

# Gay Surrey's Lifestyle Survey

## Safety and Security Report

### July 2007

## Introduction

Gay Surrey's strategic mission is to help our community to realise true equality and one of our primary action areas is to **FIGHT HATE CRIME**.

At the beginning of 2007, we launched our Lifestyle Survey. It was the first attitude and opinion survey specifically designed and targeted towards the LGBT community in Surrey. The topics range across a number of public and commercial services.

The results are published on a rolling basis to enable interested organisations and individuals track and monitor opinions.

This report takes a closer look at the results and responses surrounding safety, security and Hate Crime in Surrey.

It is our intent to stamp out homophobic incidents and hate crime by continuing to help support Surrey Police in achieving their goals of positive action and strengthen confidence within the LGBT community of Surrey.

**Mick Day, Head of Diversity**  
**Directorate says** "Surrey Police welcomes the publication of the Gay Surrey Lifestyle Survey - Safety and Security report 2007.

Working with Gay Surrey has helped the Force to understand some of the issues which we now face to improve that level of trust and confidence."

**Gino Meriano**  
*Chair*  
*Gay Surrey*

## Executive summary

There is an increasing demand on local MP's, Councillors, elected bodies and organisations to become a proactive force in Surrey by helping eliminate all forms of discrimination and hate crime.

In a society where equality and fairness should be paramount – it is shameful that the LGBT community continues to see more closeted approaches, receive less help from our elected officials and experience hidden homophobic treatment within the public and commercial sectors.

There is still a desire for many community leaders to simply turn their backs rather than face the hard reality that surrounds gay men, women and families within our rural Surrey towns.

Local officials should, therefore, not be surprised that the gay community is sceptical surrounding hate crime initiatives when outcomes and statistics are accompanied by countless caveats or woolly results.

## Key concerns

### Why are homophobic incidents and hate crime increasing?

Even though there is increasing acceptance of LGBT people – hate crime within Surrey continues to rise.

There are new laws in place to help protect the LGBT community but, as with any legal protection offered to minority groups, society's awareness and compliance lags behind.

In some circumstances, these new laws have increased public awareness and potentially spurring those who choose to discriminate to lead others within society to discriminate.

### Why don't people report incidents when they happen?

The survey highlights the sad fact that many people who experience homophobia or live with homophobic hate crime are so *used to it* they fear reporting it will not be taken seriously.

Some of our community have had bad experiences when reporting incidents; others fear being 'outed' or continuing reprisals from the perpetrators.

However, unless people do have confidence to report homophobia and hate crime, there cannot be a true record of the extent of the problem and little will be done to address the problem.

## Recommendations

There are clear actions that local authorities and enforcement agencies must take to rebuild confidence and improve their reputations within the LGBT community.

### *How can Surrey Police help the gay community further?*

These are a few of the priorities and actions requested.

#### **Publicise successes and demonstrate tangible action**

Our recommendation is to identify and work diligently with organisations that can help inform the LGBT community.

Gay Surrey has offered its events and website to help share news and updates:

[www.gaysurrey.org](http://www.gaysurrey.org)

Any claimed success must be backed by evidence. It should also be acknowledge when and where improvements can be made without trying to be defensive as an authority.

#### **Raise Hate Crime awareness across the county**

It is clear that for one reason or another, the campaigns run so far have not been as successful as hoped.

Our suggestion is again to support and invest in a coordinated campaign that is appropriate for the audience. Face to face contact should also be part of the communication mix.

Gay Surrey is actively seeking funding for our **StopHateNow** campaign:

[www.stophatenow.org.uk](http://www.stophatenow.org.uk)

#### **Educate young people**

Young people within the LGBT community are especially vulnerable to homophobia whether hidden or overt. One area Gay Surrey is focussing on is eliminating homophobic bullying in schools. **Learn – Teach – Grow**

We are actively seeking funding to run a project to inform educators and then help them teach the topic with the hope to grow a more inclusive society.

[www.stophatenow.org.uk/learn](http://www.stophatenow.org.uk/learn)

## Track opinions and gather feedback

Gay Surrey's lifestyle survey provides a method to help achieve this.

We aim to help by having our third party reported incidents included and reviewed by the authorities.

Gay Surrey also strives to build confidence and participation within the LGBT community.

One aim for us is to secure on-going funding to continue the Lifestyle Survey and to run focus groups and independent workshops to gain further insights to inform the authorities' future strategy and action plans.

## Appoint and enable LAGLOs

Over 66% of people completing the Lifestyle Survey requested a LGBT Officer to help understand the community and someone to communicate with.

It will be a great opportunity for Surrey Police to demonstrate real commitment to improving its reputation within the LGBT community.

**Mick Day, Head of Diversity Directorate says** "Surrey Police welcomes the publication of the Gay Surrey Lifestyle Survey - Safety and Security report 2007. Building trust and confidence within all communities in Surrey is a key element of our Neighbourhood Policing style.

We recognise that victims of homophobic hate crime within Surrey may not yet have the level of trust and confidence to report such crimes as we would hope for. Working with Gay Surrey has helped the Force to understand some of the issues which we now face to improve that level of trust and confidence.

Let no one doubt our commitment to tackling all forms of hate crime to the fullest extent which the law provides. Sometimes, due to the vagaries of the law and our legal system, we may not be successful in prosecuting offenders but our resolve will be to try our utmost so to do. Part of our commitment will be the appointment of Lesbian and Gay Liaison Officers over the coming months for each of our four geographic Divisions. We will continue to work closely with Gay Surrey to strive towards making Surrey a safer place for all our communities."

***Gay Surrey is a Registered Charity staffed entirely by volunteers.***

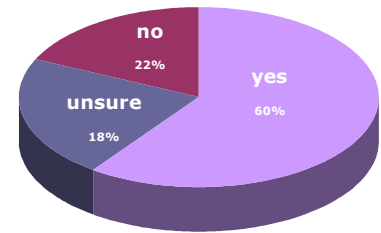
*Without our volunteers, Trustees and supporters we would not be able to continue to make a difference in our local community.*

*If you would like to donate or volunteer your time to help us achieve our mission, please visit [www.gaysurrey.org/supportus.htm](http://www.gaysurrey.org/supportus.htm)*

## Survey results

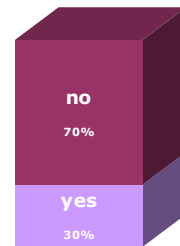
### If you needed help in connection with a homophobic incident/crime would you contact Surrey Police?

This appears to identify a disenfranchised group who are likely to have had some contact with the Police. Our task here should be to rebuild confidence and convince those who are unsure about reporting.



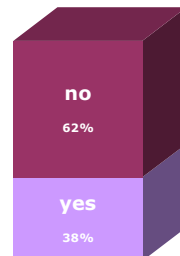
### Have you ever been a victim of a hate crime incident?

One third of respondents have been victims of hate crime. Gay Surrey's blog, youth groups and social groups have identified a knowledge gap regarding what constitutes an homophobic incident or hate crime.



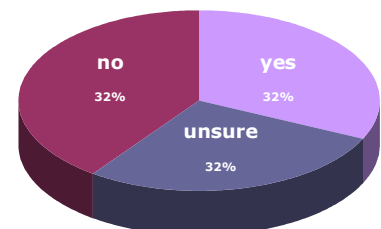
### If yes, did you report the crime?

The minority of reported incidents that are currently used by the Police to secure funding and allocate appropriate resources appears to be inaccurate.



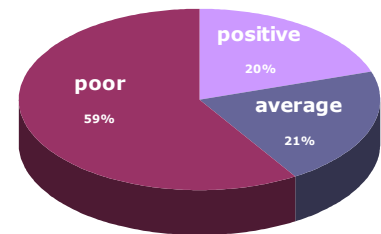
### Do you have confidence in Surrey Police?

Less than one third of the LGBT community express confidence in our Police. There are some interesting insights and potential suggestions provided by the respondents.



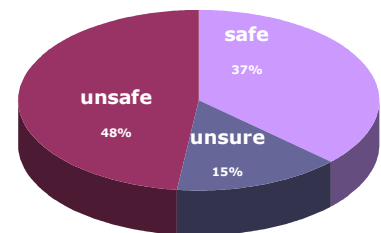
### If you have reported hate crime to Surrey Police, what reaction have you received?

Less than one quarter of respondents felt they received a positive response from the Police. The majority of respondents, however, identified their experience as poor.



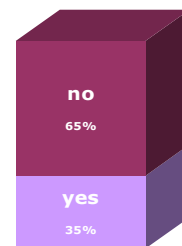
### Do you feel you need to hide your sexuality in public to remain safe?

This directly relates to how safe LGBT individuals feel. Only 37% felt secure enough to show signs, for example simply holding hands, of their sexuality in public.



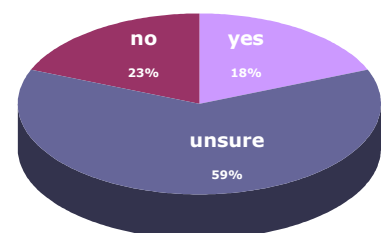
### Are you aware that Surrey Police have run campaigns to raise awareness of Hate Crime and to encourage victims to report them?

Here the majority have indicated previous campaigns have either not been seen as targeted to the LGBT community or perhaps have not exploited the channels appropriate to our community.



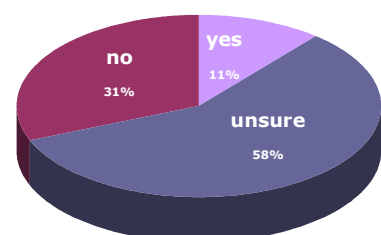
### Do you feel Surrey Police treat everyone fairly regardless of their sexuality?

It is interesting to see that nearly 60% of respondents did not know if Surrey Police treated the LGBT community equally.



### Do you think Surrey Police understand the issues that affect the LGBT community?

Only 11% of participants felt the authorities understood their issues. With 58% unsure, it will be interesting to see how this metric changes with the introduction of a Lesbian and Gay Liaison Officer (LAGLO)



**The team at Gay Surrey would like to thank everyone that has completed the Lifestyle Survey and as a result made this document happen**

**Thank you**