• All services for young people, including schools, to promote current anti-bullying campaigns that already exist, e.g. Stonewall and The Diana Awards and actively promote national anti-bullying week to raise awareness e.g. through age appropriate workshops on different types of bullying.

• Schools to hold assemblies on anti-bullying, including cyberbullying, at the beginning of term but also throughout the year to refresh students’ memories.

• Parents’ workshops to educate and inform them how to support anti-bullying work done in school to help to keep their child safe as well as take greater responsibility for behaviour outside of school.

• Parents’ workshops to also include how social media apps are being used by their children and where to seek support/advice if their child has been/is being cyberbullied or if their child has been bullying others online. This should include how to approach their children to ensure that they are able to open up about online issues without fear of reprisal.

• An online guide on how to report cyberbullying to be promoted on the most popular websites. This will serve as a tool to signpost victims too. This could be on ChannelMogo.

• HCC to ensure that their anti-bullying guidance has clear guidelines for cyberbullying in schools including how to support victims of cyberbullying

• Schools to ensure anti-bullying policies are widely known to students, teachers and parents and to include an anti-cyberbullying policy within their anti-bullying policy. This should include awareness of the consequences for those found cyberbullying, plus an appeal process.

• Schools to enforce the sanctions set out in the anti-bullying policies for those found cyberbullying both in school and out.

• Anti-bullying policy should be easily available on the schools intranets and physical copies to be kept in form/tutor rooms.

• Invite PCSO/policemen to go into schools, youth projects etc to present about cyberbullying and the possible legal consequences.
GLOSSARY

Below is a glossary of terms used in Priority One of the Hertfordshire Youth Manifesto, which for 2015/16 is cyberbullying.

Android phone - is a powerful, high-tech smartphone that runs on Google’s Android operating system

App(s) – App is short for Application. It is a self-contained program or piece of software designed for a particular purpose, especially as downloaded by a user to a mobile device.

CEOP – is an acronym for the National Crime Agencies Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command.

Device – To include Smart and Android phones, computers, laptop and tablet.

Troll - An internet ‘troll’ is an abusive or obnoxious user who uses shock value to promote arguments and disharmony in online communities.

Selfie – A picture taken by yourself, of yourself (or with others) on your mobile or Smartphone.

Revenge porn – This is where somebody threatens to, or does share, intimate pictures or films without the permission of the person featured. Revenge porn can be illegal, particularly if either or both the people making, taking or sharing is under-18. All incidences should be reported in person or anonymously to the police or directly to http://www.ceop.police.uk

LGBT – Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

Instagram - is a free social media platform that offers users a very creative way to take photos, share images, and use creative filters. You must be 13 years of age, set up a profile, have the option of completing a bio, and option of using privacy settings.

Snapchat – is a free application used to share photos, videos, text, and drawings. It’s free to download the app and free to send messages using it.

Smartphone - a mobile phone that performs many of the functions of a computer, typically having a touchscreen interface, Internet access, and an operating system capable of running downloaded apps.

WhatsApp – is an instant messaging app for smartphones that operates under a subscription business model.

Facebook – is the most popular social media site in the UK. You must be 13 years of age to open a free account and set up a profile. This includes an option to use privacy and security settings.

Twitter - Twitter is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called “tweets.”
YOUNG PEOPLE’S RIGHTS

appropriate adult, cautions, domestic abuse, working hours, pay, sharing of indecent images, right to be heard, etc.
PRIORITY TWO FOR 2015, AS VOTED FOR BY 2824 YOUNG PEOPLE IN HERTFORDSHIRE, IS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO HAVE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR LEGAL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS WITH REGARD TO EDUCATION, YOUTH JUSTICE, PROTECTION AND THE WIDER WORLD OF EMPLOYMENT.
Of all of the priorities in this year’s Young People’s Manifesto we are aware that this is the widest, spanning across several public services as well as commenting on national concerns like the minimum wage. Despite this, we believe there is a common thread that runs through all, which is a need for young people to know more; and a right to have their voice heard on the issues that directly affect them.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international document that sets out the rights that all children and young people under the age of 18 have. This age mirrors UK law, where those under 18 are considered differently to those over 18, which is the age at which you are identified as an adult in the UK.

In the UK the Government ‘must make sure that every child has the rights that are listed in the Convention.’ Article 12 of the Convention sets out the right that every child and young person has to have their opinion sought on matters that affect them, with an onus on the Government to ensure that decision makers take these views into account once heard. In Hertfordshire, there are many different ways that young people are consulted including youth councils, Youth Commissioners, Herts1125 and the Hertfordshire Youth Parliament. This survey, which was designed by Herts1125 to hear the views and recommendations of those who live, work or are educated in the county, and completed by 1917 young people, will contribute to the Hertfordshire Young People’s Manifesto.

This year, for Priority Two of the Manifesto, Herts1125 are focusing on specific rights within the following areas:

1. Employment – the minimum wage and working hours
2. Law and order – the age of criminal responsibility and stop and search laws
3. Being heard – Young people have the access and opportunities to have their say about matters that affect them.
4. Keeping safe – domestic violence and online safety

1 [http://www.lawstuff.org.uk/the-facts/what-are-childrens-rights](http://www.lawstuff.org.uk/the-facts/what-are-childrens-rights)
THE ISSUES

Of those who participated in this survey 51% (971) are female, 45% (861) are male and 4% (67) prefer not to share their gender identity and 117 young people self-identified as members of the LGBT+ community.

The majority of respondents are under 18, (which is relevant in several of the areas consulted on), with those aged 11-13 representing 39% (737) of the sample group, 14-15 year olds 41% (780), 16-18 year olds 19% (343) and those aged 19-25 accounting for the remaining 1% (26). This means that the feedback and comments that inform Herts1125 recommendations for Priority Two, largely represents the views of those whose rights are legally protected by the Convention and in UK law as a child/young person.

EMPLOYMENT

The vast majority (73%: 1318) of young people who took part in this survey are not in paid work and have never had a job. Whilst at first glance this might look concerning, especially as the unemployment rate for Hertfordshire is above national rates\(^2\), it should be considered in the context that over a third of respondents are aged 11-13 and so more at a stage of preparing for work, than getting their first jobs. This is not absolute, with some young people from that age group saying that they do chores for family or friends on an ad-hoc basis to earn extra money, e.g. washing the car or gardening, and others are volunteering through uniformed youth groups, e.g. Scouts, St John’s Ambulance and Air Cadets.

‘EVERY NOW AND THEN I DO WORK FOR MY DAD BUT IT’S NOT A DAILY THING.’ MALE, 11-13, NORTH HERTS

It would seem that this trend is not confined to those young people who are currently too young to work, but applies to the 14-17 year olds too who are still in education. Although some young people in Hertfordshire complain that they would like a part-time job but are struggling to find one, many said they are not looking for work due to a range of reasons, including being too busy with their studies.

‘I WANT A JOB, BUT THERE ARE NO GOOD ONES FOR MY AGE.’ MALE, 11-13, DACORUM

A 2015 study by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills supports the findings in Hertfordshire. This shows that the number of 16 and 17-year-olds working while studying has more than halved since 1996, meaning that the trend for young people to supplement their pocket money (UK average £6 per week) has changed radically in this time. This is attributed as much to the pressure of exams and homework experienced by many pupils, to the lack of opportunities, resulting in fewer young people taking on traditional Saturday jobs.

'55% OF YOUNG PEOPLE SAID THEIR MAIN REASON FOR LEARNING NOT EARNING IS BECAUSE THEY WANT TO FOCUS ON THEIR STUDIES.'

'WORKING IS GOOD, AS LONG IT DOESN'T INTERFERE WITH SCHOOL.' FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

This echoes comments made by members of Herts1125, who additionally point out that some parents prefer their child to study rather than work, and are able to financially support them so that they do not need to. Whilst this is great, it does arguably mean that these young people are not learning the work-based social and employment skills required for when they leave education, putting them at a disadvantage to their peers who have managed a part-time job whilst studying, in terms of experience.

Although this survey did not specifically ask about voluntary work, we think it should be noted that we received several comments about the contribution young people make, free of charge to their communities.

'THE WORK I DO IS VOLUNTARY FOR A CHARITY SHOP.' MALE, 14-15, WATFORD

'IT WASN'T A PAID JOB BUT IT WAS A JOB.' FEMALE, 14-15, HERTSMERE

Of the 27% that do work, or have worked, the hours worked by young people per week vary greatly from zero hour contracts, where they can be given 'one shift a week, ten or nothing' making it very hard to plan and budget, to those who work full time at 35+ hours a week.

'I AM ZERO HOURS AND SO I DON'T KNOW MY AVERAGE WORKING HOURS.' FEMALE, 19-21, HERTSMERE

'IT IS NOT EVERY WEEK, ROUGHLY 8 HOURS A MONTH.' FEMALE, 14-15, EAST HERTS

‘I WORK 35+ HOURS A WEEK.’ MALE, 16-18, HERTSMERE

We assume that the reported variance between a few hours and full-time employment is again due in some part to the wide age range of respondents, which is between 11 and 25. At the bottom end of the scale, young people are too young to have regular paid employment and at the top it is expected that if they are not still in education or training the average 25 year old in Hertfordshire will be working.

‘I DO BABYSITTING SOMETIMES AND HELP OUT AT THE CHURCH AS WELL AS SING IN THE CHOIR WHICH I GET PAID FOR.’ FEMALE, 11-13, NORTH HERTS

One young person reported being a young entrepreneur, developing a business on a strict budget and expanding it to fit the market created.

‘I HAVE A BUSINESS I RUN WITH A WEEKLY REVENUE OF BETWEEN £25-£75.’ MALE, 14-15, HERTSMERE
In 1998 the UK Government made the Minimum Wage law in order to make sure that all employees in the UK are provided with ‘decent minimum standards and fairness in the workplace.’ Even if young people are not currently working, Herts1125 were surprised that so few (just under 30%: 535) knew anything about the minimum wage for their age group.

‘IS THE MINIMUM WAGE 5.00?’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

‘I HAVEN’T BEEN TOLD ANY OF THIS, I SHOULD.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

Herts1125 think that it is important that all young people know the current minimum wage and that this should be taught as part of PSHE / Citizenship Financial Education (see Manifesto Priority Five) to prepare them for work and to understand the value of money.

Of those that do know the minimum wage for their age, usually through experience of working either currently or previously, there is a very mixed opinion. Whilst some young people told us about respected employers who they believe treat them equally to older members of staff doing the same job:

‘I HAVE A 3 HOUR JOB SHELF STACKING IN A NEWSAGENT AND AM PAID ABOVE THE MINIMUM WAGE FOR MY AGE GROUP.’ FEMALE, 14-15, ST ALBANS

The main message received from the young people of Hertfordshire is:

‘THE MINIMUM WAGE IS VERY UNFAIR’ FEMALE, 16-18, EAST HERTS
In this opinion they are not alone; the British Youth Council has been campaigning against what they believe to be the inequality in the three tier structure of the minimum wage that means a worker aged 16 can be paid £2.23 an hour less than their 22 year old colleague for essentially doing the same job.

’IT’S UNFAIR THAT PEOPLE ARE PAID LESS THAN OTHERS JUST BECAUSE OF THEIR AGE.’ FEMALE, 16-18, NORTH HERTS

The other concern raised through this survey is that for some young people, receiving minimum wage means that they are struggling to earn a decent salary, despite working long hours. This combines to create less incentive to work.

’I GET £4.35 AN HOUR. IT IS SO MINIMAL THAT IT IS BARELY WORTH GOING TO WORK CONSIDERING THE RESTRICTIONS ON THE HOURS I AM SUPPOSED TO WORK. AFTER MY OVERPRICED BUS FARE I AM BARELY LEFT WITH ANYTHING.’ FEMALE, 16-18, WELWYN & HATFIELD

’(THE) MINIMUM WAGE IS NOT ENOUGH FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING ON THEIR OWN.’ FEMALE, 19-21, EAST HERTS

’I WORK HARDER THAN I AM PAID FOR WHICH IS NOT OK.’ FEMALE, 16-18, WATFORD

To find out more about the BYC campaign go to http://www.byc.org.uk/news/join-byc’s-campaign-to-raise-the-national-minimum-wage-to-a-living-wage.aspx
In the UK there are employment laws in place to protect the rights of all workers, including those of young people under the age of 18. These restrictions are there to ensure that health and safety needs are met and working does not impact on a young persons’ education, which is deemed more important. Our survey shows that 61% (1109) of those asked say that they know there are legal restrictions to the number of hours under 18’s can work in a day, but many were hazy as to what these restrictions are and how they are enforced.

To be clear, and for the 39% (716) who admit to knowing nothing, the restrictions mean that those under 13 can only undertake paid work in special circumstances, e.g. acting or modeling, where a permit has been applied for and agreed. At age 13, young people can do what is termed ‘light work’, which includes things like a traditional paper round.

‘I DIDN’T KNOW YOU COULD WORK AT THE AGE OF 13.’
FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

Once aged 14, young people have a wider choice of potential part-time jobs, although they still cannot legally work in factories or on a building site. These restrictions last until the age of 16 and change if a young person leaves school for training, apprenticeships or employment when they become what is termed a ‘young worker’. Anyone aged 18 or over has the same work rights as every other adult in the UK, even though the minimum wage differs (see section on this above).7

In Hertfordshire, the local authority has details of all these restrictions, including the permitted hours of work by age and how to apply for a work permit, which can be found at: http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/schlife/employ/

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7 This information is based on that found at [http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-young-people](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-young-people)
‘WOULD LIKE TO FIND OUT AT SCHOOL BUT WE DON’T’
FEMALE, 14-15, WELWYN HATFIELD

![Bar chart showing responses to the question: Whose responsibility is it to ensure working hours for young people are kept to?]

‘THE EMPLOYER SHOULD ALWAYS TAKE CARE OF THE EMPLOYEE.’ FEMALE, 11-13, EAST HERTS

‘I AM VERY LUCKY THAT I WORK FOR A COMPANY THAT MADE SURE ALL SUPERVISORS KNOW ABOUT WHEN I HAVE TO HAVE A BREAK OR WHEN MY SHIFT ENDS.’ FEMALE, 16-18, NORTH HERTS

From our survey it is clear to see that the overwhelming majority (65%:1262) of young people in Hertfordshire believe it is the employer responsibility to ensure that the hours that young people work are within the law and kept to. The second biggest vote (22%:428) was young people who believe that it is their own responsibility, at least in part, to ensure that they work within the legal restrictions:

‘YOU NEED TO PAY ATTENTION TO (WORKING) HOURS TOO, SO NOT TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY EMPLOYER.’ FEMALE, 14-15, THREE RIVERS

‘BETWEEN YOURSELF AND THE EMPLOYER YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO KEEP TO WORKING HOURS.’ MALE, 14-15, HERTSMERE
However, as many young people think it is up to the young person themselves to know and adhere to the working restrictions for their age, yet do not know what they are, Herts1125 believe that this needs to be considered and addressed.

**CHANGES WE WANT TO SEE**

One of the British Youth Council’s priority campaigns for 2015 is “fair treatment at work”\(^8\). This includes campaigning for a more equitable minimum wage for young people that bring it in line with those over 18 who do the same job. We would like to see wider awareness of this campaign within schools, youth services and voluntary sector youth clubs so that young people in Hertfordshire know more about the issues and make informed choices about supporting it.

Employers in Herts who employ young people should be made aware of their workplace rights, perhaps in the form of a document signed by both the employer and the youth employee and their parents, the terms of which would specify the rights of the young person while legally holding the employer to account.

**LAW AND ORDER**

The UK police have a range of powers to stop and search people. The most commonly known is ‘under section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) which accounts for over 1 million stops and searches per year.’\(^9\) This allows the police to stop and search any person and/or vehicle if they have ‘reasonable grounds’ to suspect that a crime has been committed, or is about to be committed.

As part of this survey Herts1125 asked young people in Hertfordshire if they have ever been stopped and searched by the police and the results were that the large majority of 90% (1636) have not.

We then asked the 10% (188) that have if they had been given a reason when stopped by the police.

‘IT HAPPENED TO ME THE OTHER WEEK.’ MALE, 16-18, WELWYN & HATFIELD

‘(I’VE) BEEN SEARCHED BUT (I’M) NOT A CRIMINAL.’ MALE, 14-15, WELWYN & HATFIELD


\(^9\) [researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN03878.pdf](researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN03878.pdf)
Herts1125 think that even though the majority of young people have no experience of being stopped by the police, and possibly never will, all young people should know their rights when it comes to law and order. This includes what to do should they be stopped and searched by the police. We were pleased to hear that this is already happening in some schools in Hertfordshire:

‘THIS HAS BEEN COVERED AT MY SCHOOL THROUGH ASSEMBLIES AND LESSONS.’ FEMALE, 14-15, EAST HERTS

But we are concerned about the sizeable minority (21%:337) who say that they do not know that the police can only stop and search you if they have reasonable grounds to suspect you. We think that if you are out and about in the community, without the presence of an adult, all young people should know the grounds on which the police can stop someone and what to do.
‘IN THE WATFORD AREA I HAVE FRIENDS WHO HAVE BEEN STOPPED AND SEARCH(ED) ON WHAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE INSUBSTANTIAL GROUNDS (WALKING AROUND IN A GROUP OF OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE).’ MALE, 16-18, LIVES IN THREE RIVERS

Although the majority of young people (78%: 1285) in this survey said they do know the police must have grounds upon which to stop people, from the information we have it is not possible to tell if they understand what these are, or if they know the difference between stop and question and stop and search. A discussion amongst Herts1125 members about what the police can and can’t do highlighted the uncertainty surrounding this and so needs clarifying.

Stop and question
A police officer has powers to stop you at any time and ask you:
• what you’re doing
• why you’re in an area and/or where you’re going10

Legally young people (and adults) don’t have to answer any questions the police officer asks them, although we suggest people consider their decision very seriously before deciding not to.

Stop and search
A police officer has powers to stop and search you if they have ‘reasonable grounds’ for suspecting that they will find:
• Stolen goods, or
• drugs, or
• an offensive weapon, or
• any article made or adapted for use in certain offences, for example a burglary or theft, or
• knives, or
• items which could damage or destroy property, for example spray paint cans.11’

There are times when you can be stopped without the police having reasonable grounds, e.g. if a violent incident has taken place nearby or it is related to terrorism, but this can only happen if it has been authorised by a senior police officer.

10 https://www.gov.uk/police-powers-to-stop-and-search-your-rights
It should be remembered that being searched is not the same as being arrested. For more details go to https://www.gov.uk/police-powers-to-stop-and-search-your-rights

In England and Wales, the age of criminal responsibility is 10 years old. This means that children under that age cannot be arrested, although there may be other punishments applied dependent on the crime committed. Although we received verbal comments from young people (some showing surprise, others giving an opinion about whether this is a fair age to hold somebody accountable), it is unclear how many young people know the correct age. If this topic is raised again in future Manifestos we would like to undertake some more research to find out how many young people in Hertfordshire know and where / how they learnt about it.

‘I DON’T KNOW WHAT A CAUTION MEANS.’ 14-15, ST ALBANS

This survey reveals that the majority of young people are either unsure or don’t know what a police caution is (65%:1202) with only 35% (657) being certain that they do.

A child in England and Wales who is aged 10 – 17 years old can be given a youth caution if they admit to a criminal offence and the police have enough evidence to prove an offence was committed. They can also be given a youth conditional caution. Youth conditional cautions are cautions with one or more conditions attached. If a child does not keep to the conditions they could be prosecuted for the original offence12.

Youth cautions are similar to an adult caution [given to those aged 18 and over]. Youth justice law in Scotland is slightly different, which is why it isn’t included in this information.

12 http://www.yjlc.uk/youth-conditional-caution
Again, most young people completing this survey were unclear if this statement was true or false (47%: 855), demonstrating a general lack of knowledge about youth cautions and youth conditional cautions. Although a caution is not technically classed as a conviction (as only the Courts can convict someone) it can be taken into consideration by the Courts if someone goes on to commit, and be convicted of, a further offence.

Most young people who receive a caution will be referred to their local youth offending team, and their parents, or whoever has parental responsibility, is likely to be informed. If they receive a youth conditional caution they will definitely be referred to the youth offending team as some conditions will apply, e.g. a curfew, and parents/carers will need to be told.

A youth caution remains on a child’s criminal record. Once over the age of 18 it is considered spent, which means it is an old conviction that job seekers do not usually have
to tell most employers about. However, it will appear on an enhanced criminal record check [Disclosure and Barring Service check], which is likely to be required when applying for certain jobs, for example, working with children as a teacher or nanny, social care work with vulnerable adults, certain professions such as law, health care, and pharmacy and certain jobs where matters of national security are involved.

Please note that this information is correct at the time of writing the Young People’s Manifesto [September 2015], but laws do change and are updated so it is important to check\textsuperscript{13}.

Any child or young person cautioned who is age of 17 or under, must have an appropriate adult present. From April 2015 in England and Wales the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 has been amended (section 41) so that any ‘youth caution or youth conditional caution given to a young person aged 17 must be given in the presence of an appropriate adult.\textsuperscript{14}’ If you are aged 18 or over unless you have specific needs, you are considered an adult so this does not apply.

An appropriate adult is often a parent or guardian but can include professionals such as your social worker or a member of the local youth justice team. If none of these are available, the police have access to volunteer adults who have trained to be appropriate adults and one of these may be called.

\textsuperscript{13} To find out more contact your local youth offending team or go to https://www.gov.uk/browse/justice/young-people.

CHANGES WE WANT TO SEE

Whilst the vast majority of young people who took part in this survey have had no contact with the police at all, apart from as visitors in school or seeing them within the community, and many are adamant they never will, Herts1125 believe that all young people should know their legal rights, especially those related to stop and search laws and cautions.

‘I DON’T KNOW A LOT ABOUT THIS, NO ONE I KNOW HAS BEEN ARRESTED.’ FEMALE, 11-13, WELWYN & HATFIELD

‘I DON’T KNOW BECAUSE I DON’T INTEND TO GO THROUGH ANYTHING LIKE THAT.’ FEMALE, 11-13, NORTH HERTS

Verbal comments amongst Herts1125 about stop and search are largely based on newspaper headlines and information gained though watching TV, some of which are incorrect or heavily biased. Our research reflects that conducted by the Young Foundation that many ‘young people remain unsure of how (stop and search) should be carried out, what their rights are, and feel that police fail to provide them with simple information that might make the procedure less hostile.’

We are also concerned that many did not know whether they must admit to a crime to get a caution, or whether a caution is a criminal conviction, or the age of criminal responsibility. All of this could impact negatively on those that have received a caution but do not know if or when to inform a potential employer, especially if it is for a job that requires an enhanced police check.

To change this, we recommend that ‘Know your rights’ workshops are held regularly in schools, facilitated by the police or PCSO’s. These will enable young people to find out the information they need and ask questions, e.g. how to respond if they are stopped by the police, as well as reassuring young people about their safety and promoting closer community links between police and young people.

It would also provide an opportunity for the police to get direct feedback about the minority who do have experience of being stopped, especially if this was considered unfair or unwarranted as described by some of the respondents to this survey.

BEING HEARD

96% of those who completed this part of the survey for Priority Two (1761 yes vs. 80 no) think that all young people have the right to be heard. However, whilst the vast majority believes this in principle, there are differences in opinion as to how this should be done in Hertfordshire, with some voicing concerns over what they perceive as young people’s lack of knowledge about democracy and how to get their voice heard through local youth voice channels.

The question asking young people about ‘Votes at 16’ has provoked one of the most interesting responses of the whole Manifesto as it represents a landslide change in opinion by the majority. When asked a similar question in 2014, only a slim majority of young people (52%) in Hertfordshire supported the Votes at 16 Campaign16 (364 for vs. 343 against), compared to this year where a huge 80% (1479 for vs. 361 against) say that with effective education, they should have the vote.

‘16 YEAR OLDS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO VOTE.’ FEMALE, 11-13, EAST HERTS

For more information go to http://www.votesat16.org
This huge turnabout in opinion has provoked much discussion amongst Herts1125 members whilst reviewing the findings, and suggestions for the big difference include seeing the youth vote in action in Scotland\(^\text{17}\), witnessing the difference that politically motivated young people can make and being inspired by it, as well as the possible influence of popular British movies with a political message in the cinema in 2014/15, e.g. *Pride*\(^\text{18}\). Arguably the massive increase in the numbers of young people contributing to this manifesto is further evidence that young people are keen to get their voices heard about the things that matter to them. Last year the Herts1125 Young People’s Manifesto heard the opinions of 4,100 young people which has increased to a massive 9,232 young people taking part this year which obviously Herts1125 are delighted with. Young people from Hertfordshire’s first youth LGBT+ group and Young Carers in Hertfordshire have also contributed to the Manifesto enabling more young people than ever to have their say.

‘VOTES AT 16: ONLY IF POLITICS BECOMES PART OF THE CURRICULUM.’ FEMALE, 16-19, WATFORD

Whatever the cause, Herts1125 think that collectively young people have demonstrated their interest in democracy throughout this survey and say they want high quality, engaging education in order to understand more about the process locally and nationally to make informed opinions. To do this, we think that political education should be higher on the agenda both formally through school and informally within youth projects.

‘MORE AWARENESS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH DEMOCRACY.’

One of the current ways to get involved with local youth politics is through Youth Voice. Youth Voice is a contract between the UK Government Cabinet Office and the British Youth Council (BYC) to ‘provide a range of youth participation services to young people in England, so that they can influence public decision making at a local and national level.’\(^\text{19}\)

In Hertfordshire, Youth Connexions Youth Voice is offered through Herts1125\(^\text{20}\) that incorporates youth/school councils, youth forums, Herts UK Youth Parliament and groups including Who not What; a group that represents the needs and opinions of LGBT+ young people in the county. These have all been widely promoted through social media, e.g. Twitter and Facebook, Youth Connexions and ChannelMOGO websites, and the more traditional advertising methods of leaflets and posters in schools throughout the county. So it is disappointing to see that only 23% (409) of young people say they are aware of youth voice groups in their area, although it is possible that young people know about individual groups but are not aware of the collective term ‘Youth Voice’.

18 Pride is a film about gay activists during the miners’ strike in Wales - [http://www.walesonline.co.uk/whats-on/film-news/pride-wins-bafta-nomination-best-8410255](http://www.walesonline.co.uk/whats-on/film-news/pride-wins-bafta-nomination-best-8410255)
'I WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED WITH THIS, POSSIBLY AT THE NEXT YOUTH ELECTION.' MALE, 14-15, HERTSMERE

There are elections for HertsUKYP held annually to elect members to represent each district of the county and the Youth Parliament provides real opportunities for young people to get involved locally with Hertfordshire’s youth democracy, as well as represent Hertfordshire nationally as members of the British Youth Council.

As a countywide group, HertsUKYP fares better in the recognition stakes than Herts1125, where only 161 (9%) young people out of 1,832 said they know what it is.

When young people vote for their Youth Parliament candidate in January each year, they also vote for their top Herts1125 priorities. It appears that young people do not make the link between the priority voting and the surveys that they then complete later on in the year. It is reassuring to see a steady increase from the 30% who claimed to know about HertsUKYP in the 2014 Youth Manifesto survey to 38% this year. This 8% rise suggests that the awareness raising campaigns that were developed from young people’s recommendations to HCC last year have been effective and should be expanded and continued.

‘A MEMBER OF OUR 6TH FORM WAS A CANDIDATE FOR YOUTH PARLIAMENT.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

‘OUR COMMUNITY VOTED FOR HERTS YOUTH PARLIAMENT AND (WE) HAD A CANDIDATE AT OUR SCHOOL.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM
Herts1125 are pleased to report that 75% (1357) of young people participating in this survey say that there is a student council at the school or college they attend. However, when it comes to understanding what a student council is, or why there is one, young people were less sure, which we think needs to change.

‘(WE HAVE A) SCHOOL COUNCIL - (IT) DOES VERY LITTLE THOUGH.’ MALE, 14-15, DACORUM

CHANGES WE WANT TO SEE

‘The gap in electoral turnout between 18-24 year olds and those aged over 55 is higher in the UK than in any other democracy’\(^{21}\) Whilst this lack of political motivation is reportedly true nationally, in Hertfordshire there has been great interest shown throughout this survey, demonstrated by the massive increase in the number of young people who think that they should have the vote at 16. This equates to a 28% rise from last year.

‘I THINK EVERYONE SHOULD BE HEARD AND THEY SHOULD GET THE CHANCE TO VOTE.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

\(^{21}\) [http://www.democraticaudit.com/?p=4493](http://www.democraticaudit.com/?p=4493)
Research concludes that learning about politics early increases the likelihood of them voting once they reach 18, encouraging "greater numbers of young people to become lifelong politically active and participative citizens.22 In Hertfordshire, young people want political education that informs them of how democracy works both at local and national levels, and how this impacts on their lives, before they can engage properly in the process. This includes more political education within the school curriculum in Citizenship, alongside more knowledge of local youth democracy, so that they can develop the skills and knowledge to make informed choices and participate actively in politics, including the Votes at 16 campaign.

‘16 YR OLDS, RIGHT TO BE HEARD AND VOTE IF THEY HAVE VALUABLE VIEWS AND EDUCATION EFFECTIVE.’ FEMALE, 14-15, WELWYN AND HATFIELD

‘YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT TAKEN SERIOUS DUE TO THEIR AGE HOWEVER A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE ACTUALLY KNOW THEIR OWN MIND.’ MALE, 16-18, WELWYN & HATFIELD

Despite Herts1125 continuing to raise its profile over the last year we still need to do more as young people are still not aware of our role and do not necessarily link us to the Young People’s Manifesto surveys that so many have participated in this year, and in previous years. As the umbrella for youth voice in Herts the reasons for this need closer investigation because whilst the vast majority answered, ‘Have you heard of Herts1125?’ with ‘no’, in truth everyone should have said ‘yes’ as our logo and name is emblazoned across every questionnaire completed. In short, we have received a massive response to the surveys that inform the Young People’s Manifesto this year, so young people are clearly interested in having their say, but they still do not appear to recognise the Herts1125 brand or connect the two together: this needs to change.

‘IT NEEDS MORE PROMOTION!!’ MALE, 16-18, HERTSMERE

‘THESE THINGS NEED TO BE ADVERTISED MORE.’ FEMALE, 14-15, EAST HERTS

To challenge this, we want to find out why young people don’t know about us and then launch a new campaign to raise the profile of Herts1125, both in schools and within the community. In order to do this we think we need to increase social media platforms and promote digital democracy to better engage with young people. For example Instagram, which is reportedly more widely used by young people than Facebook and Twitter and more mobile-friendly, was raised as an issue by young people in the comments section of several surveys for this Manifesto.

22 http://www.democraticaudit.com/?p=4493
'I CANNOT ACCESS YOUR SITE BECAUSE I DO NOT HAVE TWITTER, YOU SHOULD MAKE AN INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT, AS IT IS MORE UNIVERSAL.' FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

Surveys were carried out in May – July and during this time Youth Connexions started using Instagram to connect Herts1125 with young people acting on feedback received from a number of young people. The social media strategy of Youth Connexions should be expanded to include more effective targeting and promotion of the Herts1125 messages.

Alongside this we would like to build on the success of HertsUKYP by further promoting the hustings and elections, encouraging young people from different social groups, gender identity, faith and ethnicity to consider standing for election and then representing their peers in the Youth Parliament.

'I WISH THE UK YOUTH PARLIAMENT COULD BETTER PROMOTE ITSELF AS NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT IT.' MALE, 16-18, HERTSMERE

We ask that Youth Councils develop better links with school councils in Hertfordshire to ensure that all schools, and therefore students, are aware of how they can be represented and have their voices heard within their district and countywide through Herts1125.

'MORE SCHOOL COUNCILS NEED PROMOTING.' MALE, 16-18, DACORUM

We recommend that Youth Councils and school councils improve their publicity and share news about the work that they do through social media platforms (see suggestions for Herts1125 above). Councils from different schools and districts should also consider hosting open evenings where young people can find out more about them before voting (or not) in the HertsUKYP elections. Raising awareness could also be done through assembly time, and having ‘surgeries’ that provide pupils with an opportunity to speak to their school councillors at lunch times. In this way, Youth Councils and school councils can become more representative of their peers and more effective at sharing the collective voice of young people.
‘CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW ABOUT WHAT A RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE LIKE.’ MALE, 11-13, DACORUM

This was the constant message from young people in Hertfordshire; their right to good quality SRE education, which accurately reflects current concerns for young people, is one that Herts1125 totally supports.

At first glance, it is reassuring to know that after concerted efforts to improve SRE in school, and campaigns led by Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary as well as the Youth Health Ambassadors, and opportunities to gain accreditations for peer education about positive relationships led by Youth Connexions, 73% (1313) of respondents to this survey say they know what a healthy relationship is. However, that does still leave over a quarter (27%:490) who say they are either unclear or don’t know, which is concerning.

Some of the comments made by young people to qualify the reasons for ticking the box they did, raise issues that Herts1125 would like to explore in more depth. These include:
‘... PEOPLE CAN THINK THEY HAVE A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP, BUT ARE BEING ABUSED, NOT KNOWING ANY BETTER.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

‘LOTS OF PEOPLE GET INTO RELATIONSHIPS FOR WRONG REASONS AND EXPECTATIONS AND STANDARDS ARE SKEWED.’ FEMALE, 14-15, THREE RIVERS

‘(I THINK) PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS NORMAL IN THIS DAY AND AGE DUE TO PORNOGRAPHIC CONTENT.’ MALE, 16-18, HERTSMERE

We think that these justify our recommendation for even more SRE that focuses on relationships, rather than just the biological elements of sex, and the need to include current issues for concern including sexting and social media sexual bullying and domestic abuse. This education needs to be inclusive to meet the needs of all young people regardless of their sexual orientation and / or gender identity so that it is relevant for everyone, both in formal and informal education settings.

Young people in Hertfordshire seem pretty clued up, with 87% (1588) saying that they know what sexting is and 95% (1677 vs. 82) understanding that once an image is uploaded, it is always ‘out there somewhere’ and could be posted anywhere on the Internet. To clarify the terms used for this part of the Manifesto:
‘Selfies’ refer to taking a self portrait with a mobile phone, which is usually uploaded on to a social media account to show ‘followers’ what is going on. This is currently so popular that celebrities, movie stars, musicians and even Prime Minister David Cameron\(^2\) post selfies online, sometimes daily.

‘Sexting’ is a collective term for when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video on their mobile phone, usually in a message.\(^2\) This includes ‘naked selfies’, (sometimes called ‘fanpics’ or ‘nudes’), where the self-portrait is of intimate body areas or ‘porn shots’, rather than the more traditional clothed ones.

Sexting is not just something that young people do, with findings from a McAfee report in 2014 saying that half of all adults in the UK admit to sending x-rated messages\(^2\). Although sexting is most commonly associated with mobile phones, the fast growth of social networks such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat has increased the ease with which young people can post and share images online including the forwarding of intimate images with a wide audience, for example:

- swimwear or underwear ‘shots’
- pictures from inappropriate graphic novels (18R), e.g. Manga porn
- naked pictures or nude ‘selfies’
- still pictures of a sexual nature
- pornography filmed on a mobile or downloaded clip from the Internet.

Whilst it might seem romantic to send a boy/girlfriend a sexy picture whilst apart, it is important to remember that once sent the owner has no control over where that image or film goes, or who sees it. Additionally it is illegal to take, look at or share ‘indecent’ pictures of someone under the age of 18, even if all concerned have given their consent.

To date there have been several high profile prosecutions, including a young man who has been prosecuted for having naked pictures of himself stored on his own phone.\(^2\) The message is that the taking, storing and sharing of naked pictures, even of yourself or with consent, is taken very seriously, especially if anyone involved is under the age of 18, as it is illegal. In some cases, this can be classed as child pornography in law and any penalties reflect this.

Herts\(^\d\) think that as well as knowing what sexting is, all young people should understand the wider implications of taking (or allowing someone else to take) intimate photos that could be shared with a large audience, including potential employers, and have a clear understanding of the law.


\(^2\) [https://www.childline.org.uk/explore/onlinesafety/pages/sexting.aspx](https://www.childline.org.uk/explore/onlinesafety/pages/sexting.aspx)


Whilst many intimate pictures are taken with consent, some people can feel pressured by partners or friends into taking inappropriate pictures, which can lead to bullying or even blackmail. We are reassured to see that 88% have no experience of this, but concerned for the 12% that have.

‘MANY AT SCHOOL ARE EASILY INFLUENCED, ESPECIALLY IN YOUR EARLY TEENS WHERE YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN DATING SITUATIONS.’ FEMALE, 14-15, DACORUM

‘(I THINK) WE LIVE IN A SOCIETY WHERE ANYTHING GOES AND BOTH WOMEN AND MEN OF MY AGE OR OLDER OR YOUNGER FORGET THAT THEY ARE WORTH MORE OR DON’T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING THEY DON’T WANT TO. IT’S IMPORTANT TO REMIND CHILDREN THAT AT OUR AGE THERE ARE NO STRINGS ATTACHED AND THAT YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE IN A RELATIONSHIP AS WELL AS HAVING ENOUGH SELF-RESPECT TO LOOK AFTER THEMSELVES.’ FEMALE, 16-18, EAST HERTS
Although in this survey the majority said they would tell a parent or carer, some older respondents to the survey said that they would not want their parents to know that they had taken naked photos and shared them due to embarrassment or fear of getting into trouble.
A survey by the Beatbullying website\(^{27}\) found 38% of 11-18 year olds had received a sexually explicit or distressing image via a text or email. Our survey shows that in Hertfordshire this figure is slightly less, with 28% (497) reporting that they have received an indecent image.

Of the 28% (497) that did report receiving an indecent image, Herts1125 were glad to see that a majority did delete the picture. Worryingly some young people have held onto the image[s], with some even sharing it wider. These young people are likely to be breaking the law by doing this, as sharing/distributing an indecent image of a child (under 18) is a criminal offence. There is a slight discrepancy between the number of young people answering yes, they have received an indecent image and then stating what they did with this. This may be for a variety of reasons, although Herts1125 do not want to make assumptions as to why.

Research undertaken by Brooke, a leading UK charity, shows that ‘good SRE helps young people develop and manage their emotional and physical wellbeing.’\(^{28}\) They point out that without it, young people learn about sex and relationships from their peers, the media (including music videos), TV and by watching online porn, all of which are not reliable sources of education.

The science component of sex and relationship education (SRE) is compulsory from age 11 onwards. This involves teaching children about reproduction, sexuality and sexual health\(^{29}\). However, parents can choose to withdraw their children from all other parts of sex and relationship education, which includes the part that focuses on relationships. PSHE, which is the other way that young people can learn about relationships in school is not a compulsory part of the National Curriculum, which together may in some part explain why 36% (619) of those surveyed say that learning about healthy relationships is not included at their school.

Herts1125 think that all young people should have education about what a healthy relationship is, how to maintain one and how to cope with emotions if things go wrong, as well as where to get support. This is in addition to learning about the biology of sex and sexual health and focuses more on the emotional side of building a positive relationship based on trust and respect.

‘I DON’T KNOW WHAT A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP IS SO IT WOULD BE GOOD TO TELL PEOPLE IN SCHOOL BECAUSE THEN THEY WOULD KNOW.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

\(^{27}\) www.beatbullying.org (2009)  
e21stcenturyreportfinal.pdf  
\(^{29}\) https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/other-compulsory-subjects
‘WE SHOULD LEARN ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS BECAUSE IT TEACHES US HOW TO STAY SAFE AND HAPPY.’
FEMALE, 14-15, ST ALBANS

‘IT’S IMPORTANT THAT PEOPLE KNOW IF THEY ARE BEING BULLIED OR ARE BULLYING SOMEONE IN A RELATIONSHIP.’
MALE, 11-13, NORTH HERTS

‘THERE ARE TOO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS’
FEMALE, 16-18, DACORUM

The vast majority of young people (89%:1544) want to see domestic abuse included in sex and relationships education. This includes learning in social education settings, e.g. in youth projects, as well as in school to challenge any assumptions held and raise awareness generally.

‘MEN AS WELL AS WOMEN CAN BE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE.’
MALE, 16-18, HERTSMERE
'TEACHERS AND SCHOOL IS ALMOST LIKE OUR SECOND HOME, SO I BELIEVE THEY SHOULD BE AWARE OF IT.' FEMALE, 14-15, THREE RIVERS

As there is a specific question earlier in this survey about police, they were left off the suggested list of people most likely to be confided in about domestic abuse, but they received the most votes in the comments section for this question, which we think very positive.

‘IT IS IMPORTANT FOR SIGNS TO BE SPOTTED EARLY FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE, BEFORE IT BECOMES TOO SERIOUS AND YOU CAN’T GET OUT OF IT.’ FEMALE, 16-18, NORTH HERTS

Some young people told us that after finding out that a friend was in an abusive relationship, they were prevented from reporting it:

‘I HAVE EXPERIENCED SITUATIONS WHERE SOMEONE DOES NOT WANT TO HAVE THEIR PROBLEMS REVEALED AND SO IN THESE CASES REVEALING THE TRUTH CAN BE INCREDIBLY DAMAGING TO THEM. I WOULD STILL DO SO DUE TO THE SEVERITY OF DOMESTIC ABUSE BUT I CAN SEE WHY SOME WOULD NOT.’ MALE, 16-18, THREE RIVERS

For young people to report their concerns they need to feel confident that they will be listened to and taken seriously. They also need to believe that if reporting relationship domestic abuse, it will not escalate the violence or emotional abuse, and in some cases they need to be ready to make the break and move away from their partner.
‘BECAUSE IT’S DIFFICULT TO TELL WHEN YOU’RE IN THAT SITUATION.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

I ticked yes but in some occasions the victims of abusive relationships could be threatened by their partner not to.’ 11-13, NORTH HERTS

Others talked about being reluctant to tell people due to concerns about making things worse if professionals don’t take it seriously, especially the Police. This barrier is probably enhanced due to the media coverage of recent high profile cases.

‘I HAVE HEARD MANY CASES ON THE NEWS WHERE IT HAS TAKEN AGES FOR EVEN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE FROM POLICE.’ MALE, 11-13, HERTSMERE

‘I WOULD BE SCARED IN CASE I WAS CAUGHT BY THE PARTNER AND I WOULDN’T RECEIVE HELP FROM THE POLICE.’ FEMALE, 14-15, ST ALBANS

Fear of the police was also a commonly given reason amongst the minority who said they would not report domestic abuse to them.

‘I WOULD BE TOO SCARED TO GO TO THE POLICE AND I WOULD PROBABLY TELL MY FAMILY.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS
Young people also expressed anxiety about informing the police due to worries about getting an abuser ‘into trouble’, and the guilt they might feel as a consequence of it going to court.

‘MY CONSCIENCE, I’D BE WORRIED ABOUT SENDING PEOPLE TO JAIL/ NO ONE BELIEVING ME.’ MALE, 11-13, DACORUM

‘I WOULD BE WORRIED WHAT MY PARTNER WOULD DO IF I CALLED THE POLICE.’ FEMALE, 11-13, EAST HERTS

‘BEING FRIGHTENED OF WHAT THE OTHER PERSON WOULD DO MAYBE IT BEING LOOKED AS “SILLY” AND THEN NOT BEING DEALT WITH. SO THEY COULD CARRY ON.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

However, with the police being issued with new guidelines on how to respond to domestic abuse designed to help officers prosecute without relying on victims’ evidence, some of these fears about informing could be resolved.

‘I HAVE WITNESSED IT AND IT SHOULD BE SOMETHING (WE ARE) ALL AWARE OF.’ FEMALE, 16-18, WATFORD
The BBC reports on a ‘new domestic abuse offence of “coercive and controlling behaviour” within relationships expected to come into force later this year’. This addresses the type of behaviour covered by the question above as well as things like the abuser preventing their victim from seeing friends and family, not being ‘allowed’ to go out without them, confiscating money or mobile phones and constant criticism that can lead to a lowering of self esteem and confidence.

‘I KNOW TOO MANY PEOPLE WHO’VE BEEN EMOTIONALLY MANIPULATED IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS AND HAVEN’T BEEN ABLE TO SEE THE SIGNS OR DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT BECAUSE THEY WEREN’T EDUCATED ON THE SUBJECT OF ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS AT ALL. SO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF.’ FEMALE, 16-18, NORTH HERTS

The majority of young people say that they didn’t know that domestic abuse laws includes those aged 16 and 17, which we think needs to change.

‘SOME PEOPLE DON’T KNOW WHAT COUNTS AS DOMESTIC ABUSE OR DON’T KNOW HOW TO REPORT IT.’ MALE, 14-15, HERTSMERE

30  http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34309575
‘THE SCARIEST THING ABOUT ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS WHETHER ROMANTIC, SEXUAL OR PLATONIC IS MOST PEOPLE DO NOT EVEN REALISE IT’S ABUSIVE AT THE TIME. ADDITIONALLY EVEN WHEN YOU DO REALISE THEY ARE STILL VERY HARD TO GET OUT OF.’ 16-18, HERTSMERE

CHANGES WE WANT TO SEE

Sexting is an issue that most young people in Hertfordshire are aware of, although only a minority say they have been directly involved. Sexting and revenge porn has had much media coverage, including storylines on TV that highlight the dangers of intimate pictures being shared online. Additionally, some reality TV celebrities, including Kim Kardashian and ex-Towie star Lauren Goodger are famous and celebrated for their raunchy online selfie pictures, which definitely give mixed messages.

‘YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NAIVE SOMETIMES AND ARE EASILY MANIPULATED; HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE SPOT THE SIGNS COULD PROTECT THEM OR THEIR PEERS.’ FEMALE, 19-21, EAST HERTS

It is important that young people understand the risks associated with sexting and are supported in standing up to those who put pressure on them to do anything that makes them feel concerned, anxious or bullied. This includes the laws that protect children and young people under the age of 18 from the making and distribution of intimate images, which in some cases could be classified as child pornography. This includes young couples sending each other naked selfies as well as ‘revenge porn’, a term used to describe sending intimate pictures or films intended to be seen only within the context of a relationship but shared widely with malicious intent after a break-up.

‘(YOUNG PEOPLE) NEED TO UNDERSTAND IT ISN’T RIGHT AND IS AN OFFENCE.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

‘(IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THIS) SO WE AREN’T UNWITTINGLY VICTIMISED OR CRIMINALISED.’ MALE, 14-15, HERTSMERE

To do this, Herts1125 call for sexting, and the laws around the taking and sharing of intimate pictures, to be added to SRE and PSHE cyberbullying and online safety education. We think that this should happen from Year 5 (in an age appropriate way) onwards because as one young person explained: ‘children need to become aware of these issues at a young age as technology has now meant that more and more younger children will be affected by sensitive material.’

‘TO ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO MAKE RIGHT CHOICES ON WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR OR NOT.’ FEMALE, 19-21, HERTMERE

This education must include making sure that all young people know where to go for help and advice, and the wide promotion of how to report indecent images and/or concerns about grooming to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP32). This is run by the police and offers support, advice and guidance to young people, parents / carers and professionals.

‘SO PEOPLE KNOW WHAT EXPLOITATION IS.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

‘THEN PEOPLE WOULD BE MORE CAUTIOUS AND KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THAT SITUATION.’ FEMALE, 11-13, NORTH HERTS

‘IT MAKES AND ALLOWS YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE AWARE OF THE DANGERS AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION.’ FEMALE, 16-18, WATFORD

Herts1125 recommend that healthy relationships (including relationships with friends, parents, family members as well as partners) be included in SRE / PSHE from the beginning of secondary school, and discussed in age appropriate terms before this in primary school. We think that the emotional aspect of a relationship, including trust, respect and consent, are of equal importance to being taught about contraception and sexually transmitted infections. With many young people in our survey saying that they are not sure about what a healthy relationship is we think that this addition to the curriculum cannot come quickly enough.

‘CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW ABOUT WHAT A RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE LIKE.’ MALE, 11-13, DACORUM

32 http://ceop.police.uk
'SO PEOPLE CAN LEARN TO HAVE A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP.' FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

'MANY PEOPLE ARE UNAWARE OF THESE ISSUES AND THESE LESSONS NEED TO BE TAUGHT TO CHILDREN WAY BEFORE YEAR 6.' FEMALE, 14-15, DACORUM

Domestic abuse can be a sensitive topic to discuss, especially as victims and perpetrators are often skilled at hiding what is going on, in some cases for years. However, Herts1125 want to ensure that all young people have education about this as part of SRE so they understand that any form of abuse within a relationship is not acceptable or healthy.

'SCHOOL IS MEANT TO TEACH US AND PREPARE US SO WHY SHOULD THIS SUBJECT NOT BE TAUGHT OR AT LEAST TALKED ABOUT?' MALE, 14-15, DACORUM

'PEOPLE KNOW THE SIGNS, SHOULD IT EVER HAPPEN TO THEM.' FEMALE, 14-15, DACORUM

We have been made aware through the comments in this survey that many young people know very little, and in some case nothing, about domestic abuse. We want more education, including inviting in specialists into school, about all of the different forms of domestic abuse, including information about the new domestic abuse offence of "coercive and controlling behaviour".

'PEOPLE HAVE A VERY GENERIC VIEW ON IT. A MAN BEATS A WOMAN AND THAT'S IT. PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND MEN GET BEATEN AND THERE ARE OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE LIKE RESTRICTING SOMEONE'S FREEDOM AND IN A WAY MENTALLY HARMING THEIR PARTNER.' MALE, 16-18, DACORUM

We were also concerned about a small minority of comments that seemed to indicate an acceptance of some types of violence within relationships, including one young person who said that the reason they would not tell someone about domestic abuse is because, 'they would have deserved it for a reason.' We are shocked that attitudes like this exist amongst young people and believe this needs challenging as a priority through SRE that is engaging and reflective of real life and posters, leaflets in schools, youth clubs, One-Stop-Shops etc. about local and national domestic abuse awareness raising campaigns.
‘PEOPLE MAY THINK THE ABUSE IS OK AND THEY DESERVE IT.’ FEMALE, 16-18, WATFORD

Young people also explained to us why they think some find it hard to leave an abusive relationship, with a small minority admitting that they have experienced domestic abuse in some form, either with their own partner or at home.

‘BECAUSE YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL LIKE THEY NEED TO STAY WITH A VIOLENT PARTNER OR THEY WON’T BE LOVED.’ FEMALE, 16-18, BROXBOURNE

‘THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE AT MY SCHOOL WITH BAD FAMILY LIVES.’ MALE, 14-15, DACORUM

The comments made during this survey have highlighted the need for additional emotional support and education to encourage children and young people to break the code of silence about domestic abuse and tell someone. This should be through wider promotion of domestic abuse awareness campaigns, featuring both national and local support organisations, e.g. Women’s Aid and the Terrence Higgins Trust, and ensure that all types of relationship are shown to challenge unhelpful stereotypes about the perpetrators of domestic abuse.

‘BECAUSE IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE. A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE SCARED.’ FEMALE, 16-18, DACORUM

‘TO PREVENT DANGEROUS AND HARMFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FUTURE AND TO EDUCATE PEOPLE ON HOW TO ESCAPE FROM THEM AND WHAT TO DO IF THEY DO EVER GET THEMSELVES INTO DANGER.’ FEMALE, 16-18, DACORUM

Young people need to know that it is not just adults who can be a victim of domestic abuse and that the law is there to protect 16 and 17 year olds too. Anyone younger than this is protected by safeguarding laws, and all young people need to know that there are places to go and people to talk to outside of family and friends who can offer professional support and guidance, and information will be treated seriously and with respect to try and encourage a culture of openness.
Priority Two in short:

Herts1125 want to empower young people through education about their rights and to support them in getting their voices heard through youth governance structures in Hertfordshire. To do this we ask Hertfordshire County Council to support us in the following recommendations:

- To educate young people about the law and in particular the law in relation to the police ‘stop and search’ powers and cautions through police or PCSO visits in school. This would help to build positive relationships and ensure that young people know their rights, as well as their community responsibility to report things like hate crime.

- Information on ChannelMOGO to include links to specific young people’s rights including: employment, stop and search and if you are arrested what to do, sending of/ receiving indecent images and the law and internet safety, rights around domestic abuse and how to report it. Changes in the law should also be part of the update feed.

- Links on ChannelMOGO to be reviewed by HCC to ensure information is relevant to young people and easily accessible by all including schools PSHE leads and frontline workers.

- Continue to raise the profile of Herts1125 as the umbrella for youth voice in Herts including groups such as UK Youth Parliament and Who Not What and increase social media platforms to better engage with young people.

- Youth Councils/ forums to improve their publicity and work that they do through social media platforms. Youth Councils to consider having open evenings where students from each school are invited to find out more about the Youth Council and what it is about before having to decide to commit.

- Youth Councils to better link with school councils in the districts to ensure that all schools, and therefore students, are aware of how they can be represented and have their voices heard within their district and countywide through Herts1125. This could be through assembly time, speaking to school councillors at lunch times etc.

- Healthy relationships (including relationships with friends, parents, family members as well as partners) to be included in PSHE from beginning of secondary school. Education will be age appropriate e.g. older years to be taught about and engage in workshops/ assemblies on domestic abuse, how to spot the signs and how to report it.

- Schools to consider speakers coming in to speak to students about domestic abuse using case studies to bring the reality of what can occur, to life.

- Healthy relationships education to include information around consent and making informed decisions. This should also include the legal side of consent and sending/ distributing indecent images.

- ChildLine’s number to be distributed to all students/ young people at the beginning of term. Young people should be aware of the range of services and support that Childline can offer.
PRI-ORITY THREE

HATE CRIME

What is it? How to report it? Hate crimes are crimes that are targeted at a person because of their disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender identity.
THE THIRD PRIORITY FOR THE 2015 MANIFESTO, AS VOTED FOR BY 2494 YOUNG PEOPLE IN HERTFORDSHIRE, IS HATE CRIME. TO ENSURE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE HAD A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF HATE CRIME AND HATE INCIDENTS, HERTS1125 USED THE DEFINITION BELOW, WHICH IS A SUMMARY OF THE ONE USED BY THE POLICE.
Hate Crimes are any crimes that ‘the victim or any other person perceives to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards any aspect of a person’s identity’. Police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland annually monitor five strands of hate crime:

- Disability
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity

A hate crime is also committed by inciting anyone to engage in any of the above.

Hate incidents are incidents related to the above, but where no direct laws have been broken. These can escalate into crimes or tension within a community if left unchallenged, so it is important that both hate crimes and hate incidents are reported.

THE ISSUES

The majority of the 1,583 young people who responded to this survey are aged between 13-15 (81%: 1261) years old and attend schools across Hertfordshire; 18% (283) are 16 and 18 and less than 1% (19) are aged 19-25. This means that all are over the age of criminal responsibility in England (which is 10); the majority are under the legal age of consent for sex and only a few are old enough to vote, which should be considered in context when reading the comments that young people have made to support the survey findings.

The balance of responses is split between females 51% (767) and males 45% (680), along with 4% (59) of young people who preferred not to identify their gender. Within these statistics, 119 young people self-identify as LGBT+ and 22 as transgender, 73 have a disability and another 53 say religion has been a reason for hate crime. However, this does not mean that the comments within this survey are solely attributable to any or one of these groups, as they have been selected anonymously from across all respondents. It also does not infer that all those who identify or indicated that they belong to one or more of these groups have been victims of hate incidents/crimes.

1 http://www.stophateuk.org/what-is-hate-crime/
2 For more information go to http://www.report-it.org.uk/what_is_hate_crime
In 2013/14, there were 44,850 hate crimes, based on recorded police crime data for England and Wales, which is a 5% increase from 2012/13. This rise is considered to be due to better police identification across the five strands used to monitor hate crime, as well as an increase in public awareness, and better encouragement and support to report incidents and crimes committed. This includes being able to report hate crime online at http://www.report-it.org.uk/your_police_force, which in our survey only 9% (139) of young people knew about. Feedback from those who have used the website is that the process is not as simple as it seems on first glance at the online report form. This could be a major barrier for people, not just young people, reporting hate crimes.

‘THAT REPORT SITE IS REALLY NOT HELPFUL AND IS DIFFICULT TO USE.’ FEMALE, 16-18, DACORUM

Herts1125 think that all young people should be informed about the online provision for reporting, and any awareness campaign should include showing how to use the site. This can help to challenge negative rumours about it being complicated and ineffectual and encourage more young people to use it. It is also important for young people to know that you are able to report a hate incident/ crime on behalf of a victim or as a witness; they do not need to be a victim to be able to report it.

Young people were asked at the start of the survey if they knew what hate crime and hate incidents are. At first glance the answers seem very reassuring with 70% (1094) saying they know what a hate crime is and 55% (863) ticking the ‘yes’ box for hate incidents. However, these figures are possibly not a strict representation of the actual level of knowledge amongst respondents as many commented that they knew nothing about hate crime before reading the Herts1125 description given on the questionnaire. This means that whilst our intent to clarify the terms has raised awareness, which is good, it has probably distorted the true figures.

‘THE FIRST TIME I HEARD ABOUT HATE CRIME WAS IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.’ MALE, 13-15, NORTH HERSTS

‘I KNOW ABOUT IT FROM THE BOTTOM OF THIS PAGE.” MALE, 13-15, DACORUM

We are hoping that having raised awareness and interest in young people to find out more, our recommendations for more education about what constitutes a hate crime or hate incident both in schools and through informal educations will be acted upon swiftly by policymakers and service providers.

Of those that are familiar with the term ‘hate crime’, the major source of their information is from the internet and newspapers, with a large number commenting that they gained their information from TV. Together, these account for 37% (646) of all responses. This could be in part due to recent high profile cases with wide media coverage, including ‘a surge in the number of anti-Muslim hate crimes after the murder of soldier Lee Rigby by two Islamic extremists in Woolwich, south-east London, in May 2013’⁴, and media reports about homophobic cyberbullying hate campaigns that have led to young people committing suicide.⁵

‘THE IMPACT OF TERRORIST GROUPS HAS ALSO UNNECESSARILY CREATED A NEGATIVE STIGMA FOR SOME RELIGIONS WHICH MAY LEAD TO HATE CRIMES IN THE COMMUNITY.’16-18, EAST HERSTS

⁴ http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/dec/27/uk-anti-muslim-hate-crime-soars
⁵ http://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/fresh-evidence-that-benefit-scrounger-rhetoric-is-causing-hate-crime/
Herts1125 expected the Internet to be responsible for much of the knowledge young people have about hate crime. Our research for Priority One of this Manifesto, cyberbullying, revealed that most young people in Hertfordshire have at least one social media account and access to social media is easier than ever. This reflects a recent European study, which found that 81% of young people say they go online to search for information for their own use, especially on emotive topics they feel strongly about. Anti-hate crime campaigns, e.g. Mencap’s ‘Stand by me’ campaign to end disability hate crime and the LGBT Foundation’s ‘Report LGBT Hate Crime’ have all included viral social media campaigns, including on Facebook and Twitter, featuring powerful images.

‘I THINK MORE PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IT AND BE AWARE AS I DIDN’T KNOW ANYTHING.’ FEMALE, 13-15, HERTSMERE

Some young people reveal that their knowledge is from hard-hitting soap opera storylines, e.g. EastEnders and TV dramas, e.g. Orange is the new Black, where characters have been victimised due to one of the five defined personal characteristics of hate crime. Following these programmes has raised awareness and had a memorable affect on respondents by influencing their opinions and making them more aware of the issues surrounding hate crime.

8 http://lgbt.foundation/information-advice/hate-crime/
The second most popular place that young people say they found out about hate crime is at school or college (23%; 394). However, this needs to be considered in context, as it might be misleading due to the fact that so many say they found out whilst completing our survey, which they did in school. By way of comparison we have looked at the numbers who say they learnt from their teachers, whether this is during PSHE lessons or dedicated assemblies, and this is much lower, at only 7% (120). This is something that Herts1125 would like to see changed.

‘I THINK THAT SCHOOL SHOULD TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT HATE CRIME AND HATE INCIDENTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL PSHE CURRICULUM.’ FEMALE, 13-15, EAST HERTS

‘NOT MANY PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF ISSUES LIKE HATE CRIME, ESPECIALLY YOUNG PEOPLE.’ FEMALE, 13-15, EAST HERTS

Parents account for 11% (190) of young people’s knowledge but, surprisingly, only 9% (158) of young people say they found out about hate crime via their friends. This is unusual in comparison to the results of asking the same question about other Manifesto issues, where friends have come out repeatedly as the main source of information for most age groups.

![Bar Chart](image)

Although Herts1125 offer assurance that all feedback and comments will remain anonymous, we have been clear that the answers to our questions are not confidential as they are informing our recommendations for this Manifesto. This could mean that not everyone who has experience of either hate incidents or hate crime has been open about it, which is perhaps the reason for the difference here between the total numbers of people completing the rest of the survey and the numbers responding to this section.
‘AS THIS WAS FILLED OUT IN A CLASSROOM PEOPLE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN HONEST AS PEOPLE CAN SEE.’ FEMALE, 13-15, EAST HERTS

A report commissioned by Stop Hate UK estimates that 88% of hate crime is never reported\(^9\). Again, the figures here do not tally with the lower numbers who say they have reported a hate crime or incident, which suggests that this is happening in Hertfordshire amongst young people too.

\(^9\) [http://www.stophateuk.org/report-lgb-and-t-hate-crime/]
‘WHERE I LIVE, THERE IS A LOT OF TENSION BETWEEN RACE AND RELIGION.’ MALE, 13-15, DACORUM

Our survey shows that 85% (1244) of those who completed it think that all hate crime and hate incidents should be reported, yet our research suggests that in many cases they currently aren’t. Herts1125 are asking for the support of the police and HCC to educate and raise awareness, build confidence in the reporting system and make the consequences of engaging in hate crime more widely known.

‘ALL HATE CRIMES NEED REPORTING SO THE PUBLIC CAN GAIN AWARENESS ABOUT THIS VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE.’ FEMALE, 13-15, DACORUM

We think young people also need to move away from associating reporting hate crime with ‘grassing’ or ‘snitching’. Everyone makes a choice about how they behave, and if this includes victimising someone else because of a personal characteristic it needs to be reported to keep everyone safe.

‘IF YOU DO NOTHING, NO ONE WILL KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU AND NOTHING CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT. IT ALSO MEANS THAT OTHER PEOPLE MAY RECEIVE THE SAME OR WORSE ABUSE.’

REPORTING

Of those that have spoken out about their experiences as a witness or victim of hate crime 37% (53) said that they were happy with how it was dealt with and/or resolved. This relatively positive statistic includes those who approached a teacher or youth worker, and/or a significant adult at home, as well as those that reported what had happened to the police.

‘(IT WAS) DEALT WITH SWIFTLY AND PROMPTLY.’ MALE, 16-18, DACORUM

‘HAPPY AS THE POLICE DEALT WITH IT IN THE CORRECT MANNER.’ MALE, 16-18, HERTSMERE

‘FACEBOOK REMOVED THE INDECENT REPORT (BUT) I DON’T THINK THE POLICE WERE CALLED.’ FEMALE, 13-15, ST ALBANS

However, the majority (63%: 89) who say they have reported a hate crime when they became a target were unhappy with the outcome. The opinion of those who did report it, or tried to report it, seems to be that it is emotionally and physically difficult to report, notoriously difficult to prove and even if the offender does get caught, nothing changes and any punishment is not commensurate to the pain and unhappiness caused.

‘IT DIDN’T GET SOLVED AND IT’S STILL HAPPENING. I’VE GIVEN UP TRYING.’ FEMALE, 13-15, DACORUM

‘IT TOOK A VERY LONG TIME TO DEAL WITH AND VERY LITTLE ACTION WAS TAKEN.’ MALE, 16-18, STEVENAGE

‘NOTHING WAS DONE. NO CONTACT EVEN THOUGH THE POLICE SAID THEY WOULD.’ MALE, 19-21, BROXBOURNE

We were also given examples where the victim had done exactly the right thing and followed reporting protocols but, in this particular case, a lack of witnesses meant that no charges could be bought. This meant clear dissatisfaction for the young person who was targeted and fears that the person who committed the offence could do so again.
‘I DID NOT KNOW THAT I COULD REPORT IT AS A HATE CRIME AT THE TIME SO I REPORTED IT AS A NORMAL INCIDENT. THE POLICE BELIEVED HER OVER MYSELF AS NO WITNESSES CAME FORWARD.’ 16-18, WELWYN AND HATFIELD

‘POLICE COULDN’T DO ANYTHING AS MY ATTACKERS FRIEND SAID THEY DIDN’T DO ANYTHING.’ MALE, 16-18, DACORUM

A small percentage of young people report taking matters into their own hands, either sorting it out themselves successfully, or in doing so, escalating the situation. The concern here is that the line between challenging someone on their behaviour and acting in retribution might be very thin; should the Police become involved, a victim might become a perpetrator of a similar or different crime very swiftly.

‘I DEALT WITH IT MYSELF, PEOPLE GET THE MESSAGE BETTER.’ MALE, 13-15, DACORUM

‘I TRIED TO DEAL WITH IT BUT IT TURNED AROUND SO IT ENDED UP AS MY FAULT WHEN IT WASN’T.’ FEMALE, 13-15, NORTH HERTS

One very interesting point that was repeated throughout this survey is, ‘where does bullying end and hate crime start?’

‘I’M UNSURE HOW HATE INCIDENTS/CRIMES DIFFER FROM ABUSE/BULLYING’ FEMALE, 13-15, ST ALBANS

‘HATE INCIDENTS ARE VERY COMMON AND PEOPLE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN ABUSE AND EVERYDAY CONVERSATIONS SO IT WILL BE HARD TO STOP.’ FEMALE, 13-15, ST ALBANS

This ambiguity was given as a reason why young people have not reported things that have happened, e.g. racial and homophobic abuse, with individual comments made about not being clear how ‘bad’ things had to be or how many times an action had to be repeated before it tipped the balance of the scales to ‘hate crime’ from ‘bullying’. This isn’t to suggest that one is more tolerable or acceptable than the other, simply that at the moment the definition is not clear enough.
‘THE IDEA OF ‘TATTLE-TALING’ SHOULD BE ELIMINATED TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM BEING SCARED TO REPORT AN INCIDENT.’ MALE, 13-15, HERTSMERE

‘I DON’T THINK IT IS TAKEN SERIOUSLY WHATSOEVER, ESPECIALLY TOWARDS MEMBERS OF THE LGBT COMMUNITY.’ FEMALE, 16-18, STEVENAGE

“You may think that someone calling you names is no big deal, you may be used to it and have experienced it many times before but it is vital that you report any incident of biphobia, homophobia or transphobia.” It is also important to note here that bullying in relation to any of the five strands of hate crime should be reported.

As well as not reporting repeatedly aggressive or unpleasant verbal and emotional abuse, some actions are put down to a ‘joke’ or just ‘banter’. This appears to be another barrier that has to be crossed in order for the police to be informed and the true scale of hate crime revealed.

The term ‘banter’ has featured in comments made within several of the priorities within this Manifesto, and our main concern is that it has become an excuse for being rude, ignorant or discriminative without any fear of repercussions.

‘WHAT IF IT’S BANTER?’ MALE, 16-18, STEVENAGE

‘(I DIDN’T REPORT IT) BECAUSE IT WAS FROM MY “FRIEND” SO I DIDN’T THINK THERE WAS ANY POINT’ FEMALE, 13-15, DACORUM

‘EVERYONE JUST SAID IT WAS A JOKE.’ FEMALE, 13-15, WELWYN & HATFIELD

Bullying UK suggest that if it is a one off incident that both people find funny, then it may be banter. However, persistent and regular name calling, especially if it makes the victim feel uncomfortable, shamed, embarrassed or angry is more likely to be verbal bullying, which in turn could lead to a hate incident or crime being committed by the tormentors, even if they don’t realise it. This is particularly so if the name-callers have been asked to stop, but refuse, and/or the bullying escalates into another area of life e.g. online.

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12 [http://www.bullying.co.uk/general-advice/verbal-bullying/](http://www.bullying.co.uk/general-advice/verbal-bullying/)
Herts1125 were pleased to see that so many young people feel they can tell their family and friends if they are the victims of a hate crime. To support this we have made recommendations about creating a wide range of learning opportunities to understand more about the impact of hate crime on victims, how offenders can be supported to stop and the laws that can be enforced. From comments made we can see that it is really important for young people to feel that they are listened to and treated with respect, partly because so much courage is required to admit that it is happening and fears about what tormentors will do if they know that the secret is out.

‘THEY (MY PARENTS) JUST TOLD ME TO IGNORE IT AND THAT DIDN’T MAKE AN IMPACT WHATSOEVER.’ FEMALE, 13-15, ST ALBANS

‘I DIDN’T THINK I WOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND DIDN’T WANT ANYONE TO FIND OUT MY SEXUALITY.’ FEMALE, 13-15, DACORUM

‘BECAUSE I WAS SCARED THE PERSON WOULD HURT ME.’ MALE, 13-15, DACORUM

Teachers score highly in this section too, despite several young people expressing their concerns that a general lack of knowledge about hate crime and previous negative experiences when things have been reported. There is also a fear that they shall not be taken seriously which could be attributed to teachers having a lack of knowledge about what constitutes a hate incident and when this escalates to a hate crime.
‘(I WOULD NOT REPORT HATE CRIME AGAIN) BECAUSE NOTHING HAS CHANGED, I CAN’T COUNT ON TEACHERS, HAVEN’T BEEN TAKEN SERIOUSLY.’ FEMALE, 13-15, ST ALBANS

Fear seems to be the overwhelmingly most common factor as to why victims do not report hate crimes; being scared, both physically and emotionally, of the perpetrators of hate crime, plus a general worry and anxiety about what will happen as a consequence of reporting are considered the main barriers to victims reporting what has happened to them.

‘THERE IS NOT A LOT OF EMPHASIS ON DISABILITY HATE CRIMES. PEOPLE FORGET THAT A HATE CRIME MAY ALSO BE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SOMEONE I.E. IF THEY ARE DEAF / BLIND ETC.’ 16-18, EAST HERTS

There were comments made to suggest that young people worry that they will not be taken seriously, or that they will be ridiculed by peers for ‘taking it too seriously’.

‘I KNEW THAT NOTHING WOULD CHANGE EVEN IF I REPORTED IT SO IT FELT SILLY TO DO SO.’ 16-18, HERTSMERE
‘BECAUSE I WAS SCARED THEY WOULD TAKE THE MICK OUT OF ME TELLING SOMEBODY.’ MALE, 13-15, NORTH HERTS

For some young people, particularly members of the LGBT+ community, this includes the fear that by reporting hate crime they will be forced to reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity before they are ready to come out.

‘HIGH LEVELS OF UNDER-REPORTING – OUT OF FEAR THAT POLICE WILL NOT TREAT INCIDENTS SERIOUSLY, OR THAT THEY WILL BE “OUTED” TO FAMILIES – IS LEAVING VULNERABLE VICTIMS LONELY AND ISOLATED.’

This uninvited invasion of privacy, plus the anxiety of how parents will react, can be enough to guarantee that some victims will never tell anyone in authority what is going on, no matter how they feel. Research suggests that keeping these emotions suppressed and living with fear can contribute to depression and anxiety and in some cases lead to self-harming or even suicide.

Mencap research found 9 out of 10 people with a learning disability had experienced bullying and abuse, with almost half of people suffering verbal abuse and almost a quarter being physically assaulted, often in a public place, whilst onlookers ignored what was happening\(^{14}\). By ignoring prejudiced or discriminatory hate incidents and not challenging physical and verbal hate crime we send the message that intolerance is acceptable.

‘I FIND THAT RACIST HATE INCIDENTS HAPPEN VERY OFTEN, AND THE REASON FOR THIS IS THAT I FEEL THERE IS STILL A MENTALITY OF ‘WHITES’ SUPERIOR TO ‘BLACKS’. PEOPLE TELL RACIAL JOKES TO ME, AND ALTHOUGH I DON’T TELL PEOPLE I AM OFFENDED BY IT, IT HURTS DEEP DOWN A LOT.’ FEMALE, 13-15, DACORUM

‘I HAVE CLOSE FRIENDS THAT HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THIS AND IT NEEDS TO BE SORTED.’ MALE, 13-15, WELWYN & HATFIELD

This, along with our research that suggests that people will often look away as they ‘don’t want to get involved’, or take the attitude that ‘it’s not my problem’, reinforces the importance of the Herts1125 message that witnesses of hate crime must report what they see. Herts1125 think this is one of the key ways to make a difference and improve our communities for everyone.

“THE POLICE SERVICE IS COMMITTED TO REDUCING THE HARM CAUSED BY HATE CRIME AND IT IS VITAL THAT WE ENCOURAGE MORE VICTIMS WHO SUFFER CRIMES TO REPORT THEM.”\(^{15}\)


The majority of young people said that punishment alone is unlikely to change the views and behaviour of the perpetrators of hate crime. Ignorance, parental and community prejudice and a lack of understanding and empathy were all discussed in relation to the reasons why someone might engage in hate crime. The majority of young people agree that alongside consequences, which are clearly understood and that include some reparation to the victim, e.g. empathy building and apologising using a restorative justice model, will make those convicted of hate crime less likely to reoffend.

‘I FEEL THAT REPORTING A HATE CRIME HAS NEGATIVE EFFECTS AS WELL AS POSITIVE. I BELIEVE THAT THIS CAN DEMONISE SOME PERPETRATORS, WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY PEOPLE TO COMMIT THAT HATE CRIME. I THEREFORE FEEL SUPPORT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE VICTIM AND PERPETRATOR IN EQUAL MEASURE.’ FEMALE, 13-15, DACORUM

‘PERPETRATORS SHOULD BE EDUCATED ON THEIR CRIMES, AND FACE HARSHER PUNISHMENT.’ FEMALE, 13-15, DACORUM

‘I THINK THAT PEOPLE COMMITTING HATE CRIMES SHOULD NOT ALL BE BLAMED AS THEY COULD HAVE PROBLEMS AND RELEASE IT ON OTHER PEOPLE AND NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO BUT THEY’RE TOO SCARED TOO.’ MALE, 13-15, NORTH HERTS
CHANGES WE WANT TO SEE

Lots of young people said that they had not heard about hate crime and hate incidents before taking part in the Herts1125 Manifesto consultation and 93% (1324) voted overwhelmingly for more awareness about how to report hate incidents and crimes. Because of this, and the number of young people uncertain about where bullying and ‘bantering’ stops and hate crime starts, we ask for more education, including where to go for practical and emotional support, as part of the core PSHE curriculum in all Hertfordshire schools from September 2016.

‘IN A DIVERSE SOCIETY, THERE IS NO REASON FOR IGNORANCE.’ FEMALE, 16-18, WATFORD

These PSHE lessons should be mandatory for all pupils and include reporting of hate crime and hate incidents. It may also be appropriate for Police Officers or PCSOs to support the teaching of this topic to highlight the severity of hate crime and to better explain the legal context, e.g. the court processes, differences in sentencing and the likely consequences of having a criminal record for hate crime, and also send the message to any potential (or actual) offenders that this is illegal and will be taken seriously.

‘THERE’S NOT ENOUGH EDUCATION ABOUT SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, RELIGION, RACE AND DISABILITY IN SCHOOLS AND SO PEOPLE TREAT THESE AS TABOO SUBJECTS AND INSTEAD OF ACCEPTING THAT EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT, THEY PICK THEM OUT.’ FEMALE, 13-15, WELWYN & HATFIELD

‘WE SHOULD BE TAUGHT MORE REGARDING SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY IN SCHOOL SO INCIDENTS INVOLVING IGNORANCE CAN BE STOPPED.’ 13-15, DACORUM

Education in school should be reinforced by a shared social education curriculum, based on an Anti-Hate Crime Resource Pack, delivered through Youth Connexions youth projects, one-stop-shops and voluntary sector youth projects.

‘I THINK IF PEOPLE WERE EDUCATED MORE ABOUT EQUALITY AND HOW ALL SHOULD BE TREATED THE SAME THEN MAYBE THERE’D BE LESS HATE CRIMES TO REPORT.’ FEMALE, 13-15, ST ALBANS
'THERE SHOULD BE GREATER EFFORT MADE TO PORTRAY DIFFERENT SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS, GENDER IDENTITIES, RELIGIONS, RACES AND DISABILITIES AS NORMAL'. FEMALE, 16-18, WATFORD

In response to the number of people who say that they do not believe that the perpetrators of hate crime understand the full extent of the damage they inflict both emotionally and physically, Herts1125 would like to be involved in developing a peer education programme that focuses on the victim impact of different types of hate crime to build awareness and empathy. This could be done through an equal partnership of young people, the community and professionals from the police, health and education. To encourage young people to volunteer their time to work as peer educators, either through existing programmes such as the Health Ambassadors, or as part of a new project, accreditation opportunities could be made available through Youth Connexions. This would provide young people with an opportunity to teach others more about their community, culture, disability as well as different sexual orientations and transgender issues, providing positive role models from each group and offering peer support.

’I THINK THAT QUITE A LOT OF THE TIME TEENAGERS SAY AND DO HURTFUL THINGS AND DON’T UNDERSTAND THE SEVERITY OF THEIR ACTIONS.’ MALE, 13-15, EAST HERTS

In addition to educating young people, Herts1125 want more information and awareness available to all parents/carers. Our survey demonstrates that these are the people that a high percentage of young people are most likely to turn to for help and support if they become a victim of hate crime. Additionally, as parents/carers usually play a large role in the lives of their children they are probably well placed to notice any behavioural or emotional changes that could be the result of hate incidents and so intervene early to stop it.

However, they cannot be reasonably expected to take up this additional parenting challenge without knowing the facts first. We propose HCC financially supports a leaflet (or infographic that can be emailed home) that can be understood by both parents and young people through a partnership made up of Herts1125, student volunteers, police and school staff.

We are also calling for training for parents, delivered either as a series of workshops held in different schools (including MLD and SLD schools) around the county, or as a presentation during wider parents’ evenings. Finally, we ask that it be considered as part of any parenting orders attached to orders through the youth courts, where there has been a racial, homophobic, transphobic, religious or disability element to the crime a young person has a conviction or warning for.
‘NOT JUST YOUNG PEOPLE BUT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW WHAT HATE CRIME IS. REPORTING SOMEONE IS SCARY ENOUGH BUT WHEN YOU HAVE NO TRUST IN THE POLICE DUE TO PAST EXPERIENCES IT’S EVEN HARDER.’ 16-18, WELWYN AND HATFIELD

Greater trust in the Police needs to be built and one way that this could be done is to ensure that all schools have a PCSO assigned to them. They can then visit the school formally and informally to get to know the pupils better and build a greater understanding of community and youth issues. We think this will make it easier for young people to report any crimes or incidents that occur and provide wider intelligence to the police too.

‘I DIDN’T REPORT THE HATE INCIDENT AS I FELT THE POLICE WOULD NOT BELIEVE IT.’ FEMALE, 16-18, WATFORD

‘WHEN THE PERSON WHO COMMITTED THE HATE CRIME IS NOT CHARGED THEN THIS CAN LEAVE THE YOUNG PERSON SCARED AND DAMAGED FOR AN EXTREMELY LONG TIME.’ 16-18, WELWYN & HATFIELD

For young people to feel confident enough to report hate crime they need to believe that things are likely to improve and justice will be done. This is especially true for young people whose tormenters share the same physical space with them on a daily basis, e.g. in school, and who have to weigh up the likelihood of making things worse if they do report and nothing happens as a consequence.

If an incident takes place within formal education hours or in and around school property, schools should have a concise protection plan for those who have been victims of hate crime. This needs to be in flow chart format so that it can be easily followed and young people know what is likely to happen if they report something. This will enable schools to get a better picture of what is happening and provide frontline information for the police, even if this remains confidential because it has not yet reached the stage where it could be considered a hate incident or crime.

There should be a similar pathway designed to show the likely consequences of being accused and convicted of hate crime in terms of the impact on future education and employment. These can be promoted on school intranets and youth social media and websites, e.g. ChannelMOGO.

As the final thread in this strand of improving reporting, Herts1125 calls for a new awareness campaign to be designed by professionals to specifically target and engage young people on how to report hate crime, including how to report online at www.report-it.org. This could be done through social media, short films on YouTube and other graphic ways to grab young people’s attention and give them the information they need.
‘I THINK MORE SHOULD BE DONE TO RAISE AWARENESS SO PEOPLE KNOW WHY AND HOW TO REPORT THE INCIDENT.’
FEMALE, 13-15, WELWYN & HATFIELD

Although Hertfordshire Police use the same five personal characteristics that all police forces use in England and Wales to record hate incidents and crimes, in some areas this has been expanded from the set five to include other personal characteristics. For example, Greater Manchester Police now recognises alternative sub-culture hate incidents based on someone’s appearance, e.g. Goths, Emos and Punks. Amongst the examples of hate incidents and hate crimes given by young people in Hertfordshire were those based on gender, e.g. sexist abuse and physical bullying.

‘GENDER SHOULD BE INCLUDED, NOT JUST GENDER IDENTITY.’ FEMALE, 13-15, ST ALBANS

Responding to these concerns, largely raised by young women in the county, Herts1125 ask that specific research be commissioned to identify whether this is an issue that needs to be addressed.

‘DOES SEXISM ALSO COME UNDER HATE CRIMES? IT HAPPENS A LOT.’ FEMALE, 13-15, EAST HERTS

IN SHORT

• There should be wider education for all young people about hate crime / incidents both in PSHE lessons and within wider social education settings and youth centres. This should be a mandatory part of the PSHE curriculum and be delivered informally using an Anti-Hate Crime Resource pack to make it possible to evaluate and measure the impact and learning outcomes across county.

• Additionally, more education is required for all year groups on diversity and religious awareness including the animosity towards less visible minority groups – possibly in RE.

• Herts1125 want funding to develop a peer education programme to focus on the victim impact of different types of hate crime to build awareness and empathy. This will be part of a wider Restorative Justice approach to reparation and will be in partnership with Hertfordshire Youth Justice Services.

• All schools should have a concise protection plan, in flow chart format, to be developed and used in all schools. This will plot the routes of reporting hate crime / incidents and show young people what is likely to happen if they do report something.

• A companion pathway should be developed to show the likely consequences of being accused and convicted of hate crime. This, along with links to reporting sites, can be promoted on school intranets and via youth social media groups and websites, e.g. ChannelMOGO and Hertfordshire Constabulary.

• Schools should provide parents with opportunities to attend Hate Crime Awareness workshops, either as a separate event or as part of parents’ evenings, to give information and provide a safe space to discuss issues and concerns.

• Youth Courts should consider referring the parents/carers of young people found guilty of hate crime to a school workshop in their community, either on a voluntary basis or as part of a Parenting Order.

• All parents and young people should be provided with a leaflet/infographic that gives information on what a hate crime/incident is and how to report it.

• Improved community cohesion by schools and youth projects developing projects to improve awareness/acceptance of the diversity in their communities/districts.

• Research commissioned to consider hate crime/incidents in relation to gender, particularly how sexist behaviour and attitudes are impacting on young women in Hertfordshire.

• The Police to raise awareness about how to report hate crime and give reassurance that all information will be handled with respect, both for the victim and the perpetrator. This includes reporting methods such as report-it.org and should include encouragement to report Hate Incidents even if no law has been broken so that police can monitor and plan preventative interventions with other services for young people where necessary.

• A hate crime section should be available on ChannelMOGO defining hate crimes/incidents and providing links to report-it.org.

• All of these strands should be brought together into one HCC strategy that focuses on reducing hate crime and hate incidents in the county, and provides baseline statistics from all agencies to work from.
PRIORITY FOUR

LGBT+ (LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, PLUS)

Tackling homophobia, reducing stigma, increasing understanding, support for LGBT+ young people.
THE LGBT+ SURVEY SENT OUT THROUGH SCHOOLS, YOUTH PROJECTS AND OTHER YOUTH SERVICES IN HERTFORDSHIRE RECEIVED A TOTAL OF 1313 RESPONSES. OF THE COMPLETED SURVEYS, 686 (53%) WERE FROM FEMALES, 575 (44%) FROM MALES AND 40 (3%) WERE FROM YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PREFERRED NOT TO REVEAL THEIR GENDER.
To understand the data and recommendations made for Priority Four within the Herts1125 Manifesto it should be acknowledged that the majority of young people offering their opinions are aged between 13 and 15 and identify as heterosexual and cisgender, with 97 responses from self-identified LGBT+ young people. To put this into context, the UK government estimates that approximately 6% of the UK population are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB), increasing the likelihood that there are more LGBT+ young people within the sample group than those who self-identified, especially as the average age to come out in the UK is currently 17. Stonewall, a gay rights charity, support this by estimating that that 5-7% of the population is LGBT+.

So, unlike the section of this Manifesto presented by ‘Who not What’ (Hertfordshire’s LGBT+ youth strategic group), this survey contains answers from those with a limited knowledge of what it means to grow up LGBT+ in Hertfordshire. This does not make their opinions invalid or their support unimportant, but Herts1125 strongly ask that all recommendations acted upon involve young people. This equal partnership should include representatives from Herts1125, Who not What, elected Herts MYPs, local and national LGBT+ campaign charities, professionals from education, health, social care and the police. This is to ensure that decisions to tackle the oppression and bullying of marginalised groups are evidence based and developed using experts by experience, as well as allies, who have a sound knowledge of how to advance LGBT+ equality.

THE ISSUES

Our survey revealed that 50% (619) of young people taking part did not know what the commonly used acronym ‘LGBT+’ stands for. This might have differed had more young people aged 15+ participated, but the reality is still concerning as everyone completing this survey will have had SRE lessons in school, which should have covered this very basic information. This highlights a learning need, which echoes findings discussed in more detail later.

As the aim of Priority Four in the Manifesto is to explore attitudes and assess young people’s knowledge of LGBT+ issues to inform recommendations made to challenge homophobic bullying and increase awareness about LGBT+ issues, the next questions we asked were about stigma and the misuse of language.

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1 A description for a person whose gender identity, gender expression, and biological sex all align (man, masculine, and male and woman, feminine and female)
4 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. The + is an inclusive term for all other non-heterosexual and non-cisgender people
Identifying as LGBT+ and disclosing this to other people is often described as ‘coming out’. Being open about your sexual orientation and/or gender identity can have positive and negative effects, so although people can come out at any time, they often choose not to because of concerns about what their family, friends and the wider community will say or do. At school, there can be additional pressures to conform with peers and fit in, leading to worries about bullying if people find out.

‘Young LGBT people need more than just practical support when coming out; acceptance and understanding are crucial. Many young LGBT people are undermined when they try to talk about their sexuality and gender identity, by parents, teachers, and even doctors dismissing their feelings as a phase.’

Whilst it is heartening to hear that young people believe that any stigma associated with being LGBT+ is getting better, it does mean that if you add this number together with those who said yes, 69% (878) think that a stigma still exists. This stigma can lead to young people feeling isolated from their peers and/or the target for homophobic language and bullying which can extend to allies and friends.

It is especially important to young people who are questioning their sexual orientation and gender identity that they have the support of their peers in school. Whilst networks of support can be found online and within the two LGBT+ support groups in the county (North Herts and Dacorum), knowing that your classmates and year group think that there is a stigma attached to sexual orientations and being transgender, can mean everyday misery and anxiety that can damage mental health. Hopefully the 145 (9%) young people who ticked ‘no’ to stigma or who think it is getting better, can advocate to those who are unsure, to support campaigns like Stonewall in school to make it a better place for everyone.

The next questions were asked within the context of hearing the word ‘gay’ used to describe something or somebody in a negative way, and the answers support the assumptions made by Herts1125 when they devised the questionnaire that it is a term commonly used inappropriately amongst young people.
Some members of Herts1125 report that in their school the use of the word 'gay' as a derogatory term is ‘going out of fashion’. There is also research outside of ours to suggest that it is more widely used amongst 8-11 year olds, an age range not consulted by Herts1125. Whilst any reduction in use is gratifying to know, our survey shows that over 95% (1235) of young people have heard someone call someone or something ‘gay’. In fact, only 64 (5%) people out of 1299 had not heard it used at some time.


‘IT IS UNACCEPTABLE MAKE RACIST COMMENTS, HOMOPHOBIC COMMENTS SHOULD ALSO BE UNACCEPTABLE’ FEMALE, 16-18, WATFORD

‘EVERYONE KNOWS IT’S NOT RIGHT AND EVEN IF THEY DON’T, THEY WOULDN’T WANT A MEMBER OF THE LGBT COMMUNITY TO HEAR IT IN CASE IT OFFENDS.’ MALE, 16-18, DACORUM
However, despite young people saying that ‘everyone’ knows they shouldn’t say it, this research shows that 24% (244), a sizeable minority, of young people think that it is OK to use the term ‘gay’ out of context, with lots of comments being made to negate the damage it might do to someone who is LGBT+. This includes saying that it is a ‘joke’ or arguing that the real meaning of ‘gay’ is happy, so if it has been misused once to become a common term then it is fine for it to be used as a catch-all derogatory term for anything in the same way that ‘lame’ or ‘sad’ is.

The other excuse offered is that it is just ‘banter’ so therefore people should not get upset or offended. The repeal of Section 28 in 2003 and the introduction of the Equality Act in 2010 were both positive steps towards promoting equality and tackling prejudice in schools, but according to the charity Schools OUT UK there is still a problem within many schools of institutionalised homophobia, which could account for young people saying that ‘banter’ is not always challenged, e.g. using the word ‘gay’ as a derogatory term to describe something or someone. Whilst it is outside of the scope of this survey and Manifesto to explore this any more depth, what Herts 1125 would like to explore further, in terms of homophobic bullying and hate crime, is where ‘banter’ ends and ‘bullying’ begins, as from some of the remarks made it seems that the two are interchangeable.

‘IT ISN’T THAT BIG OF A DEAL AS IT’S NOT A DIRECT INSULT.’
FEMALE, 13-15, DACORUM

‘IT IS IMPLYING SOMETHING NEGATIVE TOWARDS GAY PEOPLE. HOWEVER, I DON’T THINK IT’S THAT BAD AND SOMETIMES PEOPLE MIGHT JUST NEED TO GET OVER IT.’
MALE, 13-15, DACORUM

‘IT’S A JOKE MAN, AND IT’S NOT OFFENDING THEM.’ MALE, 13-15, DACORUM

Excusing offensive language or making jibes at the expense of others is often an excuse for oppressive behaviour, whether intended or not. There was a common lack of empathy running through much of the feedback from this question. It should be made clear to all young people that a joke is never a joke when the laugh is at the expense of the feelings and/or dignity of others.

‘IT’S NOT [OK] BUT SOMETIMES IT IS SAID AS A JOKE AND NOT TO OFFEND ANYONE, AS YOU WOULDN’T SAY IT TO ANYONE WHO IS LGBT.’ MALE, 13-15, DACORUM

[7] [http://www.schools-out.org.uk]
This last response begs the question how young people are deciding who they think is LGBT+ (and therefore not OK to say it to), and who is heterosexual. It is an interesting distinction to make, particularly when we know from local (WnW) and national research (Stonewall) that the average age to come out is 17 years old, and the vast majority of those who participated in this survey are under 15. Put in simple terms, this means that young people are likely to be insulting LGBT+ young people, without realising it, as well as devising some sort of shared gay/not gay scale, which we think needs exploring further too.

As one young person put it: ‘being gay is something that you can’t help and because of negative comments such as this, it is making people ashamed of who they are when they shouldn’t be and it’s not ok.’

The majority (81%:1027) of responses support the view that it is unacceptable to misuse the term ‘gay’, and many young people provided explanations of how and why doing so could offend, hurt or anger LGBT+ people. It is also worth pointing out that you don’t have to be LGBT+ to feel offended at the misuse of this word.

‘IT USES HOMOSEXUALITY AS AN INSULT AND USES IT IN A WAY THAT SUGGESTS IT IS BAD TO BE GAY.’ MALE, 13-15, HERTSMERE

‘IT IS OFFENSIVE AND IS USED TOO OFTEN DESPITE THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE TIME IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SEXUAL ORIENTATION.’ 13-15, HERTSMERE
‘TO BE GAY IS A STATE OF BEING, IT ISN’T ASSOCIATED WITH EITHER NEGATIVITY/POSITIVITY AND THEREFORE SHOULD NOT BE A WORD USED TO JUDGE SOMETHING.’ MALE, 16-18, HERTSMERE

‘IT ENCOURAGES HETERONORMATIVITY AND HOMOPHOBIA BY USING THE WORD ‘GAY’ AS A DEROGATORY TERM.’ FEMALE, 13-15, DACORUM

‘WHEN PEOPLE SAY ‘THAT’S SO GAY’ THEY SAY IT IN A MEAN AND RUDE WAY TO MAKE IT SOUND LIKE AN INSULT BUT BEING GAY ISN’T WRONG OR BAD!’ FEMALE, 13-15, DACORUM

When asked if young people think that misusing the word gay is considered offensive, surprisingly 27% (323) said that it is not. This is in contrast to the 81% (1027) who said it is ‘not OK’ to use ‘gay’ in a derogatory way in the previous question.

This needs further consideration to find out the reason for the discrepancy. For example, is it not offensive because it has become such a common term that it has lost its meaning? Or is it not offensive because the majority of people asked in this survey are heterosexual and so it is not a term of offence aimed at them? The final explanation is that those asked do not realise the hurt, damage and offence that misused terms like this can have on an individual.
“AS FOR THE ABUSE OF THE WORD ‘GAY’, IT’S DANGEROUS TO BE DISMISSIVE BY USING THE ARGUMENT, ‘OH THE KIDS THINK IT’S FINE AND SO IT’S FINE’. THAT DOESN’T STAND UP. IF THE WORD IS BEING USED TO MEAN STUPID, THEN HOW DOES IT MAKE A YOUNG GAY PERSON FEEL? IT MAKES THEM FEEL STUPID. IT’S AN INEVITABLE CONNECTION IN THEIR MINDS.” RUTH HUNT, STONEWALL UK

However, it should not be overlooked that 73% (871) of our survey said that using the term ‘gay’ to mean anything other than a person’s sexual orientation (and only then if they are ‘out’), is offensive, meaning that this is the majority view.

‘PEOPLE SHOULDN’T USE THIS PHRASE AS IT IS EXTREMELY OFFENSIVE, AND PEOPLE WOULDN’T SAY, “THAT’S SO STRAIGHT” SO WHY SAY, “THAT’S SO GAY”? ’ FEMALE, 13-15, DACORUM

Herts1125 think that it needs to be made clear to young people that you do not have to be LGBT+ yourself to have empathy and understanding of the challenges faced, particularly in school, and to challenge homophobic attitudes and hate crime.

‘GAY IS BEING USED IN THE WRONG WAY, AND IN ORDER TO STOP DISCRIMINATION, HOMOSEXUALITY NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT IN A POSITIVE LIGHT, ESPECIALLY TO KIDS, 7-15.’ (TEACHER, HERTFORDSHIRE)

Teachers, social workers and youth workers have all reported frustration and irritation that despite being challenged, so many young people continue to use homophobic terms of abuse within their everyday language.

‘... GAY SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN THE PLACE OF ‘LAME’ EVEN THOUGH IT IS A DEROGATORY TERM.’ (TEACHER, HERTFORDSHIRE)

They also see this confusion in attitudes towards some words reflected back on the TV and in song lyrics.
'IT CAN OFFEND PEOPLE. THEN AGAIN, FRIENDS SAY IT TO EACH OTHER IN A JOKE WAY. IT SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME ACCEPTABLE IN SOCIETY TO SAY IT.’ MALE, 16-18, HERTSMERE

This perceived ‘acceptability’ is an interesting notion, especially if compared to other terms once used commonly to describe members of the LGBT+ community. So to hear that some young people consider calling something or somebody ‘gay’ acceptable amongst friends, even whilst the majority are clear that it is a derogatory term, is concerning.

‘BOYS HAVE TO BE MASCULINE AND MACHO AND ANYONE WHO ISN’T MUST GO ALONG WITH IT OR FACE BEING BULLIED.’ HELEN COWIE (PSYCHOLOGIST)

‘I WOULD SAY THAT THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT LGBT+ DISCRIMINATION IS OCCURRING IN SCHOOLS.’ TEACHER, HERTFORDSHIRE

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7289390.stm
Homophobia is usually defined as an irrational dislike, hatred or fear of individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. These attitudes can also affect anyone who is perceived to be gay, regardless of whether it is true or not, or those who do not conform to stereotypical standards of masculine or feminine behaviour.

Again, the information gathered through this survey about young LGBT+ being openly discriminated against is hard to interpret. From the responses we have, it seems that young people, particularly those under the age of 15, are unaware of how casual homophobia, intolerance and comments like, ‘I'm not homophobic, I have a friend who is gay,’ impact on the quality of life and emotional wellbeing of LGBT+ young people in school and the wider community.

For some young people, particularly those who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity, discrimination and bullying, including the random use of the term ‘gay’, can impact negatively on their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

‘IT’S STUPID, UNINFORMED, DEROGATORY, IGNORANT, OFFENSIVE AND UNREASONABLE.’ FEMALE, 16-18, WATFORD

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Gender orientation - the internal perception of an individual's gender, and how they label themselves - See more at: [http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/#sthash.kfPCzAic.dpuf](http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/#sthash.kfPCzAic.dpuf)
32% (278) of those responding to the question asking if teachers challenge LGBT+ discrimination in school said they were unsure, and only 33% (283) said that they did some of the time. Our expectations were that the numbers reporting that their teachers always challenge discrimination against LGBT+ pupils would be much higher than the actual 18% (157) who did in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the equal opportunities policies that all local authority schools work within. However, we are aware that this question asks for an opinion and we do not know what measures are taken by teachers away from the wider class, or how they challenge individuals away from the main group.

‘ALL STAFF NEED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY FEEL SECURE ENOUGH AND CONFIDENT TO CHALLENGE HOMOPHOBIA’ DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (2012)

Given time, we would like to research this further to understand how teachers do challenge homophobic language and why the perception of pupils that took part in this study is that many of them don’t.

‘WHY ISN’T THIS QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE SAYING “YOU MONG” OR “SPAZ” OR P***? ALL ARE JUST AS BAD BUT TEACHERS/LEADERS/ADULTS ALLOW THEM.’ FEMALE, 16-18, NORTH HERTS
Of those who have witnessed a young person being bullied about their sexual orientation or their gender identity whether it be repeating gossip, sending hate messages via texts and social media, socially isolating someone and making mean jokes as well as more traditional physical forms of bullying, and it was encouraging to see how many young people told us that they had challenged it in some way. Some examples given were personal accounts of homophobia or bullying, including a few where the target stood up to the bullies, whilst others described a time when they stood up for someone else.

‘IT HASN’T BEEN ANYTHING BIG AND PHRASES LIKE “THAT’S GAY” GETS USED SO OFTEN I GET USED TO IT - WHEN I SHOULDN’T.’ FEMALE, 13-15, NORTH HERTS

‘I WAS GETTING BULLIED A FEW YEARS AGO BECAUSE MY PARENTS CALL ME (A NAME) AND THEY MADE FUN OF IT. THEY THEN CALLED MY FRIENDS GAY SO I STOOD UP FOR THEM BECAUSE I KNEW WHAT IT FELT LIKE.’ MALE, 13-15, NORTH HERTS

Knowing that you have supportive peers that are prepared to challenge homophobia and hate crime, whether you are friends or not, can make a huge difference to a target of bullying behaviour. As with all bullying, the bully’s power is reinforced by active supporters, bystanders or those who ignore it. Without it, they are alone, which is why Herts1125 support anti-bullying campaigns like Young Stonewall. 11
'ONE OF MY CLASSMATES WAS HOMOPHOBIC AND I TOLD HIM TO KEEP HIS OPINIONS TO HIMSELF.' FEMALE, 16-18, ST ALBANS

'I'VE SAID IT TO A FRIEND WHEN THEY SAY "THAT'S GAY" BUT NOT TO A STRANGER.' FEMALE, 13-15, NORTH HERTS

We recognise that standing up for what is right is not always the easiest thing to do, with people saying that they did nothing for fear of making it worse or because the bullies may turn on them.

'SOME THINK THAT IF YOU STAND UP FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY, THEN YOU COULD BE PART OF THE LGBT COMMUNITY.' MALE, 13-15, DACORUM

Sometimes it can be simpler to ignore what you see and walk away, which was also reported. However several of those who did nothing at the time now wish they could turn the clock back and do things differently as the experience has left them feeling unhappy, guilty and/or angry. Some also say that understanding more about the issues young LGBT+ can face and having been educated about the damage homophobia in all its forms can do to emotional wellbeing and mental health, has changed their attitudes and given them confidence to speak up in the future.

'I WAS 14 AND BOYS A FEW YEARS OLDER THAN ME WERE BULLYING SOMEONE IN THEIR YEAR. BEFORE THIS I DID NOT KNOW MUCH ABOUT HOW LGBT+ PEOPLE WERE TREATED OR HOW THEY WERE BULLIED AND I WAS NOT CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO CONFRONT THEM ABOUT IT, BUT I WOULD NOW.' 16-18, WELWYN HATFIELD

'I HAVE NEVER WITNESSED IT BUT I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT IF I DID I WOULD BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO SAY SOMETHING.' FEMALE, 13-15, ST ALBANS

Some respondents were adamant that although they have never seen bullying or homophobic behaviour, if they did they would challenge it. Most of these comments centre around the opinion that bullying someone because of their sexual orientation or gender identity is ‘wrong’ and that those perpetrating it should be stopped and punished.

However, a small minority openly describe themselves as homophobic, seemingly unaware that expressing this extreme opinion or acting upon it could be considered a hate crime, which should be reported to the police, as it is illegal. Others, having witnessed this type of
bullying, say they did nothing ‘because I’m not gay so it’s not my place to say anything’, ‘it’s not my problem’, and ‘none of my business so why get involved?’

‘I’M NOT ONE TO STAND UP FOR PEOPLE.’ MALE, 13-15, NORTH HERTS

‘I DID NOTHING BECAUSE I DON’T REALLY CARE.’ MALE, 13-15, NORTH HERTS

‘IT’S NORMAL TO BE HOMOPHOBIC …’ MALE, 13-15, DACORUM

This seemingly callous and ill-informed hostility to LGBT+ people reinforces the need for additional education, especially around the legal consequences of extremism and the laws in place to protect minority groups from attitudes such as this. In particular, all young people should know:

‘A hate incident is defined as any act, which may or may not be a crime, that the victim or any other person perceives to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards an aspect of a person’s identity. Hate incidents include:

• Verbal abuse like name-calling
• Harassment
• Physical attacks such as hitting, punching, pushing, spitting
• Threats of violence
• Hoax calls, abusive phone or text messages, hate mail
• Online abuse for example on Facebook or Twitter
• Harm or damage to things such as your home, pet, vehicle
• Graffiti
• Arson.

A hate crime is any illegal act that the victim or any other person perceives to be motivated by hostility or prejudices towards an aspect of a person’s identity.’

‘I GO TO A GIRL’S SCHOOL, SOME TEACHERS ARE HOMOPHOBIC.’ FEMALE, 16-18, ST ALBANS

‘WE ARE NOT TOLD ABOUT OTHER SEXUALITIES.’ MALE, 16-18, WATFORD

Of the 1274 students who answered this question, 430 (33%) of young people say that they are either unsure about the levels of support for LGBT+ pupils in their school or that they do not think there is enough. 80% (1016) said that outside of school they do not know where to go for advice with LGBT+ issues either. Of those who said that they do know where to go, the most popular place was online, including Snapchat and Tumblr, which was also the place where most young people say that they learnt about LGBT+ issues. Again, Herts1125 ask for more education in school because although the internet provides an unlimited source of information, not all of it is true.

‘IT’S NOT TAUGHT IN OUR SCHOOL, EVERYONE LEARNS THIS ONLINE.’ FEMALE, 16-18, DACORUM

Youth Connexions and talking to parents were also suggested as good sources of information about LGBT+, as well as being able to offer advice and support.

Reviewing this information, along with all the other statistics gained from the 1313 young people who completed this survey has led Herts1125 to draw the following conclusions:

1. Information about advice and support available for LGBT+ young people is not freely or widely available in schools in Hertfordshire.

2. Young people who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity may prefer to keep this to themselves because of the negative and extreme attitudes expressed by some of their peers in this survey.
3. Anyone seen showing interest in a poster or taking a leaflet would be likely to have their own sexual orientation or gender identity questioned.

Herts1125 were surprised that so many young people answered ‘no’ to this question about inclusive education, and disheartened that 190 (15%) were not sure what it meant.

All schools in the UK are tasked with providing an education that meets the needs of all pupils, regardless of their gender, faith, ethnicity and sexual orientation. This includes an entitlement to high quality, age-appropriate SRE both in school and within other services for young people. One young lesbian observed that SRE in her school doesn’t include any information about girl on girl sex, resulting in her learning the mechanics through watching straight porn with her heterosexual male friends, which meant missing out on some of the positive aspects of an intimate relationship like affection, trust, consent and mutual pleasure, which is not shown in porn 13.

The fact that so many young people didn’t know what LGBT+ stands for at the start of the survey, suggests that pupils are not being taught enough about LGBT+ issues. By this we mean not just learning about sexual health but wider lifestyle topics too e.g. same sex marriage, adopting or having children, LGBT+ rights etc. with the current focus remaining firmly on heterosexual sex and traditional boy/girl relationships.

Promoting equal rights for LGBT+ pupils across the curriculum and including LGBT+ issues equally during PSHE, Citizenship and SRE would enable young people from an early age to understand and accept difference, resulting in less homophobic incidents. It could also prevent young people from inadvertently condoning oppressive language and behaviour due to ignorance and a lack of empathy.
CHANGES WE WANT TO SEE

We were surprised at the number of young people that said they did not know what the term 'LGBT+' means as we incorrectly assumed that this acronym was well known across society. We think it identifies a huge need for better education about LGBT+ issues in school, extra-curricular activities and all other services for young people. We believe that schools in particular, need to be more inclusive in the language they use and improve their attitudes to different sexual orientations and gender identities in order to provide a safe, supportive environment where all children and young people can learn and emotionally flourish.

There also needs to be changes made to the way that PSHE and SRE is taught in schools to make it more inclusive of LGBT+ issues and promote gay rights. The needs of LGBT+ young people need to be considered when teaching about sex and relationships, self-image and the need to be comfortable about your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity for good emotional wellbeing and improved mental health. This includes the use of inclusive teaching support materials, e.g. films, leaflets and scenarios for activities that place equal status and value on non-heterosexual characters and relationships.

Youth services, school nurses and any other professionals that offer relationship advice and give out leaflets about sexual health, STI's and condoms need to find ways to ask what type of sex young people intend to have, and with whom, rather than making assumptions that everyone is heterosexual. Doing this will make it easier for LGBT+ young people to access services without embarrassment and make it more likely they will practice safer sex.

“WE NEED TO DO MORE TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH IT IS EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO DISCUSS SEXUAL WELL-BEING AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CONVERSATION WE HAVE WITH PEOPLE ABOUT OUR HEALTH.” PROFESSOR DAME ANNE JOHNSON - UCL INFECTION & POPULATION HEALTH

The word “gay” is now the most frequently used term of abuse in schools, according to a BBC report. However, 27% (323) of those asked say that using ‘gay’ as a derogatory term is ‘not offensive’, which is not the response that Herts were expecting.

‘GAY HAS TWO MEANINGS AND PEOPLE HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT WE ARE YOUNG ADULTS AND WE SAY THINGS WITHOUT MEANING IT AND SOMETIMES IT’S JUST A LAUGH AND PEOPLE NEED TO CHILL.’ FEMALE, 16-18, NORTH HERTS

This attitude, and excuses that using language like this is a ‘joke’ or only ‘banter’, needs to be explored further as it is outside the remit of this survey to explain such concerning

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7289390.stm
opinions. The wide misuse of ‘gay’ as a substitute for the previously popular terms ‘lame’ or ‘sad’, along with an apparent lack of understanding of the offence it can cause, undermines the majority view that it is wrong.

Because of this, Herts1125 is calling for further research to find out the reasons behind some of the homophobic attitudes and opinions expressed in this survey, some of which were too extreme to include. Young people should be educated to realise the hurt, damage and offence that terms like this can have on an individual and we think that more work needs to be done to challenge language and homophobic attitudes, to demonstrate equality and support for LGBT+ young people in the county.

‘NEARLY EVERYONE HAS HEARD SOMEBODY SAY: “THAT’S SO GAY” THEREFORE I THINK PEOPLE DO NOT REALISE THAT THIS CLASSIFIES AS STIGMA.’ HERTS1125 MEMBER

From comments made, it would seem that young people are largely unaware that expressing extreme homophobic opinions could be breaking the law and result in them getting a criminal record. The police take Hate Crime very seriously so Herts1125 suggest that opportunities are created, possibly during Citizenship lessons, for officers to come in and educate all young people about the law and the likely consequences of breaking it. This would serve two purposes; firstly it would provide reassurance to young people and they would know how and where to report things, and secondly it would reinforce the position that homophobia, in any form, is unacceptable.

We propose HCC urgently carries out some research with a group made up of Herts1125, representatives from Who not What, SRE/PSHE professionals, teachers, youth workers, existing Stonewall Co-ordinators and the police to look into challenging homophobic language and attitudes within schools. The aim of this would be to consider effective ways to challenge terms like, ‘that’s so gay’, which our survey demonstrates is a widely used derogatory term, and to ensure that LGBT+ rights, history and lifestyles are promoted equally alongside heterosexual ones.

Additionally, research should be done into how to provide the right support for young people questioning their gender identity and transgender young people coming out. This should include how to talk to parents, how to talk and support a transgender friend or peer and how education, health and youth services can help to challenge any discrimination and provide a safe environment. Again, this should be based on a model involving young transsexuals who would like to volunteer alongside professionals and community members, e.g. mentors or faith leaders.

As part of challenging homophobia, positive LGBT+ role models should be promoted in every school, youth centre and service for young people, so that children grow up understanding the huge contribution that the LGBT+ community have made to the lifestyle and freedoms we enjoy today. LGBT History Month, held annually in February, provides an opportunity to focus on this further and could include LGBT+ people’s achievements within the fields of medicine, computer science, sports and the arts. This would promote equality and educate all in ways that are engaging, fun and meaningful.
Herts1125 believe that in order to bring all these strategies together and challenge any stigma surrounding homosexuality or homophobic attitudes, whilst increasing and developing the support for LGBT+ young people, there should be a Stonewall Co-ordinator attached to each secondary school in the county, plus a designated teacher or support worker. In Hertfordshire, there are currently only ten schools registered as Stonewall School Champions. The school-based staff should have specialist training in LGBT+ awareness to effectively support young people experiencing difficulties in school.

This can be expanded to become an LGBT+ group that offers a safe place to socialise as well as learn. Those young people questioning their gender identity and/or sexual orientation would also be welcome, along with ‘straight allies’. The school LGBT+ groups could then be signposted to Youth Connexions and other activities and support in the community to ensure that LGBT+ young people have access to services provided for them, in a way that is fully supported as well as develop involvement in our work.

**IN SHORT**

Herts1125 ask Hertfordshire County Council to action the following recommendations:

- Improved SRE that is inclusive of LGBT+ issues. This should include sex and relationships, but also provide an opportunity for all young people to learn about LGBT+ lifestyle issues too, e.g. same sex marriage, adoption and parenting, as well as about the heterosexual ones already taught.

- More information about LGBT+ issues and where to go for help, advice and support to be widely and openly available in all schools and youth provision.

- Education in school about homophobic Hate Crime and the consequences of it if you are reported, delivered in partnership with the police. Reporting structures put in place in schools and a ‘zero tolerance’ approach promoted to encourage people to speak up, especially ‘bystanders’.

- Research carried out, with representatives from Herts1125, Who not What, SRE/PSHE professionals, youth workers and the police as equal partners, into effective ways to educate young people who are ignorant of LGBT+ issues (or what it means) that can lead to casual homophobia, e.g. the wide use of the term ‘gay’ as an insult; and challenge homophobic language and attitudes within school.

- LGBT+ history and achievements should be celebrated in all schools during LGBT History Month, which is February. This would include promoting positive role models like the first openly gay English rugby player, Keegan Hirst, swimmer Tom Daley and England / Arsenal female footballer Casey Stoney, musicians like Sam Smith and historical heroes like Allan Turing, who developed the first computer and made such a huge contribution during World War II. It also includes celebrating transsexuals who have made an amazing contribution, e.g. the scientist Kate Stone (trans woman).

- Herts1125 recommends that there is a Stonewall Co-ordinator and designated teacher in each secondary school in the county. Part of this role would be to set up and staff a regular LGBT+ group, with links to other LGBT+ support and social activities within the locality and feed into countywide strategies.
PRIORITY FIVE

FINANCIAL HELP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

pupil premium, 16-19 bursary, student grants, scholarships & bursaries, student & apprenticeship cards, etc.
PRIORITY FIVE FOR 2015, AS VOTED FOR BY 2127 YOUNG PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN 11-18 IN HERTFORDSHIRE, IS FOR INCREASED FINANCIAL HELP AND SUPPORT. WITH UK PERSONAL DEBT ESTIMATED AT A RECORD £1.4 TRILLION¹ AND MOST FAMILIES PERSONALLY AFFECTED BY THE RECENT GLOBAL RECESSION IN SOME WAY, HERTS1125 UNDERSTAND WHY YOUNG PEOPLE BELIEVE NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO LEARN FINANCIAL SKILLS FOR LIFE.

‘IT HELPS TO KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR MONEY AND BE SMART WITH IT.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

Our survey reports that young people want high quality, practical financial education about money matters that apply both now, e.g. student bursaries, loans and opening a bank account and for post education, e.g. budgeting for independent living, taxes and saving money.

THE ISSUES

In total, we received 1948 completed surveys for this priority completed in schools and youth centres across Hertfordshire. Again, the gender split of those participating is almost even, with slightly more young women responding (52%: 1007) than young men (45%: 880). The final 3% (61) represents the views of those who prefer not to share their gender identity.

The majority of young people in this survey are under 16, with those aged 11-13 representing 46% (887) of the sample group, 14-15 year olds 36% (692), 16-18 year olds 16% (313) and those aged 19-25 accounting for the remaining 1% (19). This means that the feedback received, which informs our recommendations for Priority Five, largely represent the views of those who are legally too young for independent living, full time work and financial credit commitments. However, just because they are young does not mean that they do not need to learn the skills to budget and make their money work well for them, often trying to make pocket money, an allowance or part-time wages stretch to pay for all the things they want and need.

Receiving financial education early and building skills over time means that when young people do come to need them, they can do so with confidence.

For example, research shows that the average age in the UK to first own a mobile phone is 10 years old². Whilst the child may not actually pay for the handset, for many this is the first time that they will need to use money skills to ensure that their phone credit lasts all month, as well as understanding mobile tariffs to ensure they choose the best data allowance or ‘bundle’ from the wide range available online or in-store.

Those aged 16 and over at the time of our survey are past the age of statutory financial education, so any additional skills will be learnt outside of the mandatory curriculum. However, they are at the age when moving on to college, university or work is only a short distance away so it is reassuring that a number of respondents told us that in Sixth Form their schools provide finance workshops.

² http://www.broadbandchoices.co.uk/news/2014/08/children-technology-280814
Research by Lloyd’s Banking Group shows that young people from the age of 12 have on average £6 pocket money a week and this is supplemented by paid household chores and money given for birthdays etc\(^3\). Therefore basic skills learnt at a young age can be put into practice early on and added to in more detail as young people start part-time work etc, meaning they grow up making informed financial choices and things like budgeting become familiar and less daunting.

The vast majority of young people who participated in this survey did not know that they have a statutory entitlement to financial education in school. Some contributors said they did not realize that the small amount of time dedicated to finance in a couple of citizenship lessons, delivered in a seemingly random order, was actually the ‘Financial Education’ requirement being fulfilled by their school.

‘WE HAD A ‘TASTER’ BUT DIDN’T COVER ANYTHING IN MUCH DETAIL.’ FEMALE, 11-13, WELWYN & HATFIELD

‘UNDER THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM PROGRAMMES OF STUDY TAUGHT IN LOCAL AUTHORITY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS FROM SEPTEMBER 2014, FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION IS STATUTORY FOR THE FIRST TIME, AS PART OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4 (AGES 11-16)’

Financial education can also be taught as part of the non-statutory curriculum for Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) and should be incorporated into the maths curriculum so young people learn to apply numeracy skills to real life situation, e.g. budgeting, saving and understanding things like the interest rates on a loan.

Martin Lewis, founder of MoneySavingExpert.com and active campaigner for financial education in schools, encourages the two curriculum areas to be dovetailed for finance lessons: “basic maths is the lifeblood of good money saving, helping you understand when you’re getting a good deal and when you’re being ripped off.”

This need to understand what is happening from a personal perspective is echoed by lots of comments made by young people about the need to be able to manage their own money and financial affairs and understand how things work.

4 http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06156
5 www.moneysavingexpert.com
‘WE HAVE LEARNED TO WRITE A CV BUT WHAT IS THE POINT IN GETTING A JOB IF YOU WON’T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THE MONEY?’ FEMALE, 16-18, NORTH HERTS

55% (1030) of young people completing this survey say that they have not received financial education at school, although another 11% (202) say they expect to. This includes pupils where finance is taught in sixth form, which is great but does mean that those who leave at the end of Year 11 go without any financial education at all.

‘NEVER A LESSON FULLY COMMITTED TO IT SOMETIMES TOUCHED ON IT BUT THERE WAS NEVER A FULL LESSON OR EVENT FULLY COMMITTED TO IT.’ MALE, 16-18, DACORUM

‘WE’VE RECEIVED NO SUPPORT ON BANKING AND BILLS AND HOW TAXES WORK AND IT ALL SEEMS TERRIFYING.’ FEMALE, 16-18, NORTH HERTS

Herts1125 assume that the wide age gap between the majority and minority of respondents is likely to be in part responsible for the very different views expressed in the comments section between those who consider themselves still a ‘child’, so too young to learn about finance, which they don’t think is useful, and young adults who want to find out more.
The majority of those who have, or are, receiving financial education found lessons useful, or at least in part, although many said that they still don’t feel they are equipped or prepared enough to manage money effectively in the future and would like to learn more.

‘IT HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT FINANCE AND MANAGING MONEY EARLY ON.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

‘IT WAS VERY USEFUL AND IT SHOWED ME THAT IT IS UP TO ME TO GO OUT, EARN MONEY AND MANAGE MY MONEY WELL.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

A few young people told us that they had enjoyed regular financial education in primary school. This was generally thought to be really useful, but when it came to picking up lessons again in secondary school it did mean that some pupils had to sit through classes on basic things a second time. The other issue raised here was that if you learn in Year 6 but only do a few sessions after that, by the time you get to Year 12 and starting to think about college/university/work, you are likely to have forgotten the details, plus your needs will have changed dramatically.
‘I WAS TOO YOUNG (WHEN I HAD FINANCIAL EDUCATION) AND SO DIDN’T DISCUSS/CONSIDER STUDENT FINANCE.’ FEMALE, 16-18, ST ALBANS

‘IT WAS PROBABLY HELPFUL AT THE TIME BUT NOW I HAVE FORGOTTEN IT SINCE WE ONLY DID IT ONCE.’ MALE, 14-15, HERTSMERE

We were told that in some secondary schools financial education is done as a one day event, meaning that if you are off sick that day, you miss it. Others reported they have six short sessions in Year 10, which they think is still not enough to take everything in.

‘I THINK WE HAD ONE LESSON ON MONEY ORGANISING BUT THAT’S IT.’ FEMALE, 14-15, WELWYN & HATFIELD

‘WE HAD AN ELD (EXTENDED LEARNING DAY) ABOUT MANAGING MONEY.’ MALE, 14-15, WELWYN & HATFIELD

‘ONLY FOR AROUND 6 WEEKS IN THE YEAR, IN VERY RUSHED LESSONS.’ MALE, 14-15, HERTSMERE

For those reporting that they did not find the financial education they have received useful, this appears to be mainly due to the teaching methods used, rather than the subject itself. This resulted in several young people giving the greatest thumbs down to any learning experience; ‘it was a bit boring’ and ‘I can’t remember it now’.

‘NOT ALL OF IT WAS EASY TO UNDERSTAND.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM

‘WE DID A QUIZ SO I DON’T REMEMBER ANYTHING NOW.’ FEMALE, 14-15, DACORUM

‘IT WAS A REALLY BAD LESSON, JUST COPYING OUT FROM A SHEET’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM
Herts1125 think this needs addressing and new ways found to make lessons both interesting and informative, as unlike some subjects learnt in school, which will only ever apply in certain contexts, financial education is a skill for life because everyone will use it. For example, not everybody will set up their own business, as per the exercise described by some young people from their business studies coursework but almost everyone will handle money on a daily basis to pay bills, travel, buy food etc., so everyone does need to know how to handle it and also how to keep it safe.

Some students seem unconvinced about the need to have actual lessons about finance, with some remarking that it is, ‘just common sense’ and that ‘you learn as you go along’. Whilst this is a nice thought, the statistics for debt and loans for young people do not bear out the evidence that this strategy works.

‘MANY YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES. 31% OF 18-24 YEAR OLDS ARE OVER-INDEBTED.’

Other young people seem to think that although financial education has been compulsory for all pupils since September 2015, some of the comments indicated that financial education in their school was optional: it may be that this is an option only available in 6th form.

‘I DIDN’T TAKE FINANCE BUT IT WAS AVAILABLE.’ FEMALE, 16-18, BROXBOURNE

‘I DID NOT DO FINANCIAL STUDIES, HOWEVER THE OPTION IS ALWAYS THERE FOR THOSE THAT WANT TO STUDY IT.’ FEMALE, 16-18, EAST HERTS

Herts1125 think that all young people should learn money management and develop financial skills across the span of their school life, rather than in a few dedicated workshops.

‘I THINK WE HAD ONE LESSON ON MONEY ORGANISING BUT THAT’S IT.’ FEMALE, 14-15, WELWYN & HATFIELD

‘(OUR FINANCIAL EDUCATION) DIDN’T COVER MUCH, WAS BRIEFLY DONE IN YEAR 9.’ MALE, 14-15, WELWYN AND HATFIELD

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6 http://www.fincap.org.uk/children_and_young_people
76% (1419) of those who completed this survey said that they have not been provided with enough information on how to manage money in the future.

![Bar chart showing preferences for additional financial information](chart.png)

Young people, especially students in Year 11 onwards, would like to see more emphasis and in-depth information on things that are going to be relevant to the lives of all of them after compulsory education, whether they choose college or Higher Education, employment or apprenticeships. This includes paying taxes and National Insurance (including how this looks on pay slips), budgeting, choosing and opening the right bank account and student loans / bank loans. Whilst some of these link directly to life skills and Citizenship, others fit better within the maths or business studies curriculum at school.

‘THERE SHOULD BE MORE OF A FOCUS ON HOW MONEY AND TAXATION WORKS IN PSCE FOR LOWER YEAR STUDENTS OR TUTORIAL HOURS IN SIXTH FORM. LITTLE INFORMATION OR DETAIL IS GIVEN ABOUT ANYTHING TO DO WITH BANKING, TAXATION OR ANY OTHER FINANCIAL TOPICS. IT WOULD BE MUCH MORE HELPFUL IF THERE WAS A GREATER FOCUS ON WHAT PEOPLE SHOULD DO AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL FINANCIALLY RATHER THAN DOING UNHELPFUL AND SEEMINGLY MEANINGLESS EXERCISES.’ MALE, 16-18, NORTH HERTS

Some pupils think that the lack of interest starts with teachers who are not specifically trained in money and finances and show little interest in the topic themselves so do not enthuse others.
'IT WAS THE REAL GAME BUT IT WAS NOT CARRIED OUT PROPERLY AND THE TEACHERS DIDN’T SEEM TO CARE ABOUT IT MUCH.' MALE, 16-19, WELWYN AND HATFIELD

‘TEACHERS WERE UNSURE.’ MALE, 14-15, WELWYN AND HATFIELD

This was in sharp contrast to young people who have participated in workshops run by external banking organisations that were offered in some schools who spoke highly of them.

Herts1125 appreciate that this is only a snapshot of what is happening across county but this perception of financial education is having a knock on effect on students, meaning that they place less emphasis on the importance of learning about finances and lessons get a bad reputation that de-motivates the next set of learners.

Research by the Citizens Advice Bureau shows 62% of young people who access credit end up turning to high-cost payday loans to keep up with the payments and with the constant advertisement of pay day lenders this is not surprising. Research for the Financial Capability Strategy for the UK found that media and social expectations heavily influence young peoples’ attitudes to money and spending and this is further reinforced if parents have a ‘spend rather than save’ attitude and so we were interested to see where pupils in Herts go for money advice.

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In our survey, parents are the main source of financial information by a sizeable majority. Whilst parents are certainly likely to shape their children’s values and attitudes to money, it seems a big responsibility to expect them to know everything about finance, particularly things like student loans that perhaps were not in place or the cost of tuition fees was lower when they were of a similar age and making their own choices.

47% (921) of young people say they look online to find out about finance. Amongst the additional comments made following this question young people told us that they have got financial education from their bank. Popular TV adverts, including the ‘Barclays Skills for Life9’ campaign have motivated young people to find out more, usually by going online to read and download information, or by physically going into a bank to pick up leaflets. Another popular feature online is the webchat that many banks have where young people can talk directly to a virtual financial advisor about student accounts, direct debits etc and money expert websites, e.g. Martin Lewis, who was mentioned by name.

‘ALTHOUGH QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH SHOWS THAT 81% OF 15-17 YEAR OLDS SAY THEY ARE HAPPY TO TALK ABOUT MONEY WITH THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY, QUALITATIVE RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT THEIR CONVERSATIONS RARELY GO DEEPER THAN TALK OF ‘BEING BROKE’.2’

This research is arguably reflected in the results of our survey, with only 333 (17%) of young people saying that they would get information or advice about money from friends.

http://www.fincap.org.uk/children_and_young_people
Herts1125 are pleased to see that this year 55% (1003) of young people have heard of the Hertfordshire Saver Card. However, disappointingly the numbers that do not know what it is have risen from 32%\(^{10}\) in summer 2014 to 45% (831) this year. This means that despite all of the advertising and campaigns outside of school through Youth Connexions and HCC transport department, including posters at every bus stop in the county, there are still young people who don’t know about the benefits.
16-19 BURSARIES

Herts1125 were very concerned that 88% (1631) of young people said that they have never heard of the 16-19 Bursary. Comments also said that many young people have no idea what a bursary is, this may be reflective of the younger age of respondents however needs to be addressed.

‘I DON’T EVEN KNOW WHAT A BURSARY IS, I DIDN’T KNOW ANY OF THESE FACTS’ FEMALE, 14-15, THREE RIVERS

The bursary, which is government funded, is for qualifying students aged 16 to 19 and can greatly help with education-related costs (e.g. travel, school clothing and books or equipment), although it can be spent on anything that the young person chooses. It is for young people:

- Studying at school or college [not university] in England
- On a training course, including unpaid work experience

There are two types of bursary available, but unsurprisingly considering most respondents had not heard of the 16-19 Bursary at all, young people are mainly unaware of these too. As the bursary for some students is £1200 a year, and there is no assessment of parental income in those cases, it can make a huge difference to the ability to carry-on past Year 11. Even the lower bursary, paid at the discretion of the school or college and of a variable amount, can be extremely helpful for some students.

Whilst this is not a bursary for all, we think it is still important that young people have the right information upon which to make their decisions about continuing education and/or further training.
STUDENT LOANS

In the comments that were made alongside this survey, many young people show concern throughout that they do not know anything much about student loans in higher education. For some this has resulted in a fear that, with the increase in tuition fees as well, university may prove too expensive and so prevent them from going. Other young people have taken the opportunity to share their opinions on the politics and ethics of student loans.

‘I DON’T UNDERSTAND LOTS OF THE THINGS BUT I AM WORRIED ABOUT WHETHER I WILL BE ABLE TO AFFORD COLLEGE AND HOUSING - AND UNIVERSITY.’ MALE, 11-13, NORTH HERTS

‘I DON’T THINK IT’S RIGHT STUDENTS HAVE TO PAY LOANS FOR UNIVERSITY. FIRSTLY BECAUSE IN SCOTLAND THEY DON’T HAVE TO; SECONDLY BECAUSE IT PUTS PEOPLE OFF GOING TO UNIVERSITY, IMPACTING ON THE ECONOMY.’ FEMALE, 14-15, DACORUM

The majority of young people in this consultation do not know how student loans are repaid which we can only assume will be having an effect on the fear of taking out student loans and therefore the choices young people make about the possibility of going to university. Consideration does however have to be given to the age of respondents (46% aged 11-13).

We think that financial education provides a real opportunity for teachers and youth workers to discuss issues like this that young people are fired up about and use them as a springboard to education about student loans, how it works and how they are paid back.

‘I FEEL LIKE I DON’T KNOW ENOUGH AND I AM SLIGHTLY WORRIED HOW I AM GOING TO MANAGE MY MONEY.’ FEMALE, 11-13, DACORUM
Financial education has been part of the compulsory national curriculum since September 2014. It is taught within citizenship lessons and should link closely to the maths curriculum, ensuring that all young people are numerate in money matters when they leave compulsory education. However our survey demonstrates that the majority of young people are unaware of this and their experience is that there is not enough financial education in school. One young person summed up the view of over a thousand of his/her peers about the message they would like to give to HCC and head teachers:
'I WOULD JUST LIKE YOU GUYS TO ENCOURAGE OUR SCHOOL TO TEACH ABOUT FINANCE AT A YOUNGER AGE, WE JUST HAVEN’T LEARNT MUCH ABOUT THIS.' MALE, 11-13, DACORUM

Despite negative comments made about the way that financial education is currently delivered in schools, the most positive message to come from this survey is that so many young people can see the value of learning money skills for life and want to have more financial education that is appropriate for their age.

‘OUR SCHOOL NEEDS TO BE EDUCATED MORE ON THIS, AS I HAVE LEARNT MORE IN THIS SURVEY THAN IN MY WHOLE SCHOOL LIFE.’ FEMALE, 14-15, ST ALBANS

Young people seem genuinely worried about their financial future and believe that by learning from an early age how to manage their finances they can escape, or better cope, with the stress that money matters can provoke. In particular, young people expressed concerns about debt, not only through making poor choices about things like credit cards and loan companies, but also through student loans and the cost of studying away from home.

‘GENERATION Y IS FAST BECOMING GENERATION CREDIT. THE HOUSING AND MONEY PRESSURES ON YOUNG ADULTS ARE SIGNIFICANT AND IT IS A BIG CONCERN THAT ONE IN THREE YOUNG ADULTS IN SERIOUS DEBT IS EMPLOYED.’ CITIZENS ADVICE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GILLIAN GUY (2015)

From our research it would seem that significant adults at home are the people most likely to be approached for information and advice about money matters. We think that in order for parents to feel confident in doing this they need to have regular updated information on things like student loans and bursaries. This could be via a concise, easy to read factsheet that is on schools’ intranets and also available in hard copy to be given out to parents in GPs surgeries, youth courts and parents’ evenings. As well as being jargon free and eye-catching, the factsheet should be designed to be easily updated and give basic information and signposting to find out more, as well as helplines for parents concerned about their young adult’s spending.

The current level of financial education given, and the priority it has on the school timetable seems to vary widely from school to school, with young people giving very different accounts of their learning experiences. Whilst accepting that this is only the first year that financial education has been on the statutory curriculum, many schools were previously teaching it through subjects like PSHE and economics, so this can be a reason but not an excuse.

Herts1125 think that for financial education to succeed, it needs to engage young people by being relevant to their lives, both now and in the future. Lessons need resources that are
interactive, easily understood and transferable to different contexts to meet the individual needs of pupils and their different circumstances, e.g. one young person told us they had a lesson that compared the price of cigarettes to how much someone could save if they gave up, despite the majority of the pupils being non-smokers and under the age of fourteen. Instead subjects should be incremental making them relevant as young people grow up, so things like budgeting for the future is taught from year 7 upwards and student finances can be incorporated into the year 10/11 curriculum. This should include a wide range of teaching methods to meet the range of different learning styles that pupils have, for example using films or videos, discussions and practical lessons to experience applying for financial services, plus scenario work, including what happens if you do get into debt.

These lessons need to be regular and learning reinforced through practical activities so that young people do not ‘forget’ as described by so many who took part in this survey. There is evidence to support the fact that they are not just being flippant or deliberately not remembering what has been taught, which strengthens our call for a more coordinated approach.

‘EVIDENCE SHOWS IF THE LEARNING OF ONE HOUR’S WORTH OF FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION IS NOT PUT INTO PRACTICE WITHIN 8 MONTHS, IT IS LOST.’

We think that teachers need to feel confident teaching it and to have wide financial knowledge. In addition to specialist training for teachers we would like to see more opportunities created for independent advisers (such as CAB), local credit unions (who offer cheaper banking and lower-cost loans), commercial bankers and money experts to come into school to facilitate workshops about real life situations, savings and loans. These should be linked to activities in youth projects and one stop shops so that young people can learn gradually from different sources. This way we think young people will gain a robust working knowledge of how finance works so that when they have to start managing money independently they have the skills to cope and hopefully make good choices. Equally when they start work, part-time or later full-time, they can read a wage slip with confidence, and if they do apply for a credit card, loan or purchases they understand how interest rates work.

Whilst at school, our survey shows that many young people still do not know about the benefits available to them through an NUS Card or other discount schemes that can help them save money.

We are really pleased that for the first time more young people currently know about the Herts Saver Card than don’t. We think this is in part due to previous recommendations from young people being agreed and actioned by HCC from the last two Youth Manifestos. However, the fact that 45% (831) still do not know about the Saver Card, despite wide promotion online and in the community, e.g. at bus stops, is very disappointing.

We can only ask schools once again to better promote these discount schemes, particularly the Herts Saver Card, which now has the additional benefits of providing proof of age ID. We recommend all young people are told about the Saver Card and Hertfordshire Train Card during the transition period from Year 6 to Year 7 and again at the beginning of each new year.

11 http://www.fincap.org.uk/children_and_young_people
school year as young people’s circumstances may have changed. Additionally, we would like to see information and application forms continue to be given to parents/carers during school information evenings both before Year 6 pupils start secondary school and at other opportunities throughout the school year. Details and a link to the Saver Card site should be posted on all school websites in Hertfordshire, including the confidential financial assistance available for qualifying families, so that everyone can benefit from discount schemes and save money.

Very few young people in this survey knew anything about 16-19 Bursaries, which are available for qualifying young people to help support them to continue education and training. This is a means tested bursary so not applicable to all students, however Herts1125 think that all young people should learn about it to ensure equality of opportunity when applying and to take into account that many young people are not open about their home financial situation, e.g. preferring to take in a packed lunch rather than have the free school lunch they are entitled to.

‘IT’S IMPORTANT WE LEARN ABOUT THIS AS (WE) ARE FAST APPROACHING SITUATIONS WHERE WE NEED THIS KNOWLEDGE.’ MALE, 14-15, WELWYN & HATFIELD

With the increased university fees it is essential for young people to be aware of how student loans work, including how and when they are repaid and when they are repaid. Myths surrounding who is entitled and who is not, how to get a higher student loan by moving house (or pretending to live with other family) and it not being ‘worth getting a job after university as all your wages will be taken away’ all need to be challenged through high quality education that ensures all young people know the correct information.

‘I HEARD THAT TUITION FEES WILL INCREASE AND REPAYMENT TERMS WILL BECOME MORE HARSH BUT ONLY THROUGH VAGUE INTERNET ARTICLES/HEARSAY.’ MALE, 16-18, STEVENAGE

‘I THINK INCREASING UNIVERSITY FEES WILL CAUSE ECONOMIC CHAOS FOR MANY STUDENTS, THEREFORE MAKING IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO REACH THEIR DESIRED JOB.’ 16-18, DACORUM

IN SHORT

The Money Advice Service defines a financially capable person as someone ‘who keeps track of their money, plans ahead and is able to make informed decisions about their finances, understanding the risks and benefits of particular options.’ (www.moneyadvice service.org.uk)

Ultimately we want finance education in Hertfordshire to equip young people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to be ‘financially capable’ and ready to make informed money choices, both now and post-16 as they prepare for further education, training and eventual independence. To do this we recommend:

• Students and schools should be reminded that it is now compulsory for young people to have financial education at school.

• Finance education in school needs to be dynamic, interesting and taught regularly during all Key Stages, from primary onwards. This should include money experts coming into school for age appropriate ‘master classes’ and to be part of an overall strategy to get financial education on everyone’s agenda, including youth services and the community too.

• These lessons need to be fun and engaging to different learning styles and abilities, as well as educative and relevant to the lives of pupils to challenge the stereotype that learning about money has to be ‘boring’.

• Young people were very clear that they do not believe that the finance education they currently receive is enough and they would like to see more emphasis and in-depth information on paying taxes, budgeting and loans as well as financial services available like savings and interest accounts.

• All young people need to be educated about student loans, how to apply, how they work and how they are paid back. Information on repaying student loans and money queries should be available on the ChannelMOGO website.

• Students should also be taught in PSHE/financial education lessons about the eligibility criteria for the student 16-19 bursary/discretionary student bursary.

• Financial education lessons need to include information about the NUS card and NUS apprenticeship extra discount card, as well as local discount schemes to help pupils save money. Leaflets and information regarding these schemes should be available to all students at the end of year 11 whether they are undertaking an apprenticeship or employment, remaining at school or going to college.

• We ask HCC to continue to provide schools with Herts Saver Card promotional material to schools so that they can continue to promote the discounts families are able to access on travel to and from education.
WE ARE DELIGHTED TO INTRODUCE THE FIRST CONSULTATION WITH YOUNG LGBT+ IN HERTFORDSHIRE
WHO NOT WHAT, JUST LIKE MEMBERS OF HERTS1125, ARE AGED BETWEEN 11-25, AND LIVE, WORK OR ARE EDUCATED IN HERTFORDSHIRE.

Our group represent the views of LGBT+ young people within the county and were set up following just one tweet. Speaking of concerns that our voice had been silenced for too long, and that more support, understanding and education was essential in Hertfordshire, we aim to make Hertfordshire a more inclusive county for young LGBT+ and the needs that they have.

Through consulting with young LGBT+ people for the first time as part of the Hertfordshire Young People’s Manifesto, we have been able to offer them the opportunity to have their voice heard, perhaps for the first time, regarding issues that matter to them, and to give them the chance to be a part of seeing changes made within the county.

By inviting this group of people to take part in our surveys we wish to identify the biggest issues surrounding what is available for the young LGBT+ and to campaign for these issues to be changed, whilst encouraging them that their views matter and that they are an important part of a diverse community within Hertfordshire.

This year, we have identified that the top two issues faced by young LGBT+ people as:

**Mental Health: Support, where to go, consequences of not getting support e.g. self-harm, specific support available for young LGBT+.**

**Individual Support: Understanding of own sexuality, acceptance of own sexuality, effect on emotional health, was/is there support for you, where do you/did you turn?**

Focussing on the above two priorities, we have asked young LGBT+, through questionnaires, to outline what the issues within these areas are and the exact changes and improvements that we Eleanor Hynes, Ripley Marshall and Samaya Woolner on behalf of Evangeline Rowe, Emi Grover, Frankie Walsh, Kieran Stanbridge, Ricky Jennings, Robert Wheatley, Reece Browne, Rebecca Wheatley, Ola Zwierew, Xander Holmes, Tom
Lees and Perry Brown would like to see implemented for the young LGBT+ community within Hertfordshire.

‘Who not What’ (WnW) are Hertfordshire’s first LGBT+ strategic youth group. Our role is to consult with our peers about the issues that matter and then present them to Hertfordshire County Council’s education, health and community policymakers and service providers, making recommendations about how to ensure that young people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, get access to the quality services they are entitled to.

Statistics from the 2013 UK National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyle (Natsal) show that one in eighty adults (aged between 18 and 75) identify themselves as gay or lesbian and one in eighty as bisexual adding up to about 1.2 million people. When you add this figure to the number of people whose sexual identity was not covered in the survey (excluding heterosexual), it becomes easy to see that LGBT+ people form a large and diverse sector of the UK population.

For our first countywide survey we are pleased to report that 134 young people from the LGBT+ community took part that live, work or are educated in the county. Note: fourteen responses were from young people who live out of county but who are educated or work within Hertfordshire.

In Hertfordshire, LGBT+ young people say they feel left out at school, particularly during PSHE and SRE lessons, marginalised within healthcare services and socially isolated in terms of youth provisions offering somewhere to meet other LGBT+ young people. This can often have a negative impact on mental health and emotional wellbeing, leaving them feeling detached from their heterosexual peers and unsupported by professionals.

‘I FEEL THAT THERE IS NOT ENOUGH SUPPORT AND TOO MUCH INTIMIDATION IN HERTS. THERE IS A DISTINCT LACK OF SUPPORT THAT MUST BE FILLED AS IT IS DESTROYING THE LIVES OF MYSELF AND MANY OF MY FRIENDS.’ 13 – 16, HATFIELD

The findings from this peer consultation, plus recommendations to improve things for LGBT+ young people in Hertfordshire are presented for the first time in the Young People’s Manifesto for 2015/16. In doing this, we hope to contribute towards making Hertfordshire a safer and more supportive place for LGBT+ young people to grow up both now and in future years.

PRIORITY ONE

MENTAL HEALTH: SUPPORT, WHERE TO GO, CONSEQUENCES OF NOT GETTING SUPPORT E.G. SELF-HARM, SPECIFIC SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR YOUNG LGBT+ PEOPLE

THE ISSUES

According to a survey undertaken by the LGBT Foundation, 'It is likely that 1 in 4 people will experience at least one mental health problem in any one year of their lives.' However research by the Youth Chances Project, which was considered England’s biggest LGBT+ social research project when it was completed in 2014, reports this figure to be much higher amongst those aged 16-25, with over half of the 7,000 surveyed saying they have suffered mental health problems and 50% admitting to having self-harmed. This does not mean that an LGBT+ identity in itself is the reason for this, rather that the challenges of homophobia, prejudice and heterosexism, along with things like the stress of coming out can impact negatively on mental health, however this isn’t exclusive.

For those young people that do suffer mental ill health, Dominic Davies from Pink Therapy, (a leading mental health support service for LGBT+), believes that this can quickly escalate due to not getting the right sort of help early on. He says that fears about being ‘outed’ by health professionals, or anxiety about being asked difficult questions, means that young people often don’t get help until they are in crisis.

‘AS LGBT PEOPLE, OUR MENTAL HEALTH IS OFTEN UNDER ATTACK FROM VARIOUS QUARTERS, AND SOMETIMES WE CAN FIND OURSELVES BEING OUR OWN WORST ENEMY.’

However, WnW are keen to stress that not all LGBT+ people will have poor mental health and many will live their lives unaffected in any negative way. This is particularly true if they have a supportive network around them, including teachers, parents and friends, who accept, value and respect them meaning they suffer less emotional pressures and anxieties than those who do not. Having this built-in resilience makes them more likely to cope effectively with the pressures of life.

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2 http://lgbt.foundation/information-advice/mental-health-advice-for-lgb-young-people/
4 http://www.pinktherapy.com
GETTING IT RIGHT

A recent YouGov study shows that asked to plot themselves on a ‘sexuality scale’, 23% of all British people aged 18-70 chose something other than 100% heterosexual - and that figure rose to 49% among 18-24 year olds. In real terms this means that 1 in 2 young people (under 24) who took part in this survey identifies as not 100% heterosexual. This broad spectrum of sexual orientation, which challenges older style assumptions that people fall into four basic categories, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or straight, is reflected in the terms used by young people to describe themselves within the WnW consultation.

Throughout this consultation WnW has been made aware that a lack of knowledge amongst peers, families and professionals about different sexual orientations and gender identities, including the terms used to describe them correctly, contributes to misunderstandings and bad feeling. In short, it is irritating that people get it wrong, making LGBT+ young people think that although professionals say that services are for everyone, in reality they ‘can’t be bothered’ to get it right. One young person encapsulated the feelings of many:

‘ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT SEXUALITIES THAT YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND MAKES US FEEL LIKE OUTCASTS AND (YOU) SPEND MORE TIME TALKING ABOUT OUR SEXUALITY THAN WHAT WE’RE ACTUALLY THERE FOR.’ 19-21, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

In Hertfordshire, young people used a wide range of terms to describe their sexual orientation and gender identity. Whilst some of these may be familiar to service providers and policy makers, including county councillors, there are probably several that aren’t.

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5 [https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/08/16/half-young-not-heterosexual/](https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/08/16/half-young-not-heterosexual/)
As a result, and having understood how important a wider understanding is to young people, one suggestion we would like to make is for further commissioned research to look at these terms of identification, what they mean, how young people categorise themselves, if they refer to subtle distinctions in sexual orientation and if these result in different support needs.
‘(THERE IS) A LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF SEXUALITIES OTHER THAN HETEROSEXUALITY AND HOMOSEXUALITY AND GENDER IDENTITY ISSUES.’ 17-18, LETCHWORTH

From here a ‘guide for professionals’ could be made to explain the different terms and so reduce the language barriers described in detail by so many young people throughout this consultation.

QUESTIONING AND COMING OUT

Some young people talked about realising at an early age that they felt differently to their peers, but not having a name for these feelings or knowing what to do with them.

‘I NEVER WANTED TO BE THE HANDSOME PRINCE, EVER. I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE THE BEAUTIFUL ONE WITH THE LONG HAIR WHO GETS TO WEAR THE DRESS AND GETS RESCUED BY THE PRINCE. LUCKILY MY SCHOOL LET ME, BUT I KNOW PLENTY OF GAY MEN WHO WERE TOLD TO STOP BEING STUPID AND TO PLAY WITH ‘BOY’S TOYS.’’ 18-19, EAST HERTS

This often happens before young people leave primary school, with contributors to this survey describing themselves as feeling like ‘outsiders’ or ‘confused’ but having no positive role models offered, apart from heterosexual ones. When LGBT+ celebrities or sports people are talked about it is often in terms that perpetuate stereotypes, e.g. all female footballers are lesbians; all male nurses are gay, etc. Some young people said they were told that it was probably ‘a phase’ they would grow out of by parents, whilst others said that Year 6 was the age they first realised that some people thought their feelings were ‘wrong or immoral’.

‘IN PRIMARY SCHOOL I DIDN’T TELL ANYONE UNTIL I DIDN’T HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT ANYMORE. AND IN SECONDARY SCHOOL I SPOKE TO MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT IT.’ 19-21, ENFIELD

‘THERE’S NOTHING WORSE THAN KNOWING YOU’RE DIFFERENT AND FEELING ALONE. I’VE KNOWN PEOPLE WHO DIDN’T REALISE THAT THEIR ORIENTATION WAS ACTUALLY A COMMON NAMED THING – E.G. DEMISEXUAL.’ 17-18, HATCH END
Our research demonstrated that coming out to people about your sexual orientation and/or gender identity can be a very different experience, dependent on how your family, friends or community react. Whilst for some it is a positive declaration of who they are, other young people talked about the anxiety and fear of rejection that clouds their emotional wellbeing, sometimes for months before they tell someone, especially whilst they are still questioning and trying to make sense of their sexual orientation. In particular, worrying about breaking the news to parents, who in reality may or may not already have some idea, can lead to family tensions and increased arguments. Some described feeling as though they have ‘let parents down’ by being anything other than straight, leading to them becoming reliant on friends and older members of the LGBT+ community for emotional support.

‘[TO CHANGE THINGS] WILL BE A LONG PAIN-STAKING PROCESS. THE FIRST STEP WOULD BE TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO THE YOUNG LGBT+ COMMUNITY THAT IT IS OK TO COME OUT.’ 17-18, BIGGLESWADE

Not having the ongoing support of significant people in your life during this time can damage young people’s confidence further and this can have a negative knock on effect on emotional wellbeing.

Carrying around a ‘secret’, which at a time when many young people are already stressed over school, peer pressure, exams and self-image, leads some to seek professional medical help.
OTHER, PLEASE STATE

- Sleep issues
- Detachment issues
- Coping issues
- Psychosomatic Illness
- Schizophrenia

As shown in the graph, the biggest mental health issues revealed by this survey are stress, low self-esteem and confidence issues. Young people talked about the fear of not being accepted and discrimination.

‘PEOPLE NEED TO BE MORE APPROACHABLE SO YOUNGSTERS FEEL THEY CAN OPEN UP WHILST KNOWING THEY ARE SAFE.’ 22-25, WARE

Statistically a survey of more than 2,000 young people in England between 2010 and 2014 found that 48% of trans people under 26 said they had attempted suicide, with 30% saying the attempt had been in the past year and 59% admitting they had at least considered doing so. Anecdotally we were told that worries about people finding out, gossip amongst peers, concerns about how parents will react to the news and not knowing who is safe to talk to all contribute negatively on mental health and emotional wellbeing.

‘POOR LEVELS OF MENTAL HEALTH AMONG GAY AND BISEXUAL PEOPLE HAVE OFTEN BEEN LINKED TO EXPERIENCES OF HOMOPHOBIC DISCRIMINATION AND BULLYING.’

6 Statistics taken from research by Pace, a mental health charity for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, in partnership with Brunel University, the University of Worcester, and London South Bank University.

7 [http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/LGBhealth/Pages/Mentalhealth.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/LGBhealth/Pages/Mentalhealth.aspx)
However, the largest unanswered question from this survey is whether the young people who participated in it would have experienced mental health problems anyway, regardless of identifying as LGBT+. For example, some of the risk factors identified by the NHS\textsuperscript{8} include a pre-disposition to mental health problems, excessive drug or alcohol misuse, long term ill health or a family history of poor mental health. Some of the contributors to this survey may have experienced some or all of these, as well as the stress and anxiety they have endured because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. What we cannot say with any authority is that those young people who have experienced mental health problems have only done so because of the experience of coming out. Only one specific comment was made on the subject:

‘I BELIEVE SOME LGBT+ PEOPLE CANNOT GET ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AS IT FEELS THAT PEOPLE ARE FORCED TO CHOOSE THE DEPRESSION CAUSE. I FEAR THAT BEING OPEN ABOUT LGBT+ IMMEDIATELY PUTS YOUR SEXUALITY AS THE CAUSE, RATHER THAN THAT YOU CAN BE LGBT+ AND STILL HAVE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS WITHOUT THE TWO BEING LINKED.’ 22-25, ST ALBANS

What our survey does clearly show is that most young people think that their sexual orientation and gender identity impacts on their mental health in a negative way, even if for the majority it is only slightly.

\textsuperscript{8} \url{http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/LGBhealth/Pages/Mentalhealth.aspx}
GETTING SUPPORT IN HERTFORDSHIRE

The next questions asked in this consultation were designed to find out about young people’s experience of receiving mental health support in Hertfordshire.

Of the young people who responded to the WnW survey nearly 40% have received specific mental health support, e.g. CAMHS, or visited their GP to discuss feelings of confusion, stress and/or depression.
Our survey shows that the majority of young people asked don’t think mental health services are inclusive of LGBT+ issues, with comments made about the lack of knowledge that they believe professionals have about coming out and the anguish that particularly transgender young people go through. It should be noted that responses from out of county are likely to be specific to their own local authority’s services.

‘I THINK ESPECIALLY FOR TRANSGENDER PEOPLE THE REFERRAL SYSTEM NEEDS TO BE A LOT FASTER. THE AGONISING WAIT CAN BE VERY DISTRESSING AND THE FACT THAT SEEKING MENTAL HELP CAN SLOW DOWN THE REFERRAL PROCESS LEADS MANY TO NOT CONSIDER IT AT ALL AS THEY NEED TO SEE A SPECIALIST ASAP.’ 22-25, STEVENAGE

‘THEY NEED TO KNOW THAT ANYONE AND EVERYONE IN THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY IS APPROACHABLE AND WILL BE SYMPATHETIC TO THEIR SITUATION – IT SHOULD BE STATED THAT THEY WILL HELP WITH ISSUES THAT ARE LGBT+ RELATED SO THAT THEY KNOW THEY CAN TALK ABOUT IT AND WILL BE LISTENED TO. THE FIRST STEP IS MAKING THEM FEEL SAFE.’ 17-18, BIGGLESWADE

Young people commented that they often don’t feel welcome in mental health services, including CAMHS, which can leave them feeling embarrassed and ashamed, not only due to their mental illness but also about their sexual orientation or gender identity. For those who
have not come out yet, especially to their family, there are additional fears that parents will need to be contacted and confidentiality breached, meaning that some young people are reluctant to go for help, even if they feel depressed or are having suicidal thoughts.

‘ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, WITHOUT OUTING YOURSELF TO FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS CAN BE VERY DIFFICULT. HEALTH SERVICES NEED TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR FREE AND WITHOUT THE NEED FOR PARENTS TO GET INVOLVED / KNOW.’ 13-16, POTTERS BAR

Whilst this is clearly not the intention of mental health services, which all operate within the Equality Act 2010 and NHS equal opportunities policies that promote inclusiveness, this was a recurring complaint. WnW think that more needs to be done to promote mental health services in ways that make it clear that they are LGBT+ friendly and outline confidentiality from the start. This can be reinforced via other services for young people as well as explained by GPs who make the referrals to more acute services.

Of those participants that ticked ‘other’, suggestions include dedicated online one-to-one support and walk in services in schools, universities and colleges, as well as youth services.

‘I THINK THAT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES SHOULD BE AS WIDELY AVAILABLE AS POSSIBLE.’ 17-18, BIGGLESWADE
BULLYING

The next section of the WNW survey looks at LGBT+ young people’s experience of bullying and intimidating behaviour, both from their peers and within the wider community. Statistics show that in the UK ‘1 in 3 lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people have experienced some kind of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic attack.’ Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic views can be shown in a variety of ways ranging from name calling, shouting abuse in the street or discrimination against LGBT+ people to things like beating someone up or destroying something that belongs to them.

WnW results largely reflect the findings of The School Report (2012), a survey of over 1,600 LGBT+ young people, conducted by the University of Cambridge for Stonewall, which found that over half (55%) of gay young people have experienced homophobic bullying of some kind and almost all (99%) hear the use of homophobic phrases or language commonly used in school.

However, in real terms, the WnW consultation revealed that percentage wise young trans people or those with different gender identities experience the highest levels of bullying.

“WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN MANY CHANGES IN LEGISLATION, THE REALITIES OF YOUNG TRANS PEOPLE ARE THAT THEY CAN EXPERIENCE HIGHLY NEGATIVE RESPONSES FOR EITHER BEING TRANS OR EXPRESSING GENDER VARIANCE. BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS IS ENDEMIC AND WE OFTEN FIND SCHOOLS SWEEPING SUCH

http://lgbt.foundation/information-advice/hate-crime/
THINGS UNDER THE CARPET.” JAY STEWART, CO-FOUNDER OF GENDERED INTELLIGENCE

One very welcome result of the survey is that over half of those who said they have experienced bullying due to their sexual orientation or gender identity have told someone. Less welcome is the fact that the vast majority said that after plucking up the courage to tell someone, nothing happened and that those told either didn’t understand or did not know how to manage the situation effectively.

‘I WAS TOLD IT WOULD BE DEALT WITH BUT THINGS DIDN’T REALLY CHANGE.’ 22-25, HATFIELD

‘TEACHERS NEED ADVICE ON WHAT CONSTITUTES A HOMOPHOBIC SLUR/HOMOPHOBIC STEREOTYPING SINCE OFTEN TEACHERS HAVE DEFENDED HOMOPHOBIC REMARKS MADE BY OTHER STUDENTS.’ 17-18, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

For LGBT+ young people to report bullying and seek help they must be able to believe in the system and that things will change for the better as a result of it. At the moment the majority of those asked don’t, and as a consequence are unlikely to report it. This could mean that the figures recorded for LGBT+ bullying, including verbal, emotional and physical abuse, are much higher than those reported.

‘HOMOPHOBIC/TRANSPHOBIC BULLYING SHOULD BE TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY BECAUSE IT CAN LEAD TO SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND ANXIETY.’ 13-16, STEVENAGE

As well as being distressing and impacting on an individual’s mental health and self-image, young people, particularly through school assemblies and form time, should be informed and reminded that in the UK this sort of bullying is illegal. Termed ‘Hate Crime’, young people should be supported to report biphobic, homophobic and transphobic hate crime either online, by phone or in person at a police station.

A homophobic hate crime is:

“Any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.”

10 Gendered Intelligence is a group that supports young trans people and seeks to increase education around trans issues http://genderedintelligence.co.uk Quote taken from http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/nov/19/young-transgender-suicide-attempts-survey
A transphobic hate crime is:
“Any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.”

‘WE DO NOT TOLERATE RACIST BEHAVIOUR AND YET WE ARE LENIENT TOWARDS HOMOPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC BEHAVIOUR. AS A PERSON OF COLOUR MYSELF I FIND THIS APPALLING. PEOPLE DO NOT CHOOSE THEIR ETHNICITY, NOR DO THEY CHOOSE THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY. NO ONE SHOULD BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST AND I BELIEVE THAT HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA SHOULD CARRY THE SAME CONSEQUENCES AS RACISM,’ 17-18, BIGGLESWADE

Of the minority who say they have been a victim of hate crime, only two reported it to the police, of which only one person was happy with the support received. Obviously this is too small a sample to draw conclusions from but the additional comments made by young people to encourage more targets of bullying to report it are very powerful:

11 http://www.report-it.org.uk/homophobic_and_transphobic_hate_crime
'LET THEM KNOW THE RIGHT WAY TO GO ABOUT REPORTING HATE CRIMES AS SOME MAY BE SCARED TO DO SO OR DON’T EVEN KNOW HOW TO REPORT A HATE CRIME CORRECTLY.’ 19-21, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

‘IT’S IMPORTANT THAT VICTIMS DON’T FEEL ISOLATED FROM THEIR COMMUNITY AFTER SUFFERING A HATE CRIME.’ 22-25, HATFIELD

‘(WE NEED) POLICE WHO AREN’T DISMISSIVE AND ACTUALLY TAKE THE TIME TO LISTEN, WHO TAKE HATE CRIME SERIOUSLY AND DON’T DISMISS REPORTS JUST BECAUSE THE VICTIM IS A CHILD / TEENAGER.’ 13-16, WATFORD

Further suggestions to help reduce hate crime and offer more support revolve around education for all:

‘EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION! STEMMING THE PROBLEM SHOULD BE THE PRIORITY RATHER THAN BEING OVERWHELMED BY DAMAGE CONTROL.’ 17-18, HATCH END

‘EDUCATE CHILDREN FROM A YOUNG AGE ABOUT LGBT+ TO AVOID THE USE OF TERMS (E.G. GAY) AS NEGATIVE.’ 17-18, HARLOW

In conclusion to the issues for Priority One, the young people who responded to the survey feel that they face discrimination and prejudice in almost every aspect of their everyday lives. This includes enduring bullying, without much expectation of getting the right support if they report it, and other oppressive behaviour, which impacts negatively in some way on their emotional wellbeing and mental health.

**CHANGES WE WANT TO SEE**

The importance of using the right terminology was returned to again and again both within feedback from the Mental Health and the Individual Support questionnaire, results of which follow this section. Not doing so, particularly amongst professionals who work with young people, e.g. teachers and youth workers, or the use of collective terms for all non-heterosexuals, is perceived as disrespectful and unacceptable, whatever the intention.

Having a universal language that is widely promoted and covers sexual orientation and gender identity is essential for professionals to build respect, acceptance and understanding for all. This can be promoted in school, colleges and healthcare delivery
points through posters and leaflets etc. and also as a free download online on websites including Young Pride in Herts, Youth Connexions ChannelMOGO and education and library intranets throughout Hertfordshire County Council. This must be regularly updated to ensure that information remains current and should help everyone have a clearer understanding of the correct language to describe different types of sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as helping young people who are questioning. WnW want this to contribute to a wider strategy to reduce the types of bullying and oppressive behaviour (both in and outside of school) that can lead to low self-esteem, poor mental health and damaged emotional wellbeing.

Although our survey showed no clear links between sexual orientation/gender identity and increased mental health problems, it did demonstrate that the vast majority of young people think that the issues caused through their sexuality, including bullying and coming out, have a negative impact in some way on their mental health and emotional wellbeing. However, they are not always eager to ask for help, as they believe that mental health professionals do not necessarily understand or prioritise LGBT+ issues. This means that they may only be seeking help once their problem has become acute and they are in crisis.

This needs to change and WnW believe that all mental health professionals would benefit from specific training in LGBT+ and gender identity issues.

‘THERE SHOULD BE MORE AWARENESS OF LESS WELL KNOWN SEXUALITIES AND GENDER IDENTITIES SO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL THEY WILL BE LISTENED TO AND TAKEN SERIOUSLY IF THEY COME FORWARD FOR HELP.’ 13-16, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

‘(MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES) SHOULD NOT MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLES’ SEXUALITY OR GENDER IDENTITY.’ 18-19, EAST HERTS

‘TRAINING MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO BE MORE LGBT+ FRIENDLY, MAKING THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE WITHIN THE CLINICS AND MAKING CLINICS MORE LGBT+ FRIENDLY.’ 19-21, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

This training would be co-produced with young people from WnW and include educating teachers, social care and youth workers to raise awareness of LGBT+ issues and build empathy, as well as respond to concerns about the mental health needs of young LGBT+. In schools this can then be taught through high quality SRE and PSHE that includes sexual orientation gender identity, challenging bullying and exploitation, and where to go for one-to-one help and support as part of Hertfordshire County Council’s early intervention strategy.
Recommendations we make for improvement, so that LGBT+ young people feel able to access the mental health services they require, from their GP onwards, include simple things like making posters and leaflets more prominent in public spaces, and designing them to ‘stand out’ so that they are seen. All of this information should be available online too, with links to click through to specific specialist services, e.g. on Young Pride in Herts, ChannelMOGO and the Hertfordshire Youth Connexions website.

WnW wants LGBT+ bullying to be tackled as a priority in schools, along with other services for young people, e.g. youth projects, and the community. Whilst understanding that in some cases this is a criminal offence, or Hate Crime, victims are often reluctant to tell anyone or report it for fear of making things worse or not being believed/understood. We want HCC to support national campaigns, e.g. Stonewall that challenge LGBT+ bullying and raise awareness about LGBT+ Hate Crime, including what it is, how to report it and the consequences of being found guilty of committing one.


Young people told us that the main reason they do not report incidents of bullying in school is that they do not believe that by doing so anything will improve. In fact some told us that in their experience things got steadily worse after telling someone in authority, including an increased fear of physical harm. This lack of faith in schools to be able to deal effectively with bullies extends to a belief that the existing sanctions and punishments are disproportionate to the harm and emotional damage done to the victim.

This echoes the findings of the 2014 Youth Chances Project that revealed one in five LGBT+ young people had been a victim of a physical attack at school12 of which the majority did not report for similar reasons to those given in our survey. We ask Hertfordshire schools to make an amendment to their existing anti-bullying policies to specifically cover homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and for it to be treated with the same level of importance as bullying based on ethnicity and faith. Additionally, young people would like to see bullying tackled in three distinctive ways:

1. Education, both in school and within the community from an early age. This should endeavour to build empathy about how it might feel to be bullied, as well as teach children why it is wrong to do it. Teachers should be taught how to challenge LGBT+ bullying and hate crimes so they can deal with situations more effectively, and offer appropriate support to those targeted. The police should also be trained in supporting young people, and this should be widely promoted to encourage more LGBT+ to report hate crime.

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2. Make anti-bullying policies and rules with clear consequences of what will happen if these are broken in school, youth clubs etc. That way people will know that if they engage in bullying behaviour the sanctions outlined in the policy will be applied without exception. This will encourage more LGBT+ young people to believe in the system and report bullying, rather than hiding it for fear of rejection or reprisals.

3. More support for those who have been bullied due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, both in school and the community. This includes bullying within online communities and social media platforms where young people should be educated and encouraged to use the reporting systems in place. Anyone caught posting, sharing or forwarding inappropriate comments, pictures or content (or inciting anyone else to) on a school intranet or HCC moderated site should be immediately blocked and their account suspended. Where appropriate online bullying, particularly of a sexual nature, should be reported to the police.

Teachers and youth workers should have a more practical understanding of LGBT+ issues and this should be kept up-to-date through mandatory training. There needs to be wider awareness within schools of terms that are perceived as ‘slurs’ by the LGBT+ community, e.g. referring to a transsexual as ‘born a boy inside a girl’s body’, which is inaccurate as well as offensive.

‘(TEACHERS NEED) TRAINING ON SENSITIVITY TO LGBT+ PEOPLE (I.E. NOT MAKING NON-PC COMMENTS IN LESSONS) AND TRAINING ON HOW TO TALK ABOUT LGBT+ ISSUES AND GIVING ADVICE/HELPING PEOPLE ACCESS ADVICE.’ 17 – 18, HITCHIN
IN SHORT

To challenge the growing need for greater support with mental health issues and improve emotional wellbeing for LGBT+ young people, WnW ask Hertfordshire County Council to provide:

- Greater awareness for all from pre-school age onwards to challenge stereotypes, LGBT+ bullying and hate crime.
- An amendment to all anti-bullying policies in schools and services for young people to include a specific section on LGBT+ bullying plus a clear strategy for victim support.
- A specified strategy within children and young people’s services for early intervention and support so that all professionals know more about the wide spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities and how they can meet the educational, pastoral and social care needs of LGBT+ young people.
- Mandatory INSET training for those working in schools and other children and young people’s services in LGBT+ issues. This must include how to support a young person who is questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, how to identify early mental health problems and where to refer young people for professional support.
- Easier access to confidential mental health services and emotional support, widely advertised so young people know they will be listened to and taken seriously if they come forwards for help and/or support.
- Specialist CAMHS support that has a fast-track referral route for transgender young people and those questioning their gender identity.
- Encouragement and support for young people to report incidents of hate crime, which includes homophobic, biphobic or transphobic attacks.
- An ‘LGBT+ Awareness and Anti-bullying Education Resource Pack’, developed in partnership with WnW, youth councils and/or MYPs, representatives of LGBT+ charities (e.g. Stonewall) and HCC professionals for educating young people in school and informal education settings.

This would be age appropriate, engaging and meaningful to raise awareness of LGBT+ issues, build empathy, challenge stereotypes and any discrimination as well as make sure that all children and young people know what an LGBT+ motivated Hate Crime is, how to report it and the likely consequences of engaging in it. It would also raise awareness about who to go to for information and support if young people are questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and things like coming out, relationships and sexual health.

- Greater support and promotion of Stonewall to campaign against the bullying of LGBT+ young people and for this to be promoted throughout schools and services for young people during LGBT History Month each February, International Transgender Day of Remembrance, which annually highlights transphobic murders, and awareness campaigns such as World Aids Day and Mental Health Week within the county.
PRIORITY TWO

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT: UNDERSTANDING OF OWN SEXUALITY, ACCEPTANCE OF OWN SEXUALITY, EFFECT ON EMOTIONAL HEALTH, WAS/IS THERE SUPPORT FOR YOU, WHERE DO YOU/DID YOU TURN?

Of those young people who contributed to this consultation, the vast majority said that they had come out, although their experience of this varies greatly between the positive and emotionally damaging. UK research states that the average age for young people to come out to their parents or the significant adults in their life is 17, although some will do so before this and others won’t feel ready until much later¹³.

![Bar chart showing age distribution and gender of respondents.]

Of the 54 young people who responded, 47 (87%) had come out as a member of the LGBT community and perhaps not unsurprisingly, the majority of young people said that the first person they told was a friend. More surprising was that this friend was most likely to be someone from outside of school, rather than a school friend. However, as one young person succinctly explained,

‘I WILL ALWAYS BE “COMING OUT” AS A MEMBER OF THE LGBT+ COMMUNITY AS I WILL NEVER STOP MEETING NEW PEOPLE.’ 19-21, STEVENAGE

¹³ https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/gay-and-lesbian-well-being/201103/should-you-come-out-your-parents
Identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or any of the other terms used to describe the wide spectrum of human sexual orientations/gender identities (LGBT+) can be a massive step in a young person’s life. Some young people are very clear about the attractions they feel, their gender identity and their sexual orientation from a young age and are happy to share this with anyone who asks.

‘I ALWAYS KNEW I WAS GAY AND HAVE NEVER TRIED TO HIDE IT. WHY SHOULD I? BEING GAY IS GREAT.’ 18-19, EAST HERTS

The right time to ‘come out’ is a very personal choice and no one should feel pressured before they are ready. In fact there is no requirement for an individual to tell anyone ever, if that is what they choose, although research suggests that telling people leads to closer, more honest relationships in the end. However WnW has been made aware of young people who have been forced into revealing their sexual orientation and where private information has been used inappropriately, leading to them feeling exposed to bullying and ridicule, with nobody to talk it through with.

‘I CONFIDED IN A FEW FRIENDS AND SOMEBODY ‘OUTED’ ME TO THE WHOLE SCHOOL.’ 17-18, HITCHIN

‘I SUPPORTED MY FRIEND TO TELL (COLLEGE) THAT HE WAS TRANS, HOWEVER ONE MUSIC TEACHER MADE REMARKS BEHIND THE PERSON’S BACK WHICH WAS HIGHLY UNCALLED FOR.’ 19-21, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

14 Leaflets and advice on coming out available from http://lgbt.foundation/information-advice/coming-out-support/
‘COMING OUT WAS AWKWARD, I TOLD ONE PERSON I THOUGHT I COULD TRUST WHO TOLD THEIR FRIENDS, WHO THEN TOLD EVERYBODY.’ 17-18, LITTLE CANFIELD

It is important for young people to keep in mind that coming out is not ‘confession time’; they have done nothing wrong and they have the same right to privacy as anyone else. WnW thinks that this message should be reinforced through all SRE and PSHE lessons and no one should be forced to share personal and/or intimate things about their sexual orientation or gender identity until they feel ready.

With the approval and acceptance of peer groups being so important to most young people, WnW is pleased that our survey reported some very positive examples of supportive friends.

‘I CAME OUT TO MY FRIENDS EASILY JUST AS I WAS COMING TO TERMS WITH MY SEXUALITY. THEY WERE ALL ENCOURAGING AND REALLY GREAT.’ 17-18, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

‘IT WAS ACTUALLY A FRIEND WHO SUGGESTED THAT I MAY BE ASEXUAL AFTER SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE TOPIC. I CAME OUT TO HER AND ANOTHER FRIEND AS PANROMANTIC AT A LATER DATE VERY INFORMALLY.’ 13-16, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

For others, understanding their sexual orientation and/or gender identity takes longer and whilst in the questioning stages they need the support of a friend or positive adult to confide in.

‘I HAVEN’T TOLD ANYONE THAT I’M QUESTIONING GENDER AS IT’S MORE OF A TABOO SUBJECT AND I’M STILL WORKING THINGS OUT.’ 17-18, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

Existing support offered by public services received a very mixed response from young people, with the service considered to offer the most supportive environment being sexual health services.
‘SEXUAL HEALTH CLINICS DON’T OFTEN TREAT ME DIFFERENTLY AND WERE ENTIRELY NON-JUDGMENTAL, BUT SOME REGULAR HEALTH SERVICES ARE OFTEN PRESUMPTUOUS ABOUT SEXUALITY, ALTHOUGH NONE ARE JUDGMENTAL ONCE THEY DO FIND OUT.’ 19-21, HATFIELD

As for talking to teachers, youth workers or doctors, the WnW survey reinforced the personal experiences of WnW group members, particularly for those questioning their gender identity, which is that it is hard to find professional one-to-one support in Hertfordshire to talk through your feelings and discuss different ways to come out. Only one person said they had talked to a Youth Connexions worker, whilst the others said they contacted national organisations, mainly online including the Tavistock Centre in London and Stonewall.

‘THERE NEEDS TO BE A CO-PRODUCTION MODEL IN PLACE WITH A HOLISTIC APPROACH USED ACROSS ALL SERVICES, WITH ALL SERVICES HAVING ACCESS TO THE RIGHT AND RELEVANT INFORMATION - KNOWING WHERE TO SIGNPOST.’ 19-21, HATFIELD

‘THERE SHOULD BE MORE SUPPORT FROM ‘OFFICIAL’ AREAS. FOR EXAMPLE SOCIAL WORKERS COULD DO MORE TO FACTOR IN GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUALITY.’ 13-16, ST ALBANS

‘ALTHOUGH MOST SERVICES ARE LGBT FRIENDLY I’VE NEVER FELT COMFORTABLE ENOUGH TO TALK ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES AS A WHOLE OR EVEN TO MENTION THEM.’ 22-25, BISHOP’S STORTFORD
Ultimately there is no right or wrong way to come out, individuals should do it the way they want to and the way they feel comfortable, but this period of questioning and self-discovery can be the time when young people really need easy access to informed adults and professionals to talk to, where they can share feelings and talk about everything without feeling judged. In our survey, over 95% of respondents said they would like more support, but it is not always easy to find, with some young people reporting that their feelings were dismissed when they tried to talk to people in authority.

‘SOME PEOPLE WHO ARE CLOSE TO ME FIND IT NORMAL, WHEREAS MY DOCTORS AND TEACHERS TEND TO BE DISMISSIVE.’ 22-25, HATFIELD

‘IT IS EASY TO FEEL ISOLATED IN A SEA OF HETEROSEXUALITY, MAKING SELF-ACCEPTANCE MORE DIFFICULT.’ 17-18, BISHOP’S STORTFORD
IF OTHER, PLEASE STATE.

- Online Counselling (Similar to Childline set-up but for the young LGBT+ community)
- Visits into schools and youth groups to educate about LGBT rights and LGBT people.

60% [32] of young people think that specific barriers related to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity prevent them from accessing public services, despite all public services having an equal opportunity policy that states that their service is open to all. Much of this is reportedly due to a general distrust of the reception they will receive, for example fears of being judged or assumptions being made by staff, often reinforced by the fact that there are no LGBT+ friendly posters or information on display.
Added to that many respondents say they worry that people will ‘know’ or ‘find out’, and that they will be put into a position where they either have to openly disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity, whether they are comfortable or not doing so, or lie. WnW believes that this can be unintentional and due in part to workers’ lack of knowledge or experience of talking to LGBT+ people.

For example, giving out forms or asking questions about gender identity in the first few minutes of meeting, or in school, PSHE lessons involving all pupils in the same condom demonstration without explaining first what type of sex the condom is made for. Finally, the use of pronouns ‘he’ and ‘she’ without taking into account different gender identifications. All of this contributes to some young people feeling that professionals are unapproachable.

‘WHEN I’VE VISITED DOCTORS THEY’VE ALWAYS ASSUMED I’M STRAIGHT AND ASKED ABOUT BOYFRIENDS SO I HAVEN’T FELT COMFORTABLE TO MENTION RELATIONSHIPS WITH GIRLS.’ 17 – 18, HITCHIN

Young people also told us how negative feedback from friends who have used a service further reduces the likelihood of others accessing it. For example, one young person told us about a friend who had warned others about the trouble encountered getting an STI check where they felt ‘spoken to in a derogatory fashion,’ which they believed was solely due to their sexual orientation. This person left the service feeling humiliated, angry and disrespected at a time when they naturally felt vulnerable and needed extra support. Hearing about it puts up further barriers for young people who are already feeling nervous or uncomfortable about approaching services for help or support.

‘I DON’T FEEL THAT THERE IS ENOUGH SPECIFIC, ACCURATE, RECENT INFORMATION WITHIN THESE SETTINGS, I DON’T FEEL THAT THEY ARE EQUIPPED WITH THE INFORMATION OR KNOWLEDGE OF HOW TO SPEAK TO LGBT+ COMMUNITIES SO OFTEN THEY DON’T BOTHER OR EVEN CONSIDER THAT IT MIGHT NEED TO BE DONE.’ 19 – 21, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

EDUCATION

Since 2012, all schools in the UK must take account of the needs of LGBT+ pupils’ (Ofsted can ask to see evidence of this in their inspections), which should mean higher levels of pastoral help and support and big changes to how sex and relationships education (SRE) is taught to make it more inclusive and relevant to all. However, many young people believe that there is still not enough equality in the SRE taught in schools and teaching materials, e.g. films, worksheets and discussion scenarios still promote male / female relationships to the exclusion of all else. Things like same sex parenting is not discussed with equal value too, which can leave young people feeling left out or just bored as the SRE doesn’t seem to relate to them.

One big gap identified by WnW is the lack of education about transgender issues, including the challenging of misinformation about gender reassignment and preparing other young people to communicate effectively with respect to someone undergoing this process, or choosing to live as something other than ’cisgender’, (cisgender is a term for someone who has a gender identity that aligns with that which they were assigned at birth.)
Young people’s personal experiences in schools, colleges and universities vary too with some excellent examples of supportive projects, groups and campaigns and very negative experiences being shared too.

‘WE HAVE A ZERO TOLERANCE BULLYING POLICY, SUPPORTIVE TEACHERS, STONEWALL COORDINATOR AND MORE.’ 13-16, WATFORD

‘WE HAD AN EXCELLENT SERIES OF INITIATIVES PIONEERED BY OUR HEAD GIRL TO SPREAD AWARENESS FOR BOTH LGBT ISSUES AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, HOWEVER, HAVING LEFT SCHOOL IT IS CLEAR EVEN TO ME THAT THE TEACHERS WILL NOT PERSEVERE WITH THIS.’ 17-18, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

‘MY UNIVERSITY HAS ITS OWN LGBT+ SOCIETY OPEN TO ALL INCLUDING STRAIGHT ALLIES. IN MY SIXTH FORM AND SECONDARY SCHOOL IF THERE WAS AN LGBT+ GROUP I WAS UNAWARE OF THEM NOR ABOUT THE SUPPORT ONE MAY HAVE IN RESPONSE TO BULLYING OVER GENDER IDENTITY OR SEXUALITY.’ 19-21, HATFIELD

‘MY SCHOOL IS STILL OVERWHELMINGLY HETERONORMATIVE AND CISNORMATIVE AND ALTHOUGH LGBGTQIAP ISSUES ARE BRIEFLY MENTIONED IN PSHE, IT IS NEVER CONSIDERED THAT PEOPLE IN THE CLASS MAY ACTUALLY IDENTIFY WITH IT.’ 13-16, HATFIELD

Some young people are particularly worried about homophobic bullying, which they believe is likely to go unchallenged or unpunished in school. In their opinion this is largely due to the fact that teachers do not know how to 'handle it' when problems arise:

‘THE SCHOOL PREFERRED TO HIDE ME RATHER THAN TACKLE THE PROBLEM DIRECTLY.’ 22-25, ST ALBANS

‘I WAS TOLD TO TAKE THE UPPER HAND AND BE MATURE ABOUT THE SITUATION WHICH RESULTED IN THE BULLYING GETTING WORSE. THIS ADVICE CAME FROM A TEACHER IN
SECONDARY SCHOOL WHEN I WAS JUST STARTING TO COME OUT AS BISEXUAL AND IT MADE THE COMING OUT STAGE AT THE AGE OF 14 A LOT HARDER AND MORE CONFUSING.’ 19-21, WELWYN

Not knowing what is available, nor who to talk to were both recurring themes, which is perhaps accountable for the survey figures showing that the majority of pupils and students think that their learning environment still doesn’t do enough to support LGBT+ young people. Those that reported that they have enough support tended to be those who have left compulsory education and are now at university, where clubs, societies and LGBT+ facilities seem to be well thought out and part of the mainstream fabric of student services available

Parents and other significant adults
Coming out to parents/carers in particular is a big issue for young people, even when they suspect one or both parents will be understanding and/or supportive. In the WnW survey, some young people confessed that even the thought of coming out to parents and carers makes them feel stressed and anxious, as they worry about their reactions and fear rejection and/or family conflict.

‘LOTS OF PEOPLE COME OUT AS BI FIRST, LIKE THAT IS MORE SOCIA LLY ACCEPTABLE, AND THEN A COUPLE OF YEARS LATER THEY SAY, ‘YEAH, WELL I WAS GAY ALL ALONG. TELLING PEOPLE YOU ARE BISEXUAL IS LIKE THE FIRST STEP TO TEST OUT PEOPLE’S REACTIONS.’ 13-16, ST ALBANS
‘I HAVEN’T TOLD MY PARENTS YET, NOT BECAUSE THEY WILL KICK ME OUT OR ANYTHING, THEY’RE VERY LOVING AND TRY TO BE UNDERSTANDING, BUT I THINK IT WILL BE AN AWKWARD CONVERSATION AND THEY MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND.’ 13-16, POTTERS BAR

MY FRIENDS WERE REALLY SUPPORTIVE BUT I STILL CAN’T TALK OPENLY ABOUT MY ORIENTATION BECAUSE I’M AFRAID MY MOTHER WON’T ACCEPT IT.’ 19-21, HATFIELD

‘(MY PARENTS) DON’T AGREE WITH GAY PEOPLE SAYING THEY ARE ALWAYS ‘PUSHED IN THEIR FACES’ BY TV PROGRAMMES.’ 22-25, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

Just as all families are different, each parent or carer’s response is different; for some it is a complete shock, for others it is only confirmation of what they already thought.

‘MY MUM AND HER PARTNER WERE ALREADY AWARE AS THEY ARE NOT IN A STRAIGHT RELATIONSHIP. MY FRIENDS KNEW TOO AS I’VE ALWAYS BEEN OPEN WITH THEM ABOUT MY SEXUALITY. I CAME OUT TO MY DAD, BROTHER AND SISTER BY TEXT AND MY MUM TOLD HER BROTHER WHO TOLD MY AUNT, NAN AND GRANDDAD. MY BROTHER DIDN’T SAY MUCH BUT MAKES THE ODD JOKE, MY DAD REPLIED XX AND MY SISTER CALLED ME.’ 19-21, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

Research findings suggest that for ‘openly gay kids, having a good relationship with parents is good for their mental health and self-esteem and may inoculate them from suicidal feelings, substance abuse and risky sex.’ From our survey, it seems apparent that some family members do offer their support and that little gestures, including encouraging texts, can help reassure young people that they are loved and cared for, even when coming out has been a surprise or where parents need time to get used to the news.

‘MY FAMILY WAS VERY SUPPORTIVE AND DIDN’T ACTUALLY TREAT ME DIFFERENTLY.’ 11-12, BROXBOURNE

https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/gay-and-lesbian-well-being/201103/should-you-come-out-your-parents
‘MY UNCLE TOOK IT THE BEST; HE TOLD ME HE WAS PROUD OF ME.’ 19-21, HATFIELD

‘I CASUALLY SLIPPED IT INTO CONVERSATION. MY SISTER WAS VERY SUPPORTIVE.’ 13-16, LETCHWORTH

Despite these encouraging comments, other young people say telling those closest to them sparked angry and hurtful reactions, which they worry has damaged relationships forever. This was attributed in some part to parents being worried that their child will ‘miss out’ on some things in life, despite equality laws that ensure LGBT+ people are not discriminated against in employment, housing or education. Within relationships, there is a standard age of sexual consent for all and LGBT+ people have the right to get married and have, foster or adopt children in the same way heterosexual people can. As one young person said of their experience:

“(MY) PARENTS NEED TO BE TOLD THAT SOCIETY DOESN’T FROWN ON NON-HETEROSEXUALS LIKE IT DID WHEN THEY WERE GROWING UP.” 13-16, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

Other parents’ bias is based on culture, faith and religion, which is arguably the hardest challenge to reconcile if the divide is too great.

‘TELLING MY MUM WAS AWKWARD, MY DAD WAS FINE WITH IT BUT DESPITE MY MOTHER HAVING GAY FRIENDS SHE LOOKED AT ME DISAPPROVINGLY WHEN I TOLD HER, PROBABLY BECAUSE OF THE CHRISTIAN BACKGROUND SHE COMES FROM. THAT BEING SAID I’M A CHRISTIAN AND (OBVIOUSLY) I SUPPORT LGBT+ RIGHTS FULLY.’ 17-18, LITTLE CANFIELD

‘EDUCATING PEOPLE ABOUT LGBT ISSUES IS ALWAYS A GOOD THING, HOWEVER, DEPENDING ON SOMEONE’S OWN PERSONAL / RELIGIOUS BELIEFS THERE MAY BE A LIMITED AMOUNT OF INFORMATION THEY WANT TO HEAR OR ACCEPT.’ 22-25, HITCHIN

This narrow view is not necessarily reflected within Hertfordshire faith schools, and one in particular has been praised through this survey for offering excellent support and promoting equality for all.
‘I GO TO A CATHOLIC SCHOOL BUT THE RS DEPARTMENT ARE EXTREMELY LIBERAL AND IT WAS THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT WHO HAS BEEN THE MOST SUPPORTIVE TO ME WITH ADVICE AND ACCESS TO COUNSELING IF I NEED IT AT ANY TIME.’ 13-16, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

Some difficulties can be ascribed to not understanding what their son or daughter is talking about, or having preconceived ideas about what gay or transsexual people do or don’t do. For example, people of any age may be transgender, transsexual or transvestite but this does not necessarily mean they are LGB+. For some parents and carers their only experience of LGBT+ life is from watching reality TV shows or characters in soap operas, which are not always honest reflections of any community. Even whilst knowing that TV is not real life it can be easy to make assumptions based on these storylines, which in turn can perpetuate some stereotypes.

‘MY EXPERIENCE OF COMING OUT WAS NOT GOOD. DISOWNED BY FAMILY. HAD TO RUN AWAY TO BE ACCEPTED.’ 17-18, ST ALBANS

‘(COMING OUT) TO MY PARENTS WAS VERY TOUGH, NOT A NICE EXPERIENCE AT ALL, WITH RELATIONSHIPS BEING A LITTLE ICY AROUND THE EDGES AS A RESULT.’ 13-16, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

When it comes to telling grandparents and people of the ‘older generation’ in general young people report more concerns and negative reactions than with their parents/carers and peers. Comments made demonstrate that young people believe that these family members, who are emotionally important to them, often hold views that could be considered homophobic or transphobic, as well as applying traditional stereotypes when voicing their concerns. Examples given include fears that grandparents will feel let down, ashamed or ‘disown’ their grandchild which conflict with feelings of love and wanting to make them proud.

‘I HAVEN’T COME OUT TO MY GRANDPARENTS. THIS IS FOLLOWING ADVICE FROM MY PARENTS THAT THEY WILL PROBABLY DISOWN ME IF THEY KNEW.’ 19-21, HATFIELD
ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The WnW questionnaire asked young people if they think that there should be more support for family and friends to help them understand the difficulties and emotions triggered by coming out. The answer was actually very surprising, with as many people saying that it depends what’s being offered as votes for ‘yes’. The qualifying explanations for this make interesting reading, but the main point is that not one person surveyed disagreed with the basic premise of offering parental support.

‘PARENTS CAN FIND IT COMFORTING TO MEET OTHER PARENTS OF LGBT IDENTIFYING YOUNG PEOPLE.’ 19-21, HATFIELD

‘I THINK THAT PARTICULARLY CLOSED-MINDED PARENTS / CARERS SHOULD BE SENT INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE PART OF THE LGBT SPECTRUM, THAT IT’S COMPLETELY NORMAL AND THAT IT’S OK.’ 19-21, HATFIELD

‘IF (PARENTS) ARE ACCEPTING BUT NOT CLEAR ON HOW TO REFER TO THEIR CHILD THEN MAYBE A BOOKLET ON WHAT GAY LIFE IS LIKE [THE SAME AS STRAIGHT BUT JUST LIKING THE SAME GENDER] AND PRONOUNS PEOPLE MAY PREFER.’ 17-18, LITTLE CANFIELD

CHANGES WE WANT TO SEE

One of the main changes we want to see is the way that children and young people are taught about different sexual orientations and gender identities from pre-school onwards. We believe that improving this would raise awareness and help children grow up to understand that there is a wide spectrum of sexual orientation, and all are normal. This includes educating about relationships, civil partnerships, marriage and parenting, as well as later on about sex and relationships in mainstream SRE.

We would also like to see more support available in all schools, from primary school onwards, based on some of the good practice highlighted in our survey. This would mean that pupils grow up feeling ‘normal’ and comfortable talking to each other, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. This in turn should reduce incidents of things like homophobic bullying.

‘SCHOOL IS VERY SUPPORTIVE OF LGBTQ* RIGHTS AND NOT TOLERANT AT ALL OF HOMOPHOBIC REMARKS/BULLYING ETC. VERY EASY TO SPEAK TO A TEACHER IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLES. HAVE AN LGBTQ* CLUB.’ 17-18, LITTLE CANFIELD
'OUR SCHOOL IS A STONEWALL CHAMPION AND HAS A MEMBER OF STAFF WHO PIONEERS A SUPPORT GROUP WITHIN THE SCHOOL; INCREASED TRAINING ON DEALING WITH LGBT+ MATTERS HAS ALSO BEEN IMPLEMENTED.' 17-18, HARLOW

There are currently ten schools throughout Hertfordshire that are Stonewall Education Champions\(^\text{16}\): Berkhamsted Collegiate School in Dacorum: Hertfordshire & Essex High School and Simon Balle School in East Herts: Hitchin Boys School in North Herts: Knightsfield School and Monk’s Walk School in Welwyn Hatfield, Sandringham School, Sir John Lawes School, St Alban’s High School for Girls and Townsend C of E School, all in St Albans District.

WnW are pleased to see that these schools are taking a proactive stance around homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in their schools, and believe that all schools should be signed up to the programme. In line with this, WnW believe there should be an LGBT+ group in each school, supported by a designated teacher who is trained to offer information, advice and support effectively. From here, older year pupils could be trained as LGBT+ Health Champions, so that lower year pupils experiencing problems or questioning their own sexual orientation, etc can easily access peer support.

SRE and PSHE in schools should be more inclusive so that both heterosexual and LGBT+ relationships are looked at with equal value. Lessons should also offer support with things like self-esteem and confidence. Additionally, we suggest that there are posters, stories and LGBT+ history displayed along with heterosexual ones to promote positive roles models and to inspire LGBT+ young people to see what they can achieve.

‘I FEEL THAT MORE EXPOSURE TO ‘EVERYDAY’ LGBT+ PEOPLE WOULD HELP ACT AS ROLE MODELS FOR LGBT+ YOUNG PEOPLE WHO STRUGGLE WITH ESTEEM OR UNDERSTANDING THEIR SEXUALITY. SEEING LGBT PEOPLE LIVING ‘NORMAL’ LIVES FROM DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE (SCIENTIFIC, HUMANITIES ETC) WOULD POSITIVELY ENCOURAGE THEM.’ 17-18, HARLOW

Universities seem to offer wider support and elements of this could be shared with local colleges to improve the support they give LGBT+ students. The main criticism of LGBT+ groups and other support in FE and HE is that they need to be more widely promoted so that all students know what is available and when. This could be included in the prospectus for the campus as well as during things like induction and Fresher’s Week.

\(^{16}\) [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/get-involved/education/secondary-schools](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/get-involved/education/secondary-schools)
‘AT OUR UNIVERSITY WE HAVE AN EXCELLENT LGBT+ SOCIETY. MEETINGS ARE HELD ONCE A WEEK AND WE DO ALL SORTS FROM WATCHING FILMS TO GOING OUT TO THE LOCAL BAR. IT’S A GREAT PLACE TO MEET PEOPLE IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS AND WITH SIMILAR PERSPECTIVES EVERYONE IS FRIENDLY AND RESPECTFUL REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU’RE EXPLORING YOUR SEXUALITY/GENDER, OUT AND PROUD OR JUST A SUPPORTER.’ 19-21, HATFIELD

Outside of school, we would like to see local LGBT+ groups in every district of Hertfordshire, where young people can meet regularly with peers and have access to youth workers who have been trained in LGBT+ issues. These should be widely and openly promoted and provide opportunities to meet and socialise with other LGBT+ young people, as well as offer opportunities to get involved in things like community projects, volunteering, wider learning opportunities and accredited courses to help support young people into further education, employment and training. As young people told us: in most LGBT+ help/social environments the main focus is always on sex, which is useful, however it should be expanded to other areas. In short, learning about LGBT+ lifestyle issues is equally important to learning about safe sex and STI’s.

Each family is unique but some parents, carers and wider family find it hard to come to terms with their child’s sexual orientation or gender identity. To help reduce tensions at home and so increase the support young people can draw on, WnW would like Hertfordshire County Council to offer positive information and guidance, specifically aimed at answering any questions they might have and provide a family forum to help them feel less alone and realise that their child is a member of a huge non-heterosexual sector of the population. This could include things like having a list of phone numbers, such as one for PFLAG UK (Parents and friends of Lesbians And Gays[17]) where parents can phone for anonymous advice and support.

‘FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHO HAVE QUESTIONS BUT DON’T WANT TO BE INTRUSIVE AND WANT TO BE AS SUPPORTIVE AS POSSIBLE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ATTEND SESSIONS TO AID THOSE WHO HAVE COME OUT TO THEM.’ 13-16, BISHOP’S STORTFORD

An organised group, whether offered through regular meetings or online, should provide an opportunity for sharing experiences and gaining support. It should be as inclusive as possible and not linked to any religious group. As one young person put it, ‘If support means counselling on how their child is going to hell and how to ‘convert’ them back to heterosexuality (then we) obviously don’t want it!\textbf{With these changes in place we believe that LGBT+ young people in Hertfordshire can feel supported in all areas of their lives, from formal education to their social and home life, which can only benefit their acceptance and understanding of who they are whilst increasing their confidence, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing.}\n
\textbf{IN SHORT}\n
\begin{itemize}
\item Provide more dedicated one-to-one support for young people coming out and those questioning or making decisions about gender identity.
\item Expand the ‘Who not What’ project (or similar) so that there is a support group in each district of Hertfordshire. These can represent the concerns, successes and issues of members before feeding into wider campaigns, including local initiatives like Herts1125 and Herts Pride, and national events and initiatives led by Stonewall, Educate & Celebrate and other national organisations.
\item Buy-in specialist training for sexual health providers, health workers and SRE teachers so they can better support LGBT+ young people as they make choices about relationships and the type of sex they choose to have. This includes promoting abstinence or being asexual as a normal choice and ensuring that assumptions are not made about young people participating in the C-Card scheme or in Sexual Health and Family Planning Clinics.
\item Provide specialist training for designated Youth Connexions professionals and a manager to develop an LGBT+ youth project in each district. This project would be in a safe place where young people can meet up to provide mutual support and develop friendships, as well as have opportunities to learn life and social skills, and engage in community projects. These projects would include sexual health information and be a part of the C-Card Scheme, but this would not be the sole purpose of the group as opportunities for young people to become Health Champions and participate in various projects including NCS and the Duke of Edinburgh Award, would also be available.
\item Widely promote through schools and other services for young people these newly created Youth Connexions LGBT+ projects so that young people get to hear, or are signposted to, the provision and the opportunities available to them.
\item Make schools and other professionals supporting young people aware of local health services, e.g. counselling, sexual health as well as extra-curricular opportunities appropriate for young LGBT+ and then signpost or refer those who might benefit.
\end{itemize}
• Open access support group meetings, or online support, for parents, carers, grandparents, siblings and wider family that provide information about LGBT+ issues and how best to support a family member coming out.

• Hertfordshire colleges and the University to expand on what they offer and then promote it so that all students are aware of what is available to them.

• Widely promote campaign groups like Stonewall and ensure that positive images of LGBT+ people, both in everyday life and those who have made an outstanding contribution, e.g. in sports, politics or the performing arts, to inspire and motivate young people to achieve.
YOUNG CARERS IN HERTFORDSHIRE
Young carers are defined nationally as children or young people who ‘help look after a member of the family who is sick, disabled or has mental health problems, or is misusing drugs or alcohol’1. Although this is useful as a broad ‘catch all’ term to describe young people with caring responsibilities, it is important to remember that first and foremost they are individuals with their own challenges and aspirations. They have the same rights as any other young person in the UK, e.g. the right to an education, to have their voice heard and to be safe, even though their particular circumstances may mean that they are in need of additional support outside of the home in order to exercise them.

The 2011 census identified 178,000 young carers in England and Wales but it is widely accepted that this number is likely to be much larger as many young carers go unnoticed and so miss out on support that could be available to them2. In Hertfordshire, Carers in Hertfordshire estimate that there are at least 8000 young people with caring responsibilities3. Just to put this into context, this is roughly 10% of pupils attending state funded secondary schools in the county, based on information collected by the Department of Education in January 2015 for the school census4.

This year, for the first time, young carers have taken part in the Herts1125 Manifesto and used their collective voice to share the issues and concerns that affect them daily. The Young Carers Council and members of Young Carers Support Groups identified two major priorities for 2015/16 to consult with their peers on, which are:

1. Identifying young carers in school
2. Local young carer support groups

Teachers from a small selection of schools5 within Hertfordshire that support young carers also completed a short survey to share good practice and offer any ideas they have for additional support.

From here, the Young Carers Council has reviewed all the feedback from the 71 young carers who participated in the survey, the teachers’ questionnaire and comments made by young carers during council meetings held during summer 2015 and made recommendations about things that Hertfordshire County Council and commissioned services can do to raise awareness, improve the support young carers receive and increase opportunities for education and employment.

1 [http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/young_carers.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/young_carers.htm)
2 Hidden From View (The Children’s Society, 2013)
3 [http://www.carersinherts.org.uk/home/contact-us/media-and-key-facts](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk/home/contact-us/media-and-key-facts) based on the BBC survey in 2010
PRIORITY ONE

IDENTIFYING YOUNG CARERS: HOW THIS CAN BE DONE CONSIDERATELY, AND THE NEED FOR YOUNG CARERS TO ACCESS SUPPORT AND INFORMATION IN SCHOOLS.

THE ISSUES

According to Barnardos, the average age of a young carer in the UK is 12. This was supported by our local statistics with 86% of respondents aged 11-18, 11% aged 8-10 and a small minority of younger contributors (3%) under the age of 8. Of the 71 young people who completed the survey the majority are young women (62%, 44), 37% (26) are young men and the final 1% (1) prefer not to be defined by gender.

As well as asking how old respondents were at the time of the survey (July 2015), we also asked at what age they actually began caring. This revealed that only 8 out of 71 (11%) respondents were aged 12 or over, meaning that although the national average age of a carer is 12, in Hertfordshire there are much younger children taking on responsibilities, in some cases long before they know what the term means.

‘I CAN’T REMEMBER A TIME WHEN I WASN’T A CARER.’
FEMALE, 18, WEST HERTS
‘I DIDN’T REALISE IT WASN’T NORMAL. IT ISN’T UNTIL YOU START GOING TO OTHER PEOPLE’S HOUSES THAT YOU SEE HOW DIFFERENT IT IS FOR THEM.’ FEMALE, 18, THREE RIVERS

Most young carers look after one of their parents or care for a brother or sister but some young people in Hertfordshire care for multiple members of their family, including those from different generations. However the actual amount of care, support or physical lifting varies greatly as the levels of support required often ‘changes from day to day’, making it difficult to define an ‘average day’. Some young people believe that this creates a ‘two-tier’ response from teachers, friends and professionals, dependent on the relationship you have to the person you are caring for and the level of disability the person has, for example caring for a wheelchair user rather than someone with a learning disability, a parent rather than a grandparent. This can result in being treated differently, even though the actual hours spent caring and the levels of responsibility involved might be the same.

‘MY SCHOOL HAS THE IDEA THAT YOU HAVE TO BE LOOKING AFTER SOMEONE IN A WHEELCHAIR TO BE COUNTED AS A YOUNG CARER.’ MALE, 15, WELWYN & HATFIELD

‘MY TEACHER CALLS ME A ‘CARING BROTHER’ RATHER THAN A ‘YOUNG CARER’ AS MY BROTHER HAS A MENTAL DISABILITY.’ YOUNG CARER, YOUNG CARERS’ COUNCIL

‘MY TEACHER THINKS THAT TO BE A YOUNG CARER YOU HAVE TO CARE FOR A PARENT, NOT A SIBLING.’ YOUNG CARER, YOUNG CARERS’ COUNCIL

Unsurprisingly, as most of the young people who took part in this survey have links to Carers in Hertfordshire or attend young carer groups, many of the positive comments about the value of being recognised as a young carer relate to either the Young Carers Council or support groups. As well as enjoying feeling ‘a part of something’ and ‘getting days away’ from the stresses of home life, many young people say that they like being with other young carers, whose experiences are similar and where they don’t have to explain how they feel, and what it is like to care for someone else.

‘(IT’S AN) OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE TIME TO MYSELF.’ FEMALE, 16-18, LUTON

‘KNOWING THERE ARE OTHERS IN THE SAME SITUATION.’ MALE, 16-18, ST ALBANS

The majority of the 71 young people surveyed (87%: 60) said that they are happy to tell others, including friends and other peers, about their caring role, although of this group 51% (35) say they have some reservations about it being made common knowledge. This is mainly to do with not wanting to be perceived as different from their peers and fears about being seen as an outsider.
'IT MEANS THAT I WOULD HAVE TO EXPLAIN WHAT I DO AND WHY I DO IT IN DETAIL AND THAT IS SOMETIMES HARD FOR ME.' FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

The final 13% [9] are young people to whom the term ‘young carer’ can be applied but who do not want to reveal their role. This reinforces the suggestion by Carers in Hertfordshire that there could be hundreds more ‘hidden’ young carers in Hertfordshire schools who are not identified and possibly not accessing the support on offer.

The reality for those consulted is that even when people do know, being a young carer has a huge impact on all aspects of their life, whoever it is they care for. This is more than the physical aspect of moving around equipment, lifting and handling or simply being there whenever needed, but also the emotional strain, worry and anxiety that comes with caring for someone you love.

‘PEOPLE THINK I’M JUST LIKE THEM BUT THEY DON’T KNOW MY LIFE AT HOME.’ YOUNG CARER, YOUNG CARERS’ COUNCIL

‘PEOPLE SOMETIMES JUST THINK IT’S LIKE A BABYSITTING ROLE AND SAY ‘OH, I DO THAT – DOES THAT MEAN I’M A YOUNG CARER TOO?’ FEMALE, 17, EAST HERTS

As one young person described it, being a carer for her mother means that she ‘has to be her second body,’ and even when not physically present she is ‘always there in your mind, the physical, emotional and mental caring you do is 24/7’. This can result in young people feeling stressed and anxious, whilst feeling misunderstood by the people around them.

‘I THINK EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS THAT YOU HAVE A DISABLED BROTHER, BUT A LOT OF PEOPLE DON’T UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS.’ MALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS
We asked if schools should know about young carers who attend their school and 88% (61 out of 69) who responded said, ‘yes’, with only a small but adamant proportion of young people saying they definitely do not want their school to know.

‘[SCHOOLS SHOULD KNOW] BECAUSE SOME CARERS COULD BE UNDER A LOT OF STRESS. THIS COULD MAKE THEIR GRADES DROP OR ATTITUDE BECOME POOR AND TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW THAT IT ISN’T THE PUPIL’S FAULT.’ FEMALE, 11-13, BROXBOURNE

‘SOME YOUNG CARERS ARE IN BAD POSITIONS AND ARE STRUGGLING. AND KNOWING THAT THEY CAN TALK TO SOMEONE AND FIND SUPPORT IS A GREAT HELP’ FEMALE, 14-15, HATFIELD

57% (4) of the teachers who completed the companion survey for this priority reported a small increase over the last two years of people coming forward to self-identify as young carers, which hopefully means that barriers are being broken down and young people are feeling more confident about receiving support. However, the top reasons given for not identifying as a young carer were fear of being treated differently by peers and / or members of staff at school and embarrassment.

7 57% of 7 teachers who completed the young carers teacher survey in July 2015
'I DIDN’T TELL PEOPLE AS YOU GET BULLIED AT SCHOOL FOR BEING A YOUNG CARER. I DIDN’T WANT PEOPLE TO THINK I’M WEIRD OR A FREAK.’ MALE, 15, NORTH HERTS

‘NOT EVERYONE IS NICE AND NOT ALL YOUNG CARERS WANT TO BE KNOWN ABOUT.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

‘I DON’T MIND PEOPLE KNOWING, JUST THE FACT THAT I MIGHT BE TREATED DIFFERENTLY THAN OTHER PEOPLE IN MY CLASS.’ FEMALE, 14-15, HATFIELD

To access additional pastoral support and opportunities like young carers support groups through school, young people need to self identify. There are divided opinions about how young carers feel recognition should take place and the existing practice in schools appears to vary. A questionnaire to be completed in school is the most popular suggestion in this survey, gaining 46% (39) of the vote. Members of the Young Carers Council told us that some schools already do this once during a Year 7 assembly, which was further evidenced by comments made in the teachers’ survey: ‘I have done an assembly for Year 7 and identified young carers via a follow-up questionnaire.’ The only issue highlighted here, and not made clear from the teachers’ survey, is that to their knowledge this is never followed up over later school years when situations can and do change.

‘IF A SITUATION CHANGES, LIKE AN ACCIDENT OR SOMETHING, HOW WILL THE SCHOOL KNOW?’ MALE, 15, NORTH HERTS

Another very good point made was that whilst some school surveys are anonymous, presumably to encourage pupils to be open and honest, the reality is that once all of the surveys are collected in there can be no way of knowing which young people ticked ‘yes’ to questions asking if more support or immediate help is required. This appears to be a major flaw in the recognition process, which young carers would like to see resolved.
The next most popular idea for how to find out who the young carers are in a school (35%: 30) is for young people to self-report using a confidential email address on the school website. This would inform the relevant teachers but keep information on a need-to-know basis, thus satisfying some of the worries expressed about ‘everyone’ finding out.

In addition to ticking the box for the question above, some young people took the opportunity to make positive comments about the additional support they have been offered / given once teachers know.
‘[SANDRINGHAM SCHOOL] IS EXCELLENT AT DEALING WITH YOUNG CARERS! :’ FEMALE, 14-15, ST ALBANS

As well as feedback from young people on this topic we asked teaching staff to tell us about some of the good practice they have in their school:

‘TOGETHER WITH ANOTHER SCHOOL WE HAVE YC LUNCHES ONCE A MONTH WITH TREATS, PICNICS, OUTING INCLUDED AND THANK THEM FOR THE CARE THEY GIVE.’ SCHOOL SURVEY COMMENT

![Bar chart showing responses to Do you think caring can have an impact on your academic achievement?

The majority of young carers (49%: 39) told us that their caring responsibilities have ‘some negative impact on their studies’ and an understanding that the school environment can make a huge difference when things at home are tough. This is especially so if teachers know about the pressure young carers may be under at different times, as it enables them to effectively support them in their studies and homework.

‘SCHOOLS SHOULD KNOW BECAUSE WHEN MY MUM IS ILL AND I AM FEELING DOWN AND NOT MYSELF, THEY WILL KNOW WHY.’ MALE, 11-13, HERTSMERE

‘YOU CAN BE OVERWHELMED AND STILL HAVE TO DO THE WORK EXPECTED OF YOU.’ FEMALE, 16-18, NORTH HERTS
At the other end of the scale, five young people said caring experiences have a large positive impact on their academic achievements, not just in terms of curriculum subjects but also in building things like patience and tolerance and improving concentration.

‘IF I GET NO SLEEP DUE TO BROTHER, MY WORK GOES DOWN. BUT IT HELPS ME TO UNDERSTAND SUBJECTS LIKE PSYCHOLOGY BETTER I THINK.’ 14-15, BROXBOURNE

Some of the Young Carers Council did express a fear of stigma being attached to being a carer for a relative and shared examples of previous bullying or unkind behaviour from their peers at school.

‘PEOPLE DO NOT UNDERSTAND AND ARE NOT COMPASSIONATE ABOUT THESE THINGS.’ FEMALE, 14-15, NORTH HERTS

Others admitted to being pressured by parents to keep family information hidden from outsiders. This last concern extended to fears about social care interventions that might result in children being ‘taken away’ from their homes and families if their caring commitments were reported by a teacher, even if there is another adult present within the home who shares this responsibility.
This disparity between being open about a caring role and not being happy to share information about home life was reflected in lots of the comments made. One young woman was adamant that she was not really a carer, "just doing what any family member would do for another" despite meeting all the criteria for membership of a young carers’ support group and attending the Young Carers Council meetings. Seemingly unhappy with what she sees as ‘people trying to take over’ she said she would prefer no one to know, which was echoed by others who talked about a fear of pity and the daily irritation of having to answer questions posed by peers and/or adults who understand nothing about their life.

Whilst accepting that other young people might not know a lot about the huge responsibilities and restrictions of being a young carer, we were surprised at the high number of young carers who said they believe that teachers and school staff are also not fully aware about the commitments of being a young carer.

‘MORE TEACHERS NEED TO BE INFORMED OF THE IMPACT THAT BEING A YOUNG CARER HAS.’ 14-15, BROXBOURNE

We asked young carers how they felt teachers and school staff could best be made aware of the responsibilities that face many of their students and the response was making use of the teacher training inset days whilst also hearing from Young Carers themselves about the reality of balancing home and school life.

![Bar chart showing responses to the question: What do you think would be the best way to educate teachers about young carers’ issues?](chart.png)

Comment made by participant at Young Carers Council meeting, Hemel Hempstead 12.08.15
Another key issue raised is the impact that one person’s additional needs can have on the whole family. Although many of the young people consulted are not the sole or primary carer as there are adult carers living at home, e.g. a parent or older sibling, they are still offering a level of emotional support and practical help around the house, e.g. shopping, cooking and cleaning that is much greater than the responsibilities of their peers. Several young people spoke about the fact that wherever they are and whatever they are doing they are ‘always worrying about what is happening at home.’

‘WHEN I GO TO A FRIEND’S HOUSE AND SEE WHAT LIFE IS LIKE FOR THEM IT IS LIKE ENTERING A DIFFERENT WORLD, ONE WHERE YOU ONLY HAVE TO DO THINGS FOR YOURSELF AND NOT ALWAYS COME LAST.’ MALE, 15, WELWYN & HATFIELD

This difference means that the opportunity to have friends to tea or to stay over is limited to times when respite is available and simple pleasures that most teenagers take for granted, e.g. going to parties, shopping or spontaneous treats, become difficult or impossible.

**CHANGES WE WANT TO SEE**

The majority of young people consulted think that schools should know which of their pupils are young carers. This should be confidential, to reassure young people that this information will not become common knowledge which could make them targets for bullies, but NOT anonymous. There should also be an opt out box for young carers who do not want any help and another for those who do not need any at the current time but may need additional support in the future.

‘THE SCHOOL SHOULD SUPPORT THE CARER AS THEY MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO COMPLETE THEIR WORK WHICH RESULTS IN GETTING IN TROUBLE.’ YOUNG CARER, YOUNG CARERS’ COUNCIL

Young carers believe that many of the difficulties they have in school are due to their peers’ lack of knowledge and understanding about what a young carer is and how it impacts on life both in and outside of school. This includes bullying and stereotyping, e.g. expecting all disabled people to be wheelchair users. They would like to see this challenged by an HCC countywide campaign to raise awareness through events, workshops and training similar to the national campaigns for mental health issues.
In addition to adult-led workshops, young carers would like opportunities to volunteer as Health Champions and be trained by Youth Connexions workers to co-facilitate these workshops and share some of their experiences. It is important to young carers that those who work with them have some training in the issues of young carers so that they are sensitive to their needs. Topics for workshops could include looking after a long-term sick sibling or parent, how to support a friend who is a carer, becoming a carer and coping with additional responsibilities at home.

They would also like specialist INSET training offered for those teachers that are directly supporting young people, either as a named worker or co-ordinating support in school. The teachers who took part in this survey agree with this suggestion, explaining that although their current knowledge is good they would like joint training held with teachers from other schools to share practice and to learn about specific topics during more focussed workshops, e.g. research into the impact caring has on learning.
IN SHORT

- Schools should conduct regular surveys that are confidential, not anonymous, to identify the young carers in the school before offering appropriate support, information and guidance.

- These surveys would provide Carers in Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) with more accurate data so that the true number of young carers in the county is known and appropriate support can be developed to reflect this.

- Young carers should have the option to refuse any support, where appropriate, but have the opportunity to easily opt-in if things change at home or they feel less able to cope alone later on.

- Because young carers provide care and/or emotional support to a family member (or guardian) they need additional emotional and practical support to access the same opportunities as their peers. This includes teachers trained in young carers’ issues who can support and empathise, without the whole school having to know.

- Any bullying of young carers should be treated with the same level of seriousness as other forms of bullying and discrimination in schools and inappropriate language by pupils should be challenged immediately.

- HCC should provide training and support for teachers so that they have a wider understanding of what it means to be a young carer and therefore be better equipped to support their students. This should be identified by a partnership of young carers, Carers in Hertfordshire and teachers, along with Youth Connexions workers, and then sourced from specialist trainers.
• Schools should promote positive images of people who have been young carers and gone on to achieve life goals to motivate and inspire current young carers and show other young people it can be done. This could also encourage those not yet recognised within school to come forward and self-identify, providing a gateway to the additional support they can access.

• There should be awareness raising days in schools, e.g. Carers Rights Day in November and Carers Week in June, and learning about young carers should be incorporated into the PSHE curriculum.
PRIORITY TWO

LOCAL YOUNG CARER SUPPORT GROUPS: WHAT IS THE NEED FOR LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS, WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO YOUNG CARERS AND WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE AVAILABLE.

THE ISSUES

One of the main issues for young carers is the impact their caring responsibilities at home have on their performance and attendance in school and later college / university. This is true for young people throughout their school career, resulting in them trying to balance practical jobs like cooking, cleaning and shopping with good attendance records, active learning and homework. One young man explained that he was basing his university choice on the one nearest to home rather than the one best for the course and career he wants.

This does not stop when the school day ends and many of those consulted shared concerns about their inability to do homework or meet deadlines for coursework.

‘SOMETIMES MY DAD (WHO I CARE FOR) ASKS ME TO DO THINGS FOR HIM AND THAT SOMETIMES Interrupts ME DOING HOMEWORK.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

‘I HAVE BEEN A CARER FOR NINE YEARS, FROM A CHILD TO NOW, AND IT’S PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL CARING 24/7. THEY COME FIRST, WHATEVER I’M DOING AT SCHOOL. IF I HAVE TO GO HOME, I GO.’ YOUNG CARER, YOUNG CARERS’ COUNCIL

‘IT MAKES ME FEEL I HAVE TO WORK HARDER TO MAKE MY MUM PROUD (IN A GOOD WAY) BUT I MISS DAYS OFF SCHOOL.’ MALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

Our survey asked young carers to tell us about where they feel most comfortable talking about their caring role and the people who supported them best. The majority of support was overwhelmingly accepted from close friends and family, which was the answer we had expected to hear.
However, we were surprised that support in youth clubs was rated very low so we took the opportunity to ask more about this during our meeting with the Young Carers Council.

‘SOCIAL LIFE? WHAT SOCIAL LIFE? I DON’T HAVE A SOCIAL LIFE!’ YOUNG CARER, YOUNG CARERS’ COUNCIL

Only one member of the Young Carers Council expressed concerns about joining a mainstream youth project:

‘I WOULDN’T GO TO A NORMAL YOUTH CLUB AS I WOULD BE AFRAID THAT WHEN PEOPLE FOUND OUT ABOUT ME THEY WOULD GIVE ME SYMPATHY – I REALLY DON’T WANT SYMPATHY.’

This attitude is concerning as this particular young person does attend a voluntary sector youth club for young carers in Hitchin and has high praise for it. We think that this should be a trigger for an awareness raising campaign specifically targeted at young carers to inform them about what’s on offer in their area and the support that youth workers can offer to complement young carers support groups. However, this also needs to go hand in hand with support to access these groups.

Comment made at Young Carers Council meeting, Ware 26.09.15
However, that aside, for young people to enjoy a similar social life to their peers, young carers told us that they need more practical financial help with things like entrance money and snacks from the tuck shop or vending machine. At the Young Carers Council meeting several young people told us that as their family is reliant on disability benefits, budgets at home are tight and there is not much cash available for non-essentials. They feel that not having money sets them apart from their non-caring peers, as well as the overwhelming priority need for someone to take over at home to relieve them of some of their caring duties to enable them to participate. This is particularly so for several of the young people who sit on the Young Carers Council who live alone or with a young sibling and the adult they care for.

The other major barrier to joining a local youth group or sports club is a lack of transport and inconvenient opening times.

‘IF YOU CAN’T GET A LIFT, YOU CAN’T GO.’ YOUNG CARER, YOUNG CARERS’ COUNCIL

Young people agree that it is the provision of free transport that enables them to participate in Carers in Hertfordshire events, and we were told that this is also offered by the charity that supports the young carers group in Hitchin.

![Bar graph showing responses to the question: Do you think other young people understand the responsibilities young carers have?](image)

When it comes to ongoing support, we were told that although family members try to help out, they do not always live locally, meaning that the support and practical help they can offer is extremely limited. Interestingly some young people said that the person who offers them the most emotional support is the person they care for.
‘MY MUM’S SISTER HELPS OUT WHEN SHE CAN, BUT SHE WORKS AND HAS KIDS OF HER OWN SO IT IS DIFFICULT FOR HER TO COME ROUND AND HELP US.’ MALE, 16-18, WELWYN HATFIELD

Equally, friends are frequently unable or unwilling to offer the support young carers need from them in school.

‘MY FRIENDS DON’T FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT WHAT’S HAPPENED. WHEN I TRY AND TALK ABOUT IT, THEY CHANGE THE SUBJECT.’ FEMALE, 14-15, NORTH HERTS

Alongside this, young people talked a lot about their caring role being ‘normal’ or simply something they have become accustomed to over time. This is especially true where levels of care have changed due to someone’s deteriorating health or after an accident, meaning that the fabric and pace of family life has expanded or shrunk to accommodate altering needs. This process could account for why some of the young people said that they do not want or need a support group.

‘(SUPPORT GROUPS) SOUND VERY HELPFUL BUT I PREFER NOT TO BE INVOLVED.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

Although our survey showed that many young carers feel that teachers have little understanding about what it means to be a young carer, a large majority still admitted to having spoken to a teacher or member of staff about their caring role at some point. Some teachers seem to have made an outstanding contribution and young people were keen that they have some recognition for this.

‘MY HEAD OF YEAR ALWAYS SAYS HER DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN IF I NEED TO TALK TO HER.’ FEMALE, 14-15, EAST HERTS
Not all experiences were positive though with some young people saying they feel that teachers do not know enough about caring issues, or have a close enough relationship to understand their caring role, to be truly helpful.

‘WE WERE GIVEN SOMEONE TO TALK TO IN SIXTH FORM ONE-TO-ONE BUT I NEVER KNEW THEM CLOSE ENOUGH TO TELL ANYTHING COMPLETELY PERSONAL THAT WOULD SOMETIMES WORRY ME.’ FEMALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

This question also produced some extreme responses with high praise for the support offered in some school and indignation and anger about experiences in others.
'MY TEACHER OFFERED ME) TO SPEAK TO HER WHENEVER I WANTED TO. PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING, TO TALK TO MY PARENTS, ADVICE ON HOW TO SLEEP.' FEMALE, 14-15, EAST HERTS

‘WHEN THINGS AREN’T GOING VERY WELL AT SCHOOL THERE IS NO ONE TO TELL. YOU TRY AND TELL THEM AND THEY GET CROSS AND BLAME ME. EVEN WHEN PROFESSIONALS TELL THEM THEY’RE SCREWING IT UP THEY JUST GET ANGRY AND TWIST WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON. THEY DON’T LISTEN TO MY MUM EITHER. I WOULD LIKE SOMEONE WHO DOESN’T WORK FOR THE SCHOOL THAT I CAN GO TO WHEN THE SCHOOL ISN’T GETTING IT RIGHT. THEY JUST WANT TO TELL EVERYONE THAT THEY ARE PERFECT AND DON’T CARE HOW MUCH UPSET IT CAUSES.’ MALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

Some young people report feeling that teachers ‘don’t believe them’ or think that young people use caring responsibilities as an excuse for not getting work in on time or for not doing homework.

‘I TRIED (TO GET SUPPORT IN SCHOOL). VERY UNHELPFUL. FELT I WAS JUST TRYING TO GET OUT OF THINGS.’ FEMALE, 16-18, NORTH HERTS

Whilst this may not be intended, it was certainly a strong feeling amongst the Young Carer Council, so we feel it needs to be addressed.

**Changes we want to see**

Young carers recommend that the existing good practice shown in some schools is expanded throughout the county so that each one has an in-school support group on a weekly drop-in basis, during lunchtime. This should be as well as, not instead of the one-to-one support suggested in Priority One, in recognition of the fact that not all young carers feel comfortable sharing their private information in a group. Offering it as a drop-in group with a rolling programme will help young carers balance the demands of homework, which is often done in school time due to distractions at home, and caring, where young people may have to come out of school to go home to help at short notice. It will also help the group be inclusive of those who don’t want support at the moment, but may do in the future.

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10 Discussed at Young Carers Council meeting, Hemel Hempstead, 12.08.15
'I JUST WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE TO BE NORMAL, BUT I KNOW MY PARENTS TRULY UNDERSTAND SO I TELL THEM I KNOW HELP IS AT STUDENT SERVICES BUT I DON’T NEED IT FOR NOW THANKS.' FEMALE, 14-15, ST ALBANS

Young people also said that they would like a named teacher in each school who leads on young carers issues. This person must be fully trained and understand the issues involved in being a young carer, as well as being able to co-ordinate in-school and community events, e.g. awareness raising projects and work in partnership with social care and other agencies to ensure all young carers get the help and support they are entitled to at all stages of their school life, e.g. the 16-19 bursaries.

This teacher will facilitate the informal weekly drop-in sessions for young carers from any school year that wish to be identified. There should be no pressure to attend and it should be promoted as a place to relax, socialise with other young carers and give and receive peer support. It will additionally provide somewhere to make new friends with people who are more likely to understand the issues involved in caring for a sick or disabled family member.

‘A SUPPORT GROUP IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO PEOPLE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION, YOU DON’T HAVE TO EXPLAIN BECAUSE THEY KNOW.’ YOUNG CARER, YOUNG CARERS’ COUNCIL

‘THEY CAN GIVE SUPPORT AS YOUNG CARERS MAY FACE BULLYING OR BE A TARGET.’ YOUNG CARER, YOUNG CARERS’ COUNCIL

As well as the social aspect of the groups, we would also like weekly topics related to young carers and opportunities to raise self-esteem, confidence, keep safe and develop assertiveness skills, including accreditation opportunities for things like First Aid, which are useful at home but also enhance a CV for the future. This would reflect the best practice in some schools already outlined in the previous section (Priority One) and formalise what individual teachers have been offering on an ad-hoc basis.

‘THEY CAN HELP THE STUDENTS KNOW THAT THEY ARE NOT ALONE.’ MALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS

‘I THINK OUR SCHOOL SHOULD OFFER MORE RANGE OF SUPPORT AND ACTIVELY HEAR WHAT WE FEEL AND WHAT WE WANT, NOT JUST DO WHAT THEY THINK IS BEST.’ MALE, 11-13, ST ALBANS
The carers support group should be promoted widely within the school through assemblies, social media and PSHE lessons so that all pupils know what is on offer and can access it easily without having to ‘tell everyone else’. This also provides an opportunity to give out a factsheet (developed by young carers and professional adults) that explains more about the role of a young carer to all pupils to further raise awareness.

Whist having a young carer support group in school is a key recommendation for this Manifesto, we also want to address the distinct lack of time young carers spend outside of the family home socialising with friends. We have already been told how caring responsibilities can make it hard for young people to go out in the evening and over the weekend, particularly those who live outside of the towns and cities in Hertfordshire. For young people to have equality of access to the social and leisure activities that their peers enjoy, young carers need additional support in terms of respite and cover so that they can leave the house without worrying about what is happening at home.

As a solution we would like to recommend a young carers project in each district of the county, possibly to be held in a Youth Connexions building. These weekly projects, delivered at a time most suited to the needs of young carers, will be a project, developed with young carers, Youth Connexions and Carers in Hertfordshire in equal partnership.

The projects will operate like youth clubs and offer life skills, job skills and art/craft based activities as well as offering a safe, supportive environment in which to meet new friends and develop relationships. All of this would be within the usual boundaries of confidentiality. We would like rolling programme of activities and issue based workshops so that young people can attend as often as their caring duties allow, and not feel awkward about missing sessions if there is a problem at home. Programmes should include practical skills like learning First Aid, combating bullying / how to report bullying, advocacy and offer opportunities for accreditation, e.g. the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.

Professionals, including teachers and youth workers, need to liaise and work together to offer integrated support for young carers. This would be to support young carers during important transitions including work experience, support to visit colleges or university and support making career choices.

Young carers told us that work experience is an area that at the moment they feel they do not get the widest opportunities in, often because in order to get the most out of it they need to plan far in advance, to include respite if the work is outside of school hours, and have placements that understand the issues surrounding young carers, though not necessarily each individual's situation in depth.

Whilst on work experience each young carer should have a named professional, either a Youth Connexions PA, school link worker or support worker from Carers in Hertfordshire (whichever is most appropriate/suitable for the school) to support and mentor the young person.
Although face-to-face meetings are a great way of building a relationship, we feel that a regular text conversation or Face-time call will suffice for some pupils. This person should be the one contacted to liaise with the work placement should things become difficult at home and a young carer either can’t come in or has to leave early.

The manager of Carers in Hertfordshire explained:

’WE WANT TO ENSURE THAT ALL YOUNG CARERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A POSITIVE WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT.’ [CAROLE WHITTLE, 29.09.15]

The final comment on work experience is about transport. Without it being organised and paid for by HCC, any work experience outside of a short walking distance of a young carer’s home is unlikely to happen.

Finally, we think there should be more information about support for young carers, young carers rights and who to contact for advice and guidance on everything from budgeting, advocacy and benefits on the Youth Connexions and ChannelMOGO websites.

![Bar chart showing responses to the question: Do you think information about the role of young carers should be advertised to help others understand the role and if so, where?]

Paper copies of all these should also be available for those who do not have wide access to social media or online. This includes in all GP surgeries and hospital waiting areas, alongside child-friendly information packs about different illnesses and conditions that can help young carers gain a basic understanding.
IN SHORT

Following the consultation of Priority Two, young carers would like to recommend that:

- Hertfordshire County Council provides more information, advice and support to young carers and their families so that they know what is available, what they qualify for and how to access it.

- Teachers should be trained to become more aware of what it means to be a young carer and each school to have a trained, named teacher who can act as the first point of contact for young carers, from reporting that they are tired due to a bad night at home through to providing weekly informal catch-up meetings. This teacher would also liaise with outside agencies to ensure all support possible, including financial, is in place.

- Young carers would like a weekly support group set up in each school, facilitated by a trained, named teacher. Here they can take a break from their caring responsibilities and spend time with other young carers to share experiences and take up opportunities to work on accredited rolling programmes.

- So that young people get more than just support, Young Carers are asking HCC to develop a young carers project in each district, within a Youth Connexions project where possible. This will enable young carers to meet new people and gain peer support, participate in a wide range of projects and have the opportunity to work towards accredited awards, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.

- HCC needs to provide respite cover at home for the person cared for so that young people can participate in extra-curricular activities, like their peers do, without feeling guilty or too worried to enjoy anything.

- Wider work experience opportunities are needed, which take into account the difficulties young carers often have with transport and spending additional time outside of school hours away from home.

- Young carers need additional support during transition periods, e.g. leaving primary, moving on to secondary education, and help when choosing further or higher education, provided by somebody who is fully trained and with an awareness of what life is like as a young carer.

- Young carers would like more dedicated information available to them on the Youth Connexions website and more ‘child-friendly’ information in GP surgeries, made freely available to all young people who require one.
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
The 2015/16 Manifesto will be widely circulated across the county so that issues raised in it can be taken forward and responded to.

Due to the large amount of feedback received and the subsequent length of this Manifesto, Herts1125 recognise that it is no longer a document that young people are likely to read. We therefore propose to share the feedback with young people, schools and youth projects/centres in ‘infographic’ format therefore making the outcomes visible and easy to read.

These infographics will also be shared across county via social networking to reach as many young people as possible so that they can find out what was said and see the suggested improvements that have been put forward to Hertfordshire’s County Council and other key decision makers.

Hard copies of the Manifesto will be made available to senior decision makers in Hertfordshire County Council, Members of Parliament, councillors, the Police & Crime Commissioner and members of relevant charities and organisations to promote discussion and change on the issues most important to young people within Hertfordshire.

Members of HertsUKYP and Herts1125 will meet with Hertfordshire County Council and other interested parties by the end of March 2015 to discuss and receive feedback on how improvements can, and are, being made for young people. This will ensure that issues raised in the Manifesto are given the importance they deserve and that the suggested improvements are given full consideration.

ONLINE ACCESS

This Manifesto is available to download electronically via http://www.youthconnexions-hertfordshire.org/youth-work/young-peoples-democracy/herts-young-peoples-manifesto/ or just go to www.youthconnexions.org and type ‘manifesto’ into the search box on the home page.

All supporting evidence will be available in late November/early December and found via the link above. Due to late receipt of some consultations, there are discrepancies between feedback responses received and included within the Manifesto, and the evidence available online.

Countywide Graphs & statistics
District specific graphs and stats

If you are a member of school staff and would like to see specific results for your school, please email jasmin.payne@hertfordshire.gov.uk
HOW TO FIND OUT MORE AND GET INVOLVED?

To make the Hertfordshire Young People’s Manifesto as inclusive and representative as possible we need everyone to have their say in influencing decisions that affect them.

If you are reading about Herts1125 or HertsMYPs for the first time and would like to know more, or find out how to get involved in the 2016/17 Manifesto, please get in touch with the Youth Connexions Youth Workers who support our work and enable us to represent young people across Hertfordshire.

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FOR PRESENTING AT
HERTS1125 JULY MEETING
Herts MYPs
Herts1125WnW
Hertsmere Youth Council
planning committee
St Albans Youth Council
Stevenage Youth Council
Stevenage Young Mayor
Welwyn Hatfield Youth Council

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE WHO
PARTICIPATED IN THE ONLINE
CONSULTATIONS
THANK YOU TO TEACHERS, SCHOOL STAFF AND YOUTH WORKERS WHO ENABLED YOUNG PEOPLE TO TAKE PART IN HAVING THEIR VOICE HEARD

SCHOOLS/COLLEGES

Bushey Meads School
Chancellor’s School
Cheshunt School
Francis Combe Academy
Haberdashers’ Aske’s Boys’ School
Hertsmere Academy
Highfield School
Hitchin Boys’ School
Hitchin Girls’ School
John F Kennedy Catholic School
The John Henry Newman Catholic School
Knightsfield School
The Knights Templar School
Meridian School
Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School
Oaklands College
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Queens School
Simon Balle School
Sir John Lawes School
St Georges School
St Albans Girls’ School
Stanborough School
The Astley Cooper School
The Cavendish School
Leventhorpe Academy
The Sele School
Tring School
Watford Grammar School for Boys
Watford Grammar School for Girls
Westfield Academy

YCH St Albans Pioneer
YCH St Albans Youth Council
YCH St Albans, Harpenden Youth Council
YCH Three Rivers Cools Arts LD
YCH Three Rivers NCS
YCH Three Rivers SO Youth Project
YCH Watford Francis Combe Project
YCH Watford Harwoods
YCH Watford Meriden
YCH Watford NCS
YCH Watford Starburst LD
YCH Watford YouthPoint
YCH Welwyn/ Hatfield Breaks Manor

FOR REVIEWING INFORMATION

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James Holland, Customer Inclusion & Engagement Manager, Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
Richard Maskreye, Safety Adviser, Herts for Learning Ltd
Gary Vaux, Money Advice Unit Health and Community Services, Hertfordshire County Council
Helen Whitehead, Hate Crime Policy Officer - Hertfordshire Constabulary

GLOSSARY

CV - Curriculum Vitae
CVS - Council for Voluntary Services
DofE - Duke of Edinburgh’s Award
HCC - Hertfordshire County Council
ID - Identification
MHFA - Mental Health First Aid
NHS - National Health Service
PA - Personal Adviser
PCSO - Police Community Support Officer
PSHE - Personal, Social & Health Education
Q&A - Question and answer
UK - United Kingdom
UKYP - United Kingdom Youth Parliament
THE MORE OF US THERE ARE, THE STRONGER OUR VOICE WILL BE.