

**Brighton & Hove City Council**

# **LGBTQ+ AUDIT**



# Contents

---

Introduction and Services included	3
Summary & Recommendations	4
Snapshot #1 - Current Service Users	7
Snapshot #2 - Current Service Users	8
Snapshot #3 - Current Service Users	8
Survey Questions	9
Switchboard: Perspectives on LGBTQ+ Homelessness in Brighton and Hove	23
LGBTQ+ Voices	24
Housing Professional Voices	25
Evaluation and Experience from the LGBTQ+ Night Shelter Pilot	26
Actions and Future	27



# Introduction

---

The Housing Commissioning Team completed a voluntary audit in partnership with LGBT Switchboard with services across the Rough Sleeper and Single Homeless Pathway – Adults & Young People.

The Audit was undertaken following internal review of services commissioned by BHCC in comparison with other cities which also have large LGBTQ+ communities. Switchboard had also recently undertaken a LGBTQ+ Nightshelter in partnership with Stonewall Housing. BHCC has a commitment to ensure that commissioned services are providing good quality, inclusive service for LGBTQ+ people.

The majority of services that took part were commissioned, by Brighton & Hove City Council with some non-commissioned services also taking part. Services represented the majority of provision within the Single Adult, Rough Sleeper and Young Persons Accommodation pathways. This includes some accommodation based services as well as non-accommodation-based outreach, advice or work and learning services.

The audit was completed in July 2023, the methodology used was to both gather a snapshot of gender and sexuality of service users as well as narrative feedback around inclusivity best practice and the challenges faced by providers. BHCC working with Switchboard to design a set of questions that would gather the information regarded in an inclusive format. In addition, the Council is conscious of Brighton & Hove having a large and varied LGBTQ+ community and currently the Council does not commission any specific housing projects for this group. As a starting point to look at whether these services are required within the city and what would most benefit the communities, the audit was completed.

We would like to thank all the organizations that provided open and reflective feedback. Services included are: St Mungo's / Equinox Women's service / Gloucester Street / CGL Peer Support / Phase One / YMCA DLG / Gareth Stacey House / Nightstop / St Patrick's / Bennett House / Evolve / Fred Emery Court / George Williams Mews / Leslie Best House / Stanley Court / William Colier House / Lansworth House / YAC / Seagull / CGL Outreach / Clocktower Sanctuary / Stopover / Step by Step /

# Summary and Recommendations

---

It has been clear through reading the returned audits that commissioned services are committed to working effectively with clients who are LGBTQ+, and providing, safe inclusive services to reflect the needs of this community. We have seen some fantastic examples of good practice, particularly across the young persons pathway, which all providers are encouraged to follow once the audit and its findings are released.

It was clear from reviewing the data that there were a number of clients who did not wish to disclose information about their gender and sexuality and/or or this was either not known and/or not recorded by service providers. This raises a query about whether clients living in/using services feel safe and able to disclose this information or whether there is an issue of staff requiring further training and/or support to feel confident to ask for this information in an open and inclusive way.

As a service we have also reflected and looked at the approach for the audit and the benefit that could have come from applying an intersectional lens to the data gathered. With taking an intersectional approach to the audit we may have been better able to understand the experience of Black and Racially Minoritised LGBTQ+ individuals within the pathway, alongside further exploring an understanding how age, economic status and accessibility also interact with the needs of our LGBTQ+ clients. As a result we aim to build an intersectionality approach into ongoing pieces of similar work and allow this to inform future commissioning.

We have reviewed the information provided by the audit to make the following recommendations and commitments for both Brighton & Hove City Council and partners across the supported pathways.

1) LGBTQ+ inclusion training to be commissioned and provided across the pathways, to service managers. Training was provided at service manager level, intended to be disseminated to respective organisations internally. This took place in early 2024. It is recommended that providers seek training from organisations run by/for LGBTQ+ communities, and monitor the effectiveness of the training in improving services accordingly.

2) BHCC will aim to build in LGBTQ+ lived experience into future commissioning, considering LGBTQ+ specific services but ensure all services are inclusive.

3) BHCC will include the information from the audit to help shape and support the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

4) BHCC will seek evidence of LGBTQ+-affirmative practices, policies and training in future contract reviews, including feedback from service users where possible

5) BHCC will maximise any future funding opportunities that may be available to support LGBTQ+ residents, working in partnership wherever possible with LGBTQ+ services

6) All services across the pathway are recommended to have a LGBTQ+ champion, and to ensure that bullying, harassment and discrimination procedures include specific reference to LGBTQ+ communities, and take into account intersectionality (ie, people who have more than one protected characteristic).

7) All services to review how equalities data is a) sought and b) recorded to reduce data recorded as “not disclosed” or “not known”. This may include seeking specific training/ guidance by LGBTQ+ organisations. BHCC will ensure that recording systems are improved (for example, Bthink), so that information about LGBTQ+ demographics can be recorded accurately. Improved service reporting on equalities data also helps providers and BHCC to better understand how race, nationality, ethnicity (including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller experiences) interact with LGBTQ+ experiences and how services can be shaped to better support with individuals.

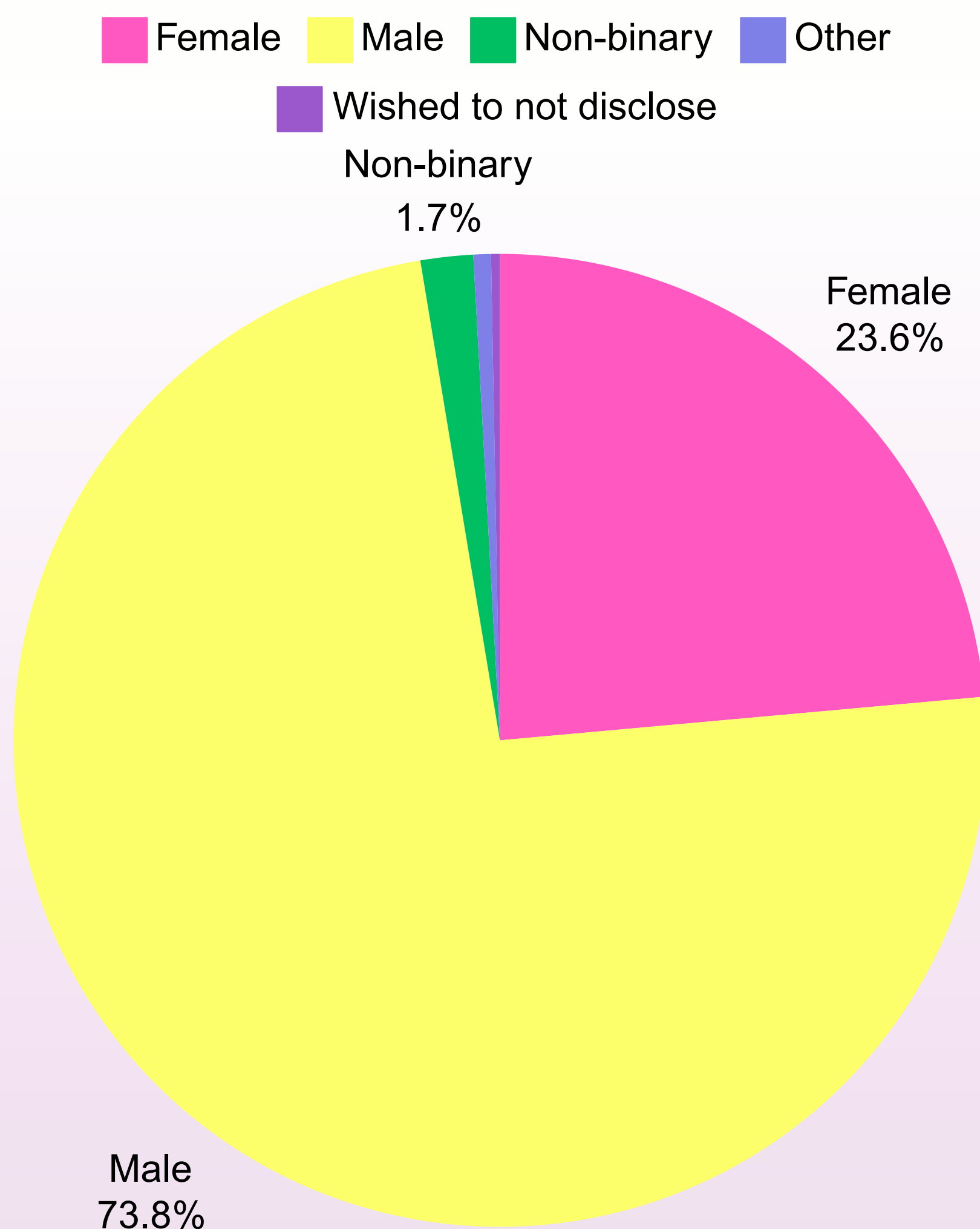
8) BHCC to apply the learning from this audit to its Temporary Accommodation profile, with the view to developing a similar audit for households in Temporary Accommodation alongside completing LGBTQ+ inclusion training for staff and providers of temporary accommodation.

9) BHCC to ensure that ongoing audits apply an intersectionality lens to data gathering and analysis, working to ensure that all aspects of a clients identity are considered and that BHCC run or commissioned services work to address the challenges that might be faced by clients.

# Information from the Snapshot

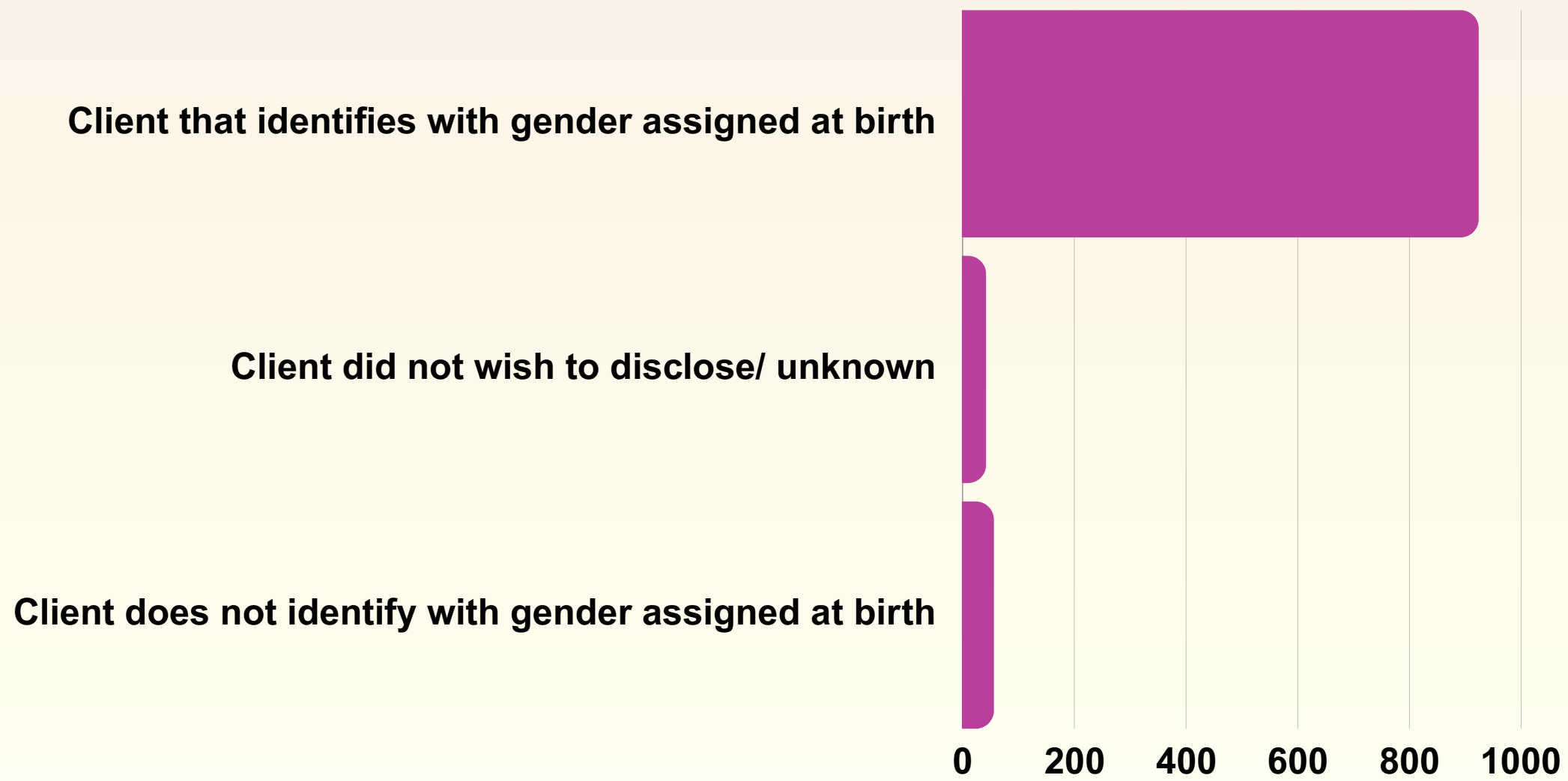
Services were asked to provide snapshot information related to people living in or using services

## Snapshot #1 - Current Service Users



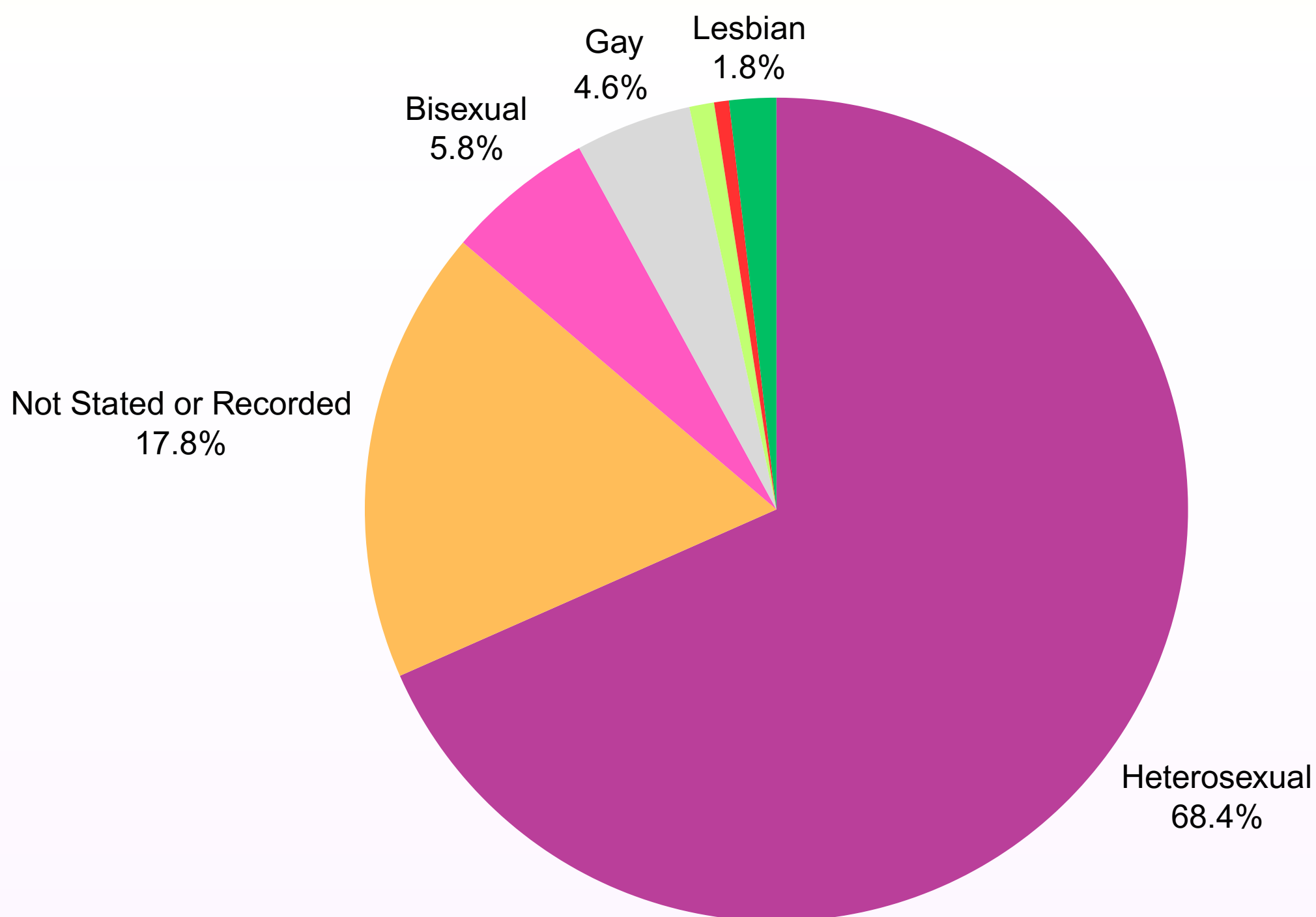
1031 users in total: Male - 761, Female - 243, Non-binary - 18, Other - 6, Wish to not disclose - 3

## Snapshot #2 - Current Service Users



1031 users in total: Client that identifies with gender assigned at birth - 924, Client does not identify with gender assigned at birth - 42, Client did not wish to disclose/unknown - 56

## Snapshot #3 - Current Service Users



1031 users in total: Heterosexual - 705, Not stated or recorded - 184, Bisexual - 60, Gay - 47, Lesbian - 19, Queer - 10, Pansexual - 6



# Survey Questions

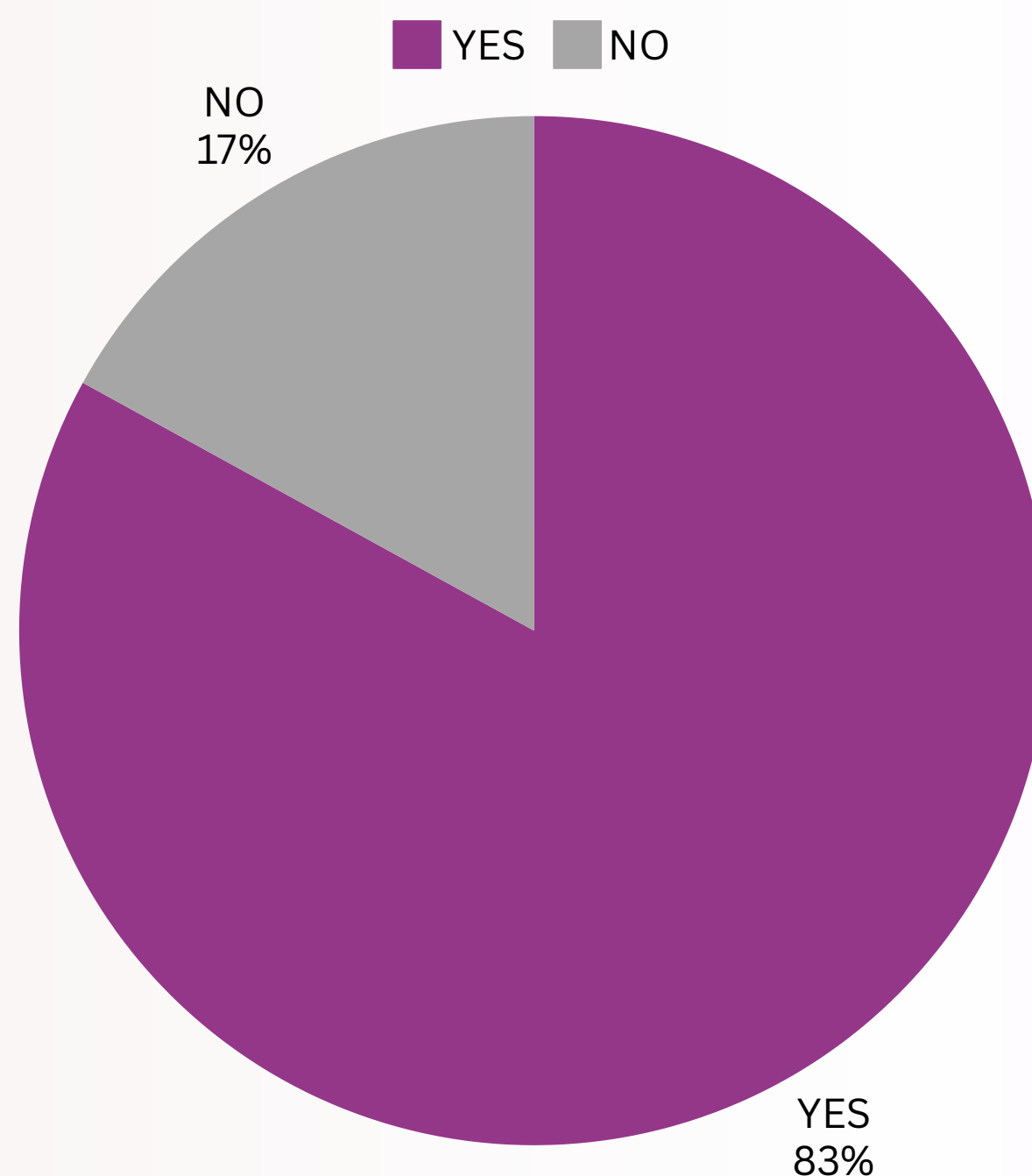
---

## 1. How does your service demonstrate inclusivity?

Badges  
Stickers  
Posters  
Training  
Ribbons  
Lanyards  
Pronouns  
Openness in  
Open door policy  
keywork  
sessions  
Inclusive options  
on enrolment  
forms  
EDI  
Champions

\*Two services reported that they currently do not utilise any visual displays of inclusivity

## 2. Does your project provide any specific LGBTQ+ services?



## 3. If yes, what are they?

### Advice Services:

*“We are in partnership with Sussex Nightstop and Allsorts to deliver specific activities that deliver outcomes for LGBTQ+ young people at risk of homelessness including appropriate pathways for their needs and family mediation”*

*“The Evolve group for LGBTQ+ clients”*

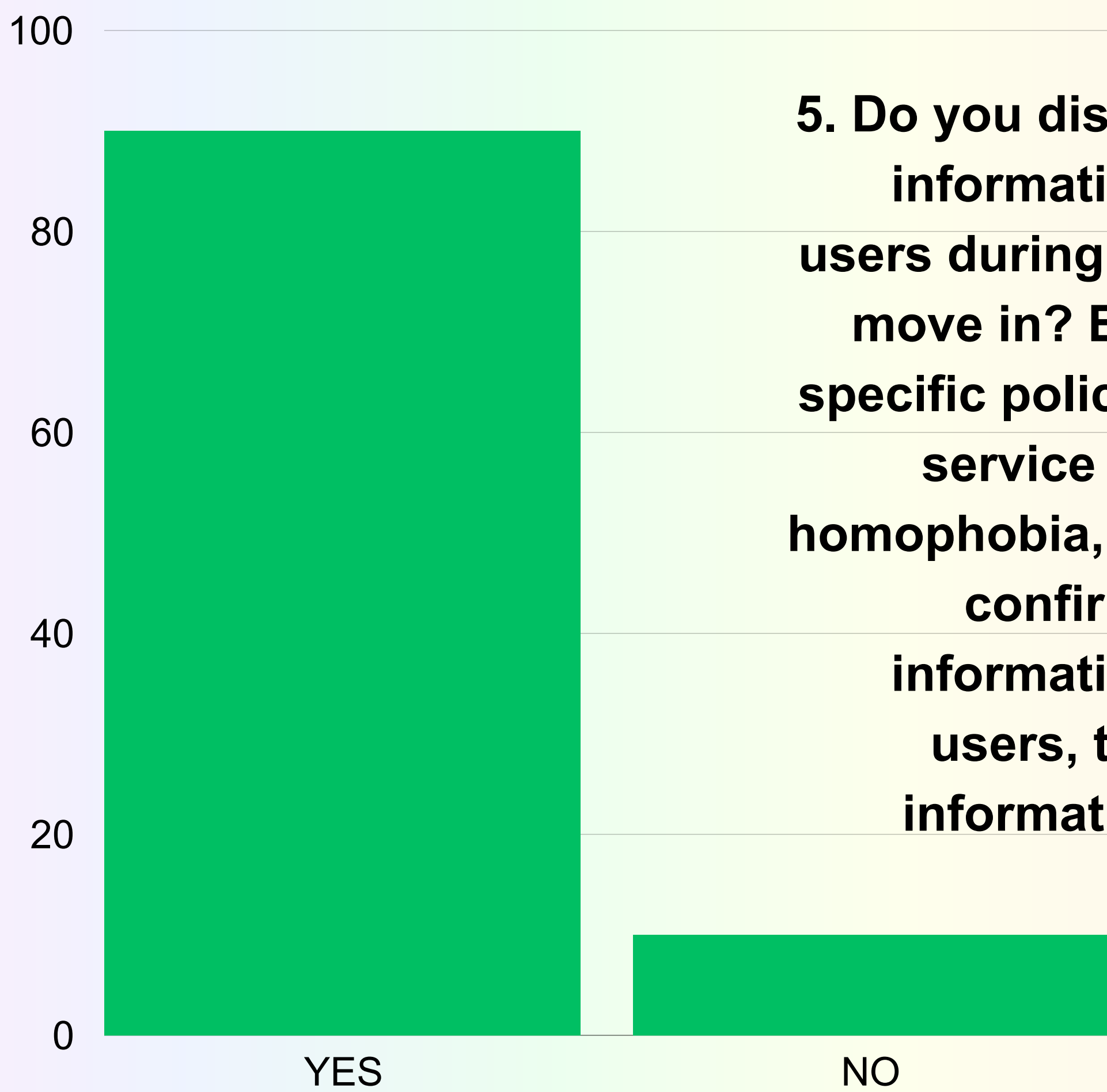
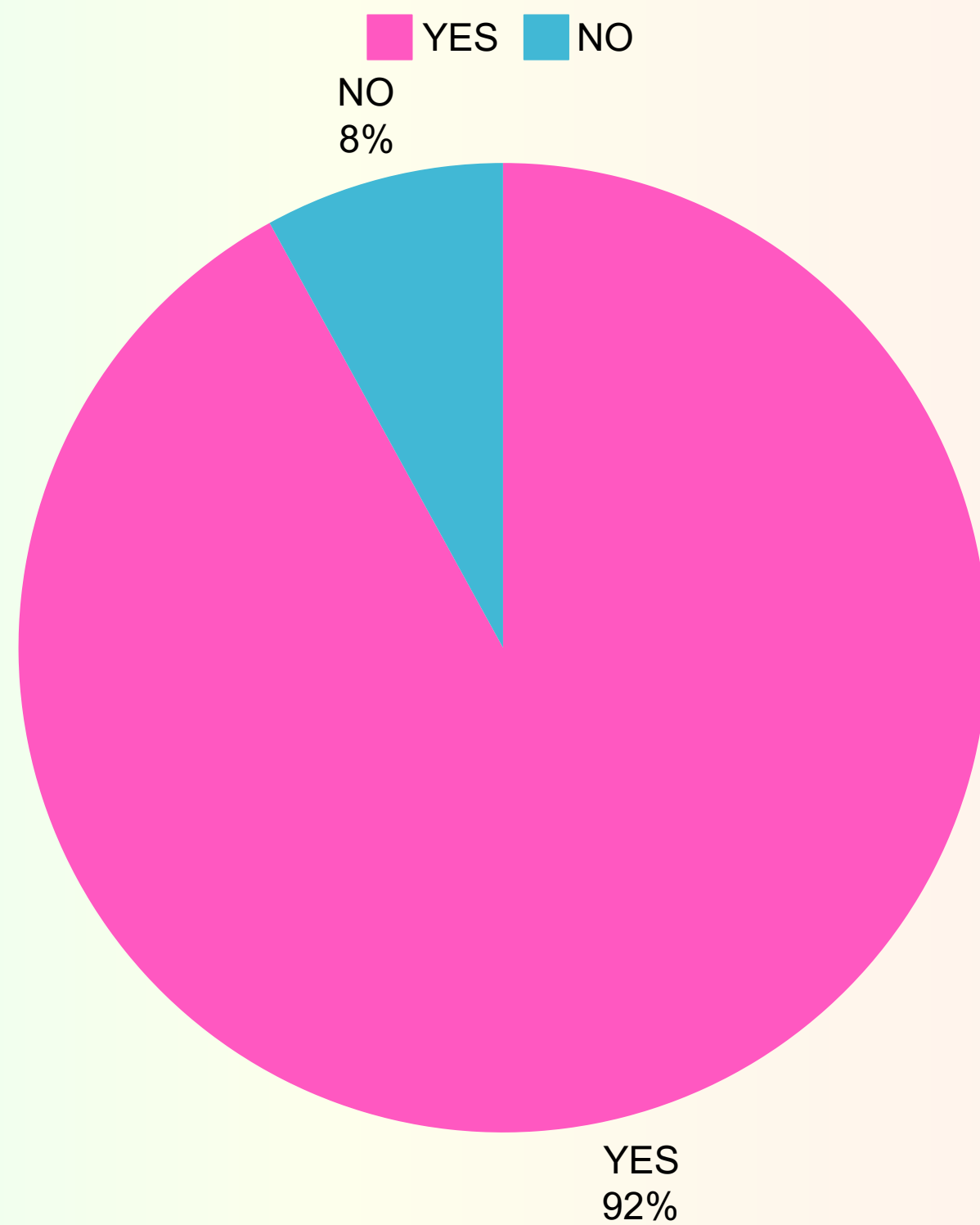
### Accommodation-based Services:

*“Although we do not directly have a service, we promote and signpost to LGBTQ+ services.”*

*“Self-identified women and gender minorities group. Operated quarterly by staff for any tenant”*

*“We are partners with Allsorts, Clock Tower Sanctuary and YAC and offer bespoke training to all staff and volunteers.”*

#### 4. Do you ask service users their preferred pronouns?



**5. Do you discuss equalities information with service users during assessment or move in? E.g., discussing specific policies within your service around racism, homophobia, transphobia or confirming equalities information with service users, to see if referral information is accurate.**

## Some examples of this discussion/working practices from different projects were:

“Part of client move in involves discussing what behaviour is expected from them and what behaviour they should expect to receive. This includes what our position is on homophobia, racism and transphobia and what action we would take and/or recommend if it arises. The organisational Equality Statement is in the client handbook and on the website. It's reinforced when theirs [sic] an incident involving those factors”

“Yes, at interview we ask additional information surrounding identity / pronouns / sexuality, and ask this again during keyworks as appropriate”

“Yes, we ask if the young person needs support around their identity or gender, any learning difficulty, registered disabled, any sensory impairment, any other additional needs, any access requirements related to faith or culture, any ESOL support”

“When receiving a referral, we look through referral paperwork to see if the client identifies as LGBT+, which services they are linked in with currently, if they have experienced any discrimination previously or have been a perpetrator of any discrimination. We will then discuss this within the housing assessment. In our Licence Agreement, we state that we will not tolerate any form of discrimination in the service. This is read through with residents at move on, as well as explaining the process of what to do if they are experiencing any harassment or discrimination. When deciding where to place a new resident, we will try to house match them in order to ensure they are moving into a house where they are with others who are accepting and understanding”

“We confirm equalities information and have discussed with clients how they prefer this information to be presented on triage forms. We use a trauma informed intersectional approach when working with young people, so we signpost and support with the correct services to suit their needs, rather than offering generic advice”

***“this is discussed as “Ongoing”  
Service #1***

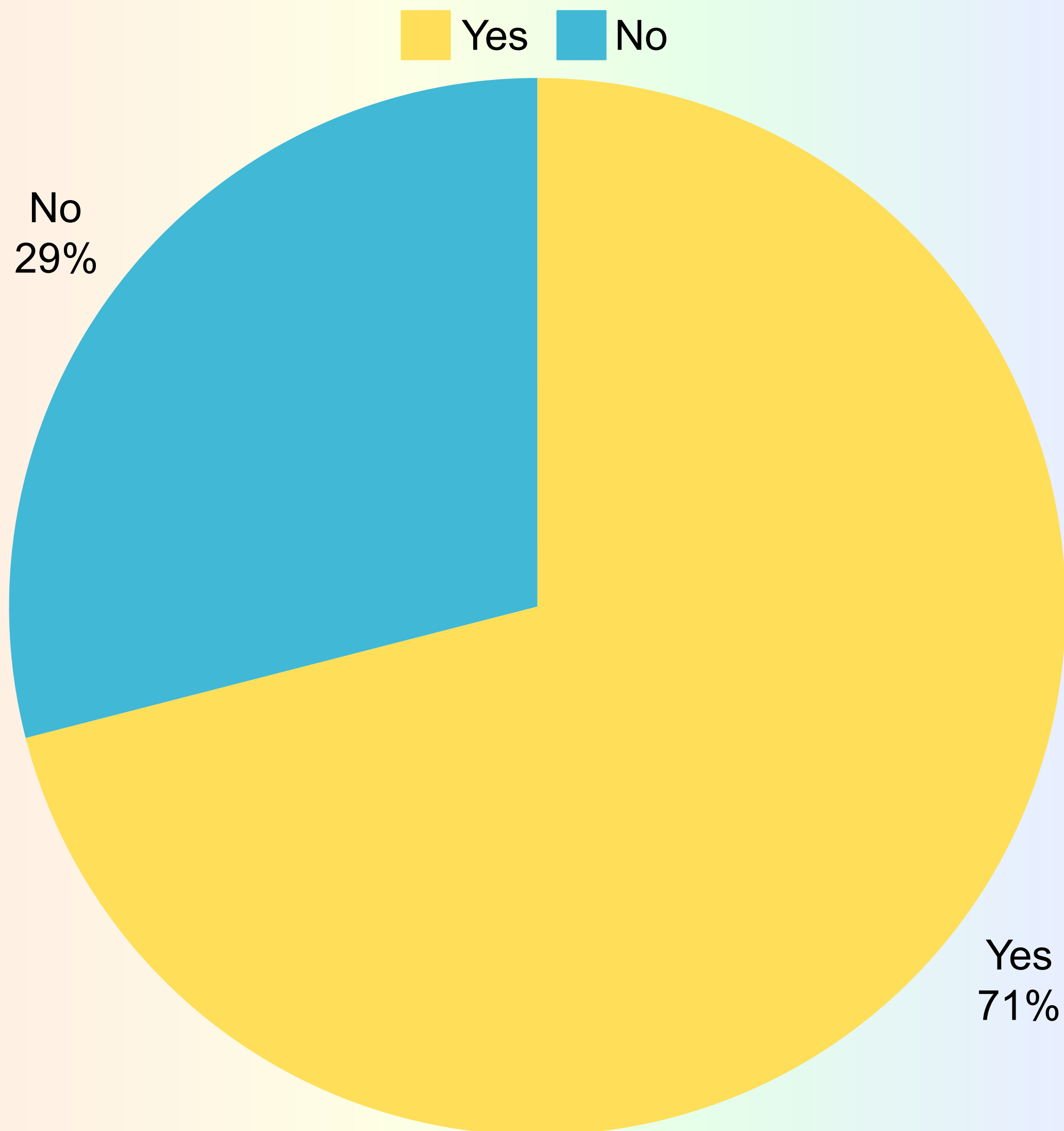
***“we get information from the referrers about this”  
Service #2***

**6. If no, when is it discussed?**

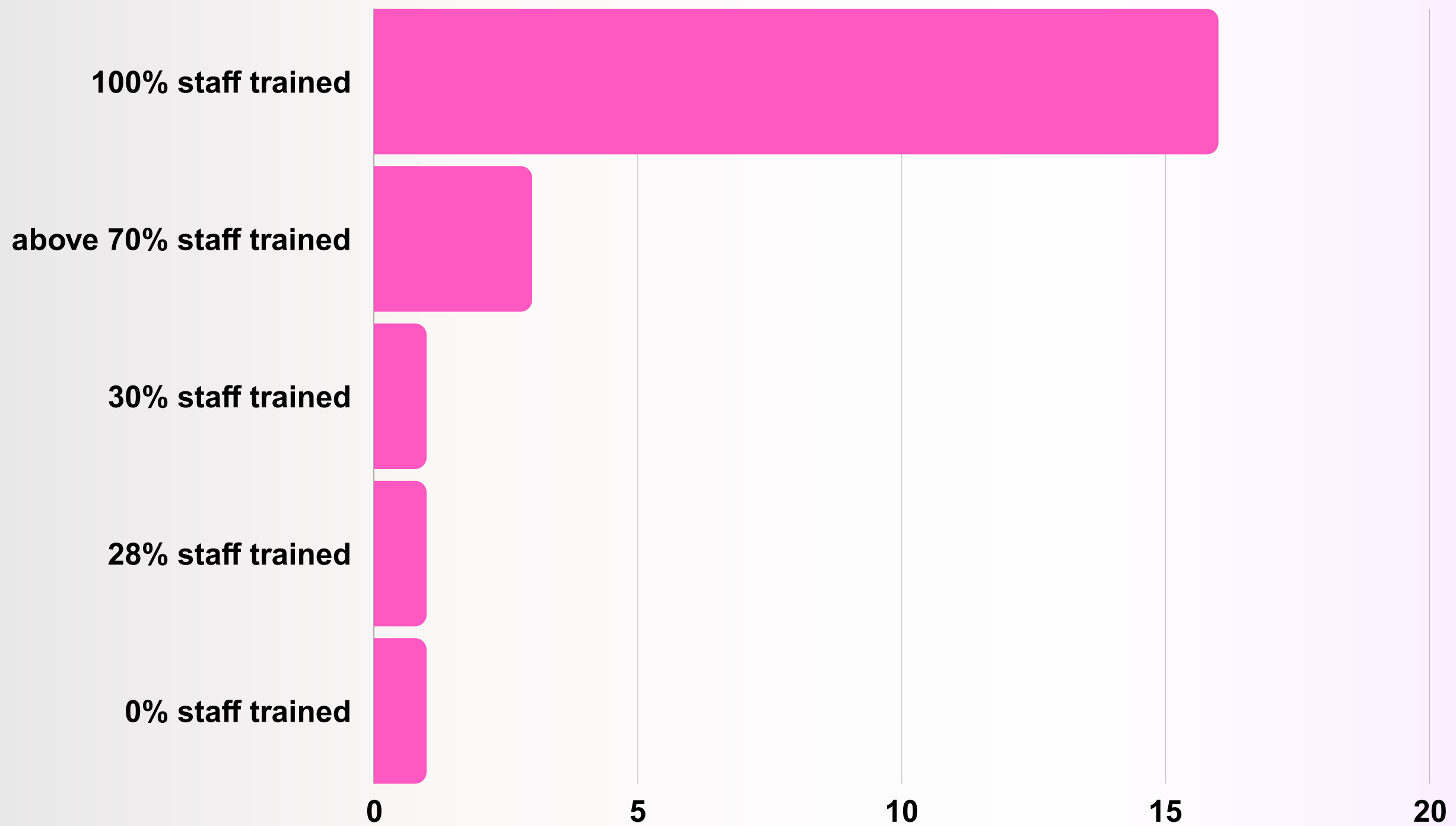
***“this behaviour is challenged when faced.”  
Service #3***

***“it is discussed either when there is a need for the safety of others in the centre. Or once we get to know the client better and have built some rapport.”  
Service #4***

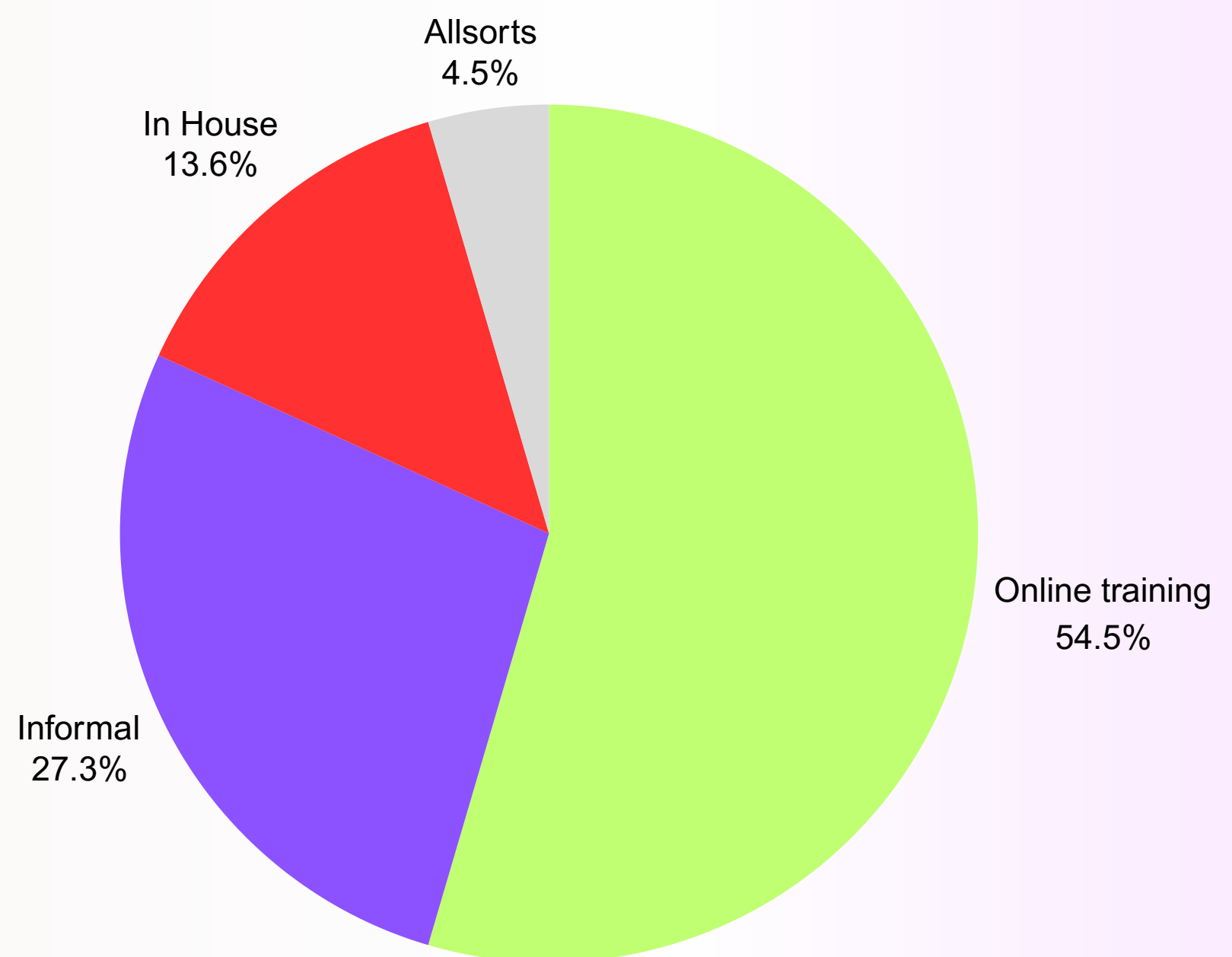
## 7. Are staff trained to use gender neutral language when communicating through writing or verbally with service users?



# 8. What percentage of your team have been trained in LGBTQ+ affirmative practice?



# 9. What form did this training take?



## Examples of training given were:

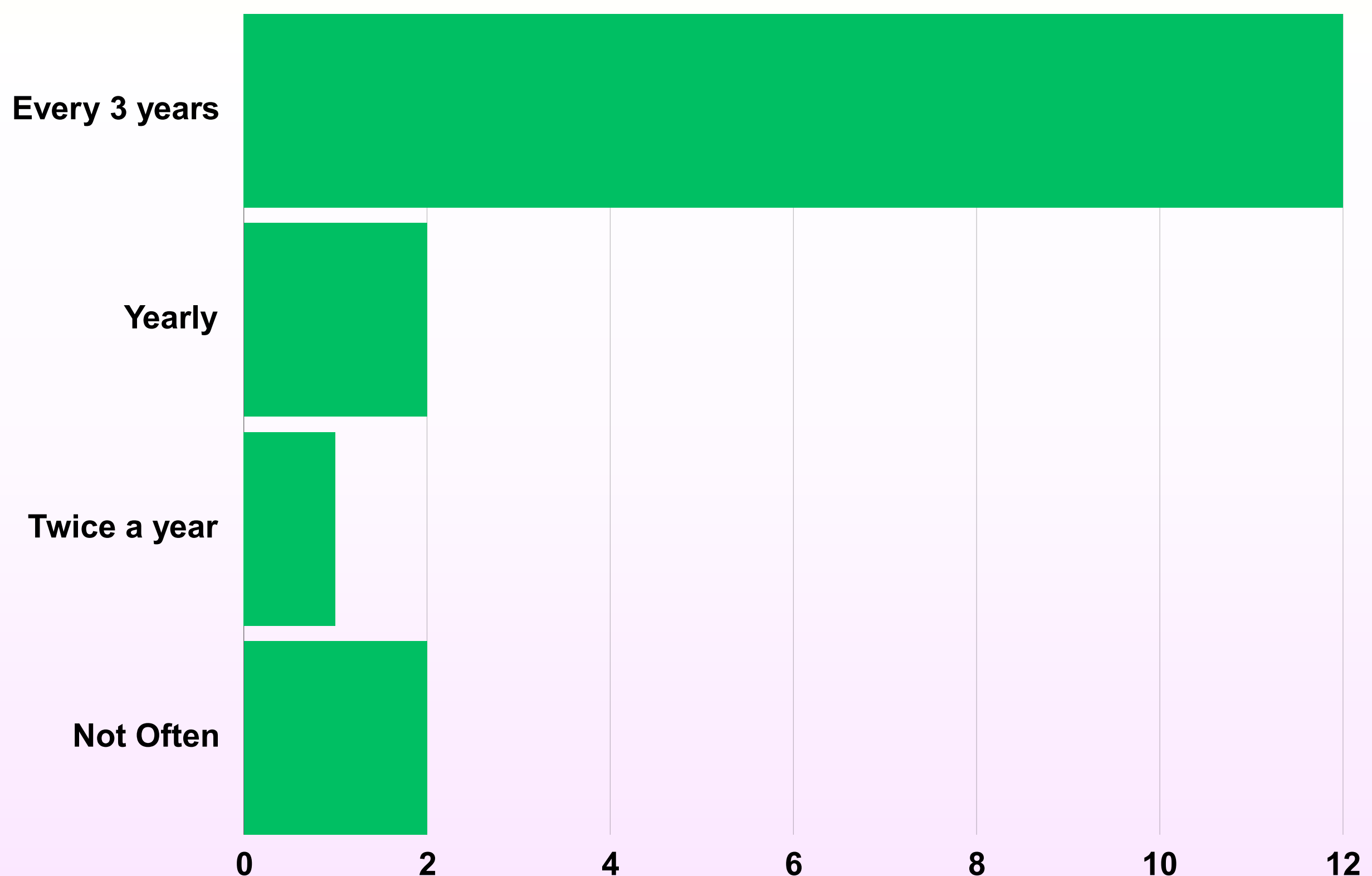
“Our learning platform - Me Learning”

“training on LGBTQ specific esp cruising/chem sex etc, domestic violence in queer couples, we go to LGBTQIA+ homelessness specific events to learn about how it intersects.”

“Training with Switchboard on DV in the LGBTQ+ Community”

“ALLSORTS TRANS AWARENESS TRAINING”

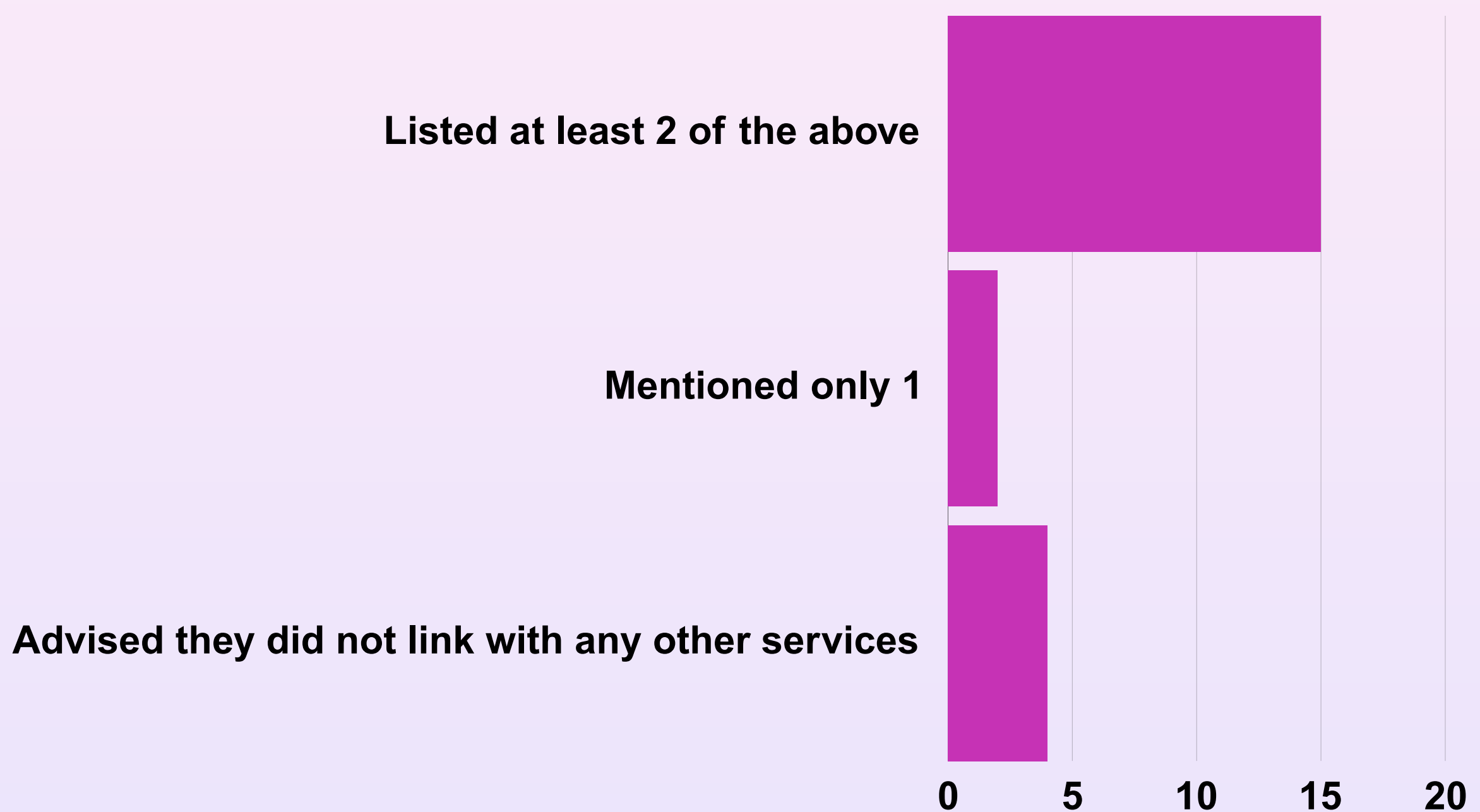
## 10. How often is this training refreshed?



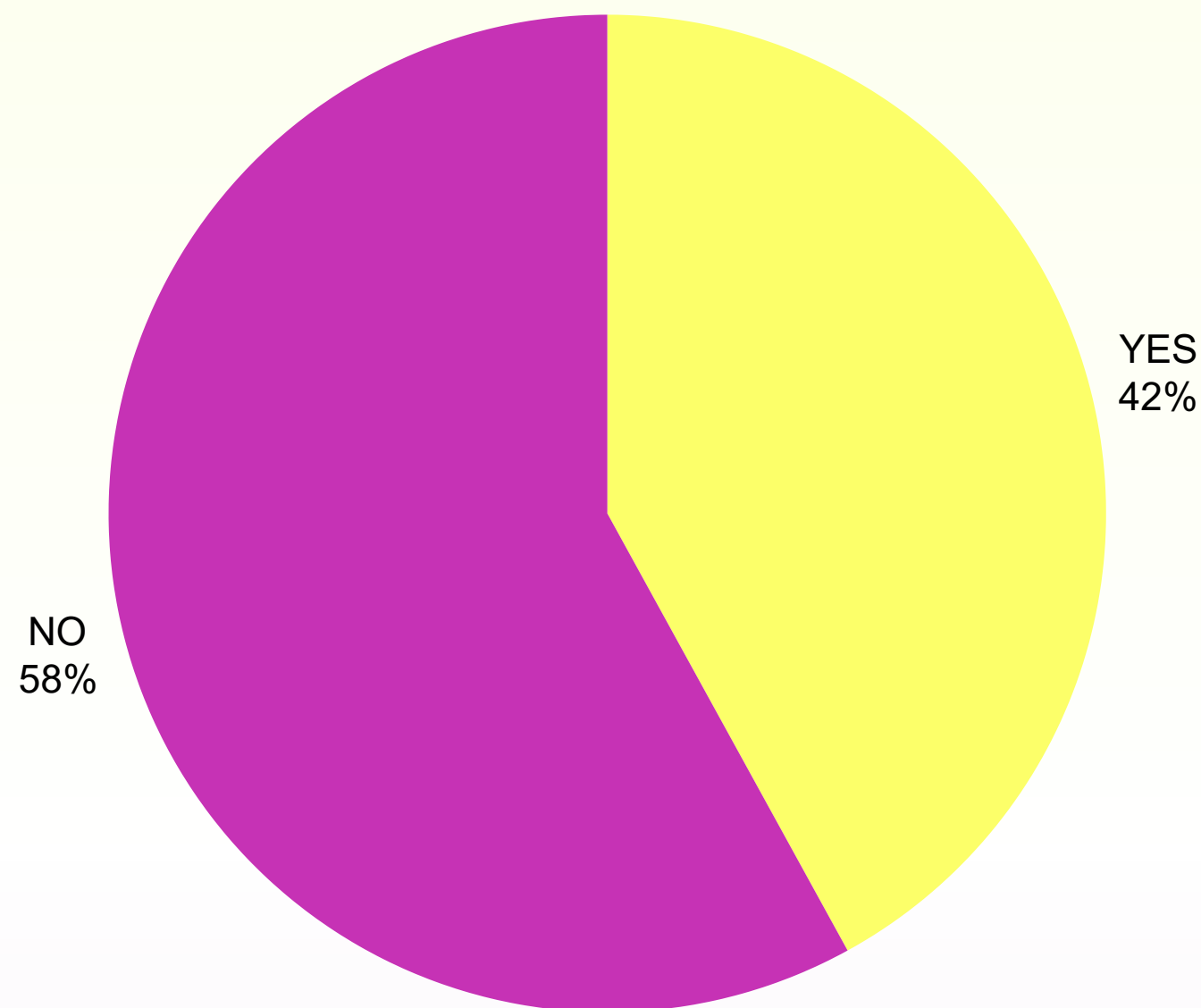


# 11. What external services does your project link in with around LGBTQ+ provision?

**EVOLVE** MindOut  
**Stonewall Switchboard**  
**Ledward Centre The Clare Project**  
 Sexual Health Homeless Link LGBT+ worker  
 Services Lunch Positive TransSober or safe space  
 Speak out Terrace Higgins Trust The Queery  
 Allsorts **LGBTQU+** Gires  
 Across Rainbows  
 TranSupport CGL LGBT Recovery Support  
 Clock Tower LGBTQ+ Night Shelter Groups  
**Arcobaleno Cafe**



## 12. Do you have a LGBTQ+ Champion?



## 13. If yes, how do they work to ensure best practice at your service?

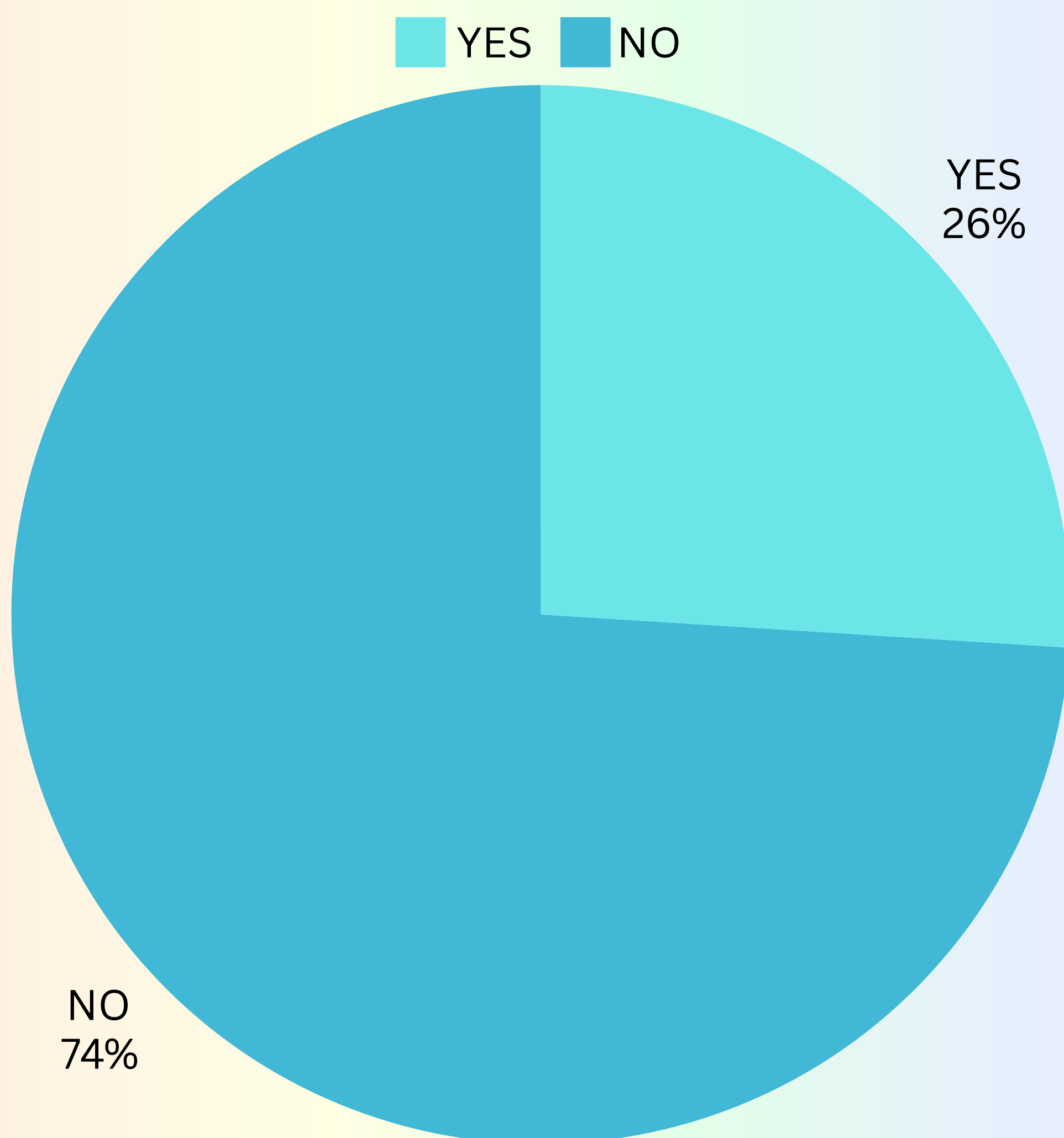
### Examples given of best practice were:

"we have a member of staff, trustee and a volunteer who sit on our inclusivity board. They try to ensure that anything related to inclusivity is addressed and attend any relevant training/seminars to keep up to date on changes ensuring we implement what we can."

"staff EDI Champions in each of the projects who meet monthly for a working group with the organisation. EDI Lead and feed into the EDI Action Plan."

"TSIP partnership with ALLSORTS and YAC which funds specific LGBT umbrella training twice a year. Their service coordinator holds quarterly front-line meetings with these services and their senior front-line staff to discuss numbers, any signposting they can share, success stories and obstacles. Their champion also ensures appropriate language and terminology is used in all assessment paperwork and policies."

**14. Do your domestic abuse, harassment or bullying policies have a specific section in relation to LGBTQ+ service users?**



## 15. Please let us know about any examples of good practice around LGBTQ+ inclusivity not covered above.

"As an organisation we run EDI "Conversations" 3 to 4 times a year for staff. The session is facilitated by an external provider (Chris Brown). The topics for each "Conversation" are identified at the EDI Working Group. The sessions have so far have included: "Inclusive language", LGBTQ+ and Race", "Mental Health" and "Religion and Faith". The aim of the session is to discuss in more depth how these topic effect people in different ways, exploring intersectionality and challenging the attendees assumptions and norms."

"we run workshops that include focus on diversity events and have run the following  
-Flag making day for international day against LGBTQ+ Phobia  
LGBTQ+ History month Collage -LGBTQ+ Words, voices and celebration drop in for  
LGBTQ+ History month  
Autistic pride celebration  
Tie-dye t-shirt and Placard making for the Brighton and Hove pride parade  
-Pride celebration event at Head office (28th July whole organisation)"

"always accepting the young person's non biological identity and using their chosen pronouns. Keeping this information confidential. Advocating on behalf of the young person in the form of writing personal statements, liaising with social services and family mediation workers"

"We have offered hair and makeup sessions to trans women previously in the service"

"We recruit and work with people from the LGBTQ+ community, so when we have clients who identify we support in finding someone well suited to work with them. However, we work with everyone in the same way, but recognise some people need specific support. Also meet with people in places that they are comfortable and will ask them what suits them"

## **16. Please let us know about any barriers or challenges faced by either your service or other service users around LGBTQ+ provision/support/inclusivity.**

All responses are included here (details of identifying projects have been removed for this version)

"A Switchboard event showed us how many queer people are homeless because of their home life/family so, afraid of facing more homophobia through any council placement (or rough sleeping), would rather find anywhere else to stay, even if this isn't safe for other reasons), so as a rough sleeper service we probably don't find anywhere near as many homeless queer people as there are to support. There is also the concern that placing a gay or trans person into a hostel could lead to them experiencing homophobia or danger (which is why we were very interested in the Switchboard pilot)."

"We get quite a lot of LGBTQ+ people without a Local Connection who will come to Brighton because they haven't felt accepted in their home community."

"Tenants have expressed frustrations as they find themselves continually reminding other services about their preferred pronouns."

"Barriers include multiple needs for our clients (intersectionality) which can be complex to manage or assist client to receive support."

"Some residents do not understand the LGBTQ+ community, especially the trans community and can use incorrect language when referring to other transgender residents."

"sometimes it is difficult to house match to ensure everyone is housed appropriately according to their needs e.g., if there is only one void"

"Challenges from service users initially around accommodating trans young women. Worked with the service users and Allsorts to increase understanding and respect"

"Being a part of an outgroup within the larger outgroup of homeless people is very alienating. Joining events or discussions around LGBTQ+ topics sometimes makes our LGBTQ+ residents feel as if they are further making themselves vulnerable to unwanted attention. The feeling of wanting to be left alone often held by the homeless community being at odds with the idea of being a proud member of the LGBTQ+ community. Unfortunately, due to the high rate of aggressive incidents at XXX, hate speech is very common. This can make the environment seem toxic to our residents who are a part of the LGBTQ+ community, further adding to this sense of alienation"

"experienced Lack of specific homelessness support in the city"

more homophobic and misogynistic client base accessing the centre more recently

## **2 Services advised they have not experienced any barriers.**

"The adverse language/behaviour towards transgender clients by other clients can be repeated often. The transgender clients have expressed frustration around not feeling safe or respected in their home, often wanting quite punitive responses from management. This is a challenging balance as both sides have differing support needs of their own."

"Challenges from service users initially around accommodating trans young women. Worked with the service users and ALLSORTS to increase understanding and respect"

# *Switchboard: Perspectives on LGBTQ+ Homelessness in Brighton and Hove*

---

The prevalence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) homelessness can be hard to quantify, given that few services collect data about sexual orientation or trans status/people do not feel safe enough to give the information. Multiple studies, however, have shown that LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be homeless than non-LGBTQ+ people, with this group making up 20–40% of homeless populations (Fraser et al, 2019).

Brighton & Hove is the local authority with the largest LGBTQ+ population in the country. A report by Brighton and Hove Switchboard states that of 600 people asked 60 % of young LGBTQ+ people, 43% of TNBI people and 22% of all LGBTQ+ people were experiencing an unsafe living situation in Brighton and Hove. Two previous local housing strategies produced by Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) 2009 and 2015 acknowledged the need for safe inclusive housing and the specific needs of LGBT communities. A lack of training and understanding from staff can result in staff reproducing queerphobic attitudes, and/or not intervening in incidents of queerphobia e.g. from other service users (Abramovich, 2016).

# LGBTQ+ Voices

“When I was in emergency accommodation, I had a really bad experience. It was just a room and the shared toilet, kitchen, and stuff. One night, two guys got drunk and tried to knock the door down saying ‘you’re gay, we’ll fix you’. It was just horrendous”.

“Very often when we go to mainstream services we can be discriminated against. Either because the person dealing with us doesn’t understand the issues associated with being LGBTQ+ and homeless or because of previous experiences we’ve had we don’t feel able to disclose who we are and that means our needs are not really being met”.

“You just get let down a lot. I have lived in more places than the 26 years I have been alive - I have no hope at all”.

“(LGBTQ+ specific accommodation is needed) all year round, because whilst there is supported accommodation available, I wouldn’t feel safe as a trans person. I would actually feel safer camping out”.

LGBTQ+ people with lived experience in Brighton and Hove share that generic emergency/supported/temporary accommodation is avoided by LGBTQ+ community members for safety reasons. Several people interviewed have experienced homo/bi/transphobia or assault.

Several people interviewed have reported being told by professionals that emergency/supported accommodation is not safe for them as TNBI people and attempts have been made to access alternative accommodation. When this has not been possible however, they have ended up in emergency/supported accommodation which they have found frightening.

“When I was really unwell and completely flat, I was given all these numbers and met all these people, and I just don’t remember any of them”.

I was told not to give my pronouns as it might impact my chances of getting somewhere to live”.



# Housing Professional Voices

There are perceived and real barriers to LGBTQ+ resident engagement. Residents are often afraid to attend resident involvement meetings.

Staff report in some organisations, particularly in young people's services, that they feel included and heard on LGBTQ+ issues.

Staff report in some organisations where there are LGBTQ+ people living and working that the culture is healthy and open minded.

In-house training is reported to be insufficient, particularly related to TNBI inclusion.

It is reported that trans residents do not receive the mental health support they need. Some mental health workers continue to misgender residents, even after being informed of pronouns.

Staff have felt powerless in some organisations as they feel there is nowhere to take their concerns related to lack of LGBTQ+ inclusion.

It was commonly commented on by professionals that there seems to be a culture of resignation across services that mainstream emergency/temporary and supported accommodation is unsafe particularly for TNBI people.

It was reported that services are not person centred with assumptions made about what support needs clients have particularly if they have just 'come out': "There are some really inclusive young people's services such as the Clocktower Sanctuary, YAC and Sussex Nightstop".

# Evaluation and Experience from the LGBTQ+ Night Shelter Pilot

**Switchboard successfully initiated a 10-week pilot LGBTQ+ night shelter funded by the Rainbow Fund in partnership with Stonewall Housing and The Outside Project.**

It demonstrated a clear need in the city for LGBTQ+ specific accommodation. “I don’t mean to shock but [without the LGBTQ+ Night Shelter] I don’t think I’d be alive today... because of my mental health and my medical and clinical needs”.

Specific consideration should be given to trans, non-binary and gender diverse people who experience particular hardship when accessing mainstream services.

Guests developed strong bonds and a sense of community and belonging which they felt increased their confidence and wellbeing.

The LGBTQ+ Night Shelter in all likelihood delivered potential cost savings in excess of the original investment in the Night Shelter (the HACT Social Values Bank).

50% of people attending the night shelter were not known to statutory services and form part of the ‘invisible LGBTQ+ homeless.

“It provided me with the stability required to get my life back on track. One of the biggest issues with couch surfing homelessness and squatting is a lack of control over your own life. The shelter has provided enough routine and stability for me to focus on my own life...Policies here have helped me address both substance and mental health issues”.

LGBTQ+ inclusion training for mainstream, commissioned housing services should be a focus for investment.

# Switchboard: Actions and Future

Switchboard has published a community written Housing Manifesto outlining priorities to ensure that safe LGBTQ+ inclusive housing is available.

The availability of LGBTQ+ specific services, LGBTQ+ Inclusion training and the collection of sexual and gender identity data are called for by LGBTQ+ communities in Brighton and Hove.

Brighton and Hove City Council have worked with Switchboard to provide LGBTQ+ inclusion training for services across Brighton and Hove which was positively evaluated.

Stonewall Housing has opened a new housing scheme supporting vulnerable LGBTQ+ people in Brighton & Hove and is hoping to open more.

An LGBTQ+ specific housing support officer is required, and a charity bid has been submitted for this.



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**