



Stamping Out Homophobic Bullying in schools

On 15 May professionals working in schools & colleges across Cheshire came together to discuss and determine how to stamp out homophobic hate crime against young people.

Following a research project undertaken by Lesbian and Gay Youth Manchester Services to investigate the degree and prevalence of violence in the daily lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Young People across the North West, The School Street Home Report (SSH!) looked at the experiences of violence against over 100 young people at school, at home and in the street. A conference was organised to inform practitioners about the outcomes of the research, how to become a hate crime reporting centre and to launch quality standards for LGBT Student access.

Key note speeches were delivered by Phil Thompson Acting Assistant Chief Constable of Cheshire Constabulary, Ellie Acton, Hate Crime Advisor and from LGBT Young people who told their personal stories of abuse & violence against them at home, at school and in the street.

Phil Thompson said " School days are supposed to be the best days of our lives but not for some. Those who are 'different' either through sexuality, religion, disability, ethnicity or other grounds don't all have the same positive experience of school that most do and of that incomplete list, sexuality is probably the most difficult for children and young adults at school.

Whilst the Constabulary has specially trained officers and police staff, multi-agency involvement dealing with emotional and welfare support and third party hate crime reporting, it is important to consider the impact various courses of action may have on all parties involved. We need to consider less confrontational outcomes through a restorative NOT perjorative justice approaches and ask schools to give real support to children and young people in this situation so that victims have confidence in reporting homophobic incidents to the police."

When asked what delegates at the conference would do to make their establishment a safer, happier & more productive environment for young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans people, they said they would liaise with staff to promote training around homophobia, incorporate homophobic PSD lessons and provide staff/ pupil awareness training, lobby for the inclusion of LGBT equality in teacher training programmes and look at existing policies & procedures. They would challenge when people are homophobic, biphobic & transphobic, and would challenge when students use 'gay' [out of context].