



Congleton Pride

LGBTQIA+

Congleton Pride 2026 Survey Results

September 2026

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Method and Purpose

Congleton Pride ran two online surveys, both based on best-practice examples from around the world

- The **'Attitudes' Survey** is based on international standards to evaluate the general public's attitudes to LGBTQIA+ people.
- The **'Community' Survey** asks LGBTQIA+ people what it is like living in Congleton

Both were initially carried out in late 2021 and repeated in early 2023

- Responses in 2026 = 90 for the public Attitudes and 81 for the Community Survey





Congleton Pride

RESULTS

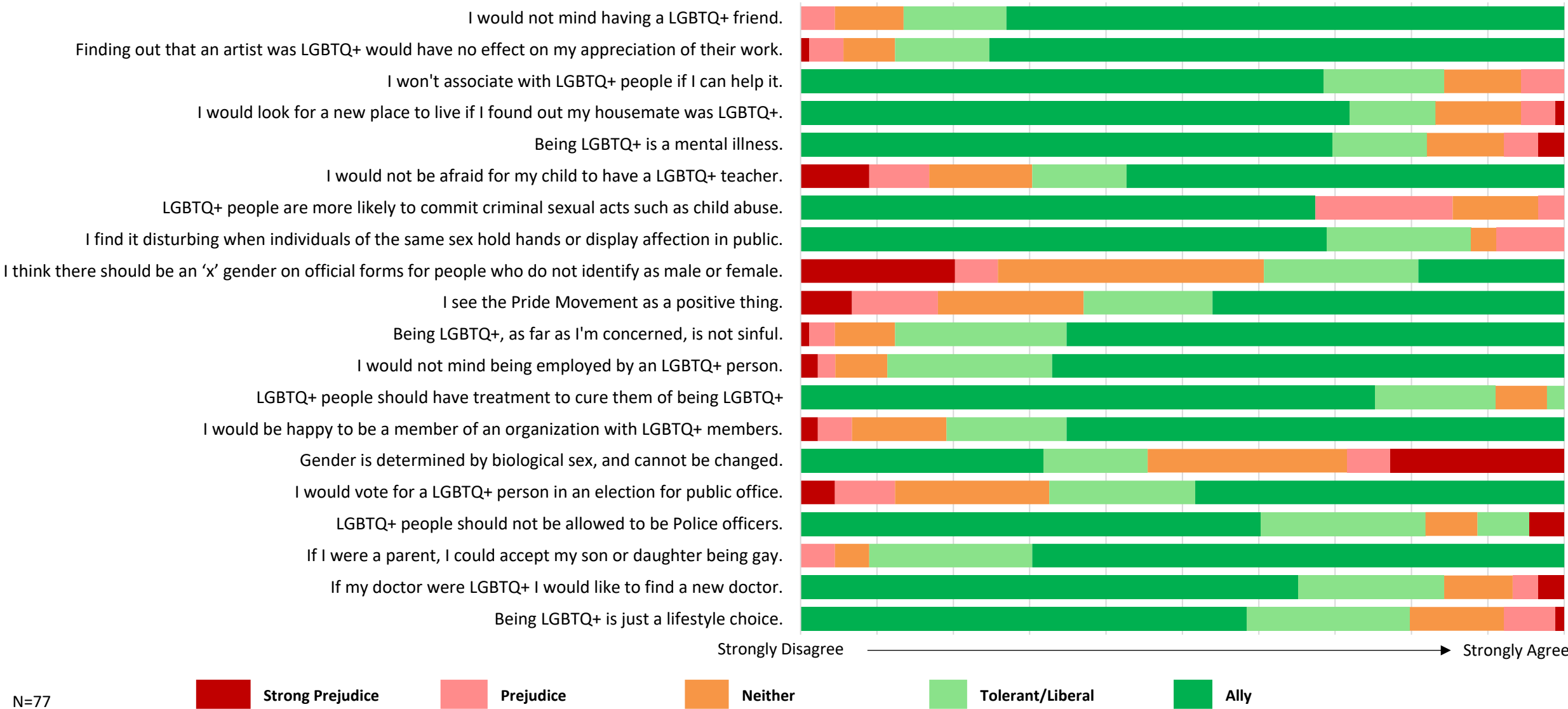
Congleton LGBTQIA+ Public Attitudes Survey 2026 n=90



The majority of respondents were tolerant and liberal-minded overall, but there is still evidence of the need for some education

2026

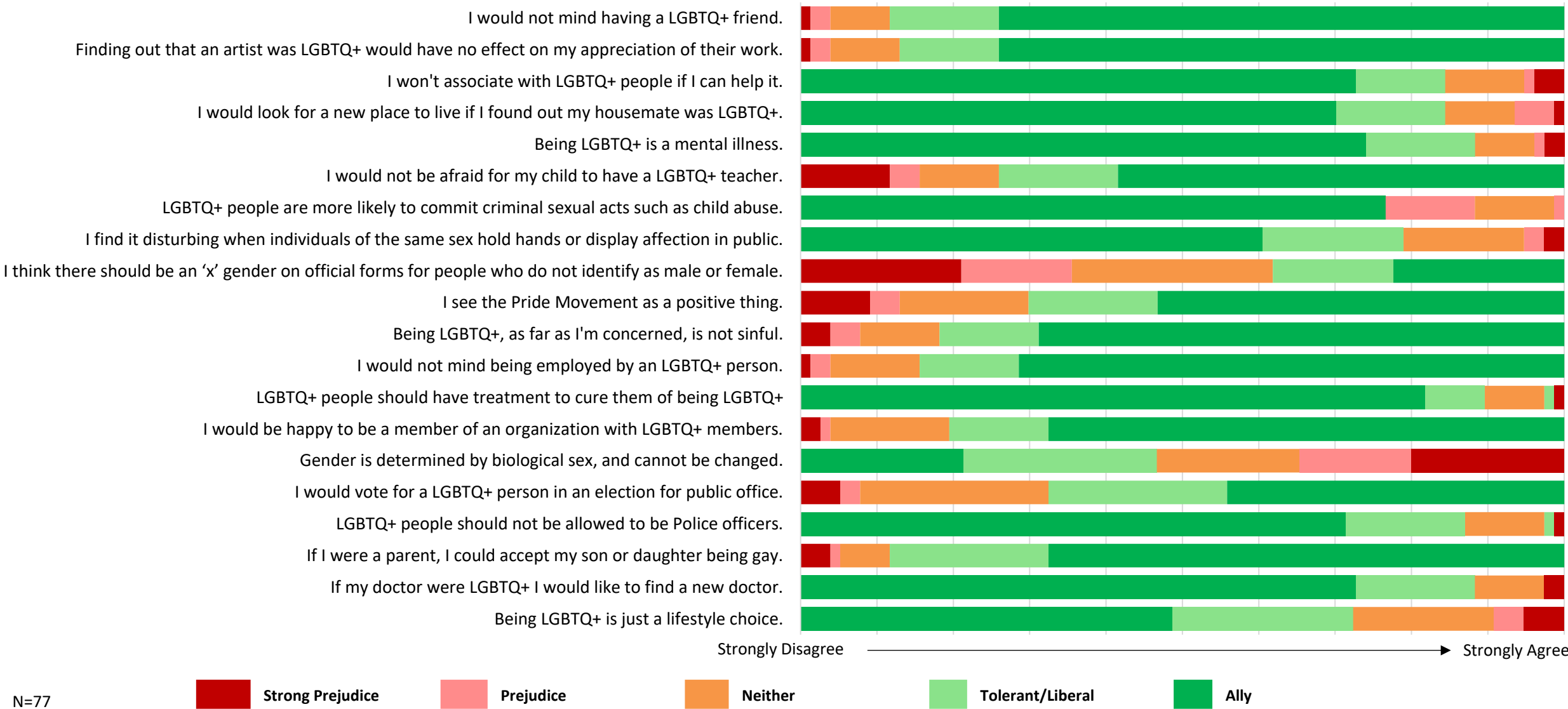
Please tell us if you agree with the following statements with regard to LGBTQIA+ people (2023)



We have seen little change from 2023-2026...

2023

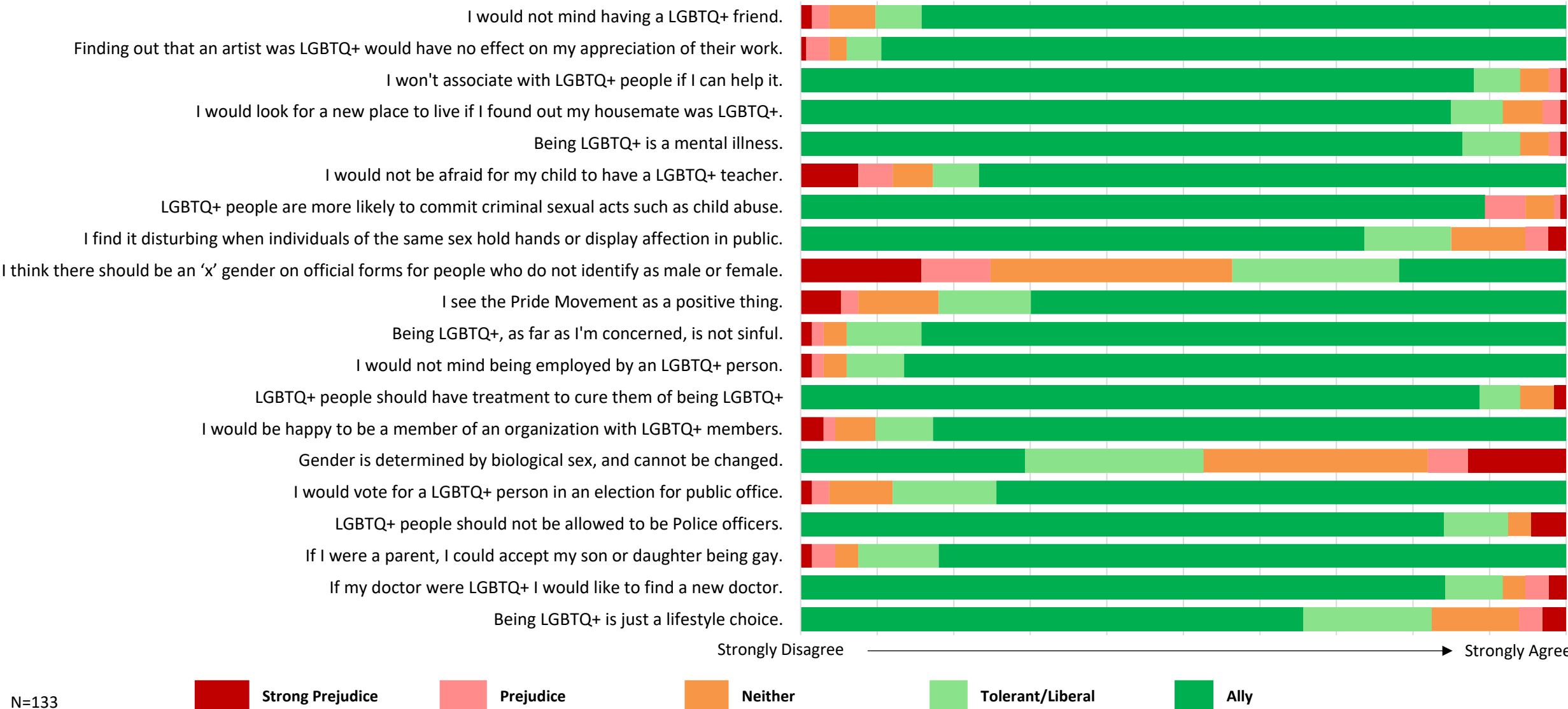
Please tell us if you agree with the following statements with regard to LGBTQIA+ people (2023)



...and still less tolerant than the public was back in 2021.

2021

Please tell us if you agree with the following statements with regard to LGBTQ+ people (2021).



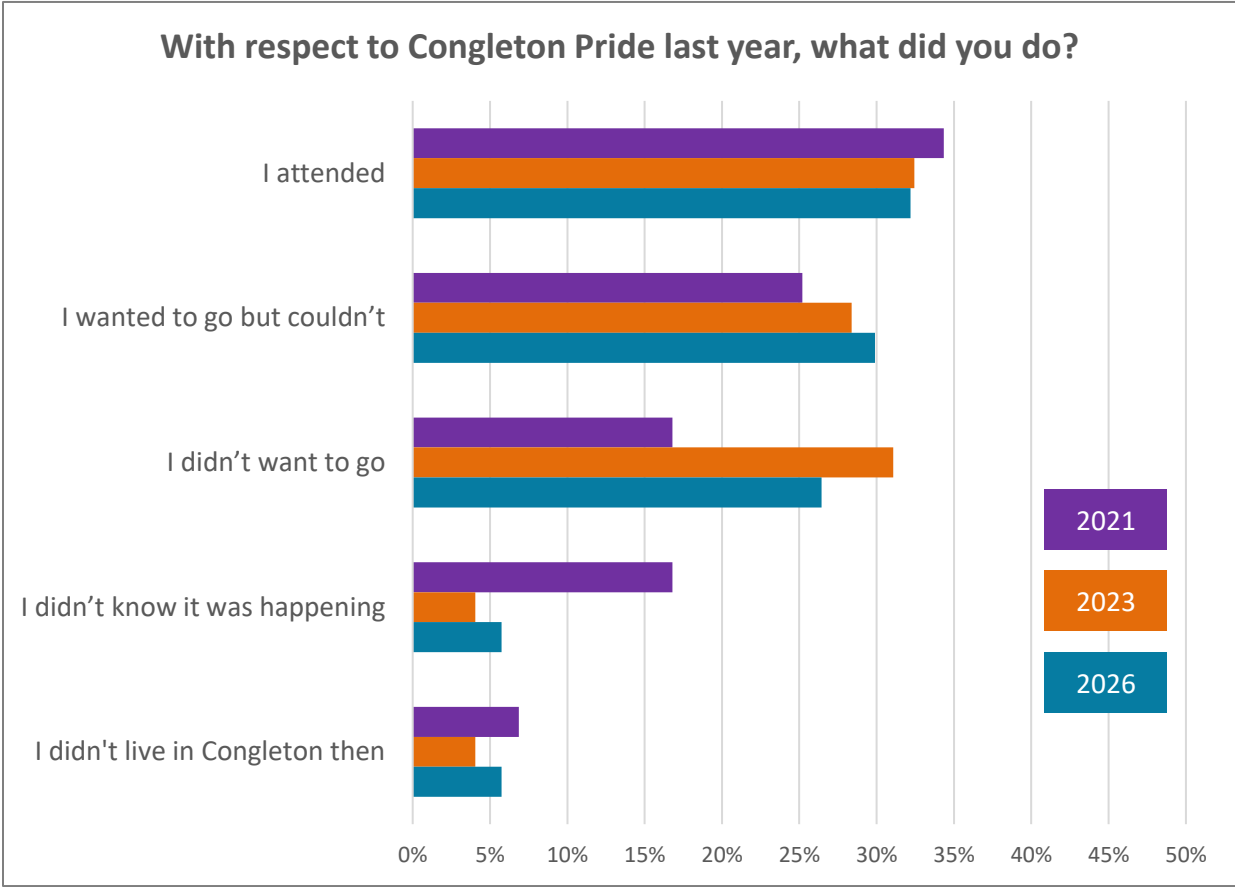
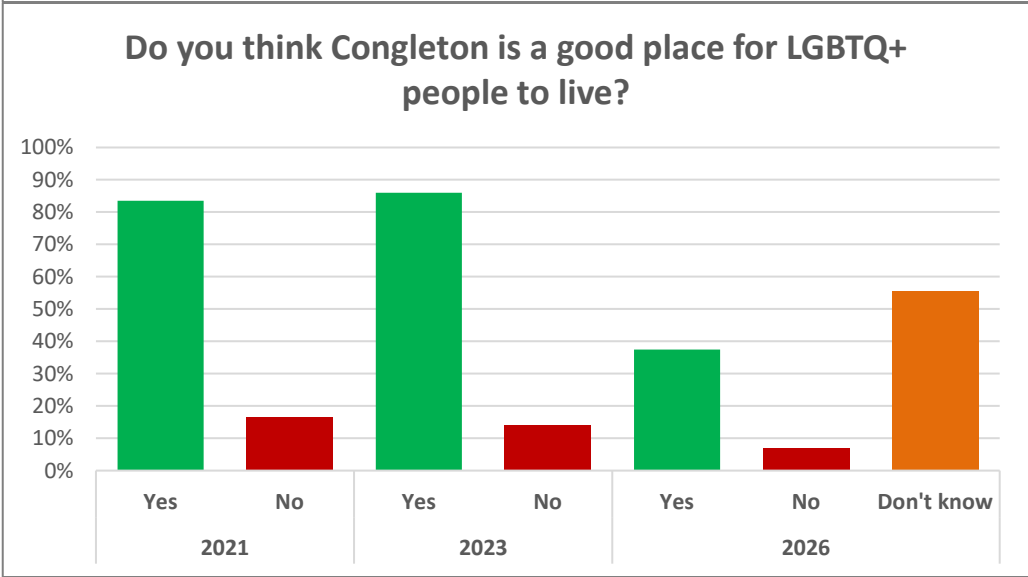
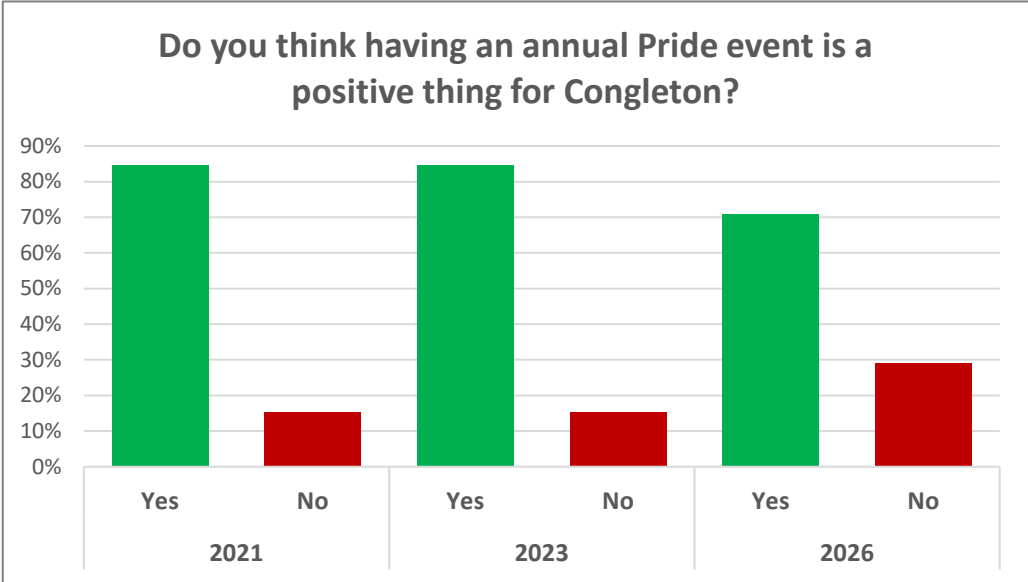
Our 'LGBTQ+ Friendliness Index' has remained constant in the last 3 years



Statement	2021	2023	2026
I would not mind having a LGBTQ+ friend.	4.7	4.6	4.6
Finding out that an artist was LGBTQ+ would have no effect on my appreciation of their work.	4.8	4.6	4.6
I won't associate with LGBTQ+ people if I can help it.	4.8	4.5	4.5
I would look for a new place to live if I found out my housemate was LGBTQ+.	4.7	4.5	4.5
Being LGBTQ+ is a mental illness.	4.8	4.6	4.4
I would not be afraid for my child to have a LGBTQ+ teacher.	4.4	4.1	4.0
LGBTQ+ people are more likely to commit criminal sexual acts such as child abuse.	4.8	4.6	4.5
I find it disturbing when individuals of the same sex hold hands or display affection in public.	4.5	4.3	4.5
I think there should be an 'x' gender on official forms for people who do not identify as male or female.	3.2	3.0	3.1
I see the Pride Movement as a positive thing.	4.4	4.0	3.8
Being LGBTQ+, as far as I'm concerned, is not sinful.	4.7	4.4	4.5
I would not mind being employed by an LGBTQ+ person.	4.8	4.5	4.5
LGBTQ+ people should have treatment to cure them of being LGBTQ+	4.8	4.7	4.6
I would be happy to be a member of an organization with LGBTQ+ members.	4.7	4.4	4.4
Gender is determined by biological sex, and cannot be changed.	3.5	3.1	3.3
I would vote for a LGBTQ+ person in an election for public office.	4.6	4.0	4.0
LGBTQ+ people should not be allowed to be Police officers.	4.7	4.5	4.3
If I were a parent, I could accept my son or daughter being gay.	4.7	4.5	4.6
If my doctor were LGBTQ+ I would like to find a new doctor.	4.7	4.6	4.4
Being LGBTQ+ is just a lifestyle choice.	4.4	4.1	4.3
LGBTQ+ 'friendliness' of Congleton	91%	85%	85%

As seen previously, questions on gender seem to require the most work

What do the public think about Congleton Pride?



Do you think having an annual Pride event is a positive thing for Congleton? Nearly 30% said 'no' this time.



- It should just be an event and not just for those in the LBGTQIA+ community.. by making it a pride event you discriminate again those that aren't part of that community.
- I have no issue with people being LGBTQIA+ . People are entitled to identify however they wish . People are precious and priceless to me however they choose to identify, and i would judge no one on that . I have 4 friends who identify as gay and are married . They are my best friends and i love them more than i can ever say . I have around 4 other friends who identify as lgbtqia+ i really love them too . I would love for my child to be taught by a teacher who identified as lgbtqia+ . I would count that as a priviledge for my child to be exposed to a precious priceless human being identifying , and i would hope it would educate my child to grown with empathy , acceptance and understanding . It would be fantastic . However - my gay friends HATE pride events - hate them . Saying there was a place for them once , but now they no longer need to serve the purpose they once did ,and actually do more harm and cause more division . I was shocked hearing this - so i am putting this forward . Maybe just have a ALL PEOPLE event and stop singling out LGBTQIA+ - . Thats my gay friends words - not mine . They are now doing more harm than good
- I don't believe it needs an event. I also think trans should be separate from the 'lgbt' gender and sexual preference are different
- What's the purpose?I hear that it's because of bigotry, do you really think the festival will change a bigots mind. In fact I think it works the opposite it makes many people irritated with there "loud and proud" attitude
- I just see people as people, so I'm not sure if I think pride is a good idea or not. But as I'm 'straight' I guess it's not up to me to decide
- I have numerous gay friends and they just want to lead normal lives without been on show all the time.
- Pride is an supposedly an inclusive event, yet it is highly exclusive on who can attend.
- Creates division between people

Do you think having an annual Pride event is a positive thing for Congleton? Nearly 30% said 'no' this time.



- I think everyone should blend in. Society naturally regardless of past persecutions. We will never normalise equality if we highlight difference. Even if the celebration is about diversity it causes disbandment.
- "Drag acts singing outside B&M building during daytime when I am with my kids (both under 10) is not appropriate. Drag acts are adult entertainment. I have no objection to drag acts for those who like them, but when there are kids around it's a huge no. Drag acts are contraversial, as they seem to demean women with comedic stereotypes."
- It's just personal choice which I don't support
- Gay people have rights these days. The pride movement has been hijacked by people wanting to showcase their kinks and fetishes in public, and it is not appropriate for families and children.
- It is an unnecessary, and embarrassing imposition on the majority of constituents, and an affront to the natural order of society.
- I don't want being gay shoved down my throat, we don't straight pride events.
- My understanding is it has replaced the town carnival that is not engaging with all social groups. For sure the town should have a carnival but it should not be based around a single group. Its about integration and pride festivals are not about integration for all social groups and ages. Look at Spain and there carnivals complete integration and common hoal to celebrate bot build walls between social groups that we presently do.
- Everyonev is equal dont need pride
- Don't know what it's for
- Because I feel that there is no need for a pride event for a gay, lesbian ect when they have the same rights as everyone else and these kind of events have become a festival for people to just party and be indecent in public.
- There is already equality, we don't need anymore exposure to it. It becomes more divisive
- It should be held as one event for Cheshire east
- I mean it brings in the people, but apart from that why do we need one ?

Do you think having an annual Pride event is a positive thing for Congleton? 71% said 'yes'



- It is an inclusive way of having fun and learning about people
- Because firstly it's a great family day, and it shows people that love is love, and love should be celebrated
- Role model to young people. Focal point for the lgbtqia community. Reminder we are here !
- Brings people together
- "It's a celebration It's to show acceptance "
- Pride is needed more then religion
- You can't be what you can't see, children need representation and proof they can be who they really are. LGBT+ people shouldn't feel hidden or invisible in their own town.
- Proud to show a diverse community
- Visible inclusion and celebration of all humans is vital for society to grow.
- It shows support for LGBT+ people. It is a chance to show acceptance and demonstrate that people in Congleton value LGBT+ members of their community, that we support them through their own acceptance of their sexuality and to reassure them that we desire Congleton to be a safe place for them.
- I respect the right for people to celebrate who they are publicly if they wish to. I think it also raises awareness of the diversity of the human race and promotes respect for and acceptance of people no matter who they are. However, I also respect that there are some LGBTQI+ people who are not comfortable taking part in some of the Pride events (eg: walking in the parade)
- Very inclusive event, open to all
- Its essential to be inclusive and Congleton needs to improve on this. Our youngsters need to know its perfectly normal and important to support this.
- I think its important to be proud of who you are and for people to support each other. Acceptance of other peoples beliefs and identity should be taught from a young age.
- This town is still extremely homophobic, they just hide it better, the businesses and people found it a fun day but a good amount are still extremely homophobic and against us. This place voted for reform and a good amount of us still feel isolated or being seen as the "gay of the village"
- To raise awareness and to promote inclusivity.
- There's a lot of hate in Congleton, I would argue that Congleton could benefit from having a large Pride event ever year + other medium scale events throughout the year.

Do you think having an annual Pride event is a positive thing for Congleton? 71% said 'yes'



- It supports local shops and services
- It's a fun day and inclusive to all whether LGBT+ or not.
- It's an opportunity to show the level/volume of diversity in the area, for LGBTQIA+ people to say "here we are!" and for non-LGBTQIA+ people to say "Hey, we're cool with you and support you".
- Visibility
- It enables those who wish to celebrate to do so.
- Brings the community together, happy event - diversity is a positive thing
- There is still a lot of work to done regarding the acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ Community and Pride helps to challenge bigoted, outdated attitudes.
- It helps make LGBT+ part of the wider community of Congleton and not hidden away.
- Recognition of life as it is
- Raise awareness
- It's Important to show support for the LGBTQ community and ensure everyone feels welcome in our town.
- It brings people of all walks and genders to come together and celebrate their lives
- Why not?
- It makes everyone more aware
- This is one of the best event in our town. It is so sad that we don't have Pride parade this year.
- It exposes the population to the norm of gay and trans people in their community: a norm that has been overwritten by national leadership of the last century.
- It raises awareness
- Representation is important, and for want of a better phrase so is "normalisation". The LGBTQIA+ community deserve to celebrate their hard-won successes, and to remind people of how far there still is to go in terms of equity in treatment and attitudes. LGBTQIA+ youth need to see positive representation, and allies. I think it is also important for the economy!
- Promotes the kind of diversity, inclusion and belonging the world needs.

Do you think Congleton is a good place for LGBTQIA+ people to live?



I think it is neither yes or no, different members of the community will have different experiences and it is for them to decide not me. All I can do is support as I can

I feel the people of Congleton are quite inclusive, and I feel that wherever you live you will always get some people who don't agree LGBTQIA+

Everybody is welcome to live where they choose. Should not even be an issue

It's filled with a lot of homophobia

Mixed bag anywhere in the country - its no better or worse than anywhere else

The community in Congleton is generally an accepting and friendly place for people from all walks of life. As all percentage of hate filled bigots exist everywhere. We work to bring the next generation up to not tolerate this hatred and create a society where everyone feels safe and valued.

Unfortunately some people are still vocal (online) about their homophobic attitudes. I would like everyone to be accepting and kind to others but I keep seeing comments that prove this is not the case yet.

Someone I know is gay and has lived happily in Congleton for many years. I would hope others would have a similar experience.

A little old fashioned/ generational outdated issues with views on LGBTQIA. We need to get with the times a bit more, being Gay is pretty normal and should be addressed as this!

This place is still very conservative and they did vote heavy for reform so that should tell you why. It has a lot of people who are labour and more liberal but it really depends where you live in this town. I literally can't go certain places or areas in town cuz I will be hate crimed.

I live in Biddulph but visit Congleton regularly so I don't know what it's like to live there.

The amount of hate and abuse I see towards LGBTQIA+ people concerns me.

Do you think Congleton is a good place for LGBTQIA+ people to live?



Having seen the amount of comments on the Pride Flag flying on the Town Hall, I would say we still have plenty of knuckle-draggers to educate.

I have no direct experience though I do see LGBT+ people around and I've not seen anyone hassle them. I hope no one does.

No idea what it means. People are people whatever their sexual preferences are. I have a nephew who is married to a bloke. I'm a female married to a man. So what?

People of Congleton can be very narrow minded unfortunately. I just let people get on with the lives as they see fit.

I don't want them here.

But it could be even better.

Its a good place for all social groups but we all have a responsibility to integrate whatever colour/religion/sex we are. Do i think LGBTQIA should have any additional rights no but equally no less but we have to integrate and accept diversity whatever it looks like left/right/gay/colour etc etc. All groups are responsible for achieving this.

I hope it is! I'm not a member it the community and don't have any local friends who are LGBTQIA+, so I don't have enough information to say. My friends who are LGBTQIA+ all live in other cities

As an ally rather than someone from the LGBTQIA+ community, it is not my place to comment.

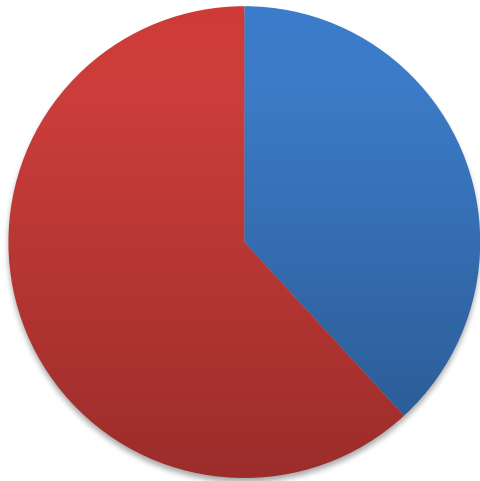
I feel there is so many negative and horrible comments on the social media groups for congleton when pride is mentioned and it shows why it's still needed.

There are a lot of closed minded people who are unfortunately very anti anything different to themselves.

I'd like to think it is. But having no lived experience of being, or personally knowing a LGBTQIA+ person in Congleton I couldn't say.

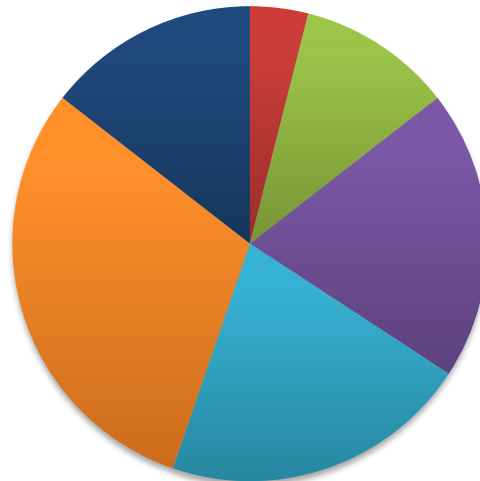
Demographics of Public who answered survey

What is your gender? Are you



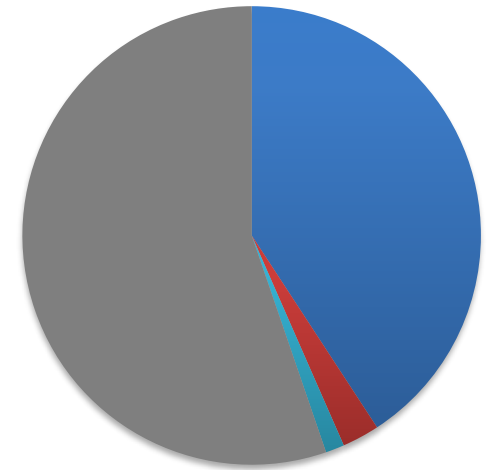
■ Male ■ Female ■ Other/Prefer not to say

What is your age?



■ Under 18 ■ 18-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-44
■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65+

What is your religion?



■ Christian ■ Buddhist ■ Jewish
■ Hindu ■ Muslim ■ Sikh
■ Other religion ■ No religion





Congleton Pride

RESULTS

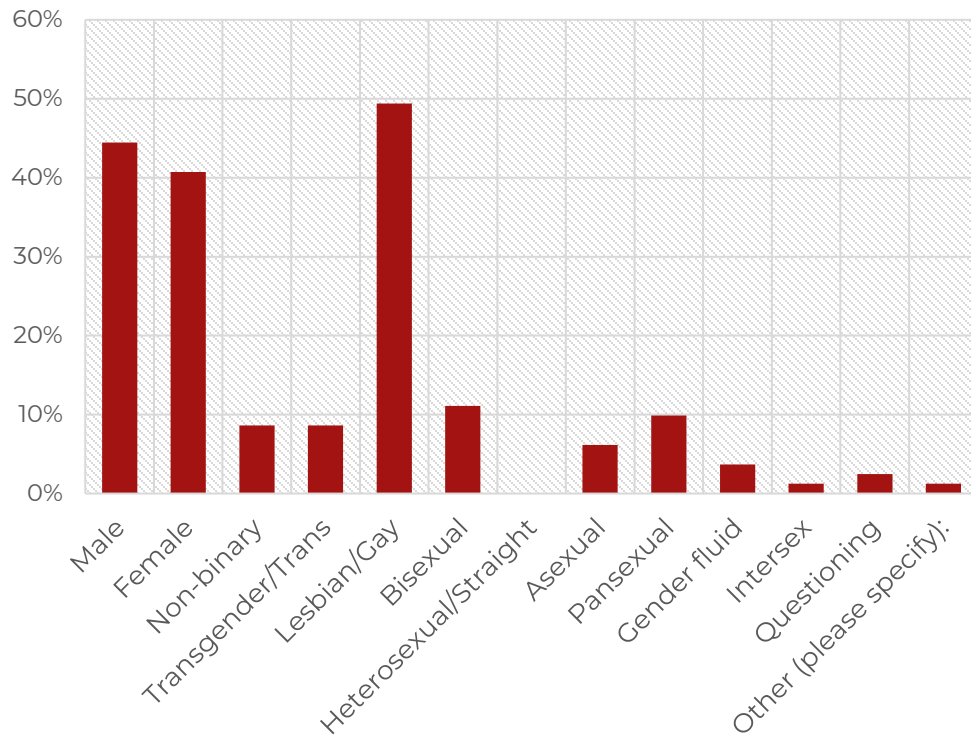
Congleton LGBTQIA+ Community Survey 2026

n=81



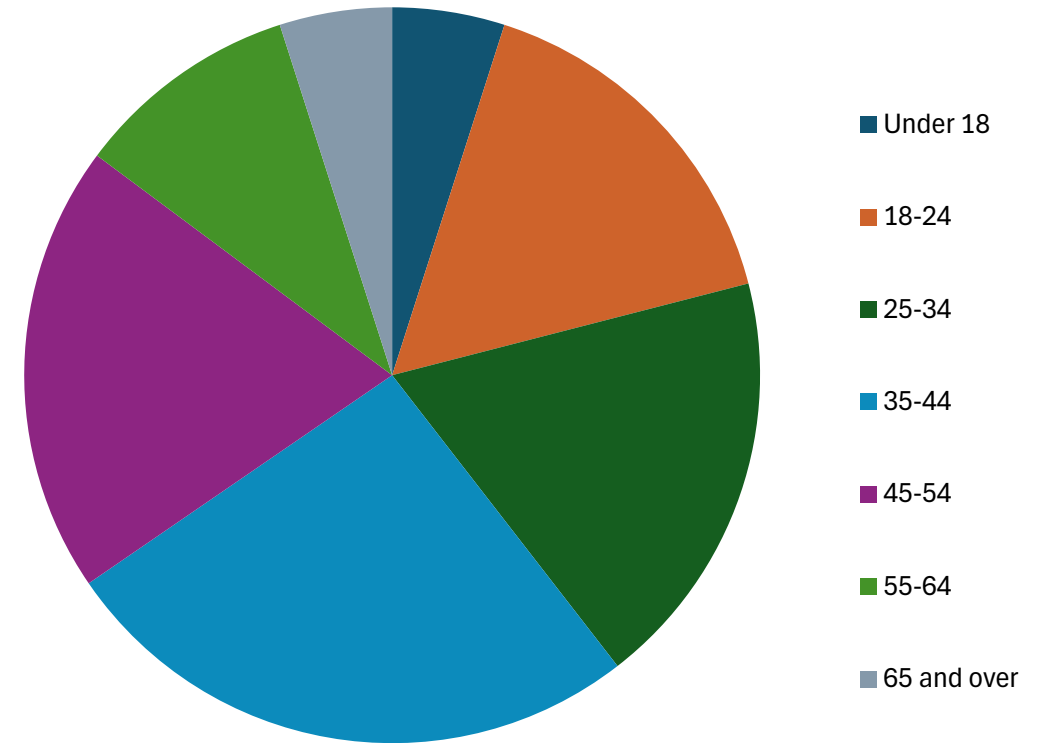
Demographics of LGBTQIA+ Respondents

Do you consider yourself to be
(choose ALL that apply):



N=81

What age range are you in?



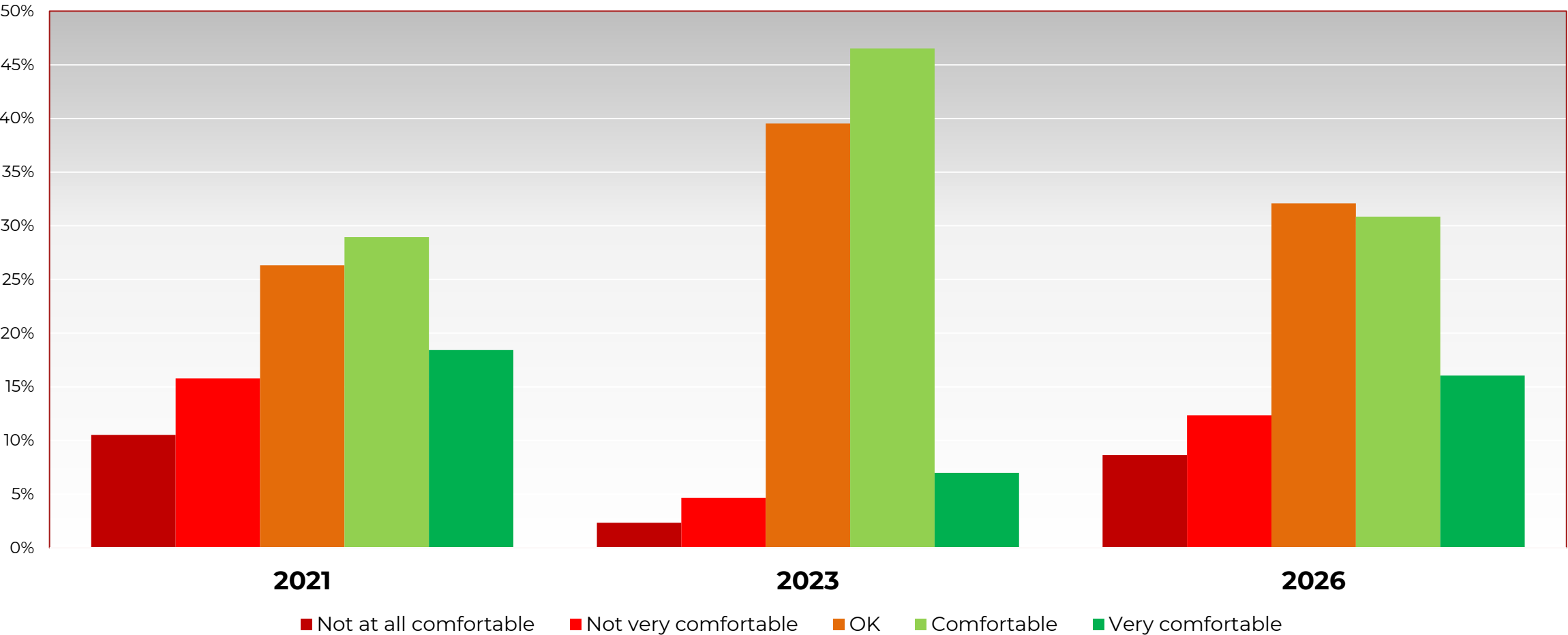
N=81



More than a fifth (21%) of LGBTQIA+ people do not feel 'comfortable' in Congleton, up from 7% in 2023. However, 16% now feel 'very comfortable', up from 6%



How Comfortable do you feel being LGBTQIA+ in Congleton?



Many LGBTQIA+ people have mixed feelings about living in Congleton in 2026



- I feel things may have taken a step back in the last couple of years, I feel people are less understanding than they were say two or three years ago.
- I overhear lots of negative comments about the LGBTQ+ community in my workplace from customers and there seems to be a large opposition to Pride and LGBTQ+ in the town particularly online, however I've never been directly targeted by this. That said I have never publicly announced my sexuality so a lot of people wouldn't know.
- As a Bi women who is also gender-critical, the entirely pro- trans Congleton pride makes me feel unrepresented and unsafe, due to the open hostility of trans groups to GC women, including lesbians and Bi women
- I've grown to be myself as unapologetically as I can but the odd glare can still get to me.
- To many neds
- Moved to Congleton a year ago with my girlfriend, just before Pride 2025. Heard so many sad things about people pulling down posters and it just felt a bit like maybe the town isn't so accepting. Not had any bad experiences due to being gay and living in Congleton but don't overly feel like I'd want to go to Pride in the town as it's doesn't seem to be something people want here. That being said, we're not an overly PDA couple anyways so haven't had bad experiences here. Everyone has been friendly enough.
- Haven't had any issues, however with comments being made recently it is getting worrying
- A lot of homophobic comments and reform uk supporters on Congleton Facebook groups
- A combination of social anxiety and the current political climate reminding me of regular upsetting experiences in the past
- 90% of people are good, I will not let the rest to control me.
- Seeing a lot of negative comments from people in congleton regarding LGBTQIA+ makes me hesitant to be open in public -- events like Pride really do help, though. Brings people together.

Many LGBTQIA+ people have mixed feelings about living in Congleton in 2026



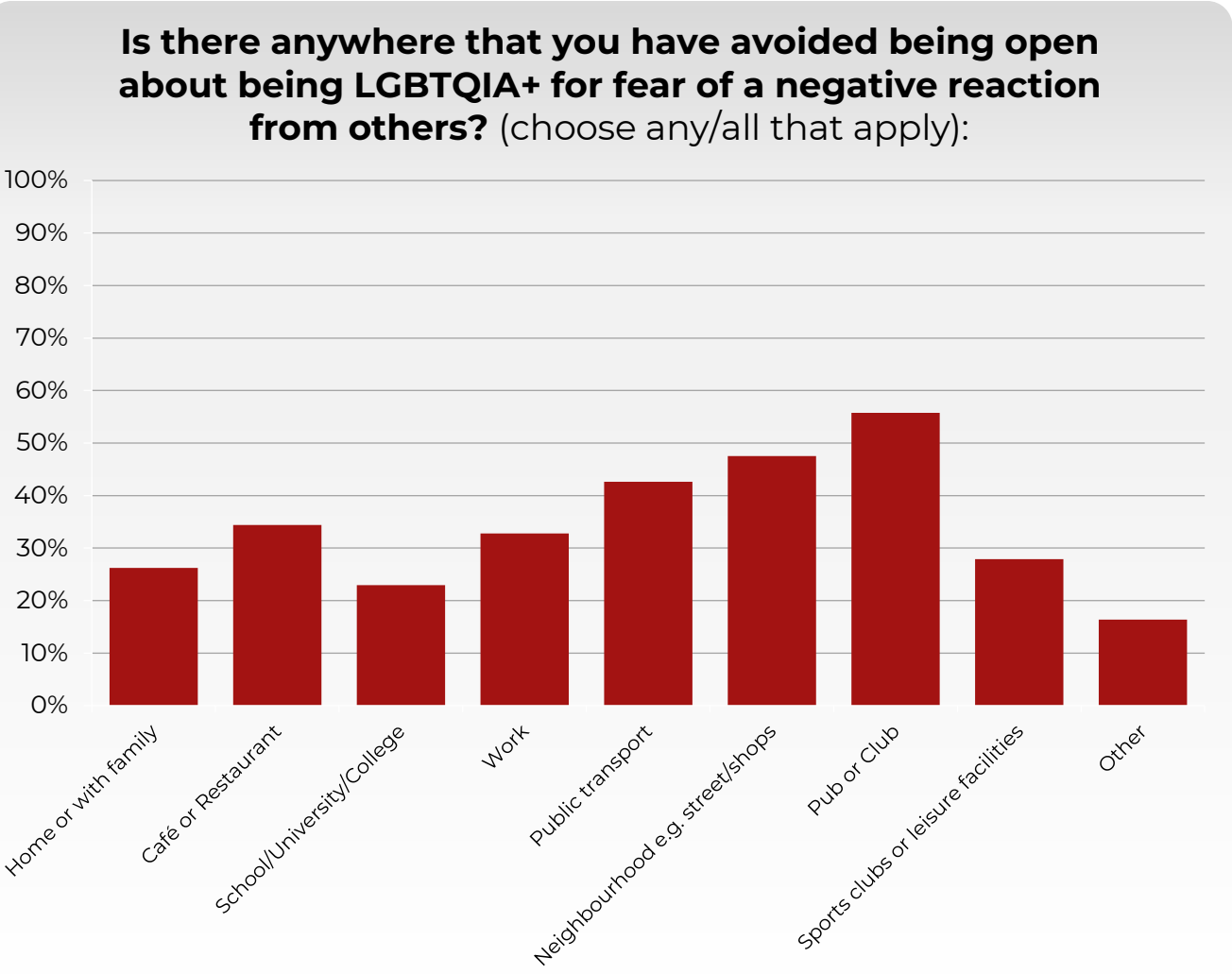
- Apart from a very select few comments seen on local Facebook posts we have never had any negative experiences. We receive a warm welcome everywhere. Seeing the town filled with pride flags in June and July make us feel safe and part of the community. Much better than where we came from in the west midlands
- Everyone seems very welcoming and friendly and we haven't encountered any problems or negativity.
- It's better than many places, having recently lived in Stockport and Manchester, though the rise of the Reform movement feels like it's shifting things in a more negative direction.
- Mostly ok occasional looks still not confident to hold hands
- I know I can surround myself with friends who make Congleton feel more welcoming, but when alone in town, I generally feel that I'm an outsider here. There are no spaces that are consistently queer-focused.
- Have been verbally assaulted. Have seen many stickers with terf rhetoric. Have seen a LOT of hate comments online.
- Homophobic attitudes and stares and rude remarks when out in public if I hold my wife's hand.
- The ever changing political views. And the far right attacking minority communities (such as Muslims) makes me wonder if they are going to go after further minority communities (like the LGBTQIA+ community)
- I think with the rising far-right attitudes creeping back into society because of the likes of Reform etc, it has made me more conscious of being visibly gay out and about. It's sad that we seem to sliding backwards rather than progressing forwards as a society.
- We bought a house moved here over a year ago after visiting several times. I feel safe when here but concerned hearing stories about the pride banner being vandalised multiple times. Also being in several Congleton community chats on Facebook has made me feel unwelcome. The comments especially on the town hall pride flags being flown were very eye opening for how members of the community feel towards gay people.

Many LGBTQIA+ people have mixed feelings about living in Congleton in 2026



- It's fine in general, but it often feels like I don't have places to buy things that would aid with my comfort (eg: chest binders).
- Congleton chatback is full of homophobia especially when anything about pride is posted or promoted
- I'm 17, and I think teenagers still make fun of and ridicule LGBTQ people so I don't want to or feel comfortable to be open about it. I'm confident in myself and it's something I've always known, but I've still been closeted.
- Women are understanding, the men of this town know nothing more than how to abuse.
- I went to sixth form in Congleton and I was surprised by the difference in consideration of the LGBTQIA+ community from where I lived before. Before, I felt comfortable with my identity and had finally figured it out, but the reaction from my peers in school from what they even suspected about me sent me in the closet again and it's taken a long time to feel better about it. This plus everything I see about banners being ripped down and stolen and the horrible comments online doesn't make it feel like a very comfortable place to be a part of the community
- Working in hospitality in a forward facing role people of Congleton know my sexuality and I've only ever had 1 person who had a problem with me being gay.
- Most people nice but too many religious (Christian) people with extreme anti-homosexual views. It seems to have got worst in past 2 years.
- In person, I feel okay but there is so much online homophobic and transphobic behaviour in local groups it does worry me it'll spill out to in "real life"
- Mix of people here. Some are old enough to know better, as the saying goes.
- I loved seeing so many shops with pride displays & the Congleton market quarter with all their pride decorations. I was disappointed and a little worried about how much smaller pride was this year? I found it a bit overwhelming having it in such a small space indoors, and I think it was a shame there wasn't more stalls. The march was also greatly missed. I've been to pride almost every year since moving here, and this was the first year where it felt like less of a whole town thing, and more "hidden away".

There is concern about openness, especially in the street and in pubs



All places

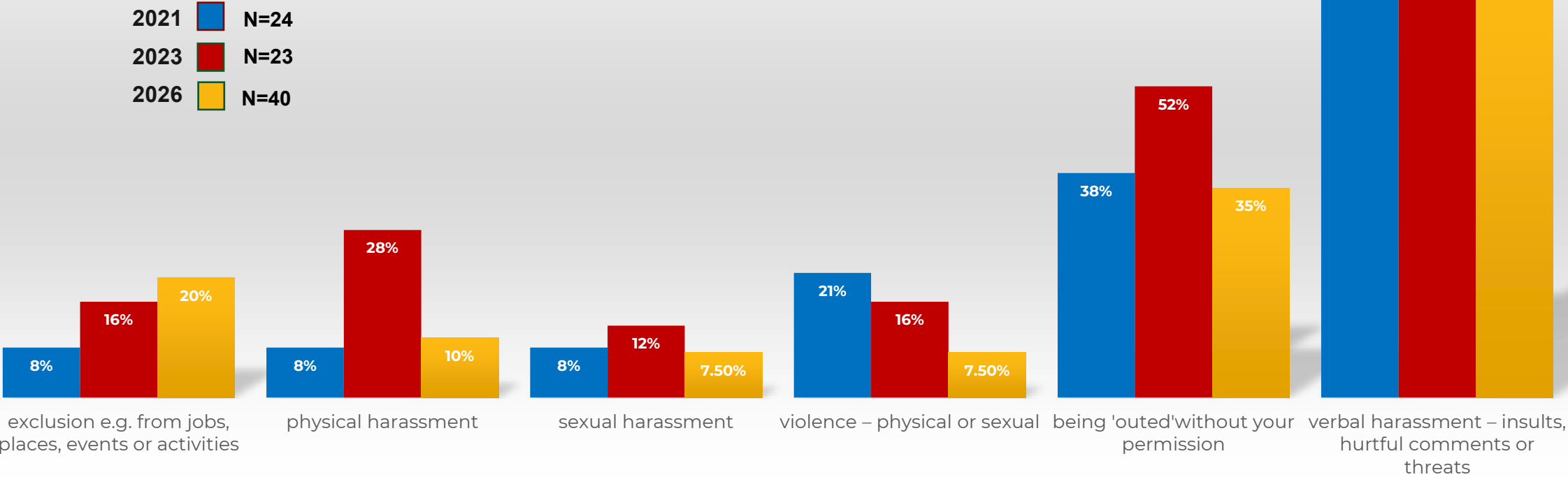
It may just be my age, but I'm wary of being openly seen in public generally - ie holding hands with husband

Generally cautious in Congleton.

Half of 2026 respondents reported harassment or abuse in Congleton



In Congleton, due to being LGBTQ+, have you ever experienced:



More information about harassment or abuse experienced by respondents in Congleton

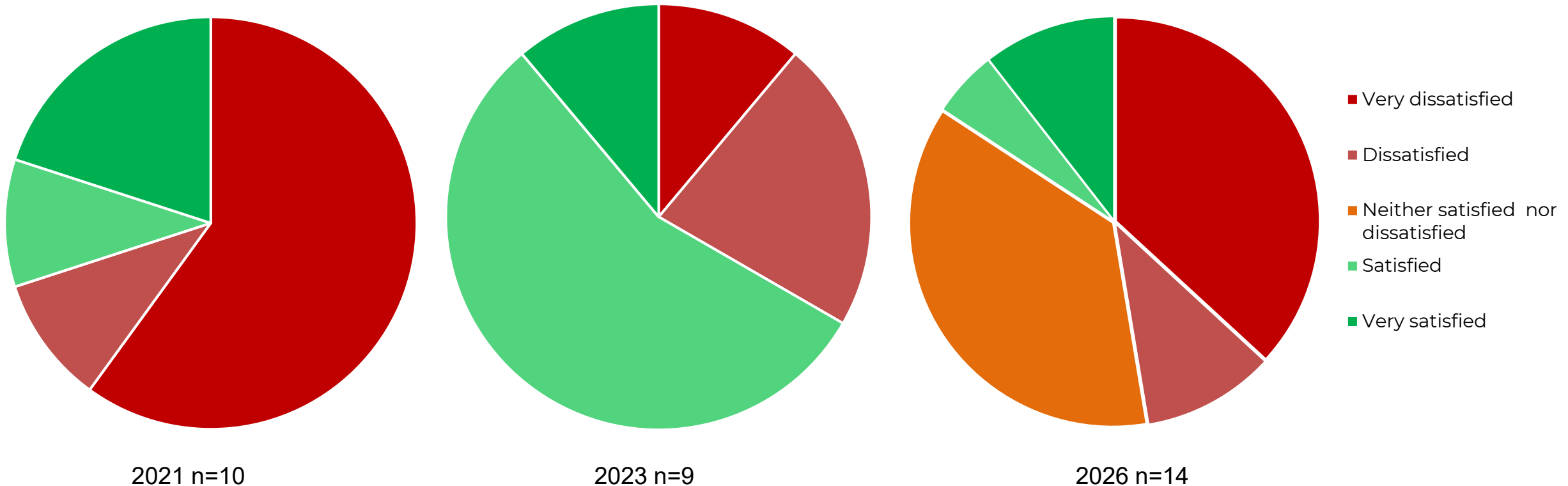


- Big park
- Family members have said various comments to strangers usually "I knew them before they were x"
Strangers shouting "wtf is that" when walking past
- I was outed to all of my colleagues at my old workplace in Congleton. I was constantly talked down to by my boss and misgendered/deadnamed purposely which eventually made me leave.
- A group of young lads shouted at me and my partner because we were laughing together walking through the park. We are both straight acting guys but these youngsters shouted "nonces" at us. For absolutely no reason at all.
- It feels like we're entering a backlash period and those would be inclined to shout in the street or throw things from cars feel empowered to do so without repercussion.
- I got accused of being a lesbian (as an insult) by a younger boy in my high-school for wearing a suit to a formal event as opposed to a dress. Said boy did not know I was part of the LGBTQ+ community, and was simply using it as an insult.
- I gave my girlfriend a peck on the mouth in a restaurant and two women sat on the table nearby gasped and proceeded to stare at us as if we had two heads
- I am excluded from any events which openly support gender /trans ideology, due to its track record of hostility towards GC women, including lesbians and bi women
- Exclusion from Congleton Pride themselves.
- Congleton Cricket Club - was outed without my permission by a male individual who portrayed myself as a gay tranny who needed to be chased out/removed from Congleton.
- Lawton House Surgery - Had to change my doctors surgery because of the highly transphobic abuse physically suffered by the receptionist team and certain GP's. Tesco - Customers who made verbal abuse. High Street, Lawton Street, Bridge Street - Places in which I now avoid at all costs.
- I've experienced none of these
- Congleton high school
- Hounded by a local woman via social media and via on the ground gossip defaming and libelling me. Vandalism and theft etc of the small community project I run.
- If you're in school, changing in the changing rooms, girls will laugh at you, ask if you're looking at them, etc. People will say you're a lesbian, aloud, when you're not ready to properly say that
- Facebook

The level of satisfaction with action taken on reporting abuse is mixed, and numbers reporting are still small



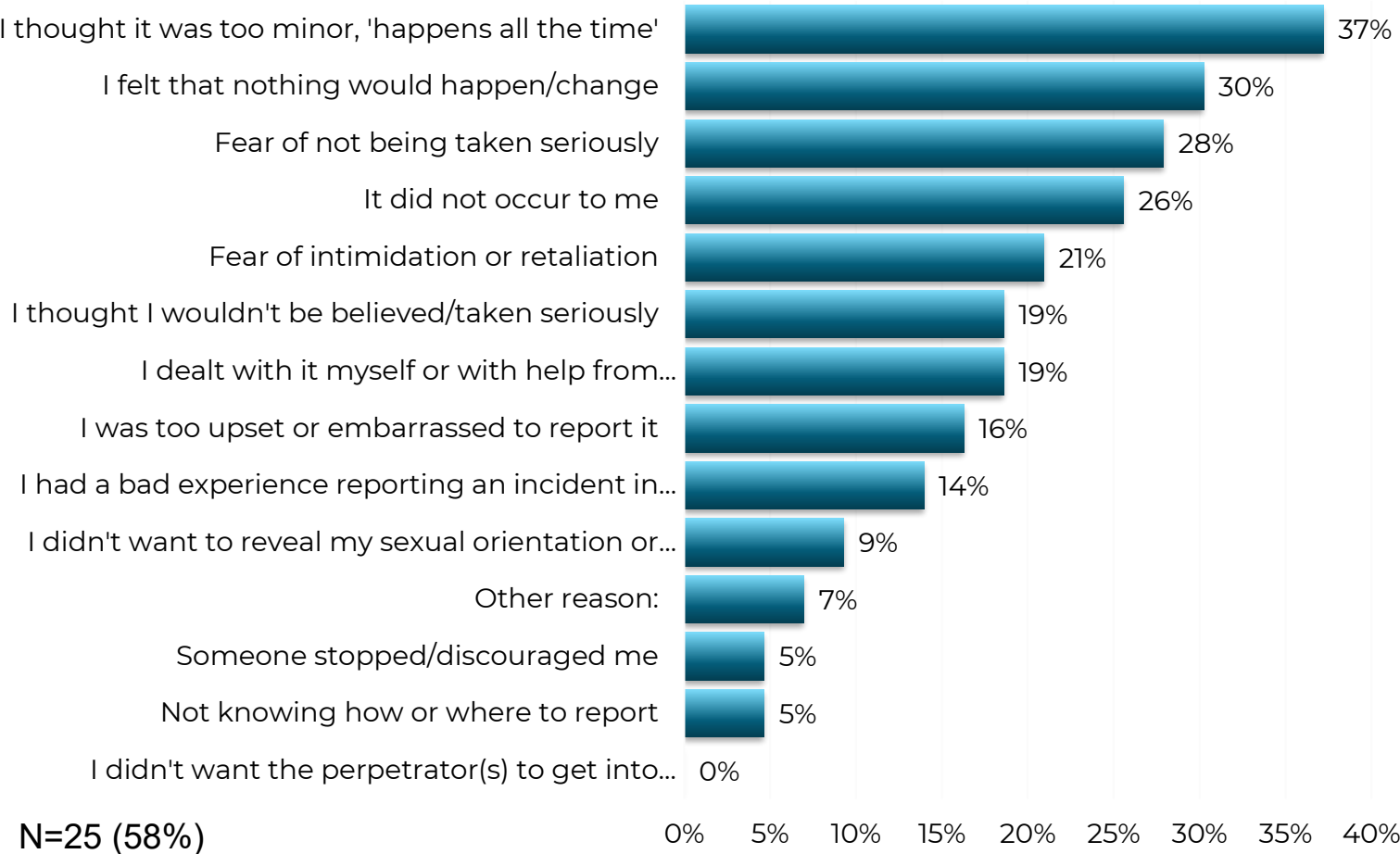
If you have reported harassment, abuse or violence to an authority in Congleton, how satisfied have you been with the action taken and outcome(s) ? :



More than half of responding LGBTQIA+ people experienced abuse and chose not to report it for a number of reasons



Have you experienced harassment, abuse or violence and NOT reported it in Congleton? If so, why didn't you report it?



Others think it's just making a fuss over nothing important.

Banned them from the premises and that was good enough for me.

My business and my personal social media account has been targeted by trans rights supporters

Quite happy to retaliate back and usually they end up more embarrassed and dont say anything else

I am married to a man, so most people don't understand that I am still part of the lgbtq+ society.

Sometimes it's easier to put into a box and forget about than to have to repeat it. Thankfully I have some good friends who have reported the some of the worst for me.

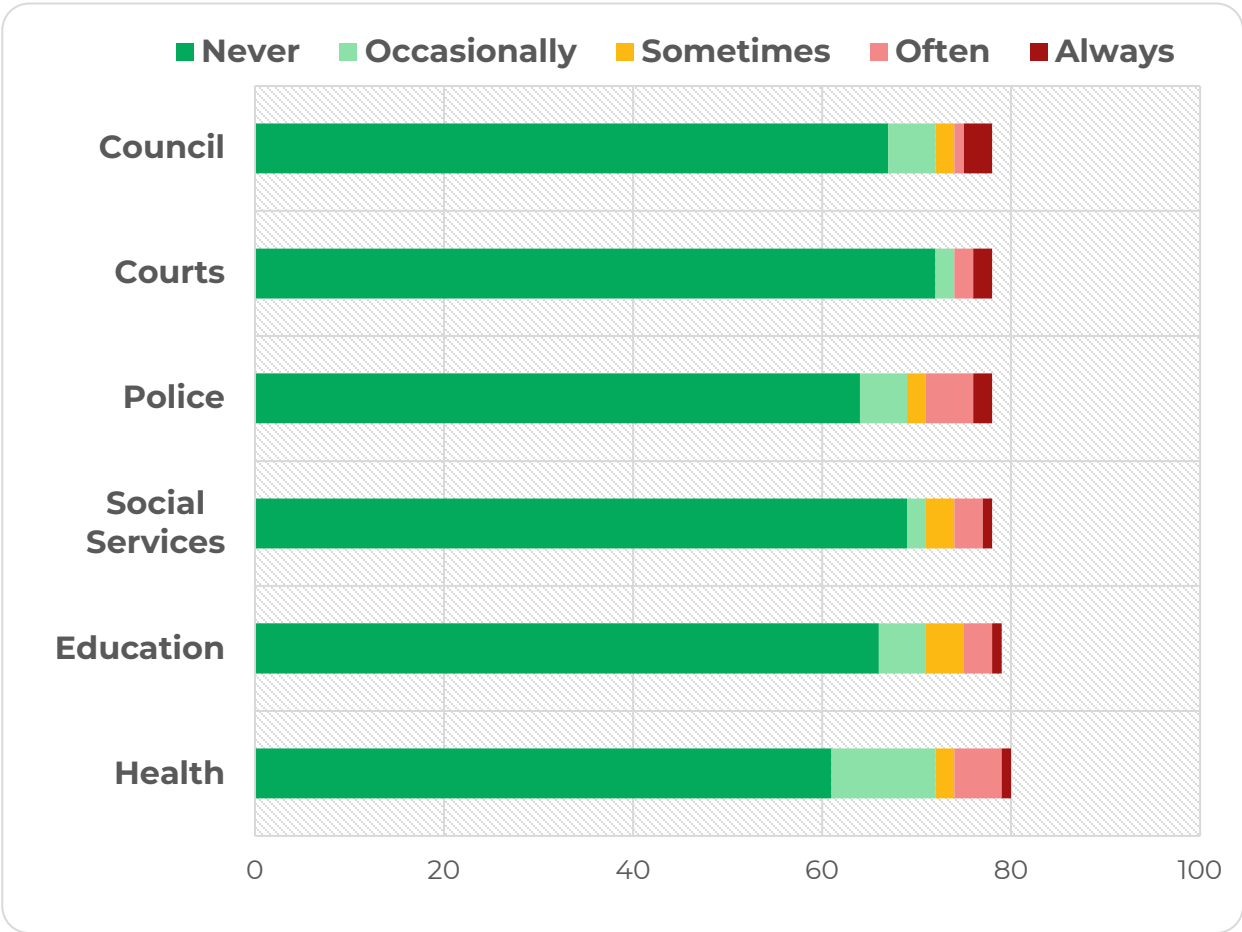
What really can the authorities do to a group of young kids. We didn't even know who they were.

Have a crime number for all the theft n damage but nothing for the rest. It astounds me people are allowed to get away with such bile behaviour.

Accessing public services in Congleton, some LGBTQIA+ people report discrimination (10-25%)



Has the fact you are LGBTQIA+ been a barrier to your accessing public services
(health, education, social services, police/justice system etc)?



N=80

Council refused to change my name on my property as I was apparently in arrears however I wasn't finally got it sorted a year ago even though I had legally changed my name over 10 years ago

Not accessed some of these services. No comment on police.

More historic than recent certainly.

Dealing with people via the phone is tricky.

I've never been in a position where I have had to access these services accept from education, so I dont know if I would have issues accessing them if I did need them.

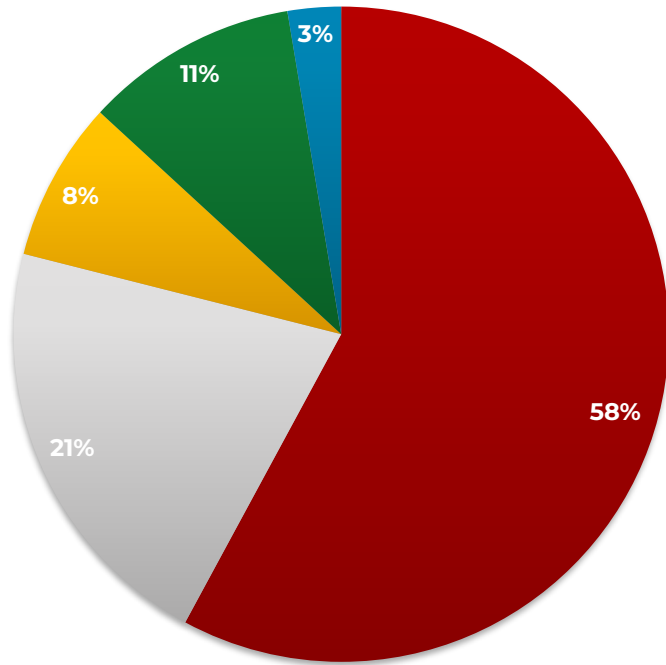
Cheshire East Council are probably the most prejudice people on this planet. Sarah Russel MP wouldn't even acknowledge my complaints. Congleton town is not a friendly town for LGBTQI+... Pride is just a place to advertise and open oneself up to a plethora of abuse from town biggots.

My wife needed an appendectomy and the hospital would not perform surgery until they had her give a pregnancy test despite us both being gay, and married to one another

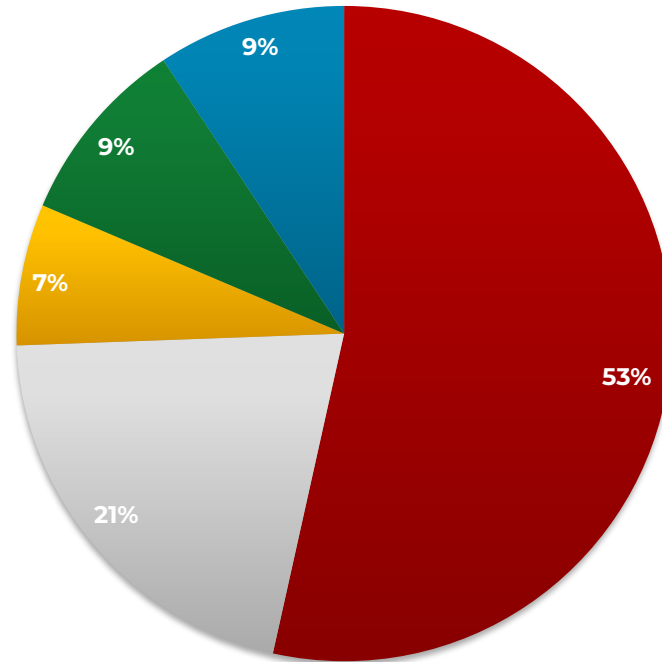
Only 42% attended Pride the year before, and 21% said 'I didn't want to go'



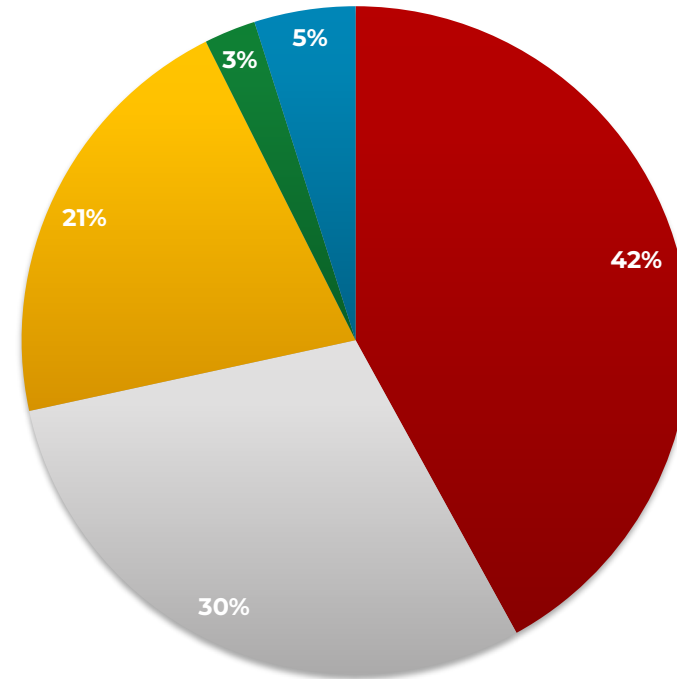
With respect to Congleton Pride last year, what did you do?



2021
N=38



2023
N=43



2026
N=81

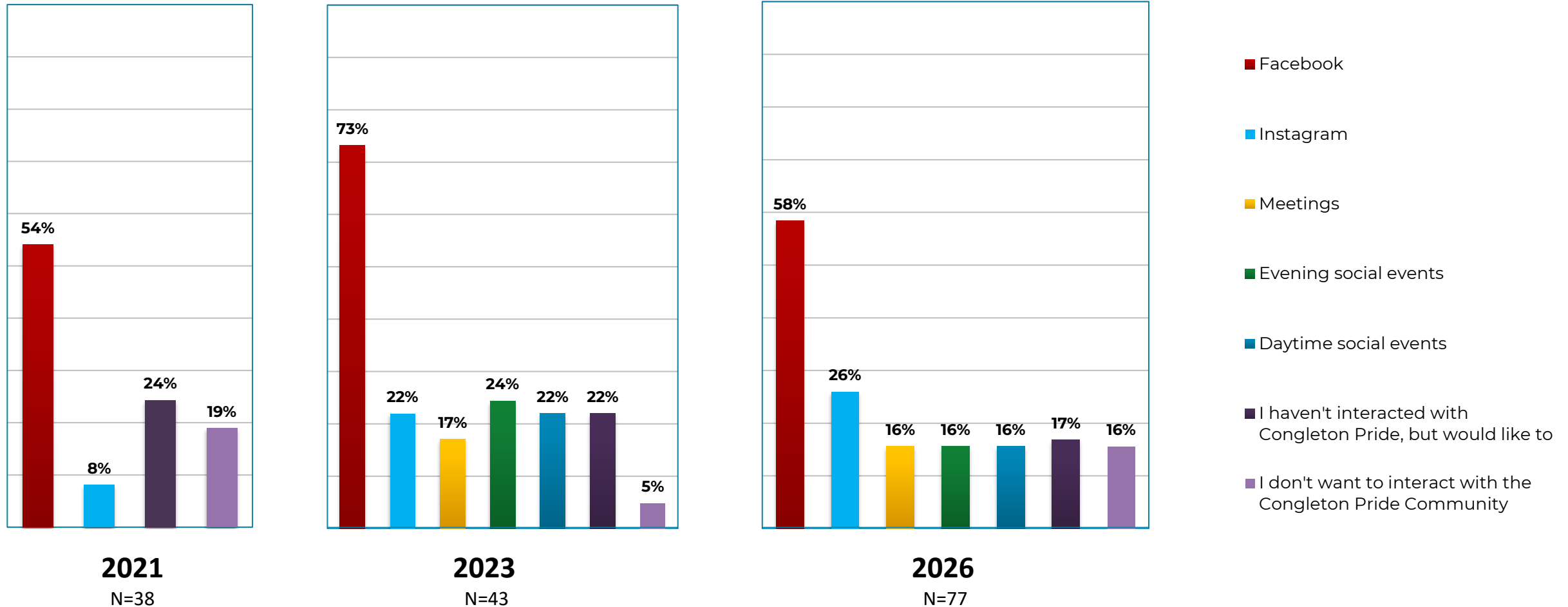
- I attended
- I wanted to go but couldn't
- I didn't want to go
- I didn't know it was happening
- I didn't live in Congleton then



There are now more ways to interact with Congleton Pride

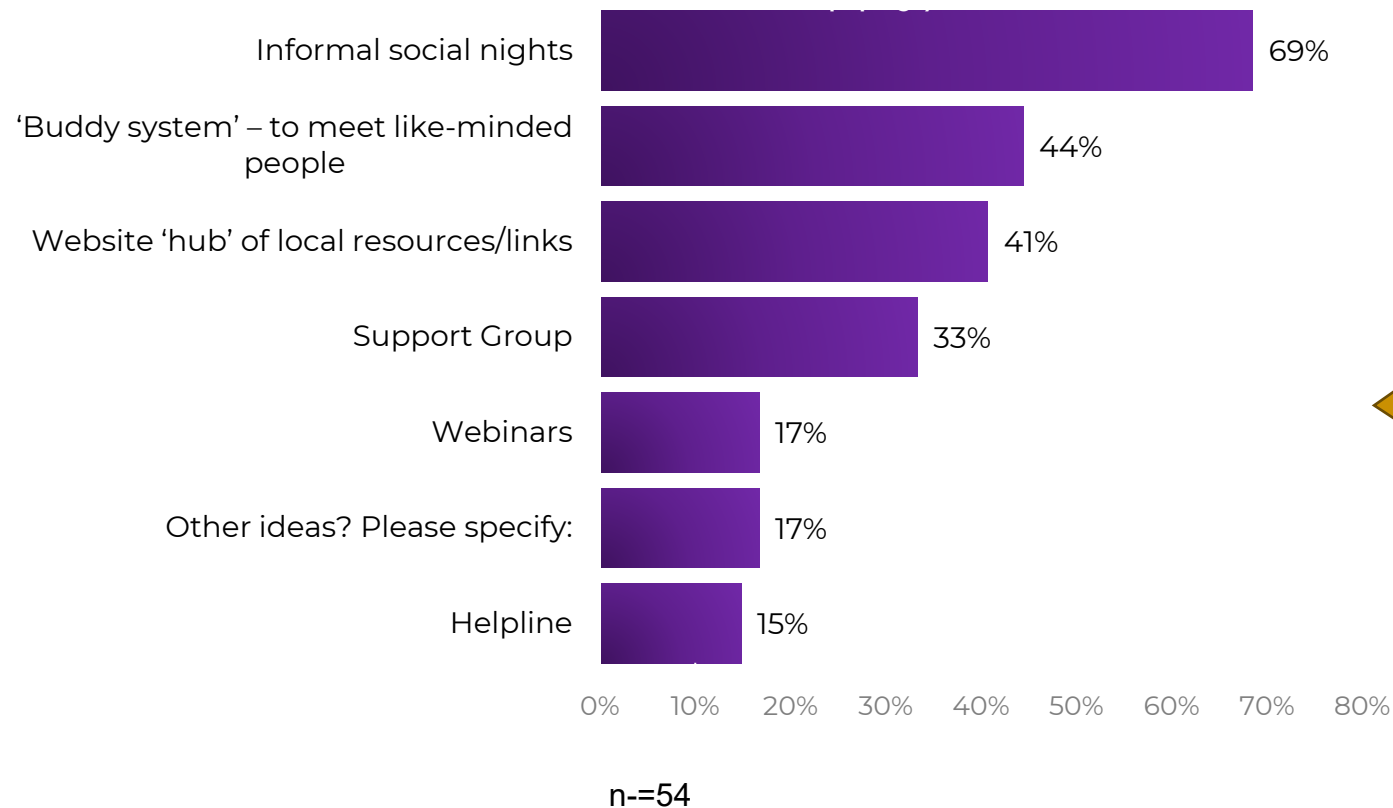


Do you interact with the Congleton Pride Community in other ways? (choose all that apply)





Other things respondents would like from Pride



An online community would be good

Youth support group

I've been part of many groups in the past, and have a lot of experience in mentoring, support network facilitation, social events etc - I haven't seen anything like this promoted or being visible so far, if it does happen.

I would like to meet other LGBTQ+ people and make friends.

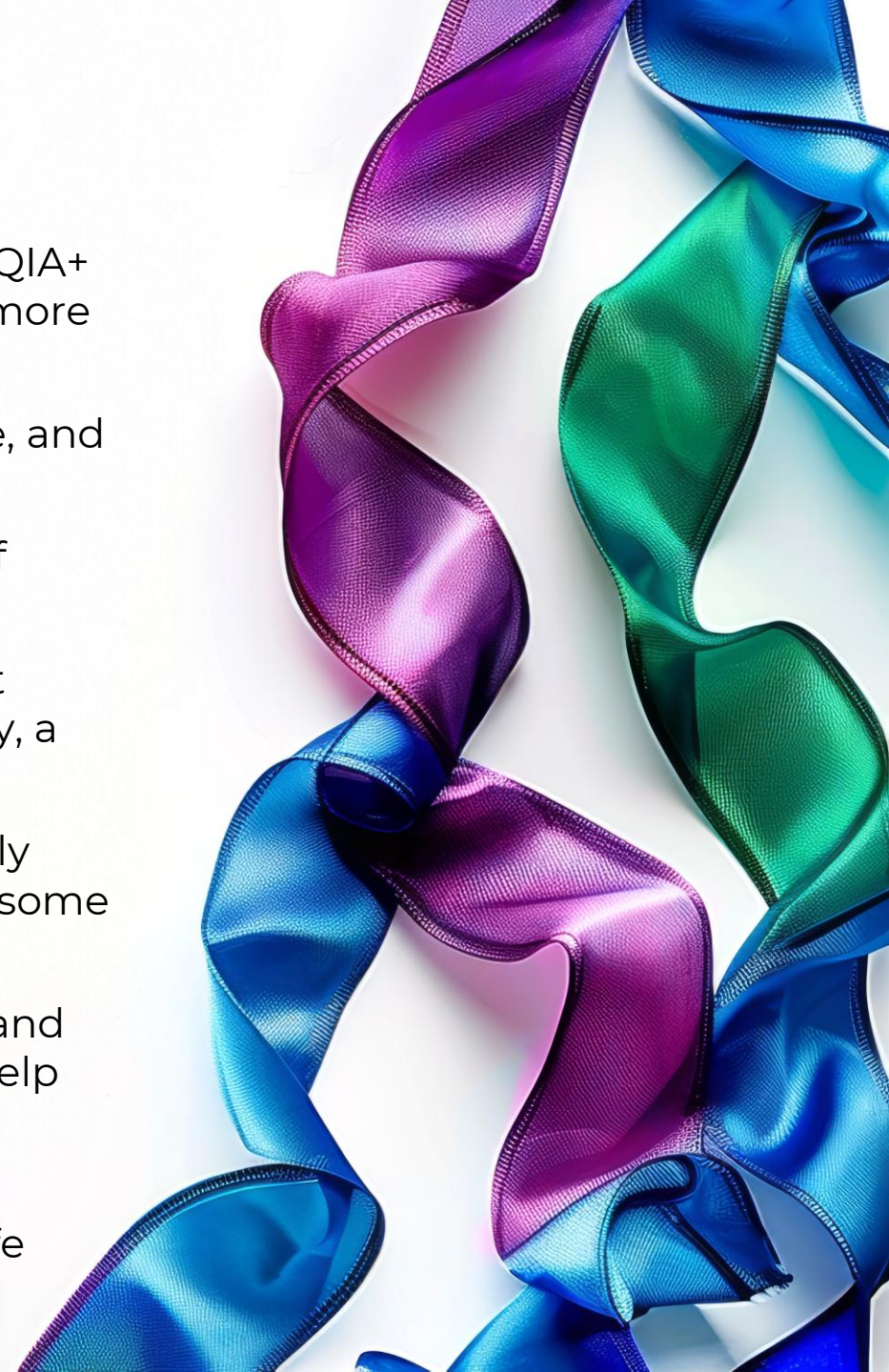
I like the idea of smaller more informal ways of meeting people but I'd be put off by the fear that it would attract a load of young people/teens, maybe it could be targeted at over 40s for example

All of the above really, but just more social events for all ages, I'm 25 but not very confident when talking about my sexuality so to meet other people my age and make new friendships would be really appreciated. This town, just like any other, really needs it.



Conclusions

- ❖ Progress seems to have slipped back in terms of attitudes to LGBTQIA+ people, although most people are still inclusive. There were many more comments this year describing why people feel as they do.
- ❖ Members of the community still experience harassment and abuse, and most don't report it for various reasons.
- ❖ LGBTQIA+ people interact with Congleton Pride in a wide variety of ways.
- ❖ Public attitudes are more polarised, with some very supportive, but many more anti-Pride and anti LGBTQIA+ comments, and ironically, a significant minority saying that Pride is 'no longer needed'.
- ❖ Some of this is not surprising, given the national narrative, especially around trans people, and the biased coverage in the national (and some local) media.
- ❖ As previously, LGBTQIA+ people want more than an annual event, and there is a significant number asking for signposts to information, help and support.
- ❖ Congleton Pride's ongoing social events are meeting a need for LGBTQIA+ people to enjoy a variety of activities in a friendly and safe space.





Thank You