



IMPACTFUL GOVERNANCE  
Community Interest Company

“Creating sustainability by imbuing independence and strength into organisations;  
supporting services to be more effective and efficient”



# LGBTQ+ Research Report

Commissioned by: Watford & Three Rivers Trust CVS



Presented by:  
Andrew Waite, Chief Executive  
Impactful Governance – Community Interest Company

Winners of:



**Finalists** 2019 Governance Professional of the Year:  
**icsa** | The Chartered **Governance** Institute



**Email:** [admin@ig-CIC.org.uk](mailto:admin@ig-CIC.org.uk) **Office:** 01923 231660 **Website:** [www.ig-cic.org.uk](http://www.ig-cic.org.uk)  
**Luton Office:** West Wing Studios, Unit 166 The Mall, Luton, Bedfordshire LU1 2TL  
Registered Community Interest Company Number: 10940809 Patron: Author, Lola Jaye  
**Registered Office Address:** The Old Free School, George Street, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 0BX

## Contents

### **1. Summary of the Project (page 3)**

- The Initial interviews
- The demographics
- Final Report
- Additional Research Needs

### **2. Marketing Strategy (page 8)**

- Initial Marketing Strategy: reaching the LGBTQ+ community
- Second Marketing Strategy: social media
- Third Marketing Strategy: Outreach
- Final Marketing Strategy: Part 2
- Summary

### **3. Results of the Initial research (page 11)**

### **4. Analysis of the Results (page 17)**

- What are they able to access well?
- What challenges have they faced?
- What support do they require?

### **5 Recommendations (page 20)**

### **6. Appendix Quotes from participants (Page 23)**

## Executive Summary

To facilitate meaningful engagement and representation, the research involved 20 individuals from across the LGBTQ+ community, capturing whether they are residents of the Watford and Three Rivers area, or the wider Hertfordshire area.

### The Initial interviews

The initial interviews were not all possible face to face due to the “secluded” nature of some of the participants. Where this was the case, we submitted questionnaires for online completion. The Initial questionnaire form can be found here: <https://forms.gle/vyHZL3YzMBoXWQZv7> . It is noted here that due to the higher risk of Hate Crime (see bottom of page 4) against the Trans people, they are less visible at present and their regular Watford meeting place has seen numbers decline.

### The Demographics

We targeted individuals who live or work within Watford & Three Rivers geographic area and capture the postcode from their home address for statistical analysis once the interviews were all complete. Some people access services or visit Watford and Three Rivers although live or work outside of the Hertfordshire area (i.e. Harrow). We allowed those two participants to contribute as they are stakeholders in the leisure and social aspects of the LGBTQ+ community.

The term LGBTQ+ covers a spectrum of individuals who are all unique although may identify within these parameters. Some people may identify as Heterosexual or “straight” yet still have physical and emotional relationships with same-sex partners. Many have biological children or may have fostered or adopted.

The report cannot be exhaustive although we have allowed flexibility in how people like to be addressed, including the concepts of non-binary, pronouns and terms used to describe sexuality on an emotional or intellectual level as well as a physical interpretation.

The term LGBTQi is sometimes used to include “intersex” people (those born with both male & female genitals or other characteristics).

*“Intersex people are individuals born with any of several sex characteristics including chromosome patterns, gonads, or genitals that, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies”. Though the range of atypical sex characteristics may be obvious from birth through the presence of physically ambiguous genitalia, in other instances, atypical characteristics may go unnoticed, presenting as ambiguous internal reproductive organs or atypical chromosomes that may remain unknown to an individual all of their life” (Ref: Wikipedia ).*

For the purpose of this report, we have left the descriptor as “other” and allowed free-text entries although acknowledge that there are a range of additional terms used within the LGBTQ+ community.

## Background

- 1998 saw some of the most homophobic comments made by the then MP, Boris Johnson relating to “Tank top bum boys” and that allowing gay marriage was like allowing “three men and a dog to marry”. The first comment related to the departure of Peter Mandelson as a gay man, from the Labour Party:

**“Weep, O ye shirt-makers of Jermyn Street, ye Cool Britannia tailors and whatever exists of human finer feeling, in the Ministry of Sound, the tank-topped bum boys blub into their Pils.”**

- June 2019 Mr Johnson then seemed to have changed his stance, publicly at least: **“I will continue to champion LGBT+ equality, get tough on hate crime and ensure that we break down barriers to a fairer society.”**

[Boris Johnson LGBT rights record: Anti-gay slurs mixed with surprisingly liberal stance \(pinknews.co.uk\)](https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/06/11/boris-johnson-lgbt-rights-record-anti-gay-slurs-mixed-with-surprisingly-liberal-stance/)

- July 2019 didn't seem to have convinced the Independent Newspaper: **“It's definitely a new era for Britain, and arguably a scary one, as Boris Johnson becomes prime minister. Leaving aside his many gaffes and foibles – both personal and political – what does his election by the Tory membership mean for minority communities? I can't speak on behalf of the entire LGBT+ community, but his elevation to prime minister certainly provokes concern among many LGBT+ people.”**

[What Boris Johnson's victory means for LGBT+ people | The Independent | The Independent](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-lgbt-people-what-his-victory-means-for-lgbt-people-2019-07-11)

- December 2019 Boris Johnson then said: **“if gay marriage was OK... then I saw no reason in principle why a union should not be consecrated between three men, as well as two men, or indeed three men and a dog.”**

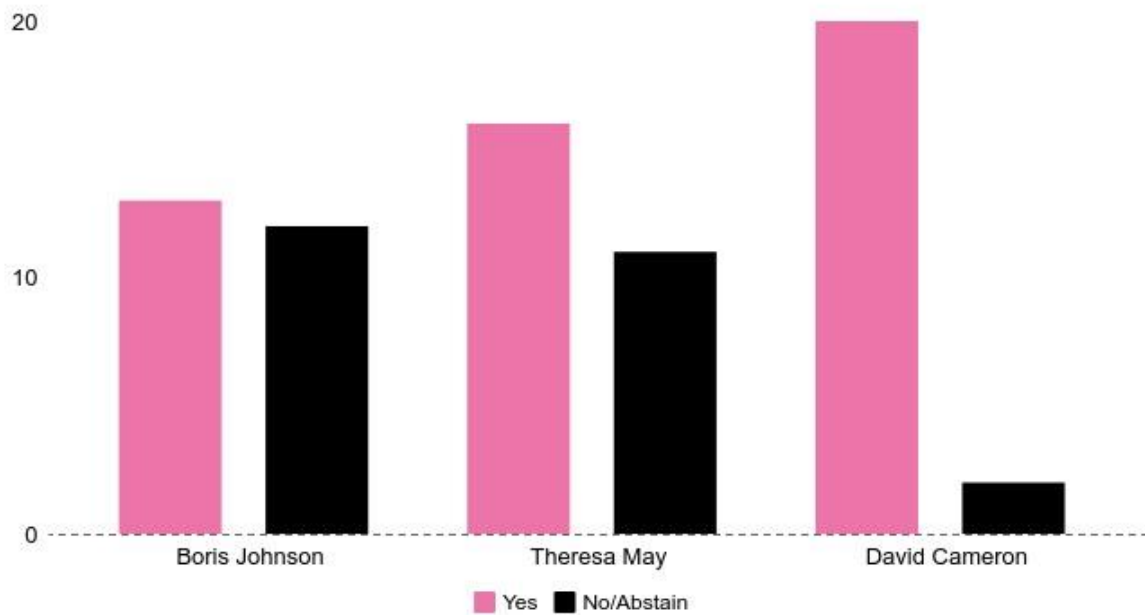
With a backdrop of such blatant anti-LGBTQ+ feeling and disrespect, it is no wonder that the general public feel it is ok to denigrate LGBTQ+ people and Hertfordshire Police reports a sharp rise in LGBTQ+ related Hate Crime.

- June 2021 the Prime Minister invited a selection of LGBTQ+ people to state: **“I think that what we want for this country is for it to be a place where you can be what you want to be, and love whomsoever you want to love,”** yet still asks for another public consultation to work out whether the Government should ban conversion therapy.

- December 2021 Between January and August 2021, Hertfordshire Police received 30 recorded Hate Crimes. When it came to sexual orientation hate crimes, which includes transphobic offences, there were 203 in 2019 and 200 in 2020. Hertfordshire Police recorded 22 transphobic hate crimes in 2019 and 32 in 2020. **Over the past eight months of 2021, there were 160 recorded Hate Crimes in Hertfordshire.** The highest number of violent sexual orientation hate crimes in a calendar month was 17 in July 2020; for violent transphobic hate crimes it was five in March 2020, September 2020 and November 2020.

[Transphobic hate crimes have increased in Hertfordshire | Welwyn Hatfield Times \(whtimes.co.uk\)](https://www.welwynhatfieldtimes.co.uk/news/transphobic-hate-crimes-have-increased-in-hertfordshire/)

### How Cabinets voted on equal marriage



### Canada's MPs Vote Unanimously to Ban LGBT Conversion Therapy



### Canada's MPs Vote Unanimously to Ban LGBT Conversion Therapy

mygwork.com

141

4 comments

Like

Comment

Share

Send



Leave your thoughts here...



Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021 Chris Bryant MP (BBC interview with Nick Robinson) "**This is a more dangerous time for LGBTQ+ people than any other time in the last 30 years.**"

Nationally there are raised concerns about the debate on Trans. There is still no ban on conversation therapy in the UK (unlike Canada – announced December 3rd 2021). This feeling on misrepresentation, marginalising and exclusion harps back to the Margaret Thatcher era where Clause 28 was imposed to restrict LGBTQ+ people from being considered as part of society. The document specifically stated that LGBTQ+ life was a "Pretend family relationship" and although it was repealed and supported by the now Prime Minister Boris Johnson, there is a distinct feeling of deja-vu, bearing in mind his previous anti-LGBTQ+ comments.

## Final Report

This final report has been put together after conducting a variety of approaches, looking at a range of demographics and being as broad as possible whilst working with a small sample.

Seventeen of the twenty respondents had a WD postcode:

- WD3 1 respondent
- WD5 1 respondent
- WD17 3 respondents
- WD18 1 respondents
- WD19 6 respondents
- WD23 1 respondent
- WD24 4 respondents
- HA2 1 respondent
- HA5 1 respondent
- HP2 1 respondent

Disclosed sexuality breakdown was:

- 16 Gay Male
- 2 Bi-Sexual
- 1 Gay Female
- 1 Curious.

Taking part in some form of community activities or events was **conceptual** for some, such as only using Impactful Governance, Holywell, a local Hockey Club, a political party meeting or health services such as Watford Sexual Health Clinic, GP or Mental Health services.

## Additional Research Needs

This project focussed on Watford and Three Rivers and users of services within that geographic area. There is clearly a greater need to cover the whole of Hertfordshire to conduct further research and support community organisations to have a better understanding and inclusive approach to the LGBTQ+ community.

## Project period:

Preparation and writing the interview questionnaires began in November although the delivery of the project was initially scheduled to be between 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The project began much earlier in November due to the Author's existing knowledge of the extreme lack of support and need to establish facts in a non-bias format. Preparation and initial contacts were also made during November to schedule in-person individual interviews. Due to suspicion, established mistrust and many participants not being openly able to discuss their sexuality; Face to Face interviews all took place in December and accounted for 7 out of the 20 participants.

## **Objectives:**

To establish what services are being accessed and why they may not be tailored to an LGBTQ+ audience.

- The brief:  
*“W3RT CVS is keen to learn more about how the local charity and voluntary sector engages with and supports local LGBTQ+ community members. We would like to understand any barriers or issues community members may have experienced when accessing existing services or funding opportunities provided by the charity and voluntary sector (including W3RT), and any gaps in service provision across Watford and the Three Rivers area.”*

## Marketing Strategy

Our marketing strategy involved a combination of approaches to engage the LGBTQ+ community to participating in the Research.

The issue of capturing information in a survey without first having an email to send it to, would leave the responses open to corruption where non-LGBTQ+ may respond in addition to the target groups. To ask for an email address itself then threw up difficulties for a closed and suspicious community, particularly in light of how the data would be held and potentially make the individuals vulnerable to personal abuse or attacks online.

### **Initial Marketing Strategy: Reaching the LGBTQ+ community**

Of the people approached, some of the reasons for not engaging are due to the face-to-face approach to elicit genuine responses and capture the true essence of the responses, although there are captured quotes (see appendix).

Scheduling of interviews in-person was further hampered by people's work commitments away from the home so interviews were offered as one hour appointments at 10am, 2pm, 4pm & 6pm to allow travel between visits. Some people could only make Saturdays due to work commitments and so weekend meetings were also scheduled to have the greatest chance of reaching people during their available times and days.

A significant amount of trust had to be established before providing an address to visit people in their home or in other cases in a physical public place such as a coffee shop or pub in Watford.

### **Second Marketing Strategy: social media**

Two LGBTQ+ groups were approached: Harrow/Herts and separately Berkhamsted as there isn't an obvious Watford equivalent within Facebook pages. The questionnaire was posted to the site pages asking for comments and although it is unlikely that we would reach the ideal target geography of Watford or Three Rivers residents, it was most likely that the LGBTQ+ community visited Watford or Three Rivers at some point. We awaited the response from the anonymous questionnaires posted to the sites in anticipation: **none were completed.**

Two LGBTQ+ dating apps were engaged where a total of 133 people were asked to participate.



### **Third Marketing Strategy: Outreach (Social venue approach)**

To have a fair segmentation of the LGBTQ+ community take part, further outreach to Lesbian and Trans people was necessary and involved physical visits to local LGBTQ+ friendly establishments. The identity of LGBTQ+ venues has become increasingly diluted as the traditional rainbow flag has been assimilated into the NHS during the pandemic so the identity of LGBTQ+ friendly establishments is now lost in the lack of Pride celebrations in Watford town centre.

Some of the responses to a request for a face-to-face meeting are noted below:

1. **“Why do we need to meet face to face?”**
2. **“Is there not an online/email able option – would be easier for me”**
3. **“I am usually with my family so can’t commit to a time and date”**

### **Final Marketing Strategy: individual interviews**

In the weeks leading up to the commencement of individual meetings, 133 contacts were made and LGBTQ+ people asked to participate in the research. Of the 133 asked to participate, only 10 agreed to schedule a meeting to conduct the research in-person. Of those 7 cancelled the arranged times altogether or rescheduled into online questionnaires instead. By far, the individual interviews were the **most revealing** where factual quotes were captured, and a more detailed explanation of the response was possible (see appendix for quotes).

Conducted in the Author’s home, a Participant’s home, Café Nero and Load of Hay pub.

## **Summary**

Whilst some LGBTQ+ apps are seen as dating apps, they are a way of communicating with a community in order to engage in initial dialogue. One of the same Gay dating apps was used earlier in the year to gauge awareness of the Watford Pride Event held in 2021 (see page 7).

Another LGBTQ+ meeting app was used and due to the discretion needed from the LGBTQ+ community and the name of the app will not be listed in this report for confidentiality.

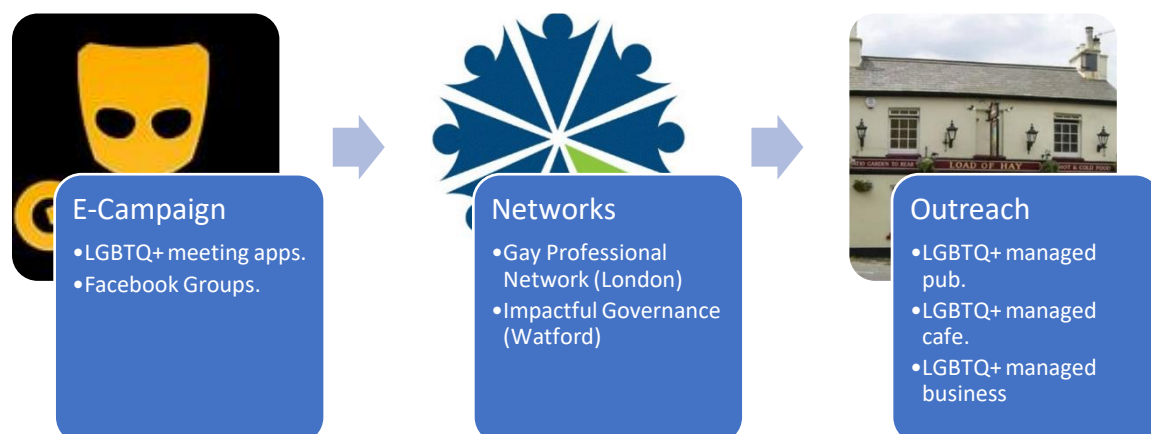
After the initial contact, we established the representation from the various LGBTQ+ spectrum and next explored other LGBTQ+ networks through social media in November to publicise that the interviews were about to get under way in December.

There is a demographic who will not be using social media at all or attending network events and it is important to capture the whole of the community wherever possible, within the small budget parameters of this project.

The final stage was to physically visit an LGBTQ+ managed pub in Watford.

The LGBTQ+ community is varied, in the same way that a heterosexual community is varied. There is a reluctance to join in activities, for fear of victimisation, stigma or non-inclusive practices and assumptions. Watford Women’s Centre used to have a Lesbian Group although at the time of writing, the group seems to have disbanded.

Whilst one respondent asked for a 20-30’s LGBTQ+ group to be held, he lives in Harrow and is starting his own group there already. Others asked for a regular LGBTQ+ event or several events throughout the year and did not specify age ranges.



### World Aids Day in 2021 was on 1st December.

HIV/AIDS, or human immunodeficiency virus, is **considered by some authors a global pandemic**. However, the WHO currently uses the term 'global epidemic' to describe HIV. As of 2018, approximately 37.9 million people are infected with HIV globally. There were about 770,000 deaths from AIDS in 2018.

Whilst LGBTQ+ people must **not** be defined by the stigma relating to the earlier cases of HIV, it should be recognised that a HIV Awareness Day came and went in Watford without any events noticeably taking place.

Watford's "Walk-in Clinic" has been suspended due to the Covid19 pandemic:

[Watford Sexual Health Clinic: Sexual Health Hertfordshire \(clch.nhs.uk\)](https://www.clch.nhs.uk/)

### Hertfordshire Pride 2021 was on 14<sup>th</sup> August this year.

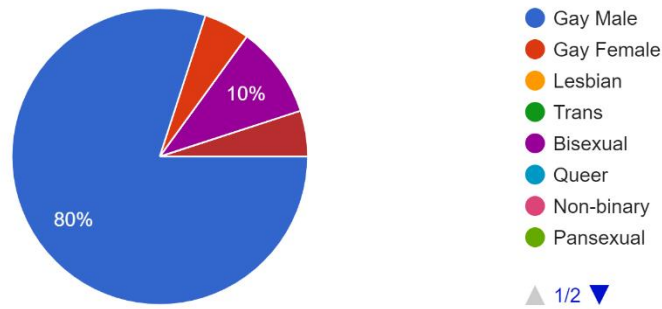
The event was arranged at the very last minute and so publicity was through a narrow professional channel of information and mostly through social media, adding to the Digital Divide where direct "community Engagement" has been eroded over recent years with the increased reliance on the assumption that information is on the internet, hence people are (assumed to be) aware.

**Author's note - Outside of this research;** the author conducted a straw poll in August, prior to the Pride Event in Watford to the LGBTQ+ community to find overwhelmingly out of approximately 30 people approached, almost all had no idea that the event was taking place (only 1 person knew about it). This adds to the feeling within the LGBTQ+ community that events are organised without the knowledge or inclusion of the LGBTQ+ individuals. An over-reliance on social media has left many excluded. A discussion with Watford Borough Council took place prior to the Pride event to ensure that the Watford town centre could share in the celebration although there was again no visible support during 2021, apart from the rear of Cassiobury Park where Herts Pride was held, mostly (in the view of the Author) for those professionals and acquaintances who were already aware of it via existing networks. There were LGBTQ+ people there although as a free event during 2021 it was majority heterosexual.

## Results of the Initial LGBTQ+ survey

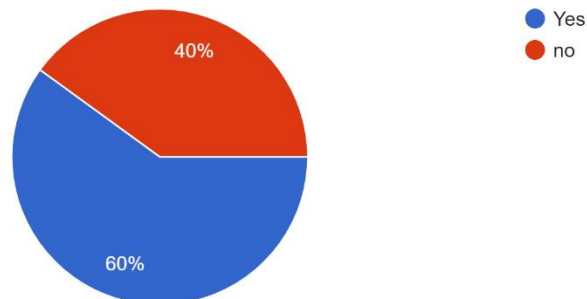
# 20 individuals took part in the LGBTQ+ research.

Sexuality  
20 responses

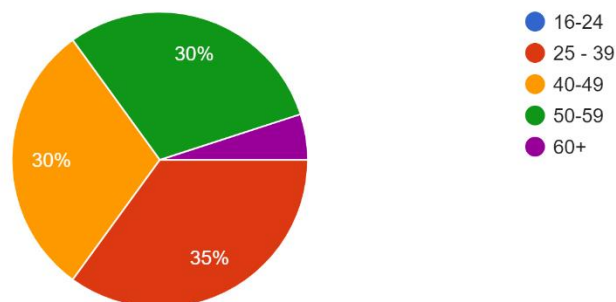


1 Gay Female, 1 curious, 2 Bi-sexual and 16 Gay Male

Are you openly "Out" with your LGBTQ+ identity?  
20 responses

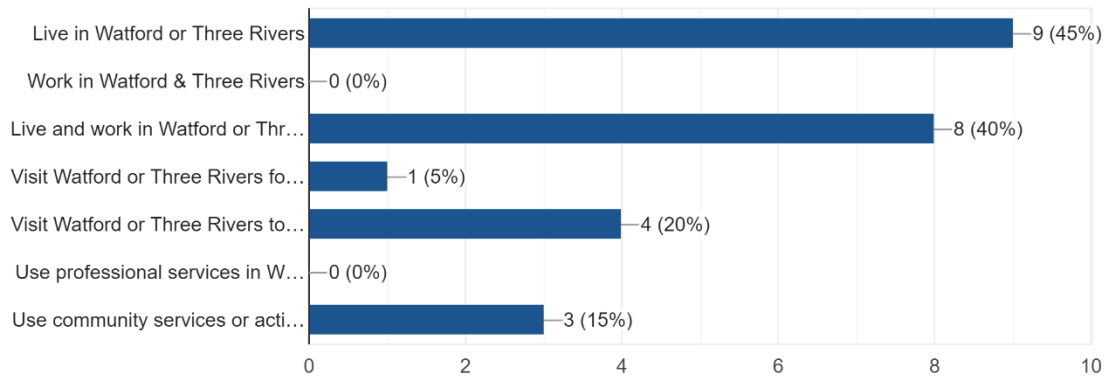


What is your age bracket  
20 responses



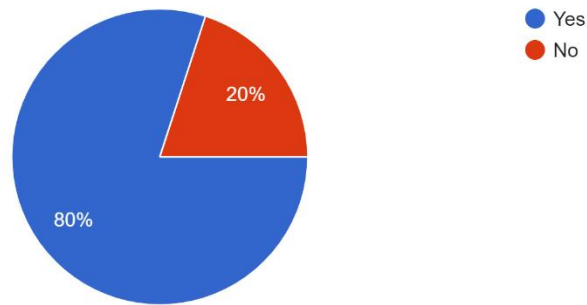
### Do you live, work or visit in the Watford or Three Rivers area?

20 responses



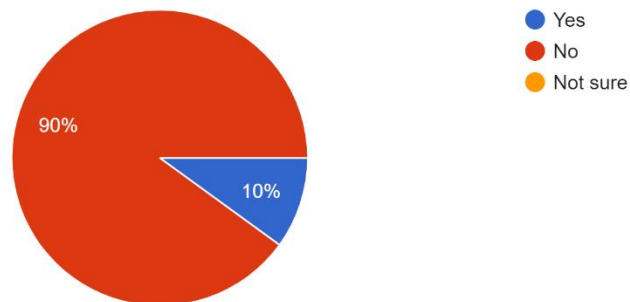
### Is English your first language?

20 responses



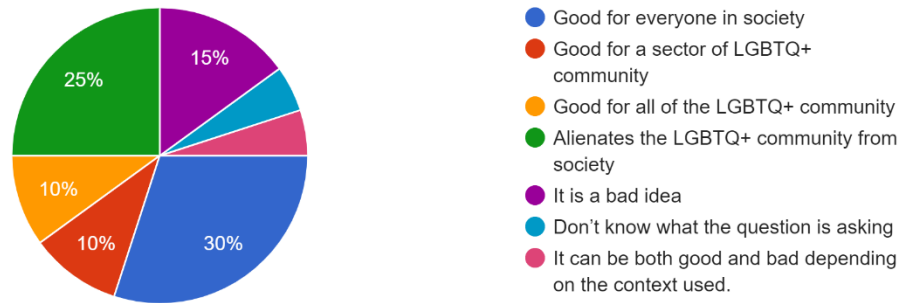
### Do you have a disability of any type

20 responses



Do you think the use of pronouns is a good thing for the whole of the LGBTQ+ community or applies to one sector?

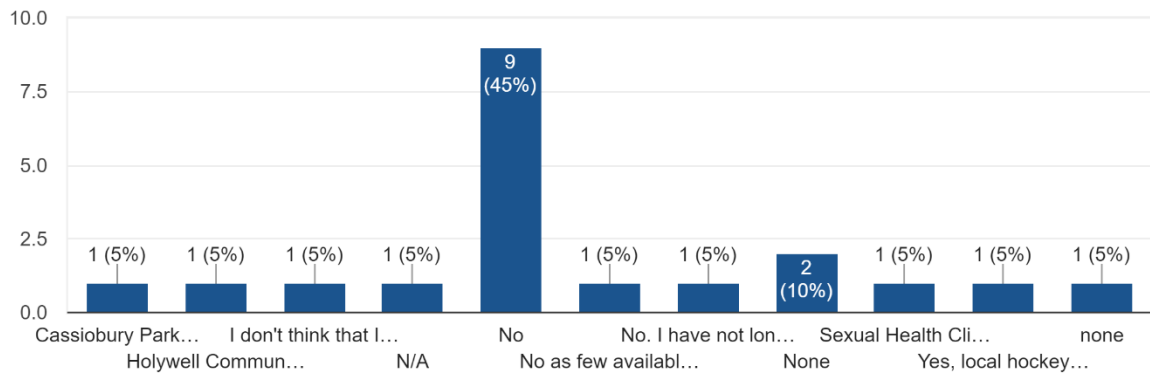
20 responses



**One respondent said, “It can be both good and bad depending on the context used.”**

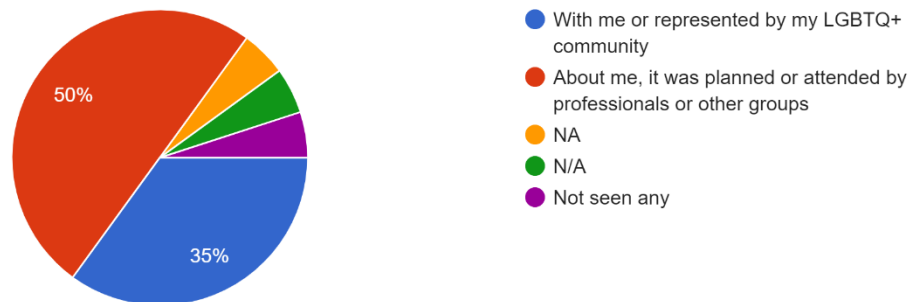
Have you used any community centres, charities or community services in the area of Watford or Three Rivers (if so which)? Example: religious group, voluntary or advice.

20 responses

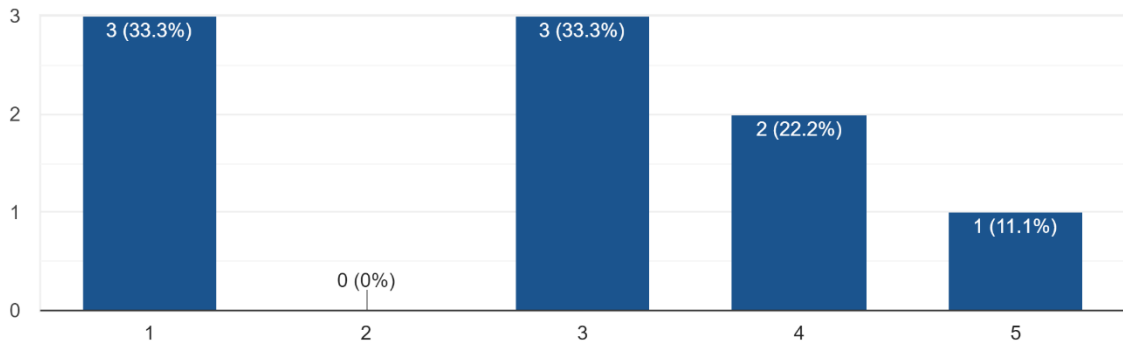


Was the activity or event planned by people representing you or with you before it happened (with me or about me)?

20 responses

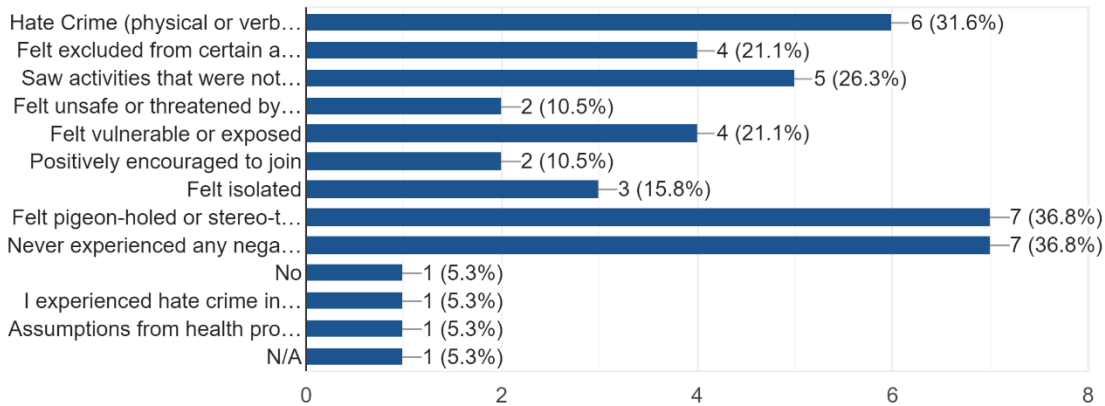


If you have used them, do you feel that the community organisations you have engaged with in Watford or Three Rivers understood what you need ...Id like to see happen in Watford or Three Rivers?  
9 responses



Scale of 1-5 where 1 is no empathy or understanding & 5 is completely understood

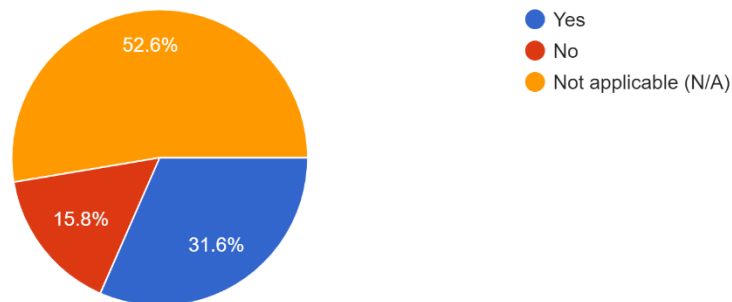
Have you experienced any of the following due to your LGBTQ+ identity?  
19 responses



**One participant quoted: “I experienced hate crime in WATFORD lower high Street”**

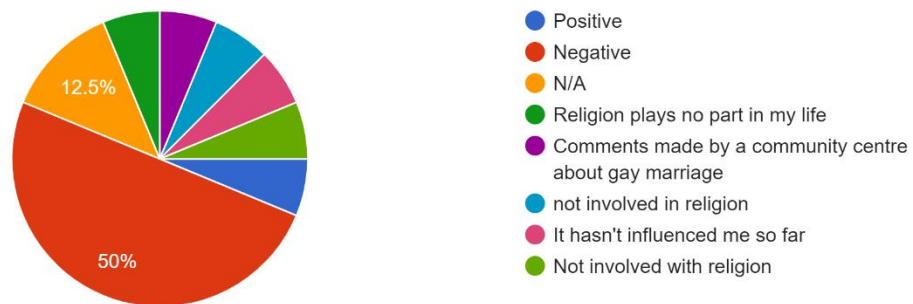
If you said yes to any of the above, did this happen in Watford or Three Rivers? (if no please tick N/A)

19 responses



Has religion played a negative or positive part in dealing with your desire to join an activity?

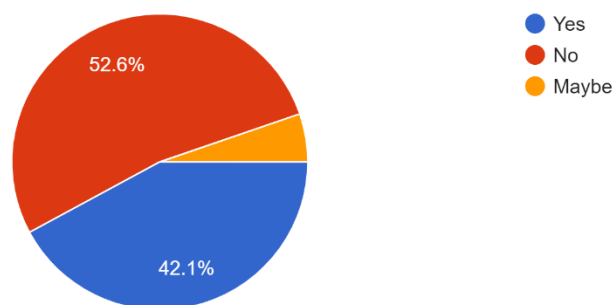
16 responses



**One participant quoted: “Comments made by a community centre about gay marriage”**

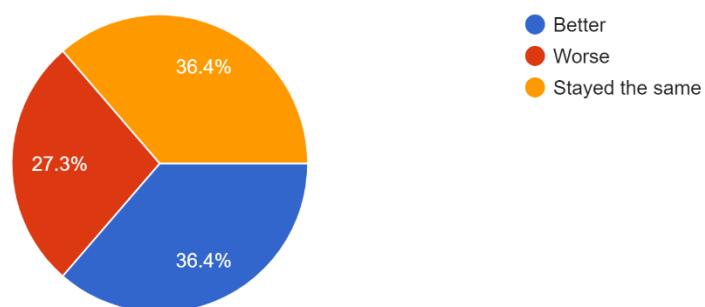
Have you ever had any mental health, depression or suicidal thoughts?

19 responses



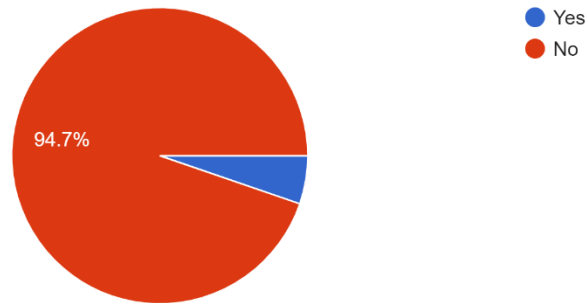
If you answered yes or maybe to the above, has this become better or worse during the pandemic, restrictions or isolation over the past 2 years?

11 responses



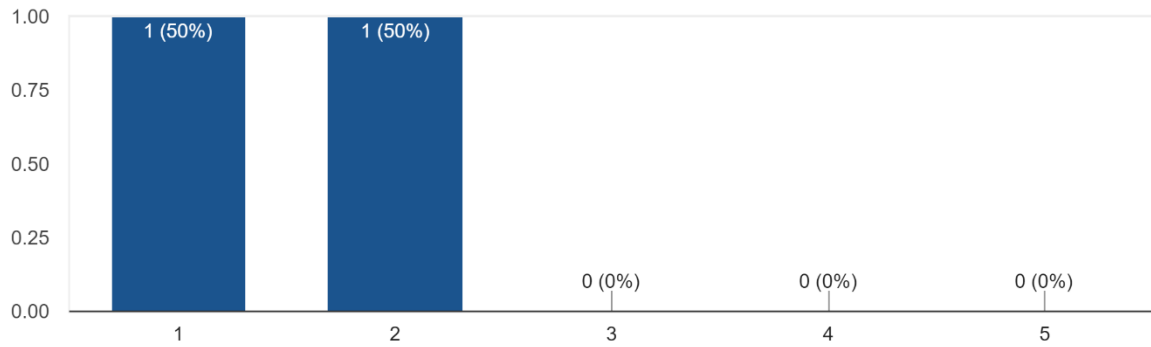
Have you ever accessed any funding (finance or money) through a charity or community organisation in Watford or Three Rivers?

19 responses



If yes, how easy was it to access funding on a scale of 1 to 5

2 responses



**When asked about accessing funding, with 1 being difficult and 5 being easy.**



## Analysis of the Results

### The LGBTQ+ community

#### What are organisations doing well?

Two (out of 20) of the respondents said they were positively encouraged to attend community activities in Watford or Three Rivers and 40% of respondents had never encountered negative attitudes towards their LGBTQ+ identity.

There is a national helpline provided by Terrance Higgins Trust (THT) and a local THT group to deal with HIV and isolation as a result of covid19.

When asked: **“Are there any ways that you are being put off using services? For example: descriptions, titles used or lack of information”**.16 responses were received:

1. No
2. N/A
3. I have not seen much information around
4. Lack of information
5. I have never used services like the Citizen's Advice Bureau as I never knew how they worked.
6. None of the above
7. Some religious groups are openly opposed to Gay marriage which puts me off going there. Other religious groups have anti-gay views and never try to engage with the LGBTQ+ community.
8. Just never needed them
9. I haven't seen any services advertised, the local community paper / leaflets are no longer posted.
10. Need to be clearly labelled
11. Cleaning should be much better. There are no cleaners on-site and the shower drains overflow with hair blockages. People have made negative comments about LGBTQ+ people and that makes me feel uncomfortable. I was bullied a lot as a child and teenager so I hide myself away. I am chicken because I don't want any trouble. I would never go to a football match, it is too aggressive so I stay away.
12. Organisations not accepting responsibility i.e. pushed to other services. I will take action where I can. Parts of Watford culture are ant-gay due to their religious beliefs
13. There is no way of knowing if I would be welcome. E.G we can see sticker those those how are hard of hearing of need wheelchair but there are no visible sign if GLBT+ community would be welcome, Many venues in London have some form or another of letting people know they are welcome and their needs will be met
14. There is just a lack of information
15. Lack of availability of service for my ethnic background and age
16. I am not out

### **What challenges have they faced?**

Assumptions are the key message that is repeated and the need to repeat stories where people then make negative judgements has led to individuals deciding to go elsewhere.

Terrance Higgins Trust (nationally) supports people living with HIV and has a local office at 501 St Albans Road, Watford WD24 7RZ. Covid19 has adversely affected LGBTQ+ people who on top of living with stigma associated with the disease are now also faced with the potentially higher chance of being seriously ill or death due to their compromised immune systems. This has meant that people with the condition are isolating more and at greater risk of increased Mental illness or Depression. There used to be a Trans weekly group at the Load of Hay, Pinner Road, Watford although since Covid19 none of the Trans community visit there any longer. Perception, even of the term LGBTQ+ is misconceived, for example a bar-staff at the Load of Hay (historically a gay venue) referred to the interview participants in relation to Trans people rather than male gays or lesbians. There is a fear of erosion due to the many and varied terms in circulation.

### **What support do they require?**

When asked “Are you a member of a social or professional group that supports LGBTQ+ people? If so, please name any allies, company, group or organisation you are aware of in Watford or Three Rivers.”

Of the 20 responses received there were only three people actually had local knowledge or membership of LGBT organisations, sixteen had “no”, “N/A” or “none” as a response and only four others mentioned general community or social activities:

1. No
2. None
3. Gay Professional Network, Impactful Governance, Load of Hay and I donate to Terrance Higgins Trust every month.
4. Not currently a member of a group
5. Work-based outside of Watford & Three Rivers
6. no
7. member of GPN in London but open to all.
8. N/A
9. Through work

There is no regular and safe meeting place for all LGBTQ+ people in Watford & Three Rivers.

#### One respondent comment:

**“...People have made negative comments about LGBTQ+ people and that makes me feel uncomfortable. I was bullied a lot as a child and teenager so I hide myself away. I am chicken because I don't want any trouble. I would never go to a football match, it is too aggressive so I stay away.”**

#### One respondent comment:

**“I haven't seen any services advertised, the local community paper / leaflets are no longer posted.”**

**“Services should be advertised or put on info boards around the town, in town centre, reintroduce local publications again where these services are advertised etc”**

**“Just advertising and being made aware what is available”**

Another respondent comments:

**“Community spirit- where everyone looks out for each other regardless of who they are - Visible policing - I honestly feel I am more likely to meet the queen in Weatherspoon's than seeing a police officer in Watford.”**

The **largest percentage at 40%** think that the use of Pronouns is a bad thing or alienates the LGBTQ+ community compared to 30% thinking it is good for everyone whilst a further 10% think it is good for a sector of the LGBTQ+ community. And the way to get around pronouns is to use names and ask questions before making assumptions. Most LGBTQ+ participants thought that **simply by asking, rather than assuming**, partner identity or sexuality, would make a big positive difference to attitudes. LGBTQ+ people want to be part of the design and decision-making process when it comes to LGBTQ+ issues. 50% of respondents felt LGBTQ+ activities and events were organised without them (or their LGBTQ+ representatives) with a further 15% being unaware of activities designed for LGBTQ+ in mind at all.

Four respondents noted **“stigma”** as the **main issue** they face.

When asked: **“What is the biggest issue, you personally feel, when it comes to LGBTQ+ concerns? Examples: Health, Wealth, Age, Relationships, bias, stigma, exclusion”** 18 responses were received:

1. Stigma
2. N/A
3. Stigma
4. None
5. Not having a "Gay" space like a gay cafe to drop into.
6. Relationships
7. exclusion
8. No
9. Lack of inclusive environments through in appropriate verbal insults etc
10. None really
11. Stigma is the main issue
12. Exclusion and lack of visibility
13. People also assume I have a girlfriend and I may lose my job if people find out I am gay. In Poland, LGBTQ+ people have to go to extremes like being naked to demonstrate because they are being closed-down; not included and that may turn other non-LGBTQ+ people away from the cause. I was bullied at school so I cannot be open with everyone.
14. Too much emphasis on gender identity & danger of not carrying people with us. Being gay does not define me.
15. Religion, faith schools and the lack of presence and information in the town- being Gay is not a choice or a state of mind, no one chooses their skin colour or sexuality, is like, you are who you are and people should be educated, is not just about having an event once a year where everyone is welcome like pride, is above celebrating life everyday with everyone regardless.
16. Safety
17. Exclusion
18. Bias and stigma

## Recommendations

1. Conduct a small focus group of 100% LGBTQ+ participants, to explore potential LGBTQ+ improvements.
2. Create a Gay Friendly space and devise “gay friendly” window stickers.
3. Create an accepting community with visible LGBTQ+ banners or identifiers.
4. Conduct an LGBTQ+ Audit with all community organisations in Watford & Three Rivers to create a benchmark for LGBTQ+ inclusion.
5. Secure a mechanism to host a full-time post, hosted by Impactful Governance for ongoing research and implementing the findings of this report.
6. Conduct a larger sample of face-to-face interviews with specific LGBTQ+ spectrum focus i.e. Trans only, Gay Male only or Bisexual only to elicit a fuller response and to capture the feelings as well as the statistics within an online survey alone.
7. Encourage age-appropriate LGBTQ+ groups at consistent venues throughout the Watford & Three Rivers area.
8. Encourage religious groups to be purposefully and actively welcoming of the LGBTQ+ community.
9. Reference the Charity Commission Governance Code additions on inclusion as the driver for change within all community organisations.
10. Have LGBTQ+ inclusion within Boards and Decision-Making processes that involve LGBTQ+ people and absolutely do not allow this to be a tick-box exercise. LGBTQ+ people have been used for commercial gain, seen events being taken over by other agenda and symbols of visible safety replaced (i.e., Rainbow flags).
11. Continue dialogue with LGBTQ+ venues and raise awareness to all community organisations.

When asked: **“What improvements could you suggest to better existing services and events or what gaps are there in services or activities?”** 20 responses were received:

1. N/A
2. I don't think I've lived here long enough and have no talent for use of charitable or community services.
3. Having things more publicised
4. None as far as I'm aware. I tend not to use or need community services
5. A male gay bar would be good. Regular gay event i.e. The George on St Alban's Road used to have a once a month event. Facebook has a group but there is no physical events in Watford & Three Rivers that I can go to. Pride event is only once a year and only in the evening when professionals have gone.
6. N/A as I have moved to the area during the pandemic
7. Organisations should publicly display rainbow flags during pride month and actively promote and attract LGBTQ+ people in their literature or publicity.
8. Don't know enough about the services
9. No
10. Can't think of any
11. Services should be advertised or put on info boards around the town, in town centre, reintroduce local publications again where these services are advertised etc
12. A socialising space is needed. Everything is only online now.
13. The Council Gym doesn't give a shit about LGBTQ+. People should ask if my partner is male or female rather than assume I have a girlfriend and make me feel like an outsider. There should be public toilets put out when the football is on, instead of fans pissing in my garden. The shouting and chanting makes me feel threatened and I stay inside my apartment, I can't even sit on my balcony.
14. There is no sense of LGBTQ+ community in Watford & Three Rivers, only Gay apps. Watford should have an LGBTQ+ app to promote LGBTQ+ events and activities and show support.
15. Using the above example, to have a visible presence in the community where I live. Visibility normalises everything the more you see of the less obvious it becomes and everyone is equal.
16. There were lots of people at Herts Pride in Watford although they should make it more publicised.
17. Can't think of any
18. LGBT support groups for 20-30s
19. Have unisex toilets to break-down stereo-types and binary genders. The Council could hold monthly or weekly LGBTQ+ mixed gym or swimming sessions.
20. More gay bars

When asked: **“What do you feel is missing from the Watford or Three Rivers area to make you feel more included or what gaps are there within the community?”** 16 responses were received:

1. I would say bar/club
2. Nothing
3. A gay friendly cafe. The rainbow flag used to be a sign that somewhere is gay friendly but now the NHS has taken it for the straight community, there is no way of knowing if I will be made welcome or not. We need some sort of identifier to say they are gay friendly.
4. more LGBT locations
5. Encourage community organisations to be more LGBTQ+ friendly and embracing. Giving them training on the whole range of LGBTQ+ community, not just the ones who insist on pronouns. Posters around town promoting positive images of LGBTQ+. There were no rainbow flags around Watford Town Centre, even during Pride Event. Pride should actively encourage and reach out to LGBTQ+ people, instead of offering it free so it was majority straight families - there needs to be a place where LGBTQ+ people feel comfortable and in the majority.
6. None
7. Can't think of anything
8. Just advertising and being made aware what is available
9. An LGBTQ+ socialising space, visibility, ways to get involved and networking
10. I want to have a family but religious views make judgements against me. I want a partner but there is no gay place to meet in Watford. Unisex toilet cubicles would make things safer and more comfortable. The marketing for Pride in Watford is shit, it is not promoted, I didn't know there was one even. Use people's names instead of Pronouns. Titles keep changing, like Actresses want to be called Actors now - it just creates confusion.
11. There is no sense of LGBTQ+ community in Watford & Three Rivers. It is a dormitory town. Local Councillors interfacing i.e. when planning skate park for children. What could they do for LGBTQ+? How many openly Gay Councillors are there?
12. community spirit- where everyone looks out for each other regardless of who they are - Visible policing - I honestly feel I am more likely to meet the queen in Weatherspoon's than seeing a police officer in Watford.
13. N/A
14. Gay Bars
15. Lgbt support groups for 20-30s
16. Not sure

## Appendix – Quotes from participants

### About taking part

1. "That is more complicated then I'm afraid because I won't be in the area during December. Sorry"
2. "I won't be here"
3. "I'm not from Watford"
4. There is f\*\*\* all chance I'm clicking on some random link from a dude on \*\*\*\*\*"
5. "I don't care, Watford is a s\*\*\* hole"
6. "The sooner I leave the better. Put that on your survey and consider me having had my say"
7. "Not sure, will it invade my privacy as I'm a married bi guy?"

### Some of the additional comments made during in-person interviews were:

1. "I was previously in a hetero-sexual relationship and have two grown up children. I came out of it after twelve years. My Father was very homophobic and worked for the police force."
2. "I am retired and loving it. I don't get tested in Watford for HIV or anything due to a "click" and it is staffed too heavily by hetero-sexual who make comments and judgements about my sex-life like "you are too old to be having different sexual partners" and they make me feel awkward. I now go to the John Hunter Clinic in London where I can be treated with respect."
3. "I am bi-polar although I don't like to be seen as a victim which is what happens with the health service. I get fed-up repeating the same story to health professionals over and over again and them making me feel like a victim."
4. "We could regress by using these pronouns where gains made in the past are watered down and alienate the hetero-sexual population to suit a minority within a minority."

### When asked about how you are being put off using community services, some answered:

1. "The community centre near me only provides meals with meat only and I am pescatarian. All of their events are meat dishes only and I don't eat meat so don't join in."
2. "Organisations are not accepting responsibility i.e. I get pushed to other services. I will take action where I can. Parts of Watford culture are anti-gay due to their religious beliefs and I wouldn't feel comfortable where there is hostility or I have to hide who I am."
3. "LGBTQ+ issues are never mentioned in any of the Council meetings that I attend. Assumptions are made that everyone there is heterosexual."
4. "I have never used services like the Citizen's Advice Bureau as I never knew how they operate."
5. "Need to be clearly labelled"
6. There is just a lack of information.

When asked what improvements could make things better, some responses were:

1. "There is no sense of LGBTQ+ community in Watford, only gay apps. Watford & Three Rivers could develop an LGBTQ+ community App for everyone."
2. "A gay bar would be good. The Load of Hay used to be but is mostly straight now. A regular gay event like the George in St Alban's Road used to have once a month. Facebook has a group but there are no physical events in Watford or Three Rivers. A Pride event is only once a year and only good later in the evening when the professional stall-holders have gone."

When asked about experiences in Watford & Three Rivers, some responses were:

1. "There are assumptions from health professionals about hetero partners for example, asking me about my wife."
2. "There is no gay space at all in Watford or Three Rivers."
3. "Stop football fans using my garden as a toilet – provide portable toilets instead"

When asked about religious impact on being LGBTQ+, some responses were:

1. "Catholics didn't accept gay people so I dropped my religion."
2. "Let's talk about the elephant in the room, Muslim religion is anti-gay and they don't allow me to be myself. I know some Gay Muslims but they are hidden due to fear of their religion or not out because they had arranged marriages and are living a double-life."

Have you encountered any hate crime (abuse, physical attacks)?

1. Six out of twenty (6/20) have experience a specific LGBTQ+ related Hate Crime.
2. Seven incidents were within Watford & Three Rivers, representing 35% (over a third) of those surveyed.

What support would you like to see in Watford & Three Rivers?

1. A gay friendly café is needed.
2. The rainbow flag used to be a sign that somewhere is gay friendly but now the NHS has taken it for the straight community, there is no way of knowing if I will be made welcome or not.
3. We need some sort of identifier to say they are gay friendly.
4. A socialising space is needed. Everything is only online now.
5. There were lots of people at Herts Pride in Watford although they should make it more publicised.
6. Rainbow flags.
7. Gay Pub.
8. People need to be more friendly.
9. Local people need to understand my needs.