

**KANTAR**

**DIVA**

# The DIVA Survey – LGBTQI Women's Insight 2020

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## Intro from Kantar

“We are delighted to partner with Diva on this important piece of work to help understand and support women in the LGBTQI community in meaningful ways.

Kantar exists to help understand people and inspire growth, and the belief that inclusion and diversity is a business imperative sits at the core of everything we do. As the world’s leading insights and consulting company we know that we have an important role to play in providing evidence that helps us all better understand the world we live in – and that includes shining a light on groups that are often under appreciated. So, whether that’s developing the Inclusion Index to help organisations understand, track and measure their progress on developing truly inclusive workplaces, creating the Reykjavik Index to understand the role of women in leadership, supporting the Special Olympics with driving an inclusion revolution for people with intellectual disabilities, committing to the Valuable 500, or establishing a safe community at work for our LGBTQI employees with Pride @ Kantar, our passion and commitment to bringing genuine, authentic inclusivity to the diverse world we all live in is something we are incredibly proud of.”



- Caroline Frankum, Global CEO, Kantar, Profiles Division

## Intro from DIVA

The DIVA Survey: LGBTQI Women’s Insight 2020 is the biggest ever piece of research focusing on the lives and the specific needs of LGBTQI women. As part of Lesbian Visibility Week, sponsored by London Women’s Clinic, DIVA Media Group and Kantar are setting the agenda for the community, changing what it means to be an LGBTQI woman in society today.

The objective of this study was to highlight the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI women, putting our needs centre stage, and shaping the work of DIVA and its charity and corporate partners for many years to come.

# Who we spoke to

We spoke to 1423 women; of which 60% identified as Lesbian, with a further 9% identifying as gay. An additional 18% of our respondents identified as other, with 5% identifying as asexual. Regarding gender identity, 88% of our respondents identified as cisgender, with 7% identifying as gender nonbinary and 4% identifying as transgender.

The majority of our respondents lived in the UK at the time of research (84%). The additional 16% were spread across 37 countries spanning 6 continents (Europe, North America, South America, Asia, Oceania and Africa). The top 5 most-represented countries outside of the UK were USA, Canada, Australia, Ireland and Germany.



# Overview

**Coming out:** Our research shows generational shifts around coming of age and coming out. 52% of LGBTQI women came out aged 19 or older, while 29% came out under the age of 18.

**LGBTQI Spaces:** 79% of LGBTQI women feel that gay men have more visibility than they do. Many LGBTQI women feel that there are not enough events for them, with 1 in 3 claiming that there are not enough LGBTQI events aimed at their interests and this was a barrier to them attending LGBTQI events.

**Gender Identity:** There are disparities between the experiences of transgender women and their cisgender counterparts across the themes explored, this was more apparent when asked about work and safety in public spaces.

**The workplace:** Overall findings indicate that LGBTQI women face several struggles in the workplace, including not feeling emotionally supported at work, feeling 'othered' within the workplace culture, being surrounded by non-inclusive language and being a 'minority within a minority' within a male-dominated and heteronormative environment.

**Safety:** LGBTQI women feel safest at home, and report experiences of feeling anxious and unsafe in public spaces, partially resulting from past experiences.

# Lifestyle and Identity

Everyone's journey is individual, and our research shows generational shifts around coming of age and coming out. Of the women we spoke to, 29% came out aged 18 or under, 52% came out over the age of 18 and the remaining 19% either had not come out or preferred not to answer. Notably, among 16-24-year-old LGBTQI women, almost 50% came out aged 18 or younger and 1 in 3 respondents aged 25-34 came out aged 18 or under. By comparison, 18% of those currently aged 44-55 came out aged 18 or younger. This suggests that Gen Z and millennial respondents are far more likely to come out at a younger age than their older counterparts.



"There is definitely more openness in today's society, but also less tolerance."

When looking at who LGBTQI women are 'out' to, LGBTQI women under the age of 44 are the least likely to be out to family members and tend to be more open about their sexual orientation with friends and acquaintances. LGBTQI women aged 45 and over tend to be more open about their sexual orientation with everyone, relatives included.

"It is slow but attitudes amongst those under 40 appear to be where acceptance is greatest. The media, especially deliberately inflammatory newspapers, still see us as a source of derision and sell papers on the back of that."

When asked about language used to describe their sexual orientation, a further generational divide between older respondents and the millennial and Gen Z respondents emerges. Whilst the term 'dyke' was the term most-disliked by those under 44, far fewer in the older age groups disliked this word; among those 25-34, over 50% disliked this word, conversely, only 25% of those in the 55-74 category disliked this word. This is indicative of a generational shift regarding language and culture – whereas the term used to be a term of empowerment and reclamation, it is now seen more as a slur among younger respondents.<sup>1</sup>

"In London, I see attitudes changing. As a fairly diverse city, I think people mostly accept that people of different ethnicities, backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender identities are valid and equal in the city. It's when I go to more rural areas that I think attitudes haven't changed so much. I still hear people shouting gay slurs and abusing LGBTQI people in rural areas. Even in Kent, less than an hour away from London, I've seen it happen."

59% of LGBTQI women claim to have no religious affiliation whatsoever. For those who are women of faith, 15% identified as Christian, 3% identified as Humanist, 2% identified as Jewish, 2% identify as Buddhist, 1% identified as Muslim and 0.4% identified as Hindu.

<sup>1</sup> Jones, Lucy. (2012). *Dyke/Girl: Language and Identities in a Lesbian Group*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137271341>

# LGBTQI Spaces and Content

Among LGBTQI women there is high visibility and awareness for both Pride Month (95% aware) and LGBT History Month (85% aware). However, there is a lower awareness of designated days for other sections of the LGBTQI community such as Trans Awareness Day (65% aware) and Bi Awareness Day (49% aware). Regarding the former, 62% of cisgender LGBTQI women are aware, compared to 87% of transgender women.

When asked whether they feel that LGBTQI men have more visibility in public life than LGBTQI women, 80% agree overall of which 40% strongly agree. This concept of underrepresentation in public space for LGBTQI women is a consistent thread throughout the data.

When it comes to LGBTQI events, it is apparent that there is a demand from LGBTQI women for events that cater to them and their interests that is currently not being met. Only 21% of LGBTQI women attend LGBTQI focused events at least once a month, whilst 19% never attend these events. When asked what the greatest barrier was to them not attending LGBTQI events, 45% claim that not enough of these events are aimed at women, and 41% claim that LGBTQI events are male-dominated. Further, 1 in 3 claim that there are not enough LGBTQI events aimed at their interests and this is a barrier to them attending more, and 37% claim that there are simply not enough LGBTQI events in general. Notably, for those who attend LGBTQI events, 3 in 4 say that less than half of the events they have attended were aimed at women only.

"Many events are rubbish. I feel we should feel grateful, as it's a lesbian event, but often [these are] poor quality in comparison to other events."



These sentiments are reflected in the types of events LGBTQI women would like to see. 74% of LGBTQI women want to see more interest-based events, 62% want to see more social meet-ups and 46% want to see more networking events for people like them. Only 22% of these women were interested in dating events. Rather, the demand is for events revolving around their interests, their family, their community and networking opportunities.

There is a similar trend being outlined in some of the verbatims, where groups within the LGBTQI community reported that they did not feel welcome in some of the events currently held.

"I don't feel welcome as a bi woman"

"Don't feel LGBTQI events are welcoming to lesbians"

"I'm disabled and many of the events are too far away or tricky to get to as a person in a wheelchair with chronic fatigue."

# Relationships and Family

The majority of the LGBTQI women surveyed were in some form of relationship at the time of research; two-thirds of our respondents were in some form of relationship and 1 in 3 were single.

22% of the LGBTQI women surveyed have children, with an additional 26% stating that they would like to have children in the future. The remaining half do not have children or do not want to have children in the future.

Among those with children, 36% claim to have experienced homophobia from other parents and 36% claim their children have been victims of homophobia due to their parents' sexual orientation.



Further generational divides emerged when LGBTQI women were asked about starting families. According to our research, 16-24-year-olds are the least likely group to want to have children, followed by those over 45 who currently do not have children. Meanwhile, the 25-34 age group are the most likely to say they would like to have children in the future, with 46% stating this. Considering that this is the age bracket within which women are most likely to have children, a parallel can be made between heterosexual and LGBTQI women here.<sup>2</sup>

Answering our survey, a number of LGBTQI mothers detailed the abuse and barriers faced by them, their partners and their children, much of which involved educational institutions and fellow parents.

"My children were bullied at school by other kids because they had two mums"

"Less obvious bullying and more that they don't feel comfortable being open with their friends/school about having two mums, they never invite their friend's home etc."

"My children were very upset because they stopped wanting to go to school because of the bullying, we felt anger it was not dealt with by the school, and also guilty for feeling like we were the root of the kids upset"

"Child attacked at school and bullied on a regular basis for having two mums. Teachers unable to understand household with two mums."

"Professionals denying access to services. Asked to leave youth organizations. Denied access to schooling."

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/birthcharacteristicsinenglandandwales/2018>

# Work

Our research suggests that LGBTQI women face a number of barriers in the workplace including not feeling emotionally supported at work and being a 'minority within a minority' within a male-dominated and hetero-normative environment.

Although 3 in 4 respondents are open about their sexual orientation to most of their work colleagues, 16-24-year-old respondents are far less likely to be 'out' at work, with only 1 in 3 open with everyone in the workplace about their sexuality. This increases to 50% of those aged 25-34. Since the average age that our respondents 'came out' was 18 years old, this disparity perhaps suggests that young LGBTQI women may 'go back into the closet' when they get their first job, gradually becoming more comfortable expressing their identity as they age and move forward in their careers.



Over 80% of LGBTQI women feel comfortable being themselves at work, however, 27% have been made to feel uncomfortable in the workplace in the past, of which 30% is in the age bracket of 35-44. From those that were made to feel uncomfortable, only 28% felt empowered to report this to management or HR.

The most common homophobic experience encountered by LGBTQI women in the workplace was being 'outed' without their consent. Of those who have had a negative experience in the workplace regarding their sexual orientation, 49% have had a colleague disclose that they are LGBTQI to others without their permission.

# Safety



Unsurprisingly, LGBTQI women feel safest at home (81%), and report experiences of feeling anxious and unsafe in public spaces, partially resulting from past experiences. Overall, our research portrays public spaces as being unsafe for LGBTQI women and especially transgender women. Our data suggests that 1 in 3 LGBTQI women have experienced some sort of abuse be it verbal or physical.

Over a third of LGBTQI women have been verbally or physically abused because of their sexual orientation, with 37% specifically being abused in bars, pubs or nightclubs. Respondents also reported instances of verbal and/or physical abuse occurring in their neighbourhoods (26%), on public transport (23%) and at school/their educational institutions (20%). The abuse experienced can explain why there is a "fear" of showing affection in public with a same sex partner, with almost half the LGBTQI women saying that they would not be open, or only show affection in very few selected situations or places.

For cisgender respondents, it could be seen that the threat of verbal or physical violence on public transport surpasses their experiences. Although 23% of respondents have reported experiencing verbal or physical abuse on public transport due to their sexual orientation, 50% of cisgender LGBTQI women feel somewhat or not at all safe on public transport. This could perhaps be in part due to the publicisation of physical assault on public transport in 2019.<sup>3</sup>

# Travel

The results show that LGBTQI women love to travel and have a desire to be social and active in their lives. According to our survey, 88% of LGBTQI women go on holiday at least once a year, with a further 47% going on holiday more than once a year. Our research suggests that there is a demand among LGBTQI women for more activities and events catering to their needs and interests that are not currently met, both at an employer level and in the travel sector generally.



Unsurprisingly, over 1 in 4 LGBTQI women feel it is 'extremely important' that their destination declares itself LGBTQI friendly, while less than 10% consider this 'not at all important'.

Although only 7% of LGBTQI women go on LGBTQI focused trips, 60% would go on LGBTQA-focused trips or holidays aimed at women only. However, this demand is more of a mix of meeting people in their community, as shown in the 'LGBTQI spaces and content' section.



# Financial

The three most frequently accessed or opened financial products for LGBTQI women were personal bank accounts, savings accounts and credit cards, according to our survey. Some of these women expressed that they had been made to feel uncomfortable when accessing financial services due to their sexual orientation in the past.

"Assumed heterosexist titles, and continued use of them after correction, titles are unnecessary."

Regarding property, our research suggests that 45% of LGBTQI women own their own home, including 15% who own their home outright, with the remaining 30% owning their home with a mortgage. Meanwhile, 22% currently live in rented accommodation with others, and an additional 14% live in rented accommodation on their own. 13% currently live with their parents, which, unsurprisingly, is predominantly 16-24-year-olds (51%) who still live in their family home.



# Being Transgender

The disparities between the experiences of transgender women and their cisgender counterparts were most apparent in our research when topics centred on work and safety.

In terms of general openness, 64% of transgender women are open with all of their close friends about their gender identity, and 45% are open with all of their friends and acquaintances. Meanwhile, 53% of transgender women are open with all their family members.



According to our research, transgender women face barriers in the workplace, even if they are open with their colleagues about their gender identity. 64% of transgender women are open with everyone in their workplace about their gender identity. However, 1 in 4 transgender respondents feel that they have faced barriers in their current workplace due to their gender identity. Further, 58% of transgender women have been made to feel uncomfortable in the workplace due to their gender identity at some point in their career. Of those who have these negative experiences in the workplace, only 28% feel comfortable enough to report them.

LGBTQI women feel most unsafe travelling abroad (19% feel 'not at all safe'), on public transport (18%) and in bars, pubs and nightclubs (14%). For transgender women, this leaps to 29% (travelling), 20% (public transport) and 35% (bars, pubs and nightclubs). Notably, 35% of transgender women feel not at all safe at sports clubs or other fitness/leisure facilities, compared to 6% of cisgender LGBTQI women.



"It's appalling to see cis lesbians alienating trans women and misgendering them and calling them a threat simply because they were assigned male at birth."

Although only 4% of our sample identify as transgender, the data paints a picture of how safety for the trans community differs compared to their cisgender counterparts. For transgender women, the threat of abuse in public spaces is more severe than their cisgender counterparts. Over 50% admit to experiencing verbal or physical abuse because of their gender identity in a public place. These instances also occurred in their neighbourhoods (36%), on public transport (33%), in bars, pubs and nightclubs (27%) and in the workplace (27%).

# Other



While we did explore topics during the survey, especially in regards to health and happiness, due to the widespread and unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic, these topics would likely yield very different responses if fielded today.

However, it is important to note that in terms of mental wellbeing, it is well documented that the <sup>5</sup>LGBTQI community may be more susceptible to mental health concerns due to a range of factors, including discrimination. The results from this survey revealed that 43% suffer from stress and anxiety and 35% suffer from mental health related issues.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/mental-health-statistics-lgbt-people>

# Conclusion

The survey results show differences in attitudes and experiences especially between Millennial and Generation Z LGBTQI women – Women seem to be coming out earlier in their identity development – than their older counterparts in the community. LGBTQI women still face challenges in the workplace, including being outed in the workplace without their consent.

In addition, safety on public transport continues to be a concern to LGBTQI women where the fear of possible attacks over gender identity exceed those of sexual orientation and transgender women being disproportionately targeted by attacks in public places, despite being a comparatively small section of the LGBTQI spectrum.

Further, although generational shifts around identity development are progressing, barriers remain for LGBTQI women wanting to live their lives in wider society. Notably, LGBTQI mothers face homophobic abuse and prejudice, both from fellow parents and when interacting with educational institutions.

Although the LGBTQI community is diverse by nature, there is still a section of respondents that feel their identities were underrepresented and therefore feel excluded at events and workplaces. Our respondents showed a clear demand for more events that cater to their needs and interests which is currently not being met both professionally and recreationally.

# About Kantar

Kantar is the world's leading evidence-based insights and consulting company. We have a complete, unique and rounded understanding of how people think, feel and act; globally and locally in over 90 markets. By combining the deep expertise of our people, our data resources and benchmarks, our innovative analytics and technology, we help our clients understand people and inspire growth.

The Kantar Inclusion Index offers a unique benchmarking tool to enable organisations to understand, track and measure their own progress in developing an inclusive and diverse workplace on a global scale, helping to transform business culture and overall success on a global scale.

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