

LONDON
TRAVELWATCH

November 2023

Out In London

LGBTQ+ People's Safety On
London's Transport Network



In collaboration with Galop

Who we are

London TravelWatch is the official independent transport watchdog, which campaigns to improve journeys and advocates for all people who travel in and around the capital. London TravelWatch is sponsored and funded by the London Assembly, which is part of the Greater London Authority, and is independent from transport operators.

London TravelWatch promotes integrated transport policies aimed at raising the quality, performance, and accessibility of transport services, while continuing to ensure they are affordable and safe for all who use them. We liaise and work closely with transport operators, providers, regulators, and local authorities. In turn, transport operators consult us on proposed changes to services and closures of lines or stations.

We cover all forms of Transport for London (TfL) services, National Rail in and around London, and those who walk, cycle or wheel in the capital.

You can find out more about us at londontravelwatch.org.uk.

About Galop

Galop is the UK's LGBT+ anti-abuse charity. We work directly with thousands of LGBT+ people who have experienced abuse and violence every year.

We specialise in supporting LGBT+ victims and survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, hate crime, honour-based abuse, forced marriage, and so-called conversion therapies. We run the National LGBT+ Abuse and Violence Helpline (0800 999 5428), supporting LGBT+ survivors of abuse across the country. We provide advocacy and therapeutic services, both in London and nationally, for LGBT+ victims who need longer-term support. We are a service run by LGBT+ people, for LGBT+ people, and the needs of our community are at the centre of what we do.

We use what we learn through working on the frontlines with clients to work on national and local policy change, to improve outcomes for LGBT+ victims and survivors of abuse and violence. We build evidence through key pieces of research around LGBT+ people's experiences of abuse and violence. We push for legislative change, improved statutory guidance for victims, and better understanding of the needs of LGBT+ people around the country.

You can find out more about us at galop.org.uk.

Foreword

London TravelWatch

In January 2022, we published our report about personal security on London's transport network. It identified that certain transport users were at greater risk of victimisation than others and it highlighted five priority areas for action, including the need to address hate crime and sexual harassment.

We have since followed up with two further pieces of work. The first, our June 2023 scorecard, ranked the capital's transport providers according to their approach to improving passengers' personal security. It suggested that action was being taken on many issues, but warned that providers should not get complacent and must continue to do more to make travelling safer.

This report is the second piece of work and returns to a specific topic which came to light during our original research. Many of the LGBTQ+ transport users we spoke to then expressed a fear of victimisation when travelling. With significant under-reporting of LGBTQ+ hate crimes generally in the UK, we felt it was important to understand better how this issue plays out on the London transport network, and what might be done about it.

Through our collaboration with Galop, this latest phase of research surveyed over 600 LGBTQ+ adults. We are incredibly grateful to them for sharing their experiences with us.

Based on the findings of our research, the following four clear themes emerge.

A large proportion of LGBTQ+ people travel around London with an underlying yet serious concern for their everyday safety.

As a result, they live with a pervasive sense of vigilance about their safety, and that of other LGBTQ+ people – often changing their behaviour or appearance to reduce the risk to themselves of negative reactions or harm.



Unfortunately, many LGBTQ+ people feel it can be unsafe to intervene as active bystanders if they see an incident, and they feel unsupported by the wider community.

Worse still, many LGBTQ+ people have little confidence or trust in policing authorities, or in reporting crimes on public transport.

This situation should not be accepted anywhere in a tolerant society and certainly not in a vibrant, diverse world city such as London. We hope our recommendations for change will be taken up by decision makers, transport providers and policing authorities as we promote a transport system that genuinely works for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that ends in an arrowhead pointing to the right.

MICHAEL ROBERTS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, LONDON TRAVELWATCH

Foreword

Galop

Every Londoner should be able to live freely as themselves and, when it comes to living freely, we cannot underestimate the importance of being able to travel. Access to a welcoming, accessible, and safe public transport network is vital for all Londoners being able to live their lives to the fullest and, as this important study shows, there is work to be done to make that a reality for LGBT+ people in the capital.

Reported anti-LGBT+ hate crime figures have doubled since 2016, so perhaps it is unsurprising that two-thirds of LGBT+ respondents to this study said they feel there is always a possible threat of violence or harassment when using public transport in London. An even higher number - more than four in five - of LGBT+ respondents change their behaviour around travelling in order to avoid abuse and harassment. Experiences also vary across the community, with higher levels of safety concerns amongst cis LB+ women, trans people, LGBT+ People of Colour, and Disabled LGBT+ Londoners – many of whom have experienced harassment and abuse based on their identities.

A prominent theme from respondents to the study was the citing of broader cultural anti-LGBT+ prejudice as a key factor in their experiences on London transport. While the London transport network is just one place in public life where this plays out, there are important steps that could be taken to make the network a beacon for LGBT+ accessibility and inclusion. We hope this research will be a catalyst for change, taking us closer to a future where LGBT+ people can live their lives openly, freely, and without fear.

For any LGBT+ people affected by this research, Galop's National LGBT+ Hate Crime Helpline is available by phone on 0800 999 5428, via email at help@galop.org.uk or through live chat at galop.org.uk



We would like to thank London TravelWatch for commissioning this project and shining a light on the realities of travel for LGBT+ Londoners in 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leni Morris".

LENI MORRIS
CEO
Galop, the LGBT+ anti-abuse charity

Executive Summary

Travelling is a vital part of day-to-day life, and everyone should be able to move around the city freely and safely. This report uses the findings from a survey that highlights LGBTQ+ people's experiences of using transport in London, including barriers to travel, perceptions around safety and what steps LGBTQ+ people take to keep themselves safe. It also provides recommendations for the transport industry and policing bodies on how to improve the safety of LGBTQ+ people when travelling in London.

Key findings

LGBTQ+ people often hold serious concerns about their personal security in public spaces. Experiences of crimes and unwanted behaviour, including sexual harassment and hate crime, are not uncommon. 66% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported they had experienced at least one form of victimisation on public transport in the last 12 months, and 21% said they were subjected to hate crime while travelling in the same period. 39% of LGBTQ+ respondents felt London has become less safe in the past 5 years, compared to just 10% who thought it had become safer.

Over 68% said the general feeling of anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice in society makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable when using public transport. For those who experienced abuse on public transport in the past year, 68% said anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice or hostility towards their LGBTQ+ identity was a key factor in the abuse they experienced.

The research highlights the different experiences and concerns for LGBTQ+ people whose identities overlap with different characteristics, such as gender, race, religion, disability and age. Not all people in the LGBTQ+ community experience travel and safety the same, and looking at how these additional factors – such as misogyny, racism and ableism – come into play is necessary to understand people's experiences and concerns fully. For example, 87% of cis LB+ women and 73% of trans+ respondents reported having a general feeling of being unsafe at night, compared to 43% of cis GB+ men. Additionally, trans+ respondents, Deaf and Disabled LGBTQ+ respondents, younger (aged 18-24) LGBTQ+ respondents and LGBTQ+ People of Colour were most likely to say their own lived experiences (for example, harassment, abuse, anti-social behaviour) made them feel unsafe.

“Hate crime is always a fear/reality for LGBT+ people travelling through London, especially during unsociable hours. We know that more marginalised intersections are more likely to be repeat targets (trans people, Disabled people, Black and People of Colour – or intersections of all three).”

HATE CRIME VICTIM SUPPORT WORKER [1]
LGBT+ ORGANISATION



What does this mean for LGBTQ+ people travelling?

Having an underlying yet serious concern for their everyday safety

A large proportion of LGBTQ+ respondents said they experienced one or more forms of victimisation on public transport in London in the past year. Among these, the majority felt they were victimised mainly or partly because of their LGBTQ+ identity:

- 67% of LGBTQ+ respondents said they feel there is always a possible threat of violence or harassment when using public transport.
- 43% of LGBTQ+ respondents said they often feel uneasy or “on edge” when using public transport.
- 77% of trans+ respondents felt that hostility and prejudice against their LGBTQ+ identity was the main reason or part of the reason for the abuse they experienced on public transport in the past year (compared with 68% of LGBTQ+ respondents overall).

Being hypervigilant and changing behaviour

LGBTQ+ people live with a pervasive sense of vigilance or concern for their safety, and for the safety of other LGBTQ+ people while travelling in London. Things like first-hand experiences, shared histories of facing anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice, and the ongoing history of violence, mistreatment and hostility towards the LGBTQ+ community all foster perceptions that it is not safe to be outwardly or visibly LGBTQ+. This context leaves many LGBTQ+ people feeling like they have little choice but to be extra vigilant when travelling in and around London. 78% of LGBTQ+ respondents said it sometimes feels dangerous to look or act visibly LGBTQ+ on public transport. Given their safety concerns, many feel like they cannot be their true selves when travelling in and around London.

They regularly change their behaviours to protect their safety. Many choose to hide or disguise that they are LGBTQ+ people (such as modifying or concealing their clothing, wearing a face or head covering, or not interacting with or touching their LGBTQ+ partner) so that their presentation aligns with what society sees as typical for a heterosexual or cisgender person.

Changing their presentation or behaviours helps provide a sense of security or safety by reducing the risk of any potential negative reactions or harm while on their commute, which may be more likely if they presented as “visibly queer”:

- 82% of LGBTQ+ respondents said they sometimes, often or always modify their travelling behaviour out of concern for their safety. This is even higher for trans+ respondents (91%) and cis LB+ women (92%).
- Deaf and Disabled LGBTQ+ respondents (86%) were more likely than those without Disability (77%) to report adjusting their behaviour sometimes, often or always.
- Of those who modify their behaviour, 72% of LGBTQ+ respondents said they hide or disguise the fact they are LGBTQ+ to protect their safety, and 68% said they become hypervigilant and constantly monitor their surroundings.

“Feeling safe means not constantly looking over my shoulder, feeling ill at ease or edgy, and being hypervigilant about my surroundings. I have to constantly adjust the way I look, sound, and hold myself. I avoid making phone calls on public transport/in public for fear that people will hear my ‘gay voice’ and laugh at or harass me. Sometimes feeling unsafe isn’t just the feeling of being physically threatened, it’s wanting to avoid being bullied or laughed at.”

(TRANS+ RESPONDENT, 18-24)

Feeling unsafe to act as a bystander and unsupported by the wider community

One of the key points that has arisen out of previous London TravelWatch research on personal security is the importance of bystander intervention and the need for better tools, messaging and guidance to help people be active bystanders.

Justifiably, given their safety concerns, many LGBTQ+ people feel it can often be unsafe to intervene as active bystanders, out of fear that the abuser may then turn on them. This highlights the need for allyship and for more non-LGBTQ+ bystanders to intervene if they see an incident. Yet many in the LGBTQ+ community may feel less confident that other passengers would support them. Respondents who experienced at least one form of abuse or discrimination on public transport in the past year said that those witnessing the event rarely intervened or acted to support them when the abuse was happening.

- Three quarters of LGBTQ+ respondents said not feeling safe/fears of putting themselves at risk would stop them from intervening in an unsafe situation on public transport.
- Among the LGBTQ+ community, trans+ respondents, younger LGBTQ+ respondents and People of Colour were the most likely to say that not feeling safe/fears of putting themselves at risk would stop them from intervening in an unsafe situation on public transport.
- Of those LGBTQ+ respondents who experienced abuse or harm and who said other people witnessed what had happened, most said the bystanders watched, but did nothing (65%) or pretended not to see (59%).

“I think a big problem with reporting hate crimes is that it feels pointless. Why would I bother spending hours reporting my experience to the authorities when I know nothing is going to be done or change. Reporting it is never going to stop me being harassed.”

(TRANS+ RESPONDENT, 25-34)

Having little confidence or trust in policing authorities, or reporting in general

This study suggests that police presence currently has limited value in allaying many LGBTQ+ people's safety concerns. Nearly half (49%) of LGBTQ+ respondents said that seeing the Metropolitan Police does not help them feel safer on public transport.

Our findings also suggest that LGBTQ+ respondents lack confidence in the current processes of reporting their experiences to the police, as well as reporting incidents they may witness. They have little trust in these systems effectively addressing and responding to their concerns. A number of LGBTQ+ respondents, in their own words, described having negative experiences with the Met, British Transport Police, or both police forces.

Based on comments from survey participants and LGBTQ+ stakeholder interviews, many among the LGBTQ+ community feel that when they report incidents to the police, their reports are not treated seriously, and incidents are not adequately investigated.

Of our LGBTQ+ respondents, the vast majority (84%) of those who said they were victimised in some way on public transport in the past year did not report their experiences to the police or other formal support services. Of those who did not report:

- 50% said it was because they felt they would not be taken seriously by police and 49% said it was because they do not trust the police.
- 27% chose not to do so because they were worried the police would discriminate against them due to their LGBT+ identity.

More widely, 34% LGBTQ+ respondents said they do not feel safe in reporting a crime on public transport. 57% of LGBTQ+ respondents said they did not think it is easy or straightforward to report a crime on public transport.

“It feels frustrating and scary when everyone just pretends not to notice. It makes me feel less safe in intervening because if it goes wrong, it feels like no one will help me!”

(CIS LB+ WOMAN, 25-34)

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report, decision makers, the transport industry and policing authorities should:

1. Commit to awareness campaigns to end hate crime and harassment targeting LGBTQ+ people. This should be a cross-industry effort including education on the problem and how people can help stop it.
2. Conduct regular staff training, co-designed with LGBTQ+ people and stakeholders, to ensure staff have the right skill set and knowledge to help and support people in the LGBTQ+ community when they are travelling in London.
3. Commission further research into LGBTQ+ people's safety concerns while travelling around London, particularly around policing and how different intersectionalities face different barriers when it comes to policing bodies and reporting.
4. Implement a robust cross-industry strategy to address anti-social behaviour.
5. Work directly through LGBTQ+ organisations and people with lived experience throughout. This should be factored into all aspects of work rather than as an add on or an afterthought.

In addition, transport operators should:

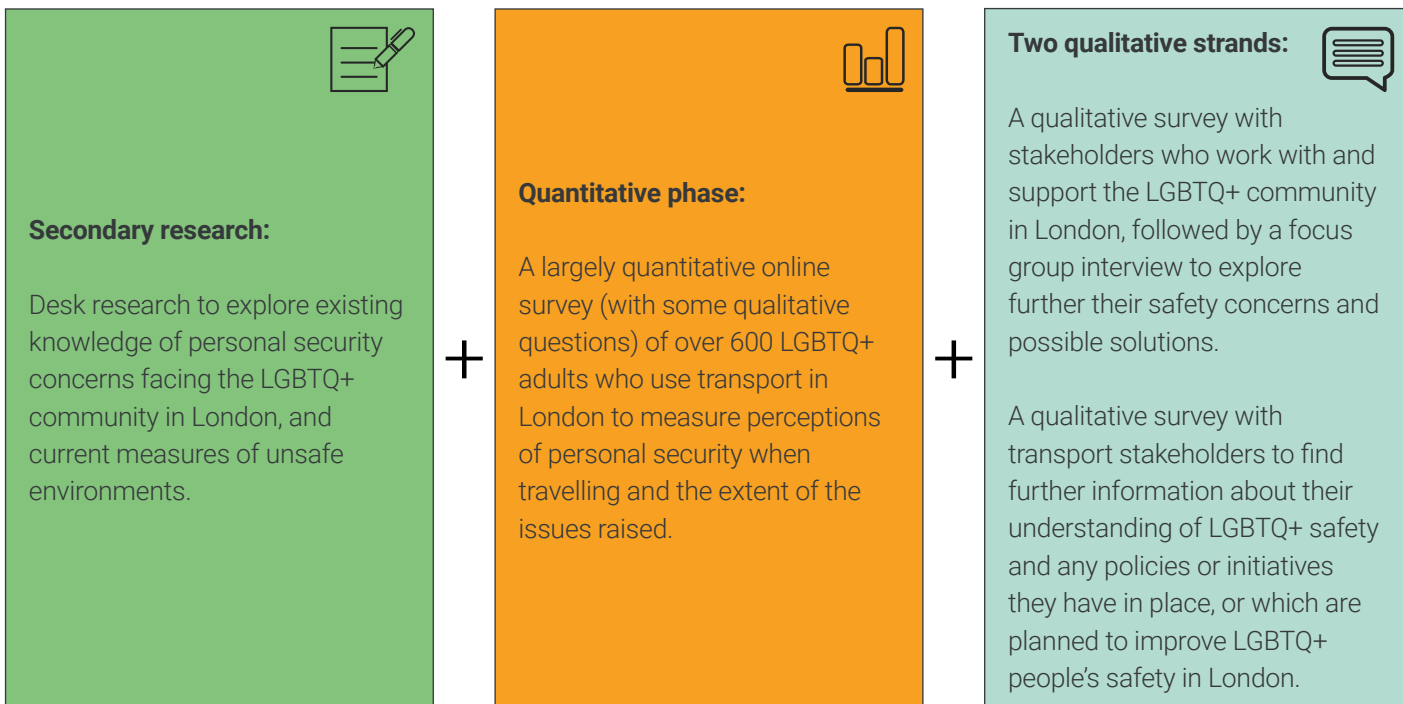
6. Maintain the frequency of services and ensure they are reliable, particularly at night, to help make sure people are not stuck in unsafe or potentially dangerous situations.
7. Put infrastructure in place to improve security concerns and perceptions of safety, including improving WiFi and connectivity, lighting and CCTV.
8. Have visible staff at stations and on services to support LGBTQ+ people before, during and after their journey.
9. Collaborate with, and support, trusted third-party organisations such as CATCH and Zoteria to promote their services to LGBTQ+ people who use transport.

Policing authorities should:

10. Raise awareness of trusted third-party schemes such as CATCH and Zoteria and how to use them and improve these referral pathways within the police.
11. Within the Met, commit to implementing recommendations from the Casey Review to address LGBTQ+ prejudice within their organisation.
12. Within the BTP, create and implement an action plan detailing how they will address LGBTQ+ prejudice within their organisation and build trust within the LGBTQ+ community.

Methodology and definitions

Our research programme consisted of three phases:



Desk (Secondary) Research

The desk research phase focused on understanding the perception of safety amongst the LGBTQ+ community more widely, and to explore existing knowledge of personal security concerns in London and current measures of unsafe environments.

Wherever data from desk research is cited throughout the report, the source is clearly labelled and a link to relevant online information is provided.

Quantitative Community Survey

Overall, 45 questions were asked through Galop's online survey, with over 600 responses from LGBTQ+ adults who use transport in London. Participants were recruited through social media and LGBTQ+ networks. While we took steps to try and make sure all demographics were sufficiently included in the responses, it should be noted that respondents are not an exact reflection of the London LGBTQ+ community, and unfortunately some groups are underrepresented, such as People of Colour and cis LB+ women.

Fieldwork took place from 3 April to 23 May 2023. Questions were split into a mixture of 8 demographic

questions, followed by 35 quantitative questions and 2 qualitative questions. The survey was implemented using SmartSurvey.

Descriptive statistics, uni- and bivariate analysis has been done on an overall and subgroup level, calling out significant differences between different intersects of the LGBTQ+ community.

Qualitative Methodology

The qualitative phase was conducted between 23 April and 2 June 2023, and included two main strands:

- **With LGBTQ+ stakeholders.** 11 questions were asked in a qualitative survey of 19 participants who work with or support the LGBTQ+ community in London. The survey was implemented using SmartSurvey. Participants included representatives from charities working with LGBTQ+ people and especially those at high risk of victimisation (including LBT+ women, refugees and migrants, and People of Colour). The survey explored personal security concerns, experiences of hate crime and harassment, the impact of feeling unsafe and views on what needs to be done to ensure impacted groups feel like transport is still a safe option for them.

The qualitative survey was followed by a semi-structured focus group interview with five different organisations, from LGBTQ+ charities and violence support charities to business venues, held on 31 May 2023. It lasted 75 minutes and was conducted over Microsoft Teams. The interview was conversational in format, following a semi-structured discussion guide covering people's experiences of travelling in and around London as someone from the LGBTQ+ community, how they travelled around the city, and how unsafe environments impacts their travel and day-to-day life.

- **With transport and policing bodies.** 16 questions were asked in a short qualitative survey of those who work in or with the transport industry, including Transport for London (TfL) and the British Transport Police (BTP). The survey was implemented using SmartSurvey. The survey explored their understanding of personal security concerns amongst the LGBTQ+ community and steps they were taking to improve LGBTQ+ people's safety when travelling in London. This included current and future policies and initiatives in place to improve LGBTQ+ people's safety in London and whether there was anything planned for the future.

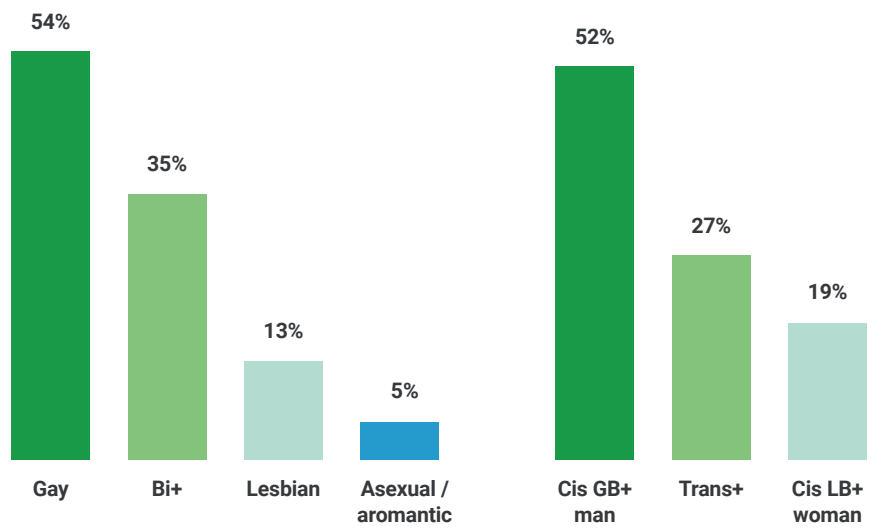
These expert interviews helped contextualise the personal security concerns shared by LGBTQ+ respondents in the community survey. The qualitative component also provided further information about safety concerns for LGBTQ+ people when using transport in London, and possible solutions.



Who did we speak to?

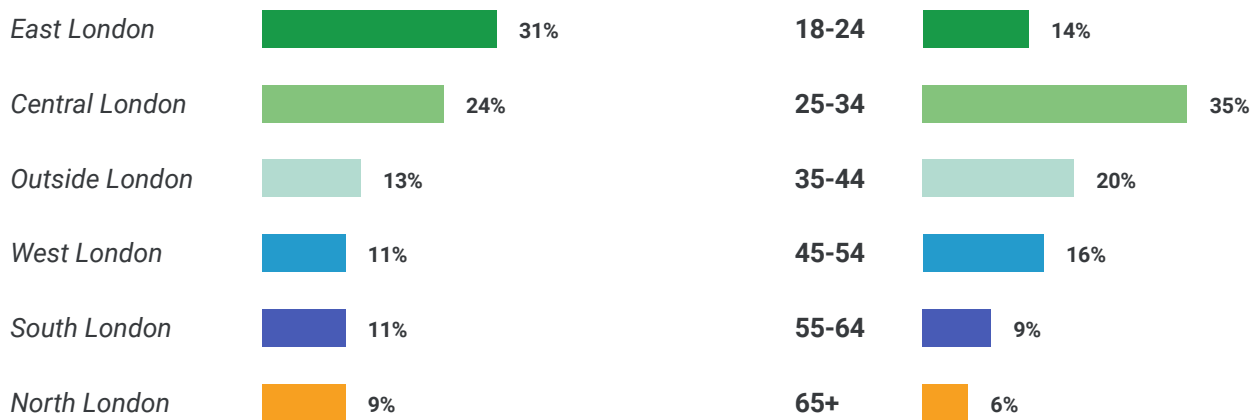
Fig.1

- **13% LGBTQ+ respondents of colour.**
- **3% wear religious dress some or all the time.**
- **44% said they have a physical or mental health condition/s.**
- **0.7% Intersex respondents.**



Location & age range

Fig.2



*Fig.2 represents where respondents live.

*numbers are rounded so percentages may not add up to 100%



Analysis and evidence

Current Picture

LGBTQ+ people and communities have long held concerns for their safety in public spaces in the UK. Recent evidence suggests LGBTQ+ people are at increasingly high risk of violence and abuse. While there is limited research published about LGBTQ+ people's experience while travelling in London, the desk research brings to light many personal security concerns LGBTQ+ people have more widely. These can also act as a barrier to travel.

According to Home Office statistics¹, in 2022/23 there were 24,102 reported hate crimes targeting the victim's sexual orientation, a 112% increase over the 5 years from 2017/18. There were also 4,732 reported hate crimes targeting trans people, an increase of 186% over the same 5-year time period. From the Home Office statistics, transphobic hate crimes saw the biggest percentage rise compared with other forms of hate crime in the last year. These statistics are likely underestimating the number of hate crime victims due to a lack of trust in the criminal justice system and subsequent under-reporting. In the last year alone Galop have seen a 65% increase in LGBTQ+ victims of hate crime coming to them for support², again highlighting the increased discrimination, hate and prejudice LGBTQ+ people across the country are facing.

Research also shows that LGBTQ+ people feel less safe in their neighbourhoods compared to cisgender and heterosexual individuals³. London is no exception to this.

"I have been the victim of transphobia numerous times over the past two years, and yet the police haven't really taken it seriously. I was even deliberately misgendered over the phone by the police, even after I'd corrected them twice."

JAMES, 47 (SOUTH EAST)⁵

"Even just five years ago it was not safe for me to come out as trans, the pace of change has been amazing. Unfortunately, there now appears to be a backlash against that progress in the last year with hate from the media against trans increasing disturbingly in the last six months. This increasing transphobia is accelerating and is causing acute anxiety in my daily life."

WILLOW, 40 (WALES)⁴

This discrimination can extend into all areas of daily life, including public transport. According to Galop's Hate Crime Report⁶, the majority of participants stated anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice was a regular and frequent occurrence. Such incidents were a routine and common feature of their everyday lives. As their report finds, 1 in 6 respondents experienced anti-LGBTQ+ violence and abuse daily (16%), more than one-third experienced it at least weekly (36%), and almost two-thirds experienced it at least monthly (64%).

Hate crime and discrimination targeting LGBTQ+ people has an impact on their perception of personal security, and can also impact their relationship with the police. In Galop's Hate Crime Report⁷ most crimes go underreported. Over half (54%) of LGBTQ+ people thought that the police wouldn't do anything, while 38% said this kind of abuse happens too often to report each incident to police. Of those who didn't report, 28% said they hadn't because they distrusted or were fearful of the police.

On public transport more specifically, LGBTQ+ people's experience while travelling can differ hugely from those who identify as heterosexual and cisgender. Research from "Queer mobilities: critical LGBTQ perspectives of public transport space" found that "LGBTQ+ passengers are three times more likely to encounter unsolicited sexual behaviour on public transport in London compared to heterosexual individuals". It also suggests that many LGBTQ+ people change their behaviour and travel patterns in order for them to feel safer while travelling in London: a finding confirmed by the results outlined in this report.

It is vital that everyone can travel safely in and around London. In order to work towards this goal, it is important to understand the issue further. Therefore, this research aims to explore LGBTQ+ people's experience of transport in more detail, including barriers to travel, perceptions around safety and what steps people would like to see to address the problems.

This is the start of a conversation, and while the research provides a picture of the overall situation, there's more to be done. Further research could be done to explore the impacts on certain groups within the LGBTQ+ community and delve deeper into the different intersections, for example around misogyny, racism, and ableism.

Having an underlying yet serious concern for their everyday safety

Perceptions of safety in general

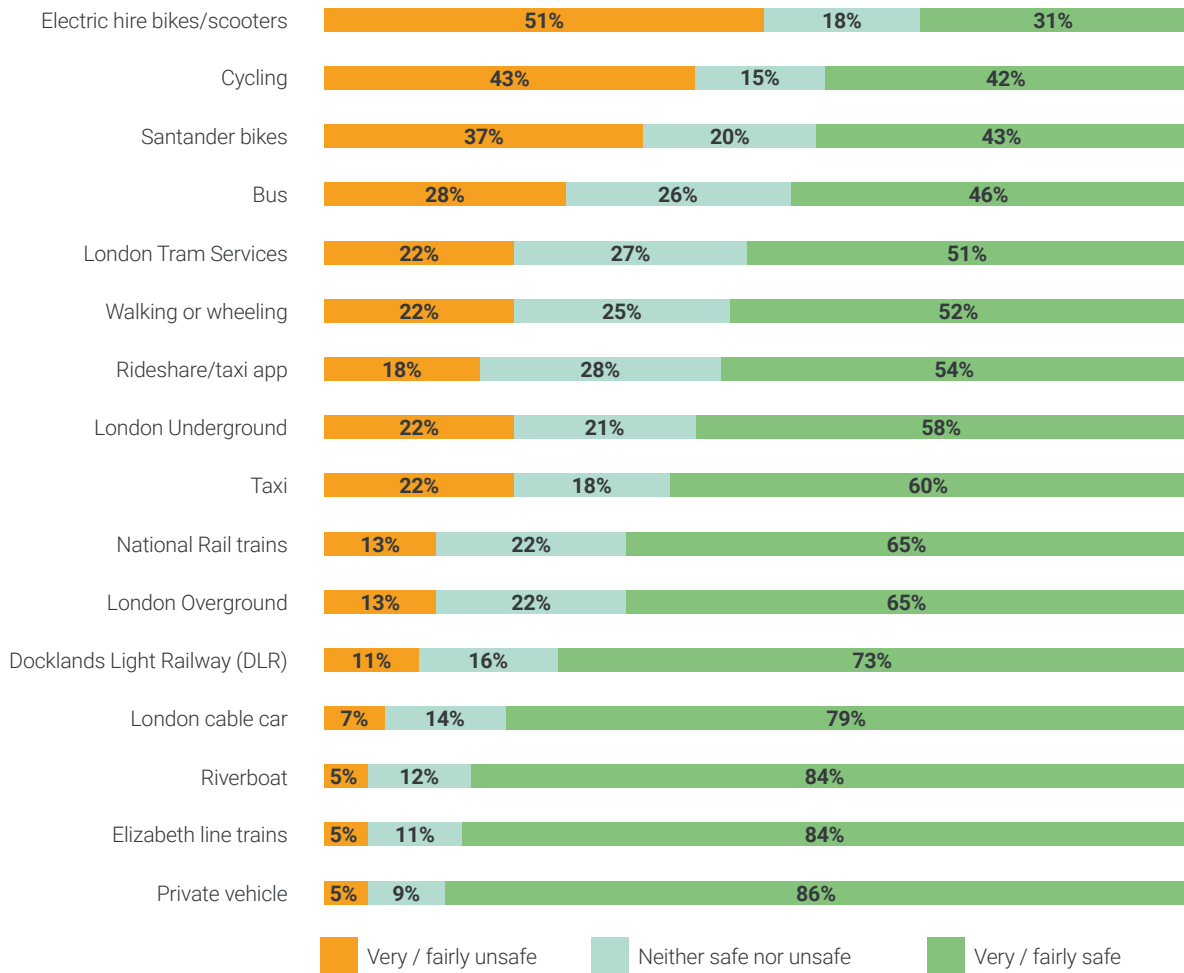
Whether it's to get to work or education, for healthcare, running errands, meeting family or friends, or one of the many other reasons people travel, transport is an integral part of everyday life. However, while the vast majority of LGBTQ+ respondents (83%) find it easy to use public transport, just two-thirds (66%) said they generally feel safe when travelling around London.

Perceptions of safety vary depending on the mode, with LGBTQ+ people feeling safest in private vehicles, the Elizabeth Line and DLR, and most unsafe when undertaking active travel (walking, wheeling, cycling and micromobility), or when using the bus, tram, underground or taxis. It should be noted the issues causing concern on different modes will vary. For example, crashes or collisions are likely to be a higher concern for cyclists compared to people travelling by train. However, as will be discussed later in the report, a significant number of safety concerns across all modes of transport are due to anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice and abuse many LGBTQ+ people experience when travelling.



“In general, how safe or unsafe do you feel on each of the following modes of transport which you use in and around London?” (607 total responses)

Fig.3



Many LGBTQ+ people feel safest travelling in daylight times with small to moderate crowds. From evening peak onwards was perceived to be the least safe time to travel, with concerns increasing into the night. This is in part due to the levels of intoxication that are more likely at later times – increasing the risk of anti-social behaviour and risk of harassment. Indeed, over half (52%) of LGBTQ+ respondents said they do not feel safe travelling at night.

39% of LGBTQ+ respondents feel London has become less safe in the past 5 years, with just 10% feeling it has become safer. This feeling that the city has become more unsafe was higher for trans+ respondents (43%).

“I feel safe most of the time but avoid the rush hour and late-night travel if possible. Moderately busy carriages are best - not very empty or very overcrowded ones.”

(CIS GB+ MAN, 65+)

“I think that late morning feels safer as there are still a number of people around, so the risk of abuse whilst alone is minimal, but still a small enough crowd that there are less people who can harass/abuse. 4:30pm-midnight might feel like an unsafe time as people are going for drinks after work/ nights out and the risk of violence/ abuse increases.”

(YOUNG PEOPLE VICTIM SUPPORT WORKER, LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION)

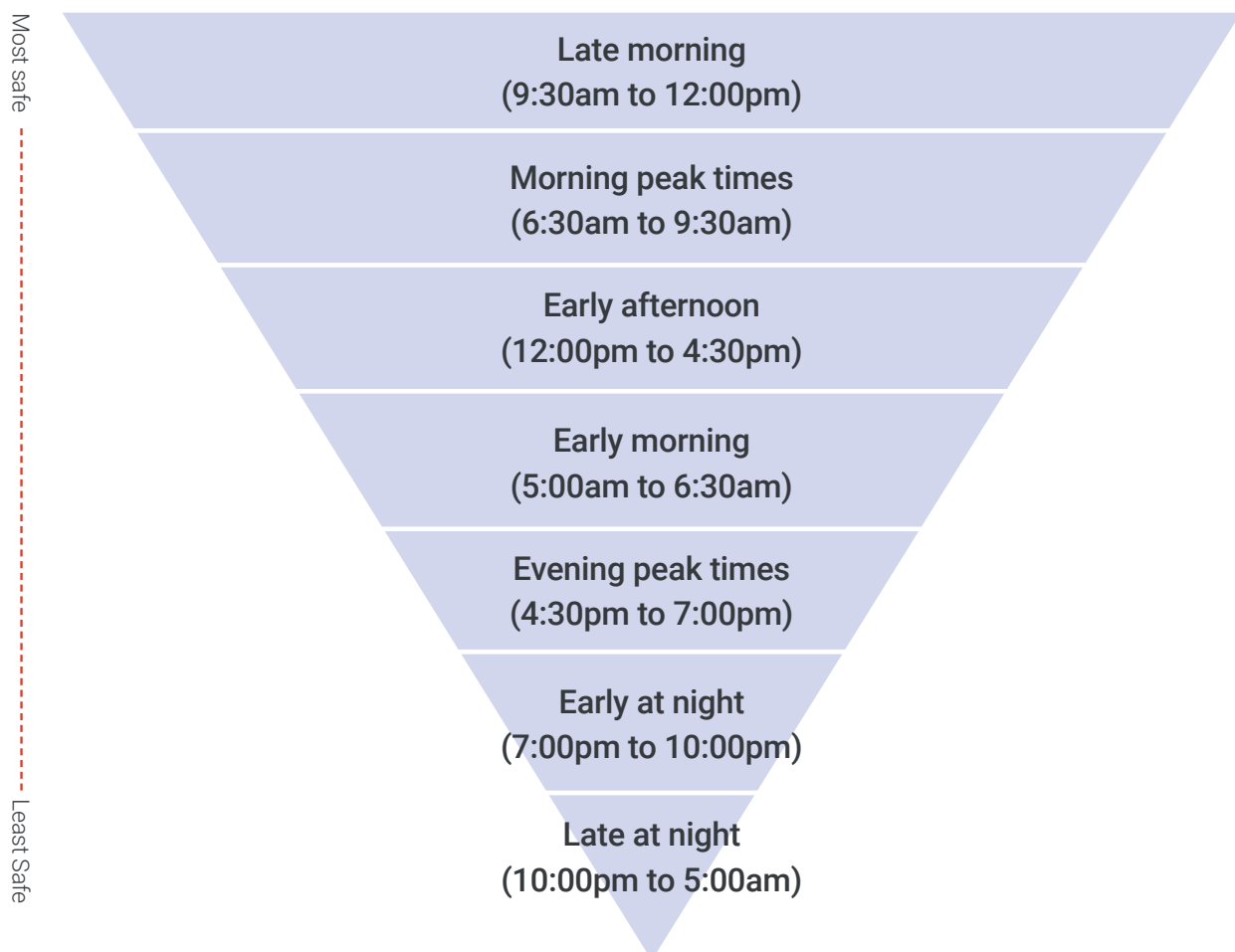
Nearly 4 in 10 (39%) LGBTQ+ respondents feel London has become less safe in the past 5 years, with just 1 in 10 (10%) feeling it has become safer. This feeling that the city has become more unsafe was higher for trans+ respondents (43%).

“Over the last 5 years it has become increasingly unsafe to travel as a transgender or genderqueer person or have an androgynous gender expression. The rate of transgender-specific hate crimes have risen over the last 5 years and continue to rise. [...] It has become more unsafe to be visibly/openly transgender in public. I personally have experienced more transphobia and witnessed more transphobic behaviour in public in the past 5 years.”

(TRANS+ RESPONDENT, 18-24)

“Across all the different modes of transport that you take, which of the following times of day would you consider safe or unsafe to travel? (607 total responses)

Fig.4



Deeper, underlying safety concerns

Our research suggests that LGBTQ+ people’s safety concerns when using public transport are much deeper and more widespread than it might first appear:

- Nearly 4 in 5 (78%) feel that it is dangerous for them to look or act visibly LGBTQ+ on public transport.
- 2 in 3 (67%) feel there is always a possible threat of violence or harassment on public transport.
- Over 2 in 5 (43%) often feel uneasy or “on edge” when using public transport.

Though there was a sense of safety among most of the LGBTQ+ community in general, some people in the LGBTQ+ community feel more unsafe than others. For example, as seen in figure 5, trans+ respondents, cis LB+ women, Deaf and Disabled LGBTQ+ respondents, and LGBTQ+ People of Colour were more likely to feel that there is always a possible threat of violence or harassment when they use public transport.

“Travelling feels very isolated and whilst nothing significant has ever happened to me, it always feels like it very easily could”

(CIS GB+ MAN, 35-44)

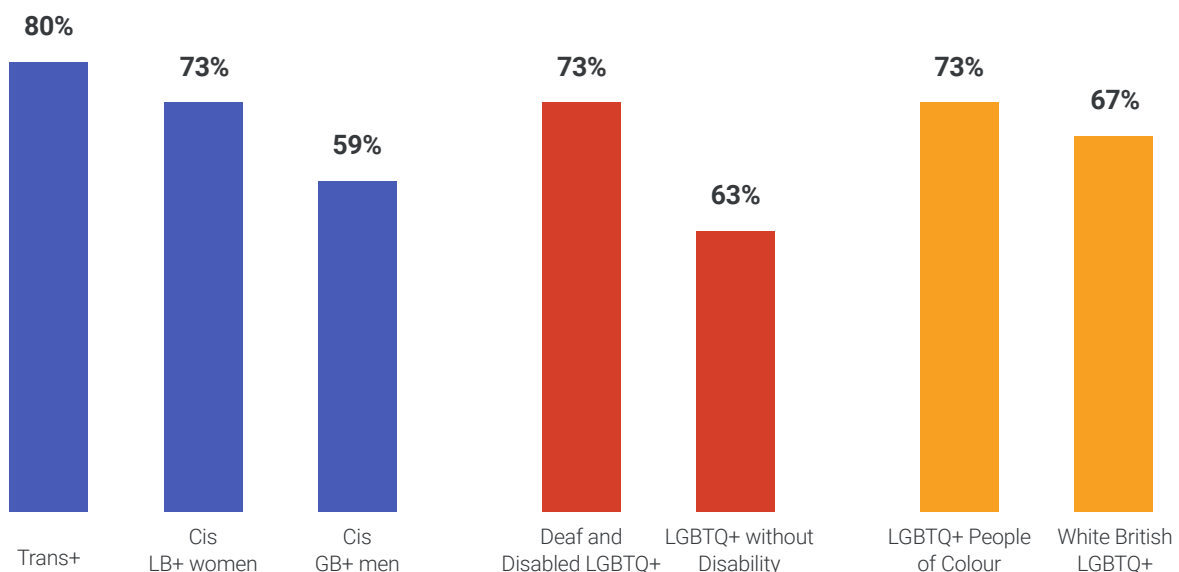
This difference is similarly reflected when asked if they feel safe when travelling in and around London:

- 28% of trans+ respondents and 21% of cis LB+ women said they feel very or fairly unsafe, compared with 6% of cis GB+ men.
- Deaf and Disabled LGBTQ+ respondents were more than twice as likely as LGBTQ+ people who are not Disabled to feel unsafe when travelling (23% and 10% respectively).
- 1 in 4 (26%) LGBTQ+ People of Colour said they generally feel unsafe on public transport, compared with around 1 in 6 (15%) white LGBTQ+ respondents.

A range of factors contribute to LGBTQ+ people’s safety concerns on public transport. These can be due to wider societal factors, transport specific issues, environmental factors and based on people’s own lived experiences.

“I feel there is always a possible threat of violence or harassment when I use public transport”
 % of respondents who answered ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’.

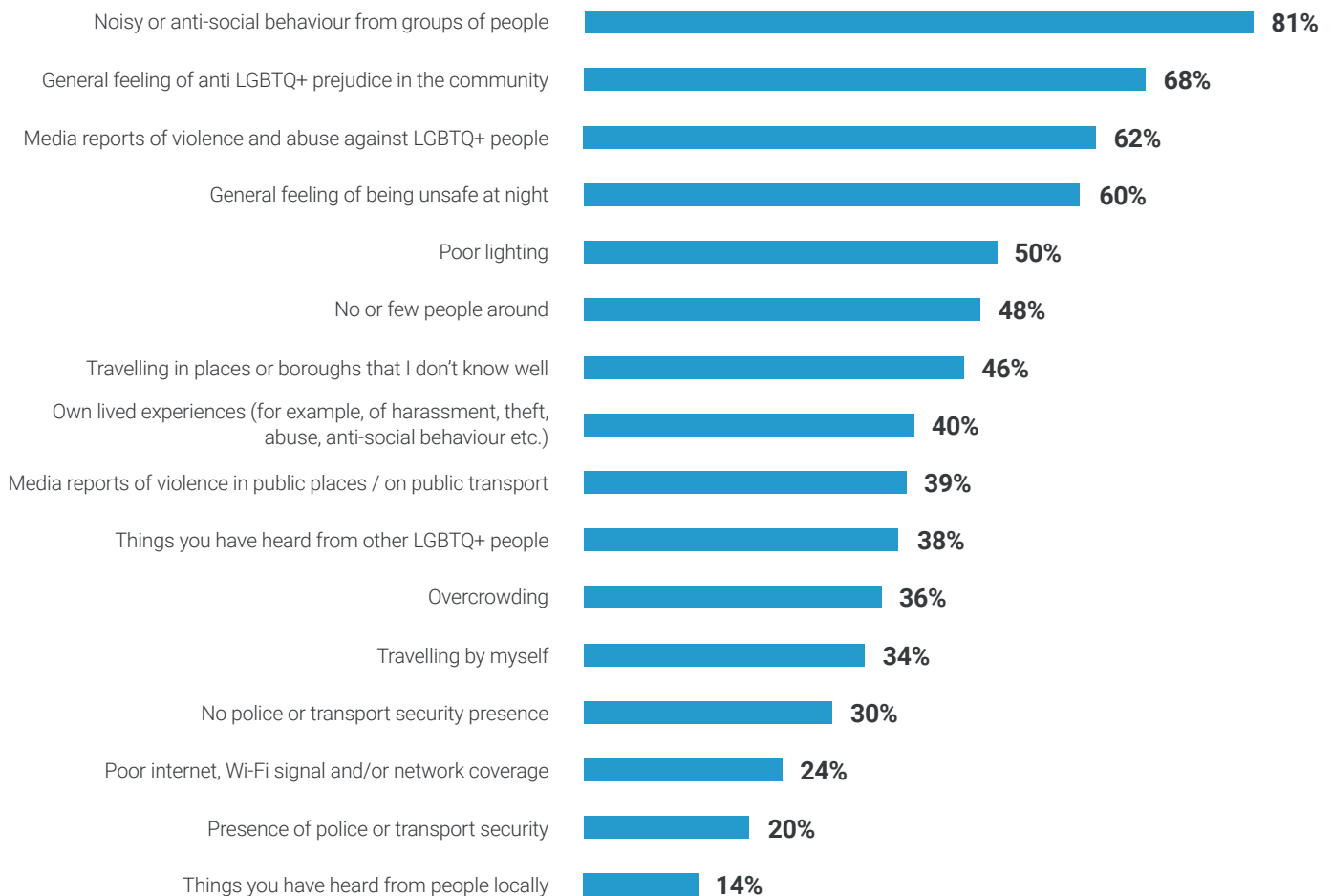
Fig.5



Factors contributing to LGBTQ+ people's safety concerns

% of respondents who experienced the following safety concerns (608 total responses)

Fig.6



Trans+ respondents (53%), lesbian respondents (51%), Deaf and Disabled LGBTQ+ respondents (49%), younger LGBTQ+ respondents (49%) and LGBTQ+ People of Colour (47%) were most likely to say their own lived experiences (for example of harassment, abuse, anti-social behaviour) made them feel unsafe.

"If the station is bright/well lit, it feels a lot safer because then there's less chance of someone trying something nefarious."

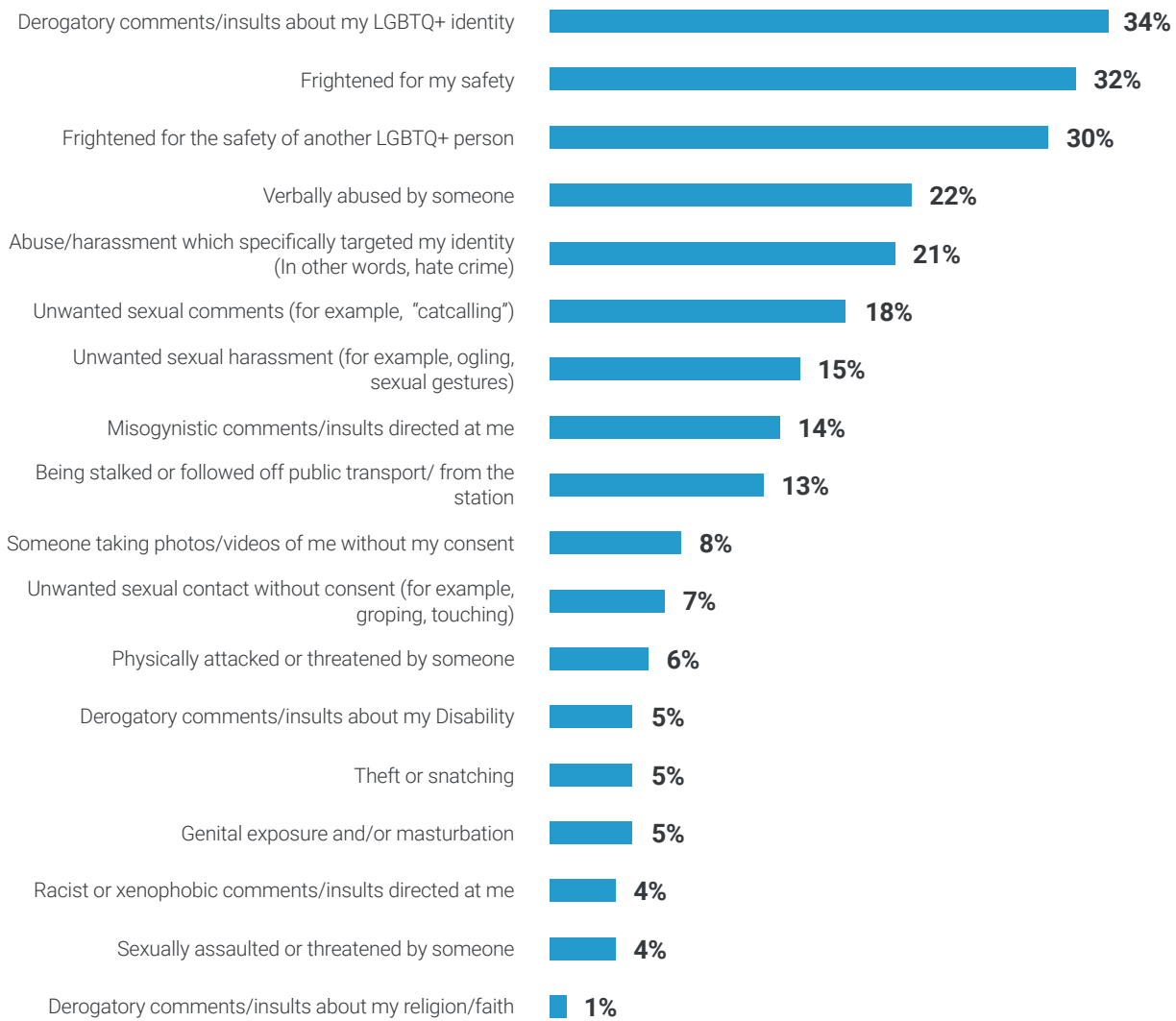
(NON-BINARY RESPONDENT, 35-44)

"More station and vehicle staff is probably the single biggest factor to me feeling safe while travelling, aside from addressing societal prejudice at large and having more legal rights. Staff should not only be visible, but at identifiable and reliable places like ticket offices."

(TRANS+ RESPONDENT, 18-24)

% of respondents who have experienced hostility while traveling on, heading to, or waiting for the train, bus or tram. (594 total responses)

Fig.7



As seen in our research and through many in the community's lived experiences, LGBTQ+ people's safety concerns are justified. 2 in 3 (66%) LGBTQ+ respondents reported they had experienced at least one form of victimisation on public transport in the past year. This includes derogatory comments and insults about their LGBTQ+ identity, sexual assault, harassment and physical abuse, amongst other incidents.

1 in 5 (21%) LGBTQ+ respondents said they were subjected to hate crime on public transport in the past year.

Over two-thirds (68%) of respondents who experienced abuse felt that hostility and prejudice against their LGBTQ+ identity was the main or part of the reason for the abuse they experienced on public transport in the past year. Trans+ respondents were much more likely to say

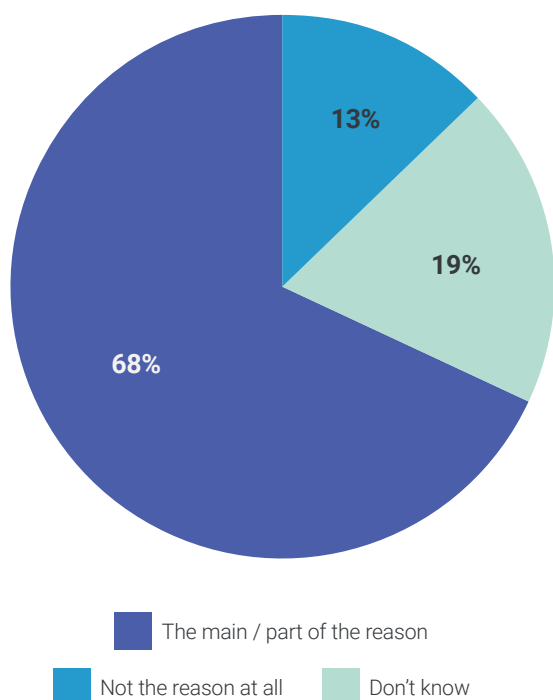
that hostility towards their LGBTQ+ identity was the main or part of the reason for the abuse they experienced on public transport in the past year (77% compared with 68% of LGBTQ+ respondents overall).

Of those who experienced at least one form of abuse on public transport in the past year, some LGBTQ+ respondents felt the abuse they experienced targeted other parts of their identity: such as their age (16%), ethnicity or cultural background (12%), their Disability (9%) or their race (8%).



How much, if at all, do you feel that hostility/ prejudice against your LGBTQ+ identity was a reason you experienced hostility in the past year?

Fig.8



Some LGBTQ+ respondents described how the issues they have faced – including men’s use of sexual harassment or sexual abuse directed at them – or their hypervigilance relate to being a woman or having a “femme” gender expression.

“I’ve never had any problems on London transport because I’m gay. Every single problem I’ve had is because I’m a woman. It’s always the sexual harassment and the catcalling.”

(CIS LB+ WOMAN, 18-24)

Additionally, 87% cis LB+ women and 73% trans+ respondents said they had a general feeling of being unsafe at night, compared with 43% of cis GB+ men. These comments and findings highlight misogyny as contributing to their experiences and safety concerns.

What does “being safe” mean?

When asked, LGBTQ+ respondents mainly defined ‘being safe’ as:

- Being able to be yourself – to present and act in a way that is true to who you are, including freely being and acting LGBTQ+.
- Being able to move freely and the absence of possible threats – to move around London without scanning for risks of abuse.
- Being able to relax and travel without being “on alert” and without fear.

“It’s about having the chance to not think about the way you sit or stand, what you are wearing and who you’re with. Feeling safe is not just being left in peace. It’s reaching the point where you don’t consider something bad could happen.”

(CIS GB+ MAN, 25-34)

“Not having to change my behaviour or be on guard at all times.”

(CIS LB+ WOMAN OF COLOUR, 18-24)

“To walk and travel freely without my race or LGBTQ+ identity triggering people.”

(CIS GB+ MAN OF COLOUR, 35-44)

“Feeling safe would be entirely being myself and knowing that I wouldn’t be targeted for it. It would also mean that there is a sense of community on transport to respond and help each other.”

(TRANS+ RESPONDENT, 25-34)

Being hypervigilant and changing behaviour

As shown in the previous section, LGBTQ+ people often feel that they might experience discrimination, abuse, or harassment while travelling in and around London. Many LGBTQ+ people feel they must always have their guard up when travelling in and around London. They tend to be hyper aware of their surroundings throughout their journey especially when travelling at certain times of the day and night.

“I am constantly in a state of high vigilance when I am on public transport - as someone who grew up in London I do it entirely naturally and without noticing. I feel many/most women/ marginalised groups feel like this, and most/ many men do not understand this, which is why sometimes action is not taken.”

(CIS LB+ WOMAN, 35-44)

In order to reduce any potential risk of harm and to ensure their safety, many LGBTQ+ people choose to change their behaviour – such as by modifying their dress or presentation or changing their travelling behaviour. These findings highlight the unfortunate reality that many LGBTQ+ people feel they cannot be their true selves when travelling in and around London. Rather, they hold serious concerns for their safety in public spaces due to underlying anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice and potential mistreatment.

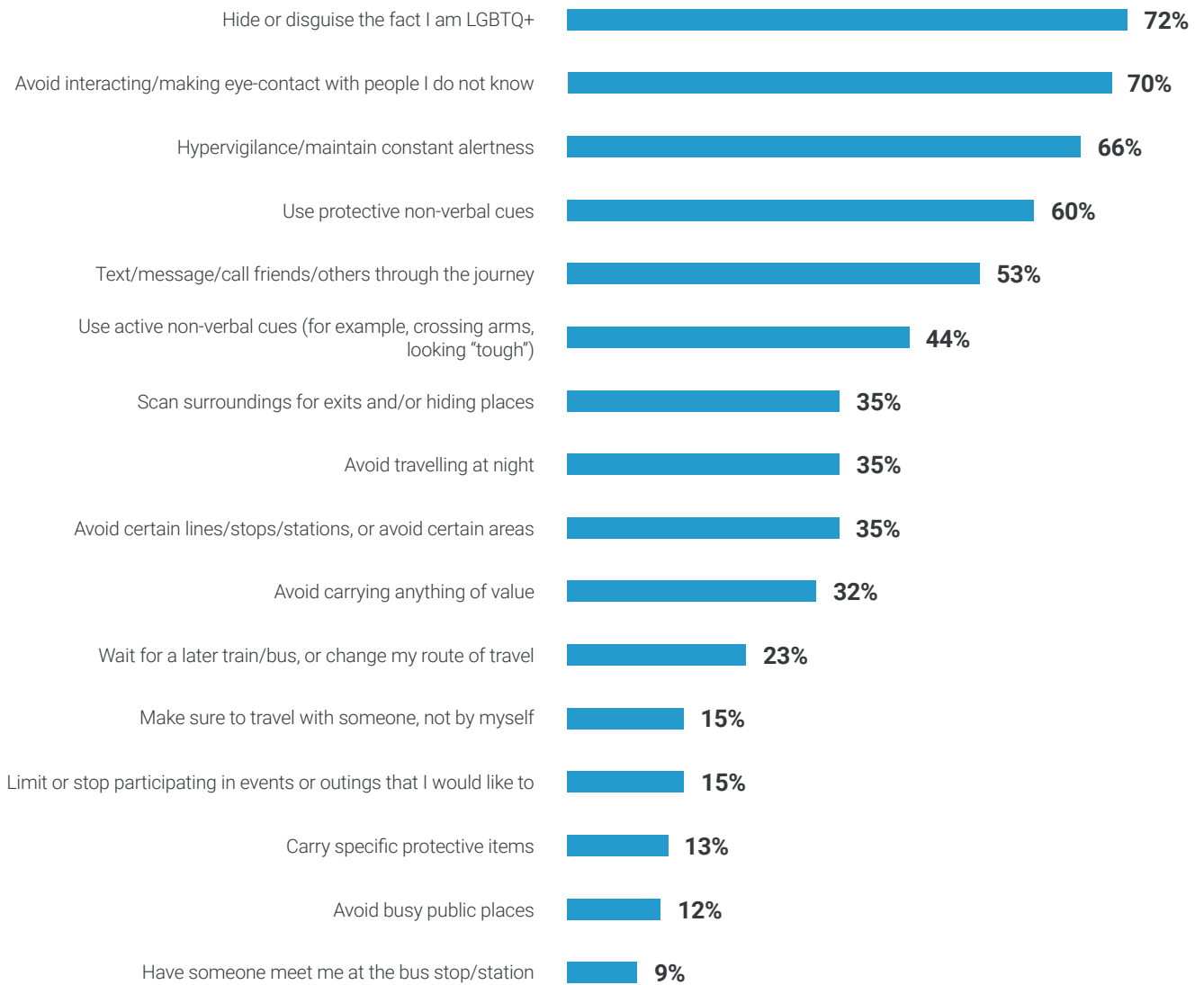
More than eight in ten (82%) LGBTQ+ respondents said they sometimes, often or always modify their travelling behaviour out of concern for their safety. Trans+ respondents (91%) and cis LB+ women (92%) were far more likely than cis GB+ men (53%) to say they sometimes, often or always change their behaviour to keep themselves safe when travelling around London.

Of those who change their behaviour, the most common action was to hide or disguise the fact they are an LGBTQ+ person to protect their safety, with 72% of LGBTQ+ respondents saying they do this. A similar proportion (70%) say they avoid interacting or making eye contact with people they don't know, and 66% said they are hypervigilant and constantly monitor their surroundings. Indeed, looking or acting visibly LGBTQ+ on public transport can feel like a dangerous prospect for many LGBTQ+ people.



% of respondents who take the following precautions while travelling (585 total responses)

Fig.9



Over three quarters (78%) of all LGBTQ+ respondents feel that it is dangerous for them to look or act visibly LGBTQ+ when using public transport.

Hiding or disguising one's LGBTQ+ identity may take many forms. It can include changing or concealing items of clothing, wearing a face or head covering (such as a beanie or hat, sunglasses, large headphones, or a face mask), changing the way they speak or choosing not to openly interact with or touch their LGBTQ+ partner, so that their appearance aligns with or "passes" for what society sees as typical for a heterosexual or cisgender person.

Changing their presentation or behaviours helps provide a sense of security or safety in reducing the risk of any potential negative reactions, discrimination or harm while on their journey, which may be more likely if they presented as "visibly queer".

"As a woman I don't think I've ever felt completely safe on public transport. I try not to look visibly queer and feel anxious when people I'm with do 'look' queer for fear of them being harassed."

(CIS LB+ WOMAN, 25-34)



“I’ve been wearing trousers more in public when I’d normally wear skirts just because I feel like I get so much less. It really helps you fly under the radar. And yeah, it makes such a difference. And it’s been very liberating, even though it’s not how I want to present, you know.”

(TRANS+ VICTIM SUPPORT WORKER [2],
LGBT+ ORGANISATION)

Along with changing their appearance, LGBTQ+ people also change the way they travel as a means to ensure their safety. Some avoid busy modes of transport, while others may cycle or “use other means of transport such as paying for taxis to avoid being around the public” (Hate crime victim support worker², LGBTQ+ organisation).

“The anxiety that can come from the fear of harassment can be debilitating and this has been very clear in how many people will take steps to avoid public transport.”

(VICTIM SUPPORT WORKER¹, LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION)

Only travelling at certain times of the day or night are another safety measure LGBTQ+ people are forced to put in place to feel safe – 35% of LGBTQ+ respondents who modify their behaviour said they avoid travelling at night. And many LGBTQ+ people tend to feel safer when travelling with a group or in pairs compared to travelling alone; nearly 1 in 6 (15%) make sure they travel with someone. When an LGBTQ+ person is travelling alone, being able to connect and keep in contact with a friend or family member is important to them feeling safe on their journey.

But some of these changes also come with additional barriers. For example, using more expensive transport options like taxis instead of comparably affordable ones like buses or trains can create an added financial burden on LGBTQ+ people, all because they want to make sure they travel safely.

“For my trans friends, public transport feels extremely unsafe. They often spend a huge amount on Ubers to and from venues to avoid any potentially difficult or abusive interactions”

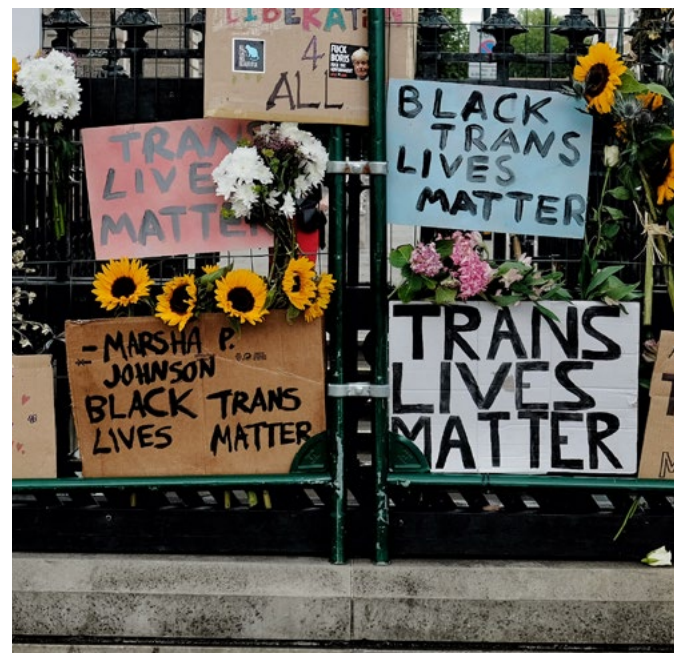
(CIS LB+ WOMAN, 25-34)

“They don’t use it [public transport] if they can avoid it, they will cycle or walk if possible. What is happening is keeping my clients trapped within their homes, they do not feel safe on London Transport services.”

(TRANS+ VICTIM SUPPORT WORKER [3], LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION)

Nearly 7 in 10 (68%) LGBTQ+ respondents said their safety concerns prevent them from going to places that they would like to visit in London.

Some stakeholders we spoke to said that avoiding transport altogether is far too common for LGBTQ+ people, in particular for many trans+ people, who are increasingly deciding not to leave their homes in fear for their safety in public places.



“Most of the trans and non-binary people I support, especially trans women and trans women of colour, are afraid to travel on public transport at the moment. [...] Most of my clients are quite scared to go out of the house at all at the moment. When they do, they have to make a thorough safety plan.

Many of them travel with friends if they can, but when they can't they often text their friends when they head out, arrive to where they are going, and when they are back home. Many try to keep their heads down so nobody will engage with them. Some of my clients who are trans women wear masks so they can hide their faces so that transphobic people do not harass them.”

(TRANS+ VICTIM SUPPORT WORKER [4], LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION)

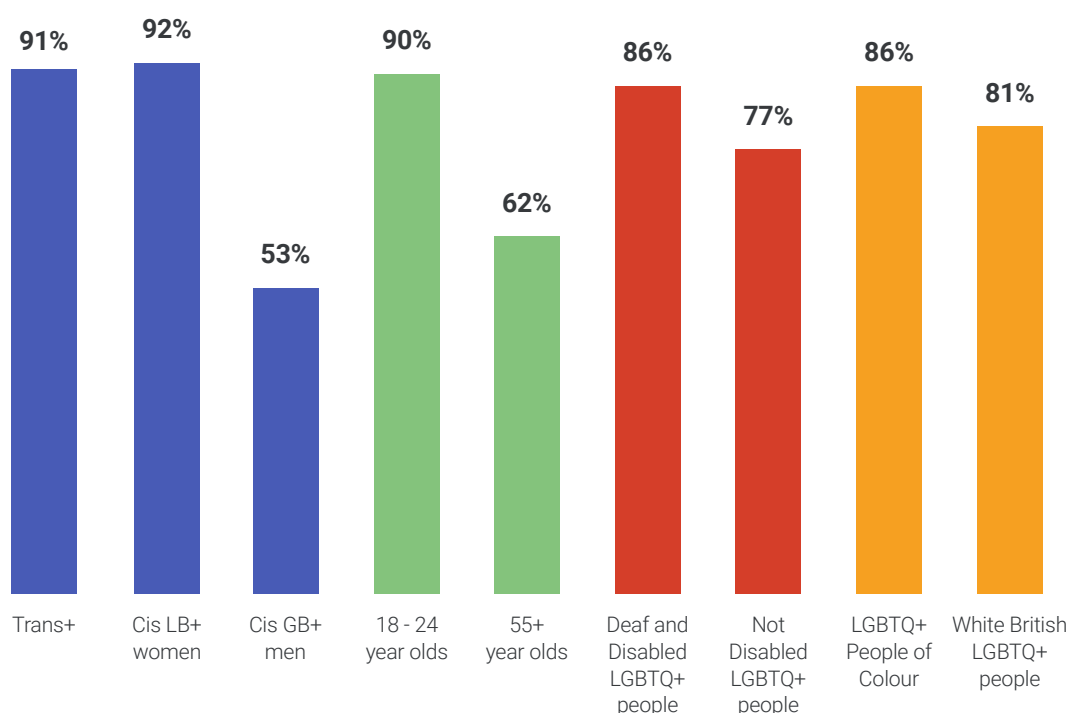
While many people in the LGBTQ+ community change their behaviour to feel safer while travelling, our research shows that some parts of the community are more likely to modify their behaviour than others. As focus group participants described, having a visibly intersectional identity (such as being a Person of colour or a Disabled person) and presenting as LGBTQ+ meant there were additional layers or aspects of a person's identity that an abuser could target.

“I have clients [who are LB+ migrants/ asylum-seekers] who say that they avoid speaking their own language even when with people from the same country when they're on public transport. This is a big thing, not being able to communicate in your own language with a person from your country [due to fear of abuse or harassment]”.

(LBT+ MIGRANT AND ASYLUM-SEEKER SUPPORT WORKER, VICTIM SUPPORT ORGANISATION)

How often, if at all, would you say you adjust your behaviour in order to feel safe when you're travelling in and around London?

Fig.10



“Passing privilege has a huge impact on safety and perceptions of safety [...] The point about passing and being visible is really, really important` because obviously that option is not available to everybody. And I think there’s a lot of, obviously, intersectional factors that can create more of a target on your back when you are on public transport.”

(LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION CO-FOUNDER)

The need for LGBTQ+ people to hide their identity or change their behaviour to stay safe has harmful effects on their well-being. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of our respondents said that having to take steps to protect their safety negatively impacts their wellbeing. This highlights that this is not a sustainable coping mechanism to feel safe on transport and can have dangerous mental health impacts on LGBTQ+ people. No one should have to change their behaviour to safely move around London or to access public transport, and no one should be put in the position of deciding against travelling at all for fear of being at risk from harm.

Feeling unsafe to act as a bystander and unsupported by the wider community

Bystander intervention

One of the key points that arose from London TravelWatch’s previous research on personal security is the importance of bystander intervention and the need for better tools, messaging and guidance to help people be active bystanders. However, given their personal security concerns and the risk of experiencing discrimination, harassment or abuse, many LGBTQ+ people justifiably feel it can be unsafe or risky for them to intervene as an active bystander in unsafe or serious situations on public transport. As such, LGBTQ+ people often weigh-up the danger of retaliation or abuse when deciding whether to step in and support someone else.

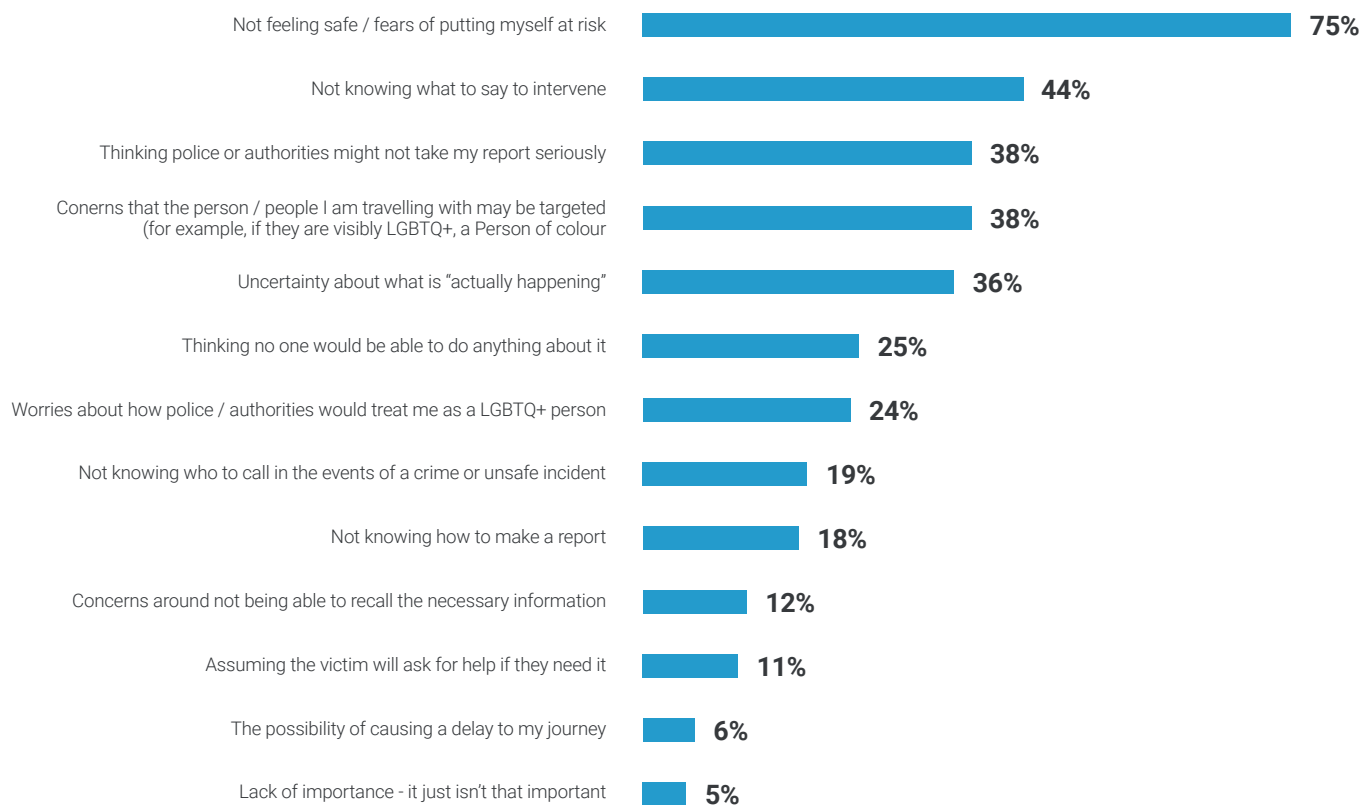
75% of LGBTQ+ respondents said not feeling safe/fears of putting themselves at risk would stop them from intervening in an unsafe situation on public transport.

Among the community, trans+ respondents (81%), younger LGBTQ+ respondents (81%) and LGBTQ+ People of Colour (79%) were the most likely to say that not feeling safe/ fears of putting myself at risk would stop them from intervening in an unsafe situation on public transport.



% of respondents who said the following examples would make them less likely to intervene or report their experience. (597 total responses)

Fig.11



In addition, over half of trans+ respondents (52%) reported they would be hesitant to intervene in an unsafe or serious situation on public transport, because of concerns that the person or people they are travelling with may be targeted (e.g., if they are visibly LGBTQ+, or a person of colour). Concerns for one's own and others safety can thus themselves be barriers to bystander intervention for those from minoritised groups.

LGBT+ people would be less likely/ confident to intervene for fear of bringing attention towards themselves and escalating a situation further. LGBT+ people may also feel they are helping someone in need, but may be unsure of how that person will react towards them e.g. attempting to help someone who is themselves transphobic."

(VICTIM SUPPORT WORKER [2], LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION)

"Being unable to get to the victim to support them because, as a wheelchair user, I'd be trapped in the wheelchair space."

(CIS LB+ WOMAN, 35-44)

Additionally, trans+ respondents (81%), Bi+ respondents (45%) and Deaf and Disabled LGBTQ+ respondents (32%) were most likely to say that their worries about how police/authorities would treat them as a LGBTQ+ person is a barrier to them acting as a bystander in an unsafe situation.

Despite these concerns, most LGBTQ+ respondents said that they would take some kind of proactive action when witnessing a serious or unsafe situation unfold on public transport. 59% said they would support the victim after the incident. Other preferred proactive bystander behaviours for LGBTQ+ respondents included supporting the victim while the behaviour was taking place (46%), reporting the behaviour to a driver or transport staff (46%) and asking a simple question to distract the victim or defuse the situation (39%).



“I am deaf, so don’t know what is going on or how to communicate without endangering myself.”

(CIS GB+ MAN, 25-34)

Additionally, trans+ respondents (81%), Bi+ respondents (45%) and Deaf and Disabled LGBTQ+ respondents (32%) were most likely to say that their worries about how police/authorities would treat them as a LGBTQ+ person is a barrier to them acting as a bystander in an unsafe situation.

Despite these concerns, most LGBTQ+ respondents said that they would take some kind of proactive action when witnessing a serious or unsafe situation unfold on public transport. 59% said they would support the victim after the incident. Other preferred proactive bystander behaviours for LGBTQ+ respondents included supporting the victim while the behaviour was taking place (46%), and asking a simple question to distract the victim or defuse the situation (39%).

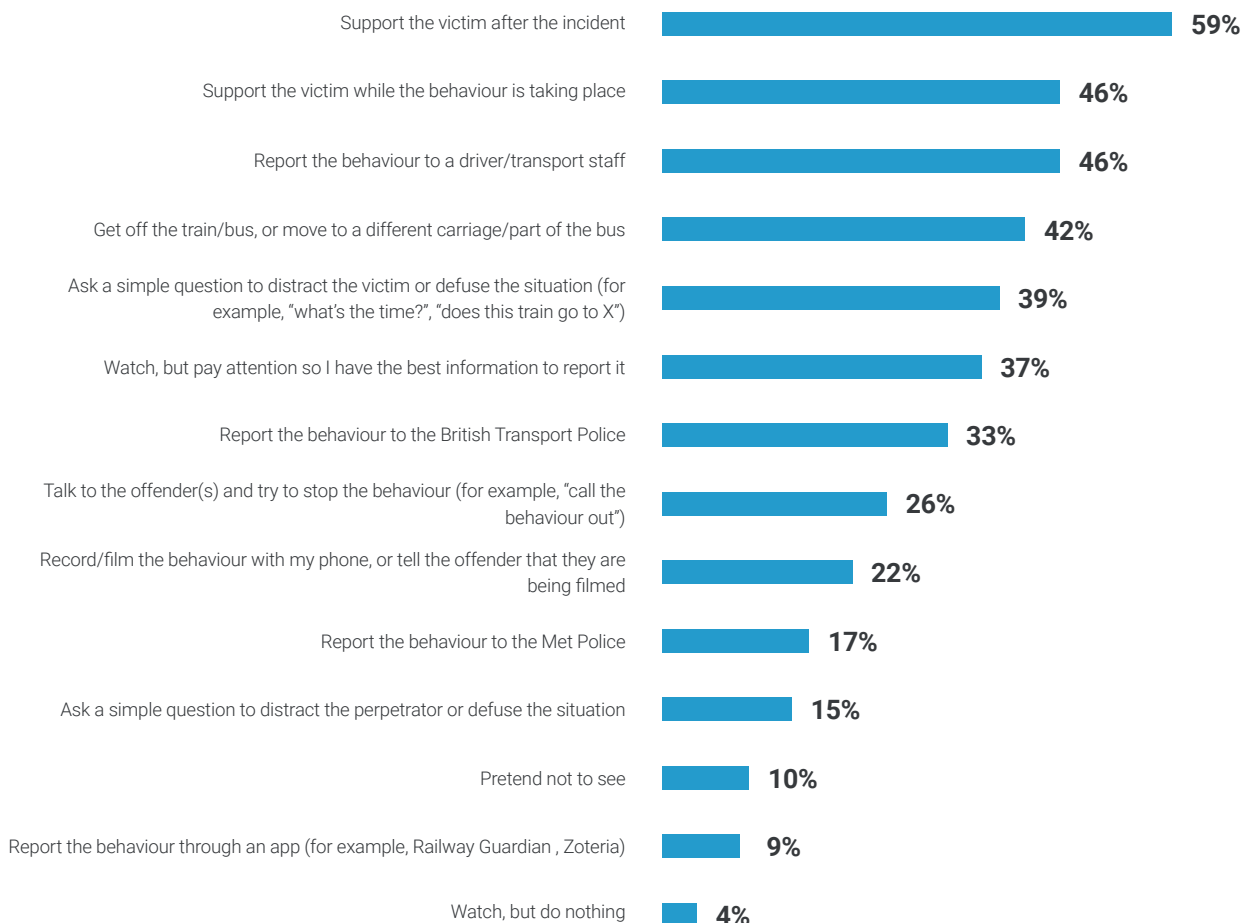


“I would only do anything that distracts or engages a perpetrator if I felt physically safe. Otherwise, I would try to engage with the person being harassed.”

(CIS LB+ WOMAN, 35-44)

% of respondents who would take some steps to intervene or act in an unsafe situation. (605 total responses)

Fig.12



While results suggest an eagerness to help, LGBTQ+ respondents did not feel fully confident in performing specific bystander behaviours. Of LGBTQ+ respondents who said they would take proactive action when witnessing an unsafe situation, around half (52%) said they would not be confident in talking to the offender(s) or try to stop the behaviour. 6 in 10 (61%) of those who would take some kind of action said they would only be fairly or somewhat confident in asking a simple question to distract or defuse the situation.

Additionally, around 2 in 3 (63%) said they would feel more confident in responding or acting in an unsafe situation if they had more information about how to help. This suggests that there is a desire to help and support other LGBTQ+ people when travelling, but also that they may not have the tools or confidence to do it in a way that would both protect the person being targeted and protect themselves.

“The climate of transphobia in media and politics is making me feel more and more at risk – even in London.”

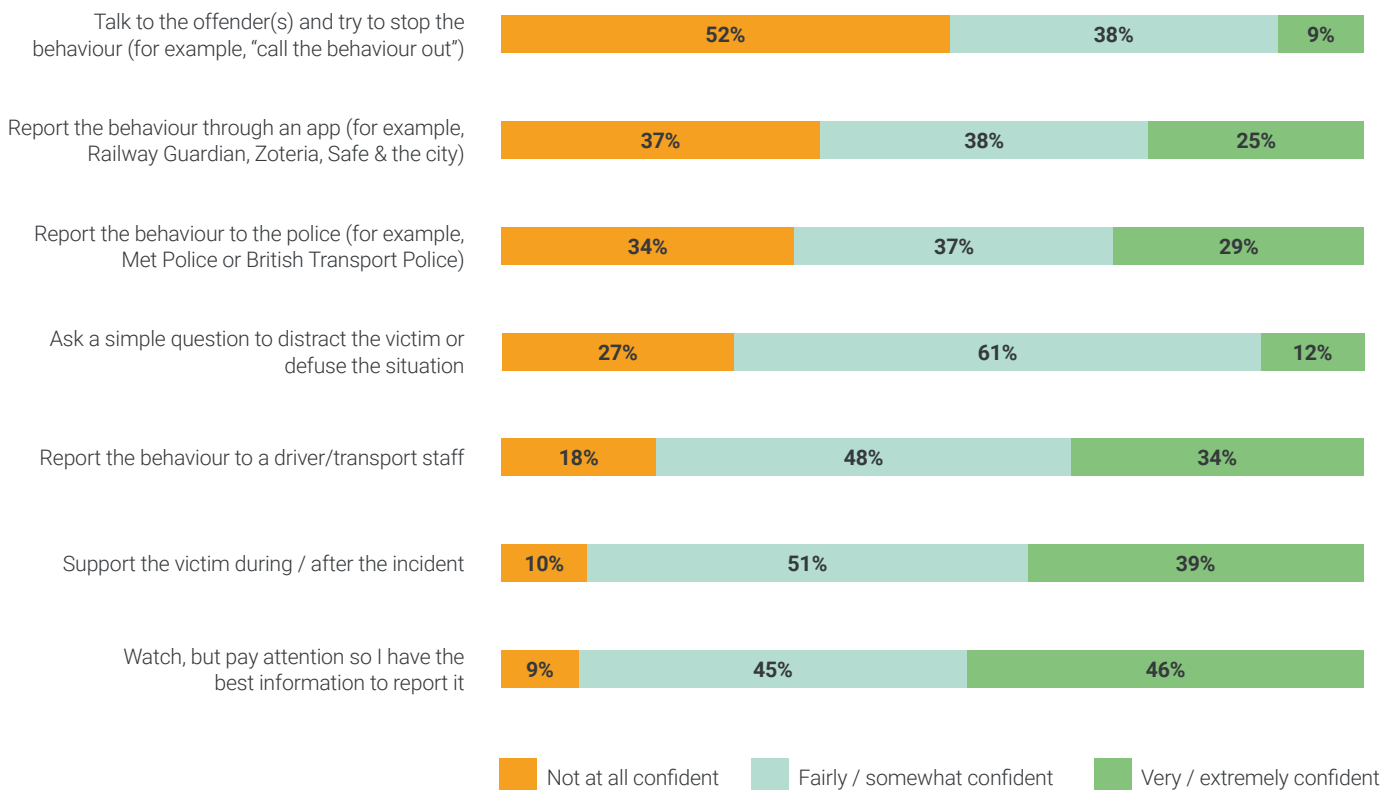
(TRANS+ RESPONDENT, 45-54, EAST LONDON)

“I would probably feel too afraid to step in but would feel safer if lots of people on the carriage decided to collectively get involved or intervene. Safety in numbers.”

(TRANS+ RESPONDENT, 18-24)

You mentioned that you might take some steps to intervene or act if you witnessed an unsafe situation. How would you intervene? (330 total responses)

Fig.13



Bystander initiatives must be intersectional to acknowledge that people will face different barriers to being an active bystander, and different possible safety risks if taking action to stop abuse. Given the safety concerns for LGBTQ+ people around being an active bystander, it's important that everyone shows allyship and intervenes if they see hate crime, harassment or abuse happening. It should not be up to those most at risk of being abused to prevent violence, abuse and discrimination – to be successful, bystander initiatives must involve and be actively implemented by everyone, not just those who are LGBTQ+.

Support from other bystanders (or lack thereof)

Responses from LGBTQ+ respondents who experienced at least one form of discrimination, harassment or abuse on public transport in the past year shed some light on bystander intervention initiatives in practice. Of the LGBTQ+ respondents who experienced abuse on public transport in London in the past year, 62% said the abuse was witnessed by one or more other people – and among this group, the majority said the bystanders watched but did nothing (65%) or said that the bystanders pretended not to see (59%).

Some LGBTQ+ respondents described in free-text comments that not only other passengers, but also transport staff did not intervene or act to support them when they experienced abuse or hostility on public transport. LGBTQ+ stakeholders also shared some case studies where LGBTQ+ survivors were given little support by bystanders to the abuse – including transport staff (who are trained to support passengers) as well as other passengers.

“I worked with a trans woman who was regularly sexually harassed on public buses and always found that the bus drivers did not support her or make any attempts at keeping her safe during these incidents.”

(VICTIM SUPPORT WORKER [1], LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION)

“A trans caller to our helpline was verbally abused while using a TFL train by someone who cornered them and used transphobic slurs. No other passengers / onlookers stepped in to help despite it being very loud and obvious what the perpetrator was doing, which affected them even more than the abuse itself.”

(LGBTQ+ HELPLINE WORKER, LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION)

“I was harassed at a bus stop, and I jumped on the first bus arriving and asked [the driver] if he could call police and he said ‘no ... nothing happened on my bus’. Then he left the doors open extra-long, so the perpetrator got on and I had to fight to get off and ran.”

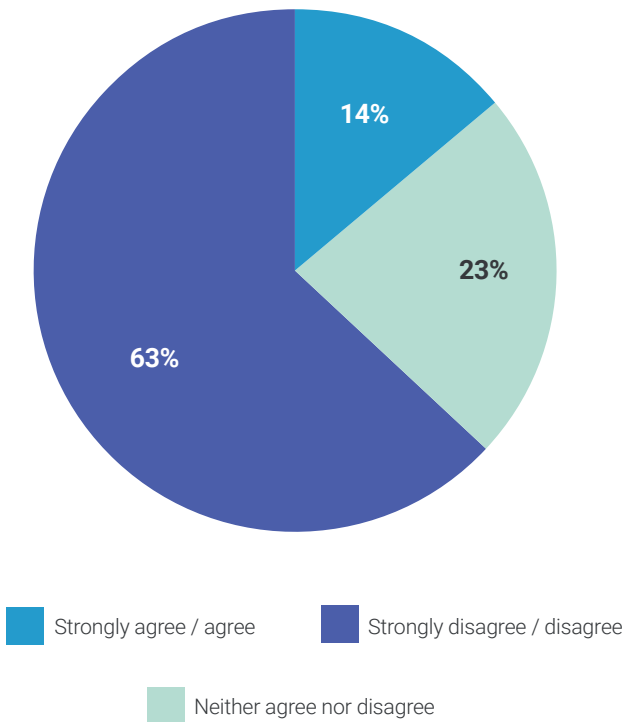
(CIS GB+ MAN, 45-54)

Additionally, all LGBTQ+ respondents were asked an attitude question about how supportive the community might be if they experienced an unsafe situation. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of LGBTQ+ respondents felt that other passengers would not do anything to help them if they were to experience harassment or abuse on public transport .



"If I were to experience harassment or abuse on public transport, other passengers would do things to help me"

Fig.14



"A big challenge is that people do not trust getting the relevant support or response if they were to report incidents that occur, and that other members of the public would not intervene or defend them in any way."

(HATE CRIME VICTIM SUPPORT WORKER [2], LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION)

In the qualitative component of the study, LGBTQ+ stakeholders discussed bystander behaviour and how the "othering" of LGBTQ+ people (and especially trans+ people) through anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric may contribute to LGBTQ+ people feeling less connected to or supported by the wider community. On top of the current atmosphere of anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice – where people may pretend not to see, actively encourage, or participate in the abuse or harassment of LGBTQ+ people - the stakeholders also considered how London's culture of "minding one's own business" may also contribute to the wider community's reluctance or failure to intervene when a LGBTQ+ passenger needs support.

"[It's] Different from Latin America. For instance, [in Latin America] people approach you if they feel you're not well. In London, there's a big 'distance' and people do not offer you help or support. Being a migrant, on top of being LGBTQ+, and the language barrier to ask for help or to confront a situation [is another issue]."

(LBT+ MIGRANT AND ASYLUM-SEEKER SUPPORT WORKER, VICTIM SUPPORT ORGANISATION)

"LGBT+ people are more likely to intervene when they see homophobia / transphobia, at the expense of their own safety, than non-LGBT+ people. The support of other (non-LGBT+) passengers would be really important, not just in the moment but for feeling welcome and supported overall."

(LGBTQ+ HELPLINE WORKER, LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION)



Having little confidence or trust in policing authorities, or reporting in general

Perceptions of police

Results in this study suggest that police and policing responses do not necessarily provide a sense of security for LGBTQ+ people. Rather, police presence may contribute to - rather than lessen - many LGBTQ+ people's safety concerns. Just 33% of respondents agreed that seeing the Metropolitan Police (Met) made them feel safer while using public transport, while nearly half (49%) of LGBTQ+ respondents disagreed. The British Transport Police (BTP) are seen somewhat more favourably: 43% of LGBTQ+ respondents agreed that seeing them made them feel safer, compared to 36% who disagreed. Nevertheless, this indicates that many do not implicitly view the police as a guarantee of their safety.

Additionally, trans+ respondents (40%) and LGBTQ+ People of Colour (32%) were the most likely to report that the presence of police made them feel unsafe on public transport (compared with 20% of LGBTQ+ respondents overall). These findings challenge common assumptions that increased police presence leads to increased safety.

“I think for the Latin American community, for instance, one of the main factors that impact our community is the fear of deportation when calling the police or any other statutory service. [...] For our clients from the Latin American community, the presence of police does not mean safety at all”

(LGBT+ MIGRANT AND ASYLUM-SEEKER SUPPORT WORKER, VICTIM SUPPORT ORGANISATION)

Other results in this study indicate that many LGBTQ+ Londoners are apprehensive or afraid to engage with the police – even when they experience violence or abuse or witness it happening – due to concerns about their safety, lack of trust in police and policing responses, and fears of potential discrimination. 1 in 3 (34%) LGBTQ+ respondents said they do not currently feel safe in reporting a crime on public transport. These findings suggest a significant number of LGBTQ+ people have little trust or confidence in these systems to effectively address and respond to their concerns.

These views of policing institutions are not unfounded. A sizeable number of LGBTQ+ respondents described, in their own words, having negative experiences with the Met, BTP or both police forces. Outside of this research, the Casey Review found the Met to be institutionally homophobic (as well as institutionally misogynistic, sexist and racist), and that over half of LGBTQ+ Londoners did not have confidence in the Met to treat people equally and fairly⁹. It also found the Met treat their own LGBTQ+ officers and staff in an over-sexualised, prejudiced manner – which “has worrying consequences for the assumptions Met officers make about victims of crime and how they police London.”

Reporting anti-LGBTQ+ incidents

The vast majority (84%) of the LGBTQ+ respondents who said they were victimised in some way on public transport in the past year did not report their experiences to police or other formal support services. Of those LGBTQ+ respondents who did not report:

- Two-thirds (67%) felt police would not be able to do anything.
- Half did not report their experiences because they felt they would not be taken seriously by police (50%) or did not trust the police (49%).
- Over a quarter (27%) did not report the incidents due to concerns that the police might discriminate against them based on their LGBTQ+ identity.
- 1 in 5 (20%) did not report what happened to them on public transport because they felt police would not believe them or because they were afraid of the police.

These results highlight a significant level of apprehension and concern among LGBTQ+ people about how they or their report might be handled by police. Fear of potential

bias or discrimination may add another layer of reluctance to engage with police when seeking assistance as a victim, or when reporting incidents as a witness.

When asked what actions they might take if they witnessed a serious or unsafe situation on public transport, only 33% said they would report to BTP, and only 17% said they would report the behaviour to the Met. Instead, LGBTQ+ respondents were far more likely to say they would report the behaviour to a driver/transport staff (46%). 1 in 3 (34%) respondents did not feel at all confident in reporting it to the police after witnessing a serious or unsafe situation on public transport.

This is not because people are not aware of these authorities - LGBTQ+ respondents demonstrated a high awareness of various law enforcement agencies in London, with 97% knowing about the BTP, 91% about the Met, 70% about City of London Police, and 69% about Crimestoppers. Instead, the results in this study point to LGBTQ+ people's apprehension or distrust of policing institutions as a whole.

"...it's not just the Met Police. There's other police forces out there [...] it's the uniform and communities talk to each other, either in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Luton, anywhere, any city – communities talk so that distrust seeps out to all."

(TRANS+ VICTIM SUPPORT WORKER [5], LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION)

Perceptions of reporting

The study findings, confirmed by LGBTQ+ stakeholders, reveal that for many LGBTQ+ people, reporting incidents they witness or experience feels “pointless”, complicated, and potentially re-traumatizing for victims. 57% of LGBTQ+ respondents said it is not easy or straightforward to report a crime on public transport, and more than four in ten respondents (45%) also said they would be unlikely to use an app-based reporting feature if they experienced or witnessed an unsafe situation on public transport. These findings are similar to those seen in our previous report¹⁰ which highlighted similar concerns that it was neither easy nor straightforward to report a crime on public transport.

In free-text responses in the survey, many LGBTQ+ respondents shared frustrations with reporting to police and the lack of action that followed, with the result that they felt their report – often of an unsafe, violent, threatening, or intimidating incident – was not taken seriously. There appeared to be a common perception among respondents that “nothing happens” after a report is made to police – that is, no follow-up, no investigation, or no overall reduction in hate crime, discrimination, or abuse – which may contribute to LGBTQ+ people’s reluctance and apathy towards reporting incidents they experience or witness on public transport.

If the industry wants LGBTQ+ people and the wider community to report incidents, they must demonstrate that it has a real or substantive impact on addressing hate crime, harassment and abuse – not just to build a picture of the scale or nature of these issues on transport networks.

“I was choked unconscious in an assault at a train station in central London after leaving a gay nightclub. When I regained consciousness and found a policeman, I was just told to go to the nearest police station. The case was closed within weeks – the Met really didn’t bother to do anything at all.”

(CIS GB+ MAN, 45-54)

“Knowing that nothing will be done if something bad does happen to me. I have refrained from reporting homophobic and transphobic harassment in the past because there is no real recourse for action - the report/complaint will be dismissed/take too long/have no outcome, and I do not trust that authorities take it seriously.”

(TRANS+ RESPONDENT, 18-24)

“Victims, for the most part, feel that the BTP/the Met will not take them seriously if they report hate crime on public transport, so incidents feel scarier as they don’t feel protected by the institutions that should be keeping them safe.”

(VICTIM SUPPORT WORKER [3], LGBTQ+ ORGANISATION)

If transport and policing authorities want to encourage reporting, they must also make this as easy, safe, and accessible as possible – such as by improving Wi-Fi infrastructure to support reporting while on the tube or by integrating reporting functions into existing apps (such as CityMapper) to make the process simpler. Third-party, community-led apps such as Zoteria (an independent LGBTQ+ hate crime reporting app) should also be widely advertised to promote alternative reporting and support pathways.

Recommendations

What needs to be done?

Based on the findings of this report, decision makers, the transport industry and policing authorities should adopt the following 12 key recommendations. While the scale of the problems faced by LGBTQ+ people when travelling means that serious and ongoing action will be needed to stop it, we believe that the below steps will work towards putting an end to anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice and hate on London's transport network.



Based on the findings of this report, decision makers, the transport industry and policing authorities should:

1. Commit to awareness campaigns to end hate crime and harassment targeting LGBTQ+ people. This should be a cross-industry effort including education on the problem and how people can help stop it. These should:

- a. Educate people about the safety concerns and prejudice that LGBTQ+ people face when travelling in and around London.
- b. Include a cross-industry consistent playbook of good active bystander behaviours to help address intersectional hate crimes and communicate this to the public.
- c. Equip all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, with the skills and confidence needed to be an active bystander, so that they can intervene when they see an incident happening and feel like it is safe to do so.

2. Conduct regular staff training, co-designed with LGBTQ+ people and stakeholders, to ensure staff have the right skill set and knowledge to help and support people in the LGBTQ+ community when they are travelling in London. This should also consider visible signs of allyship with the LGBTQ+ community through solidarity symbols such as - but not limited to - rainbow badges and Pride flags, outside of Pride month.

3. Commission further research into LGBTQ+ people's safety concerns while travelling around London, particularly around policing and how different intersectionalities face different barriers when it comes to policing bodies and reporting.

Findings should work on how to improve the perception of safety, and what support is needed to address the LGBTQ+ prejudice, sexual harassment and mistrust in authorities. We believe this research is just the start of the conversation – more needs to be done.

4. Implement a robust cross-industry strategy to address anti-social behaviour, contributing to a safer environment for people to travel in. This should include reviewing the effectiveness of steps already being taken to stop this behaviour, and an updated action plan.

5. Work directly with LGBTQ+ organisations and people with lived experience throughout. This should be factored into all aspects of work rather than an add on or as an afterthought. This could range from co-designing solutions to improve personal security concerns of LGBTQ+ people when travelling in London, to engaging with them during consultations to make sure more general policies are LGBTQ+ friendly, to co-delivering outreach and safety campaigns.



In addition, transport operators should:

6. **Maintain the frequency of services and ensure they are reliable, particularly at night, to help make sure people are not stuck in unsafe or potentially dangerous situations.** This includes maintaining night services such as the Night Tube and night buses. As night buses serve many places with few other transport options, these in particular should be protected, and where possible increased in frequency.
7. **Put infrastructure in place to improve security concerns and perceptions of safety.** This could include (but is not limited to) improving WIFI and connectivity, more lighting and visible functioning CCTV.
8. **Have visible staff at stations and on services to support LGBTQ+ people before, during and after their journey.** This should consider things such as knowing where to find and contact staff when an unsafe incident unfolds.
9. **Collaborate with and support trusted third-party organisations like CATCH and Zoteria to promote their services to LGBTQ+ people who use transport.** This can include signposting people to their services to provide better support if someone is a victim of a hate crime or sexual harassment.

Policing authorities should:

10. **Raise awareness of trusted third-party schemes such as CATCH and Zoteria and how to use them and improve these referral pathways within the police.** This should include more explicitly advertising CATCH and specialist support services within the Met and BTP, and adopting correct, continued and effective implementation of said pathways.
11. **Within the Met, commit to implementing recommendations following the Casey Review to address LGBTQ+ prejudice within their organisations.** This should include creating and implementing an action plan detailing how they will address LGBTQ+ prejudice within their organisations and, more widely, to prioritise building trust within the LGBTQ+ community.
12. **Within the BTP, create and implement an action plan detailing how they will address LGBTQ+ prejudice within their organisations** and more widely, to prioritise building trust within the LGBTQ+ community.



Appendix A: definitions of key terms

Acronyms and report-specific terms

LGBTQ+

This report uses LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) as the umbrella term for people with minority orientations or gender identities. Galop consistently uses LGBT+. Quotes by participants may also use the other acronyms, such as LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, or asexual.)

Trans+

The term “trans+” is used as an umbrella grouping in this study, which includes binary trans (i.e., trans women and trans men), non-binary, gender queer, agender, gender non-conforming and other gender-diverse identities.

LB+ women / cis LB+ women

This term is used to refer to the cisgender women among the whole LGBTQ+ community sample. It includes cis lesbian women, cis bi women, cis queer women, cis asexual women, and cis pansexual women, among other identities. This grouping is used to understand differences in experiences according to gender identity, especially compared with the experiences of trans+ respondents and cis GB+ men respondents.

GB+ men / cis GB+ men

This term is used to refer to the cisgender men among the whole LGBTQ+ community sample. It includes cis gay men, cis bi men, cis queer men, cis asexual men, and cis pansexual men, among other identities. This grouping is used to understand differences in experiences according to gender identity, especially compared with the experiences of trans+ respondents and cis LB+ women respondents.

Bi+

In this study, “bi+” is used as an umbrella grouping for pluri-sexual or pluri-romantic identities where the person is attracted to more than one gender, which includes bi, pan, and queer respondents.

Younger LGBTQ+

In this study, “younger” LGBTQ+ includes respondents aged 18 to 24 years.

Older LGBTQ+

In this study, “older” LGBTQ+ includes respondents aged over the age of 55 years.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is how characteristics and/or identities such as faith, race, age, disability, class, gender and orientation intersect and can create individual experiences of oppression and discrimination.

Allyship

The use of power and privilege to encourage change and take action to learn. Being an ally is not an identity – it is a continued practice that should be led by minoritised communities and result in further equity and inclusion for marginalised individuals and/or groups of people.

Identities and orientations

Trans/Transgender

A person whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth.

Non-binary

A person whose gender identity does not sit comfortably in the gender binary.

Cis/ Cisgender

A person whose gender identity matches the gender that they were assigned at birth.

Intersex

An umbrella term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with sex characteristics (anatomical, hormonal or genetic) that don't fit the typical definitions of female or male. For some, the condition is clear at birth, while others don't discover that they're intersex until puberty or later.

Bi/Bisexual

Bi people can experience attraction to more than one gender. Different people experience their attractions in different ways and in different intensities, and all of them are valid. Bi+ can be used as shorthand for people with plurisexual or pluriromantic identities (for example; pansexual, omnisexual).



Ace/ Asexual or Aro/ Aromantic

Asexual people experience little or no sexual attraction, or only experience sexual attraction in certain circumstances.

Asexuality is a type of sexual orientation, alongside other orientations such as gay, lesbian, bisexual and pansexual. It is not the same as celibacy or abstinence, which are behaviors rather than orientations.

Aromanticism is a romantic orientation and does not necessarily correlate with asexuality. Aromantic people experience little or no romantic attraction towards other people, or only experience it under certain circumstances.

Queer

Queer is an umbrella term and identity that's often used to describe a range of gender identities and orientations across the LGBTQ+ community.

Other terms

Hate crime

Hate crime is a name for abuse, violence or intimidation targeting someone because of who they are.

Anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime is abuse or violence committed against someone because of their orientation or gender identity. It includes abusing the person because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, queer, intersex or asexual. This can include:

- Physical attacks
- Sexually threatening or violent behaviour
- Stealing or damaging a person's belongings
- Blackmail, including demanding money not to 'out' the person.
- Sending abusive or offensive messages
- Verbal abuse, such as calling someone anti-LGBTQ+ names.
- Acting in a threatening or intimidating way
- Encouraging others to target LGBTQ+ people.

Gender expression

The choices made on a daily basis regarding what someone wears, how they present themselves in the world and the ways they behave that indicates their gender. These do not always 'match'- some people are not in a position where they can outwardly present their gender identity (and not all of the time). Someone's gender expression might fluctuate during their lives, or depending on where they are or who they are interacting with.

Gender expressions/presentations are socially and culturally coded; that is, they vary across the world.

Gender expression is conceptually distinct from gender identity. Gender identity refers to someone's internal experience and meaning of their gender, such as their sense of themselves as a particular gender, i.e., that they are a boy/man, girl/woman, both or neither. Gender identity is a spectrum, not a binary of "man" or "woman" as polar and distinct opposites; some people may understand themselves outside of that binary, a mix of those identities, or somewhere in-between the binary.

Transmisogyny

The intersection of transphobia and misogyny as experienced by trans women and transfeminine people. A particular form of oppression experienced by trans women.

Passing

Passing is used to describe being perceived as cis and/or straight by others. LGBTQ+ identities are valid whether or not they are externally perceived.



References / citations

1. Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 (2023, October 5) GOV.UK. Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
2. Galop's statement on the 2022-2023 Official Statistics for Hate Crime (2023) Galop <https://galop.org.uk/galops-statement-on-the-2022-2023-official-statistics-for-hate-crime>
3. LGBTQ+ people feel less safe in their neighbourhoods (2022, June 22) Sustrans. <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/opinion/2022/june/lgbtqplus-people-feel-less-safe-in-their-neighbourhoods-how-can-we-change-this/>
4. LGBT in Britain: Trans Report (p. 22) Stonewall (2018) https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_-_trans_report_final.pdf.
5. LGBT in Britain: Hate Crime and Discrimination, Stonewall (2017) https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_hate_crime.pdf.
6. Hate Crime Report 2021: Supporting LGBT+ victims of hate crime (pp. 11–46) Galop (2021) <https://galop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Galop-Hate-Crime-Report-2021-1.pdf>.
7. Hate Crime Report 2021: Supporting LGBT+ victims of hate crime (pp. 11–46) Galop. (2021) <https://galop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Galop-Hate-Crime-Report-2021-1.pdf>.
8. Queer Mobilities: Critical LGBTQ perspectives of public transport spaces. Mobilities, (2021) <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2021.1958249>
9. BARONESS CASEY REVIEW: An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service (p. 257) (2023) BARONESS CASEY REVIEW Final Report (met.police.uk)
10. Personal Security on London's Transport Network Report London TravelWatch (2022) <https://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/campaigns/personal-security/>
11. Credit to Angela Christofilou for imagery on pages, 10, 22 and 38
12. Credit to TfL for imagery on pages, 20, 28, 34, 37 and 39



Report author, Sasha Langeveldt (She/Her)

Designed by Craig Colgin-Aitken (He/Him)

If you have any questions about the report or want further information please contact project lead **Sasha Langeveldt** at:

info@londontravelwatch.org.uk

020 3176 2999

LONDON
TRAVELWATCH





LONDON
TRAVELWATCH



londontravelwatch.org.uk

020 3176 2999

info@londontravelwatch.org.uk

