

# UNSEEN ON SCREEN

Gay people on youth TV





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# Foreword

TV remains the medium used by most of Britain's young people despite the predictions of its demise in an age of social media. Still watched by millions, it's helping shape shared social attitudes for decades to come. That's why Stonewall wanted to investigate the portrayal of gay people on TV. And it's why our researchers chose to examine not those programmes which broadcasters claim to be targeted at young people but those which are, in fact, most watched by them.

Out of 126 hours of programming monitored in a range of genres, lesbian, gay and bisexual people were positively and realistically portrayed for just 46 minutes. More disturbing was that so much of the remaining five hours which featured them did so in such a derogatory or negative way.

Recent YouGov polling has demonstrated that three in five secondary school teachers regularly witness homophobic bullying in their school. This bullying doesn't just undermine and frighten those children growing up to be gay, but also many tens of thousands of children who are merely perceived to be

gay too. More than seven in ten teachers say that anti-gay language in broadcast media affects the levels of homophobic bullying in schools.

Young gay people tell us, through Stonewall's Education for All programme, that positive portrayals of lesbian and gay people make them feel better about themselves and have a positive impact on the attitudes of their peers. And the insights young people from across Britain shared with researchers – into the minimal, one dimensional or stereotypical content of so much TV output – were materially more mature than the excuses often given by broadcasters themselves.

One specific observation made by young people was also that they feel underserved by broadcasters' failure to represent gay people's 21st century lives on screen. It is for those young people, tomorrow's licence-payers, that this report and its recommendations have been produced.

**Ben Summerskill** Chief Executive Stonewall

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**The study** Researchers monitored 20 TV programmes most popular with young people on BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five for a 16 week period. Researchers analysed the extent to which lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people were portrayed positively. In total, researchers analysed a sample of 126 hours, 42 minutes and 17 seconds of programmes. The research also used a series of focus groups with young people from across Britain to explore their views on the ways broadcasters portray gay people and on how this influences them.

# Key findings

## THE PORTRAYAL

- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people were portrayed for 5 hours and 43 minutes – **4.5 per cent** of total programming.
- However, lesbian, gay and bisexual people were portrayed negatively for two hours and three minutes.
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people were positively and realistically portrayed for just 46 minutes, **0.6 per cent** of total programmes monitored.
- **Three quarters** of portrayal was confined to just four programmes – Hollyoaks, I'm A Celebrity..., How to Look Good Naked and Emmerdale.

## THE CHANNELS

- Channel 4 included the highest proportion of portrayal – **6.5 per cent** of its programming. Channel 4 transmitted 12 minutes of positive and realistic portrayal out of a total 34 hours and 14 minutes of programming.
- ITV1 followed closely behind. **5.6 per cent** of its programming portrayed lesbian, gay and bisexual people. ITV1 transmitted 34 minutes of positive and realistic portrayal out of a total 50 hours and 3 minutes of output.
- Only **1.7 per cent** of programming on BBC1 made any reference to lesbian, gay and bisexual people or issues. BBC1 transmitted just 44 seconds of positive and realistic portrayal out of a total 39 hours and 30 minutes of programming.

## THE TYPES OF PROGRAMME

- **Two fifths** of portrayal (39 per cent) was in soap operas.
- **A third** of portrayal was in reality TV programmes.
- There was negligible reflection of gay people in magazine shows and talent shows and no portrayal in drama programmes.

## NEGATIVE PORTRAYAL OF GAY PEOPLE

- **Half** (49 per cent) of all portrayal was stereotypical. Gay people were depicted as figures of fun, predatory or promiscuous.
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people were portrayed negatively for two hours and three minutes – accounting for **36 per cent** of all portrayal.
- **Almost a third** (31 per cent) of all portrayal was realistic but negative: in it gay people were upset or distressed, most often about their sexual orientation.
- There were 39 minutes that made passing reference to gay people – **half** of these references depicted gay people

largely for comic effect.

- **Almost a fifth** of passing references (18 per cent) used being gay, or the possibility of being gay, to tease or insult.
- 17 minutes of programming depicted homophobia but **three fifths** of this (59 per cent) went unchallenged.

## POSITIVE PORTRAYAL OF GAY PEOPLE

- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people were presented in a realistic and positive way in just 46 minutes of programming out of 126 hours.
- Just seven minutes featured scenes where homophobia was challenged.

## JUST GAY MEN

- **More than three quarters** (77 per cent) of portrayal of gay people depicted gay men.
- Just **one fifth** (21 per cent) of portrayal depicted lesbians. **Almost three quarters** (74 per cent) of this was in a Hollyoaks storyline about the death and possible murder of a character's girlfriend; other portrayals of lesbians were found in The Simpsons and in I'm A Celebrity... Just seven minutes of 126 hours and 42 minutes of broadcasting featured lesbians and was both positive and realistic.
- BBC1 portrayed lesbians for just 29 seconds out of 39 hours and 30 minutes of programming monitored.
- Bisexual people were portrayed for 5 minutes and 9 seconds. Two of these minutes featured Dannii Minogue discussing references to a contestant's sexuality on The X Factor.

## WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAY

- Young people look to their favourite programmes to learn about the real world. Limited real-life acquaintance with gay people means they rely on TV to learn about gay people.
- Young people observe there is limited portrayal of lesbian, gay and bisexual people on TV.
- They think that gay people on TV are largely stereotyped, leading unhappy lives, are bullied, and are rejected by their families. Despite recognising these as stereotypes on TV, young people often hold the same views themselves of gay people.
- 17 and 18 year-old young gay people simply don't relate to gay people they see on TV.
- Young people want to see positive and realistic portrayal of LGB people on TV and think it would have a positive effect on their own attitudes and behaviour and that of their peers.



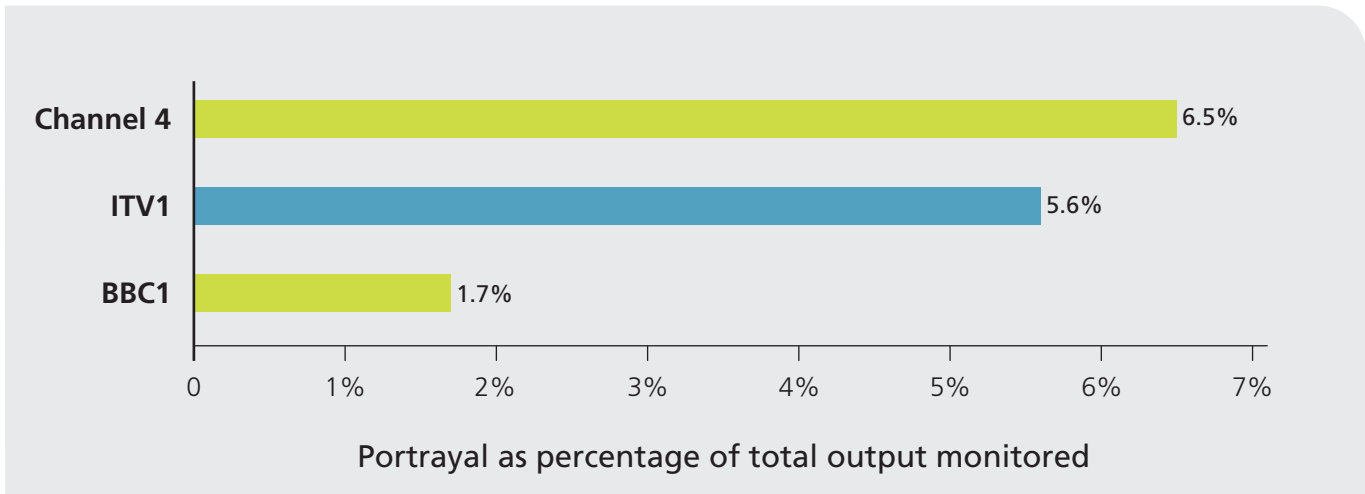
## Life on screen

'I don't think there's many gay characters on TV' Keisha, 14

Over a 16 week period, researchers monitored 20 TV programmes most popular with young people on terrestrial TV. The sample comprised 126 hours, 42 minutes and 17 seconds of programming across BBC1, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five (excluding advertising). Of the programming monitored, ITV1 accounted for 40 per cent, BBC1 31 per cent, Channel 4 27 per cent and Five 2 per cent. Five had just one programme in the top 20, BBC2 had none.

The 20 television programmes were:

ITV1	BBC1	Channel 4	Five
The Bill	Blue Peter	Hollyoaks	The Gadget Show
Coronation Street	EastEnders	How to Look Good Naked	
Emmerdale	Football Focus	The Paul O'Grady Show	
Harry Hill's TV Burp	Friday Night with Jonathan Ross	The Simpsons	
I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!	Merlin		
Piers Morgan's Life Stories	The One Show		
The X Factor	Strictly Come Dancing		
You've Been Framed!			



Lesbian, gay and bisexual people and issues were portrayed for 5 hours and 43 minutes – **4.5 per cent** of the total time monitored.

**Three quarters** of those portrayals were confined to just four programmes – two on ITV1, I’m A Celebrity... and Emmerdale and two on Channel 4, Hollyoaks and How to Look Good Naked.

**6.5 per cent** of all Channel 4 programming featured gay portrayals. ITV1 followed closely with **5.6 per cent**. Only **1.7 per cent** of BBC1 output contained any references to lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Five’s single programme had just one fleeting reference.

On ITV1, the references were spread between I’m A Celebrity... where a lesbian and a gay male couple were contestants, Emmerdale which was primarily focused on the experiences of one character, Aaron, coming to terms with being gay, and Coronation Street which featured references to gay characters Sean and Ted.

On Channel 4, references to LGB people were made on Hollyoaks which explored a story about a young lesbian who

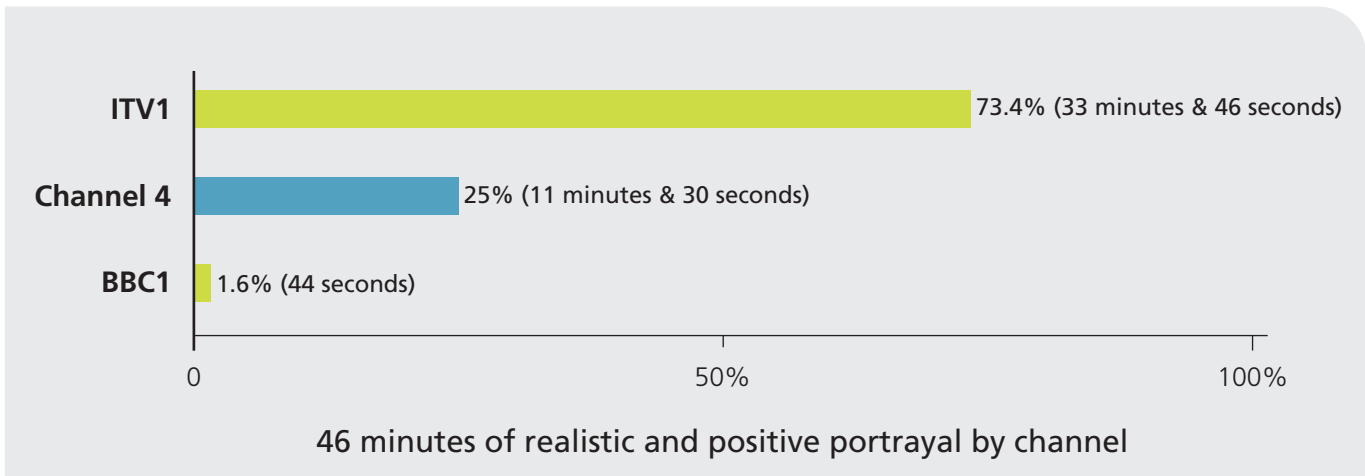
may have murdered her partner, How to Look Good Naked with Gok Wan who explicitly made reference to being gay, The Paul O’Grady Show which contained various references to gay people and issues, and The Simpsons which included an episode about allowing gay people to get married in Springfield.

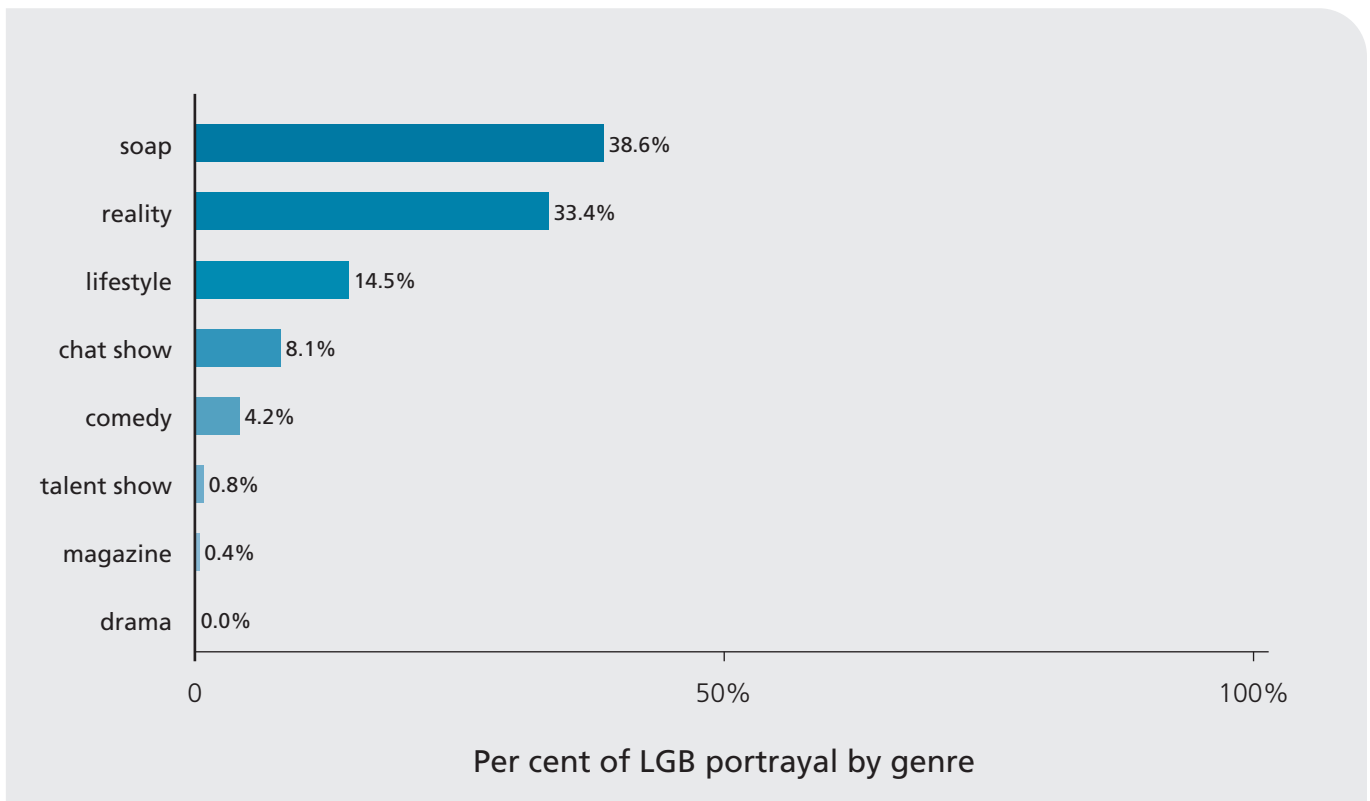
On BBC1, the vast majority of the references to gay people were found in just two programmes. EastEnders primarily focused on the stormy relationship between two characters, Syed and Christian, and Friday Night with Jonathan Ross featured a resident band 4 Poofs and a Piano.

**LACK OF POSITIVE PORTRAYAL**

Just 46 minutes portrayed gay people realistically and positively in 126 hours and 42 minutes of output most watched by young people. They were portrayed negatively **more than twice as often**, for two hours and three minutes.

Out of 46 minutes of realistic and positive portrayal, ITV1 had 34 minutes, **73 per cent**, Channel 4 had 12 minutes, **25 per cent**, and BBC1 was responsible for 44 seconds, **1.6 per cent**.





## THE TYPE OF PROGRAMME

Almost two fifths (39 per cent) of the portrayal of lesbian, gay and bisexual people was in soaps. Reality TV was the second highest genre where gay people were portrayed, yet this represented only seven per cent of output monitored. *I'm A Celebrity...* was solely responsible for LGB portrayal in this genre. There was scant reflection of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in magazine format shows such as *The One Show* and talent shows such as *The X Factor*.

## WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAY

The focus groups held with young people reveal the extent to which they rely on TV to shape their views about the world.

**On 90210 [on E4] it showed me that you can't trust everyone.** *Teshi, 13*

This is also true when it comes to learning about gay people.

**TV can give you the logical side of it – why people are gay. On EastEnders they showed the emotional side of being a gay man. It showed you how hard it can be on gay people.** *Lily, 15*

For most of the participants, aged 12-16, their acquaintance with gay people is restricted solely to peers at school they suspect of being gay or to gay people on television. A few young people know of neighbours or family friends, but most young people don't think they know any gay people.

Young people say they don't see many gay people on TV. They say that what they do see is often stereotyped. Their impression of gay people on TV is that gay characters are predominantly gay men who are effeminate, like fashion, have affairs with straight men or 'turn' them gay. Otherwise they are gay people who are miserable. Young people note lesbians are almost non-existent on TV.

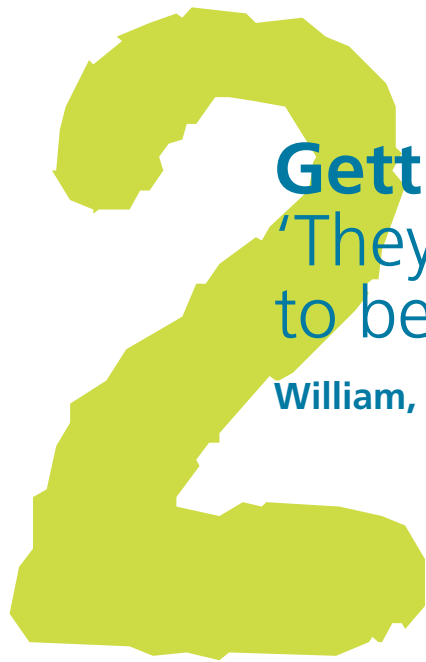
Many young people are aware TV programmes often take an unsophisticated approach towards gay lives. However, many of their own views of gay people are informed by the same stereotypes they see on TV. They express fears about 'predatory' gay people, describe gay men as mostly 'camp' and effeminate, and think gay people mostly lead tough lives subject to bullying and rejection by family.

Young people say they would like to see more realistic and positive portrayal of gay people and think it would have a positive effect on their own attitudes and behaviour and that of their peers.

The 17 and 18 year-old participants, gay themselves, say they generally can't relate to gay people on TV. They accept that including stereotyped characters can sometimes be a good thing but only when characters who are something other than 'camp' or miserable are also included. They want to see rounded characters where their sexual orientation is not the main focus.

They worry that most young people don't know gay people and so overly rely on TV's inaccurate and narrow portrayal as their main source of knowledge.





## Getting it wrong 'They never seem to be happy'

William, 13

### BEING GAY AND IN CRISIS

Young people say they think gay people are presented on television as unhappy or despairing. LGBT people were portrayed negatively for two hours and three minutes – **more than twice as often** as positive and realistic portrayals.

**A lot of bad stuff happens to them.** William, 13

**They're always having arguments and crying.** Adil, 13

Almost a third (31 per cent) of portrayal was realistic but negative. Young people say that even if these depictions are sometimes true to life, they aren't a helpful contribution to depicting the lives of gay people.

**TV gives the wrong view of gay people because every storyline is about them being beaten up and discriminated against. They are never accepted by their family. In real life they just want to fit in.**

Ishani, 16

Young people observe that programmes frequently depict gay people in distress as a result of their sexual orientation.

**There always seems to be a problem within gay storylines – like family and friends not accepting them. In Skins [on E4], Emily's family are not accepting that she's gay.** Emma 15

During the monitoring period, EastEnders portrayed an on-going relationship between Syed and Christian. However, the

couple were being blackmailed by Christian's niece and the story was focused on Syed's fear of the consequences of being 'outed' as gay.

Emmerdale had a commendably realistic portrayal of Aaron trying to come to terms with his sexuality. However, Aaron was in denial about being gay and had a relationship with a woman in order to 'prove' to himself and others that he is heterosexual despite supportive questioning from other characters. He was teased by his colleagues and the subject of speculation.

In Hollyoaks, Lydia was grieving after her girlfriend, Sarah, died in a sky-diving incident. A previous love-interest of Sarah's, Zoe, was in prison suspected of causing Sarah's death. However, it was implied that current girlfriend Lydia had actually killed Sarah.

Young people say gay people on TV are often portrayed as unhappy. These depictions may not be homophobic, and can be realistic, but when they are the only such portrayals, the unhappiness is significant.

### STEREOTYPES

Young people also say that TV programmes often present gay characters as a stereotype.

**They are bitchier.** Gareth, 18

**They always try to make lesbians really arty and punky. They are normally quite funny characters.**

Jacob, 17

TV gives the wrong view of gay people because every storyline is about them being beaten up and discriminated against. They are never accepted by their family. In real life they just want to fit in.

*Ishani, 16*

# Gay characters often bring a certain amount of comic relief to programmes. Gareth, 18

**TV tends to stereotype them a lot.** Adil, 13

Almost half (49 per cent) of the portrayals across all programmes depicted gay people as stereotypes. These included portraying gay people as figures of fun, promiscuous or predatory.

For example, on Friday Night with Jonathan Ross house band 4 Poofs and a Piano provided the opportunity for innuendo-laden introductions at the start of each show. Such references included being 'stuck up Ben Nevis' and as men 'who have spent the afternoon erecting a six foot Norwegian'.

On Harry Hill's TV Burp, Hill joked that a clip of naked men running through the streets being chased by the police was a scene from 'John Barrowman's Torchwood wrap party'. In You've Been Framed! it was remarked that 'half the population of Earl's Court' had seen John Barrowman, a well known gay man, in lederhosen.

Young people also say that gay men are almost always portrayed as being effeminate.

**We see a lot of stuff on TV. There's always a feminine guy.** Adil, 13

**They are quite feminine so like to be around girls.** Emma, 15

**They always stereotype them. He uses loads of skin products.** Tim, 12

In an episode of The Simpsons there was a song montage advertising Springfield as the new destination for gay marriage. The song featured several stereotypes, including gay men as effeminate. In The One Show, a show with very few references to gay people overall, an interview with Catherine Tate included a clip where her grandmother character accused the grandson of 'liking to mince about in spandex'.

These sorts of jokes can be funny but are a limited and limiting depiction of gay people in the absence of any positive references.

Not all depiction of stereotypes are harmful; some gay men may seem 'camp' or do like fashion. However, disproportionate levels of stereotyped portrayals and an absence of portrayal of gay people living ordinary lives leaves young people with a limited and negative impression of gay people. Other stereotypes, such as gay people being particularly predatory, can fuel homophobic views.

Unfortunately, the views of young people often mirror the stereotyped portrayal they see on TV.

**I would be worried playing a gay team in case they were interested. When you are playing against straight people you know nothing would happen.** Simon, 16

**It's just weird, you share the same PE lessons and they could be watching you in the changing rooms.** Hannah, 12

**Bisexuals seem greedy.** Adil, 13

## BEING THE JOKE

Young people also recognise the comic approach TV programme makers can take to gay people.

**They make fun of them.** Tim, 12

**Gay characters often bring a certain amount of comic relief to programmes.** Gareth, 18

In the 5 hours and 43 minutes of lesbian, gay and bisexual portrayal there were 39 minutes of fleeting references to gay people or instances where gay people or gay sexuality was mentioned. This was not in connection to portraying a specific character. Half (51 per cent) of these references were for comic effect.

In Harry Hill's TV Burp, Hill joked that on his wedding night he and his wife watched a film – the punch line being that he 'particularly enjoyed the scene in which an intoxicated man flirted with a gay midget'.

# You don't think of black people as gay. *William, 13*

In *The One Show*, host Adrian Chiles remarked to guest Peter Kay that he had 'lovely warm hands' to which Kay responded, 'I have. Eh, Peter "Gay", not Peter Kay. I'm not homophobic, I'm not scared of me house'.

**Just under a fifth** (18 per cent) of fleeting references to gay people used being gay, or the possibility of being gay, to tease or insult.

In *EastEnders*, Pat and Bianca began to dance together at a fundraising dance. Roxy remarked 'oh what, same-sex couples are allowed then are they?'. Pat told Bianca to ignore her and wanted to continue dancing, but Bianca walked away dejected. On *Friday Night with Jonathan Ross* during an interview with Ray Winstone, Winstone said of another actor 'he's very good at playing gay, it's a bit scary'. In *Hollyoaks* a character was teased by the suggestion that he may have had gay sex when in prison.

Brief references to lesbian, gay or bisexual orientation were rarely mentioned naturally or incidentally. Instead young people note that gay sexuality and people are often referenced solely for humour and sometimes insult.

## THERE'S NO TYPICAL GAY PERSON

**You see more gay men on TV. People don't think of lesbians that much.** *Tim, 12*

**There aren't many lesbians on TV.** *Kia, 18*

Young people note (correctly) that when gay people are reflected, it is largely gay men represented on TV. Of 5 hours and 43 minutes where lesbian, gay and bisexual people were portrayed, **over three quarters** (77 per cent) of portrayal was about gay men. Just **one fifth** (21 per cent) of the programming monitored featured lesbians and *Hollyoaks* accounted for **three quarters** (74 per cent) of this. The storyline in *Hollyoaks* was largely concerned with whether Lydia murdered her girlfriend.

Just **seven minutes** of lesbian portrayal could be classed as positive and realistic. BBC 1 portrayed lesbians for just 29

seconds in 39 hours and 30 minutes of monitored programming – once as part of a joke and the second time as an insult.

Bisexual people were portrayed for just **five minutes and nine seconds** in the entire monitoring period and were not portrayed in a positive and realistic manner at all.

Two minutes of references to bisexual people involved Dannii Minogue discussing with Piers Morgan the furore surrounding her references to a contestant's reported bisexuality during *The X Factor*. A brief scene in *Coronation Street* saw a character discussing a magazine article where a groom was cheating on his bride-to-be with both a man and a woman.

*EastEnders*' character Syed is the one example of a gay Muslim character but he does not have a positive experience. His portrayal is unlikely to encourage other young Muslims to feel positive about their sexual orientation.

**You don't think of black people as gay.** *William, 13*

Gok Wan as presenter of *How to Look Good Naked* was the only gay person from a black or minority ethnic community to be portrayed positively during the monitoring period.

## UNCHALLENGED PREJUDICE

Young people told researchers that they often see homophobia on TV.

**They get bullied.** *Shani, 14*

**People taunt them. They get kicked out of bars.** *Luke, 13*

The monitoring found 17 minutes of programming that depicted explicit homophobia. **Almost three in five** (59 per cent) of the incidents went unchallenged.

In *Emmerdale* Aaron was teased by Cain because a male customer tried to ask him out. Paddy joined in the teasing, which went unchallenged. In *Coronation Street* the word 'gay' was used pejoratively, but it wasn't challenged by anyone in the scene.



## Getting it right 'Visibility is a good thing.'

Kia, 18

### POSITIVE PORTRAYAL

Young people say gay people should be featured regularly in broadcast output.

**Well you have different races and all types of people so why not have equal rights for gay people. It makes people understand more.** *Emma, 15*

**If there was no mention of gay or lesbian people in a programme then it wouldn't be like real life.'** *Simon, 16*

But young people also say they want to see gay people portrayed in a balanced, realistic way and in a positive context where their sexual orientation isn't being sensationalised.

**You don't see much normality – just people being rounded human beings.** *James, 18*

**They should make them more normal.** *Tim, 12*

**It's nice when you see a gay character and it's not made an issue of at all.** *Gareth, 18*

The monitoring found some rare examples of how programme makers do get it right. In 46 minutes of output, lesbian, gay and bisexual people and issues were positively and realistically portrayed.

However, *I'm a Celebrity...* accounted for almost three quarters (70 per cent) of the scenes in which gay people were portrayed realistically, in a positive context and where their sexuality was not sensationalised.

One *I'm a Celebrity...* contestant, Justin, reflected on his time in camp. Among many clips of his experiences in the jungle, the programme montage included scenes of him and his partner, Colin, showing physical affection. There was no explicit discussion about sexuality. It was an upbeat, natural reflection involving scenes with his partner among the positive experiences he had had while in the camp. In another example from the show Stuart, a heterosexual contestant, was reflecting on the future.

He said: *'I would like to be married. I would like kids. I love kids, I think kids are great. You know, and just be settled somewhere. And be blissfully happy. Like Colin and Justin are. You know they don't want to be apart. I want to be there. That's what I want.'*

In *Hollyoaks*, Charlotte and Lydia and a male friend were in the pub. Charlotte, a lesbian, commented on the attractiveness of one of the female bar staff. It was presented as a passing comment, the sort that gay people would make in their daily lives. It wasn't the central focus of the scene. It was just a casual expression of same-sex attraction in an upbeat scene of friends having fun.

During *The Paul O'Grady Show* a same-sex couple and their

It's even rarer to find a positive and realistic portrayal of lesbian, gay or bisexual people where the focus is on their sexual orientation. Just **37 seconds** of 126 hours and 42 minutes of output portrayed a scene where sexuality was an explicit focus in a positive and realistic context.

# If there was no mention of gay or lesbian people in a programme then it wouldn't be like real life. *Simon, 16*

pets were featured in the 'pet clinic'. They were just one couple among other pet owners that were included in the scene. Their sexual orientation was not discussed.

These examples of positive portrayal are welcomed by young people.

**// It makes it seem ok.** *Keisha, 14*

**// It makes it less of a big deal.** *Catherine, 16*

It's even rarer to find a positive and realistic portrayal of lesbian, gay or bisexual people where the focus is on their sexual orientation. Just 37 seconds of 126 hours and 42 minutes of output portrayed a scene where sexuality was an explicit focus in a positive and realistic context.

Commendable portrayal included a scene in Hollyoaks where Charlotte adeptly handled naive questioning from friends about lesbian sexuality. Charlotte was in a bar with a different set of friends and remarked on the attractiveness of another woman.

Male friend 1: *'I must admit, I don't get the whole lesbian thing. Like, is there a code or something?'*

Male friend 2: *'Yeah, if you fancy someone, what if they're not gay?'*

Charlotte: *'It's just the same as fancying someone who is gay, but doesn't fancy you.'*

Charlotte's comment led to a discussion about gay sexuality in a realistic and positive context. She was portrayed as both positive and comfortable in talking about her sexual orientation.

A second positive portrayal was seen when contestant, Colin, from I'm a Celebrity... directly referenced his sexuality, while he

happily discussed his fondness for boxing.

*'You may not think this, but I do quite like boxing. I'm a big boxing gay.'*

By acknowledging his sexuality in this context, he was positively contradicting a stereotype that excludes gay men from sport.

In a feature about Sherlock Holmes on The One Show, presenters discussed varying portrayals of Sherlock Holmes, including Holmes as a gay man and Holmes as a black man. The scene appreciated the various ways in which the character had developed over more than a century with a brief, but positive and inclusive reference about gay sexuality.

## CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA

Young people say they look to programmes to tackle issues relevant to them and to reveal consequences of particular behaviours. They explain that many programmes appeal to them for entertainment, but also because they teach them life lessons.

Negative attitudes towards gay people were challenged in just seven minutes of programming. In The Paul O'Grady Show, the host took a moment at the beginning of a show to condemn a homophobic attack on James Parkes, aged 22, violently attacked while on a night out in Liverpool.

**// EastEnders storylines always have consequences – it shows you that if you do something bad there will be a consequence. Skins [on E4] tells you that if you take drugs you'll be put in a hospital.** *Nailah, 13*

In EastEnders, Christian discovered his niece Lucy had been blackmailing Syed. As part of the confrontation, he explained the homophobia that gay people were victim to in the past, contextualising her actions.



# Recommendations

1

Broadcasters should monitor their output to ensure lesbian, gay and bisexual representation in programming watched by young people reflects their presence in the wider population.

2

Programme makers from major TV channels should share good practice on how to develop authentic lesbian, gay and bisexual characters in dramas and soaps, where storylines are not restricted to problems to do with their sexual orientation.

3

Guidelines should be developed between broadcasters and Ofcom to ensure more positive portrayals of gay characters.

4

Programme makers should ensure contestants in game shows, chat shows and reality programmes include openly gay participants. However, young people don't want to see gay participants recruited if their sexual orientation is being used simply for entertainment value.

5

Fact-based, magazine-format shows should ensure LGBT people are included in features depicting everyday issues in the lives of people across Britain.



6

Fact-based programmes should also ensure they include issues particular to gay people, both positive and negative, in the same way that issues concerning other population cohorts are often discussed.

7

Programme makers should be given guidance on how to avoid casual or inadvertent homophobia and also on how to challenge homophobia appropriately where it arises.

8

Gay communities are as diverse as any other community and programme makers should endeavour to reflect this.

9

Broadcasters' existing race, gender and disability policies and practices should be mirrored in relation to sexual orientation. As employers, broadcasters should make sure that LGB people are represented at every level of the programme-making process.

10

Broadcasters should consult young people on their response to programmes and the effectiveness of the portrayal of gay people on TV.

# Methodology

BARB viewing figures were used to determine the TV programmes most watched by young people across BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five.

The top 20 shows watched by young people were selected for monitoring. Researchers monitored a sample of 126 hours, 42 minutes and 17 seconds of TV programming in the 16 week period between 28 September 2009 and 17 January 2010. Total hours monitored exclude advertising.

## PROGRAMMES MONITORED

ITV1	BBC1	Channel 4	Five
The Bill	Blue Peter	Hollyoaks	The Gadget Show
Coronation Street	EastEnders	How to Look Good Naked	
Emmerdale	Football Focus	The Paul O'Grady Show	
Harry Hill's TV Burp	Friday Night with Jonathan Ross	The Simpsons	
I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!	Merlin		
Piers Morgan's Life Stories	The One Show		
The X Factor	Strictly Come Dancing		
You've Been Framed!			

total hours monitored on ITV1	50:03:05	40% of monitored programmes
total hours monitored on BBC1	39:30:05	31% of monitored programmes
total hours monitored on Channel 4	34:13:31	27% of monitored programmes
total hours monitored on Five	2:55:36	2% of monitored programmes

Five had just one programme in the top 20, BBC2 had none. Average viewing figures of young people ranged from 155,563 to 1,427,306 for each episode.

Programmes were monitored for anything of gay interest, including lesbian, gay and bisexual people, gay characters or storylines, use of gay terminology or insults, homophobia and anything related to gay sexuality.

Flamingo International, a qualitative research and strategic marketing consultancy, conducted focus groups in March 2010 with young people from across Britain aged 12 to 16 and with 17 and 18 year-old lesbian, gay and bisexual young people.

Data from the focus groups and TV monitoring was analysed thematically.

Written by April Guasp, designed by Lucy Ward



# UNSEEN ON SCREEN

Gay people on youth TV

There aren't many  
lesbians on TV. *Kia, 18*

They always stereotype  
them. He uses loads of  
skin products. *Tim, 12*

They never seem  
to be happy. *William, 13*