

# We are bovver'd:

## Responding to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people in South and East London

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## Foreword

Based in South and East London the Metro Centre Ltd works across London to design and deliver a wide range of services and improve outcomes for LGBTQ people of all ages based on input and advice from service users and other local people.

The Metro Centre Ltd has been providing services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people for 26 years, and to those young people questioning their sexuality (Q).

Currently the Metro Centre provides counselling services, health clinics, weekly groups, events, advice and advocacy, mentoring, 'Just Out' introductory courses and outreach for LGBTQ young people.

The attached *We are bovver'd: Responding to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people in South and East London Report* is the result of extensive consultation with young LGBTQ people, and provides a valuable snapshot of young people's views on a range of issues.

The findings from the survey and the in-depth interviews essentially confirm that the expectations of Ergo and Metro, and the evidence from the literature match the recent experiences of our local population. In fact, some of the findings and recommendations may match ideas for service development generated by the Metro Centre's Youth Service.

This Report also makes recommendations about a range of systems, structures and strategies of the Metro Centre; recommendations which when implemented will improve our services for LGBTQ people across London. The Metro is keen to share these recommendations so that other organisations that work in the domains of sexuality, identity, gender and diversity can learn from the challenges we have encountered.

Young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in South and East London experience a range of problems and difficulties, notably including high levels of bullying, family conflict, isolation, low self-esteem, self-harm and attempted suicide, drug and alcohol misuse, and sexual risk-taking. Conversely, high proportions of these young people report that they have been unable to access services they needed or wanted, sufficiently early.

I recommend this Report to you. In the same way that the recommendations of the Report have already proven immensely beneficial to the Metro Centre, I trust that the learning embedded in this Report will be equally useful to you.

Marguerite McLaughlin  
CEO  
The Metro Centre Ltd

Please note that Appendices can be provided upon request.

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# Executive Summary

1. Ergo Consulting were commissioned by the Metro Centre in July 2007 to undertake a review of their services for young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT) and to those young people questioning their sexuality (Q), and to provide baseline evidence of their unmet needs in relation to health, social care, inclusion, family, education, etc. Subsequently, Lambeth PCT contributed to the costs of extending the scope of the research to cover Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham.
2. The multi-faceted methodology included: literature review, a records review, interviews with stakeholder commissioners, a survey of, focus groups and in-depth interviews with, the young people themselves.
3. Recruitment to the survey and subsequent focus groups and interviews proved time consuming and resource intensive. To reach the planned target numbers we extended this process by approximately six months, from August 2007 to May 2008. We believe that the difficulties of recruiting to this research highlight the need for long time frames and additional resources to enable young people to access any future research, or indeed for them to participate in actual services.
4. Few of the findings about the needs of young LGBTQ people are unexpected. The findings from the survey and the in-depth interviews essentially confirm that the expectations of Ergo and Metro, and the evidence from the literature match the recent experiences of the local population. Indeed some of the findings and recommendations may match ideas for service development generated by the Metro Youth Service.
5. In short, young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experience a range of problems and difficulties, notably including high levels of: bullying, family problems, isolation, low self-esteem, self-harm and attempted suicide, drug and alcohol misuse, and sexual risk-taking. Conversely, high proportions of this population report that they were unable to access services they needed or wanted, sufficiently early.
6. As well as the specific recommendations we make in Section 7, we would further recommend that Metro develops a wider network of referral and partner agencies. In this way Metro can provide target group expertise to generic agencies and offer service users safe links in to other lesbian, gay and bisexual services.
7. The research data indicate no need for significant changes to the type or range of services that Metro offers young people with two important provisos. These services may only be reaching a minority of those who need them. And whilst the survey was underway there was a cessation of drug and family support services at Metro. We also understand that since carrying out the research for this report Metro has recruited a Youth Service Manager to address many of the strategic and operational issues for group work that are raised here, so some of the recommendations may already be underway.

Some 28 specific recommendations are made (see page 60) for further development of Metro's portfolio of services, and, of these, the recommended priorities are:

- More intensive and effective marketing and promotion of existing services
- Development of schools programmes to reach those most in need who are unable to access support services
- Developing a dedicated fund-raising post to enable the expansion of Metro's services.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Metro Centre (hereafter abbreviated to Metro) provides a range of youth services covering: counselling; suicide and self harm prevention; group work; outreach and schools work. Family therapy and drug and alcohol support was previously delivered by Metro but ceased during the process of this research.
- 1.2 Chris Markham and Peter Scott of Ergo Consulting (hereafter Ergo) were commissioned by Metro to review the services it currently provides to young LGBTQ people (under the age of 26) who live in Greenwich or Bexley. Subsequently, it was agreed to extend the research to include residents of first other boroughs within the larger Metro catchment area, namely Bromley, Newham, and Tower Hamlets, and subsequently (through co-sponsorship of the research by Lambeth PCT) to include Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham. It was also agreed to include participants who had grown up in these boroughs as well as those resident in them.
- 1.3 A further aim of the co-sponsorship by Lambeth PCT was to identify any statistically significant differences for these boroughs.
- 1.4 The original timescale was for the research to be completed in four months and for the analysis to have been complete by the end of August 2007. In the event, Metro agreed a number of extensions to the timescale for a number of reasons:
  - To allow more extensive internal consultation and piloting of survey questions and methods of recruitment
  - To allow consultation with Lambeth PCT, THT, GMFA, and other organisations, so as to effectively extend recruitment
  - To recruit more respondents to the survey and in-depth interviews.
- 1.5 In our analysis we have been mindful that this is applied, not abstract, research, and that the purpose is to come up with options and recommendations, which, whilst well grounded in robust evidence, are above all feasible and practical for Metro to implement, and which will support sustainable development.

## Aim and objectives

- 1.6 The aims of the research were (in summary) to help:
  - Develop further effective and sustainable work at Metro with young LGBTQ people
  - Evaluate the restructured Metro Youth Service, and embed evaluation within the service
  - Test acceptability and demand for possible and planned services
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of the current intake and assessment forms
  - Identify levels of recognition of, and satisfaction with, Metro Youth Services
  - Identify the young LGBTQ environment and the problems and issues faced by this group
  - Benchmark current sexual behaviour and levels of use of specified testing and sexual health services
  - Review understanding of sexual health and HIV risks in this group
  - Detail levels of use and contact with the range of services and facilities specified.

## Methods

- 1.1 Given the multiple, complex and detailed requirements of the original specification a research plan was agreed with Metro which included the following interlinked data collection activities:
  - Initial scoping meeting
  - Literature review
  - Self-completion questionnaire development, delivery, analysis and reporting (target 100)
  - Semi-structured interviews (target 30)
  - 3 Focus groups
  - Interviews with SRB6 stakeholders and LGBTQ youth stakeholders
  - Review of relevant Metro service records, forms and documents
  - Recruitment to Youth Forum (target 15)
- 1.2 The methods to be used were proposed by Ergo and agreed in consultation with Metro managers and frontline staff.
- 1.3 The format, style and content of the survey drew on the literature review, a draft survey was piloted, and a number of modifications were made to the final version.
- 1.4 Emerging findings were drafted and discussed with Metro.

## 2 Brief literature review

### Introduction and methodology

- 2.1 Ergo carried out a brief literature review of “issues related to group work, outreach and counselling with LGBTQ young people.”
- 2.2 In addition (where it was available) we briefly reviewed local, national and international coverage of:
  - Alcohol and drug use
  - Bullying
  - Coming out and sexual self concept
  - Employment
  - HIV (both prevention and living with HIV/AIDS) and sex
  - Homelessness
  - Mental health and illness
  - Mentoring
  - Peer groups
  - School, family and voluntary sector support
  - Suicide and self harm.
- 2.3 The main finding of this brief review is that there is substantial literature on the young people’s issues defined above, and some literature on young lesbian, gay and bisexual people’s issues, but much of this is international, out of date and incomplete. We found very little that was specifically relevant to the target audience in Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham or Southwark.
- 2.4 We understand there are a number of international standards on youth and child welfare (such as Get Ready for Geneva or the Children’s Rights Alliance for England). These were not covered in the scope of this report, but we recommend Metro develop a process for mainlining organisational knowledge of such standards, with a regular research and information sharing through team meetings.
- 2.5 This lack of detailed information matches our experience in this area and expectation of the literature review, but it does present two opportunities for Metro.
- 2.6 First, Metro is well placed to make strategic use of (anonymised) data collection processes (Metro’s own and information that Metro may access through the Pan London HIV Prevention Programme). This information could be collated and used to inform future funding decisions and service provision for the target group.
- 2.7 Secondly, since there is a lack of coherent information about the behaviours and needs of this client group — Metro could, in collaboration with an established research agency, build a joint funding application around this work.
- 2.8 Through our research one study stood out: Rosemary Thompson’s *Nurturing Future Generations*, published by Routledge in New York in 2006. It provides a good overview of the issues facing young people and specifically lesbian, gay and bisexual youth. Whilst Thompson’s findings are probably not surprising to anyone experienced in the field, she provides a single chapter overview that could make an interesting discussion document when running group work with young lesbian, gay and bisexual people or indeed act as a rapid training aid for youth workers in this field; it could back up any funding applications or requests for sponsorship.



- 2.9 Below we go on to summarise general trends affecting young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Given the limited time available for this literature review, we would recommend that Metro carries out more of its own research once particular areas of interest have been identified, before developing full programmes of work.

## **Alcohol and drug use**

- 2.10 The target group is significantly more likely to be misusing alcohol, drugs, tobacco and other substances. The target group's use is not just slightly higher than their heterosexual peers; often it is 3 times more prevalent.<sup>1</sup> These findings and the influencing factors for this may be well known to Metro (self-esteem, isolation, bullying, peer support, etc) but nevertheless represent an opportunity for Metro to commission further services in this area. Before doing so we would recommend that Metro carries out a more thorough analysis of the currently available services. As an example, offering stopping smoking courses to young LGBTQ people could be an easy way to recruit new members to Metro's other services.<sup>2</sup>

## **Bullying**

- 2.11 The target group is likely to suffer more bullying (verbal or physical), more frequently and with greater severity than their presumed heterosexual peers. For example one study<sup>3</sup> found that 23% of young lesbians reported that their peers had "attempted to hurt them in a sexual way," while only 6% of heterosexual females said the same. A recent UK study<sup>4</sup> found that 28% of its respondents had suffered "gay bullying."
- 2.12 The literature recommends school-based programmes enforcing policy, developing support groups and providing discussion and education. We understand Metro already runs such programmes but it seems from the research that there is scope to develop this work and that there exist likely sources of funding to do so and/or other agencies with whom Metro could collaborate. For one of the most comprehensive studies on homophobic bullying in schools see the excellent "2006/7 Stonewall Report: The School Report<sup>5</sup>."

## **Coming out and sexual self concept**

- 2.13 A body of research suggests that many young lesbian, gay and bisexual people begin to question their sexuality when aged 5-11 years and go on to have their first sexual experience when aged 12-14 years. Other studies cite young females as being aware or questioning their sexuality by 10 years of age, and having their first sexual experience with another female at 15 years. The same study suggested that young males were likely to be gay aware at age 9 and having their first experience at 13 years of age<sup>6</sup>.

1 Durant, Kruwchuk and Sinal (1998) cited in Thompson

2 We understand that there are only limited drug and alcohol services aimed at lesbian, gay and bisexual people such as Antidote at the Hungerford Project and DASL.

3 Gruber and Fineran 2001 ibid

4 [http://www.bullying.co.uk/nationalsurvey/thenationalbullyingsurvey\\_results.pdf](http://www.bullying.co.uk/nationalsurvey/thenationalbullyingsurvey_results.pdf)

5 [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/school\\_report.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/school_report.pdf)

- 2.14 Whilst there is some variation in specific ages from study to study, the general trend confirms our existing belief that information, and support for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people needs to be in place at the time (or ideally before) they are becoming aware of their sexuality.
- 2.15 The majority of schools work (where it happens at all) is currently delivered in secondary schools. Thus there appears to be an opportunity to further develop schools-based work, peer support work and other services for the younger age range of Metro's target audience. We understand there may be enormous difficulties in accessing junior and primary school age pupils so would encourage as a starting point delivering simple, clear, information of a non-sexual nature to pupils early on in secondary education, perhaps as part of a wider diversities programme (see for example paragraph 5.56).

## **Counselling, advice and groupwork**

- 2.16 There is a significant range of research demonstrating best practice in counselling, advice and groupwork for the target group and as Metro has strong expertise in this field, our very brief review revealed little that was innovative or surprising in this area.
- 2.17 However, from fields outside young people's services, we are aware of new trends in service development and implementation that are based on a **partnership approach**<sup>7</sup>. The organisation sets off without a fixed view of the services it aims to provide, but through research, modelling and real partnerships with current and potential services users, it develops a shared view of what and how services are to be provided. We see this as a unique opportunity for Metro to extend its services, to work in an innovative way and to significantly increase opportunities for its target group. We are happy to discuss this aspect in more detail if it is of interest.
- 2.18 Additionally, London providers already offer a range of counselling, advice and groupwork to the target audience and these are conveniently summarised on (among others) PACE's website<sup>8</sup>. One opportunity - and we understand this may be controversial - is to enter into close collaboration with other providers of such services to carry out wider needs assessments, to establish unmet needs or simply to provide higher quality, more client-centred services. We understand this forms the core of many Metro services and there may be appropriate caution about following such a route.

6 Elliot and Brantley 1997 cited in Thompson 2006

7 Partnership approaches are particularly relevant when organisations are ready for stakeholders to manage processes themselves, the stakeholders accept the idea of developing solutions themselves; organisations are ready to enable, not lead, solutions created by stakeholders are likely to be accepted and implemented.

8 <http://www.outzone.org/links/links.htm#counselling>

## Employment

- 2.19 We found little relevant literature on employment or unemployment issues for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. We know that younger people in general in western economies are more likely to be unemployed (probably by a factor of 2+) compared with the general population. We also know that those with lower levels of education are more likely to be unemployed<sup>9</sup>. For this reason support and anti-discrimination practices in schools will be vital to ensure that young lesbian, gay and bisexual people achieve their employment potential.
- 2.20 We suggest that this is firstly an opportunity for Metro to seek funding and pilot small projects as well as commissioning detailed research. HIV (both prevention and living with HIV/AIDS), and sex.
- 2.21 The largest local survey of gay men (including younger men) is probably *Consuming Passions: Findings from the United Kingdom Gay Men's Sex Survey* from Sigma Research<sup>10</sup>. Metro may already be very familiar with the findings of this work, having collaborated with Sigma, so we do not enter into significant detail here. It is clear from this research that issues of self esteem are important to a higher percentage of young gay men (under 20 years old) compared with older gay men and that this target group is at significant risk of getting or passing HIV.<sup>11</sup>
- 2.22 This research confirms other findings suggesting that specific interventions are necessary for this target group rather than the generic approach adopted by some education and information campaigns. (see also paragraph 5.33)
- 2.23 We found little relevant HIV-related research for women in the target group, or on living with HIV/AIDS for young people of either sex. This is most likely a factor of the limited time for research.

## Homelessness

- 2.24 The target group is more likely to be homeless, due to family or carer issues with their sexuality, or related to isolation at school or other causes. Studies in large US cities suggest that 16% to 38% of homeless youth self-identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.<sup>12</sup> *Closer to home, Out On My Own: Understanding the Experiences and Needs of Homeless Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth*<sup>13</sup> demonstrates that sexuality was a significant factor in the majority of homeless respondents becoming homeless and that mainstream support services do not meet the needs of this target group.

9 See for example <http://www.iglyo.com/content/files/2006-Report-SocialExclusion.pdf>

10 <http://www.sigmaresearch.org.uk/go.php/reports/gay>

11 For example, over 27% of men aged less than 20 years who tested HIV negative in the last year had unprotected receptive anal sex with a partner of positive or unknown HIV status: these percentages decreased the older the respondent.

12 Rew and Taylor-Seehafer 2001 cited in Thompson 2006 op cit

13 <http://www.homeless.org.uk/policyandinfo/issues/groups/lgbt/out>

## **Mental health and illness**

2.25 Our supposition that the target group is likely to suffer more mental health issues and more severe mental health issues than their heterosexual peers appears to be supported by the general research. Researchers suggest that this is most likely linked to greater substance abuse, increased levels of depression and isolation caused by the discrimination and social stigma that can still be connected with homosexuality.

“Many (sexual minority youth) conclude they have no hope of ever becoming productive individuals.”<sup>14</sup>

## **Mentoring**

2.26 A wealth of information exists on best practice in mentoring and the benefits this can bring to mentees and mentors. A simple internet or book search could reveal all necessary guidance. If Metro is considering implementing or developing this area of work, we would recommend detailed programme development before launching any mentoring programme.

## **Peer groups**

2.27 Through our brief research we found only general references to the importance of peer groups and the support that these are likely to offer to young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Peer support though figures prominently in our interviews with young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. (See paragraph 5.44).

## **Family and voluntary sector support**

2.28 The role of family or carers can be critical in a young lesbian, gay or bisexual person's developing a positive self identity. Some support does exist for families of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people (see for example [www.fflag.org.uk](http://www.fflag.org.uk)). But we believe this represents a significant opportunity for Metro to map current family support provision and most importantly to use the relevant data from the survey and interviews to inform future commissioning decisions.

## **Suicide and self harm**

2.29 A significant percentage of young people in general are at risk of attempting or committing suicide or self harm.<sup>15</sup> Our belief that young lesbian, gay and bisexual people are at greater risk of attempting or committing suicide or self harm appears to be supported by a range of studies,<sup>16</sup> with claims that:

“Presently there are no published studies of suicide prevention or intervention programs to target lesbian or bisexual youth.”<sup>17</sup>

14 Cook 1998 (p 378) cited in Thompson 2006

15 Studies often cite a figure of around 20% of young people who have “seriously considered suicide” and around 10% having actually attempted suicide in the previous year.

16 See for example Mays & Cochran (2001), Hetrick & Martin (1987) cited in Thompson 2006

17 Russell (2003) *ibid*

## Conclusions from the Literature Review

- 2.30 Given the lack of detailed local research we see an opportunity for Metro to become a leading authority here. We recommend that Metro collaborate with a research organisation (such as a local university) to seek funding jointly for a comprehensive review of the literature relating to young lesbian, gay and bisexual people, which would in turn increase Metro's standing and ability to raise funds for its work. This could lead to Metro developing a research and publication strategy that allows Metro to be at the cutting edge of knowledge about lesbian, gay and bisexual issues for young people and at the same time increasing Metro's reputation with potential sources of funding to deliver expanded services.
- 2.31 Linked to this we believe Metro is well positioned to join forces with a research organisation and commission a large-scale (i.e. wider than the scope of our current work) study of the issues and needs of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. This would include issues relating to access to: appropriate youth services; school-based programmes; employment; sexual behaviour; and related information and support services either across London or across the UK. A scaled down version of this would be to simply continue running the survey Metro has developed with Ergo for this project and increase the promotion of the survey locally and/or nationally.

## 3 Survey

### Sampling and recruitment for the survey

- 3.1 Given the target audience (young LGBTQ people) Ergo proposed to encourage participants to complete questionnaires mainly online. The audience is more technologically adept than, for example, older target groups, and the online nature of the survey (which is completed using the normal browsers and does not require the provision of email addresses) means that it is easier for the target audience to maintain their confidentiality and anonymity – something that is particularly important for this age group.
- 3.2 It is worth noting that this supposition was partly correct. 92 responses were received directly via online submission. There are 3 important provisos for future research:
- It took considerably longer than originally anticipated to achieve this figure
  - There was less control over the residence of respondents via the Internet
  - Whilst 92 submitted their survey via the Internet, only about two thirds of these (n=60) stated that they actually found out about it via the Internet.
- 3.3 Thus, in the event, recruitment was supplemented by the use of every available method of contact including:
- Outreach activities in gay and lesbian pubs, clubs and other commercial venues
  - ‘Snowballing’ by encouraging participants to recruit friends
  - Via youth groups at Metro itself and elsewhere in London
  - Via Metro mailing and email lists
  - Via sexual health clinics
  - Via on-line chat rooms
  - Via on-line links and printed invitations to participate placed in a wide variety of settings
- 3.4 Slightly differently formatted versions of the same questionnaire (with identical content) were made available online and in paper form.
- 3.5 Samples for interview and focus group were mainly drawn from survey participants who had expressed a willingness to participate.
- 3.6 Ergo and Metro recognise that the gold standard would involve recruitment of a random sample to ensure representativeness. However, they also recognise that, in the absence of a defined list of young LGBTQ people, such a sample is not currently feasible.
- 3.7 That said, essentially, the sample is thus a convenience sample, albeit with elements of purposive and quota sampling in the recruitment. However this is the norm in research with these target groups. In analysing, interpreting and reporting the results Ergo and Metro are cognisant of the limitations of the sample.

## Demographics of the survey sample

- 3.8 Following data cleansing, 160 valid responses to the survey were received (92 via direct submission online, and 68 completed paper questionnaires).
- 3.9 It was a long survey, with nearly 80 questions (see Appendix 1). Metro and Ergo had discussed the pros and cons of the length of the survey and had taken the view that whilst some respondents might balk at the length of the survey, nevertheless it was important to cover a very wide range of areas. In the event most respondents completed most of the survey. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in the analysis that follows, the absolute number of responses to each question do not always add up to 160. Where the shortfall is significant this is noted in the text.
- 3.10 Participants were asked how they had first heard about or got hold of the questionnaire. Table 1 details the results.

**Table 1: Source of recruitment to the survey**

| Source                                      | number     | %           |
|---------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| A friend gave it to me / told me about it   | 16         | 10%         |
| I was given it in a gay or lesbian bar      | 9          | 6%          |
| At a Metro youth group                      | 30         | 19%         |
| From another Metro service                  | 8          | 5%          |
| At another youth group elsewhere in London  | 17         | 11%         |
| I was given it / told about it at a clinic  | 4          | 3%          |
| I was told about it in an on-line chat room | 5          | 3%          |
| I found it via a link on the Internet       | 60         | 38%         |
| Other <sup>18</sup>                         | 11         | 7%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>160</b> | <b>100%</b> |

- 3.11 50% of respondents were male and 45% female. 4% (n=6) defined as transgender. Analysis of source of recruitment against sex of respondents showed no statistically significant differences. Interestingly however, young women (n=33) were no less likely to have found the survey via the Internet than young men (n=22).
- 3.12 19% of the sample identified as bisexual, 30% as lesbian, 44% as gay (including 4 women) and 7% as other<sup>19</sup>. Table 2 analyses the sex of respondents against their declared sexual identity.

18 3 given it by their teacher, 1 other at school, 2 via Queer Youth Network, 1 handed a flyer on Old Compton Street, 1 at Orpington College, 1 via the local newspaper, 1 told by their counsellor, and 1 from "Joshua at Metro".

19 4 confused or uncertain, 2 bisexual lesbians, and 1 each of gender blind, pansexual, queer, and fag.



**Table 2: The sex of respondents against their declared sexual identity**

|              | Male      | % of Males  | Female    | % of Females | Transgender |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| Bisexual     | 11        | 14%         | 15        | 21%          | 3           |
| Lesbian      | 0         | 0%          | 47        | 65%          | 1           |
| Gay          | 65        | 81%         | 4         | 6%           | 0           |
| Other        | 4         | 5%          | 6         | 8%           | 1           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>72</b> | <b>100%</b>  | <b>5</b>    |

3.13 Participants were asked how old they had been on the 1st June 2007. Table 3 shows a relatively flat spread. It is noteworthy that nearly a third (31%) were 16 or under.

**Table 3: Respondents declared ages**

| Age      | Number | %   |
|----------|--------|-----|
| No reply | 1      | 1%  |
| Under 12 | 1      | 1%  |
| 12       | 0      | 0%  |
| 13       | 1      | 1%  |
| 14       | 14     | 9%  |
| 15       | 16     | 10% |
| 16       | 16     | 10% |
| 17       | 21     | 13% |
| 18       | 10     | 6%  |
| 19       | 14     | 9%  |
| 20       | 15     | 9%  |
| 21       | 10     | 6%  |
| 22       | 8      | 5%  |
| 23       | 8      | 5%  |
| 24       | 14     | 9%  |
| 25       | 11     | 7%  |

3.14 Participants were asked both where they currently lived and also where they had grown up. Table 4 illustrates the spread of the sample.

**Table 4: Geographical spread of sample**

| Geographical area      | Number who live there now | % who live there now | Number who grew up there | % who grew up there |
|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| No information given   | 10                        | 6%                   | 7                        | 4%                  |
| Bexley                 | 14                        | 9%                   | 10                       | 6%                  |
| Bromley                | 20                        | 12%                  | 18                       | 11%                 |
| Greenwich              | 21                        | 13%                  | 13                       | 8%                  |
| Newham                 | 0                         | 0%                   | 0                        | 0%                  |
| Tower Hamlets          | 5                         | 3%                   | 6                        | 4%                  |
| Lambeth                | 8                         | 5%                   | 9                        | 6%                  |
| Lewisham               | 25                        | 16%                  | 13                       | 8%                  |
| Southwark              | 4                         | 2%                   | 4                        | 2%                  |
| Another London Borough | 29                        | 18%                  | 24                       | 15%                 |
| Outside London         | 24                        | 15%                  | 46                       | 29%                 |
| More than one place    | 0                         | 0%                   | 10                       | 6%                  |



3.15 Not unexpectedly, and in common with most other research samples, there was evidence of significant migration across administrative boundaries. The data were therefore analysed to identify four core groups of respondents as illustrated in Table 5. 43% of the sample either live in the 'core' Metro boroughs, Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley, or grew up there, or both live there and grew up there (category A). 27% of the sample have a similar connection to Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham (Category B). Note that four respondents overlap these two categories, which is why the total percentages add up to 102%. Thus these two categories are constructed inclusively.

**Table 5: Respondents who either live in or grew up in different areas**

| Category | Geographical area                                               | Number in the sample | % of the sample |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| A        | Core Metro boroughs (Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Tower Hamlets) | 69                   | 43%             |
| B        | Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham                                 | 43                   | 27%             |
| C        | Other London boroughs                                           | 29                   | 18%             |
| D        | Outside London                                                  | 23                   | 14%             |

3.16 Since the primary purpose of this research was to focus upon those who had the closest connection to the core Metro catchment area (Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley), and subsequently to the extended area covering Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, the latter two categories of Table 5 are constructed exclusively. In other words the category of "other London boroughs" (Category C) excludes respondents who currently live there if they grew up in one of the core areas, as well as those who grew up there if they currently live in one of the core areas (Categories A and B). Similarly, the category of those from "outside London" (Category D) excludes those who currently live in London even if they grew up outside London, as well as those who grew up in London even if they currently live outside London.

3.17 A large number of analyses were carried out to see if there were any statistically significant differences in the patterns of responses from those in each of these four groups. Essentially, however, time and again the result was that the numbers of these small subsets of the sample are insufficient to allow for statistically significant differences to be inferred. Tables illustrating this point are included in Appendix 2. Additionally, this accords with the great majority of published research on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations which tends to identify far greater commonalities than differences across geographical administrative boundaries, and indeed the match between the findings of this present research and the brief literature review.

- 3.18 Thus for the purposes of analysis throughout the rest of this section the following principles have been applied.
- In general the featured data tables refer to the full sample of respondents from all four geographical categories.
  - In exceptional cases, especially where questions refer to the reach, impact, recognition or perception of Metro services, the sample analysed has focussed on Categories A and B, to reflect the core geography of what we might term the Metro core (transport-convenient) catchment area.
  - In exceptional cases, where London-wide issues have been analysed only category D has been excluded from the sample of analysis.
- 3.19 Participants were asked to state their own definition of their ethnicity or family background. These were then coded into the following small number of categories (Table 6) for further statistical analysis.

**Table 6: Ethnicity of respondents**

| <b>Ethnicity</b>  | <b>Number</b> | <b>%</b>    |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| White British     | 104           | 65%         |
| White non-British | 14            | 9%          |
| Black or Asian    | 15            | 9%          |
| Mixed             | 16            | 10%         |
| No reply          | 11            | 7%          |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>160</b>    | <b>100%</b> |

- 3.20 The ethnic breakdown of the sample suggests relatively effective recruitment across ethnic boundaries, with towards a third (28%) defining themselves as other than white British. However, again, the subsets of ethnic categories are insufficient for statistically significant determination of differences.
- 3.21 Participants were asked to estimate the combined income of their parents, as an attempt to gather useful information about class or poverty in this population. However, the majority (56%) declined to provide any information. Additionally many of those who did answer this question said “none of your business” or “I have no idea” or the equivalent. It was therefore decided to apply no further analysis to this data.
- 3.22 Participants were asked what kind of home they lived in currently. As illustrated in Table 7, almost two thirds (63%) live with their family, and the remainder are more or less equally divided between those who live on their own (13%) and those who flat share (14%). Only 2% (n=3) are currently in temporary accommodation.

**Table 7: What kind of home participants currently live in**

| Home situation                                        | Number of respondents | %   |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----|
| No reply                                              | 1                     | 1%  |
| With one or both parents or guardian                  | 95                    | 59% |
| With other family members or relatives                | 7                     | 4%  |
| On my own in a rented flat                            | 19                    | 12% |
| On my own in a flat I own (with or without mortgage)  | 1                     | 1%  |
| In a shared flat with friends                         | 11                    | 7%  |
| In a shared flat with others I didn't know beforehand | 11                    | 7%  |
| In a hostel                                           | 1                     | 1%  |
| In other temporary accommodation                      | 2                     | 1%  |
| In a squat or on the street                           | 0                     | 0%  |
| Other                                                 | 12                    | 8%  |

3.23 4% of the sample are registered disabled.

3.24 Participants were asked to state their highest educational qualification. In common with most other samples in lesbian and gay research there was a recruitment bias towards those with higher educational attainment.

## Coming out

3.25 Participants were asked when they had first had sex with a partner of the same sex. There was no attempt in this question to pre-define for respondents what exactly constituted "sex". Table 8 analyses the absolute numbers of male, female, and transgender respondents as well as the cumulative percentages of males and females who say they have had sex by particular ages.

**Table 8: Age at which respondents had had their first same-sex experience**

|                 | Male      | % Male | Cumulative Male | Female    | % Female | Cumulative Female | Transgender |
|-----------------|-----------|--------|-----------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| under 12        | 4         | 5%     | 5%              | 0         | 0%       | 0%                | 0           |
| 12              | 2         | 3%     | 8%              | 2         | 3%       | 3%                | 1           |
| 13              | 12        | 15%    | 23%             | 5         | 7%       | 10%               | 1           |
| 14              | 6         | 8%     | 31%             | 2         | 3%       | 13%               | 0           |
| 15              | 8         | 10%    | 41%             | 7         | 10%      | 23%               | 1           |
| 16              | 15        | 19%    | 60%             | 9         | 13%      | 36%               | 1           |
| 17              | 5         | 6%     | 66%             | 7         | 10%      | 46%               | 0           |
| 18              | 6         | 8%     | 74%             | 5         | 7%       | 53%               | 1           |
| 19              | 4         | 5%     | 79%             | 6         | 8%       | 61%               | 1           |
| 20              | 1         | 1%     | 80%             | 1         | 1%       | 62%               | 0           |
| 21              | 1         | 1%     | 81%             | 1         | 1%       | 63%               | 0           |
| 22              | 3         | 4%     | 85%             | 1         | 1%       | 64%               | 0           |
| 23              | 0         | 0%     | 85%             | 0         | 0%       | 64%               | 0           |
| 24              | 0         | 0%     | 85%             | 0         | 0%       | 64%               | 0           |
| 25              | 1         | 1%     | 86%             | 0         | 0%       | 64%               | 0           |
| Not yet had sex | 11        | 14%    | 100%            | 25        | 35%      | 99%               | 0           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>80</b> |        |                 | <b>72</b> |          |                   | <b>6</b>    |

- 3.26 The most noteworthy finding here (especially for the purposes of targeting sexual health services) is that in this sample more than a fifth of girls (23%) have started sex under the legal age of consent (16) and two fifths of boys (41%) have done so. As already discussed in the literature review section, interventions that seek to address risk factors in relation to sexual debut need also to be targeted at those under 16. Nearly three quarters of young men (74%) and over half of young women (53%) have had sex by the age of 18.
- 3.27 Just over half the sample (55%) have never had sex with a partner of the opposite sex, 16% have had such sex once, and just over a quarter (26%) more than once. Not surprisingly there was more of a tendency for those who self-defined as gay or lesbian to never have had sex with a partner of the opposite sex, however the subsets were too small for statistical significance to be inferred.
- 3.28 Participants were also asked how old they were when they thought they might be gay, bisexual or lesbian, as well as how old they were when they first told someone about their sexuality. There were no statistically significant differences between the experiences reported by males and females. Table 9 compares the results to identify the lag between knowing and telling about sexual orientation.

**Table 9: Ages at which respondents thought they might be lesbian or gay, and at which they told someone else**

| Age                 | Cumulative % of those who thought they might be lesbian, gay or bisexual | Cumulative % of those who first told someone about their sexuality |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| under 12            | 37%                                                                      | 4%                                                                 |
| 12                  | 53%                                                                      | 8%                                                                 |
| 13                  | 68%                                                                      | 19%                                                                |
| 14                  | 80%                                                                      | 38%                                                                |
| 15                  | 89%                                                                      | 55%                                                                |
| 16                  | 96%                                                                      | 70%                                                                |
| 17                  | 98%                                                                      | 83%                                                                |
| 18                  | 98%                                                                      | 88%                                                                |
| 19                  | 98%                                                                      | 89%                                                                |
| 20                  | 99%                                                                      | 93%                                                                |
| 21                  | 99%                                                                      | 94%                                                                |
| 22                  | 99%                                                                      | 96%                                                                |
| 23                  | 99%                                                                      | 96%                                                                |
| 24                  | 99%                                                                      | 96%                                                                |
| 25                  | 99%                                                                      | 97%                                                                |
| not yet told anyone |                                                                          | 99%                                                                |

- 3.29 More than half the sample (53%) thought they might be gay, lesbian or bisexual under the age of 13, and nine tenths (89%) under the age of 16. However, there is on average a lag between first knowledge and first disclosure. More than half the sample (55%) had told someone about their sexuality under the age of 16 and nine tenths (88%) under the age of 19.

- 3.30 Participants were also asked who it was that they first told. More than three quarters (77%) had told a friend (54% of the same sex, and 23% of the opposite sex). 10% had first told parents and another 3% other family members. Essentially some 89% had told a private person in their lives, and only some 8% had first told a professional.
- 3.31 It is probably a sign of the care with which young lesbian, gay and bisexual people choose whom they will first disclose to that the reaction of 83% of those first confided in was described as “friendly and supportive”. Whilst 16% were confused or uncertain, only just over 1% were actually hostile or physically threatening.
- 3.32 Participants were asked if they felt they had needed support round about the time when they first told someone. 54% said “yes” and 21% were unsure.
- 3.33 When asked to tell what kind of problems had been encountered or what went wrong or was hardest, about two thirds of the sample gave responses. They covered a predictable range of issues including:
- Fear of rejection by family and friends
  - Loss of friends
  - Having to cope with attitudes that question their own understanding of their sexuality
  - Lack of empathy with difficulties encountered
  - Bullying at school
  - Verbal hostility and general social abuse
  - Low self-esteem, self-doubt and fear of ‘not being normal’
  - Isolation, confusion, and not knowing where to turn for support
  - Fear of peers finding out – especially at school
  - Self-harm and attempted suicide.
- 3.34 These problems largely confirm the range that was expected from the literature review, and used in the construction of the questions for the survey. As a result many of them were addressed with quantitative questions, the results of which are discussed below.
- 3.35 Participants were also asked to state what was important about the most useful support that they had got. Key themes that emerged are not surprising, but never the less useful as indicators of relevant quality standards in service provision to this population. They included predominantly:
- Not being judged
  - Made to feel ‘normal’
  - Recognition of others like oneself
  - Accompanied introduction to the gay scene
  - Youth groups providing companionship and friendship
  - General support, acceptance and reassurance
  - Being able to share feelings and experience with like-minded peers

3.36 Finally, in this section of the survey participants were asked if there was any service they wish had been available when they came out, but which they didn't know about or which didn't exist then.

- Some real support from the school
- Gay youth support groups promoted in schools
- Other accessible but confidential ways of 'chatting' to gay people such as by text and on-line, by email, etc.
- Support for confused parents
- Trans-specific and bisexual support groups
- Better promotion of the existence of Metro.

3.37 All this indicates a key gap in service provision or accessibility for those who may be struggling to come to terms with their sexuality not only between the ages of 16 – 20 but also for those under 16. Metro facilitates an under-16 group (Tribe), and expansion of access to these and other relevant groups would appear to be a key priority.

3.38 The clear message from the qualitative data in the survey is not so much the need for new or different kinds of services than exist in the sector presently, or than Metro currently provides, so much as ways of improving awareness and accessibility to them.

"I wish I knew about Metro. I've always lived in Greenwich and never ever saw a Metro publication once growing up." X male`

## Friends, sexual partners and socialising

3.39 Participants were asked to estimate how often they engaged in particular activities. Separate analysis of this data for male and female respondents showed no significant difference (other than that none of the women ever use 'cottages' or other public sites such as cruising grounds). Table 10 shows this data.

**Table 10: Frequency of use of various facilities**

|                                                    | Never | Less than once a week | About once a week | Two or three times a week | Most days |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Go to a gay or lesbian bar                         | 34%   | 35%                   | 19%               | 8%                        | 4%        |
| Cruise the Internet                                | 25%   | 16%                   | 5%                | 11%                       | 43%       |
| Go to an LGBTQ youth group                         | 55%   | 19%                   | 15%               | 10%                       | 1%        |
| Go 'cottaging' - looking for sex in public toilets | 94%   | 4%                    | 1%                | 1%                        | 1%        |
| Go to a cruising ground                            | 94%   | 4%                    | 0%                | 1%                        | 1%        |
| Read the lesbian or gay press                      | 36%   | 30%                   | 21%               | 5%                        | 8%        |

3.40 A number of trends can be detected:

- Only a small minority of young men in this sample use cottages or cruising grounds.
- The sample appears to fall into three more or less equal-sized groups, those who never use gay bars, those who use them occasionally and those who use them at least once a week.
- Similarly, roughly equal thirds of the sample never read the gay press, read it occasionally, or read it at least once a week.
- The sample again falls into three distinct groups when it comes to ‘cruising’ the Internet (i.e. looking for sexual partners or sexual interest), though in this case the largest group (60%) use the Internet for this purpose at least once a week, and only a quarter never use it for this purpose. Interestingly, further analysis showed that use of the Internet for cruising was only marginally higher amongst those recruited to the survey via the Internet, with 69% using it for cruising at least once a week.
- About half the sample (55%) state that have never used an LGBTQ youth group. This proportion rises to 70% when we exclude from the analysis those who were directly recruited to the survey at youth groups.

3.41 Participants were asked how old they were when they had their first relationship (as opposed to first sexual encounter) with a partner of the same sex. There was no statistically significant difference between males and females. Table 11 shows that nearly two fifths (38%) have had a relationship with a same sex partner under the age of 16. Table 12 breaks this down according to the gender of the respondents. It is interesting to compare the age of first stated relationship with the age of first stated same-sex (see Table 8 above). 38% of the whole sample and 34% of boys and 42% of girls have had a same-sex relationship under the legal age of consent (16), compared with 41% of boys and 23% of girls who have had sex under 16.

**Table 11: Age of first relationship with a same-sex partner**

| Age                        | %   | Cumulative |
|----------------------------|-----|------------|
| under 12                   | 5%  | 5%         |
| 12                         | 3%  | 7%         |
| 13                         | 9%  | 16%        |
| 14                         | 8%  | 24%        |
| 15                         | 14% | 38%        |
| 16                         | 10% | 48%        |
| 17                         | 13% | 61%        |
| 18                         | 7%  | 68%        |
| 19                         | 5%  | 73%        |
| 20                         | 3%  | 75%        |
| 21                         | 3%  | 78%        |
| 22                         | 0%  | 78%        |
| 23                         | 2%  | 80%        |
| 24                         | 0%  | 80%        |
| 25                         | 0%  | 80%        |
| Not had a relationship yet | 20% | 100%       |

**Table 12: Age of first relationship with a same-sex partner broken down by gender**

| Age                        | Male | % Male | Cumulative Male | Female | % Female | Cumulative Female | Transgender |
|----------------------------|------|--------|-----------------|--------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| under 12                   | 4    | 5%     | 5%              | 3      | 4%       | 4%                | 0           |
| 12                         | 3    | 4%     | 9%              | 1      | 1%       | 6%                | 0           |
| 13                         | 8    | 10%    | 19%             | 5      | 7%       | 13%               | 1           |
| 14                         | 5    | 6%     | 25%             | 8      | 11%      | 24%               | 0           |
| 15                         | 7    | 9%     | 34%             | 13     | 18%      | 42%               | 1           |
| 16                         | 13   | 16%    | 51%             | 3      | 4%       | 46%               | 0           |
| 17                         | 11   | 14%    | 65%             | 10     | 14%      | 60%               | 0           |
| 18                         | 5    | 6%     | 71%             | 5      | 7%       | 67%               | 1           |
| 19                         | 2    | 3%     | 73%             | 4      | 6%       | 72%               | 1           |
| 20                         | 1    | 1%     | 75%             | 3      | 4%       | 76%               | 0           |
| 21                         | 3    | 4%     | 78%             | 2      | 3%       | 79%               | 0           |
| 22                         | 0    | 0%     | 78%             | 0      | 0%       | 79%               | 0           |
| 23                         | 3    | 4%     | 82%             | 0      | 0%       | 79%               | 0           |
| 24                         | 0    | 0%     | 82%             | 0      | 0%       | 79%               | 0           |
| 25                         | 0    | 0%     | 82%             | 0      | 0%       | 79%               | 0           |
| Not had a relationship yet | 14   | 18%    | 100%            | 15     | 21%      | 100%              | 2           |

3.42 Further analysis of the ages of the thirteen respondents who have not had a relationship shows eighteen of them are 16 or younger, and the rest are evenly spread from ages 17 – 24. Only 9% of the sample have not had a same sex relationship by the age of 21. Again, this confirms the importance of providing relevant support services to a younger age group.

3.43 These first partners were met in a variety of ways as shown in Table 13.

**Table 13: Where or how first partners were met**

| How met                     | Number | % of first relationship |
|-----------------------------|--------|-------------------------|
| At school or college        | 53     | 42%                     |
| Over the Internet           | 21     | 17%                     |
| Through friends             | 15     | 12%                     |
| In a gay or lesbian bar     | 14     | 11%                     |
| At a youth group            | 11     | 9%                      |
| At work                     | 3      | 2%                      |
| In a non-gay bar            | 2      | 2%                      |
| At a recreational club      | 2      | 2%                      |
| On holiday                  | 2      | 2%                      |
| Virtual relationship online | 1      | 1%                      |
| In a shelter                | 1      | 1%                      |
| At church                   | 1      | 1%                      |
| Cottaging                   | 1      | 1%                      |



3.44 For a small minority (15%) none of their close friends are gay or lesbian. For just over half (51%) only a few of their friends are gay or lesbian. And for about a third (34%) most or all of their friends are gay or lesbian. Analysis of the thirty two who are under 16 not surprisingly shows that more than a third (n=12) state that none of their friends are lesbian or gay, over a half (n=17) state that only a few of their friends are lesbian or gay.

## Homophobia

3.45 Participants were asked how often they had suffered a range of hostile incidents because of their sexuality. The answers, in line with the findings from the literature review, reveal a disturbingly high level of homophobic bullying at school, with nearly half (46%) having been bullied at least once and 17% often. In rough terms about a third have been bullied at least once outside school (34%), or been threatened (36%). Two thirds (67%) have been called names at least once. A fifth (20%) have suffered physical attack at least once and nearly a fifth (17%) have suffered damage to their property. Further analysis was undertaken to see if there were any statistically significant differences in the pattern of responses from residents of the core Metro area (Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley) or from the residents of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham. None were found: see table 40, table 41 and table 42 in Appendix 2.

**Table 14: Levels of bullying experienced**

|                         | No reply | Never | Once | Sometimes | Often |
|-------------------------|----------|-------|------|-----------|-------|
| Bullying at school      | 6%       | 48%   | 12%  | 17%       | 17%   |
| Bullying outside school | 7%       | 60%   | 8%   | 18%       | 8%    |
| Threats                 | 8%       | 57%   | 13%  | 17%       | 6%    |
| Name calling            | 4%       | 29%   | 10%  | 38%       | 19%   |
| Physical attack         | 5%       | 75%   | 10%  | 7%        | 3%    |
| Damage to your property | 6%       | 78%   | 4%   | 11%       | 2%    |

3.45 This data is confirmed by the answers to three statements about perceptions of risk that participants were asked to agree or disagree with.

**Table 15: Perceptions of risk of bullying**

|                                                                                                  | No reply | Agree | Disagree |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|----------|
| I would be in physical danger from some people I know if they found out about my sexuality       | 3%       | 24%   | 74%      |
| There are some people I haven't told about my sexuality because I'm afraid of a hostile reaction | 3%       | 61%   | 37%      |
| Some people I know spread gossip or rumours about me                                             | 3%       | 53%   | 44%      |

3.47 More than half (53%) believe that they suffer gossip or rumours. 61% have not told some people about their sexuality because they fear a hostile reaction. Almost a quarter (24%) think that they could be in physical danger from some people if they knew about their sexuality. Further analysis showed no significant difference across different age groups. These high levels suggest a priority for appropriate developmental work with police and community safety, involving the participation of LGBT police officers where possible.

## General health

3.48 In the next section of the survey participants were asked a range of questions about their general health and health-related behaviour.

3.49 Two fifths of the sample are currently smokers, with no significant statistical difference between males (42%) and females (38%). Factoring in those who have smoked in the past but who have given up, just under half have never smoked, again with no significant statistical difference between males (49%) and females (44%). Analysis of the subset of those under 16 shows that some 31% are smokers, suggesting that any prevention work needs to be early.

**Table 16: Prevalence of smoking**

|                                        |     |
|----------------------------------------|-----|
| No reply                               | 1%  |
| No I've never smoked                   | 46% |
| No, I used to smoke, but I've given up | 13% |
| Yes, I smoke occasionally              | 19% |
| Yes, I smoke - up to 10 a day          | 11% |
| Yes, I smoke - more than 10 a day      | 11% |

3.50 Given its illegality, it may be expected that survey respondents would under-report recreational drug use. Nevertheless, as detailed in Table 17, significant numbers report at least occasional drug use. As might be expected with any group of young people, cannabis is the most widely used drug, and has been tried by 59% of the sample. Within cannabis use 43% have used once or sometimes. This would tend to suggest experimentation rather than a consistent habit. However, 15% are using cannabis often. There are a smaller number of frequent Class A drug users. 15% use Ecstasy sometimes or more, and 17% use cocaine sometimes or more. Levels of reported experimentation are lower for other drugs. Clearly, there is scope for targeted drug prevention and harm reduction work with this client group.

**Table 17: Use of various drugs**

|                             | No reply | Never | Once | Sometimes | Often |
|-----------------------------|----------|-------|------|-----------|-------|
| Cannabis (dope, weed, hash) | 1%       | 41%   | 14%  | 29%       | 15%   |
| E (ecstasy)                 | 3%       | 73%   | 10%  | 12%       | 3%    |
| Cocaine (coke, charlie)     | 4%       | 72%   | 8%   | 14%       | 3%    |
| Crack                       | 8%       | 87%   | 3%   | 2%        | 0%    |
| Heroin (smack)              | 4%       | 94%   | 1%   | 1%        | 0%    |
| Viagra                      | 3%       | 86%   | 8%   | 3%        | 1%    |
| Crystal meth                | 5%       | 92%   | 3%   | 0%        | 0%    |
| GHB                         | 3%       | 89%   | 6%   | 1%        | 1%    |
| Ketamine                    | 2%       | 86%   | 6%   | 3%        | 3%    |

3.51 Those who had used any of the above drugs were asked what age they first used them at. Since this question also offered the option of “never used”, further analysis reveals that only 29% of the sample have never used any of the above drugs (27% of males and 33% of females). Of those who had used drugs (n=99) more than half (57%) had undertaken their first experimentation by the age of 16. Given the limitations of the sample size, there is no statistically significant difference between the proportion of males who have used by the age of 16 (50%, n =25) and the proportion of females (70%, n = 42). Further analysis of first age of drug use of those who had used cannabis shows that 60% of the ninety respondents who state that they have ever used drugs have done so by the age of 16. Again, drugs work with this population needs to start below the age of consent if it is to address the issue before experimentation has begun.

**Table 18: Age of first use of drugs**

| <b>Age first used</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Cumulative %</b> |
|-----------------------|----------|---------------------|
| under 12              | 1%       | 1%                  |
| 12                    | 3%       | 4%                  |
| 13                    | 10%      | 14%                 |
| 14                    | 11%      | 25%                 |
| 15                    | 17%      | 42%                 |
| 16                    | 14%      | 57%                 |
| 17                    | 8%       | 65%                 |
| 18                    | 15%      | 80%                 |
| 19                    | 6%       | 86%                 |
| 20                    | 5%       | 91%                 |
| 21                    | 2%       | 93%                 |
| 22                    | 1%       | 94%                 |
| 23                    | 1%       | 95%                 |
| 24                    | 2%       | 97%                 |
| 25                    | 3%       | 100%                |

3.52 It is generally accepted that people tend to under-estimate the extent of their drinking. Nevertheless, as Table 20 shows 10% of the sample report they drink frequently and two fifths (41%) at least twice a week. Further analysis of the 69 below the age of 18 who answered this question indicates a high level of alcohol use below the legal age, with 87% having tried alcohol, and 61% drinking it regularly.

**Table 19: Reported levels of drinking**

|                        | Whole sample | Under 18 |
|------------------------|--------------|----------|
| No reply               | 2%           | 3%       |
| Never                  | 9%           | 10%      |
| Monthly or less        | 20%          | 26%      |
| 2 - 4 times a month    | 28%          | 30%      |
| 2 -3 times a week      | 31%          | 25%      |
| 4 or more times a week | 10%          | 6%       |

3.53 This is matched by the answers to a range of statements (where participants were asked to choose as many as they felt applied to themselves). Table 20 shows that whilst 58% of the sample do not report any indications of problem drinking (including those who did not answer the question) the remaining 42% between them indicate a number of warning signs of immoderate alcohol use. Again, the same trend is found amongst those under 18, suggesting that habits have become embedded before the legal drinking age.

**Table 20: Levels of indications of problem drinking**

| Description of physical fitness                                                                         | All | Under 18 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------|
| I was not able to stop drinking once I'd started                                                        | 18% | 17%      |
| I failed to do what was normally expected of me because of drinking                                     | 11% | 13%      |
| I needed an alcoholic drink in the morning to get going after a heavy drinking session the night before | 4%  | 4%       |
| I felt guilty after drinking                                                                            | 18% | 17%      |
| I was unable to remember what happened the night before because I had been drinking                     | 29% | 33%      |
| I was injured as a result of drinking                                                                   | 18% | 23%      |
| A relative, friend or professional has suggested that I cut down on my drinking                         | 10% | 12%      |
| None of the above apply to me                                                                           | 50% | 48%      |
| No reply                                                                                                | 8%  | 9%       |

3.54 Two fifths (42%) thought their physical fitness average, and a fifth (21%) thought their physical fitness to be poor or very poor.

**Table 21: Description of physical health**

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| No reply   | 3%  |
| Very good  | 8%  |
| Good       | 28% |
| Average    | 42% |
| Poor       | 16% |
| Very poor  | 5%  |
| Don't know | 1%  |

3.55 2% of the sample thought their weight was slightly overweight. 6% thought they were seriously overweight and less than 1% seriously underweight.

- 3.56 Roughly a third (34%) hardly ever or never do more than 30 minutes of exercise or sports; 19% once a week; 29% 2 – 3 times a week, and 17% more than 4 times a week.
- 3.57 A significant proportion of the sample would be interested in cutting down on drinking, drug taking and smoking.

**Table 22: Levels of interest in cutting down on drinking, drug taking and smoking**

|                  | No reply | No  | Not sure | Yes | N/A |
|------------------|----------|-----|----------|-----|-----|
| Your drinking    | 4%       | 51% | 13%      | 13% | 19% |
| Your drug taking | 5%       | 31% | 6%       | 9%  | 50% |
| Your smoking     | 5%       | 22% | 9%       | 17% | 48% |

## Mental health and well-being

- 3.58 There are relatively high levels of problems reported on some measures of mental health. Suicidal ideation is reported by a third (34%) of the sample. Less than a quarter (24%) of the sample reported no such indicative problems.

**Table 23: Reported levels of indicative problems with mental health and well-being**

|                                                      |     |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| No reply                                             | 3%  |
| I have regular trouble sleeping                      | 46% |
| I regularly feel down, worried or overwhelmed        | 56% |
| I regularly have panic attacks                       | 11% |
| I often feel lonely or wish I had someone to talk to | 47% |
| I have thought about harming myself                  | 36% |
| I have thought about killing myself                  | 34% |
| None of the above apply to me                        | 21% |

- 3.59 Moreover, approximately half the sample have attempted suicide or self-harm. 22% say they have attempted suicide, and a further 27% have attempted self-harm (with 18% having attempted self-harm more than once).
- 3.60 Two of the 38 who had attempted suicide or self-harm gave information about the circumstances. Typically, factors included:
- Bullying at school
  - Family problems, parental pressure and abuse
  - Being tormented for being gay
  - Despair about unrequited love or relationships broken up
  - Loneliness, helplessness, no one to talk to
  - Hating self for being gay

## Sexual health

- 3.61 The next section of the survey asked a number of questions about sexual health and use of sexual health services. Participants were asked to write down their own definition of what counts as safer sex. The vast majority of male replies involved “using condoms”, suggesting that there is no lack of understanding about the basic safer sex message. Not surprisingly, female participants interpreted this question in a wider way. Thus although many of them also mentioned condoms, there were more answers to do with trust, knowing sexual partners, limiting the number of sexual partners, etc.
- 3.62 The personal impact of HIV was rated as important or very important by 59% of males and by 33% of females.
- 3.63 In the analysis of what proportions have had an HIV test, the sample was filtered to exclude those who stated that they had not yet had sex with a same sex partner. About half the males and two thirds of the females have never had an HIV test. There is a significant proportion of male (29%) and female (18%) repeat testers.

**Table 24: Number of HIV tests taken**

| Number of HIV tests | Male | Female |
|---------------------|------|--------|
| No reply            | 4%   | 0%     |
| Never               | 47%  | 67%    |
| Once                | 19%  | 15%    |
| Twice               | 4%   | 7%     |
| 3-5 times           | 16%  | 7%     |
| More than 5 times   | 9%   | 4%     |

- 3.64 Of the 54 who had reported ever having an HIV test only one male reported that he had tested HIV positive. He declined to talk to a gay researcher about being HIV positive.
- 3.65 For the analysis of use of testing services the sample was filtered to include only the 108 participants from geographical categories A and B (i.e. the Metro core boroughs as well as Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham). Because the absolute numbers are small, it is difficult to say much more about these figures than that there is room for greater access of the local sexual health services by the local population.

**Table 25: Use of various HIV testing facilities**

|                                | No reply | No  | Yes |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----|-----|
| Pitstop clinic at Metro Centre | 24%      | 68% | 8%  |
| Trafalgar Clinic               | 24%      | 71% | 5%  |
| An HIV or GUM clinic elsewhere | 15%      | 63% | 22% |
| Your GP                        | 22%      | 65% | 13% |
| Fastest                        | 26%      | 73% | 1%  |
| Testing at gay venues          | 25%      | 75% | 0%  |
| Testing at Metro youth group   | 25%      | 71% | 4%  |

3.66 10 out of the 11 who had used the Pitstop clinic answered the question about what they had found best about it:

- Local and friendly
- I felt very comfortable there
- I felt comfortable and safe
- Friendly relaxed atmosphere
- Good atmosphere, relaxed
- Friendliness/helpfulness
- Comfortable, helpful
- Friendly
- Atmosphere, friendly welcome, great nurses!
- Friendly and professional

3.67 6 out of 11 answered what they would improve about it:

- Wider range of services
- Nothing!
- Cake
- More tests. Always open at the weekend and later into the evening
- Friendlier nurse... though that was a while ago
- The sofa covers?!?

3.68 For the next analysis, the sample was filtered to exclude those who had not yet had sex with a same sex partner. A small but significant minority of those who were sexually active (n=121) had had various sexually transmitted infections.

**Table 26: Reported incidence of sexually transmitted infections amongst those who have had sex with a same-sex partner**

|                       | No reply | No  | Yes |
|-----------------------|----------|-----|-----|
| Chlamydia             | 3%       | 92% | 5%  |
| Hepatitis B           | 4%       | 94% | 2%  |
| Herpes                | 3%       | 93% | 4%  |
| Gonorrhoea            | 3%       | 88% | 8%  |
| Syphilis              | 5%       | 92% | 3%  |
| Anal or genital warts | 3%       | 93% | 4%  |

3.69 Of these 38 reported incidents of sexually transmitted infection all were within a group of 17, indicating a core of those with pronounced needs for sexual health and HIV and STI prevention services.

3.70 Analysis of the filtered sample of those who had ever had sex with a partner of the same sex (n=121) showed that 31% thought they had never got into sex that was less safe than they would have liked, 25% once, 39% a few times, and 4% often.

3.71 A further question asked: "If you have had unprotected anal sex with a partner whose status you didn't know, would you be willing to talk to a lesbian or gay researcher about the circumstances in confidence?" Males fell into three equal groups, those who stated they had never had unprotected anal sex, those who had and would be willing to talk about it, and those who wouldn't.

**Table 27: Unprotected anal sex with a partner of unknown sero-status and willingness to discuss**

|                                                                          | Male | Female | Trans |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------|-------|
| Total sample                                                             | 68   | 46     | 6     |
| No reply                                                                 | 2    | 0      | 0     |
| Yes                                                                      | 23   | 4      | 3     |
| No                                                                       | 22   | 9      | 0     |
| Never had unprotected anal sex with a partner whose status I didn't know | 21   | 33     | 3     |

## Social inclusion

3.72 Nearly a fifth (19%) have been excluded from school with no significant difference between males and females. 28 of the 30 gave reasons for their exclusion.

- Fighting (x12)
- Fighting back after being bullied (x3)
- Fighting with my racist peer
- Being in a relationship with a boy (religious British public school)
- Changing the numbers on a bus and swearing at a teacher in Year 7
- Using someone else's computer account
- Hitting a teacher (primary) Fighting (secondary) Disobedience (secondary)
- Arguing with teachers
- Smoking on school grounds.
- Homework/detentions
- Throwing a football @ a teacher
- Getting into trouble so boys wouldn't think I'm gay
- Lots of things
- Smoking
- My sister was getting bullied and I tried to help.

3.73 6% have received a caution from a police officer.

3.74 6% have been convicted of a criminal offence, three respondents for offences involving fighting two for theft, one for speeding and one for forgetting to tap Oyster card on a bus journey.

3.75 Altogether 8% have ever been paid for sex, and 3% several or many times. Of these 12, 11 were male and one female.

3.76 A slightly higher proportion (11%) have ever had sex for drink, drugs or a place to stay, with three out of seventeen being female. Whilst representing a substantial proportion of the whole sample, the size of these sub samples is too small for further analysis. Clearly, there is potential for further research work.



- 3.77 Although the survey only recruited a small number of those who are in temporary accommodation, when asked about their experience of homelessness, 23% reported that they have been made homeless at least once, with 9% several or many times, which matches the high levels of homelessness indicated in the literature review.
- 3.78 6% of the sample (n=9) have been in care. No further questions were asked about care in this research, but clearly there is potential for future work, perhaps involving leaving care teams.

## Family

- 3.80 Just under a fifth (19%) have not told any members of their family about their sexuality. A slightly higher proportion of females (24%) than males (16%) have told none of their family. More than two thirds of the sample (70%) have told their mother, 56% their father, and nearly half have told various other relatives. A slightly higher proportion of females (24%) than males (16%) have told none of their family.

**Table 28: Disclosure of sexual identity to family**

|                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| No reply                | 1%  |
| None                    | 19% |
| Father                  | 56% |
| Mother                  | 70% |
| Guardian or step-parent | 16% |
| Brother(s)              | 43% |
| Sister(s)               | 46% |
| Other close relatives   | 44% |

- 3.80 More than a quarter (27%) state that they have encountered some hostility from their family, and 5% have suffered extreme hostility or physical violence. Another 21% report a family which is neither hostile nor supportive. Two fifths have been fortunate to have a supportive family right from the start.

**Table 29: Experiences of family responses to disclosure**

|                                         |     |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| No reply                                | 13% |
| Physical violence                       | 1%  |
| Extremely hostile                       | 4%  |
| Hostile                                 | 3%  |
| Initially hostile, but supportive now   | 5%  |
| Neither hostile nor supportive          | 21% |
| Supportive right from the start         | 39% |
| Some members hostile, others supportive | 14% |

- 3.81 When asked if they had heard about or used any service designed to help families come to terms with their children's sexuality more than a fifth would have liked to have used such a service but didn't know it existed, several times as many as those who have actually used such services.

**Table 30: Demand for family mediation services**

|                                                                                    |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| No reply                                                                           | 22% |
| I would have liked to have used a service but didn't know there were such services | 21% |
| I did not want to use such a service                                               | 36% |
| My family did not want to use such a service                                       | 16% |
| I have used such a service                                                         | 4%  |

*"I am out to my parents and everyone – I love the gay scene and have no problems there." E male*

## School

3.82 Fewer than half the sample (43%) say they have had support from anyone at school. Table 31 details the different sources of support encountered. Teachers are the most important group, having provided support to roughly half of all those who had received support. Also important, however, as a group to coordinate with in delivering support to young LGBTQ people at school, are counsellors, youth workers and healthcare professionals working in schools.

**Table 31: Sources of support at school**

|                   | Whole Sample | Metro Core + LSL |
|-------------------|--------------|------------------|
| No reply          | 58%          | 55%              |
| Teacher           | 21%          | 22%              |
| PSHE teacher      | 4%           | 5%               |
| Counsellor        | 13%          | 13%              |
| Connexions worker | 9%           | 7%               |
| Nurse             | 3%           | 4%               |
| Health visitor    | 1%           | 1%               |
| Other             | 11%          | 12%              |

3.83 55% state that they have never needed to report a homophobic incident at school. 22% have wanted to but felt they could not do so. And 16% have reported an incident. Of the 19 incidents described

The person committing the hate crime was dealt with accordingly

Occasionally got someone 'told off' for stuff, One girl had to replace a shirt she decided to write 'GAY' on the back of whilst I was wearing it

It's really complicated

Got in a fight, I was really angry (3 years of bullying angry!), 3 friends had to hold me back. Sent to headmaster, gave him the book of hateful comments/threats. Left school 2 months later

The general use of the word "dyke" around school, and "gay" as a synonym for "stupid"

The teacher I told was very supportive (personal friend anyway)

Got in a fight with a Muslim girl - apparently my sexuality offended her religion - she hit me first by the way

Actually my school reported it to me! I was involved in the music dept when I was at school and we went on an annual trip for a few days. One of the other pupils' mother rang the school and said she didn't want me sleeping in the same dorm as her daughter because I was a lesbian. My music teacher and the head of dept told me what had happened and told me that they would obviously be taking my side and that they had told the mother this

Assembly called. Made it worse - left school as a result

A guy in college shouted verbal abuse

Very little. Eventually, due to running away, the police became involved

Teacher dealt with it

I was beat up for looking at a boy in the shower and I told the PE teacher who told me I shouldn't be looking

Nothing was done

The boy got a warning and was nearly taken to senior management

A lot

College - nothing happened

Head teacher said it was my fault

Nothing

- 3.84 Just over a quarter (27%) had ever had any school course work which discussed gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender issues. There was no statistical difference in this respect between the whole sample and categories A and B (the core boroughs for this research).

**Table 32: School work addressing LGBTQ issues**

|                  | Whole sample | Metro core + LSL |
|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| No reply         | 8%           | 9%               |
| Yes, once        | 12%          | 14%              |
| Yes, a few times | 11%          | 12%              |
| Yes, often       | 4%           | 4%               |
| No               | 66%          | 61%              |

- 3.85 Only 13% were aware of any supportive statements about gay, lesbian and bisexual equality in any of their school's policies.

## Occupation

- 1.2 Only a small minority of the sample are not in employment, education or training, with 7% stating they are unemployed, and no replies to this question from a further 4%.

**Table 33: Occupation of respondents**

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| No reply                         | 4%  |
| At school                        | 22% |
| Studying at college, poly or uni | 36% |
| Full time employed               | 19% |
| Part-time employed               | 7%  |
| Self-employed                    | 3%  |
| Unemployed                       | 7%  |
| Registered disabled              | 1%  |

## Engagement with the community

3.87 More than two thirds of the sample (67%) have told most or all of their friends about their sexuality. And 90% have told at least one of their friends.

**Table 34: Proportions of friends to whom respondents have disclosed their sexuality**

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| No reply          | 4%  |
| No, none of them  | 7%  |
| Yes, one of them  | 5%  |
| Yes, some of them | 18% |
| Yes, most of them | 27% |
| Yes, all of them  | 40% |

3.88 Participants were also asked how those friends that they had disclosed to had reacted to the disclosure. The sample reported mainly supportive reactions from the friends they had told with some mixed reactions, and only a few distinctly hostile results.

## Experience of Metro services

3.89 Participants were asked whether they had heard of and how often they had used a wide range of specific Metro services. The analysis was initially filtered to exclude all those respondents who had neither grown up in nor were currently resident in the core areas of interest (categories C and D) Table 35 and Table 36 detail the responses for categories A and B respectively.

**Table 35: Use of Metro services by Category A respondents (core boroughs)**

|                                                                 | No reply | Never heard of | Heard of, but never used | Used once | Used sometimes | Used alot |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| Youth groups (SNAP, VIBE, Chillin' Out, Tribe, Gally, Step Out) | 9%       | 35%            | 19%                      | 3%        | 10%            | 25%       |
| Youth Forum                                                     | 10%      | 46%            | 25%                      | 1%        | 13%            | 4%        |
| Youth counselling                                               | 7%       | 39%            | 33%                      | 7%        | 9%             | 4%        |
| Family therapy                                                  | 13%      | 58%            | 28%                      | 1%        | 0%             | 0%        |
| Suicide and self harm support                                   | 10%      | 57%            | 28%                      | 0%        | 3%             | 3%        |
| Drug and alcohol support                                        | 10%      | 55%            | 33%                      | 0%        | 0%             | 1%        |
| Metrosafe                                                       | 13%      | 65%            | 22%                      | 0%        | 0%             | 0%        |
| Pitstop clinic                                                  | 12%      | 51%            | 30%                      | 6%        | 1%             | 0%        |
| Thursday drop-in                                                | 12%      | 58%            | 29%                      | 0%        | 1%             | 0%        |
| Metro condoms                                                   | 10%      | 51%            | 19%                      | 4%        | 6%             | 10%       |
| Metro website                                                   | 12%      | 30%            | 20%                      | 19%       | 15%            | 4%        |

**Table 36: Use of Metro services by Category B respondents (LSL)**

|                                                                 | No reply | Never heard of | Heard of, but never used | Used once | Used sometimes | Used alot |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| Youth groups (SNAP, VIBE, Chillin' Out, Tribe, Gally, Step Out) | 10%      | 36%            | 33%                      | 0%        | 5%             | 15%       |
| Youth Forum                                                     | 13%      | 54%            | 23%                      | 0%        | 10%            | 0%        |
| Youth counselling                                               | 13%      | 31%            | 41%                      | 10%       | 0%             | 5%        |
| Family therapy                                                  | 13%      | 49%            | 39%                      | 0%        | 0%             | 0%        |
| Suicide and self harm support                                   | 13%      | 46%            | 36%                      | 0%        | 3%             | 3%        |
| Drug and alcohol support                                        | 13%      | 39%            | 49%                      | 0%        | 0%             | 0%        |
| Metrosafe                                                       | 13%      | 46%            | 36%                      | 3%        | 3%             | 0%        |
| Pitstop clinic                                                  | 13%      | 41%            | 31%                      | 8%        | 0%             | 8%        |
| Thursday drop-in                                                | 13%      | 51%            | 36%                      | 0%        | 0%             | 0%        |
| Metro condoms                                                   | 13%      | 51%            | 23%                      | 0%        | 8%             | 5%        |
| Metro website                                                   | 13%      | 28%            | 23%                      | 21%       | 8%             | 8%        |

3.90 A number of observations may be made about these patterns of usage.

- Large proportions (35 – 65%) have never heard of the various interactive services. And of the remainder, considerably larger proportions have never used the services than used them. Our in-depth interviews discuss these matters below, but in short, there are considerable opportunities for better marketing and promotion of the services on the one hand, and for finding ways of making it easier for young people to try out these services if they have heard about them by removing barriers to access, such as lack of confidence.
- Higher proportions of the sample have used the youth groups and youth forum either occasionally or frequently. Interestingly, even when those who were recruited via youth groups are excluded from the analysis, the proportion of those who have used youth groups only slightly falls from 26% to 24%.
- Similarly, higher proportions have used the Metro website, though about half of those who have used it have only used it once, suggesting that considerably more could be done to make the site more user-friendly and to encourage return visits (where appropriate).
- Further analysis of all those in categories A and B (n=108) indicates that 45% of the filtered sample had ever used one or more of the services, with a further 15% having only ever used the Metro website. 31% had either never heard of or never used any of the services.

3.91 A theme that emerges from the interviews is some further structuring of support and peer groups. Quantitative data for the likelihood of using such groups and services was provided in the survey. Table 37 details the responses from the subset of those in categories A and B.

**Table 37: Likelihood of using various support groups and services**

|                                      | No reply | Unlikely | Fairly likely | Very likely |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|---------------|-------------|
| Living well with HIV Group           | 13%      | 77%      | 8%            | 2%          |
| Creative arts sessions               | 13%      | 41%      | 27%           | 19%         |
| Same sex youth groups                | 11%      | 28%      | 31%           | 31%         |
| 'Coming Out' group                   | 12%      | 50%      | 24%           | 14%         |
| Transgender group                    | 13%      | 76%      | 6%            | 6%          |
| Black or Asian group                 | 11%      | 70%      | 9%            | 9%          |
| Bisexual group                       | 11%      | 52%      | 21%           | 16%         |
| A group to explore personal problems | 11%      | 46%      | 28%           | 15%         |
| Body image workshop                  | 14%      | 42%      | 20%           | 24%         |
| Employment or careers advice         | 13%      | 39%      | 32%           | 16%         |
| Faith or spirituality support        | 12%      | 63%      | 14%           | 11%         |
| Gambling support                     | 13%      | 83%      | 4%            | 0%          |
| Needle and syringe exchange          | 12%      | 83%      | 4%            | 1%          |
| Debt advice                          | 12%      | 67%      | 9%            | 12%         |
| Relationship advice                  | 11%      | 39%      | 28%           | 22%         |

## Suggestions for service development

### 1.1 Participants were asked for any suggestion they might have for service development:

I am considering setting up a group for lesbians for support around safety in public/homophobic harassment or attacks.

A social group for 20-30's

More help for those who want to talk about their sexuality, without having to define it.

I think although your charity is only in Greenwich, for someone like me outside the borough it kinda feels like we don't really feel associated with Metro, in other words maybe if a Bromley office was set up or say one day a week a venue in Bromley area could be arranged for visiting Metro Centre staff to come our way, then maybe people like myself might be interested to see n hear about the whole Metro Centre help support etc.

Any support for bisexuals- what I can find is very limited

Social Activities Group

Not stopping people attending just because of what part of London you live in!

Whether it's appropriate to this questionnaire or not I think that schools should cover gay and lesbian in sex education.

Perhaps a service to approach schools. To help provide support for young LGBTQ people in schools.

Something for people in their 20s.

Y is the scene so shallow?

Services that are not far away in South. I live in East.

HIV+ group. Also the Metro Centre is too far away for me to get to as I live in East London.

A confidence building service would be a good idea.

More young group

Self confidence and self esteem.

Expression through dance/movement. Meditation. Gestalt type group sessions.

Activities and get togethers for the younger kids (under 18) so that the newbie's would not feel out of place with the older generation

## Onward recruitment

- 1.2 Finally, participants in the survey were asked if they would be willing to take part in further more in-depth research and would consider joining a panel. About a third said they would, in each case, as detailed in Table 38, and they then provided contact details.
- 1.3 However, in the event it proved very difficult to turn this notional intention into reality. As described below, although all those who had 'signed up' in principle were contacted several times, and latterly, with incentives, it was hard to recruit more than a small number to actually turn up and participate in focus groups and/or interviews.

**Table 38: Intentions to participate in further research**

|                                                                                              | No reply | Yes | No  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----|-----|
| A confidential telephone or face-to-face interview with a lesbian/gay or bisexual researcher | 11%      | 39% | 50% |
| A confidential one-off group discussion                                                      | 12%      | 34% | 54% |
| Joining a lesbian, gay and bisexual youth panel                                              | 13%      | 34% | 53% |

- 3.95 We conclude that this method of contact via a one-off survey is not an effective way of recruiting for an ongoing youth panel.

## Key conclusions from the survey

- 3.96 The survey has provided rich benchmarking and baseline data, which closely reflects the themes identified in the literature. We recommend that future Metro data gathering can build upon the range of questions in this survey, which can act as a benchmark for future developments.
- 3.97 Young LGBTQ people have high levels of need in relation to:
- Homophobic bullying and fear of hostility
  - Isolation, self esteem and mental wellbeing
  - Family mediation
  - Drugs and alcohol
  - Smoking
  - Housing
  - Sexual health.

- 3.98 Those who have received dedicated or specialised services report much satisfaction and very little dissatisfaction with them. Neither is there any evidence to suggest that the range of services is unwanted or of a low priority.
- 3.99 However, in practice, access is limited. And in most areas of need, it is clear that only a minority of those who have needed services have been able to access them. There is especially a need to increase work with the younger age group, and this must mean securing better access to those in schools.
- 3.100 More detailed conclusions relating to ways of achieving better access are covered in the next sections.



## 4 Commissioner and stakeholder interviews

- 4.1 Ergo approached five current or previous commissioners of Metro services, four of whom took part in detailed one-to-one interviews, while the fifth simply due to time commitments was unable to respond in detail, but expressed positive views about Metro's services and abilities.
- 4.2 Commissioners were asked questions aimed at determining: first their past experience of working with Metro; second areas they found Metro to be highly capable; third areas for the organisation to improve; and fourth what they felt the future of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth commissioning held. The responses were that Metro is seen as a highly capable, specialist organisation.
- 4.3 Our findings below show strong support for Metro's existing work, and encouragement for Metro to expand.

### Past experience

- 4.4 Commissioners saw Metro as a skilled specialist organisation, and that meant that commissioners felt confident in following Metro's lead in determining what to commission for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people and how Metro should deliver their work.
- 4.5 They found Metro to be an organisation that treats its service users holistically covering the range of sexual, emotional, health and HIV related issues and that this was particularly important given the sensitivities of the target audience.
- 4.6 Commissioners felt Metro is an organisation that is worth supporting and commissioners would welcome expansion (potentially both geographically and into other lesbian, gay and bisexual youth services).
- 4.7 The schools work that Metro carries out was again singled out for praise and a target for expansion. Commissioners appreciated that "work with some individuals in schools will be tough to crack," but that it is critical to challenge discrimination and promote the services that Metro can offer amongst those potential clients who are most in need. Others believed that challenging homophobia in schools was increasingly part of the national funding<sup>20</sup> agenda and would like to see Metro "promote their (school related) services more widely."
- 4.8 The need for work in schools is clear from the literature review and the survey findings. It was cited again and again by lesbian, gay and bisexual youth themselves and we discuss this in more detail in paragraph 5.15 onwards.
- 4.9 Commissioners commented that Metro has a highly skilled and experienced management team. Commissioners repeatedly cited the skills and expertise of the Metro senior management team as a key to Metro's success and commissioner confidence in the organisation. This is certainly a fillip to Metro staff, and we believe

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20 We note that while many generic youth funding opportunities will be open to Metro to develop work with young lesbian, gay and bisexual people, in some instances this generic funding is likely to be harder to win or exclude specific lesbian, gay and bisexual services.

due note should be given to this talent. At the same time, when commissioners are so strongly focussed on individuals in an organisation, the need for careful knowledge management and succession planning is heightened and we draw Metro's attention to the need to plan for senior level staff changes if they should occur.

## Improving Performance

4.10 Where it was felt Metro could improve its performance in working with commissioners generally related to communication and reporting.

- Some requests for information "have been a little slow," and Metro could do more to proactively feed back the results of its work. Others said that when they asked for information, sometimes "we don't seem to quite get to it."
- IMPORTANTLY commissioners said they would like to commission more services from Metro with higher levels of funding but without the necessary push and promotion of Metro's current successes, it was sometimes difficult to persuade other commissioners to commit greater funds.
- Given a number of staff changes, communications with commissioners had some times been sporadic and whilst commissioners were generally confident that "all was well," they sometimes lacked specific feedback to know. Others highlighted knowledge sharing, handovers when staff were leaving, which they felt "did not always happen as well as it could have."
- At times the impact of a commission was not clearly demonstrated to commissioners for example it being unclear how many people access particular groups or sessions. Commissioners also felt it would be helpful to have more information on specific activity in their own (geographic) area.<sup>21</sup>
- Commissioners were asked if they would be willing to accept standardised reporting across commissioning streams. Whilst most said they would be happy with this, we do not underestimate the level of resources Metro would need to invest in setting this up before any tangible time saving could be gained by simplified ongoing reporting.
- Commissioners also encouraged expanding partnership working by Metro. Increasingly they said they themselves were moving into partnership commissioning (across boroughs for example) and those organisations that can work across a range of boroughs or work with a range of partner provider organisations, submitting joint funding applications, are likely to be far more successful in the future.<sup>22</sup> Indeed given the rapid changes in voluntary sector provision and in funding opportunities, strong partnership arrangements are likely to assist Metro in weathering any commissioning or provision 'storms'.

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21 We have however seen some evidence of just this type of reporting to funders as part of our Records Review. However if commissioners are expressing this view, there is potential for Metro to communicate these messages more forcefully.

22 Ergo is aware that since commissioning this review Metro has been successful in winning a partnership bid with the Pan-London HIV Prevention Programme under the GMI Partnership banner and we believe this success could be repeated by Metro across other funding streams with other partner service providers. See our recommendation R 24.

## Future commissioning

- 4.11 As far as future commissioning and future services were concerned most commissioners encouraged Metro to develop their expertise in identifying, writing and submitting funding applications to their own organisation but particularly to “broaden the net” so that Metro has a diverse range of funding streams and could expand its work. For example, Metro Youth Service staff are aware of anecdotal evidence of LGBTQ young people as fitting the NEET (not in employment, education, or training) criteria, which may lead to further funding opportunities.
- 4.12 Commissioners did not cite specific planned cuts in funding but said (in general terms, with no particular reference to Metro services) that there is always “scope for realignment of available funding.”
- 4.13 Ergo did not interpret this as any kind of threat to Metro, and given our understanding of the national and political aspects of funding of health and other services we are aware that the majority of individual funding sources remain subject to change or removal and our recommendations focus on Metro developing a wider range of funding sources and enhanced capability in explaining their successes and what they are delivering to a wider audience of current and potential funders.
- 4.14 We understand that links with national and international funding sources have youth participation through fora and other involvement techniques as a key part of any funding criteria. Metro is already strong in this area, indeed plans for developing a youth forum were outlined as part of this commission and many participants expressed an interest in taking part in such representation work: we would encourage Metro to develop this further by following up with participants to invite them to a planned youth forum.
- 4.15 We recommend developing a highly proactive project reporting system for commissioners and other funders. As a minimum we suggest very brief monthly email report to all commissioners and funders, including a single RAG report on each project for which they have provided funding. We have attached a detailed toolkit on how to develop and use RAG reporting in Appendix 4 and would be glad to offer free advice and support to Metro staff in setting this up if it would be helpful. This would go some way to providing standardised reporting.
- 4.16 By collaborating with a research organisation Metro could seek funding for a comprehensive review of the literature relating to young LGBTQ people, which would in turn increase Metro’s standing with current and potential commissioners and Metro’s ability to raise funds for its work.
- 4.17 Linked to this we believe Metro is well positioned to join forces with a research organisation and commission a large-scale national<sup>23</sup> study of the issues and needs of young LGBTQ people. This would include issues relating to access to: appropriate youth services; school-based programmes; employment; sexual behaviour; and related information and support services.

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23 The key will be making this a national survey (as a minimum across England, but ideally covering the whole of the UK).

- 4.18 Because Metro works with young lesbian, gay and bisexual people, over a range of health and social issues, a view often expressed by commissioners was that Metro could do more to seek funds beyond their local and health authority catchments, and even with existing funding organisations to approach a wider range of service commissioners (beyond the largely health and mental health departments for example funding sources related to anti-smoking, anti-obesity, housing, drug and alcohol management, anti-bullying and others).
- 4.19 Given the positive support from commissioners and (as we shall later see from service users) we believe this may now be an appropriate time for Metro to submit more funding applications to a wider range of funding sources. Metro could also seek sponsorship for wider promotions campaigns. We do not believe there is currently capacity within Metro to expand this work and so we recommend recruiting to a dedicated fundraising post. We believe this post should be self-financing and typical salary costs for similar posts are in the range of £24,000 - £30,000 (plus on costs) per year.

## 5 Interviews and focus groups with young people

- 5.1 We ran interviews and focus groups with young lesbian, gay and bisexual people, staff at Metro, and with the young people themselves. 28 young people participated in either the focus groups or one-to-one interviews 11 of them being female and 17 of them male. We also interviewed one additional male who was outside the target age range of 26 or under, but as a gay teacher we felt his views were an additional benefit to the viewpoints expressed in the report. Four females participated in the survey and in a focus group/interview, whereas eight males participated in the survey and in a focus group/interview. A further seven females participated in a focus group/interview but not in the survey: a further nine males participated in a focus group/interview but not in the survey.
- 5.2 As with the stakeholder interviews, our findings below show strong support for Metro's existing work, and encouragement for Metro to expand.

*"I came out with Metro — when I think about it now, it seems weird — I knew there was something wrong with me but didn't know what 'gay' was — even though there are gay people on TV and I use the internet — for a long time I had no idea what was up with me." 5 male*

### Recruitment to focus groups

- 5.3 The research community talks generally of survey fatigue in the general public and this is, to some degree, true of our target audience too. In our initial attempts at recruiting to focus groups with no incentive, interest in signing up to spend an evening or weekend afternoon discussing lesbian, gay and bisexual youth issues was almost non-existent. Despite a personalised approach of individual emails, texts and telephone follow up, only two candidates said they planned to attend.

- 5.4 Following this first recruitment process Ergo agreed with Metro to postpone the focus groups, to run a second recruitment campaign and to offer an incentive of a low-cost music voucher to participants. This resulted in around 8 – 10 participants saying they “definitely” or “probably” would attend. In the event only two participants turned up for the three scheduled focus groups and Ergo carried out detailed interviews with each of these participants.
- 5.5 To ensure that we obtained a wider range of participants Ergo agreed with Metro to carry out further group interviews with attendees of Metro outreach and youth services. This delivered a good sample of issues, opinions and desires for future services.
- 5.6 So why won't they come, and does it matter? Our belief is that recruitment to these types of focus groups is very similar to recruitment to youth services for lesbian, gay and bisexual people and as a result the lessons learned could be used to enhance Metro's marketing and recruitment strategies, although we acknowledge that there are differences between recruitment to research groups and recruitment to youth groups in general.
- 5.7 We believe that greater use and focus should be given to online recruitment. Participants frequently cited online communities, social networking sites and discussion fora as highly influential in affecting their behaviour. There is a cost to advertising in these (often commercial) arenas, but the cost is significantly lower than print advertising. Our recommendation here is that in future funding applications Metro makes the case for increased budgets for recruitment, marketing and service promotion with this highly sensitive target group.

## **Involvement with Metro**

- 5.8 Many participants felt that Metro provided the right kinds of information, services and support but getting through the door on the first day was the toughest part. Participants talked of not knowing what to expect, fearing what other people there would be like, and generally a sense of its being “a bit scary” to arrive at Metro and come through the door alone, as they are coming to terms with their sexuality. They said they felt inhibited from visiting Metro or joining a group because they felt “shy” or feared meeting new people in this scenario.

*“I'm scared of meeting new people so I've never actually been to a session at Metro, but I want to.” A female*

- 5.9 But the young participants also had some suggestions for how this could be improved through enhanced marketing and promotions. First, they suggested that Metro could develop resources showing what it is like to arrive at Metro for the first time, what to expect and how supportive the atmosphere is. We have seen other groups develop such resources in the form of inexpensive video entries available on organisations' websites or photo-stories in print or online. These could be developed by Metro's young service users themselves and give a realistic, safe and approachable way for potential service users to find out about that all important first day at Metro.

5.10 To ease access to Metro for first time visitors, participants suggested:

- Developing online discussion fora, which they could access before visiting Metro
- Developing more appealing promotions and marketing material (ideally an online video of 'my first day at Metro')
- Publishing a blog or podcast of what it is like to attend Metro
- Setting up an email buddy system, so prospective users could email with an existing service user before coming to the premises
- Setting up a face to face buddy system so that new service users are paired with a trained existing service user.

*"...maybe a chatroom 'manned' by a staff member so people can ask embarrassing questions on-line." S male*

5.11 Ergo understands that some such print resources already exist: what our participants are saying is they sometimes found current leaflets to be "a bit clinical" and would like to see existing resources promoted more widely and further resources developed.

*"I thought Metro was really professional — I didn't like the groups though — they need to have a subject to deal with each time." L male*

*"How about more STI testing not just HIV.<sup>24</sup>" N male*

1.3 For a buddy system for people before they arrive at Metro<sup>25</sup> the young people we spoke to suggested this could be telephone support, or online email support but the aim was identical: to give people considering coming to Metro for the first time a specific individual with whom they could identify and ask questions privately before having to walk through the door.

*"I think we need more trips — things off the gay scene" E male*

*"What about getting the police to come and talk to us about legal stuff and staying safe?" K male*

*"I need help with managing money, what food to buy and cook and benefits." X male*

1.4 A number of participants talked of the high quality of the sessions currently run by Metro and how beneficial these sessions had initially been. We understand that the issues that new service users present are used as a structure for social education within the youth groups provided by Metro. But some service users went on to say that they would like to see more specialised workshops or group sessions on particular issues (risk taking and safer sex were cited as potential subject areas). There seemed to be agreement from both male and female participants that they would like to participate in some single-sex groups — particularly around sex-based issues, and for females they felt that (safer) sex issues for women were overshadowed by discussions more relevant to male participants. We would therefore recommend carrying out a simple needs assessment with current and new services users, and designing a programme of workshops or events around these specific needs. We would further recommend developing some single sex events. Participants were clear they appreciated the mixed-sex atmosphere of most groups and this should not be eliminated altogether, but added to with single-sex groups.

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24 Metro already offer this, but may need to advertise and promote it more.

25 We understand that new service users are currently allocated a link person once they arrive at Metro, the suggestion here is to extend the scheme to before people arrive to make access easier and ultimately increase service user numbers.



*"I've used Metro services and they were great — though can we have more for under 16s?"  
N male*

5.14 To assess needs for these specialised sessions, we would suggest:

- Using the data provided in this research report
- Using data from general surveys of young people, and of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people
- Running needs assessment with new and existing Metro service users such as mini-surveys, discussion groups and any other triage or assessment tools Metro uses in other areas of its work.

## School

5.15 School was a mixed bag for participants. Some had found their niche in school with other lesbian or gay friends and had found a way through their school years with relatively few sexuality related issues. More though had experienced personally or seen homophobic bullying and this had had a significant effect on them. "No one came out (voluntarily) at school, but there were a lot of rumours about people and this made it really hard for them." Others talked of personally having a difficult time at school because of their sexuality. One was outed by friends at school and felt bullied to the extent that she denied her sexuality until much later. Participants talked of the need for someone at school that they could approach confidentially with issues, assured of an understanding response.

*"I was bullied at school — that sort of thing needs fixing" W male*

*"No one came out at my school." D female*

5.16 How did the young people think the lives of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people in schools could be improved? They raised the issue of training (particularly for teachers and staff as well as fellow pupils) and focused strongly on positive role models. We say more about role models in paragraphs 5.39 to 5.41. Given the strong support from some funders for school-based work, without underestimating the difficulties of accessing schools Ergo recommends making this a focus of future funding applications and work, and we make further recommendations about schools work in R9 on page 61. For guidance on school-based campaigns we would recommend the excellent Stonewall report: *The School Report*<sup>26</sup>

*"It would be great to have Metro come and talk about gay stuff at school." X male*

1.5 We understand that Metro runs a whole school approach covering leadership in schools, policies, monitoring of homophobic bullying and direct support to young LGBTQ people among other school services and we would encourage this approach being further developed (more interventions) and expanded (delivered through more schools).

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26 Op cit - [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/school\\_report.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/school_report.pdf)

5.18 But if staff and school governance is not supportive of sexuality and anti-homophobia training, how can Metro access pupils within these schools? Ergo envisages a number of routes, some of which will already be included in Metro's school work, but others of which could be developed quickly and cost-effectively.

5.19 First, Metro could join forces with other agencies to deliver wider equalities training. This might encompass other equality issues (gender, age, ethnicity, faith etc) and could include sexuality and homophobia as a natural part of this training.

*"A lot of my friends went through a bisexual stage at school — that made it easier." D female*

5.20 Second Metro could join with other gay and lesbian equalities organisations to develop schools-based work. Metro's clearly acknowledged expertise in lesbian, gay and bisexual youth work would be a significant addition to other campaigning organisations, for example Stonewall.

5.21 Third, Metro could offer confidential support to pupils across south London (or indeed across the UK) via a daytime telephone helpline, a message telephone line or an online forum. The set up and management of such a service would not be simple, but would give Metro substantial exposure for its youth services and provide service users with a safe, confidential way of gaining information and support.

*"There should be zero tolerance of homophobic comments at school." N male*

*"I was repressed at school – it would have been good to have something there." A female*

5.22 An alternative to developing Metro's own helpline, and perhaps most easily achieved would be to partner with existing helplines and to ensure that they promote their services to younger lesbian, gay and bisexual people, with specific schools campaigns. London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard is probably the largest such agency, and given their involvement in the Pan-London HIV Prevention Programme together with Metro, this seems to be an easy gain that could bring substantial results for the target group.

*"It would be good if Metro had posters in schools and youth groups and the local papers like Metro and London Paper, not just the gay press." W male*

## College

5.23 Perhaps surprisingly, moving away from home and getting to college with its generally more experienced views of sexuality was not always the lesbian, gay and bisexual panacea one might imagine. Participants actually found events aimed directly at lesbian, gay and bisexual youth extremely challenging. They talked of being interested and excited about joining the college lesbian, gay and bisexual society but the routes in being daunting.

*"At the fresher's fair, you had to put your name up on a big list, to join the LGB soc - in front of everyone!" A female*

5.24 Some participants also thought that it was easier for young gay men, coming out and building a support network at college than it was for women. They felt that more resources were targeted at gay men and that for men it was "easier to play up to the stereotype and fit in." We see a role for Metro in helping young people move from school into college or university life and in working with college or university lesbian, gay and bisexual societies so that they are more welcoming to all lesbian, gay and bisexual students.



*"I have a problem with ... I hate the way I look. There's nothing there for young XL gay people and there should be." S male*

- 5.25 Before carrying out this work we would have expected London-based universities and colleges to have well developed lesbian, gay and bisexual support structures. It appears this is largely not the case. We recommend that Metro sets up a specific project to join with lesbian, gay and bisexual societies and local universities and colleges and assist them in developing welcome strategies for first year students. Metro could then go on to collaborate on a range of events for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people with these organisations increasing Metro's reach and increasing the number and range of service users.

## **The gay scene**

- 5.26 There were strongly differing views about the gay scene and even differing understandings of what the term meant. Some saw the gay scene as places like saunas and venues where sex was likely to take place on the premises, while others saw the gay scene as any gay pub, club, bar, café or other commercial gay venue.

*"I've dipped my toe into the gay scene – I don't want that to be my experience of gay life." I female*

- 5.27 Overwhelmingly these young people found the commercial gay scene to be expensive and talked of typically only rarely being able to afford club entry fees, and even in free-entry venues only being able to afford one drink throughout the whole evening.

*"I find the scene really cliquey." A female*

- 5.28 The gay scene was not seen as particularly welcoming for younger gay people. Participants described it as "a bit full on," or "a cattle market." Some participants said they would prefer quieter venues, where you could "sit down and talk." Notably these are very similar comments to those we have encountered from older gay men, so perhaps there is an opening for such commercial venues.

*"I've been turned away from gay places for not looking 'gay enough'" Y female*

- 5.29 There were however some contrary opinions expressed — saying that the gay scene provided entertainment, a place to meet up with their friends and a chance to meet new people.

*"I use the gay scene – no problems." L male*

- 5.30 So should Metro do something to help young people access commercial gay venues? Given that they play such a significant part in many gay people's lives, it may be appropriate to consider ways in which Metro could support safe entry into the commercial gay scene. We are aware that Metro already runs outreach events in commercial gay venues and offers social groups as an alternative to the scene. Our findings suggest that there is support for continuing this but added to this outreach, some of the young lesbian, gay and bisexual people we spoke with suggested seeing Metro do more social events in commercial gay venues, something like the supported group visits to local gay pubs they had later experienced at college or university. There are of course licensing issues to be considered: the legal age for purchasing and consuming alcohol in bars in England is 18 and this creates potential complications for groups involving 18 year olds and other younger lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the same groups.

5.31 Many participants would welcome Metro developing a range of introductions to the gay scene. The young people we interviewed had many clear ideas on how this should be achieved and we recommend using some Metro workshops to work with them to develop a suitable programme with existing service users.

*"I know a lot of people want Metro to organise trips to pubs and clubs, but what about something else like theatre museums." X male*

*"Metro needs more promo and advertising in the free papers like Metro and the London Paper." S male*

## Online resources

5.32 Many participants sought improvements in online resources for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. First they would like to see the Metro website improved. They were looking for further information on services for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and more information on sexual health, and HIV. Second they were looking for ways to interact with Metro such as online discussion fora, or links through social networking sites such as FaceBook or Bebo. Finally they wanted to see more marketing and promotion of Metro and its services on websites for young people including existing lesbian, gay and bisexual websites, but also others relevant to younger people in general so that people who were questioning their sexuality or coming out but had not yet found the many lesbian, gay and bisexual websites available would still be able to find Metro.

*"Metro needs to advertise more" X male*

*"I haven't used Metro, I haven't seen any info about them." E female*

## Specialist or mainstream support?

5.33 We could expect some of the issues raised by participants in our research to be raised by any broad sample of teenagers in London today. They have difficulties with families and parents who separate, exams, fitting in, choosing one's career, finding and dealing with friends, intimate relationships and body image all figured strongly in our discussions with young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. So do we need specialist services for this target group or would mainstream services meet needs just as well?

*"Doctors need training — not every woman is hetero and I don't need contraception advice!" D female*

*"My first time with a guy was crap — I'd like a men only session about gay sex and intimacy" N male<sup>27</sup>*

5.34 Participants mentioned again and again, that they were looking for specialist support and if they had already used Metro services this was the reason why they chose Metro. Their issue might be mainstream, but for them their sexuality was central. For one participant who focused on concerns about their own self esteem

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27 Quotations from interviews and focus groups may have been edited for clarity and may not be verbatim.

and body image, their concerns were about being attractive in the eyes of current and potential friends and sexual partners. They felt that only a lesbian, gay and bisexual specific service could understand the full gamut of issues and they would not have felt comfortable in talking about being gay, no matter how supportive a mainstream service might be: "how could they understand what it is like, if they have never been young and gay themselves."

*"I'm a gay European Muslim with a Pakistani background — it's complicated!" R male*

- 5.35 There was additional praise for Metro's staff who run the youth groups. Participants talked of service users who could get quite unruly or difficult. One participant, who identified himself as one such service user, said how well the staff had handled the situation. They quietly and calmly took him aside and discussed his behaviour and its effects on others in the group and as a result he was happy to modify his behaviour.

*"Lots of young people don't know what 'LGB' or 'LGBT' means" X female*

- 5.36 What was particularly valued by young LGBTQ people was the concept of a one-stop service where they could access — via internal referral — counselling, mentoring, volunteering, sexual health services, mental health drop in, advice and advocacy worker and other support. This is likely to be of added value to clients and funders.

## Housing

- 5.37 Moving away from the family home was cited as both an opportunity for long-awaited freedom and a challenge to find suitable affordable accommodation in London. For young lesbian, gay and bisexual people this problem is exacerbated by decisions over whether to come out to potential landlords and flat mates; whether to live in an exclusively lesbian or gay household and the difficulties of finding lesbian/gay flat shares. Participants had used services like gumtree.com or seen the commercial Outlet service, but felt neither of these met their needs.
- 5.38 We imagine that if Metro planned to set up its own flat share scheme it would prove difficult to manage and difficult to recruit and maintain the necessary critical mass of renters and landlords. However this does offer an opportunity for Metro to develop its housing advice, perhaps offering training and support in finding suitable accommodation in London for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Alternately Metro could perhaps more easily develop links with existing housing generic or specialist advice services such as Stonewall Housing or the Albert Kennedy Trust, adding where necessary the youth or lesbian, gay and bisexual expertise.

## Role models and mentoring

- 5.39 Many participants cited the lack of relevant, positive lesbian, gay or bisexual role models as a significant problem. We asked all participants if they had a role model. Mostly they had in mind famous actors, TV personalities and sports people. Participants said they did not have a role model but they would (still) find younger, UK-based lesbian, gay and bisexual role models as helpful.

*"There is not as much for women at Metro as I want." I female*

5.40 From any role model scheme participants were looking for people who were like them. Sugar Rush they viewed as very good because the lead character was a 15 year old lesbian. Generally participants felt that other lesbian (for example the L Word) and gay programming tends to feature older people, and just “wasn’t realistic enough.”

*“I don’t know much about Metro — I haven’t seen their advertising, but I would come to a session if they did something on same sex relationships.” E female*

5.41 When we asked more specifically about personal role models, for example people they know, teachers, family members or other ‘ordinary people’ again participants felt this would be invaluable, and we see this as an opportunity for Metro to develop a low-cost, low maintenance scheme for linking young lesbian, gay and bisexual people with positive role models or mentors in three specific ways.

5.42 We believe an opportunity exists for Metro to seek funding and/or sponsorship for a UK based young gay and lesbian role model campaign. A cost effective method would be to run this in the form of a competition (ideally with donated prizes) where young people would cite their own UK-based lesbian and gay role models. Substantial coverage could be gained free of charge in the gay media, and with the right management this could spill over into the mainstream media where it would have the knock on effect of acting as an education campaign for parents and families of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people and perhaps most importantly their own peer groups. The succour that this could provide for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people, knowing that such role models exist, should not be underestimated.

*“We need more stuff for under 16s” E female*

5.43 A variation on this theme of role models is a cost effective model we believe Metro could develop is linking younger lesbian, gay and bisexual people with older lesbian, gay and bisexual people. For many young people being a happy, successful and fulfilled older lesbian or gay man is almost unimaginable. A relatively simple mentoring scheme or programme which links younger and older lesbian, gay and bisexual people through social events (and build upon the existing guest speaker sessions) could provide the much needed support and inspiration for our next generation of lesbian and gay people.

5.44 Role models are now being used in a range of fields to model positive behaviour. The National Deaf Children's Society uses deaf role models to show parents just what deaf children can achieve. West Point Military Academy in the US find that positive peer role models significantly affect the choices young people make<sup>28</sup>; and in the UK peer role models have been used even with very young children to increase their intake of fruit and vegetables<sup>29</sup>.

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28 This study found “little evidence of group effects in academic performance,” but “there is evidence of group influences in choice outcomes such as the selection of academic major and the decision to remain in the Army.” Estimating and Interpreting Peer and Role Model Effects from Randomly Assigned Social Groups at West Point. **David S. Lyle** The Review of Economics and Statistics May 2007, Vol. 89, No. 2, Pages 289-299

29 [http://www.psychology.bangor.ac.uk/research/su/food\\_research.php](http://www.psychology.bangor.ac.uk/research/su/food_research.php)

*I got a bit bored with the groups – it would be better if we had something specific to do, or a different topic to talk about.”N male*

## **Health services**

- 5.45 Some participants came to Metro through health professionals, and participants felt that health settings were ideal locations to attract young lesbian, gay and bisexual people who may not yet be in touch with the gay scene and related media. One female said she came to Metro following information from her school nurse.
- 5.46 We believe a significant opportunity exists for Metro to expand its work with health professionals and so reach a range of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people who would not otherwise know of Metro’s services.
- 5.47 The secondary benefit of such a programme is that it allows Metro to influence the health agenda of young people and ensure that homosexuality is not excluded from sexuality. As an example, the forthcoming Adolescent Health Project from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) aims to “improve the health outcomes of the UK’s young people, by providing e-learning materials to all health professionals.” From our review of the available materials so far there appears to be no mention of lesbian, gay and bisexual or HIV issues and yet the programme addresses key issues for this target audience including mental health, alcohol and substance abuse, and self harm<sup>30</sup>.
- 5.48 As a starting point there are around 2,500 school nurses practicing in the UK today. It would be a relatively small and inexpensive campaign to contact those working in London and offer Metro’s expertise on how to reach and refer on young lesbian, gay and bisexual people.
- 5.49 Our recommendation here is that Metro develops 3 or 4 pilot projects over the next 6 months to provide information to small grouping of health service providers. Metro could test how far it would be possible to display information for lesbian, gay and bisexual youth in GP practices; provide a resource to all of London’s school nurses or identify other small, focussed health service targets. Once these small scale projects have been delivered and evaluated they would provide ideal material for funding applications to carry out larger-scale work with health services.

## **Transgender young people**

- 5.50 Some participants identified as transgender and felt that there was little support in the UK for transgender issues and this was particularly so for young trans people. Participants understood that Metro has limited resources and felt that if it were not possible to recruit a specialist worker, or develop its own services for trans people, collaborating with other organisations may be a cost effective way to provide support, for example inviting specialist speakers to attend sessions at the Metro. We recommend that Metro investigate the feasibility of providing such a dedicated post, perhaps in collaboration with a range of London-based agencies.

*“I think young Tran’s people need a safe space — Metro could provide this.” E female*

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30 <http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/Education/Adolescent-Health-Project>

## Literacy

5.51 According to the Skills for Life Survey, DfES, 2003<sup>31</sup> 16% of 16 —19 year olds and 13% of 20-24 year olds are at “entry level or below,” for literacy and numeracy skills, with entry level being described as the standard expected of 11 year olds. We have no data in our work to support or contradict the hypothesis that young lesbian, gay and bisexual people are likely to have higher or lower literacy levels than the general population, but assuming levels are at least equivalent to the general population this has two significant implications.

*“I’ve met lots of people who have trouble understanding all the gay leaflets on the scene.” K male*

5.52 First the approach used by many agencies for transferring information to young lesbian, gay and bisexual people may assume levels of literacy far higher than a significant proportion of young people possess. Future resources should be carefully developed in conjunction with representative samples of the target audience for example using more pictorial information, or audio or video presentations to get around literacy issues.

5.53 Second there may be a need and opportunity for Metro to deliver<sup>32</sup> specific training for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people on literacy and numeracy issues which can give young people better access to information and support on HIV and sexual health issues as well as enhancing life skills, and providing access to information, training and work.

5.54 One participant felt that where he socialises on the south London (Vauxhall) gay scene he meets many young people “who can’t read or have limited learning ability.” During our data gathering processes we allowed for varying levels of literacy and numeracy by offering supported completion of questionnaires, offering face to face and telephone interviews but we may have missed others who lacked the necessary skills to engage with our research.

5.55 We recommend that Metro consider less literate and less numerate target audiences when developing future resources and that Metro uses its influence with other agencies to ensure they too take this audience into account (for example using more pictorial information, or audio or video presentations to get around literacy issues). We further recommend that Metro pilot delivering its own training for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people on literacy and numeracy issues.

## Teacher perspective

*“As a teacher I’d like to see some general workshops that incorporate gay issues – if it is too in your face you will never get it past the Head.” (Gay male teacher)*

5.56 We were surprised and pleased to receive one survey from a gay teacher, working in Bermondsey in what he described as “a predominantly white working class area.” He is out to colleagues but not to students and fears reprisals if he did come out to students. He strongly supported the need for external organisations (like Metro) to deliver talks or workshops in schools covering diversity issues that would include sexuality.

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31 <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/database/basicsskillsupdate.html#long>

32 Or indeed to collaborate with other agencies, providing access to alternate funding streams



*"I tried to promote the Stonewall campaign [Some people are gay. Get over it!] but got no support from my colleagues — they were scared of sticking their necks out" gay male teacher*

5.57 He felt that workshops focusing solely on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues would not gain easy access to many schools but those delivered in the context of diversity would. This would appear to now be backed by legislation:

"However, employment laws which were passed on 1 December 2003, have made it illegal for employers to discriminate or tolerate discrimination against an employee on the grounds of their perceived or actual sexual orientation. With an estimated 35,000 lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) teachers in England — represented in almost every school — the significance and potential impact of the legislation is huge."<sup>33</sup>

## **Theatre in education**

5.58 We have recently seen highly successful campaigns using theatre groups in schools to deliver training on risk-taking in relation to road safety. We see an opportunity for Metro to seek a partner organisation to develop similar theatre work in schools on diversity, which would allow Metro to raise sexuality in a setting appropriate to the target audience.

5.59 Given the strong support from commissioner and service users for Metro, we recommend that Metro consider expanding services geographically across the whole of London and become the lesbian, gay and bisexual youth provider of choice. Indeed there appears to be little impediment to Metro seeking to become the UK's lesbian, gay and bisexual youth provider of choice other than the confidence to simultaneously ramp up its organisational capacity to fund and deliver services.

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33 [http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachers/issue33/secondary/features/Tacklinghomophobia\\_Secondary/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachers/issue33/secondary/features/Tacklinghomophobia_Secondary/)

## 6 Records review

- 6.1 The objectives for the record review were to review the youth intake and assessment forms, and provide recommendations on their effectiveness. We understand that after we carried out our initial records review Metro has been developing further record and triage systems under the Pan London HIV Prevention contract. We imagine much of this will supersede our review, but we include our brief findings for completeness.

### Current records collection and use

- 6.2 Metro currently holds in a mix of paper and computerised formats:
- Initial Assessment Forms
  - Contact Sheets
  - Ending Questionnaire
- 6.3 There are additional counselling services records and groupwork sheets and youth monitoring forms. We assessed these forms for ease of use, effectiveness, efficiency of data gathering, coherence (across data gathering) and primarily fitness for purpose. We found as follows.
- 6.4 There are a number of forms, often with slightly differing formats and this makes inputting data more complicated for users than it needs to be. If these forms are to be continued we recommend standardising forms styles and questions asked and content as far as is possible. We further recommend making data collection easier by providing all forms in a central computerised location. Our discussions with stake holders suggests that Metro would benefit from a small amount of additional funding, to provide better computer access for service users at the Metro premises. At present users sometimes complete the forms themselves using a computer, using paper, and sometimes complete them with a staff member. Other forms are more appropriately completed by staff members from information gained from the client. We recommend a regular review, and destruction policy to ensure that confidential data is only held for as long as is necessary (subject to appropriate record retention requirements) to avoid unnecessary risk of loss of data.
- 6.5 Given that Metro holds sensitive client data on computer, we recommend that Metro consider encryption programmes that would protect the data in the event of computers being lost or stolen. A number of commercial applications are available. We can not recommend an individual solution which would depend on the IT infrastructure that Metro maintains, but McAfee, Truecrypt and Securstar (locatable through an online search) all offer cost effective data encryption, Truecrypt being available free of charge.



## Simplifying data gathering

- 6.6 Given the likelihood of many of these forms being superseded we have limited our comments to best practice in gathering future data. Here we recommend the following processes:

**Figure 1 — Data gathering process**

1. For each individual service, assess the data currently gathered or planned to be gathered using a table similar to the one in Figure 2.
  2. Once all data gathering requirements have been assessed compare where services can share data, and plan only to collect data from clients once
  3. Develop a data gathering form or survey
  4. Pilot the survey for language, ease of use (both assisted completion and independent completion if both methods are likely to be used in real life)
  5. Implement data gathering for a trial period (to include a data reporting cycle)
  6. Take feedback from people completing the form or survey, and from those running and receiving reporting information based on these forms
  7. Refine data gathering form or survey in light of feedback from previous stage
  8. Implement a review policy, so that the forms are reviewed (at a minimum once per year); and an archive and secure destruction policy so that Metro only holds necessary and relevant data.
- 6.7 While developing a full unified data gathering model is outside the scope of this commission, we would be happy to provide feedback in real time and free of charge to Metro staff as they develop one future form or survey.

Figure 2 — Data gathering question template

| Question or Item                                 | Purpose for gathering                                                  | How the output of this data will be used                                                                                         | Has the data been gathered anywhere else?                                                                                | What would be lost if this data was not collected?                   |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Age                                              | To provide monitoring data to commissioners                            | Metro reports to commissioners the age of service users                                                                          | Currently this is gathered on the Initial Assessment Questionnaire and Counselling form and on some of the session forms | Inability to report age of service users to commissioners            |
|                                                  | To allow Metro to better target its services                           | Metro reviews current users of services by age and is able to profile users of services by age and identify any gaps in services |                                                                                                                          | Inability to target information or services at particular age groups |
|                                                  | To allow Metro to monitor how well it is reaching its target audiences | Metro compares planned targets for services by age against actual and is able to consider any variation                          |                                                                                                                          | Inability to monitor access to different target groups               |
| Should this information continue to be gathered? | <b>Yes</b>                                                             |                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                          |                                                                      |

## Note on records and reporting to commissioners

- 6.8 We were fortunate enough to also see samples of Metro’s record keeping for commissioner reporting. In our conversations with commissioners they spoke highly of the monitoring data received from Metro, although they did believe that Metro could improve its communications with commissioners.
- 6.9 Having reviewed the differing requirements of current commissioners and funders and asked if they would be willing to accept standardised reporting, most commissioners confirmed that this would be acceptable.
- 6.10 Again we understand that Metro is currently working through the Pan London HIV Prevention Contract on developing outcome based targets and reporting and we would suggest aligning any contract reporting outside the Pan London with the standardised Pan London format. This means that Metro would only need to report in one way, using standardised forms to the majority of its commissioners. If individual commissioners require additional reporting, this could be added to the standardised report, rather than having a number of similar but — different enough to be complicated — reports. Our proposals for project reporting could also streamline data gathering and reporting. (See also paragraph 4.15 and Appendix 4).

## 2 Recommendations and Conclusion

Below we have set out a series of recommendations. We appreciate that there are many and some are demanding of an organisation that already has a full workload. We are not suggesting that Metro immediately take on all these recommendations, but rather that it takes time to pick some easy to implement short term objectives now, and plans for longer term objectives. Some objectives will necessarily be deemed unsuitable — we understand this, but see it as our role to suggest the widest range of opportunities before narrowing choices. Details of the evidence base for each recommendation is contained in the cited paragraphs.

- R1. ACCESSING METRO — We recommend that Metro develop a strategy to ease access for first time visitors through online discussion fora; promotions and marketing material; publishing a blog or podcast; setting up an email and face to face buddy system. (see paragraph 5.8)
- R2. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES — We recommend that Metro sets up a specific project to join with lesbian, gay and bisexual societies at local (Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley) universities and colleges and assist them in developing welcome strategies for first year students. This could then be expanded into Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, or indeed across London. (see paragraph 5.23)
- R3. COMMUNICATION WITH COMMISSIONERS — We recommend developing a proactive project reporting system for commissioners and other funders, which would go some way to providing standardised reporting. (See Appendix 4 for our proposed methodology)
- R4. CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT — We recommend that Metro evaluate if and how it could offer confidential support via a daytime telephone helpline, a message telephone line, or an online forum. (see paragraph 5.19)
- R5. CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT ALTERNATIVE — We more strongly recommend that Metro partner with existing helplines to increase service uptake among young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. (see paragraph 5.22)
- R6. DIVERSITY TRAINING - We recommend that Metro consider developing a range of diversity-focused training (or collaborating with others on this) so that Metro can access organisations that may not initially be keen to participate in 'gay training.' This could also be delivered in school settings as part of our nine. (see paragraph 5.15 )
- R7. ENHANCE MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS — Develop a strong marketing and promotions campaign (perhaps in conjunction with existing service users) to attract more young lesbian, gay and bisexual people to Metro and its services. (see paragraphs 4.10 and 5.8). Promotions could include seeking awards for Metro services, or other public relations activity. There are further opportunities to increase referrals to Metro's services via communication campaigns with other service providers (e.g. generic youth providers, or providers of generic LGBTQ services).

- R8. EXPAND ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICES — There appears to be a need for sensitive lesbian, gay and bisexual alcohol and drug services. We understand Metro already has expertise in this field and suggest considering if this is one of the areas Metro may wish to expand and develop (perhaps across London as a first step for example). (see paragraph 2.10)
- R9. EXPAND SCHOOLS WORK — Metro already has a strong reputation for delivering school based work. We see this as the key to numerous objectives such as challenging homophobia, decreasing bullying of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people, improving the school outcomes for our target group and for bringing more young people into contact with Metro and its services. (see paragraph 5.15) This could first be piloted in Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley, before being expanded to Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, or indeed across London. We would further recommend that Metro join local and London-wide anti-bullying steering groups to provide its expertise in working with young lesbian, gay and bisexual people.
- R10. FUNDRAISER - RECRUIT A DEDICATED ROLE — Some of the recommendations contained in this report can be taken up with little or no cost, occupying minimal staff time. However if Metro wants to significantly develop and expand its activities (either geographically or in terms of services provided) we recommend recruiting a dedicated fundraiser who would look for statutory, and trust funding and seek appropriate commercial sponsorship arrangements. (see paragraph 4.19)
- R11. GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION — Develop a plan to expand Metro's services geographically across the whole of London, either separately or in partnership, to become the lesbian, gay and bisexual youth provider of choice. (see paragraph 5.59)
- R12. HEALTH SERVICES — Our recommendation here is that Metro pilots a number of small projects that build Metro's capacity to work with health services on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues for young people and then go on to seek additional funding to expand this work. (see paragraph 5.46)
- R13. HOUSING - We recommend that Metro pilots a housing advice service, perhaps offering training and support in finding suitable accommodation in London for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. (see paragraph 5.37)
- R14. INTRODUCING THE GAY SCENE – We recommend Metro work with service users to develop a suitable programme of events to introduce those young people who are keen to use the commercial scene, to pubs, clubs and bars in a supported way. (see paragraph 5.30)
- R15. LITERACY AND NUMERACY — We recommend that Metro consider less literate and less numerate target audiences when developing future resources and that Metro uses its influence with other agencies to ensure they too take this audience into account. (see paragraph 5.51)
- R16. ONLINE RESOURCES — Our recommendation is that Metro develop alliances with online providers and enhances Metro's own online resources to improve services for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. (see paragraph 5.32)

- R17. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT — Develop a succession plan for Metro Board of Trustees, Senior Management team, Management team and staff team to ensure continuity of service. (see paragraph 4.9)
- R18. PARTNERSHIP WITH SERVICE USERS — We have suggested an innovative partnership approach to how Metro could in future develop its services in close collaboration with service users, and we suggest discussing and elaborating this opportunity in more detail before concluding our work with Metro. (see paragraph 2.17)
- R19. PC SECURITY — We recommend Metro consider encryption programmes that would protect the data in the event of computers being lost or stolen. (See paragraph 6.15)
- R20. RECORD KEEPING — Our recommendation here is that Metro develop a review and destruction schedule and policy to ensure that confidential data is only held for as long as is necessary (subject to appropriate record retention requirements) to avoid unnecessary risk of loss of data. (See paragraph 6.10)
- R21. RESEARCH LITERATURE — We recommend that Metro collaborate with a research organisation to seek funding jointly for a comprehensive review of the literature relating to young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. (see paragraph 2.30)
- R22. RESEARCH NEEDS — We also recommend that Metro join forces with a private or statutory research organisation and commission a large-scale study of the issues and needs of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people. (see paragraph 2.31)
- R23. ROLE MODELS — We recommend that Metro develop up to three Role Model Projects: one based on a young lesbian, gay and bisexual publicity campaign; a second linking older and younger lesbian, gay and bisexual people and a third peer role models programme. (see paragraphs 5.39 to 5.44)
- R24. SHARED SERVICES — One opportunity — and we understand this may be controversial — is to enter into collaboration with other service providers to carry out wider needs assessments, to establish unmet needs or simply to provide higher quality, more client-centred services. We understand there may be appropriate caution about following such a route. (see paragraph 2.18)
- R25. TARGET YOUNGER AGE RANGE — We recommend that Metro deliver simple, clear, information of a non-sexual nature to pupils early on in secondary education, and later build on this work to reach earlier age ranges of students who are beginning to question and discover their sexuality. (see paragraph 2.15)
- R26. THEATRE IN EDUCATION - we recommend that Metro seeks a partner organisation to deliver educational theatre performances handling diversity issues. (see paragraph 5.58)
- R27. THEMATIC SAFER SEX, HIV AND OTHER LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL ISSUES — Our recommendation here is that Metro enhances its current programme of meetings and events with young people by giving a specific theme to events to cover safer sex, HIV and other lesbian, gay and bisexual issues. So for example, one group session could focus on accessing suitable housing, independent living, or how to deal with bullying, or safer sex in relationships, etc, rather than being just a general youth session. (see paragraph 5.13)

R28. TRANSGENDER YOUNG PEOPLE — We recommend that Metro maintains its support for young transgender people and seeks partner organisations to provide additional support, for example through inviting specialist speakers to attend sessions at the Metro. We also recommend that Metro investigate the feasibility and viability of recruiting to a specialist post for work with transgender people. (see paragraph 5.50)

We appreciate we have made a large number of recommendations and that selecting which to focus on may be complex. Only Metro's Board, staff and service users can take this decision. However, if we were asked to suggest three areas of focus, our opinion would be to develop:

1. **Marketing and promotions of existing services** to help the current and potential service users know what is on offer
2. **School based programmes** to reach those most in need and most ignored
3. **A dedicated fundraising post** to allow for expansion of Metro's services.

There are also a number of low or no cost, easy to implement changes such as improving access to Metro through buddying schemes or online fora which again we would suggest implementing at the start of any development programme.

## NOTES

## NOTES