



Trans Health Merseyside

Consultation Report July 2016

Introduction

Trans Health Merseyside is a peer led wellbeing project based in Liverpool which is led by In-Trust Merseyside in partnership with Sahir House. The project (established in 2015) was awarded a further two years funding (2016-2018) by NHS Liverpool Commissioning Group (CCG) to continue to engage and support Merseyside's transsexual, transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming (trans) networks.

The project aims to improve the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of its beneficiaries through a facilitated group supporting victims of hate crime, peer mentor support, wellbeing sessions and employment sessions to support participants to move into paid work.

In order to understand the current experiences of trans people in Merseyside, Trans Health Merseyside conducted a four week consultation throughout June 2016.

The aims of this consultation were to gain a better understanding of:

- How many potential beneficiaries Trans Health Merseyside could engage with
- Employability issues and barriers experienced by trans people in Merseyside
- Experiences of transphobic hate crime and available support in Merseyside
- Wellbeing
- Community

This report therefore highlights current issues and experiences of trans people in Merseyside in relation to Trans Health Merseyside's project outcomes.

Special thanks goes to:

In-Trust Merseyside
NHS Liverpool Commissioning Group
Spirit Level
LivFast
GYRO
Trans, Tea & Toast Wirral
TAGS
Liverpool Small Cinema
Unity Theatre

Everyone who tweeted and shared the survey link
Everyone who took the time to complete the survey

Methodology

Wellbeing, Employability & Hate Crime Survey:

An online survey was designed using Survey Monkey and distributed through networks via social media, project marketing lists, support group facilitators and service providers. The survey was accessible to participants via an online link and in paper format.

Survey questions were developed from recent national surveys Total Jobs Trans Employability Survey [1] and UK Hate Crime Survey [2] in line with the project outcomes. Questions were then put forward to the Steering Group for feedback.

Engagement & Outreach:

Consultation workers met with five peer support groups:

- In-Trust Merseyside (Sefton)
- GYRO (Liverpool)
- Spirit Level (Liverpool)
- Trans Tea & Toast (Wirral)
- LivFast Group Facilitator only (Liverpool)

To promote Trans Health Merseyside consultation, outreach was also delivered at:

- Liverpool Small Cinema: 58% Programme – celebrating films by women, trans and non-binary filmmakers (Something Must Break screening)
- Unity Theatre – Rites of Passage screening
- Trans Summer Fete hosted by Spirit Level at Armsitead

Participant Demographics

Participants were asked to complete the online/paper survey if they did not identify as cisgender. Therefore participants completing the survey will identify anywhere under the trans umbrella i.e. trans man/woman, non-binary, intersex, gender non-conforming.

The online survey was completed by 112 respondents with an additional 8 paper copies returned for a total of 120 responses.

Engagement at peer support groups was conducted with a total of 33 participants:

- In-Trust Merseyside consisted of 8 participants
- GYRO consisted of 12 participants
- Spirit Level consisted of 8 participants
- Trans Tea & Toast consisted of 5 participants

An estimated 25 people were present at the Liverpool Small Cinema screening.

Community & Housing

To begin, it should be noted that community and housing are not direct outcomes of the current Trans Health Merseyside project. Questions on these issues were included in the consultation due to the inherent link with mental and emotional wellbeing, social isolation and public attitudes and awareness of trans issues.

This section asked survey respondents to identify if they lived in the Merseyside area (Liverpool, Sefton, Wirral, Knowsley and St Helens), and if they felt safe in their neighbourhoods, if hostility they may have experienced resulted in their relocation, and if they were aware of housing association equality teams:

- 92% (n=110) of respondents stated they were currently residing in the Merseyside area. This exceeded the projects minimum beneficiary target (n=60).
- 93% (n=111) of respondents answered the question on feeling safe in their neighbourhood. Of these, 84% (n=93) stated they did feel safe in their neighbourhood, with 16% (n=18) reporting they did not.
Though this is a positive response and it is encouraging that the majority of trans people in Merseyside do not experience harassment in or around their homes, the question structure did not permit respondents to expand on their answer. Feedback from peer group engagement indicated that a more accurate response could have been provided by respondents if the question had acknowledged that factors affecting the degree to which someone feels 'safe' in their neighbourhood, are not constant i.e. a person may feel safe in their neighbourhood until they have to interact or engage with a specific person or situation. Therefore, it is more likely that trans people feel safe some of the time, and feel anxious or unsafe some of the time also.
- 20% (n=24) of respondents went on to answer the question of whether they had had to move residence due to hostility from neighbours, family members or partners, the responses were:
 - Neighbours = 63% (n=15)
 - Family members = 33% (n=8)
 - Partners = 17% (n=4)

The response rate for those who answered is similar to the number who answered that they did not feel safe in their neighbourhoods in Q2 suggesting that this subgroup of respondents predominately went on to answer Q3 as it allowed them to expand their previous answer whereas those who answered they did feel safe in their neighbourhoods skipped the question.

- 98% (n= 117) of respondents answered the last question on housing association equality teams. 59% (n=69) stated they were not aware that housing associations could provide additional support to them through designated equality teams in the event they needed rehousing. This indicates a potential barrier for vulnerable trans people and suggests that information on this type of support is not readily accessible or efficiently visible in housing association documentation.

Employment

This section consisted of nine questions, two of which were ‘further comments’ questions allowing respondents to expand on their previous answer. The questions were designed to ascertain whether trans people were aware of, and if they actively sought out employers with visible trans employment policies; the prevalence of experienced barriers to employment due to gender identity in the Merseyside area; what stage of the employment process barriers were experienced; accessibility to trans specific support regarding employment barriers; experiences of supportive employers; and experiences of discrimination in the workplace due to gender identity:

- 56% (n=67) of respondents answered the question on trans employment policies. Of these, 51% (n=34) answered ‘Yes’ they actively look for employment opportunities with employers who have visible and accessible trans policies. 49% (n=33) answered they did not. This could indicate:
 - In Merseyside trans people lack knowledge regarding their employment rights and are therefore unaware of the protection and benefit policies, in theory, provide trans people in the workplace.
 - Respondents were not in a position where they needed to look for policies i.e. they were not looking for employment, were not ‘out’ in their workplace therefore responded with ‘No’, or it was not applicable (i.e. self-employed or retired).
- 62% (n= 74) answered the question on whether they had experienced barriers to employment due to gender identity. 28% (n=21) stated they had experienced barriers to employment they believed were due to their gender identity whereas the majority of respondents, 55% (n=41) said ‘No’. As the respondents were not asked to describe their employment status it is difficult to assess what factors influenced the majority response. Possible reasons may include:
 - Respondents are unemployed and not seeking work
 - Respondents are not ‘out’ in the workplace
 - Respondents transitioned in work
 - High level of awareness and education in the organisation (i.e. supportive employers)
 - Self-employed

Feedback from peer group engagement also supported self-employment as a majority influencer as this would allow people to retain anonymity in the workplace. Groups also suggested that people may have transitioned after work, i.e. when they were retired.

Those that had experienced barriers were asked to indicate at what stage during the employment process they had occurred. 18% (n= 21) went on to answer the question with the following responses:

- Advert = 19% (n=4)
- Application = 43% (n=9)
- Interview = 81% (n=17)
- Offer of employment = 33% (n=7)

It would have been beneficial with this question to provide a 'Not applicable' tick box list that would allow respondents to identify themselves as: Self-employed; unemployed; in education; and retired

- 61% (n=73) answered the question about receiving support to address barriers to employment from a trans specific / friendly charity.

93% (n=68) responded they had not received support from trans or trans friendly charities.

This indicates that over half of the Merseyside trans population identified by this consultation are not accessing trans specific or trans affirmative support services in regards to employment. This could be due to a lack of service providers in Merseyside providing support and addressing trans issues. Or barriers in accessing the services i.e. trans people who identify as heterosexual may not access support if the service is provided through a predominately LGB provider. Group engagement however highlighted that respondents may have answered differently if the question had been more open and that 'charities' was too specific.

The following organisations were identified by those who had received support:

- Merseyside Police, National Trans Police Association
 - Trans Wirral
 - Rainbow Employment
 - Mary Seacole House
 - Imagine, Mainstream Project (NHS)
 - THT, Birkenhead
- 62% (n=74) answered the question on re-visiting education to improve their confidence in seeking work. 72% (n=53) answered they did not want to do this, 28% (n=21) indicated they would which is slightly below the employment target of 50% (n=30 per year) but also encouraging that this target can be achieved.
 - 38% (n=46) responded to whether their employer had been supportive. 52% (n=24) stated their employer had been supportive during trans health related time off work. The 48% (n= 22) that answered 'No' were able to expand on their answer with the following statements:

'I would say bare minimum'

'Only just started working so no need for time off'

'Not told them / not out'

'Never asked'

'I'm self-employed. It hasn't been relevant to longer terms contracts I've been on yet, though I've had to turn down a couple of odd days' work'

'I am at the beginning of my transition so the impact on work is minimal at the moment'

3 stated they were unemployed

- 58% (n=69) responded to whether they had experienced discrimination in the workplace due to their gender identity. 72% (n=50) of respondents stated that they had, 28% (n=19) stated they had not. Those that answered 'yes' explained further below:

'I feel like I am stereotyped and categorised based on what people generally associate trans people with'

'Violence, exclusion, forced to wear former gender clothes, use of formal name and pronouns'

'I got nervous and people found it hard to accept my gender identity. There were incidents of bullying and malicious speculation and restrictions on career development and promotion'

'My manager is being very difficult to work with and I feel the way in which they perceive my gender identity is part of it'

'Bullying, comments'

'Bullying through management'

'I was on leave having top surgery and when I returned (earlier than I was supposed to) to the bar/restaurant where I worked, the owner berated me about initially refusing to move heavy beer kegs as well as telling lots of people the reason for my leave outing me as Trans'

'Gossiping colleagues rumours etc. Was addressed by management'

'Refusal to access toilets'

'Felt that my trans status precluded me from a move which resulted in my redundancy'

Hate Crime

It is widely accepted that incidents of transphobic hate crime are significantly underreported in the UK. The Hate Crime Report produced by Galop (2013) [3] states that 3 in 4 trans people will be the target of transphobic abuse each year, yet reported numbers of transphobic crimes remain low. Confidence in the Police is seen as a major influencing factor affecting a person's decision on whether or not to report a hate crime, particularly for LGB&T individuals.

This section asked participants on their awareness of reportable hate crime abuse, their experiences of abuse, knowledge on reporting hate crimes, and support they were offered.

- 60% (n=72) answered the question on their awareness of different types of abuse that can be reported as a hate crime. 94% (n=68) of respondents were aware of the different types of abuse, though they were unable to indicate if they were aware of all abuse types or specific ones e.g. They were aware of physical abuse but not verbal.
- 60% (n=72) responded to whether they believed they had experienced hate crime abuse. 54% (n=39) of respondents answered 'Yes', 36% (n=26) answered 'No', and 10% (n=7) stated they were 'Not Sure'.
- 40% (n=48) answered the question on awareness of where to report a hate crime. 60% (n=29) of respondents stated they did know where to report incidents, however the question response rate is poor and the actual number of people who knew where to report is low (n=29). This suggests that 75% of the Merseyside trans population as defined by this consultation do not know or are not confident they know where to report a hate crime despite the likelihood that they will experience abuse.
- 60% (n=72) answered the question on awareness of third party hate crime reporting sites. 54% (n=39) stated they were aware of third party reporting sites, whereas 46% (n=33) of respondents were not.
- 28% (n=34) went on to answer the question asking if they were offered support after reporting a hate crime. 65% (n=22) of respondents said they were not offered support or signposted to services after reporting, only 35% (n=12) said they were. This could be affected by what the respondent defined as 'support' or it could just highlight the lack of support for victims of hate crime.

Key themes from suggestions on type of support that should be offered to victims of transphobic hate crime:

- Improvements in prosecutions for transphobic hate crime

- Better relationships with police to improve confidence in reporting
- Support after reporting including:
 - Counselling
 - Peer support
- Better resources and advertising of hate crime reporting services
- Better understanding of reporting process and potential outcomes
- Confidentiality and anonymity

Wellbeing

This section asked participants to describe aspects of their life relating to physical exercise and emotional wellbeing. Trans Health Merseyside incorporates the 5 steps to Wellbeing into its project management, delivery and activities. Regular physical activity is associated with a greater sense of well-being and lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups [5].

- 56% (n=67) answered the question on whether they currently exercised. 78% (n=52) of respondents stated they did currently exercise, 22% (n=15) stated they did not.

Those that answered 'yes' to the above question were asked to describe the space they use to exercise, 45% (n=54) answered this question with the following responses:

- I exercise alone = 57% (n=31)
 - I exercise in a shared space = 19% (n=10)
 - Both = 24% (n=13)
- 57% (n=68) answered the question on whether they would be interested in attending wellbeing sessions e.g. yoga or meditation. 59% (n=40) answered 'Yes' they would be interested in attending peer yoga or meditation sessions.
 - When asked if they experienced low mood, 57% (n= 68) answered with the following responses:
 - Rarely = 20% (n=14)
 - Occasionally = 49% (n=33)
 - Often = 31% (n=21)
 - When asked if they have strategies in place to help them in such times, 57% (n=68) answered with the following responses:
 - Rarely = 13% (n=9)
 - Occasionally = 49% (n=53)
 - Often = 38% (n=26)
 - 53% (n= 64) answered the question on exploring strategies to help with low mood. 61% (n=39) of respondents stated they would like to explore strategies, with 39% (n=25) stating they would not.

Conclusions

The consultation work undertaken by Trans Health Merseyside has been an effective exercise in gaining evidence that supports the project's proposed outcomes and the targets set out in the monitoring and evaluation plan submitted to Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group in March 2016.

Trans Health Merseyside successfully engaged with its target beneficiaries through an online survey whilst utilising outreach to meet with peer support groups to allow more in depth analysis of the issues discussed during the consultation, as well as the consultation design.

A total of 120 trans individuals participated in the consultation survey. It is expected that individuals who were engaged through outreach, also completed the survey. This figure (n=120) supports Trans Health Merseyside's minimum beneficiary target of n=60 over the two year (2016-2018) lifespan of the project as well as the secondary target to engage with beneficiaries who reside in the Liverpool area or are registered with a Liverpool GP (n=48).

Community & Housing

Trans people are likely to feel safe in their neighbourhoods and homes some of the time, and anxious or unsafe some of the time also. Though community and housing are not direct outcomes of the current Trans Health Merseyside project, its links with mental and emotional wellbeing as Maslow's identified basic needs (e.g. security, safety and shelter) before personal growth and development can be achieved. Techniques explored in the wellbeing sessions will give participants strategies moving forward developing inner resilience and confidence to combat potential prejudice experienced in public spaces.

More information and signposting to housing association equality teams is needed to ensure vulnerable trans people are receiving the level of support they need.

Employment

Evaluation of survey responses highlighted that more in depth analysis of socio-economic factors will be useful to gather during the project delivery to ensure greater understanding of the values and preferences of trans people in Merseyside.

In regards to people's awareness of trans policies, rather than draw out speculative conclusions, project workers will aim to gather more in depth analysis during the project regarding employment choices and barriers experienced to employment.

It would appear that barriers to employment faced by trans individuals are experienced due to systemic prejudice and discrimination in the workplace.

Hate Crime

The majority of respondents were aware of the different types of hate crime abuse that can be reported, but there could be greater awareness of third party reporting sites and signposting to support services after a crime has been reported.

Counselling and peer support were identified as support preferences.

Confidence, confidentiality and anonymity would potential help people to come forward and report transphobic abuse.

Wellbeing

Participants would welcome a space to exercise with other peers.

Whilst people did have strategies to help them in difficult times feedback indicates that peer support could be of benefit to mental and physical wellbeing.

Peer group engagement demonstrated there is a sense to better understand where to look for hormone therapy, what are safe hormone levels and how to manage the effects of such treatments.

Recommendations

Further evidence needs to be collected on the socio-economic factors of trans people in Merseyside. This could be achieved through baseline data capture on the project registration and on-going evaluation forms. This will provide a knowledge base which could be used for provision of services and future funding applications.

Organisations to be identified and signposted to Trans Awareness & Equality Training hosted by Tony Griffin (In-Trust Merseyside). Organisations to be encouraged to work towards achieving the Navajo Charter Mark.

To achieve employability outcomes the project will host sessions which bring together employment services and agencies with trans people in Merseyside. Sessions will include:

- Employment Law to educate people on their rights in the workplace
- Disclosure techniques to improve confidence in the workplace or during the interview stage
- Information sessions with local employment services and agencies
- Q&A panel with relevant agencies

Sessions scheduled with Merseyside Police and Stop Hate UK and other third party reporting sites will improve confidence in hate crime reporting and understanding of the reporting process and outcomes.

Facilitated group support sessions directed by participant's values and preferences to increase confidence and resilience during the process of hate crime reporting.

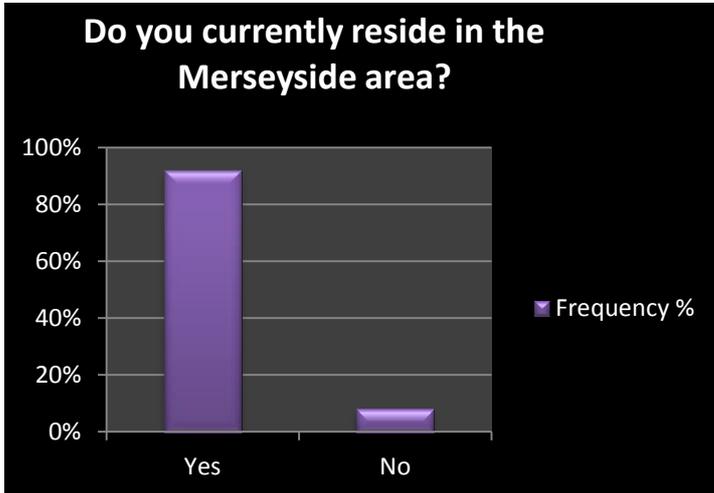
Wellbeing sessions to provide shared spaces that promote social connections and meet national recommendations for exercise and wellbeing.

Trans Health Merseyside will develop a referral resource listing of Merseyside trans inclusive organisations as part of the projects referral pathway.

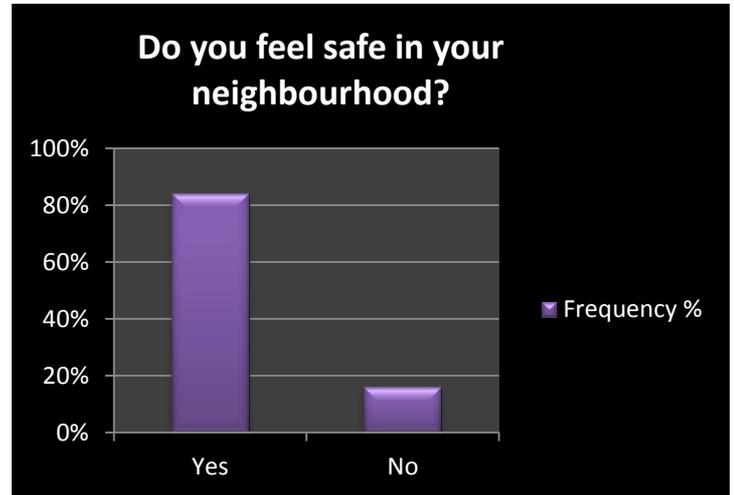
Survey Questions

Community

Q1. Do you currently reside in the Merseyside area?



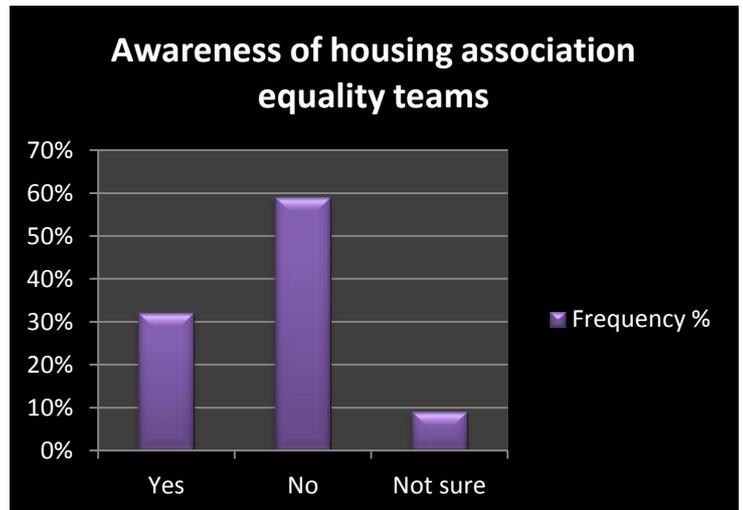
Q2. Do you feel safe in your neighbourhood?



Q3. Have you ever had to move from your place of residence due to hostility from:

- Neighbours
- Family members
- Partners

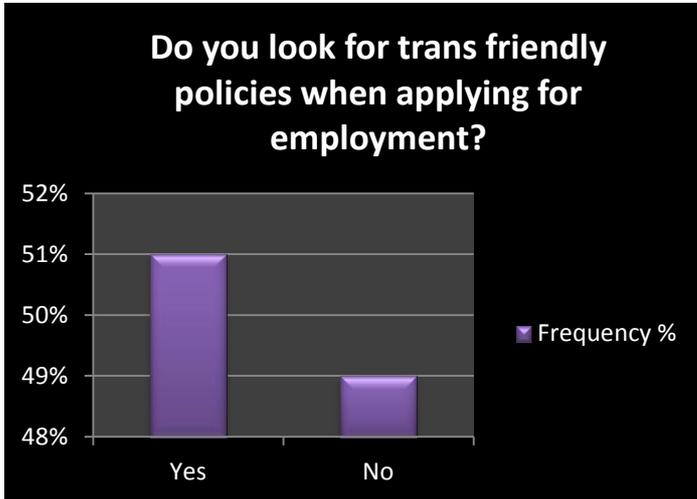
Q4. Are you aware that housing associations will have designated equality teams to help in rehousing trans people to a place of safety and provide support if needed?



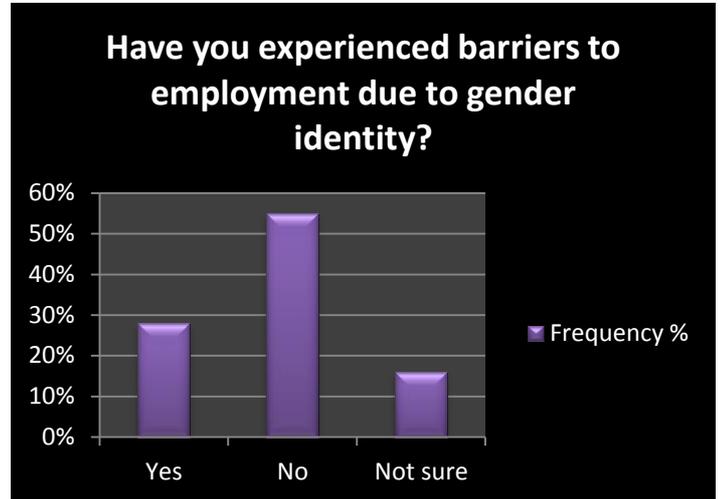
Survey Questions

Employability

Q5. Do you look for companies with trans friendly policies when applying for employment?



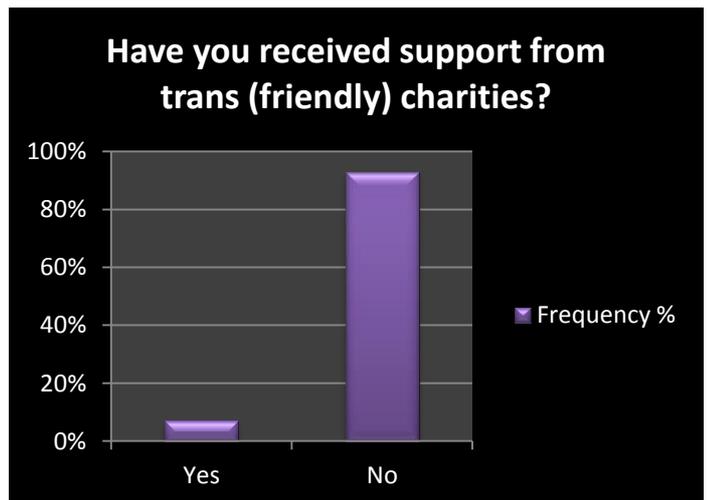
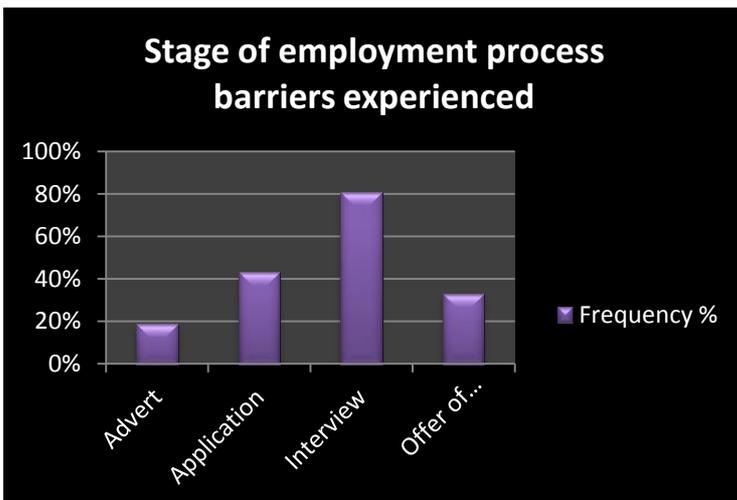
Q6. Have you ever experienced barriers to employment that you believe was due to your gender identity?



Q7. If yes, at what stage of the employment process did you experience barriers? (tick all that apply)

- Advert
- Application
- Interview
- Offer of employment

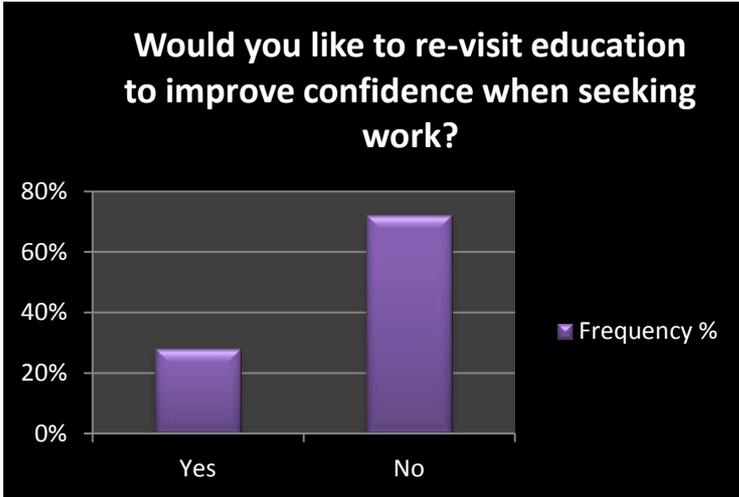
Q8: Have you ever received organisational support in addressing barriers to employment from trans or trans friendly charities?



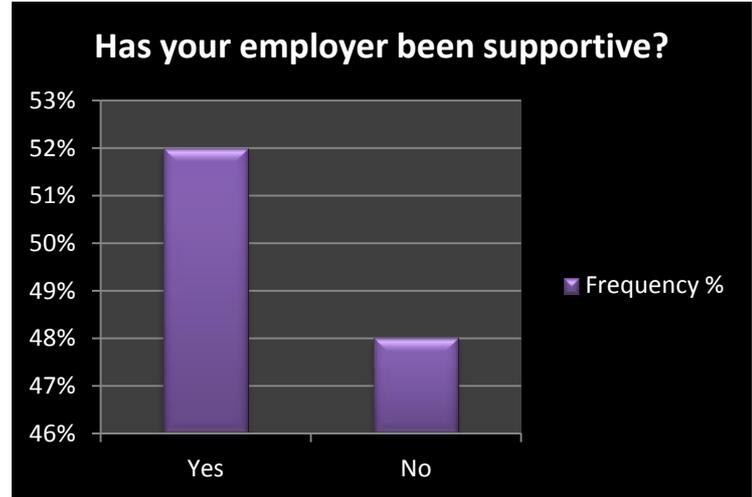
Survey Questions

Employability

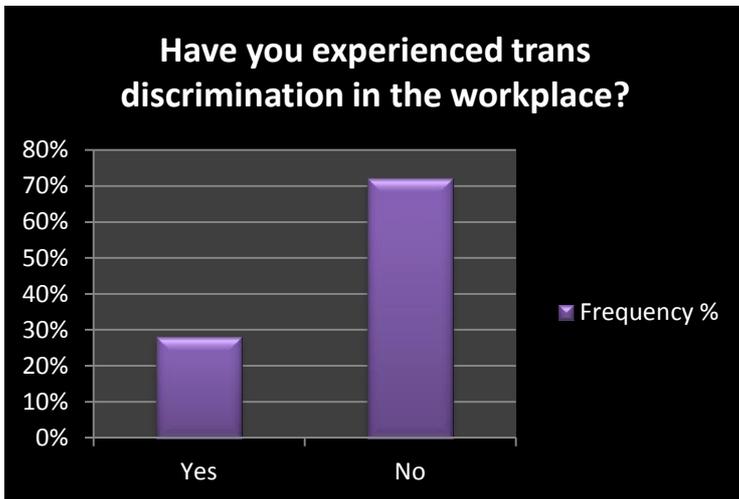
Q10: Would you like to re-train or re-visit education to improve your confidence in seeking work? E.g. job search, CV writing, interview skills?



Q11: Has your employer been supportive when you have needed time off for trans related health issues



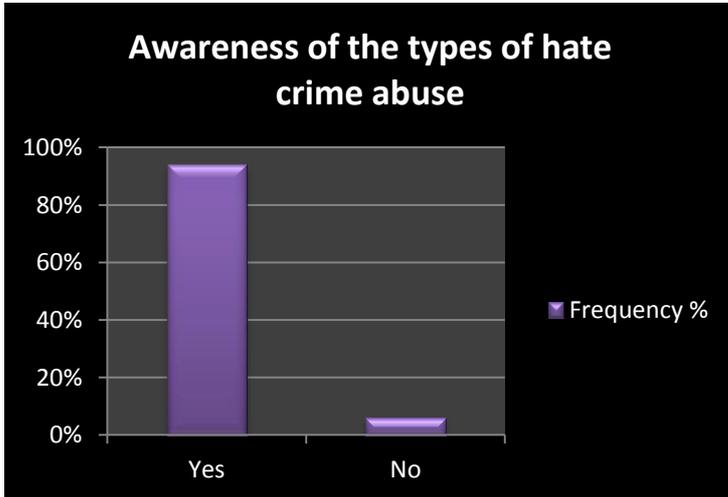
Q12: Have you experienced trans discrimination in the workplace (e.g. overlooked for promotion, unequal pay, bullying)?



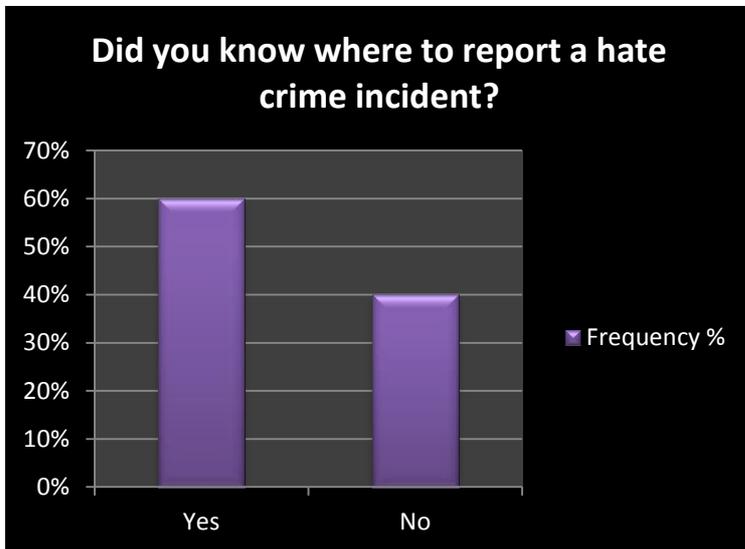
Survey Questions

Hate Crime

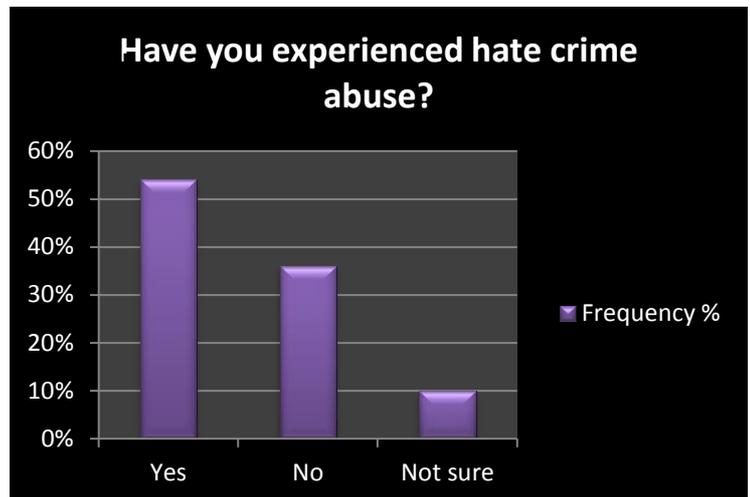
Q14: Do you know that physical, psychological, sexual and verbal abuse can be reported as a hate crime



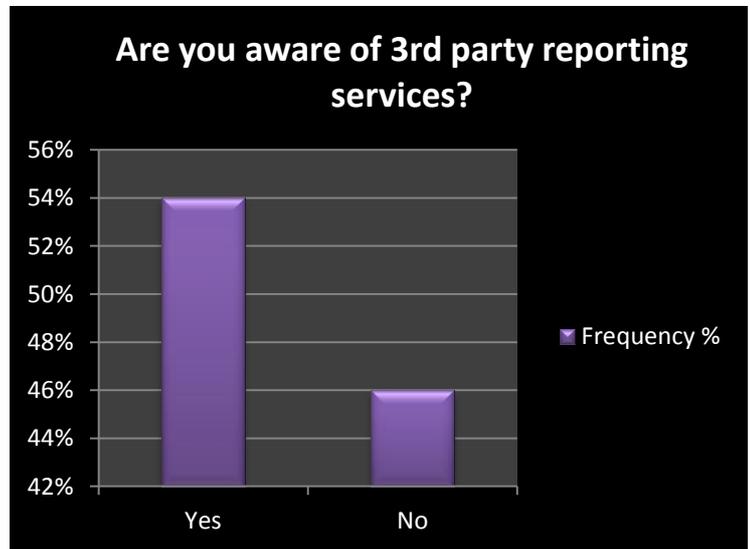
Q16: If yes, did you know where you could go to report the incident?



Q15: Do you feel that you have experienced any of the above?



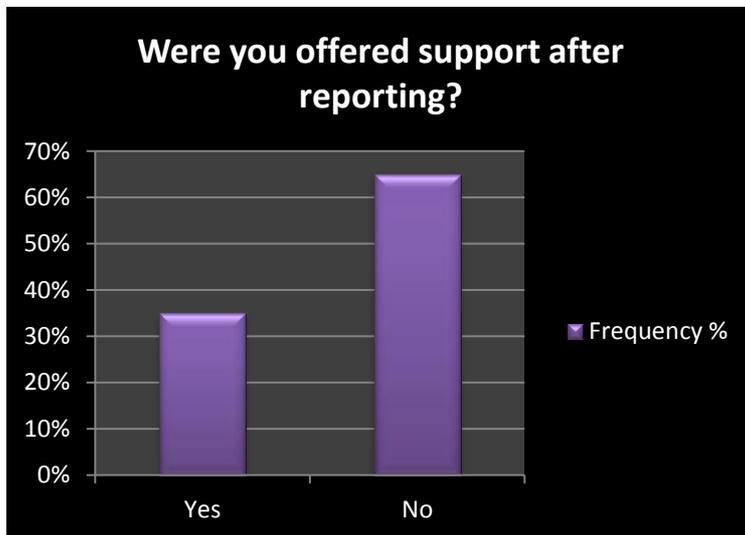
Q17: Are you aware of third party hate crime reporting services (e.g. Stop Hate UK, local hospitals, museums, voluntary organisations)?



Survey Questions

Hate Crime

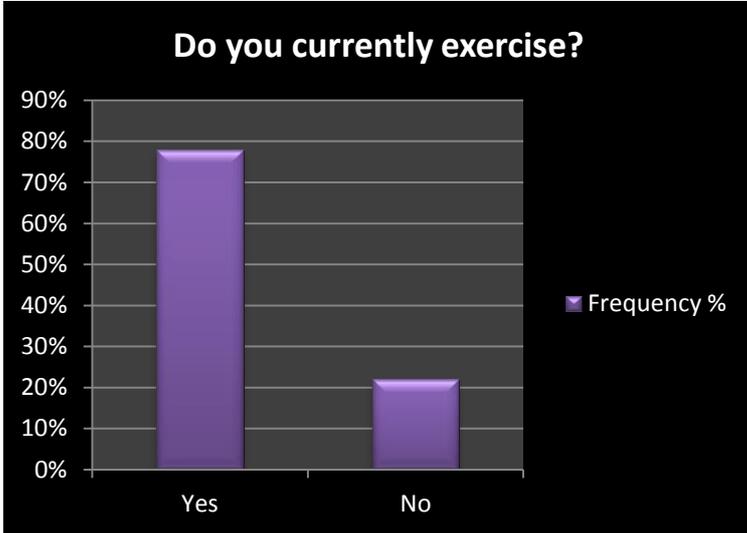
Q18: If you have reported an incident, were you offered support or signposted to services after you reported a hate crime ?



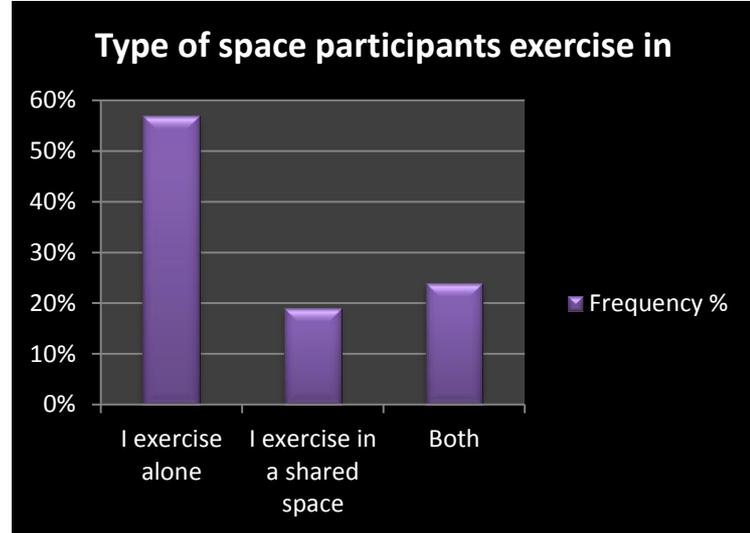
Survey Questions

Wellbeing

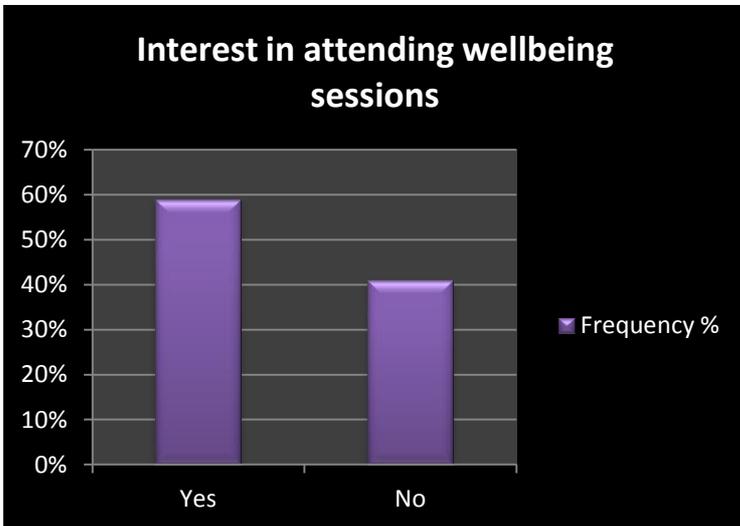
Q20: Do you currently exercise?



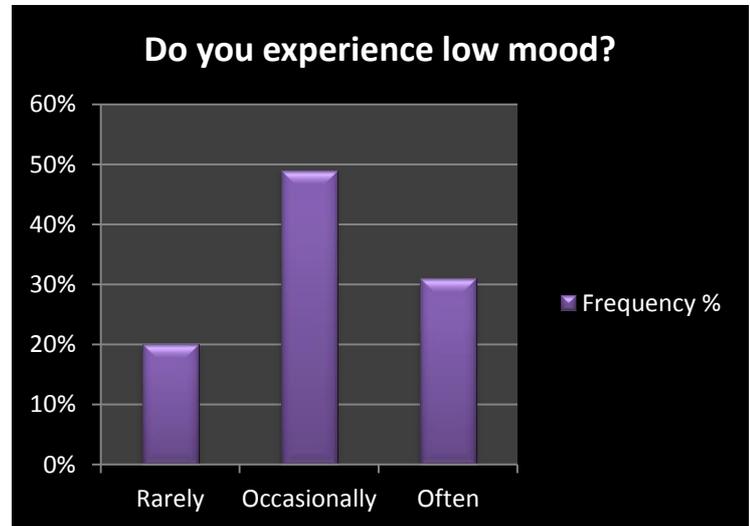
Q21: If yes, do you exercise alone or in a shared space e.g. yoga studio or gym?



Q22: Would you be interested in attending wellbeing sessions e.g. yoga or meditation with other trans peers in a trans friendly setting?



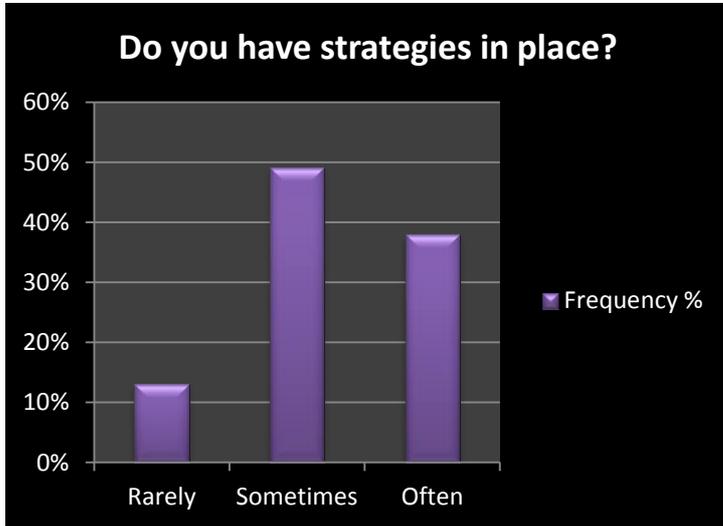
Q23: Do you experience low mood?



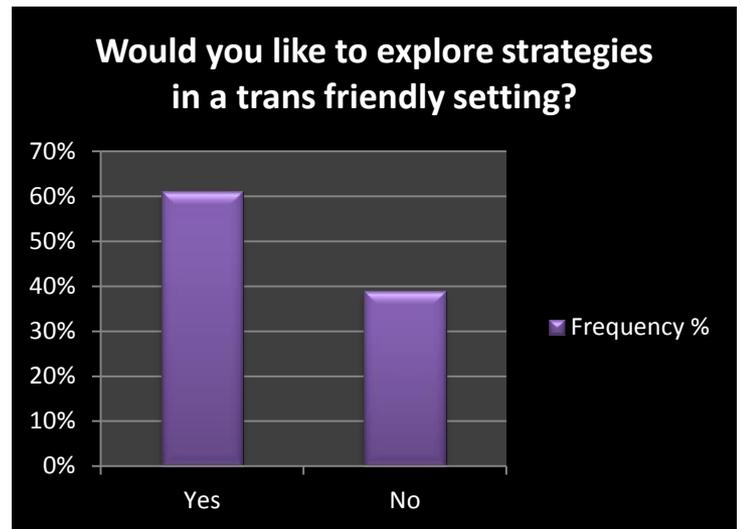
Survey Questions

Wellbeing

Q24: Have you strategies in place to help yourself in such times?



Q25: Would you like to explore strategies that have been shown to help with mild depression in a trans friendly setting?



References

1. Total Jobs Trans Employability Survey (www.totaljobs.com/insidejob/trans-employee-survey-report-2016)
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4. S. Whittle, Employment Discrimination and Transsexual People (<http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/employment-dis-full-paper.pdf>)
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