



# Trans People and Work

## Survey Report

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## Further information

For information about the services, programmes and activities LGBT Health and Wellbeing delivers please visit our website: [www.lgbthealth.org.uk](http://www.lgbthealth.org.uk)

An [Executive Summary](#) of the Trans People and Work Survey Report is available on our website at: [www.lgbthealth.org.uk/resource/trans-people-scotland-work](http://www.lgbthealth.org.uk/resource/trans-people-scotland-work)



# Foreword

We know trans<sup>1</sup> people experience specific barriers when looking for and staying in work. We wanted to understand more about these barriers in a Scottish context, and how they can be challenged. To do this we ran two in-depth focus groups, which helped inform the development of our online anonymous survey. The survey asked people about their current employment situation, and their experiences finding work and once they were in employment. We wanted to look at both barriers and enablers, and capture positive experiences, alongside areas where progress is needed.

The report provides really rich data around the employment situation of trans people in pre-Covid Scotland. It looks at the experience of coming out at work, and transitioning at work, the extent to which people have experienced discrimination and harassment, as well as the role of supportive networks, rights and protections. It identifies key areas where change is needed and outlines the many recommendations for improvements put forward by trans people.

The report captures a real diversity of experiences, including positive experiences and examples of good practice. However, it reveals an overall picture which points to many people experiencing acute disadvantage due to their trans identity. These include experiences of trans identity negatively impacting on job prospects, workplaces not being trans inclusive, harassment and unfair treatment at work impacting negatively on mental health.

Critically, less than half of survey respondents felt their workplace was trans inclusive, and less than a quarter felt that the policies and strategies in their workplace go far enough to ensure work equality for trans people. Over half of respondents had experienced harassment at work directly or indirectly related to their trans identity, including frequent misgendering, explicitly transphobic statements, verbal abuse and discrimination. Most people who experienced harassment did not report it to a manager or human resources, and the majority felt managers were not adequately equipped to deal with transphobic harassment or bullying.

Whilst most trans people were aware of their rights and protections in the workplace, they were considerably less positive about the awareness of their employer and colleagues. The report findings point to a strong need for better policies, awareness raising, education, guidance and training, alongside greater positive visibility of trans people.

We hope the report findings and recommendations will act as a catalyst for change, help inform progress towards greater work equality and, ultimately, the economic advancement and social inclusion of trans people in Scotland.

Maruska Greenwood  
Chief Executive, LGBT Health and Wellbeing

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<sup>1</sup> In this report we use the term 'trans' (short for transgender) as an inclusive umbrella term for anyone whose gender identity does not fully correspond with the sex assigned to them at birth. Throughout the report, we use the term 'trans' to refer collectively to trans men, trans women, and non-binary people. Where we are only talking about the experiences of one of these groups of trans people, we make this explicit.

# Executive summary

## Introduction

LGBT Health and Wellbeing carried out a research project on the experiences of trans people at work and when looking for work, involving two focus groups and an online survey, which received responses from 65 trans people.

We aimed to identify the barriers that this minority faces in finding and staying in appropriate employment, to understand their experiences at work and looking for work, and engaging with support networks; and their understanding and views of protective policies governing their workplaces.

## Key findings

This research has highlighted the many challenges and barriers trans people can face in relation to employment. Although most of those who contributed were in work, and there were positive experiences and examples of good practice, they identified difficulties at every stage of employment.

The full findings are described in section 6, and include rich qualitative information. There are many examples of both positive and negative experiences, but the overall picture points to many people experiencing disadvantage due to their trans identity, often even where policies are in place which should address this.

### Getting into work

When looking for work, more than half of survey respondents said they found getting into work difficult or challenging and 40% said their trans identity had a quite or very negative impact on their job prospects. Barriers included:

- Feeling unable to apply at all because of fears of prejudice
- Application forms which exclude non-binary identities
- Difficulty obtaining references and proof of qualifications to match gender and new name
- Lack of awareness, and sometimes transphobia, from interview panels
- Feeling unable to be out about their trans identity when applying for jobs.

## Experience at work

At work, a minority (41%) felt that their workplace was trans inclusive, although more than two thirds saw their workplace as an inclusive place for people with lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) identities. Three-quarters would like to see more LGBT-inclusive strategies in place at work. 69% said being at work had affected their mental health. Although three-quarters felt able to be out to at least some people at work, issues included:

- Feeling the need to be careful about who to be out to, or whether to be out at all
- Lack of awareness and understanding of trans identities from some colleagues
- For a minority (17%), lack of access to facilities, such as toilets, appropriate to their gender
- Lack of adequate policies or strategies to make their workplace more trans inclusive
- Interventions such as policies or training implemented without involvement of trans people's expertise being inadequate or even damaging
- Lack of implementation of policies
- The onus sometimes being on trans people to create change.

## Transitioning at work

More than two thirds of those who had transitioned at work were generally positive about the support they got from managers, colleagues and the workplace in general; but this was by no means universal. Issues included:

- Lack of support from employer or manager
- Lack of adequate leave while transitioning
- Negative reactions from some colleagues.

## Harassment

Harassment at work, including misgendering, explicitly transphobic statements, verbal abuse and discrimination was experienced by many people (60%); yet only a minority had reported it, and some described poor experiences in the past which put them off reporting. Issues included:

- Lack of confidence that managers were adequately equipped to deal with transphobic harassment or bullying
- Lack of confidence in consistency of support from different managers.

## Support

Two thirds of survey respondents had people at work who they could confide in if or when they experienced unfair treatment at work, but a fifth did not and 13% were not sure. Outside work, most had a strong support network such as friends, family or groups; but a fifth did not, or were unsure. Suggestions for improvement included:

- Clearer policies on trans issues
- An LGBT (or trans-specific) staff network, supported by the employer
- More informed HR support

- Better information
- Better support from managers
- External support for employees
- Better employer understanding of mental health and of neurodivergence.

## **Rights and protections**

Two thirds of survey respondents felt they had good awareness of rights and protections. They were less positive about their employer's awareness, still less about their colleagues' awareness, and the general public was judged to have the lowest awareness of all. Only 15% felt that the law goes far enough in protecting trans people at work. Issues included:

- Lack of good practice despite the law being in place
- Lack of enforcement of the law
- Smaller companies less likely to be aware
- Equality legislation is dated and needs better recognition of non-binary people
- It is difficult in practice for an individual to use the law.

## **What could be improved**

People suggested a wide range of improvements, including:

- Improvements to current law
- Clarity on and enforcement of current law
- Better awareness raising, education and training in the workplace
- Promoting positive visibility
- Better trans-inclusive policies in workplaces
- Simple procedural changes by employers.

## Recommendations

### For government:

1. Provide greater protection and recognition of non-binary people, using both policy and the law.
2. Provide support to address labour market barriers experienced by trans people through the Employability in Scotland programme and local employability partnerships.

### For the Equality and Human Rights Commission:

3. Provide clear guidance for employers on trans equality.

### For employers:

4. Ensure they have a clear LGBT policy, created with lived experience engagement, which addresses trans issues, including:
  - Recruitment processes which encourage trans applicants and do not exclude non-binary identities
  - Protection in relation to transition issues
  - Support to challenge harassment
  - Diversity monitoring
  - Use of language (for example, using people's preferred pronouns)
  - Provision of gender neutral toilet facilities.

The Transgender Workplace Support Guide<sup>2</sup> is a key resource which will support this work.

5. Provide awareness raising and training for all managers and staff on issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Transgender Workplace Support Guide, LGBT Health and Wellbeing and NHS Lothian, 2016  
<http://www.lgbthealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/TWSP-Info-Guide-Final.pdf>



# Introduction

LGBT Health and Wellbeing works to promote the health, wellbeing and equality of LGBT people in Scotland. We carried out a research project on the experiences of trans at work and when looking for work. Two focus groups were held in July and August 2019, and the findings informed the design of an online survey of trans people about their experience of work carried out during autumn and winter of 2019<sup>3</sup>.

The aim of the research was to explore the work-related barriers faced by trans people and help to identify approaches which could effectively promote equality at work. In particular, we aimed to identify the particular barriers that this minority faces in finding and staying in appropriate employment, to understand their experiences at work and looking for work, and engaging with support networks; and their understanding and views of protective policies governing their workplaces. We aimed to use this information to make recommendations which could help advance work equality and, ultimately, the economic advancement and social inclusion of trans people.

This report sets out the findings of the survey and the focus groups.

## Background

We lack a reliable baseline of exactly how many trans people are living in Scotland. Current estimates, however, are that trans people account for between 0.6% and 1% of the Scottish population.<sup>4</sup> A lack of data also makes it difficult to assess the socio-economic position of trans people. However, we know that trans people experience specific barriers in maintaining good health and wellbeing and that economic disadvantage and experiences of discrimination – including in relation to work - are often at play. Stonewall's 2018 report highlights some of these issues:

- 18% of Scottish trans respondents are still not addressed with their correct name and pronouns at work
- 40% of trans employees have been the target of negative comments or conduct from customers or clients at work in the last year because they are LGBT
- 6% of trans employees have been physically attacked by customers or colleagues in the last year because of being trans
- 13% of trans people say they did not get a promotion at work in the past year because they are LGBT - this compares with 6% of LGB people who aren't trans
- 18% of trans employees aren't open with anyone at work about their gender identity

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<sup>3</sup> Analysis of the survey was delayed by the pandemic.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/PopulationMigration>

- 58% of trans staff hid or disguised that they are LGBT at work in the last year because they were afraid of discrimination
- 12% of trans staff don't feel able to use the toilet they feel comfortable with at work
- 14% of trans employees wouldn't report transphobic bullying in the workplace. <sup>5</sup>

## Methodology

### Focus groups

Two focus group discussions were conducted with a total of seven participants, a facilitator and a research assistant, to explore experiences of work. One was held in Edinburgh in July 2019 and the other in Glasgow in August 2019. Although the number of participants was small, this allowed for in-depth discussion as each participant had diverse, rich experiences. A range of gender identities and sexual orientations were represented and ages ranged from 19 to 51. The participants were all in different kinds of work and different stages of transitioning. This meant that certain questions were more applicable to some participants than others.

The questions asked were largely informed by discussions with the trans community which had taken place at a previous community group, and by wider reading. We asked an 'ice-breaker' where participants were able to introduce themselves and their experiences of work. We then asked six main questions (see appendix 2). We left some time at the end for participants to reflect and offer any recommendations.

### Survey

The survey was designed based on the background research and the findings of the focus groups (see appendix 3). available online via our website and was publicised through our monthly LGBT and trans e-bulletins, our social media and services, as well as through partner organisations.

65 people responded to the survey:

- They were aged from 18 to 62.
- 38% (25) of survey respondents identified as non-binary, 32% (21) as a woman, 2% (1) as a transwoman, 15% (10) as a man, 5% (3) as trans masculine, 5% (3) as agender or no gender and 5% (3) as other descriptions, including gender fluid or genderqueer.
- The majority (86%) had (or were studying for) college or university level qualifications, including 31% (20) with postgraduate qualifications.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/system/files/lgbt\\_in\\_scotland\\_work\\_report.pdf](https://www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_scotland_work_report.pdf) The Scottish responses to their 2017 online questionnaire about LGBT life in Britain included 64 trans people and a further 16 individuals who indicated they were unsure or questioning their gender identity.

- The majority (88%, 57 people) were currently working, with most in paid full or part time work.
- 42% (27) of respondents said they considered themselves to be disabled, including mental ill health (14 people), neurodivergence including autism and dyspraxia (10 people) and physical disabilities (8 people).
- Two thirds (64%, 41 people) said they had enough money to cover what they felt they needed each month and a quarter (27%, 17) did not.

There is more detailed information about respondents in appendix 1.

## **Limitations**

The people who took part in our survey were more highly educated and more likely to be in work than average for Scotland. In comparison, the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) 2018<sup>6</sup> showed 32% of adults as having a degree or professional qualification, and 15% having no qualifications at all. 49% of adults were in full time employment and 13% in part time employment.

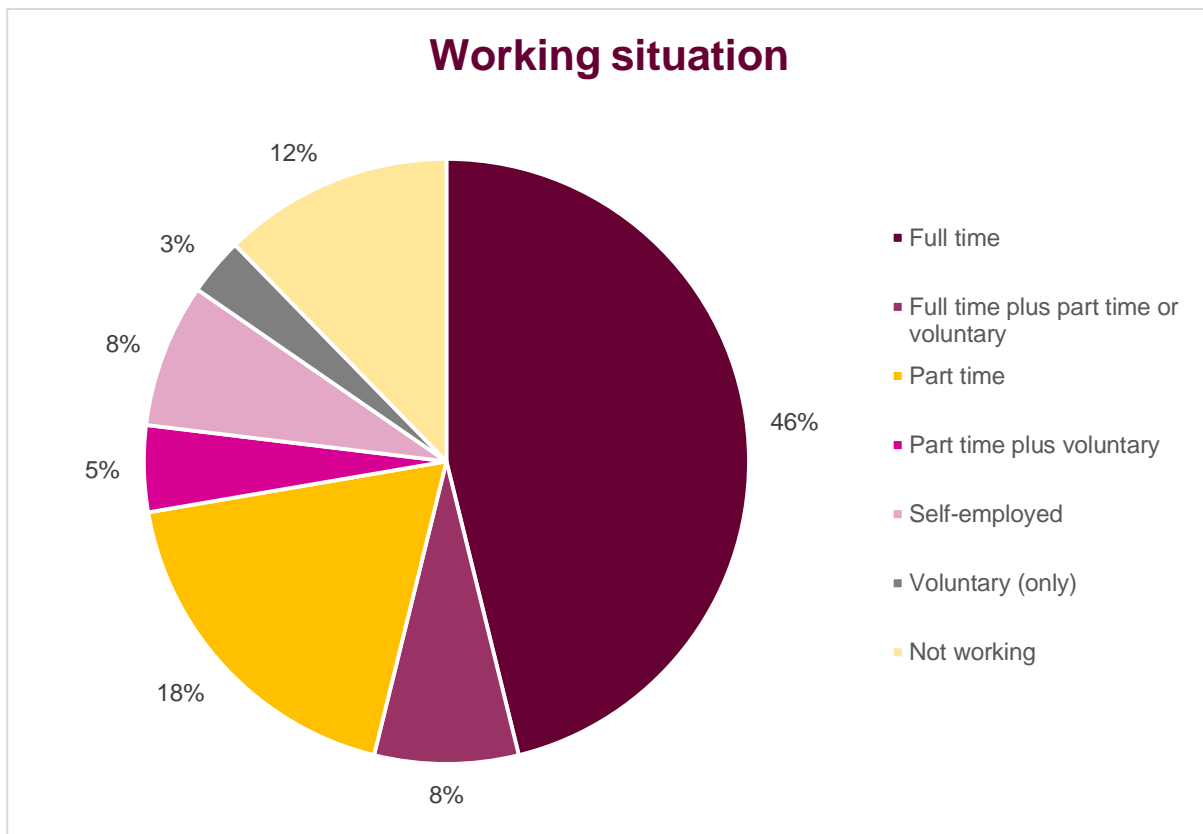
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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-people-annual-report-results-2018-scottish-household-survey/pages/5/>

# Findings

## Working situation

The majority of respondents (88%, 57 people) were currently working in paid or voluntary work, with most in paid full or part time work.



12% (8 people) were not currently working. Four were actively looking for work, two with the support of a job centre and two without. Those working were in a wide range of jobs, including charity/third sector (8 people), education/academia (6), social care (5), hospitality (5), retail (4), public sector (3) and 26 other roles from particle physics to brewing.

People gave a range of reasons for choosing their current role and some gave more than one. The most common related to the job itself (25 people) and the pay and conditions (24). 10 people chose their current job because the organisation was LGBT/trans friendly and 10 gave more general reasons for choosing the employer, such as friendly staff, a third sector employer or the employer's commitment to equality or values.

**“Limited options in town I live, disabled and can't travel far. Welcoming atmosphere and LGBTQIA+ friendly employers.”**

**“Ethics and LGBT friendly.”**

More than half (60%) had not changed work situation in the past year. Of those who had, 9 had changed employer or were about to, 5 had become employed, 4 had been promoted, 4 had become unemployed, 1 had been made redundant and one had changed role without promotion.

Two thirds (66%) had experienced unemployment in the past. For 20% (13 people) this lasted for less than 6 months; for 19% (12) for 1-2 years, and for 14% (9) it was for more than 3 years, with one person unemployed for 19 years.

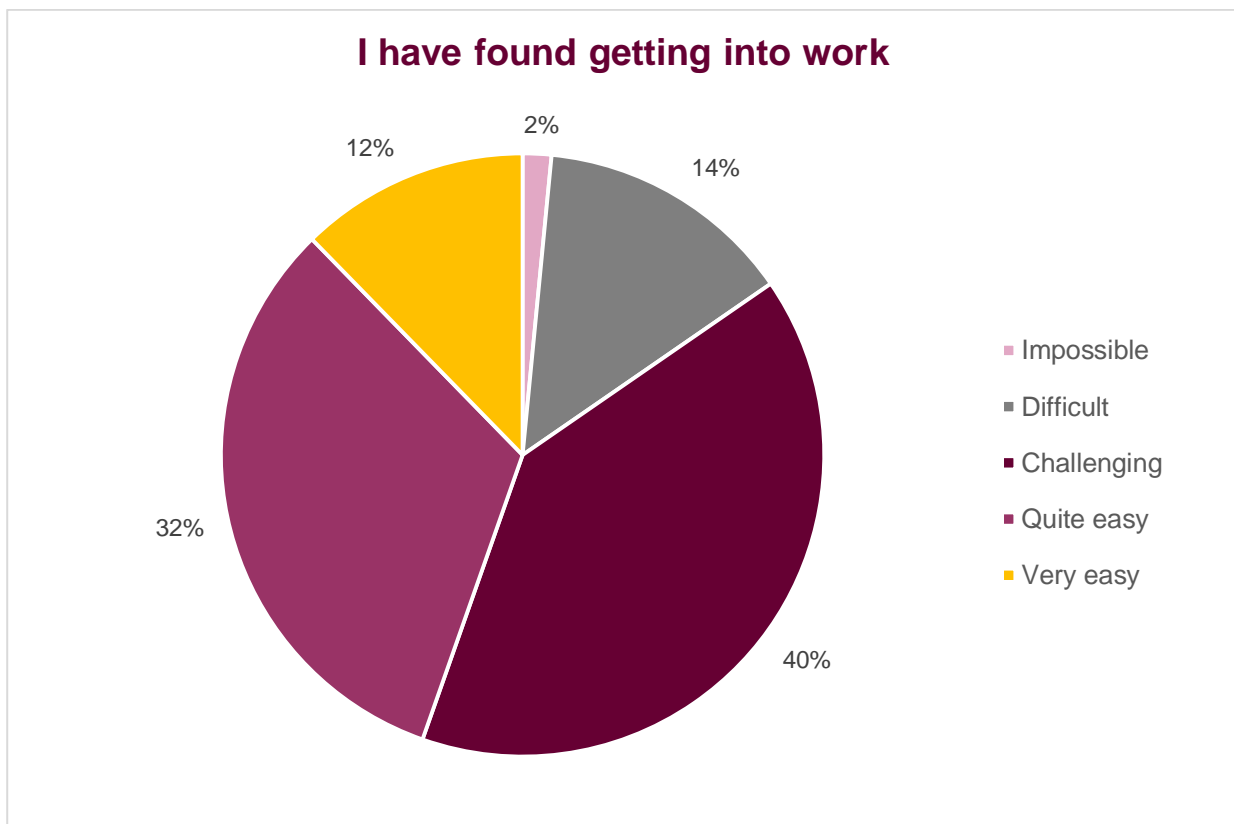


**“I found getting back into paid employment difficult after leaving an employer due to workplace discrimination. I was fortunate to find suitable employment with a large international company.”**



## Getting into work

Although most respondents were in work, more than half of survey respondents said they found getting into work difficult or challenging (54%, 35 people) and one person said they found it impossible.



40% (26 people) said their trans identity had a quite or very negative impact on their job prospects. Interestingly the three people who said their trans identity had a positive impact on their job prospects worked in very different fields, including social care and engineering.

More than half (54%, 35 people) felt that attempts to get into work had affected their mental health, and a further 17% (11 people) were not sure. Only 28% (18 people) felt that this had not affected their mental health.

Almost two thirds of respondents (63%, 41 people) had felt the need to make changes in where they worked in order to feel accepted.

Focus group participants also discussed barriers in terms of choosing work. One participant said that they rule out applying for certain jobs they would like to do because of their trans identity. Specifically, they would like to work in childcare but have ruled out applying to work with children because they are afraid of reactions, particularly of parents. They spoke of knowing trans people with similar fears who have had to stay closeted because they work in childcare.

Several participants in the focus groups spoke of feeling that they had been rejected for a job because of their trans identity being a barrier at interview stage. It was felt that there was a difference in reaction to an applicant's paper application compared to an in-person meeting.

Another said the volume of rejections and the looks and questions he faced at interviews and trial shifts 'feels like a pattern' and was an indication that rejections were based on him being trans.

Many survey respondents described negative experiences getting into work:

**"I believe in the early part of my career it was difficult to find a job in which I could transition in."**

**"I transitioned in the last job. Getting this job wasn't easy. I think being trans counted against me in some interviews despite being capable of doing the job."**

**"I'm a professional with a specialist skill set so getting an interview is easy. The trouble is once I turn up, I often get met with sour faces and a bad attitude when they realise that I am trans. I often out myself during the application process so that I am sure that I will be given a fair shot at the job. Even that has not guarded against some horrible experiences."**

**"Pretty much every job I applied for would turn me down at interview... even though I had good credentials for employment and I had the experience for it, you could tell that it was because I was trans that they didn't hire me."**

Some survey respondents had had a more positive experience:

**“General hiring process has been unbiased and mostly accommodating.”**

**“I transitioned when in position at work. When the company was taken over it was not an issue. In certain job roles being a trans woman proved advantageous. For example, when I was offered a position that was excluded from sex discrimination legislation, to work with women, I could not otherwise have taken on that task.”**

**“I’m in a fairly unique position of being in a profession that by definition is non-judgemental and open.”**

For some it had been mixed:

**“I have applied for two positions as a Transgender woman. I was successful with the first but did not even manage an interview invite with the second.”**

**“I’m not sure about the impact of my trans identity on job prospects. On one hand I’m a lot more confident and will stick out in an interviewer’s mind. But on the other there is always a chance I’ll be discriminated against for being trans.”**

**“I worked voluntarily as a writer in residence in a prison for two years and although I got on well I cannot see me ever returning to this. I was offered work in a prison recently and I turned it down because I have no confidence that my agender identity would be taken serious.”**

**“My gender actually helps with some jobs but is a big problem with others.”**

Some described not being out about their trans identity when applying for jobs:

**“I haven’t been hired yet but I’ve applied and been to one interview as a guy (I’m a trans guy) without telling them I’m trans and the interview went fine no questions asked.”**

**“I transitioned while at university (i.e. before I entered the fulltime workforce), and consistently 'pass'. I suspect that this is a major factor in why I have not had issues.”**

**“Never been out at work. Filled in an application form for first time using gender neutral title the other day which felt good. Using Gov systems like job centre + universal credit is hard because have to use gendered language.”**

**“Identity not so much a barrier to getting in - I can present “properly” for interviews. Problems arise after.”**

**“As nonbinary even within 3rd sector feel exposed to many dismissive attitudes and reluctance to be out.”**

Focus group participants highlighted barriers posed by binary options on application forms. They also spoke about issues relating to supporting documents such as references and qualifications that were in participants' dead names. This meant that either prospective employers would be confused and ask questions, or job applicants would be forced to come out to previous employers. Names were easier to change on some qualifications than others, with one participant citing problems they had with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) who (initially) had no idea how to deal with the name change request.

Focus group participants felt that job centres were generally poorly equipped to deal with the needs of trans people, lacking understanding of what being trans means in terms of rights, needs and issues and appropriate policy to help trans people specifically. Several focus group participants who had accessed job centre services had experienced transphobia, with one stating that they had been told, 'You're trans, you're unemployable. We'll just put you on the permanent sick', despite stating their desire to work.

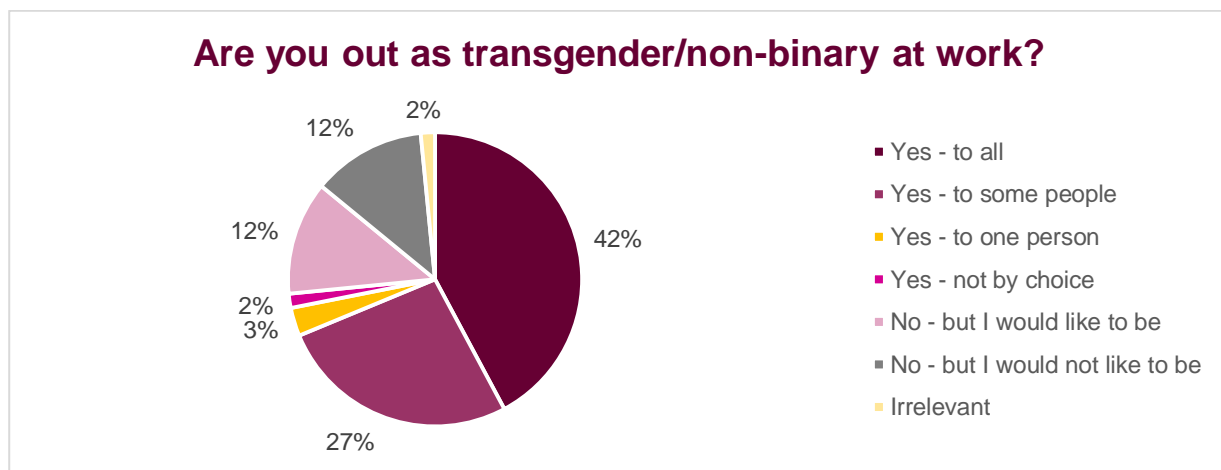


**“It feels like ‘any progress you did make is suddenly invalidated because [you] transitioned... We came to the conclusion that the best thing for me, personally, job-centre and this support group, was to say I have no references and treat me as a forty-one-year-old person who’s never worked a day in their life’.”**



## Experience at work

About a third of survey respondents (31%, 20 people) said their workplace was not trans inclusive, and a further 28% (18) were not sure. Only 41% (26) felt that their workplace was trans inclusive. However, more than two thirds (69%, 44) saw their workplace as an inclusive place for people with lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) identities. 12% (8) were not sure and 19%, 12) felt that it was not LGB inclusive.





Three-quarters of respondents (73%, 47 people) were out to at least some people at work, although only 42% (27 people) were out to everyone. One person said they were out but not by choice. Of those who were not out, half would like to be and half would not (12%, 8 people each). One person noted that they were out to employees but not to clients.



“Colleagues staring and asking questions”

“Friendly doesn't always mean accepting”

“I bite my tongue a lot”

“I changed my personality to ‘fit in’”

“I want to leave my job as I am not accepted but cannot afford to”

“It's a battle to educate people everywhere I go...”



## Mental health

The majority of people said that being at work had affected their mental health (69%, 44 people), with 9% (6) not sure. Only a fifth (22%, 14 people) said that it had not.



“I have struggled in my current job since starting my transition.”



One focus group participant brought up the idea that the social aspect of work can be a barrier. Their trans identity had no impact on the actual work they were doing, but the problems came from ‘all the human interactions that go alongside it’ with either colleagues or members of the public. They also spoke of changes to the benefits system meaning that they felt ‘forced into work’ without any support.

One focus group participant brought up the idea of not being able to present their true self as an extra layer of ‘work’. They said that their situation was ‘a lot more taxing than cis people who worked there. Along with doing the actual labour, I was putting work into keeping on with the façade’. Other participants agreed that this caused them further stress and used up a lot of mental energy.

One spoke of being forced to de-transition. They said that they had to ‘turn back into a man for employment just because I wasn’t getting any work as a woman’. Although they are finding it easier to get work, this is having a detrimental effect on their mental health because they are forced to act as someone they are not.

## Physical health

The physical impact of work specifically for trans people was brought up by two focus group participants. One spoke of having to bind for ten hour shifts. This impacts on their work and their health in that breathing can be more difficult and panic attacks can be intensified.

They are not sure of whether they are protected or entitled to anything such as more breaks as they feel this may be understood as a personal choice.

Another participant spoke of their experience around the physical impact of transitioning and how this made work more difficult. They suffer from chronic fatigue syndrome and the effect of this and hormone treatment means they cannot work full time and therefore cannot make enough to support their living.

**“It’s not beneficial for me to get off benefits... work does not pay for me.”**

## Facilities

Most people (67%, 43 people) said they could access the facilities, including toilets, that they are most comfortable using, with 17% (11 people) not able to and the remainder not sure. However only a minority of workplaces had gender-neutral toilets (36%, 23).

## Policies and strategies

Only a third of survey respondents (31%, 20 people) were aware of policies or strategies to make their workplace more LGBT-inclusive, such as emails signed off with names and preferred pronouns or an LGBT network. Half said there were none (52%, 33 people), with the rest not sure. Comments included:

**“Whilst there are no LGBT+ networks or support for LGBT+ people in particular, my workplace is allied with the Retail Trust who offer support with issues that may affect mental health and wellbeing.”**

**“Using pronouns in our email sign offs is standard, and [...] should be adopted in all workplaces as standard.”**

**“Pride event was organised recently and I think there are digital groups for different people on the messaging platform that's used but I am unsure.”**

**“There is an LGBT network but this was not created or driven by the company. In fact, it is speculated that the current head of human resources wishes to shut down all (four) networks.”**

**“The only people who sign off with their pronouns are unfortunately a few members of the LGBT network, all of whom apart from me are cis. I sign off with they/them pronouns, but I've never once been asked about it or had a colleague use the correct pronouns.”**

One focus group participant spoke of a trans-inclusive company policy at his work through which staff were no longer allowed to call customers 'sir' or 'madam'. This meant well but actually led to more trans jokes/transphobia in the workplace, and they did not feel that the policy was based on input from trans people.



**“Implementing company policies like that when your actual staff are transphobic does nothing.”**



Only a fifth (23%, 15 people) felt that the policies and strategies in their workplace go far enough in ensuring work equality for trans people, and more than half (56%, 36) felt they did not. Three-quarters (73%, 47) would like to see more LGBT-inclusive strategies in place at work. Examples of what these could be included:

- Including pronouns in email signatures; pronoun badges
- Gender neutral toilets
- Awareness raising about non binary and trans identities, rights and appropriate behaviour such as use of pronouns
- Better equality and diversity training
- Ensure policies include LGBT+ people, reflect their lives and are not inappropriately gendered
- An LGBT policy, inclusive of trans people
- Transitioning policy; protections for people's trans status
- Trans inclusive recruitment strategy
- A comprehensive bullying policy
- A staff network for consultation
- Use of gender-neutral language
- Mx title option if titles are required, no gender question on forms unless vital to the service or role
- Pride at Work initiatives
- Management take a lead in championing LGBT inclusion
- HR time allocated for equality and diversity work
- LGBT issues given equal focus in company news
- Easy access to corporate clothing/PPE which better matches gender expression
- An ally identified to have a coffee and a chat.

Further comments included:

Concerns about how appropriate or effective some current approaches are:

**“The policies are there but they are not always implemented. Practice varies a great deal from team to team and relies on committed individuals.”**

The importance that the onus is not on trans people to create change:

**“By having to ask and assert one's needs then pretty soon the trans complainer becomes the problem rather than the lack of workplace support.”**

But also the importance of lived experience:

**“There is a problem with LGBT inclusion being designed by people who are not LGBT: e.g. I attended a mandatory E&D training session and ended up having to complain about an inaccurate scenario relating to trans people, that had clearly been written by someone who knew relatively little about how transition happens.”**

**“The company has mandatory diversity training for all staff, but when the person delivering the course is happy to allow discriminatory and inflammatory comments, it is clear that the company is only ticking boxes. Real diversity training would include someone who isn't a white hetero cis male leading a one hour ‘course’.”**

**“[...] our gender action plan probably needs to be more imaginative in embedding LGBT experience and context in the curriculum in the same way that we internationalise it or that we ensure it's accessible from the start.”**

Focus group participants said that LGBT people may be left to do LGBT awareness training themselves which can be difficult, particularly in less inclusive workplaces where they have experienced harassment or when they are only just exploring their own identity. Other participants spoke of situations where this was only deemed important for managers or supervisors rather than all staff. They believed that every employee should be involved as change does not necessarily happen from the top down.

People described the impact of inadequate policies:

**“In publishing/broadcasting, there's a lot of platforming extreme anti-trans views as “debate”. What a company actually produces or publishes can undermine any LGBT policy from HR.”**

**“There are no consequences for homophobic staff members creating an unsafe environment for me.”**

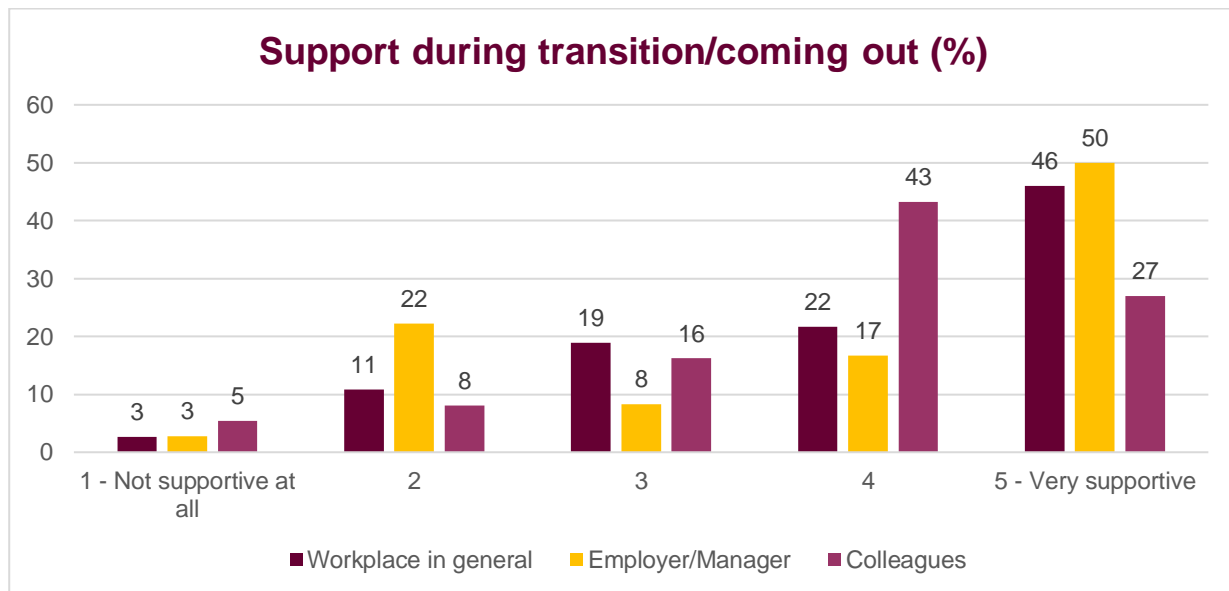
“I currently work at [University] but am leaving shortly due to the transphobic events that have been organised by an academic under "academic freedom" [...] They need to make it clear that events that attack any protected or vulnerable group are not permitted or they will lose LGBT+ staff and students.”

“We have occasionally had trans people on the ward and the large majority of people had no issue but some staff were disparaging. Also had one trans colleague and some people were funny with her.”



## Transitioning/coming out at work

60% (37 people) who had come out or transitioned were working when they did so; but only 10 of them were made aware of a workplace policy which stated their rights and a commitment to support and respect at work. More encouragingly, however, more than two thirds were generally positive about the support they got from managers, colleagues and the workplace in general, with 67%-70% (24-26 people) rating this at 4 or 5 on a scale where 1 was not supportive at all and 5 was very supportive. Support from colleagues was more likely to be rated at 4 rather than 5. A quarter, however, rated their employer or manager as not supportive (rating 1 or 2), while only 13% said this of their colleagues.



Only half said they were granted adequate leave while transitioning; 39% (14 people) were not, and 11% (4) were not sure. Employment situations affected the practical support available:



“I'm self-employed so I won't get any leave when/if I transition.”

“I wouldn't have been able to get any leave as it was a zero hours contract.”



After they transitioned, just over a quarter (28%, 10 people) said there were no changes in how they were treated at work, and another quarter (25%, 9) said there were positive changes. It was mixed, with both positive and negative changes, for about a fifth (19%, 7), but 17% (6 people) said changes were negative.

Some of the negative responses people encountered ranged from outright hostility to lack of acknowledgement:

**“I transitioned as a Chef in a 4-star hotel. Kicked out of kitchen to become a 'faggot waitress’.”**

**“I'm going through a process of transition - my gender presentation has shifted from male to mostly female, but this is not discussed and may as well not be happening in the eyes of my colleagues.”**

**“I transitioned at work but did not mention that I was currently undergoing transition.”**

Conversely, positive experiences included good support:

**“Manager supported me really well in the 6 months between coming out to him and coming out to everyone else. They gave me "as much time as I needed" off work after my mental health took a huge dive after about 5 months of trying to get myself to come out fully.”**

**“Still treated as same person, just name and pronouns changed.”**

A number of people found their experience mixed, and several highlighted the contrast between positive responses from colleagues set against more mixed or negative reactions from clients or customers.

**“At time of social transition, I owned a franchise business [...] I set the business policies etc, so no issue locally. The national business was supportive. My employees, some not so much. Customers, some hostility and some attempts to have me removed from my own business. However, my community gathered around me and refused to discuss my transition with the press [...]”**

**“Within my office base there were no changes but the client base I work with has been difficult and the way I have been treated has been difficult.”**

**“Team were excellent. Public and wider groups would be negative occasionally.”**

**“My relationships at work improved after transitioning but I never received a promotion.”**

The experience could also depend on individuals within an organisation:

**“[During medical transition] my employer [...] provided 3 months’ sick leave when required. That employer was also very supportive though after the CEO moved on I suspected our Board Chair at the time blocked my appointment as CEO. Her loss, I moved on and took my skills and experience where they were needed and welcomed. I’m kind of resilient.”**

One focus group participant spoke about coming out in what she described as the ‘safe environment’ of social work. She chose to come out while on a week’s annual leave by sending an email to colleagues, offering to answer any questions they might have. She received a lot of positive emails from colleagues and met with her manager. Her manager stated that they ‘didn’t believe’ that the participant was trans, but the participant was able to not let this affect her.

Another participant spoke of a friend’s experience of transitioning at work. They were supported by their line manager. However, they were harassed by individuals working alongside them and was now looking for redundancy because of their mental health, despite managers being inclusive.

**“No matter what the company policy is, that’s not what you interact with. You interact with the individuals and their prejudices.”**

Some survey respondents noted that transition either did not apply to their personal situation, or that they had transitioned some time ago.

## Harassment at work

60% (39 people) of survey respondents had experienced harassment at work directly or indirectly related to their trans identity. Half of the 37 people who commented (51%, 19) mentioned misgendering. Other experiences included explicitly transphobic statements, verbal abuse and discrimination. For example:

**“Constant misgendering (on purpose) by past employers, being passed on for promotion in one job because ‘no one would take me seriously’.”**

**“A lot of misgendering. I use they/them pronouns but even those I’m out to forget to use them despite me wearing a pronoun badge.”**

“Have been repeatedly misgendered, and had my boss tell me about another trans person and question if he should be using ‘it’ pronouns.”

“Hurtful comments, deliberate misgendering, pranks played on me, excluding me from work events.”

“Misgendering, jokes on gender and gender presentation while misgendering, rude comments (from customers and external staff).”

“Taken to female toilets at a different office. Misgendering. Use of dead name.”

“Verbal - coming from customers not colleagues.”

“Verbal abuse, discrimination, misogyny, low-level exclusion.”

“I have experienced several instances of colleagues and even managers laughing at transgender customers, or mocking non-binary people.”

“Misgendering by odd individual. Silent shunning by others. It’s in the body language.”

“Comments about me being feminine meant to imply I was gay. Being called a poof because I’m not stereotypically masculine enough for guys I work with.”

“Oh I'd need a book! Constantly misgendered. Out and out refusal to allow a gender-neutral title (i.e., Mx). No way to change my name. Mandatory M/F boxes on all forms and I get laughed at when I ask. People boasting to me about how they've excluded trans people.”

In some cases, there was a direct discriminatory impact on the individual’s work:

“Name calling, dismissal, shorter shifts, physical abuse, demotion, pay rollback, fired.”

“Being asked to rewrite work because it didn't fit an agency's very binary cis agenda, with it being made clear that I would stop being offered work if I didn't 'try harder to fit in'.”

“Clients refusing to work with me but that's all resolved now.”

“Being told not to work with a student as was told 'It may have a negative impact on their mental health'.”

“Misgendering frequently, use of wrong name when hiring cars, refusal to issue female sized work wear and issuing of male work wear, being laughed at when asking for female sized clothing, not spoken to by workmates, little or no work activities planned for me.”



Focus group participants had experienced verbal harassment such as misgendering, transphobic slurs or colleagues asking things like, ‘when are you going to start wearing more makeup?’ They had also experienced indirect harassment such as transphobic jokes/statements that were not directed at them, but which affected them nonetheless. One participant spoke of being gradually made to feel less important over time, being told everything they say is wrong, personal projects and initiatives being moved aside for no reason and work just generally becoming more difficult for them. Two participants had been told that employees in senior positions ‘didn’t believe’ they were trans and some had been physically assaulted. One spoke of a ‘bystander effect’ in that they were left to defend themselves completely against collegial harassment with no one stepping in to support them.

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**“Transphobic statements from colleagues.”**

**“Members of staff repeatedly joking about non-binary identities, and not taking them seriously. Manager showing me ‘funny’ memes about not being able to call a girl a girl anymore...”**

**“I was frequently harassed about wearing nail polish for about a year and still occasionally have people treating me as though I’m contagious for it. I have been asked questions including “so do you wear women’s clothes and that?”, “What’s with the nail polish,” “when are you going to get a haircut”.”**

**“That’s a barrier in itself, having to deal with all that hostility.”**

”

A theme prevalent in both focus groups was that of workplaces as gendered institutions – masculinised or feminised – and the impact that this has on trans workers. One participant spoke of the construction industry and toxic masculinity where they were unable to fit – they were told to ‘man up’ and bullied because they weren’t being ‘one of the lads’ – while another discussed similar situations of ‘workplace banter’ they had experienced working in kitchens.

Some participants did speak of positive experiences such as managers or colleagues looking out for them however, these appeared less common than negative experiences.

## **Reporting harassment**

Just over half of all survey respondents (57%, 37 people) said that if they were to experience harassment or bullying at work they would feel comfortable reporting it. However, a quarter would not (25%, 16) and a further 18% (12) were not sure.

Despite this, and despite these experiences of various levels of harassment, only 41% of the 39 people who had experienced harassment (16 people) had ever reported it to a manager or human resources. Over half (54%, 21) had not and two (5%) were not sure. Only 5 of the 39 people (13%) said they had ever lodged a formal complaint about harassment at work, and almost two thirds (62%, 24 people) said they did not feel their managers were adequately equipped to deal with transphobic harassment or bullying.

A number of people had confidence in some managers but not others:

**“I do believe my personal store manager would take bullying seriously, but I can’t say with confidence how those higher up would.”**

**“I have 5 team leaders and 1 Line Manager. One of the team leaders is very supportive, the other 4 pretend it isn't happening, and the line manager discussed it with me once but I get the feeling it was because he had to rather than for any interest in my wellbeing. None of them have had any training in diversity other than a one hour "diversity workshop", which I too have attended and have zero faith in.”**

There were additional challenges in some work settings:

**“I find it difficult with my client group to fully transition (adults with learning disabilities and mental health issue).”**

**“As a freelancer I don't have anyone I can complain to in most instances.”**

**“Contractors are very vulnerable, especially if the people doing the misgendering are senior.”**

Past experience had led to some people’s lack of confidence:

**“I tried to bring it up but as the managers have agreed with this particular man in the past, in a sexual harassment case, I don’t feel safe challenging him directly.”**

**“I spoke at length with the HR dept., but other than promises of improvement, nothing improved.”**

**“If you report you are let go. Better to suck it up and just get a new job.”**

**“In many (especially low paid) workplaces, there is no HR person to go to. If you complain about the boss you lose your job.”**

**“I dealt with it by educating the people myself, since even well-meaning staff were deeply ignorant and I was the only person out as trans in that workplace.”**

**“My complaint wasn't taken seriously.”**

Some people had dealt with issues themselves or had help from colleagues:

**“Most issues stemmed from customers or members of the public. Low-level exclusion or chatter behind my back I deal with directly myself.”**

**“Other work colleagues came to help me.”**

Focus group participants’ experience was that most instances of harassment were left unresolved, or else the ‘resolution’ was that the trans employee felt forced to resign from their workplace. One participant said that after experiencing hate speech and reporting it they had

been told to leave if they did not like it. They felt forced out. This has happened in upwards of twenty jobs that they've had and has meant that they are often out of work.

One participant spoke of an incident of harassment which saw a positive resolution. Two colleagues were overheard commenting on the participant's use of female toilets. Another colleague heard this and brought it up with management, who set up a trans awareness training event. However, attendance at the training was not mandatory and the two who had made the comments did not attend.

## Support networks

Although two thirds of survey respondents (66%, 42 people) said that there were people at work who they could confide in if or when they experienced unfair treatment at work, a fifth (22%, 14) did not have this support and 13% (8 people) were not sure. Outside work, 80% (52 people) said they had a strong support network such as friends, family or groups; but 17% (11) did not, and two (3%) were unsure. Three-quarters (73%, 47 people) were members of a union.

On what an ideal support system which could help with work would look like, comments included improvements the organisation could make:

“I certainly feel the company as a whole would only benefit from greater recognition of LGBT+ employees and the more unique issues they face. I know not all stores are equipped with gender neutral bathrooms and there is room for improvement in a number of aspects pertaining to that.”

“A clear policy stating that transphobic discrimination is unacceptable and making it clear how to complain if an incident should occur.”

“Supportive line manager, written policies supporting gender identity, respectful colleagues.”

“People in HR who recognise the issues being Trans has in the work place.”

“Something within the company that can give information and advice/links for support for trans people and for cis co-workers. Honestly even a booklet/resource on company web would be a huge help.”

“Maybe trans staff network.”

“The main thing I would like is greater effort by management to engage with LGBT staff and support the development of LGBT networks.”

“Understanding friends and colleagues, LGBT Network, strong equality and diversity policies and taking complaints seriously.”

Focus group participants felt that that managers and supervisors should be available to support individuals at work, although they did not always seem to currently. One participant pointed to the importance of a trans focus and believed a trans-specific network could be more beneficial.

A number of people thought external support would be helpful:

**“Peer mentoring and some kind of union for LGBTQIA+ employees across all professions in the UK.”**

**“A group of professionals that would be able to advise and support LGBT employees for free.”**

**“A third-party advocacy service which helps employers to sustain a Trans employee in the workplace.”**

**“An outside agency who could handle it for me, without drawing attention to me and putting me at greater risk.”**

Some would like better support from colleagues:

**“Peer support - although there is a trans champion in my workplace who I speak to, I'm aware that there are other trans people around, but not aware of anyone else who is publicly out.”**

**“Colleagues who will complain on your behalf so that you don't look like you're just being difficult.”**

**“For me, personal support & bonds with my colleagues is the greatest support system.”**

**“Someone who is willing to listen and not judge. It doesn't help me when others get irate on my behalf as I end up trying to make them feel better.”**

Focus group participants highlighted the importance of social events such as those run by LGBT Health and Wellbeing<sup>7</sup> or even the focus groups themselves. They felt that these trans-specific safe spaces, although not necessarily work related, offer helpful support.

## Multiple discrimination

Asked whether they face additional barriers when looking for and staying in work related to other parts of their identity, for example, as a person of colour or a disabled person, half of the respondents said they did (49%, 31 people). 43% (27) did not and 8% (5) were not sure. Of the 30 who gave further details, disability, autism and mental health were most commonly mentioned.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.lgbthealth.org.uk/services-support/transgender-support>

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“Being a disabled person as well as being trans has made me seem even more "other" to potential employers and made it more difficult to find employment.”

“As an autistic person people assume a lot about me or are not prepared to think of things from a different angle etc. Also experienced class based assumptions.”

“I am also Autistic and have a chronic, invisible illness. It means that trans identity is assumed to be “for attention” and that I’m just going out of my way to be as difficult as possible.”

“Autism with low support needs (frequently chided for hyperfocusing on one task and not being aware of the wider shop floor), dismissed as incompetent when battling exhaustion from depression, anxiety, insomnia.”

“Transgender for myself seems to also follow closely with depression, anxiety, substance abuse.”

“I worry that if I were to need to look for another job my age (60) might be a factor.”

“I used to be the only Afab<sup>8</sup> in the office, it's difficult to come out when your already trying to break through so many generic sexism barriers.”

“It's difficult to find entry level / general "unskilled" work that does not require standing for a prolonged period of time, which I struggle with.”

“I'm disabled and bi and fat and I know that those traits are discriminated against in hiring, retention, retirement and in unions and other work-related institutions.”

“I am eastern European and also disabled, so I often feel like people make assumptions about my knowledge of English and that I am often dismissed when I struggle because of disabilities.”

“I find that it is very hard to find a supportive workplace due to extreme anxiety and depression.”

“I’m not permitted breaks when I have meltdowns (autism) or flashbacks (ptsd).”

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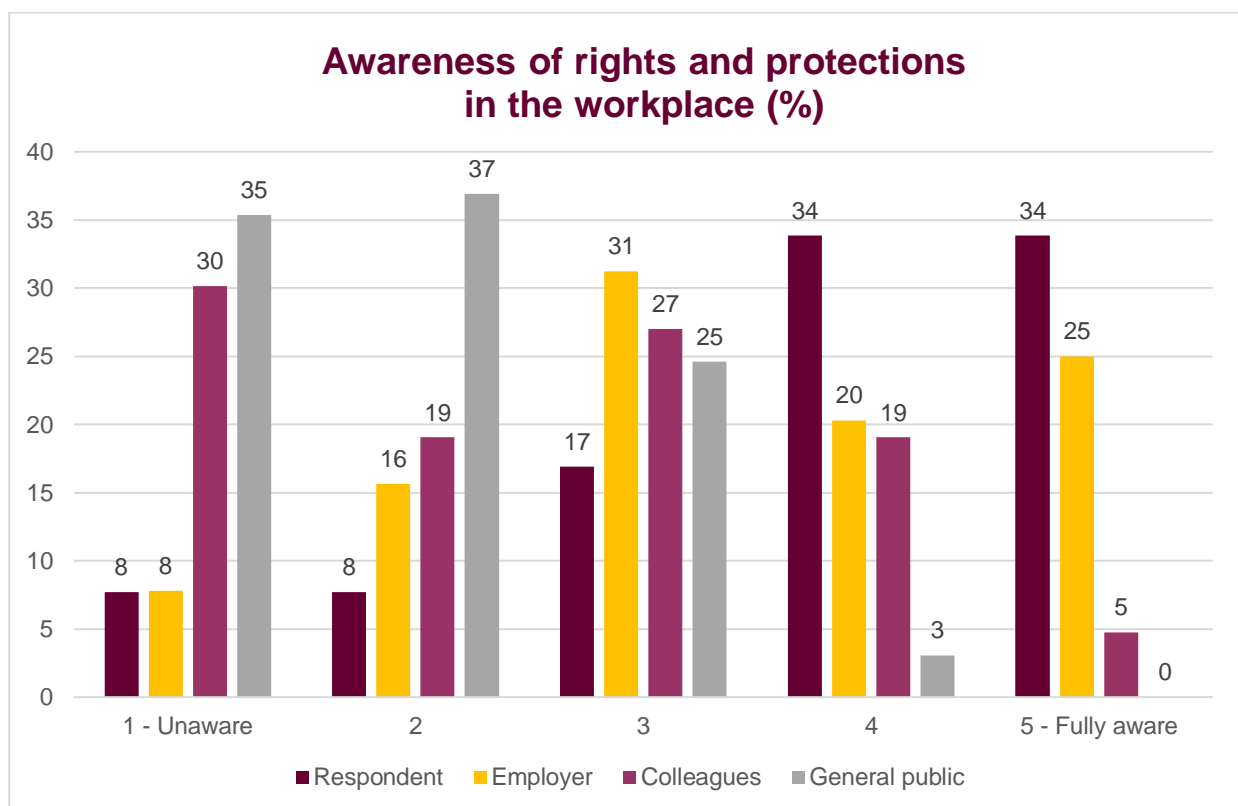
Several focus group participants discussed problems with their mental health which can affect work and getting into work. They felt that employers generally lacked knowledge and understanding of these issues and how to deal with them, and that the combination of this with their trans identity could be particularly difficult.

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<sup>8</sup> Assigned female at birth

## Rights and protections

68% (44 people) of survey respondents rated their own awareness of rights and protections in the workplace positively, at 4 or 5 on a scale where 1 was unaware and 5 was fully aware. Only 15% (10 people) rated their own awareness at 1 or 2. They were less positive however about the awareness of their employer, with 45% (29 people) rating this at 4 or 5 on the scale, and 23% (15) at 1 or 2 on the scale. Colleagues were rated as even less aware, with only a quarter (24%, 15 people) rating colleagues' awareness at 4 or 5 and half (49%, 31) rating it as 1 or 2. The general public was judged to have the lowest awareness of all, with three-quarters of respondents (72%, 47 people) rating the public's awareness as 1 or 2 and only two people (3%) giving a score of 4.



Half the respondents (48%, 31 people) felt that the law does not go far enough in protecting trans people at work, and a further 37% (24) were not sure. Only 15% (10 people) felt that the law did go far enough.

Several individuals specifically mentioned a lack of protection for non-binary people in the Equality Act 2010. It is worth noting that since we conducted the research, an Employment Tribunal in 2020 ruled in favour of a non-binary person who was experiencing discrimination and harassment at work. That judgement indicates that non-binary people are protected from workplace discrimination, in the same way that trans men and trans women are, by the current gender reassignment protected characteristic in the law.

Commenting, some people felt that the issue was with practice and enforcement rather than the law itself:

**“I think the problems mostly lie in finding work, no one is going to discriminate openly but they can still make decisions against hiring you for plenty of other reasons. I have found finding a graduate job pretty much impossible.”**

**“My employer has on their website, We embrace diversity. I think this is only words and that after using this phrase then they did no more to show or prove that they do in fact deliver on their message, it's no more than a lazy goodwill rather than practical steps to ensuring they are prepared for a Transgender employee.”**

**“More workplace training should be offered as standard to educate about the experiences and lives of trans people, to combat the current onslaught of media misinformation and slander.”**

**“I think the laws are good in theory, but they could be open to abuse in practice. I think this is why union membership is important.”**

**“The law isn't enforced.”**

Focus group participants mentioned a discrepancy of knowledge between larger companies (more likely to be aware) and smaller, local companies or the self-employed (less likely to be aware).

The need for better recognition in law, such as in the Equality Act 2010, of non-binary people was highlighted:

**“It's very unclear currently whether nonbinary people are covered by the act. The definition of the protected characteristic is not useful at all and needs updated. It should protect people due to their gender identity or expression.”**

**“Doesn't protect nonbinary folk.”**

Focus group participants highlighted that the language used in the Act, particularly the word 'transsexual', felt dated.

The difficulty of using the law as an individual was also an issue:

**“You can't report your employer in many professional fields. Word gets around that you are a 'trouble maker' and you get blackballed from the field. Right or wrong only stupid people report. Just quit, move on and roll the dice that you can find another job before you commit suicide.”**

**“I think people are aware of the legal protections but don't agree with them and they know I don't have the power to challenge them.”**

“Legal recognition for non-binary gender would be an essential part of the law protecting me.”

“DWP constantly misgender me and use the wrong title when sending benefits letters and although I have told them I use Mx I worry about pressing this point as it may prompt a benefit work fitness assessment - also nonbinary people not being recognised in law means I don't feel I could argue my point effectively.”

“There's no meaningful protection for freelancers unless we directly invoke the law. Even though my union might be willing to do that for me, it would be costly and hard to prove.”

“The law is too complicated also the two or more independent witnesses needed for a conviction is difficult to have as it is on a one to one issue bullying comes in many forms.”

A focus group participant said:

“You can be protected under the law but in reality what does that mean? You've got to go through the stress and anxiety of going through a tribunal.”

One focus group participant said that the legal protections, in part, gave her the confidence to come out/transition at work:

“Knowing the legal change was there is what made me feel able with regard to work... without knowledge of The Act I don't think I would have felt nearly as comfortable.”

## What could be improved

We asked for key ideas for how work equality for trans people could be advanced.

Some people highlighted ways in which current law needs to be improved:

“Legal recognition for nonbinary folk.”

“The protected characteristic in the Equality Act needs updating to say ‘transgender and non-binary’.”

There were also calls for clarity on and enforcement of current law:

“The EHRC has been extremely inconsistent and unhelpful on trans issues. They seem to have withdrawn some of their earlier (much more comprehensive) guidance for employers on trans



“Legal requirement for gender neutral bathrooms.”

“Have diversity and the proof of engagement in this area become an auditable measure and part of an employer’s ISO accreditation. The auditor can ask for evidence and a company can be sanctioned if they are not performing in this area.”

“Protection of trans status for employees and support for those who decide to transition while in work (e.g. SSP or compassionate leave while having surgery if someone chooses that).”

“It would help if there was a way to ensure employers were required to treat workers with basic empathy, and that the system wasn’t so hierarchical, so they wouldn’t have the opportunity to abuse their power and hide and dismiss complaints.”

equality. I would like to see them produce more, clearer guidance on the law.”

“Some kind of separate regulatory body which inspects all employers regularly to ensure that staff are being fairly treated and that employment and equality law is being adhered to.”

Promoting positive visibility was suggested:

“More visibility of trans people in the workplace, in key roles and in civic life. More active unions and a trans caucus with reps from all the major unions coming together to help move things forward.”

“LGBT issues should be a lot more visible.”

“It depends on acceptance by people, current media misinformation campaign needs to stop.”

However, one person felt that some trans rights activism might be having a negative effect:

“Extreme TRAs have to stop what they are doing - they are causing a backlash and making it hard for the rest of us.”

Better awareness raising, education and training in the workplace, and beyond, was suggested by a number of people:

“More companies could run meaningful diversity training, which challenges the way employees think rather than just taking the form of a tick box exercise.

“Awareness and education for all staff. Visible trans people doing their jobs just the same as everyone else.

“Education - people are afraid of what they don’t understand.

“Education! More issues come from a lack of it. Making training in the equality act compulsory, speaking to transgender

people in a professional capacity, being aware of current issues - there are so many ways in which education can be encouraged and advanced.

“Raising awareness in the workplace of the law, different experiences and unspoken gender norms and expectations.

“Greater education on gender vs biological sex and affirming treatment towards all trans people including nonbinary.

“Transparency so don't have to out yourself constantly, better resources so constant education doesn't fall to the trans individual.”

“As we continue to see trans people demonised in the media, it's important to protect trans individuals in the workplace by making sure staff have been given adequate training around what being trans is actually like, correct terminology, etc.”

“Education is at the core of the work we need to do. We have adequate legal frameworks in place - both specific and general (employment law) - it's the hearts and minds that are important and need nurturing and that comes through education right from junior phase.”

“More acceptance of new pronouns/name. Provide positive information on what it really means to be trans. Debunk common myths/stigma surrounding transgender.”

”

There was a range of suggestions of ways employers could improve the situation. Some of this was through better trans-inclusive policies:

“Employers should have to publish the equality data of all candidates who have applied for positions within their organisations so we know what is happening to people with protected characteristics.”

“Workplaces being made aware that Trans inclusion is required and that workplaces are made to create a transitioning policy.”

“Employers could make a specific statement that they welcome applications from trans and non-binary when seeking employees.”

“More workplaces should include support and appropriate leave for transition purposes if required.”

“More holistic view - not just focused on trans identity but parts of life that come with it (e.g. for myself, I struggle to work long shifts because chest binding becomes painful).”

“Trans-specific paid work placements in diverse industries, with opportunities to network and a chance to be retained as ongoing staff.”

“Ensuring that recruiters don't treat you different if the name you call yourself is different than the one on your ID.”

”

Simple procedural changes could also make a significant difference:

“Allow self declaration for HR forms etc. My employer at the time of transition was great at this and handled everything with

”

no complaint. My current employer's HR policy was that I had to be employed under the details of my passport, which I had yet to get round to updating [...] it was slightly embarrassing, especially as a new employee."

"Better HR systems with different gender and title options, HR systems and a 'known as' or 'preferred name' option at Job Centre for those who cannot yet access full legal transition."

"Ask for pronouns at interviews no matter the person's identity especially at group interviews! That way we don't specifically out a single person but still make people aware the company is trans inclusive."

"Better representation across organisations, not just in junior roles. Your organisation isn't diverse if the decision makers and people commissioning or producing content are all cis, straight and white"

"I've seen companies that do equality monitoring but without including trans people, and not all companies do equality monitoring, maybe that could help."

Other measures which would improve the workplace experience were suggested:

"As a nonbinary person, I'd like to be able to use gender neutral bathrooms. I currently use men's bathrooms in work and feel a pang in my stomach every time I do."

"Making sure that there's bins in the guy's bathroom!"

"More allies can use their pronouns on everything to make it more acceptable."

## Conclusion

This research has highlighted the many challenges and barriers trans people can face in relation to employment. Although most of those who contributed were in work, and there were positive experiences and examples of good practice, they identified difficulties at every stage of employment.

There are many examples of both positive and negative experiences, but the overall picture points to many people experiencing disadvantage due to their trans or non-binary identity, often even where policies are in place which should address this.

## Recommendations

### For government:

1. Provide greater protection and recognition of non-binary people, using both policy and the law.
2. Provide support to address labour market barriers experienced by trans people through the Employability in Scotland programme and local employability partnerships.

### For the Equality and Human Rights Commission:

3. Provide clear guidance for employers on trans equality.

### For employers:

4. Ensure they have a clear LGBT policy, created with lived experience engagement, which addresses trans issues, including:
  - Recruitment processes which encourage trans applicants and do not exclude non-binary identities
  - Protection in relation to transition issues
  - Support to challenge harassment
  - Diversity monitoring
  - Use of language (for example, using people's preferred pronouns)
  - Provision of gender neutral toilet facilities

The Transgender Workplace Support Guide<sup>9</sup> is a key resource which will support this work.

5. Provide awareness raising and training for all managers and staff on trans issues.

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<sup>9</sup> Transgender Workplace Support Guide, LGBT Health and Wellbeing and NHS Lothian, 2016  
<http://www.lgbthealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/TWSP-Info-Guide-Final.pdf>

## Appendix 1: Who took part in the survey

### Gender

38% (25) of survey respondents identified as non-binary, 32% (21) as a woman, 2% (1) as a transwoman, 15% (10) as a man, 5% (3) as trans masculine, 5% (3) as agender or no gender and 5% (3) as other descriptions, including gender fluid or genderqueer.

### Sexual orientation

The most common responses were bisexual and queer, with 22% (14 people) identifying with each of these labels. 15% (10) were lesbian, 12% (8) pansexual, 9% (6) asexual, 8% (5) questioning. The remaining 13% (7) were heterosexual, gay or gave other responses, including 'none of your business' or 'too stressed to think about it'.

### Ethnicity

Three-quarters (77%, 50 people) identified as white, including white Scottish, British, Irish, Welsh. 7% (5 people) identified as one of a range of ethnic minorities. 14% (9) did not respond.

### Religion

Three-quarters (72%, 47 people) said they had no religion. 12% (8) were Christian. Other responses included Pagan, Unitarian, Quaker and Other. 7% (4) were not sure or gave no response.

### Disability

42% of respondents (27 people) said they considered themselves to be disabled. 20 individuals who said they considered themselves to have a disability gave further information. Most commonly mentioned were mental ill health (14 people), including depression, OCD, anxiety, Tourette syndrome or PTSD, neurodivergence including autism and dyspraxia (10 people) and physical disabilities (8 people).

### Parental and caring status

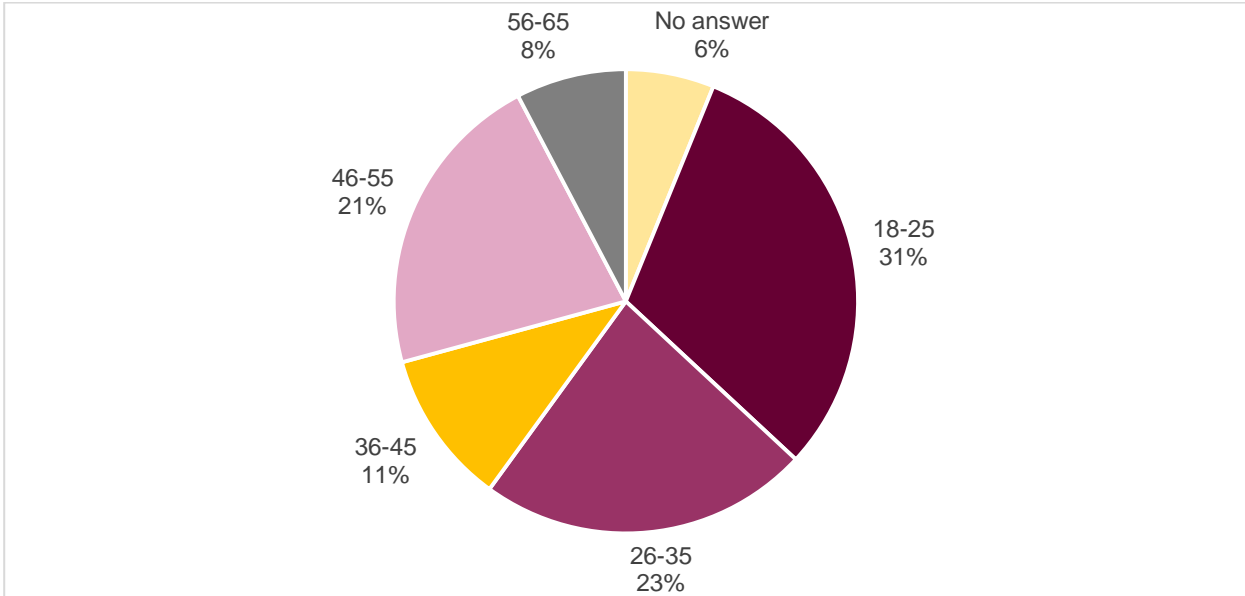
12% (8 people) were parent or guardian of children under 16. 12% (8 people, mainly different individuals) were providing care for someone who is disabled or has a long-term health condition.

### Financial status

Two thirds of respondents (64%, 41 people) said they had enough money to cover what they felt they needed each month (for example, to pay bills and see friends). A quarter (27%, 17) did not have enough money, and the remaining 9% (6) were not sure.

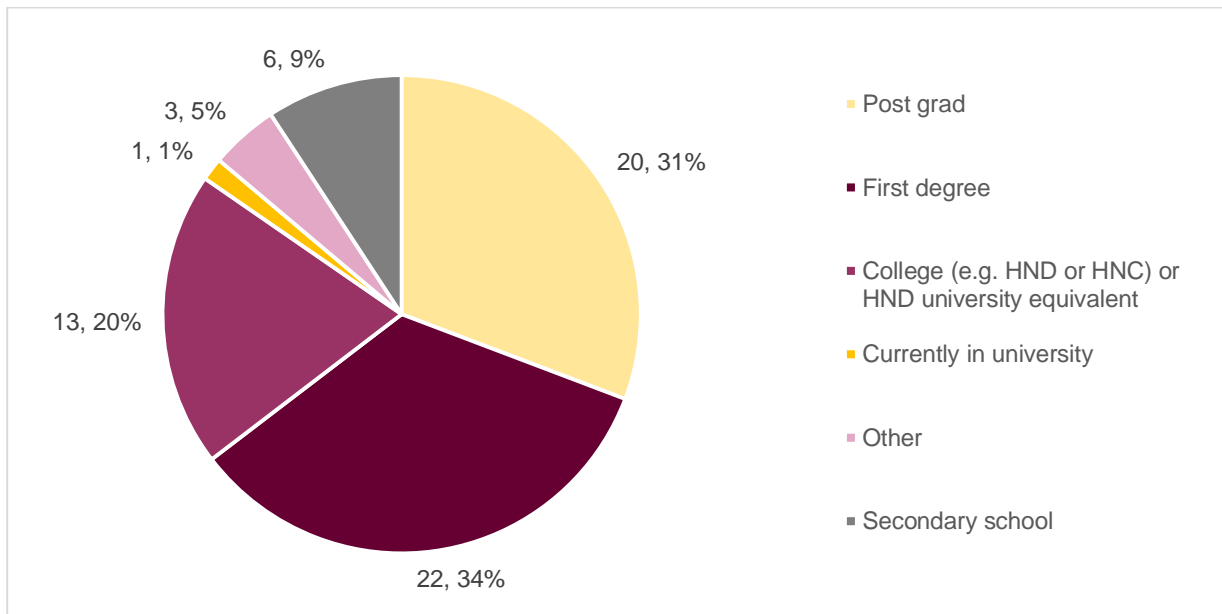
## Age

Respondents were aged from 18 to 62. The largest group was people aged 18-25 (31%, 20 people), followed by those aged 26-35 (23%, 15) and 46-55 (21%, 14). Four people did not give their age.



## Qualifications

We asked about respondents' highest level of education. 86% had (or were studying for) college or university level qualifications. 31% had postgraduate qualifications, including 3 with doctorates (5%) and 16 with masters degrees (25%). 22 (34% had a first degree and a further 13 (20%) had an HND or HNC or similar.



## Appendix 2: Focus Group Discussion Questions

- 1. How would you describe the process of getting into work as a trans/non-binary person?**

Are there barriers you feel that you face that others may not?

- 2. For those who have transitioned, were you working at the time of transitioning?**

If so, how supportive was the workplace during this period?

- 3. Have you experienced harassment at work because of your trans/non-binary identity?**

What happened and was it resolved?

- 4. Who do you feel can help with unfair treatment at work?**

Who do you feel should be helping?

- 5. Do any of you feel like you face additional barriers when looking for and staying in work because of another part of your identity?**

- 6. Are you aware of your rights and protections as trans/non-binary people under laws such as the Equality Act?**

Do you feel protected by these?

## Appendix 3: Trans People and Work Survey

Transgender people experience specific barriers when looking for and staying in work. We want to understand more about these barriers and how they can be challenged. We want to learn about the types of work transgender people do and the experiences they are having there. We are interested in a diversity of experience, including the challenges faced.

We use 'trans' as an umbrella term which includes non-binary identities. This survey is for all trans people, whether they currently have a paid job or not.

Please read through the following information and click 'begin' when you are ready to take the survey.

### **Why we are doing research**

We know transgender people experience particular barriers to finding and staying in work. This survey will help us understand more about these and how they can be challenged.

We will use the information you provide, along with information from two focus groups we ran, to publish a research report about transgender people's experiences of work, how we can improve it, and who can help.

### **What the survey will be like**

The survey will begin when you have clicked 'next' below. It will last around 10 minutes. The questions are short and mostly multiple choice. At the end of each section we provide a comments box for you to write in any additional information you want us to know. You can skip any questions you wish.

Participation in the survey is anonymous - we do not ask for your name or contact information.

### **If you'd like to talk to someone about the research**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints regarding this study please contact LGBT Health and Wellbeing.

Discussing your personal experiences in work may bring up feelings you have around this. If you want to speak to someone, the LGBT Helpline Scotland is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays 12 noon - 9pm on 0300 123 2523.

I have read the information and am ready to take the survey

Begin



## The type of work you do

Are you actively looking for work? For example, you may not be actively looking for work because you are off on long-term sick leave or you may be unable to work.

- Yes – without support                       Yes - with support of a job centre                       No

If you answered 'no', could you please say why?

---

What best describes the type of work you do? (tick all that apply)

- Full-time                       Part-time                       Casual/Zero hours  
 Self-employed                       Voluntary                       Other .....

What best describes the industry you work in? If you work several jobs, please write in the one you work most in.

---

What were the key factors for you in choosing your workplace? For example, flexible hours, LGBT-friendly employer, etc.

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Has your work situation changed in the past year?

- Yes – promoted                       Yes – retired                       Yes – changed employer  
 Yes – became unemployed                       Yes – became employed  
 Yes – became self-employed                       No                       Other .....

What has been your longest period of unemployment? (in months) .....

Any comments about the questions in this section?

---

## Application Process and Recruitment

I have found getting into work:

- Very easy                       Quite easy                       Challenging  
 Difficult                       Impossible

What impact would you say your trans identity had on your job prospects?

- Very positive                       Quite positive                       No impact  
 Quite negative                       Very negative

Do you think that attempts to get into work have affected your mental health?

- Yes                       No                       Not sure

Have you ever felt the need to make changes in where you work in order to feel accepted?

- Yes                       No                       Not sure

Any comments about the questions above?

---

### **Your experience at work**

If you are currently unemployed, please answer about your most recent workplace. If you can't remember or don't know, just click 'Not Sure' or don't answer.

Would you describe your workplace as a trans-inclusive environment?

- Yes                       No                       Not sure

Would you describe your workplace as an inclusive place for people with lesbian, gay and bisexual identities?

- Yes                       No                       Not sure

Are you out as transgender/non-binary at work?

- Yes – to all                       Yes – to some people                       No – but I would like to be  
 No – but I would not like to be                      Other .....

Do you think that being at work has affected your mental health?

- Yes                       No                       Not sure

Do you feel able to access the facilities, including toilets, that you are most comfortable using?

- Yes                       No                       Not sure

Does your workplace have gender-neutral toilets and facilities?

- Yes                       No                       Not sure

Are you aware of any policies or strategies in place to make your workplace more LGBT inclusive? For example, are emails signed off with names and preferred pronouns or is there an LGBT network?

Yes       No       Not sure

If you selected 'yes', could you give examples of these?

---

Do you think the policies/strategies available in your workplace go far enough in ensuring work equality for trans people?

Yes       No       Not sure

Would you like to see more LGBT inclusive strategies in place at work?

Yes       No       Not sure

If you selected 'yes', could you give examples of these?

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Any comments about the questions above?

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### **Transitioning at work**

If you have come out / transitioned, were you working while you did so?

Yes       No

[If yes]

Were you made aware of a workplace policy which stated your rights and a commitment to support and respect at work?

Yes       No       Not sure

How supportive was your workplace in general during this period?

Not supportive at all    1    2    3    4    5   Very supportive

Specifically, how supportive was your employer/manager?

Not supportive at all    1    2    3    4    5   Very supportive

Did you feel supported by your colleagues?

Not supportive at all  1  2  3  4  5 Very supportive

Were you granted adequate leave when you were transitioning?

Yes  No  Not sure

Were there any changes in how you were treated at work after you transitioned?

Yes – positive  Yes - negative  No  Not sure

Any comments about the questions above?

---

### **Harassment at work**

If you were to experience harassment or bullying at work, would you feel comfortable reporting it?

Yes  No  Not sure

Have you ever experienced harassment at work directly or indirectly related to your trans identity? This could come in the form of low-level insults, misgendering, or explicitly transphobic statements, for example.

Yes  No

[If yes] What forms of harassment have you experienced? (Please write in)

---

Have you ever reported harassment to a member of staff such as a manager or someone from Human Resources?

Yes  No  Not sure

Have you ever lodged a formal complaint about harassment at work?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you think your managers are adequately equipped to deal with transphobic harassment or bullying at work?

Yes  No  Not sure

Any comments about the questions above?

---

## Support networks

Do you feel like there are people at work who you can confide in when / if you experience unfair treatment at work?

Yes       No       Not sure

Are you a member of a union?

Yes       No       Not sure

Do you have a strong support network outside of work? These could be friends, family, or interest groups.

Yes       No       Not sure

What would an ideal support system which could help with work look like?

---

Any comments about the questions above?

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## Multiple discrimination

'Multiple Discrimination' is a term used to describe situations where someone is discriminated against for more than one reason such as because of both their race and gender.

Do you think that you face any additional barriers when looking for and staying in work related to another part (or parts) of your identity? For example, as a person of colour or a disabled person.

Yes       No       Not sure

Please share any details you'd like about your identity and what you have experienced.

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Any comments about the questions above?

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## Equality Act and protections

Are you aware of your rights and protections as a trans person in the workplace - for example, via the Equality Act?

How aware do you think your employer is of these?

Unaware     1     2     3     4     5    Fully aware

How aware do you think other people you work with are of these?

Unaware     1     2     3     4     5    Fully aware

How aware do you think the general public are of these?

Unaware     1     2     3     4     5    Fully aware

Do you think that the law goes far enough in protecting you as a trans person at work?

Yes         No         Not sure

Any comments about the questions above?

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### Recommendations for improvement

Could you describe one key way through which work equality for trans people could be advanced? (But please write in more ideas if you'd like!)

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### Demographic information

The information you give here will be used to give us an overall picture of who has answered our survey. It will help us to ensure our survey is accessible and that we have spoken to a range of people.

All these questions are optional, but it will help us if you answer as many as you feel comfortable doing. Please tick or write in the description that applies most to you. If you prefer not to answer any of the questions, please leave them blank.

How would you describe your gender?

Woman             Non-binary         Man             Other .....

How would you describe your sexual orientation?

Lesbian             Bisexual             Pansexual         Gay             Asexual

Questioning         Queer             Heterosexual         Other .....

How would you describe your ethnic identity?

How do you describe your religious belief/faith?

- Buddhist             Christian             Hindu             Jewish  
 Muslim             Sikh             No religion             Other .....

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

- Yes             No

If you selected 'yes', please elaborate if you'd like

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What is your age (in years)? .....

Are you the parent or guardian of any children under 16?

- Yes             No

Do you provide care for someone who is disabled or has a long-term health condition?

- Yes             No

Do you have enough money to cover what you feel you need each month (for example, to pay bills and see friends)?

- Yes             No             Not sure

What is your highest level of education?

- Secondary school             College (e.g. HND or HNC)             Bachelor's degree  
 Master's degree             Doctoral degree             Other .....