

# Getting LGBT equality embedded into clinical practice

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**269,042** patients treated in the community

**40,817** mental health patients

**7,230**  
Children  
(under 18 years)

**25,881**  
Adults

**7,706**  
Older adults  
(over 65 years)



**52,650**  
Children  
(under 18 years)

**50,938**  
Adults

**31,694**  
Older adults  
(over 65 years)

**135,282** physical health patients



**3,359**  
Addictions  
patients



**702**  
Eating disorders  
patients



**1,271**  
Learning disability  
patients



**71,945**  
Sexual health  
patients

**298**



Offender  
Care  
patients

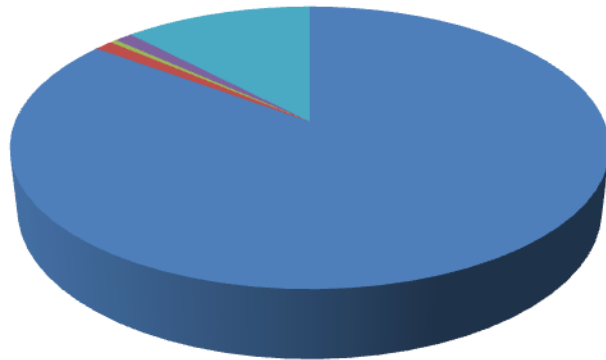
**15,368**



patients  
across  
17 prisons

# Patient demographics

**Brent**



■ Heterosexual

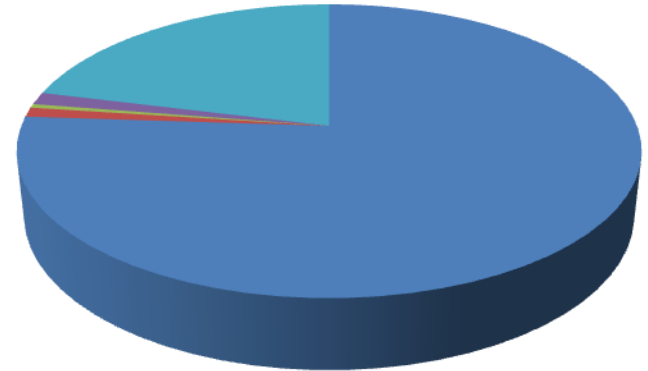
■ Gay

■ Bisexual

■ Not disclosed

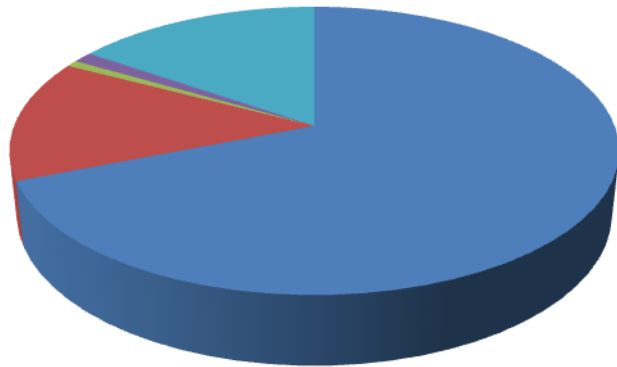
■ Not recorded

**Harrow**



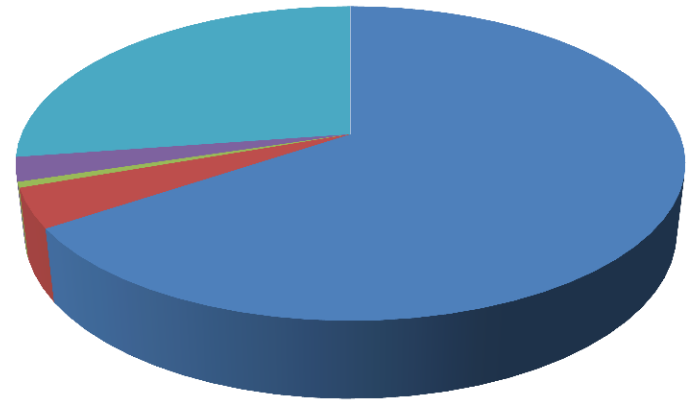
# Patient demographics

Kensington & Chelsea



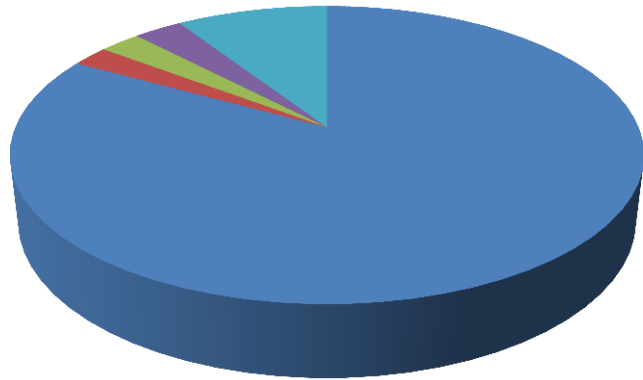
- Heterosexual
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Not disclosed
- Not recorded

Westminster

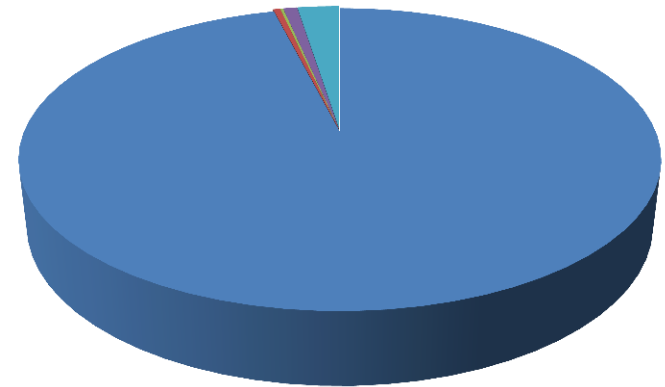


# Patient demographics

## Eating Disorders



## Learning Disability



- Heterosexual
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Not disclosed
- Not recorded



# The CNWL journey

- The catalyst
- The audit
- The training
- The rainbow lanyards
- The Straight Allies
- The re-audit
- The spread



# The catalyst

- Trans male patient with a GRC within an acute mental health unit makes a local complaint about harassment and breach of confidentiality.
- Involvement of The Advocacy Project's LGBT Advocates.
- Audit of experience of LGBT patients captured as part of a wider Equality and Diversity Patient Experience Audit (Jan-July 2012) commissioned by CNWL and carried out by *Different Voices* – The Advocacy Project's inpatient user involvement service



# The audit

## Support

**Do you feel that your care and recovery has been supported in relation to your LGBT status?**

## Respect

**Do you feel that hospital staff respect your LGBT status?**

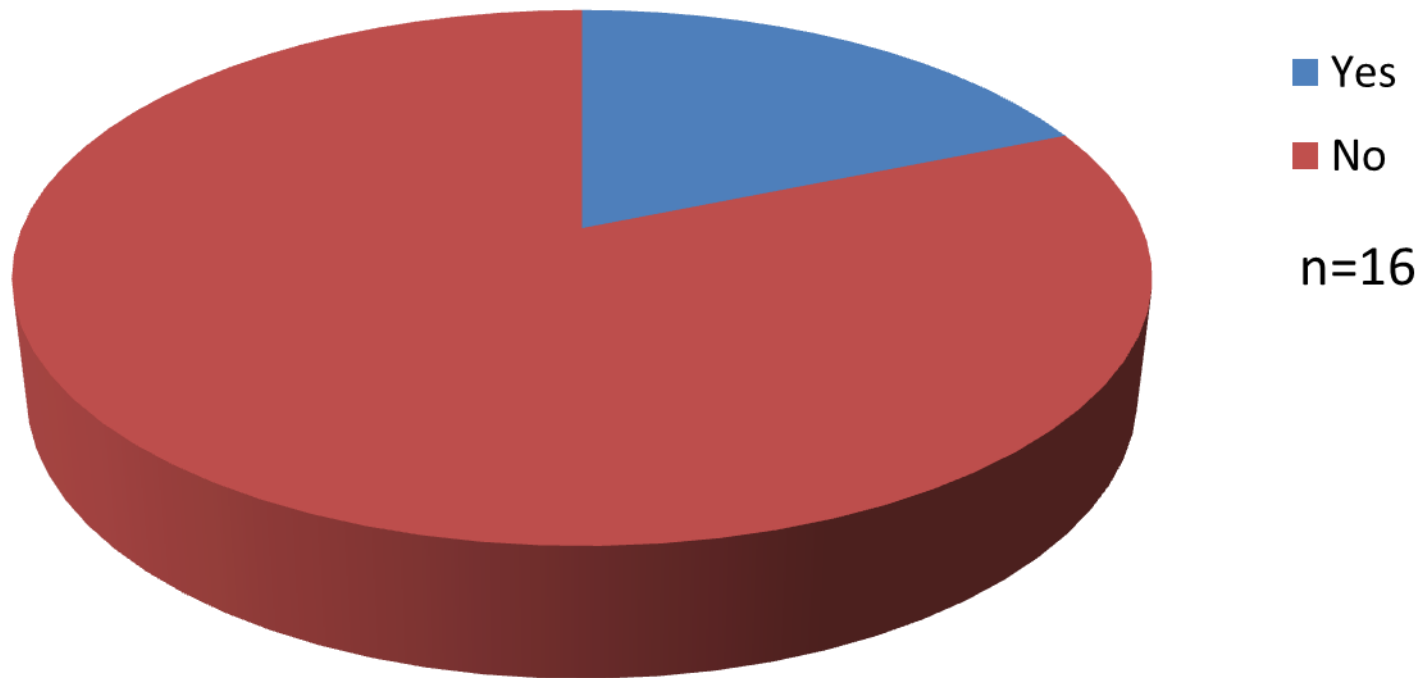
## Disclosure and discussion

**If you have any issues relating to your LGBT status, do you feel able to disclose and discuss these with hospital staff?**

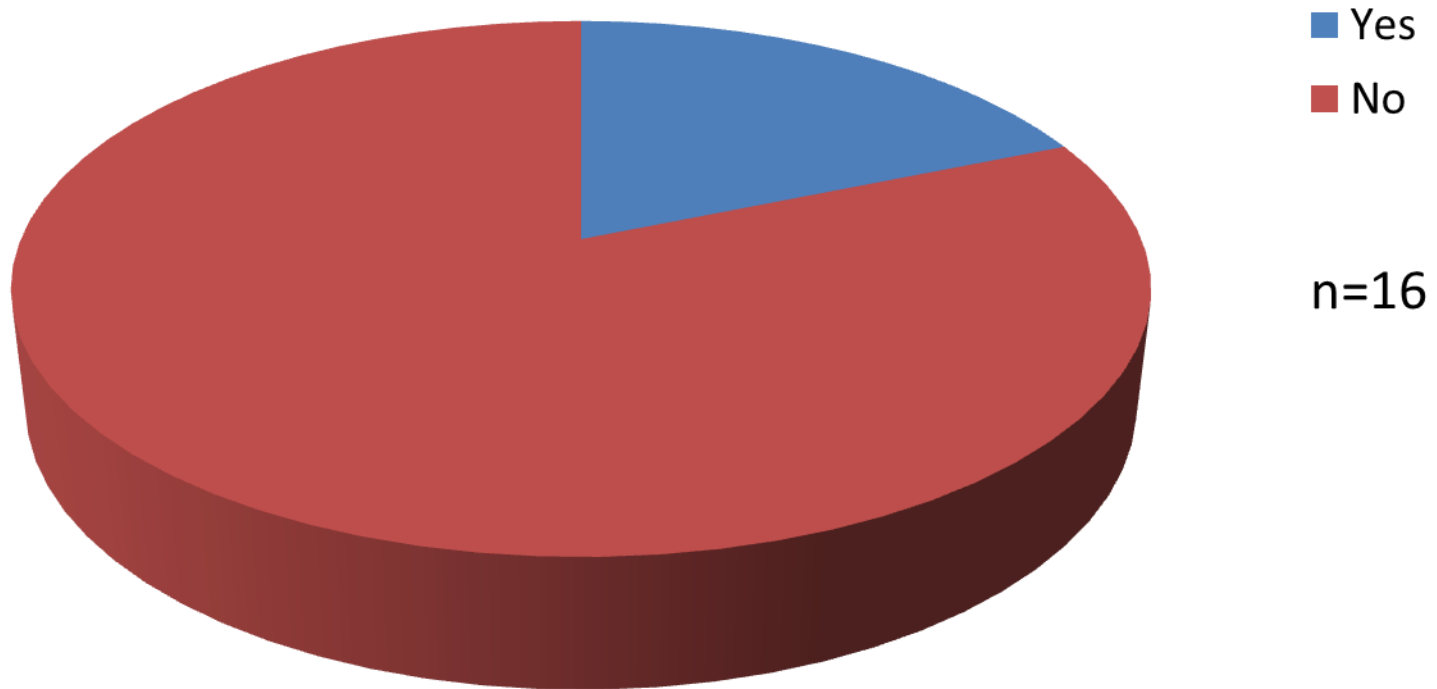




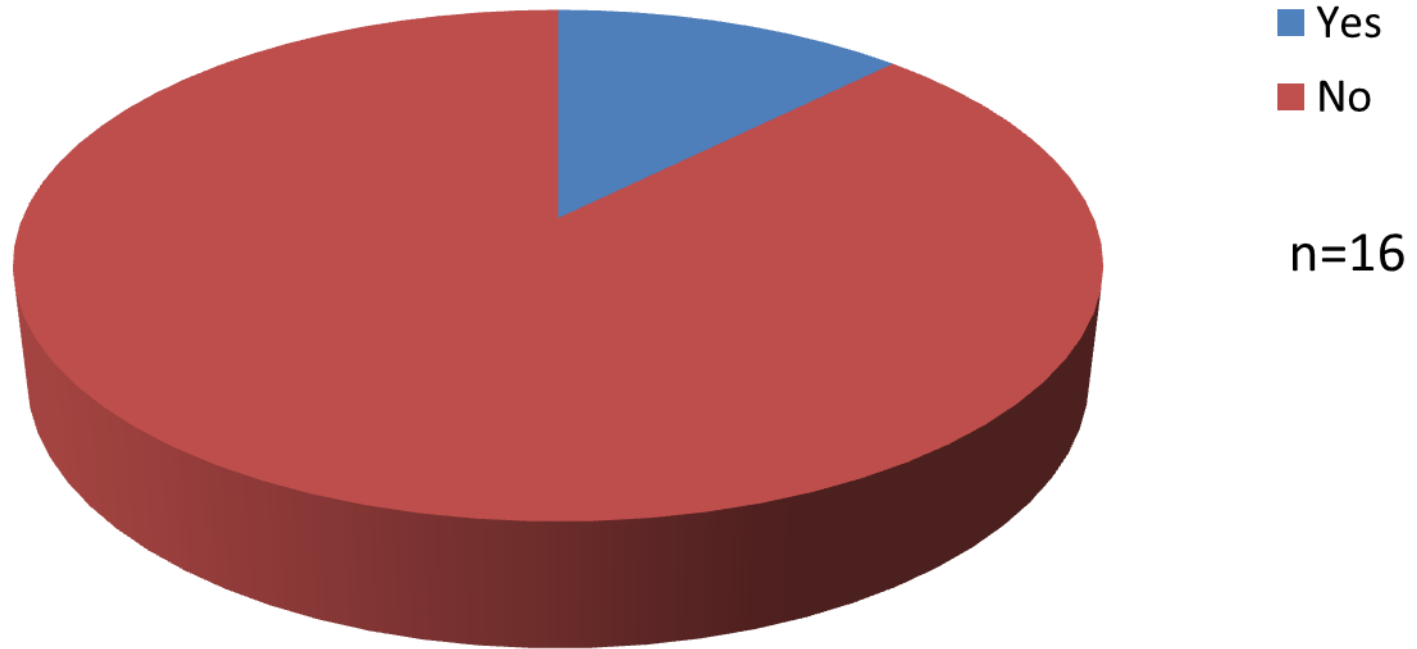
## Do you feel that your care and recovery has been supported in relation to your LGBT status?



## Do you feel that hospital staff respect your LGBT status?



# If you have any issues relating to your LGBT status, do you feel able to disclose and discuss these with hospital staff?



# The patient experience

“Some nurses called me ‘she’. Some called me ‘he’. They were often talking in their own language and looking at me and saying my name. I got looks and whispers all the time. I was even called names such as ‘poof’, ‘he-she’ or ‘hermaphrodite’.”

“It is hard to say, I never told them. I was asked several times where my husband is (I am lesbian). I think what was even worse was that some of the patients adopted this attitude and started making obvious comments and fun of gay people in general. They didn’t stop them.”



# The patient experience

“This is not the sort of place where I feel comfortable talking about my sexuality and nobody asked either. I feel very suppressed and restrained by their, what appears to be quite rigid, fundamentalist Christian values. It comes across when they talk amongst themselves about the patients”

“I would not have felt comfortable disclosing openly. They just didn’t seem like the sort of people who would be able to, if not understand, at least tolerate my situation.”



# The patient experience

“It is much harder for LGBT people in society generally, and therefore also on the ward. Sexuality is complex and staff do not acknowledge this, they are not sensitive. I have witnessed homophobic and transphobic verbal abuse on the wards and staff do not intervene.”



# The patient experience

“I didn’t feel I could talk to staff, because I don’t feel they understand LGBT issues, and I was worried they would judge me negatively. I didn’t feel I could have a partner openly visit me on the ward. Also, some staff might judge someone’s mental health according to them being gay, as being gay used to be a mental illness not so long ago. I am sure some people still think it is. It’s not. Being gay in a straight world can cause mental illness however, because of stigma, discrimination, abuse, family rejection, not being accepted, the fear of being judged hiding who you are – this can obviously affect your mental health.”



# The patient experience

“I feel very supported here... but I do think staff do not like LGBT people. One male member of staff freaked out when my boyfriend visited the ward. He only gave me a hug, it wasn't inappropriate at all. But I have learned that public displays of affection are forbidden if you are LGBT. He said very aggressively: “This is a hospital. You can't do that here!” He insinuated we were doing something dirty. But it's ok for straight patients to hug and kiss their partners hello and goodbye.”





# The patient experience

“Nobody asked me about any needs I have as an LGBT person, and I do have specific needs, including medication needs for my transition. I would be uncomfortable to ask for support, I feel they are prejudiced. Staff do not understand me, they dismiss me as a weird transgender/intersex person. They do not accept me for who I am. Only the LGBT advocate respects me as a person. It’s important to have openly LGBT staff, it makes me feel safe and I can be myself without being judged.”



# The patient experience

“They call male-identified patients ‘she’. Staff call me ‘she’ all the time, even though I have repeatedly told them I am ‘he’ and I appear male. I have a beard! It’s very upsetting and disrespectful. It breaks my confidentiality also. I know lesbian patients who are scared to ‘come out’ as they know staff won’t respect them.”

“Generally I feel respected as a patient, but not as an LGBT person. I have to keep quiet about that, not be myself. But I am used to hostility as a minority in life, so I just ignore people’s hostility, staff and patients. I know it’s not ok, that the ward is not a gay-friendly place, but what to do?”



# The patient experience

“I would rather not talk about this because I fear that if they know I might get in trouble and have to stay here longer.”



# The themes

- Patient-to-patient homophobia not being challenged by staff
- Staff-to-patient homophobia and transphobia and harassment
- A lack of visible ‘safe listening ears’
- No one asking about sexual orientation and associated needs
- LGBT patients feel the environment to be unsafe, stressful and not conducive to recovery
- A culture of LGBT patient silence and invisibility



# The training

- **Explicit message that it is required that staff ask about and consider sexual orientation**
- **Being a visible ‘safe listening ear’**
- **Tips with acceptable language – use of ‘partner’**
- **Being explicit over expected staff behaviours**
- **Their role in challenging homophobia from patients or staff**
- **LGBT status as a part of risk management & care planning**
- **Giving further support & information**



# The rainbow lanyard movement

- Launched February 2015
- Promoted to all new starters at induction
- LGBT Staff Network members and Straight Allies
- Individual sign up & commitment
- ‘A safe listening ear for LGBT patients, colleagues and students on placement’
- Stonewall’s tips on being a Straight Ally
- Info on specialist LGBT support organisations
- Mailing list for newsletter and educational links
- The best 57pence I have ever spent!



# The Straight Allies

- In every service and ward
- Sheer numbers
- Visible support for LGBT colleagues
- LGBT staff feel supported in bringing their life experience to the team
- Receive newsletter with links to TV and radio programmes
- Challenging homophobia in the services



# The re-audit

Dec 2015-Feb 2016

Same three questions plus “What do you know about rainbow lanyards?”

“I think the rainbow lanyards are BRILLIANT. They make me feel instantly safe. It makes such a difference.”

“It’s comforting. I wish more staff would wear them. I appreciate the ones who do... I can worry about being unwell and getting better, without the stress of being scared about homophobic staff.”





# The re-audit

“I think clear messages make a big difference, make LGBT people feel safe, and it’s one less thing to worry about. Because LGBT people do worry about homophobia and transphobia when they come to hospital.”

“I just want to say again that the rainbow badges are brilliant and the ward should have posters up or leaflets telling patients what they mean.”



# The spread...

- West London Mental Health Trust
- Guys & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
- University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust
  
- **DigitaliD** [www.digitalid.co.uk](http://www.digitalid.co.uk)



# Contacts

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