

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Suicide Prevention in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans* Communities

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DAY

Introduction

On Friday 29 January 2016 Mind delivered a national conference on suicide prevention in LGBTQ+ Communities, organised in partnership with MindOut, Time to Change, and a number of local organisations in Bristol.

Special thanks go to Bristol Mind, Bristol CCG, the Bristol Independent Mental Health Network, the LGBT Health Forum Bristol, Rethink Mental Illness, The Diversity Trust, and Ystradgynlais Mind for their support and contributions on the day.

The core driver of this event was a firm belief that talking openly about suicide prevention is an effective way to engage LGBTQ+ communities, service users, service providers, planners and funders in developing together positive responses to mental health needs and reducing mental health stigma.



The main aims of the conference were to:

- Raise awareness of the prevalence and causation of suicidal distress in LGBTQ+ communities; and of the need to provide LGBTQ+ affirmative services
- Provide Information about how mental health needs are experienced differently by different LGBTQ+ people
- Share experiences of a range of suicide prevention interventions for LGBTQ+ people
- Offer evidence of good practice in engaging LGBTQ+ communities, developing a community response to suicidal distress and reducing stigma
- Provide opportunities to continue and develop local partnership and co-production of LGBTQ+ affirmative practice in mental health



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Content of the day

Over 150 people attended the conference and had a chance to hear presentations from service providers, influencers, researchers, as well as to listen to the personal stories of LGBTQ+ people who experienced mental health problems in their lives and are now actively involved in services and campaigns aimed at improving the support available for LGBTQ+ people as well as for anyone else who needs it. These inspiring testimonies were crucial in bringing the discussion to life and in helping delegates fully appreciate the issues at stake.



In addition, delegates had the opportunity to attend afternoon workshops including discussions with Bristol CCG and BIMHN about partnership work, ASIST taster session, a roundtable on good practice in providing LGBTQ+ peer support, as well as a live experience of an innovative social contact concept called SoMe (in the context of the Time to Change campaign).

A copy of the agenda as well as the biographies of all speakers and workshop facilitators are available in [ANNEX 1](#)



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During group discussions, delegates identified a number of key issues that were important to them and encouraged Mind and its partners to further develop actions to effectively tackle the following:

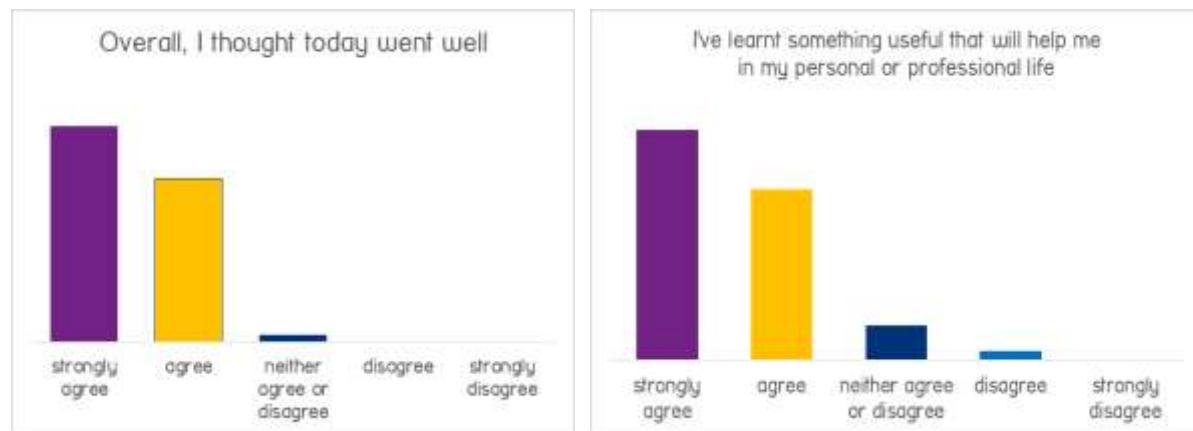
- Access to inclusive services and support (both online and offline);
- Importance of ensuring that diversity and inclusion are visually represented by services (e.g. visible diversity in printed materials);
- Fighting social exclusion, homelessness and isolation, especially in times of austerity and cuts to services and community support;
- Crisis care, with a particular emphasis on what works as far as suicide prevention amongst LGBTQ+ people is concerned;
- Importance of influencing joint strategic needs assessments (JSNAs) as a first step towards achieving services that are able to address the needs of the population;
- Importance of recognising that people's identities are complex and intersectional, rejecting the temptation of reducing people to simplistic labels. This would include the need to better recognise the interactions between one's sexual orientation/gender identity, age, religion, cultural background, and class/socio-economic background.

These conversations increased awareness of the need for joint actions at local, regional or national level. As a consequence, a number of stakeholders (including Bristol CCG, BIMHN, Bristol Mind and the Diversity Trust) committed to arrange follow up meetings to build on the momentum created by the conference and ensure this is translated into actions.

An electronic copy of the presentations used by the speakers at the event was made available to all delegates to allow them to use the information in their own work.

Delegates' feedback about the day

Over a third of the delegates (52 out of 151) completed the evaluation form contained in their packs. As the charts below show, 98% reported thinking that the day went well (strongly agreed or agreed) and 91% said they took away something useful that will help them in their personal and/or professional lives (strongly agreed or agreed). Only one person disagreed with this statement.



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Though the overall experience was very positive, delegates did identify a number of improvements they would like to see implemented in future events. These included:

- ☛ Need to talk more about intersectionality, e.g. issues faced by BME LGBT people
- ☛ Offer the opportunity to attend a second workshop during the afternoon
- ☛ Improve use of microphones. Really hard to hear at times
- ☛ Ensure BME representation amongst speakers

Mind and its partners have taken these suggestions on board and will ensure this learning is used to improve the planning and delivery of future events.

In particular, we are committed to increasing the diversity of both delegates and speakers at future events to better reflect the groups Mind is seeking to engage with through its Equality Improvement work. More information about this work can be found on our website www.mind.org.uk/equality.

A breakdown of sexual orientation, gender identity and ethnicity of delegates is available in [ANNEX 2](#) (based on information provided by 109 delegates during online registration).

Actions to be taken forward by delegates

Listed below is a selection of the answers provided by delegates when asked what actions they will take as a result of attending the event:

- ☛ I will make LGBT+ inclusion more visible in my office and promotional materials;
- ☛ I will be more aware and will speak more about LGBT mental health;
- ☛ I have learnt an enormous amount today. I will disseminate this knowledge;
- ☛ I will develop a peer support offer for LGBTQ people in our services;
- ☛ I will use the evidence presented today to make the case for more funding for training and awareness raising actions;
- ☛ I will get involved with Time to Change;
- ☛ I will find out more about SoMe;
- ☛ I will write poetry inspired by Erica's story and the metaphors she used;
- ☛ Improve our online support, especially for young LGBTQ people;
- ☛ I will get on ASIST training;
- ☛ I will look into doing a photo exhibition project with the young people I work with;
- ☛ I will request LGBT+ training for my team;
- ☛ As an LGBT Liaison Police Officer I will try to ensure more young people feel our team can support them when they are going through a difficult time;
- ☛ I will review our website to make it more LGBT+ inclusive;
- ☛ I will make LGBT leaflets and resources available in my therapeutic practice.

Mind and its partners are committed to providing as much support as possible to make sure positive actions are implemented and they result in visible improvements.

For more information about this event and other activities addressing Equality & Inclusion in Mental Health, please get in touch with Alessandro Storer, Equality Improvement Manager: a.storer@mind.org.uk – 0208 2152 225



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ANNEX 1: Agenda and Biographies

AGENDA:

09.30am: Arrival – Registration – Coffee & tea

09:55: Welcome video Stephen Fry, Mind President (5 min)

10.00am: Opening address Paul Ward, Mind Chief Operating Officer (15 min)

10.15am: Setting the scene (plenary)

- ↳ Helen Jones, MindOut Director (15 min)
- ↳ James Gorman, Rethink Mental Illness Business Partner - South (15 min)
- ↳ Dr Elizabeth McDermott, Senior Lecturer Lancaster University (15 min)
- ↳ Berkeley Wilde, Diversity Trust Director (15 min)
- ↳ Owen Jones, author and political activist (15 min)

11.30pm: Personal testimony

- ↳ Tim Hacker, local Time to Change Champion shares his story (10 min)

11.40am: Open discussion

- ↳ Q&A + Open discussion (30 min)
- ↳ Close morning session and direct people to after-lunch workshops (5 min)

12.15pm: Lunch (45 min)

1.00pm: Workshops (90min) choice of one out of six available, max 25 people each

1. Suicidal distress research + Focussing the Mind photo exhibit (Facilitated by Dr Katherine Johnson and Paul James)
2. Suicide prevention and peer support: the example of MindOut's Out of the Blue (Facilitated by Christine Belk and John Saw, MindOut)
3. Challenging mental health stigma locally and nationally in the LGBTQ+ community (Facilitated by Oz Osborne & Keith Winestein, Time to Change)
4. LGBTQ Emotional Wellness Programme – a rainbow of support, plus other peer support services in Bristol for LGBT+ people (Facilitated by Michelle Bradford, founder of LGBT Health Forum Bristol)
5. Partnership and campaigning for change in Bristol (Discussion with Glenn Townsend, Mental Health Commissioning, Bristol CCG and Tom Renhard, Bristol Independent Mental Health Network)
6. Applied Suicide intervention Skills training taster session (Delivered by Tony Price, Bristol Mind trainer)

2.30pm: Coffee break (15 min)

2.45pm: Feedback from workshops (plenary)

3.30pm: A success story from Wales

- ↳ Carol Stephens and Erica Williams, Ystradgynlais Mind (15 min)

3.45pm: Close of the day & Looking Forward

- ↳ Tom Hore, Bristol Mind Director: Local & Regional Initiatives (10 min)
- ↳ Alessandro Storer, Mind Equality Improvement Manager:
Stronger together, better in partnership (5 min)

4.00pm: Networking drinks reception

5.00pm: End of event



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CONFERENCE SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

Paul Ward, Chief Operating Officer - Mind

Paul has nearly thirty years' experience in the mental health field having managed mental health services and commissioned mental health services. He has served on a number of government working groups in the Mental Health field, and early in his career lead a major mental health hospital re-provision programme. More recently he has joined the board on a mental health NHS foundation trust in a non-executive director capacity. He has also been a non- executive director on a strategic health authority and has held senior management positions in both the NHS and charity sectors.

Paul joins Mind from the Terrence Higgins Trust, where he had been Deputy Chief Executive since 2000 and, more recently, Acting Chief Executive.

Helen Jones, Director - MindOut

Helen Jones is the Director of MindOut LGBTQ Mental Health Project. Helen founded MindOut 15 years ago in response to the demand for services to meet the needs of Brighton & Hove's LGBTQ communities. She has worked in mental health advocacy for many years, as a psychotherapist, counsellor and group worker, and prior to that as a psychiatric nurse. She is passionate about empowerment, peer support and service user participation.

Begun as part of Mind in Brighton & Hove, MindOut became an independent charity three years ago. Run by and for LGBTQ people who have lived experience of mental health issues, we deliver a range of services in the South East as well as supporting similar initiatives around the UK. We also run a national instant online chat service, see www.mindout.org.uk. MindOut has thrived as part of one of Europe's largest LGBTQ communities.

James Gorman, Business Partner - South - Rethink Mental Illness

James is Quality & Service Improvement Business Partner at Rethink Mental Illness. Rethink provides a number of community support services, offering people with severe mental illness the support and help they need to regain confidence to engage in everyday social and workplace activities.

The Bristol community support service covers the full range of mental illness from schizophrenia and bipolar disorders to depression, general anxieties, phobias or obsessive compulsive disorders. It came about as part of a remodelling of existing day services, prompted partly by commissioners and partly by Rethink Mental Illness, which wanted to reshape its community support services to promote better social inclusion.

Elizabeth McDermott, Senior Lecturer - Lancaster University

Dr Elizabeth McDermott is a senior lecturer in health research in the Faculty of Health & Medicine at Lancaster University. For the past twenty five years she has been working, teaching and researching in the field of public health within the NHS and the higher education sector. She is a specialist in mental health inequalities.

She is currently the lead investigator of Queer Futures, a two year, Dept. Health funded national research study investigating LGBTQ young people, suicide, self-harm and help-seeking. Next year her new book titled: 'Troubled subjects, troubling norms' is published which aims to develop understanding of why there is an elevated risk of suicide and self harm in LGBTQ young people.



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Berkeley Wilde, Director - Diversity Trust

Berkeley Wilde is the Founder and Director of the Diversity Trust, not-for-profit organisation influencing social change to achieve a safer and fairer society. It is a partner in the regions hate crime services and works on Police and Crime Commissioner funded programmes to improve access to domestic abuse services. Its principle aims are to bring about social change and reduce inequalities through equality, diversity and inclusion.

Berkeley has been working across the protected characteristics in the Equality Act (2010), the Public Sector Equality Duty and with the NHS Equality Delivery System (EDS2) since 2010.

Since 2004 he has been working as an equality, diversity and inclusion researcher and trainer with a focus on gender identity, sexual orientation and reducing health inequalities. Prior to 2004 Berkeley has worked in the fields of domestic abuse, HIV and mental health; with organisations including the Department of Health, Mind, Relate, Terrence Higgins Trust and a Brussels based NGO working across Europe on improving health and reducing inequality. Berkeley is the Chair of LGBT Bristol and a Stonewall Education Role Model. Berkeley volunteers with his local food bank at Bridging the Gap.

Owen Jones, Author, Columnist and Political Activist

Owen Jones was born in Sheffield and grew up in Stockport. After graduating, he worked as a trade union and parliamentary researcher. He is a columnist at the Guardian and formerly at the Independent, and the author of Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class. His new book, The Establishment – And How They Get Away With It, was published in September 2014. He was the winner of the 2012 Stonewall Journalist of the Year and 2013 Political Book Awards Young Writer of the Year. He is now working on his third book, The Politics of Hope.

Tim Hacker, local Time to Change Champion

Tim is 43, gay, separated in discussion to divorce his Civil Partner. Tim was bullied at school by his classmates and at home by his brother. He struggled with being gay and hid behind a façade. He suffered his first breakdown at 17 but did go to University. After graduation Tim worked in Insurance as a Health Claims Assessor for 13 years. Although his work colleagues were largely supportive, Tim did experience some discrimination in the workplace. Throughout life, mood swings affected him and Tim has often come to the verge of taking his own life, only to be stopped by friends and family. He was signed off sick in October 2012 when he suffered his latest breakdown. With the help of Time to Change, Rethink and his care co-ordinator Tim is slowly rebuilding his life.

Katherine Johnson, Principal Lecturer - University of Brighton

Dr Katherine Johnson is Reader in Psychology and Head of Psychology & Psychotherapy Division at the University of Brighton, and Director of Postgraduate Studies in the School of Applied Social Sciences. Her research interests include LGBT people's experiences of mental health, community psychology, issues of marginalisation and social inclusion, practices for personal and social transformation, gender non-conformity, transsexualism/transgenderism, and the relationship between gender and sexuality in the fields of queer theory, feminist theory and psychosocial studies. She has produced two community-university projects with a local mental health support group for LGBT people and findings have been disseminated as a report on suicidal distress and as a photographic exhibition aimed at challenging stigma about mental health in the Brighton and Hove annual Pride.



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Paul James, Photographer and Service User - MindOut

Paul is one of the photographers involved in the photo exhibition "Focussing the Mind" that will be discussed during workshop 1. He has been involved with MindOut for 10 years. Previously a service user, Paul is now a volunteer involved in MindOut's peer mentoring service and also their online support service.

Christine Belk, Service User - MindOut

Hiya, I'm Christine, I'm 52 and I was diagnosed bi-polar at the age of 42. I've been bi-polar all my life and struggled to "fit in". I had a very serious episode when my wife was diagnosed with cancer and tried several times to kill myself. A friend suggested I talk to someone at Mind Out and it was one of the best things I ever did in my life. They helped me get a diagnosis (my GP had been totally unsympathetic and dismissive of my relationship), provided me with an advocate and placed me in their "Out of the Blue" peer support group. Having support through my wife's illness and eventual death and helping me to learn coping strategies for the bi-polar and suicidal thoughts and just being there and not highlighting my sexuality just treating it as perfectly normal was and continues to be immensely important. Their support has totally changed my life and I can honestly say without it I would not be here today.

Oz Osborne, Director - Outsiders Community Consultants CIC

Oz works with people and communities and has a passion for difference to be appreciated and celebrated. Beginning his work in mental health and community development in 2002, Oz has worked throughout the UK with the Time to Change campaign, The Human Library movement and in 2013 created a social enterprise, The Outsiders, to develop ideas that provide a platform for transformative dialogue. A recent concept developed by The Outsiders is SoMe, which draws upon elements that work well to connect people on social media, in order to facilitate face-to-face conversations addressing specific social issues.

Keith Winenstein, Time to Change Social Contact Manager - Mind

Keith Winenstein is the Social Contact Manager at Mind working on the 'Time to Change' campaign to tackle stigma and discrimination by getting people talking about mental health issues.

Working in partnership with the City Council, 'Time to Change Bristol', a pilot hub consisting of stakeholders including NHS, voluntary sector and Champions with lived experience has been established, tailoring the campaign to local needs.

Keith's previous roles in the voluntary sector have included co-ordinating national campaigns 'World AIDS Day' and 'Are you HIV Prejudiced?' (National AIDS Trust) and 'Volunteering for All' (Media Trust).

Michelle Bradford, Founder - LGBT Health Forum Bristol

Michelle Bradford's professional background is Occupational Therapy. She has run a mental health project called the LGBTQ Emotional Wellness Programme in Bristol for the past five years, which is a drop-in with a unique LGBT+ specific recovery programme. It focuses on decreasing social isolation, coping strategies for better mental health and overcoming internalised trans/bi/homophobia.



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Glenn Townsend, Mental Health Commissioning - Bristol CCG

Glenn Townsend works in mental health commissioning for Bristol Clinical Commissioning group. In his role, he primarily focuses on patient involvement in commissioning, ensuring that the services are of high quality, meeting the needs of the whole of the local population with the user voice at its heart.

His role is also to support the creation and development of user led groups and initiatives. He works closely with the Bristol Independent Mental Health Network, as well as other local community groups. He has previously worked for Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust; the Mental Health Act Commission; and Bristol Mind as an advocate.

Tom Renhard, Bristol Independent Mental Health Network

Tom Renhard is an active mental health campaigner and Time to Change Champion living in Bristol. A former Students' Union elected officer at UWE Bristol, he oversaw the portfolio of 'Community and Welfare', working collaboratively to create and advance its Mental Health Campaign Network. As part of this role, he developed campaigns on areas including: student wellbeing; equality & diversity; community relations; tenant's rights and housing conditions. Tom is also one of the founding members of the Bristol Independent Mental Health Network; a mental health campaign group representing the voices of those who have lived experience of mental health issues. He co-ordinates the activities and development of the group, including acting as convenor to a reference group that is delivering user involvement in the recommissioning of Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services for Bristol.

Ceri Jenkins

Ceri Jenkins is a freelance writer and campaigner from Bath. She recently led the highly successful #ISeeTara campaign to see a Trans woman relocated from a male-only prison, which received international media attention.

Ceri also runs the Bath Gender Equality Network, and founded The Digital Natives, a marketing consultancy for third-sector businesses, charities, and social enterprises.

Jamie Jordon

Jamie Jordon is a final year Forensic Science student at UWE Bristol and elected Treasurer to the Bristol Independent Mental Health Network. Through his time at university, he has been highly engaged with the Students' Union. He has supported Societies' development through executive roles and writes for the student newspaper, WesternEye, as the Science and Technology Senior Reporter.

He has been an active advocate of the Mental Health Campaign, assisting with fundraising events and campaigns challenging mental health stigma and discrimination. He also sits as a Service User Representative on a reference group delivering feedback relating to the recommissioning of Improving Access to Psychological Therapies.

Tony Price, Trainer - Bristol Mind

Tony has experience of working with vulnerable persons who have mental health and/or substance issues. He has worked for a Local Mind Association as a counsellor/counselling service manager, volunteer's manager and managed a project aimed at assisting persons with mental health issues back into employment, education, training and voluntary positions. Tony is now a freelance trainer based in south-east Wales with his own training company. Since 2007 Tony has been delivering suicide intervention training. He currently delivers



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Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), safeTALK and suicideTALK training both in Wales and England.

Carol Stephens, Director – Ystradgynlais Mind

Carol Stephens has been the Director of Ystradgynlais Mind for the past 13 years. She became interested in working in the field of mental health from having experienced her own mental health issues in her early twenties. Carol became involved in establishing Neath Mind and went on to train as a psychiatric nurse. She found that she could not work within the statutory sector, it was not for her. So Carol returned to the third sector and worked in substance misuse for many years. She eventually came home and has loved every minute of her time with Ystradgynlais Mind, the people and the community at large.

Erica Williams, Project Worker – Ystradgynlais Mind

Erica Williams has worked as a project worker at Ystradgynlais Mind for the past eight years. Erica has been providing Art and relaxation therapy. Erica has previously worked with Social Services as an Art teacher with people with learning disabilities. Erica also works as a personal assistant for a person with a brain injury. Erica has a background in the mining industry, however, a serious accident forced a career change and has brought her wealth of experience and talents to support people to improve their mental and emotional wellbeing.

Tom Hore, Director – Bristol Mind

Tom joined Bristol Mind in 1998 as advocacy development worker and has built up a range of advocacy services since then through a mixture of grant applications and statutory funding. In early 2014 Tom became interim director, but still manages the advocacy services, and practices as an IMHA and IMCA.

Tom is also part of the steering group supporting Bristol Time to Change Hub.

Alessandro (Alex) Storer, Equality Improvement Manager – Mind

At Mind, Alex is responsible for designing and delivering projects supporting mental health services to become more inclusive and culturally competent. In the last 4 years this has included working with Black & Minority Ethnic Communities, Refugees & Asylum Seekers, Faith Groups, people with learning disabilities, physical and sensory impairments, as well as LGBTQ+ people. Before joining Mind Alex was working for the Euro-Med Human Rights Network where he managed EU funded projects promoting Democracy and Human Rights in North Africa and the Middle East. He holds a BA in European Law and an MA in International Relations.



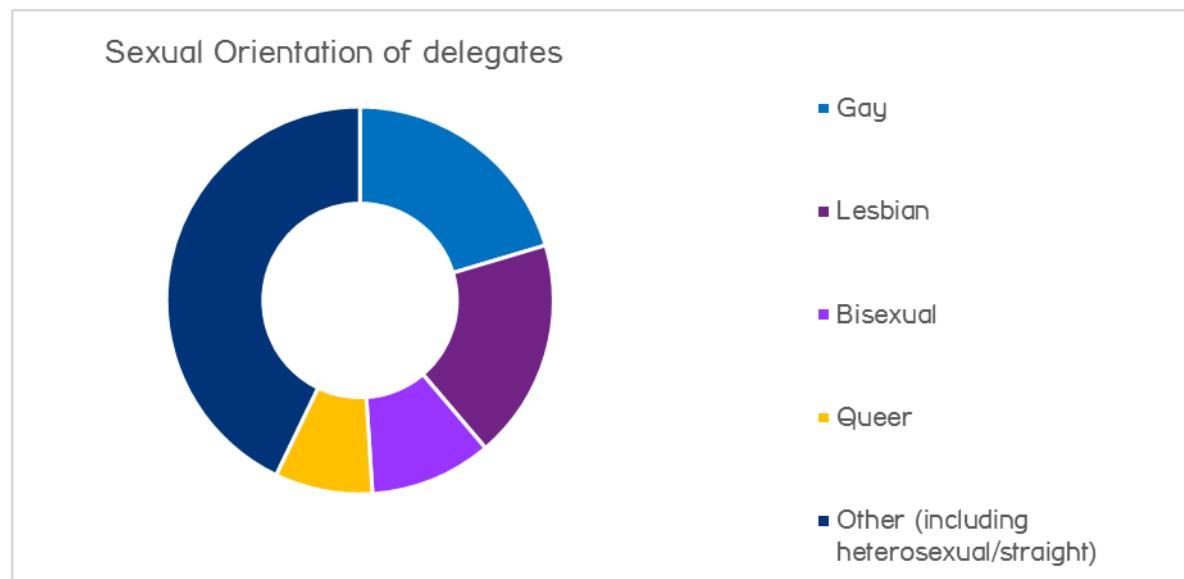
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ANNEX 2: Delegates' Profile

As shown by the first two charts below, delegates' sexual orientation and gender identity was fairly diverse and fully reflective of the group this particular conference was focusing on, i.e. LGBTQ+ people.

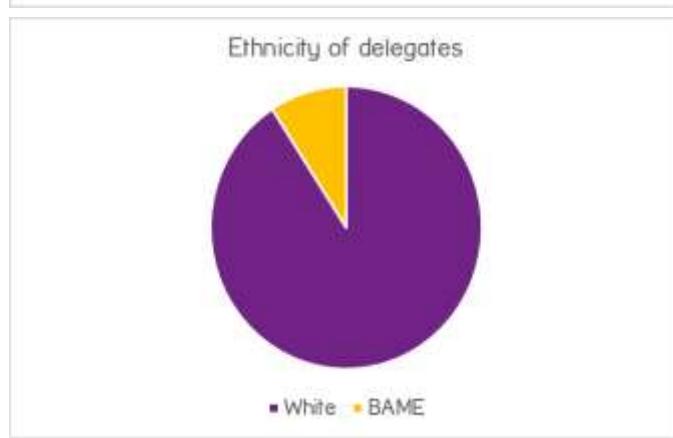
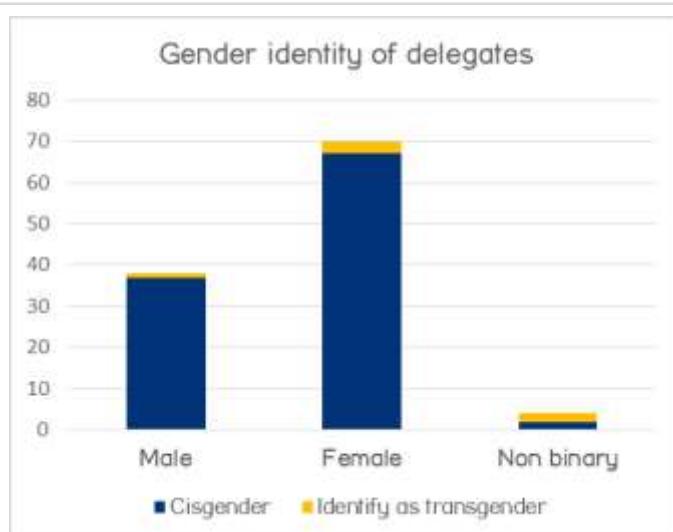
In aggregate terms, over 60% of delegates identified as LGBTQ, with the remaining 40% identifying as heterosexual or choosing another way of self-defining their sexual orientation.



The spectrum of gender identity was also fairly well represented, including as far as trans* identities are concerned, which were represented amongst all of the three categories surveyed, i.e. Male, Female, and Non-Binary, as shown in the chart.

However, one characteristic that was not well represented across the spectrum was ethnicity.

As the chart on the right shows, over 90% of the delegates identified with a White background (including White British, White Irish, and any other White background), whereas less than 10% identified with a BAME background (including Black British, Caribbean, African, any other Black background, Asian British, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese and any other Asian background).



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