

WISE THOUGHTS

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#WiseOUT ©

End of Year 2 #WiseOUT Report

April 2018 – March 2019

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CHAPTER 1.

Introduction

Year 2 of the #WiseOUT project has had very successful workshop deliveries and has provided a helpful insight in to young people's varying perspectives of LGBT including within their school communities.

We continue to collaborate with our school staff contacts post delivering the #WiseOUT workshop, such as providing advice on LGBT issues that arise in their school and bookings for further workshops in Year 3 of #WiseOUT. We have delivered **19 #WiseOUT** workshops between April 2018 – February 2019 in schools in Barnet, Harrow, and Camden in Year 2. We have already started booking for Year 3 and have booked 6 further workshops in between April-July 2019. Whilst we have yet to deliver a #WiseOUT workshop in Brent, we have commenced conversations with a school who have expressed interest.

The Department of Education requires all secondary schools to teach Relationship and Sex Education as of September 2020¹. This includes providing education that is open and inclusive of all gender identities and sexual orientations, with a commitment to ending discrimination and challenging stereotypes. The #WiseOUT workshop supports this requirement and we are finding it useful to bring focus to the government 2020 requirement when talking to schools. We are open to supporting schools on their Relationship and Sex Education policies if needed.

Students enjoy the creative and interactive nature of the workshops. It allows students to engage in discussions within small groups initially and then express their main points in a creatively engaging way. The facilitator following up each group's creative output with a class discussion, ensures that all students have understood the LGBT scenario presented and have a chance to offer further input.

In Year 2 we have engaged with students who strongly oppose LGBT, including verbal discrimination in the workshop. These incidents have occurred in schools where the teachers have informed us that they do have LGBT students and that they have been victims of LGBT bullying. Whilst the workshops are challenging where there is a high level of discomfort or opposition to LGBT, they have enabled extremely important conversations to take place and also allowed the teachers to understand what is happening within their school community. For example, one school did not realise the extent to which the majority of their students opposed LGBT. However, they were glad to have an understanding post the #WiseOUT workshop and acknowledged that they had to do more to ensure a safe community for their LGBT students.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-relationships-and-health-education-in-schools>



CHAPTER 2.

Delivery of #WiseOUT Project

We continue to work through our method of consultation with the schools prior to workshops in order to best deliver to that school's community needs. Year 2 of the project has had a majority delivery to Year 7. This is in response to schools either working towards prevention of LGBT discrimination, or for example, one school in Camden said there was a high use of homophobic slurs in Year 7 and they wanted to address that immediately. The #WiseOUT project pride themselves on this strong and tailored communication with schools.

An extension of the pre-delivery is that the #WiseOUT facilitator is engaging with the school policies prior to her visit. It is helpful to check in with what the schools Anti-Bullying Policy is and if they have specific measures for Gender and Sexuality. Where these are written the facilitator can refer to the school's policies in the workshop and the designated school contact. If these are not available on the website than the facilitator can talk to their school contact prior about what measures they have in place and can suggest these to be added to their written policies if appropriate.

The structure of the workshop has continued in Year 2 as it continues to achieve **maximum immediate impact** for the young people during and after the sessions:

- Ability to begin to have open dialogues around homophobia
- Awareness of the need to support their school communities
- Ability to address some concerns about LGBT issues
- Increased knowledge about available local (age appropriate) support services

In Year 1 the presentations additionally delivered:

- Increased knowledge about history, facts and current affairs

However, the facilitator has brought this in to the workshop structure too, having sensed a need to **add context to current LGBT issues** there too for a better understanding of the importance of the workshop.

The facilitator has included a short True/False Quiz to open the #WiseOUT workshop using statistics regarding LGBT bullying in British schools that were published in Stonewall's School Report 2017. For instance: Out of the 3700 LGBT British school students who were part of the report study, 66% have been bullied at school and 54% of these students have skipped school due to bullying. The inclusion of the facts has helped students to understand the level of discrimination and the severity of its impact.



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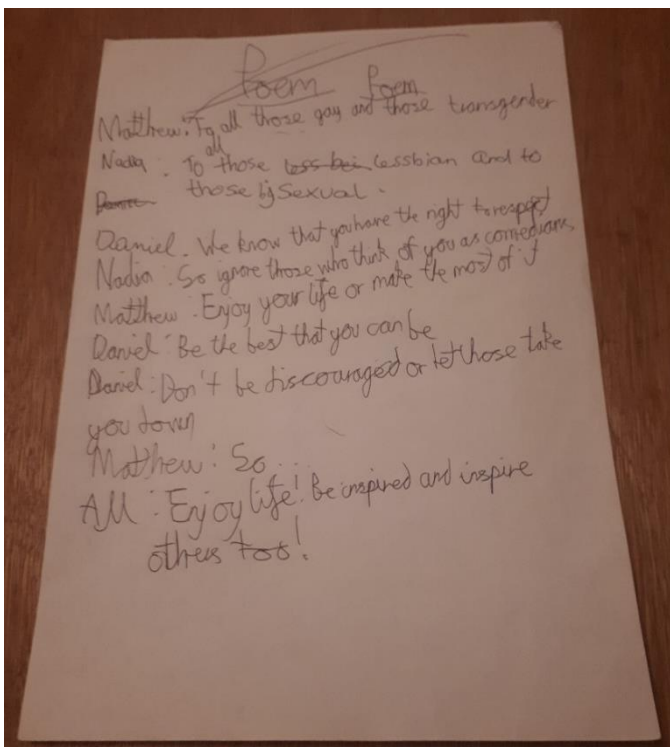
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Resources

At the completion of the #WiseOUT workshop/ presentation the #WiseOUT postcard is available for the students to take, which has the poignant rap written by an LGBT young person who had participated in one of the workshops. Furthermore, we continue to give out the #WiseOUT stickers and Wise Thoughts flyers with information regarding our weekly LGBT Drop-In Sessions and social media information. This continues to be an accessible way for the young people to engage with our services and/or signpost friends to.

The Teacher Feedback Form is a valuable resource as the teachers have been able to indicate both what they felt their students benefited from the most and also share further workshops that they believe their community needs. The facilitator is then able to use this in discussions with the school who are keen to hear how they can further support their school community.

Through Year 2 the students have produced creative responses to LGBT issues through the workshop. In 2019 we will produce a second postcard to hand out to students. The second one is a poem written by Year 7's from the perspective of LGBT allies, which will provide a positive further resource. Please see the poem below:



**“To all those gay and those transgender
To all those lesbian and those bisexual
We know that u have the right to respect
So ignore those who think of you as comedians
Enjoy your life or make the most of it
Be the best that you can be
Don't be discouraged or let those take you down
So...
Enjoy life! Be inspired and inspire others too!”**



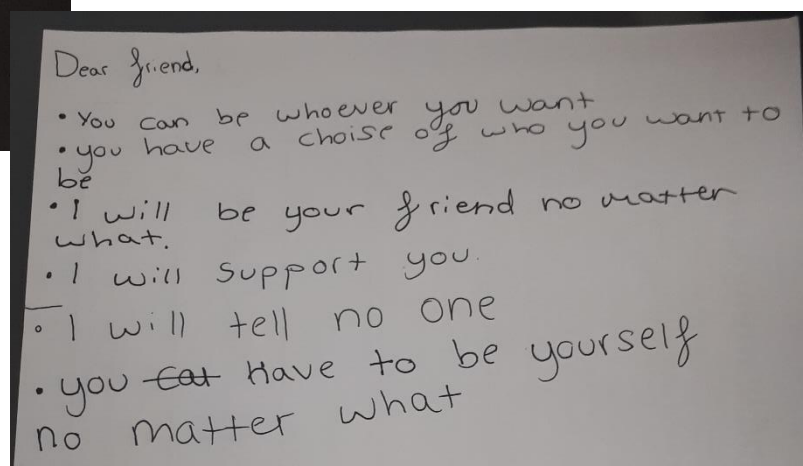
Students Responses to #WiseOUT Workshop Scenarios

SCENARIO 1

- Your friend says to you after school that they have a secret that they're scared to tell you in case you stop being friends with them.
- You tell her to tell you what it is and that you will support her.
- She says that she wants to be a boy and has never felt like a girl.
- She says that she doesn't know why she feels this way but she knows that there are people like her in the world as she looked it up online.
- You don't know any facts about this but you want to be a good friend.
- What could you do?

Year 7 students' responses to Scenario 1 included the posters and letter below, a Step by Step Guide to Getting Support and role plays. Overall most students responded in their role plays and the Step by Step Guide that they did not know themselves how to support their friend alone but that they would go to their teachers or parents for advice and further support. This is solidified in every workshop that a positive response is to get help from a teacher, parent or LGBT+ charities online. As noted in the letter below, we discussed the difference between telling an adult to get support and telling fellow classmates before your friend is ready, whilst keeping yourself supported.

Examples of Responses from Year 7 Workshops in Harrow and Camden



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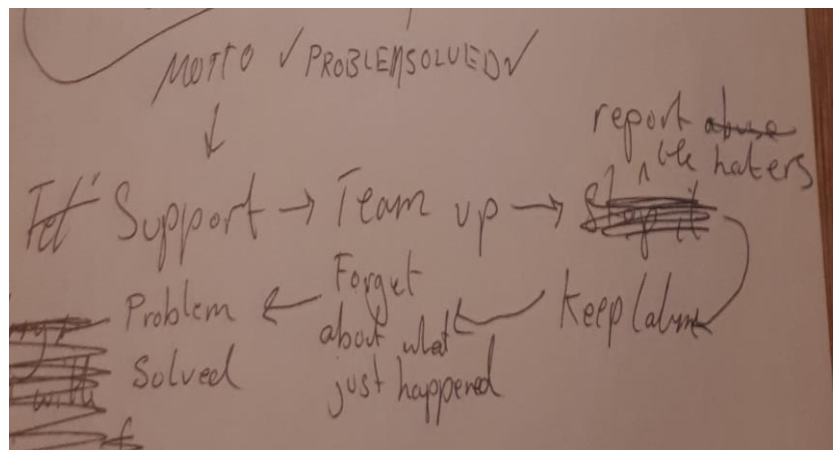
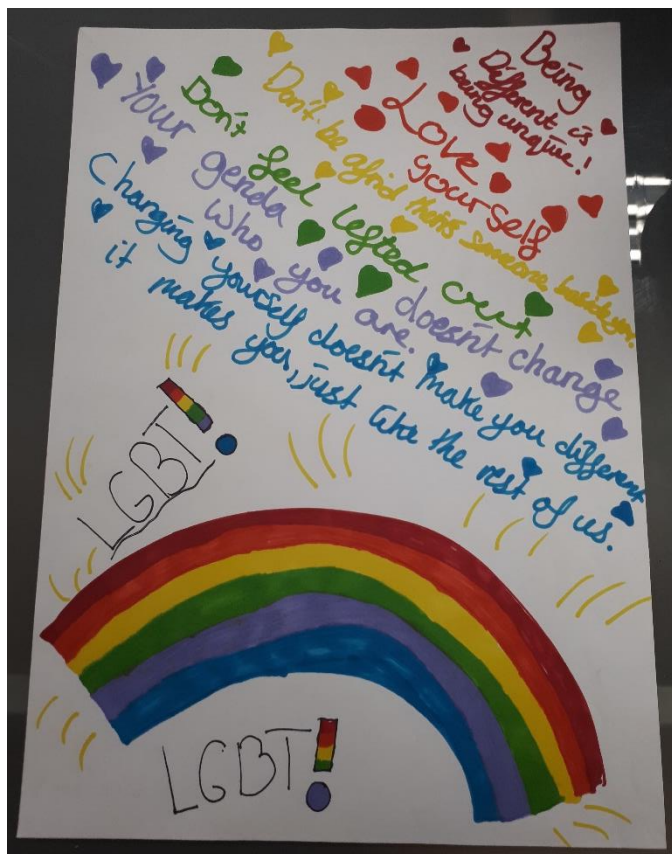
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SCENARIO 2

- On Facebook you have a friend who lives in your block. You don't go to the same school but you hang out on the estate.
- This friend puts that he is in a relationship on his status and the name tagged is a boy's name. Your friend then writes that he doesn't want to hide anymore.
- Some people have commented on his Facebook feed and have said homophobic things. Your friend then closes his Facebook account.
- What could you do?

A popular response from Year 7's was to block the people who made homophobic comments and to suggest to your friend to make a new account but only adding people they can trust. The facilitator ensured that the response strategy of reporting the comments and people on Facebook was understood by all students and put in their strategy 'tool box'. In some workshops we discussed the definition of 'Hate Incidents' and 'Hate Crimes' and what things would be a reportable offence to the police.

Examples of Responses from Year 7 Workshops in Harrow and Camden

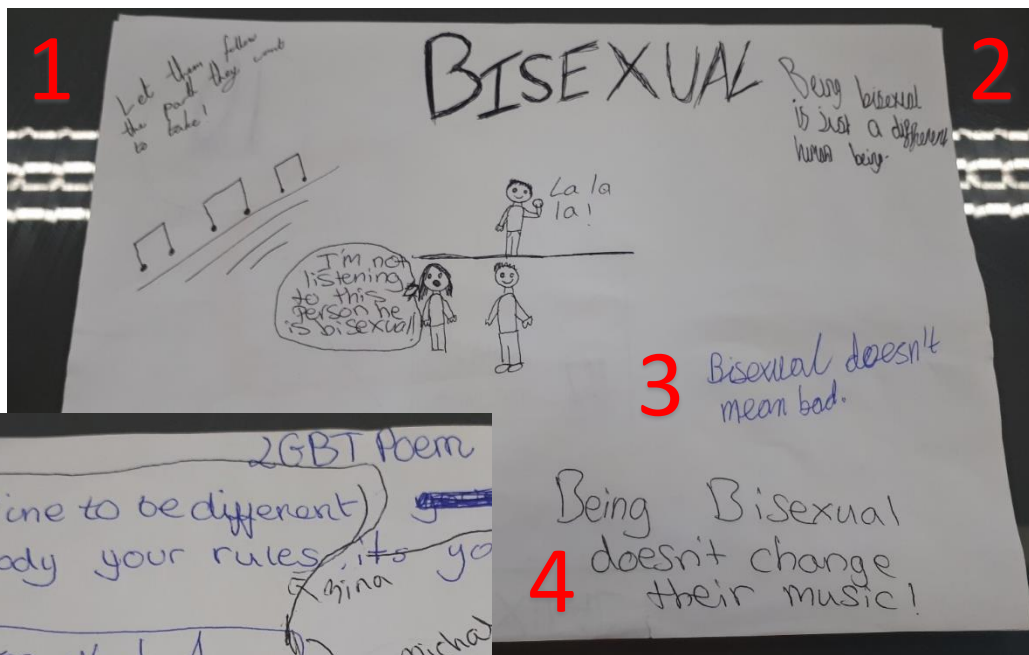


SCENARIO 3

- Your favourite music artist has their new album coming out next week.
- Your best friend tells you that they read something about this artist being bisexual.
- Your friend says they don't listen to them anymore because of that.
- Their music hasn't changed and you always listen to their new stuff when it comes out.
- You don't understand why your friend doesn't listen to them anymore.
- What could you do?

Students generally found this scenario the easiest as they were differentiating the singer's musical ability from their sexuality. In some workshops the students discussed how this same differentiation can apply to classmates in their school community; that if you like someone for their personality this shouldn't be affected by their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Examples of Responses from a #WiseOUT Year 7 Workshop in Harrow



1. Let them follow the path they want to take!
2. Being bisexual is just a different human being
3. Bisexual doesn't mean bad
4. Being bisexual doesn't change their music!



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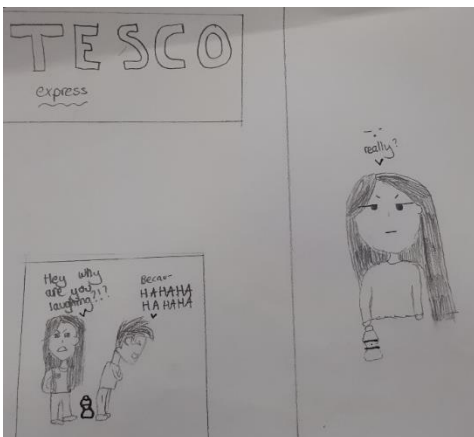
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SCENARIO 4

- You're in Tesco with a friend at lunch break buying a Ribena. You're paying and see the two men in front holding hands.
- Your friend starts pointing and laughing. You see one of the men look around embarrassed.
- You don't know why your friend thinks it's funny and you notice that the men have stopped holding hands.
- What could you say to your friend when you leave?

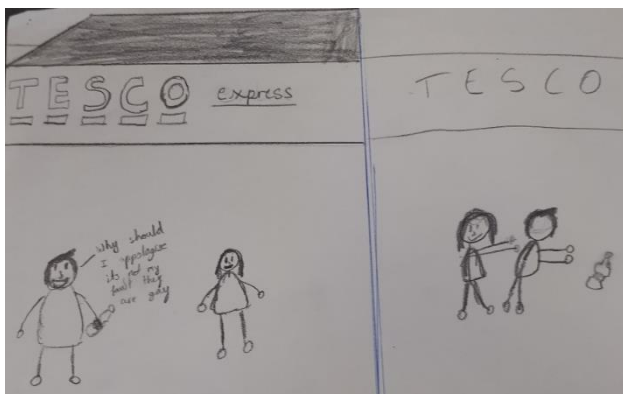
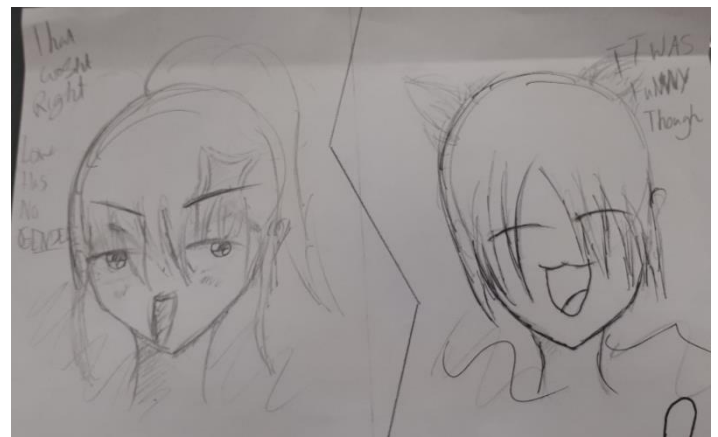
Students commonly responded in scripts and comic strips to Scenario 4. The overall opinion was to talk to your friend and remind them, as written in one script, *"Respect people's lives. Let them live their lives as they want."* Some groups suggested that the friend goes and apologises to the couple. This is also an opportunity for the facilitator to highlight what are Hate Incidents and Hate Crimes and that public displays of discrimination could potentially result in a police report. This has proven necessary also by students asking the #WiseOUT facilitator what would happen if they said their opinion that LGBT is wrong audibly to a gay couple in public. Students did not realise prior that their expression of hatred towards somebody based on their sexual orientation, which could cause distress, would classify as hate speech and is unlawful.

A Comic Strip Response by a #WiseOUT Year 7 Workshop in Camden



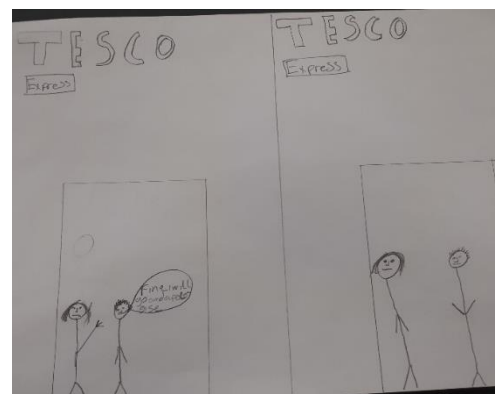
< 1. *Hey why are you laughing?"*

>2. *"That wasn't right. Love has no gender."*



< 3. *"Why should I apologise it's not my fault they are gay."*

>4. *"Fine I will go and apologise."*



SCENARIO 5

- One of your friends never asks you to come round to their house but he always comes to yours. You don't mind but you want to get out of your house sometimes as it gets boring.
- You asked your friend this morning if you could come over later to play on his new Play Station.
- They tell you that they live with their mums who are married and that they didn't want you to come round and be weird.
- What could you say to your friend?

There were 2 very profound role plays in response to a scenario regarding a young person having gay parents, including from one student who shared with the class that her Primary School best friend had gay parents and it didn't make a difference because the girl was her friend. In her group role play she demonstrated offering understanding and no judgement to her friend. Her friend then addressed the audience saying ***"it is good to know that I am supported. I feel lighter being accepted."***

Conversely, one group read the scenario differently and role played the friend struggling to decide if they wanted to visit their friend's house with 2 mums, seemingly demonstrating that they found this a challenging concept.

Another group wrote the below acrostic poem:

E veryone is equal. It doesn't matter about your parents it matters about your personality.

Q uiet is unhappy. It you keep your parents a secret, all your feelings will get bottled up inside you. Tell someone if you are upset.

U shouldn't be afraid that someone might find out.

A re you upset that your mum's are lesbians?

L ife is about happiness not gender.

The poem has some very supportive lines, however, one student wrote a line that possibly displays some resistance to the scenario ***"are you upset that your mum's are lesbians?"*** Alternatively, that student might be showing that they would be curious to check in with their friend if their resistance to invite people over is due to their own difficulties accepting their gay parents. It is good to see that within group work the students are still able to express their own opinion to the class for discussion, as encouraged by the facilitator.



CHAPTER 3.

Successes

In Year 1 of the #WiseOUT project we experienced both support and resistance from students in schools. This has continued in Year 2 and further supports the necessity of the #WiseOUT workshop for both the affirmation of LGBT support in the school community and for engagement in conversations with students who find it a challenging topic.

A Year 7 student in a Harrow school called the facilitator over once the class had divided in to group work. The student told the facilitator that they did not like to talk about LGBT and felt uncomfortable. The facilitator had a very positive conversation with the student in which they discussed a broader sense of discrimination and its impacts on young people. The student commented that they find bullying “*upsetting*” and that bullying can lead to self-harm. The facilitator then focused this back to LGBT and that the same kindness is needed towards all identities. The student said that they could continue the #WiseOUT workshop having understood and accepted the importance of the workshop in relation to encouraging kindness, not hatred.

Year 2 #WiseOUT has seen a **much more proactive approach from school teachers wanting to engage with and support the workshop**. Teacher’s feedback has been invaluable, such as one teacher in Camden suggesting after the facilitator had delivered the first of 5 workshops at their school, to draw more focus to the consequences of LGBT discrimination on young people. They felt that the first group of students did not take the subject seriously enough and were frustrated by their attitude. Subsequently the #WiseOUT facilitator discussed in further detail the mental and emotional impact of discrimination. This is now a key element to the #WiseOUT workshop and helps students to understand the impact that LGBT phobia can have upon their classmates.

Following a workshop at a school in Barnet where some students had been vocal about their opposition to LGBT, an identifying gay male teacher cried to the #WiseOUT facilitator. They were disappointed and upset as they did not realise the extent of homophobia within the student body. However, we have maintained communications with this teacher and the school and the teacher immediately e-mailed the school’s headteacher reporting the homophobia that they had heard that day. The school have since e-mailed us to say that they are conducting an LGBT survey throughout the school to look at current attitudes. They conducted the survey two years ago, however, following the #WiseOUT workshop and realising that their school community was not



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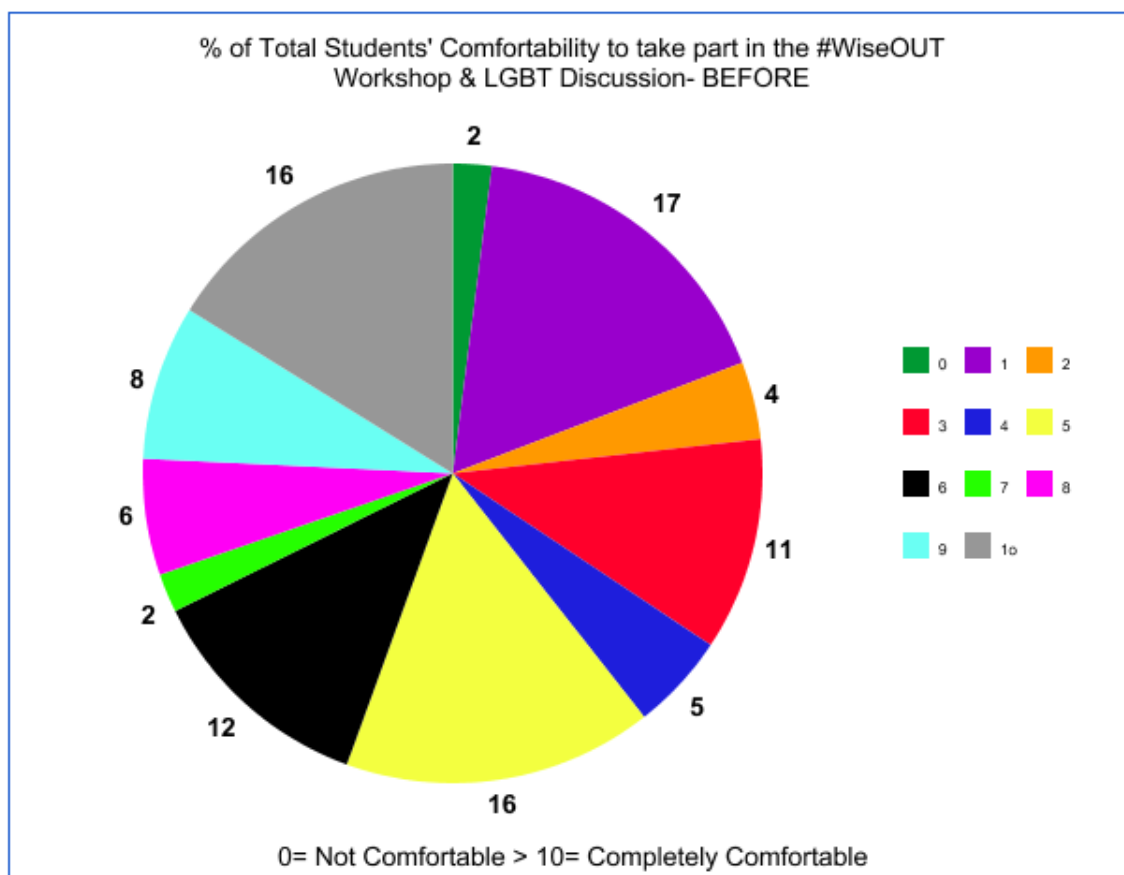
as inclusive as they had thought, they want to track the trends and changes ongoing. **The school have asked to share the survey findings with us, which will then allow us to support and advise on the findings.**

Another success of Year 2 is that we have **schools approaching us to book in advance** for PSHE days that they have timetabled in following months. We are delighted that schools have identified the #WiseOUT workshop as a pivotal platform to address LGBT and as a tool to provide an inclusive and representative school community.



Student Feedback

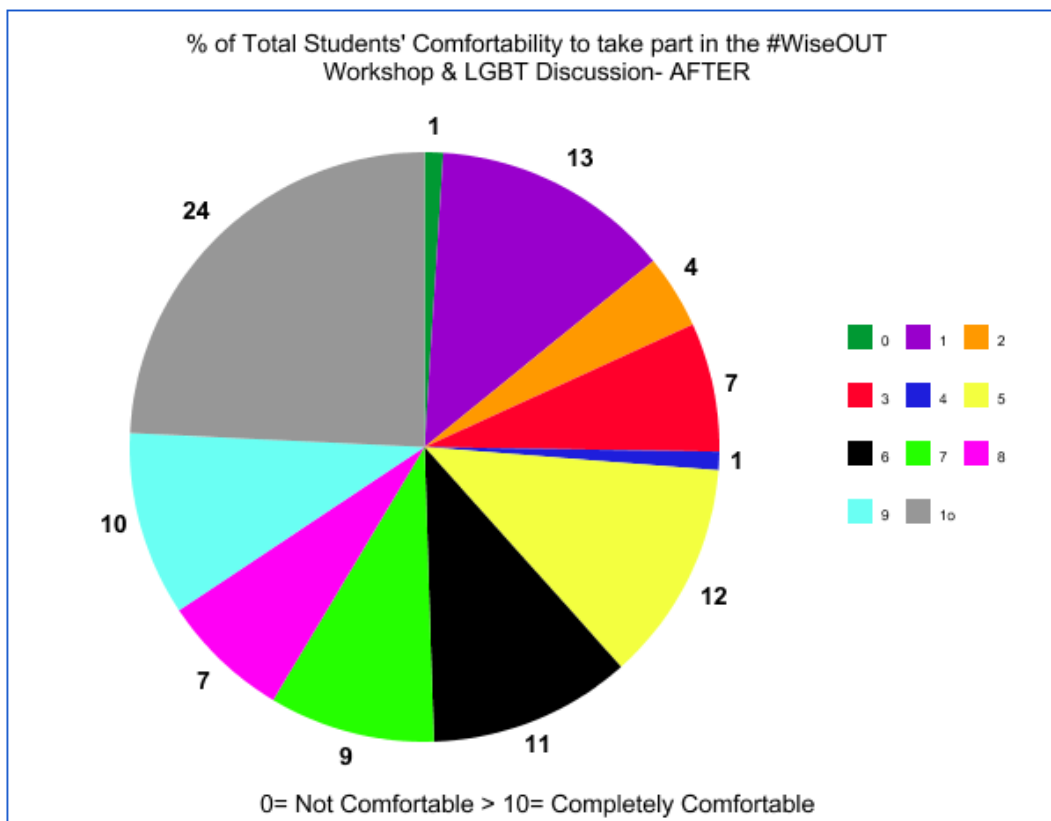
At the start of every #WiseOUT workshop the facilitator asks the students participating to write on an individual piece of paper, their Level of Comfortability. This is a number between 1-10 to indicate how comfortable they are to take part in the #WiseOUT workshop and discuss LGBT. The Pie Chart below is representative of the data collected in Year 2 #WiseOUT from **219 Year 7-8 students**- whose pieces of paper were returned at the end. The Pie Chart slices show what percentage of the 219 students chose each number between 1-10.



Before the #WiseOUT Workshop (Above)

We can see that the highest selected Level of Comfortability to discuss LGBT was Level 1, with 17%. When data monitoring at the start of 2019, the highest initial number selected was 10 at 18%. These numbers changed post 5 workshops with Year 8's at a school in Barnet. At this school the students were quite vocal about not agreeing with LGBT and that it was "not normal". The teachers at this school were shocked to see mostly low numbers but said that it gave them an indicator of the level of work that they needed to deliver to foster a safe and LGBT inclusive school community.





After the #WiseOUT Workshop (Above)

The Pie Chart above is representative of the data collected in Year 2 #WiseOUT from **228 Year 7-8 students**- whose pieces of paper were returned at the end. The Pie Chart slices show what percentage of the 228 students chose each number between 1-10 after participating in the #WiseOUT workshop.

It is positive to see that the highest percentage of students felt Completely Comfortable at Level 10 after taking part in the workshop. However, 24% of the students at Level 10 is down from the 32% of students at Level 10, which we calculated at the start of 2019. This rapid decline followed the delivery of 5 workshops within one school in Barnet where the facilitator faced a particular resistance from many Year 8 students.

Out of the 130 responses that we analysed at the start of 2019, 2 students went down in their Level of Comfortability, post #WiseOUT workshop. Out of the 228 responses overall at the end of Year 2 #WiseOUT, 11 students went down in their level. This increase from 2 to 11 students going down in their Level of Comfortability is also following data collected from the same school in Barnet. It was remarkable to see the difference that students' opinions from one school year could have on the overall Year 2 data.



On this particular day the facilitator received such comments from the Year 8's as:

“Everyone should just be normal and straight. There is no such thing as a gay Muslim.”

“It is not halal for two boys to hold hands.”

We have been researching and developing this year a second #WiseOUT workshop which will look at LGBT within the context of religion and culture. Religion seems to be the biggest barrier to LGBT acceptance in the workshops and we would like to support students and the schools in ensuring equality and respect for LGBT people.

Teacher Feedback

The teachers provided written and verbal feedback that has given positive affirmation of the #WiseOUT workshop structure and content and furthermore has given insight to the further support they believe the school community needs.

At one school in Harrow where the facilitator delivered two workshops to Year 7's that were shadowed by the Head of Year 7, the Head of Year fed back: ***“The creative nature of the workshop is fun and engaging. The information doesn't go over their heads this way.”***

The students are asked to respond creatively to the real-life scenarios of young LGBT people. The creative response allows students to engage with their favourite creative format, which has included in year 2: drawn comic strips and posters; written poems, booklets, scripts and diaries; performed role plays, dances and songs.

Another teacher in Camden commented that the creative response also allows for students to: ***“put themselves into the person's shoes and give them strategies for how to deal with bullying.”*** Another teacher in Barnet reflected similarly that the workshop ***“gave the students a chance to examine real-life scenarios. By putting themselves in to the character it let them imagine what it would be like and compare it to their own experiences.”***

The students are encouraged to think and discuss what does discrimination feel like and what are the impacts of it. Students have recognised and shared in #WiseOUT Year 2 that discrimination can impact on an individual's mental health, emotional wellbeing, school attendance and can lead to self-harm or suicide.

The facilitator clarifies that the responses that the students generate during the #WiseOUT workshop, we are sharing as a class to create a **‘toolbox’ of strategies**



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that the students can refer to should they ever need them. This gives the responses extra importance and clarity.

In one school in Camden, 3 teachers who individually attended 3 Year 7 workshops, all fed back that the 'Walking Exercise', which is the initial workshop exercise, was **"particularly good at helping students explore stereotypes"** and to **"think about stereotypes and why they are problematic"**. The students have positively responded that there is no particular way an LGBT person walks and where able to reflect on that stereotypical walks and gestures further embed expectations in society.

Following our workshop day at a school in Barnet, where the facilitator experienced the largest amount of student resistance and vocal LGBT prejudice, one teacher fed back that: **"I naively didn't realise how needed these sessions were"** and another teacher that **"this workshop was needed and it opened up areas of concern."** The #WiseOUT workshop made visible how many Year 8 students thought that LGBT was **"wrong"**, **"disgusting"** or **"not normal"**. Immediately after the final workshop one teacher sent an e-mail with evidence of the resistance and discrimination to the Head-teacher. They wanted the school to immediately follow up with both the students and their guardians, the homophobic and transphobic comments made. This particular school have identifying LGBT students and the teachers took seriously their safety within the school.

Teachers from 3 schools have commented that the education of LGBT has more impact coming from an external body, such as ourselves. A librarian at a school in Barnet who leads on Gender & Diversity at the school, described to the #WiseOUT facilitator that the students regurgitate what they think is the inclusive thing to say as explained to them by the same teachers repeatedly. The librarian said that having an external body visit gives weight to how seriously the school takes LGBT issues and that they expect complete inclusion and respect for LGBT people.

The Teacher Feedback supports the belief that the project:

- Uses creativity as an accessible and inclusive medium to explore LGBT and discrimination.
- Give Real-Life Responses that the young people can draw upon.
- Opens up opportunities for young people to ask questions that are troubling them regarding LGBT and discuss them with a professional facilitator.
- Identifies to the teachers how comfortable the students in their school are with LGBT and indicates the areas that further Relationship and Sex Education is needed.
- Has more impact being delivered by an external body.



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Year 3 #WiseOUT Recommendations

#WiseOUT in April 2018-April 2019 has successfully:

- Had a smooth transition of the #WiseOUT facilitator.
- Consistently strengthened relationship with 4 schools in Harrow and Camden and returned to deliver workshops to them.
- Adapted the workshop model to accommodate the school's community needs; such as homophobic language and trans inclusivity.
- Given students 'tools of responses' to call upon should they need.
- Represented young LGBT people in the schools that we have visited and given them support and a voice.
- Allowed teachers to understand how their school community responds to LGBT.
- Drawn schools focus to the Relationship and Sex Education policies that need to be in place by September 2020.
- Created an accompanying #WiseOUT Twitter Account to document the project and for others to refer to. We have also updated our #WiseOUT page on Wise Thoughts website for readers to read the latest news.

The project has also partly achieved:

- More student led resources e.g. further postcards.
- Training of additional delivery staff- through meetings with a University to set up a student placement commencing in Spring 2019.
- Delivery of workshops and presentations across year groups 7-11.
- Engaged with youth groups and colleges for access to more potential beneficiaries.

Current area for improvement to continue in Year 3 #WiseOUT:

- Delivery of workshops and presentation across year groups outside of Year 7 and 8.
- Delivery of workshops and presentation in the borough of Brent and in youth groups and colleges.
- The development and delivery of two further #WiseOUT workshops that explore (1) LGBT representation across different faiths and (2) Transgender.
- A #WiseOUT meeting between teachers and school governors to look at (1) the impact of LGBT discrimination on young people's lives and (2) the negative impact of restricting access to LGBT education for pupils.

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