

***“I am not alone.
There are others like me.”***

The living conditions of young LGBTQI people



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Despite everything that is difficult, a beautiful thing about figuring out that you are LGBTQI is that you suddenly find where you feel safe and fit in. You meet others and have a shared experience that helps you form strong friendships. I've made so many new friends who are like me. It's a community I've never felt before and I'm so grateful for it. That community saved my life – if you don't fit in somewhere you start to think there's something wrong with you, but it was such a positive experience to discover that there wasn't anything wrong with me.

Anonymous account

Preface

In the summer of 2020, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) was tasked by the Government to identify and compile knowledge about the living conditions of young LGBTQI people¹. MUCF has previously drawn attention to the fact that young LGBTQ people have worse living conditions than other young people. The report **Hon hen han** [She, he, they], published in 2010, was the most comprehensive study of the living conditions of young LGBTQ people of its time. This report shows that little has changed in the decade or more since the report **Hon hen han** was submitted to the Government.

MUCF's remit now included studying the living conditions of young people with intersex variations, as well as taking a more intersectional perspective and highlighting differences within the group young LGBTQI people. MUCF has done this, inter alia, through focus groups and a targeted survey.

As a group, young LGBTQI people have poorer health than other young people, especially in terms of mental health. Many young LGBTQI people, especially transgender people, do not feel safe or have a calm environment conducive to learning while at school. The way that society treats young LGBTQI people is not acceptable. Particular attention should be paid to young LGBTQI people's high level of vulnerability to crime and other forms of victimising behaviour.

LGBTQI issues are more present in the social debate now than when **Hon hen han** was published, and Sweden has since implemented several legal reforms in this area. Nevertheless, the findings of this report are clear: living conditions for young LGBTQI people are still worse than for other young people. MUCF hopes that the report can be of support to politicians and other decision-makers, service providers and activists in civil society, teachers and other staff who interact with LGBTQI people and want to work towards eliminating the differences in living conditions between young LGBTQI people and other young people.

In the light of the report's findings, MUCF also presents a large number of suggestions for actions that could lead to an improvement in the living conditions of young LGBTQI people. The suggestions consist of assignments that could be given to several different authorities. They include improving conditions at school and in leisure time, improving treatment and accessibility in healthcare and strengthening work against discrimination and other forms of vulnerability, including those related to honour.

MUCF would like to express its special thanks to the young people who shared their experiences, either in interviews or through written accounts. Your experiences are a key contribution to this report.

The report has been produced by the Investigation Department, through the efforts of Ulrika Westerlund (head of project), Vanessa Sevedag, Vierge Hård, Karl Karlsson and Johan Lidmark.

Lena Nyberg, Director-General
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¹ In this report, the term LGBTQ is used to refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (i.e. people who self-identify using queer expressions and identities). LGBTQI is used when the population also includes intersex people.

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Definitions

LGBTQ/LGBTQI – an umbrella term for the community Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (i.e. people who self-identify using queer expressions and identities). LGBTQI is used when the umbrella term also includes intersex people. In this report, the term LGBTQI is used when the information includes intersex people and LGBTQ is used to refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (i.e. people who self-identify using queer expressions and identities). When referencing previous studies or interviewees, the report uses the term that was used by the source.

Sex and Gender – Terms that are sometimes used interchangeably, but are increasingly being differentiated as biological characteristics versus social constructs, respectively:

- Legal sex is the sex registered in the Swedish Population Register.
- Biological sex is defined in terms of internal and external sex organs, sex chromosomes and hormone levels, collectively referred to as sex characteristics (see definition below)².
- Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of their own gender. Woman, man, bigender and agender are examples of gender identities.
- Gender expression is how a person expresses their gender identity outwardly in terms of clothing, make-up, body language, hair, social behaviour and voice.

Cisgender – A person whose legal sex, biological sex, gender identity and gender expression are and have always been in line with the prevailing social norm. Cis is Latin and means “on the same side”.

Transgender – An umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity and/or gender expression never or sometimes does not match the sex assigned at birth. Trans is Latin and means “on the other side of”.

Binary transgender – A term used for transgender individuals who identify as either a woman or a man.

Non-binary – An umbrella term describing anyone whose gender identity falls outside the binary of woman/man. Some non-binary individuals call themselves transgender, while some others do not.

Pronouns – she, he and they – What a person wants to be called when someone talks about them in the third person (e.g. They are nice. I like them). Pronouns can be related to a person's sex/gender identity, but do not have to be. It is not possible to predict which pronoun a person uses based on their appearance.

²MUCF is aware that biological sex is not always clear-cut, and that some people are born with conditions that affect sex development.

Sexual orientation – Refers to which gender or genders a person is attracted to, falls in love with or has sexual relations with. The sexual orientations included in the Discrimination Act are homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual, but there are other words that can be used to describe sexual orientation.

Intersex person or person born with intersex variant – Someone who is born with a body that cannot be biologically categorised as man or woman according to society's gender norms. In medicine, different terms are used, including "conditions affecting sex development" and DSD (Disorders of/Differences in Sex Development). The various conditions and diagnoses are very different from each other, but the common factor is that they relate to congenital abnormalities in sex development related to e.g. the sex chromosomes, gonads or genitalia.

Sex characteristics – Characteristics that determine biological sex. There are primary and secondary sex characteristics, congenital and those that develop during puberty. The term is sometimes used to describe the grounds of discrimination that may apply to intersex people. In its new report, the Equality Ombudsman discusses discrimination against intersex people.

Bisexual – A person who falls in love with or is attracted to people regardless of their gender identity or biological sex. .

Heterosexual – A person who falls in love with or is attracted to people of the opposite sex.

Homosexual – A person who falls in love with or is attracted to people of the same sex.

Pansexual – A person who falls in love with or is attracted to people regardless of their gender identity or biological sex. This term is sometimes used to make it clear that there are more than two genders.

Queer – A term that can refer to a theory that emerged in academia (queer theory), activism or identity. Queer as an identity means breaking away from the heteronormative in some way. Queer is about questioning norms related to gender and sexuality. Many people see their gender identity and/or sexuality as queer.

Asexual – Someone who is not attracted to other people or who is not interested in sex.

Cisnet person – A cisgender person who is heterosexual.

Hetero-cis-normativity – The norm that assumes that all people are hetero sexual and cisgender, i.e. that everyone identifies as the legal sex they were assigned at birth and has relationships and builds families with people of the so-called opposite sex. Hetero-cis-normativity assumes that there are only two genders. People who follow this norm are often given advantages in terms of legislation, sense of belonging and affirmation.

Intersectionality – Explains how different power structures and grounds of discrimination interact and can reinforce each other. Intersectional analysis can be used to create better-tailored interventions and to identify discrimination based on multiple interacting power structures.

Macroaggression – Involves structural discrimination, both material and symbolic, to exclude certain identities and/or experiences from institutional activities.

Microaggression – A statement or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudicial attitude towards someone belonging to a marginalised group.

Minority stress – Stress reactions resulting from exposure to specific stress-related experiences that LGBTQI people (and other minority groups) build up during their upbringing, linked to their LGBTQI identity.

LGBTQI phobia – An umbrella term for negative attitudes, ideologies, perceptions and values towards people who are interpreted as or are LGBTQI. Terms such as homophobia, biphobia or transphobia are sometimes used when referring to specific groups within the LGBTQI community. Another term that can be used is anti-LGBTQI.

Internalised LGBTQI phobia – An umbrella term for negative attitudes, ideologies, beliefs and values related to LGBTQI people, which LGBTQI people experience towards themselves. Terms such as internalised homophobia, biphobia or transphobia are sometimes used when referring to specific groups within the LGBTQI community.

Summary

In this report, MUCF examined the living conditions of young LGBTQI persons. The findings are presented in six chapters: health and living conditions; education; work, finances and housing; leisure and community involvement; safety and vulnerability; and the vulnerability of young LGBTQ people to conversion attempts. Each chapter starts with a slightly more detailed summary of that particular chapter's findings, and a final discussion is found towards the end of the report, before the chapter with suggestions and assessments. A brief summary of the findings in each chapter is given here in bullet form.

Findings of the “Health and living conditions” chapter

- Young LGBTQ people have poorer health than young cisgender people. This is true for both physical and mental health, but the difference is greatest for mental health. Only one-third of young LGBTQ people consider themselves to have good mental health.
- Diagnosed depression, suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts are more common among young LGBTQ people than among young cisgender people. About one in five young LGBTQ people have at some point considered taking their own life, and suicidal thoughts are about four times more common among young LGBTQ people than among young cisgender people.
- Feeling satisfied with life as a whole and having a positive outlook on the future are less common among young LGBTQ people compared to young cisgender people. With these issues, the trend among young LGBTQ people has been negative since 2012, and the gap between young LGBTQ people and young cisgender people has widened.
- It is relatively rare among young people to have someone to share their innermost feelings with, although this is more common among young LGBTQ people than among young cisgender people.
- The interviewees have mixed experiences in terms of how they have been treated within the healthcare sector. There are positive examples of healthcare providers being open and unbiased, or adapting quickly when the young person’s LGBTQI identity was revealed. At the same time, several young people describe shortcomings in the way they are treated. There are examples of this having negative consequences for the individual, such as the young person choosing to end the care contact or counselling, or the young person avoiding seeking healthcare and support.
- Due to the way things are structured, gaining access to both general mental healthcare and specialised care for gender dysphoria places demands on the individual. For transgender people in need of gender-affirming care, long waiting times and lack of knowledge outside of specialised care are highlighted. Several transgender people describe that the consequences of lack of access to care contribute to poor mental health and that they are forced to seek treatment in other ways, for example by financing parts of the care themselves with private healthcare providers either in Sweden or abroad. There are also examples of young transgender people using medication without prescription and follow-up due to long waiting times in healthcare.
- Intersex people describe challenges in healthcare, for example, in that the individual is assumed to be best served by treatment that aims for the individual to fit into the norm of two binary genders. MUCF has seen examples of young people feeling pressured to undergo treatment, or not being informed about different treatment options. At the same time, there are also examples of young people who find it stressful not to fit into the norms of women and men.

Findings of the “Education” chapter

A relatively high proportion of young LGBTQ people report that they do not always feel safe at school. Several findings also indicate that young LGBT people are more vulnerable than young cishet people to different types of victimising behaviour, such as bullying and ostracism at school. Such behaviour comes from not only other pupils but also teachers and other adults in the school. Certain groups of young LGBTQ people appear to be particularly vulnerable. This is particularly true for young LGBTQ people with disabilities.

- Many young LGBTQI people have been bullied at school because they are LGBTQI. Cis boys are more likely to be targeted by other pupils compared to cis girls. A higher proportion of young people with intersex variations and young non-binary and binary transgender people are treated poorly by teachers or other school staff compared to other LGBTQI people.
- Stereotypical or traditional gender norms persist in the interviewees’ schools, with some exceptions. This means that all LGBTQI people are at risk of harassment and victimising behaviour at school. The risk also includes others, such as cishet boys, who violate these gender norms.
- The interviewees describe teachers who are passive when victimising behaviour occurs, make light of such behaviour, or treat the rights of LGBTQI people as a matter of opinion.
- The interviewees describe shortcomings in teaching about LGBTQI issues. The young people experience a lack of knowledge among teachers and that the school acts passively or only when someone has the courage to point out shortcomings. The interviewees testify that they themselves have taken the initiative to speak about LGBTQI issues to their class, and that teachers have asked them to do so because they are LGBTQI.
- Transgender people report particular vulnerability, for example in relation to physical education classes. How changing clothes is to be handled is resolved when the issue arises, and the solution depends on the design of the premises. In some cases, there is no acceptable solution and physical education classes become inaccessible.

Findings of the “Work, finances and housing” chapter

- Young LGBTQ people are less satisfied with their current work situation compared to young cisgender people. Both current and past unemployment are also more common among young LGBTQ people.
- Young LGBTQ people experience greater vulnerability at work compared to young cisgender people and are less likely to feel safe at work. Young LGBTQ people are more likely to have felt unfairly treated by someone at work compared to young cisgender people.
- Young LGBTQ people are less satisfied with their finances compared to young cisgender people. Young LGBTQ people are also more likely to have had difficulty covering living expenses, such as food and rent, compared to young cisgender people.
- Compared to young cisgender people, young LGBTQ people are less satisfied with their current housing situation, less satisfied with the place/location where they live, and believe they will have fewer opportunities to find good housing when they want to move.
- Several interviewees state that they believe that attitudes towards LGBTQI people differ between different sectors and workplaces, and some say that this has influenced their career choice or that they are unsure of their opportunities in a particular sector.
- Some young people report that violating other norms not related to being LGBTQI, such as also having a foreign background or a disability, also affects their opportunities in the workplace.
- It is important to point out that there are also positive experiences of the world of work and some interviewees have not reflected much on being an LGBTQI person in relation to work.

Findings of the “Leisure and community involvement” chapter

- The results of the youth survey show that the majority of young LGBTQ people feel that they have ample or fairly ample opportunities to participate in various leisure activities. However, young LGBTQ people are more likely to refrain from participating in activities due to various barriers that young cisgender people do not experience to the same extent. For example, young LGBTQ people are more likely to refrain from participating in leisure activities because it is too difficult to get there, they do not feel welcome or fit in, and parents/family do not allow them to participate.
- There is a strong interest in social issues among young LGBTQ people. Compared to young cisgender people, they are more interested in politics, social issues and what is happening in other countries. However, interest varies according to whether they live in a rural or urban area, their parents’ level of education, whether they have a Swedish or a foreign background, and whether they have a disability or not.
- Many young LGBTQ people want to influence issues in their community, but most, like other young people, feel they have limited opportunities to voice their opinions to those in power.
- The internet and social media have helped interviewees navigate physical life, been a source of knowledge and community, and made it easier for them to come out as an LGBTQI person. The young interviewees also described how they acted strategically to protect themselves and remain anonymous on the internet to avoid threats and hatred.
- Young LGBTQI people feel that LGBTQI meeting spaces can provide safety, affirmation and community. This is especially true for those interviewees who live in families where their LGBTQI identity is not accepted.
- Transgender people in particular report concerns about access to sports facilities. Strong assumptions and norms about gender that are continually reasserted mean that gyms and other sports facilities are perceived as unsafe, and that gender-segregated spaces become a barrier.
- Bisexual interviewees talk about how prejudices and preconceptions about bisexuals affect them, not only in life in general but also in the LGBTQI context.

Findings of the “Safety and vulnerability” chapter

- Compared to young cisgender people, young LGBTQ people feel less safe in all places asked about in the National Youth Survey. The place where most young LGBTQ people always feel safe is with their family. However, about one-fifth of young LGBTQ people do not always feel safe with their own family; the corresponding proportion among young cisgender people is about one in ten.
- Cis boys are the group of young people who feel most secure overall. The difference is greatest in public settings, both within the group as a whole and within the LGBTQ group.
- Compared to young cisgender people, young LGBTQ people are more likely to have been subjected to bullying, threats and physical abuse in the past six months. Within the LGBTQ group, cis boys are more likely to be subjected to both physical abuse and threats than cis girls.
- It is clear from the young people’s accounts that the safety and vulnerability of young LGBTQI people is closely linked to the attitudes of society. Most of them have not experienced physical violence in public themselves. However, many have experienced verbal abuse, menacing looks and threats.
- Young LGBTQI people indicate that both the risk and the fear of being targeted are affected by whether they pass as a cisgender person in their surroundings. This leads, among other things, to young people adapting their behaviour in certain contexts in order to pass as cisgender and to young people who do not pass possibly avoiding certain places in order not to be targeted.
- Several young LGBTQI people with a foreign background indicate that they experience a particular vulnerability, where they both risk being subjected to racism everywhere in society and experience a greater vulnerability to LGBTQI phobia when they are in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas.
- The interviews reveal that some young LGBTQI people, particularly transgender people, have low levels of trust in society. This low trust applies to public authorities, politicians and the news media. The young people report that they feel that those in power and the public authorities do not act to ensure the rights of transgender people and that they even directly work against them.
- Young people who have sought asylum because of persecution as an LGBTQ person in their home country describe the asylum process as stressful and insecure and state that decisions are not comprehensible to them.

Findings from the “Vulnerability of young LGBTQ people to conversion attempts” chapter

- MUCF defines conversion attempts as “attempts to get someone to change, permanently hide or refrain from living in accordance with their sexual orientation or gender identity or from expressing gender in the way they want”.
- It is not possible to draw a sharp line between attempted conversion and, for example, honour-related violence and oppression or exposure to hate crime. It is therefore not possible to estimate how many people are subjected to conversion attempts, but MUCF’s findings suggest that conversion attempts occur on a not insignificant scale.
- Existing evidence points to several negative effects of being subjected to conversion attempts, such as poor mental health and an increased risk of suicidal thoughts and attempts.
- In a Swedish context, previous studies have addressed conversion attempts as a form of honour-related violence and oppression, sometimes linked to a specific religion and sometimes more to a cultural context, or conversion attempts within different Christian communities.
- Interviews with and accounts of vulnerable young LGBTQ people and support services, the experiences of other actors and the results of the National Youth Survey indicate that there are young LGBTQ people who are subjected to pressure to change, permanently hide or refrain from living in accordance with their sexual orientation or gender identity or from expressing gender in the way the young person wants. This can be done through, for example, physical and sexual violence, threats, intercession or exclusion from social contexts.
- There are a number of differences within the LGBTQ group that affect the extent to which they have experienced attempts by others to influence them. Binary and non-binary transgender people are more likely to be subjected to pressure than LGBQ cisgender people. Homosexual and queer young people are more likely to be subjected to this type of pressure than bisexual/pansexual people and people who have not defined their sexual orientation or state in the survey that they are unsure of their sexual orientation. Among homosexual people, more girls than boys report having been subjected to this type of pressure.

Introduction

This chapter describes the Agency's assignment and how MUCF has carried out the work on this report.

About the assignment

In July 2020, the Government tasked the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) with identifying and compiling knowledge about the living conditions of young LGBTQ people (Government Decision A2020/01666/MRB). At the same time, the Agency was tasked with identifying and compiling knowledge about the vulnerability of young LGBTQ people to what is known as conversion therapy (Government Decision A2020/01669/MRB). The assignments are part of the Government's work to strengthen the equal rights and opportunities of LGBTQI people. MUCF also sees the assignments as part of the work for the Government's youth policy objective for all young people to have good living conditions, power to shape their lives and influence on societal development (Skr. 2020/21:105).

The Government highlights that the report **Hon hen han**, published by the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (now MUCF) in 2010, was an important knowledge base in the work to develop the strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression in 2014 (Ministry of Employment, 2014). The decision also mentions the ambition to develop an action plan focusing on current challenges and concrete measures to further strengthen the work for equal rights and opportunities for LGBTQ people. The new action plan, **Action plan for equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people**, was adopted in January 2021 (Ministry of Employment, 2021).

The reasons for the decision to task MUCF with identifying the living conditions of young LGBTQI people emphasise that, although many are well, the group has poorer health and a higher risk of suicide compared to young people in the population as a whole. Minority stress due to negative treatment and discrimination from the rest of society is highlighted as the main reason why some young LGBTQ people do not experience good health. New knowledge is needed about the living conditions and vulnerability of the group, as well as about the interventions that promote and strengthen the mental health of young LGBTQ people and their access to equal rights and opportunities. The Government emphasises that the identification work should take into account developments in new ways of identifying oneself, and consider different perspectives, such as queer, intersex, non-binary and intersectional perspectives. The Government also notes that LGBTQ people as a group are heterogeneous and that some within the group have particular vulnerabilities, which must be taken into account. In addition, the assignment must also have a youth perspective and make the voices of young LGBTQ people heard.

The assignment to identify and compile knowledge about conversion therapy should be seen as a complement to the overall assignment on living conditions. In the assignment on conversion therapy, the Government emphasises that it is

unacceptable for young LGBTQ people to be subjected to coercion or various kinds of pressure to conceal their sexuality or gender identity, as everyone should have equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. The Government also points out that it is a criminal offence to force someone to undergo conversion therapy and that this can already be punished as unlawful coercion, for example. There may also be a question of increasing the penalty if one of the motives for the offence has been to preserve or restore honour. Conversion therapy is also prohibited in healthcare, as all treatment must be based on medical need.

The Government decided to give MUCF the task because the issue has received increasing attention in recent years, including from civil society actors, and there is a lack of knowledge about the existence of conversion therapy both in Sweden and internationally. The Government stresses that, in general, there is still much work to be done before all people can feel that they can live a life in which their rights and identity are fully respected, and that “for children and young people, support in the development of their identity can be crucial for their sense of self and general mental health” (Government Decision A2020/01669/MRB, p. 3). In the decision, the Government also notes that young LGBTQ people may be particularly vulnerable in an honour-related context and that conversion therapy may be a form of honour-related violence and oppression, but that there are large gaps in knowledge.

MUCF submitted a partial report on the assignment on conversion therapy on 1 March 2022, but the presentation of the findings is also included as a chapter in this report.

Purpose

Several previous studies have shown that LGBTQI people have, among other things, poorer health and greater vulnerability to certain crimes than cisgender people. The most recent comprehensive survey on the living conditions of young LGBTQ people was conducted by MUCF (then the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs) in 2010. There is therefore no comprehensive picture of the development of living conditions for young LGBTQI people over the last decade. Against this background, in 2020 MUCF was tasked with identifying the living conditions of young LGBTQI people. This report responds to this task. Based on the assignment description, the Agency has endeavoured to identify the living conditions of different groups of young LGBTQI people. The ambition has also been to say something about how the living conditions of young LGBTQ people have developed over time.

Health and living conditions

Summary of the chapter's findings

In short, the self-rated mental and physical health of young LGBTQ people is worse than the self-rated health of young cisgender people. This is true in all areas surveyed in the National Youth Survey by MUCF, the EU LGBTI Survey II by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, and the National Public Health Survey by the Public Health Agency of Sweden. In the interviews conducted by MUCF during the preparation of this report, examples are given of how family, friends, those in their immediate environment and society can all have a negative impact on the health of young LGBTQI people through negative attitudes and victimising behaviour. In contrast, for young LGBTQI people with supportive family and friends, these often play an important role in the well-being of the young people. While there are positive examples, it is clear that many young LGBTQI people experience challenges with the healthcare system. These include a lack of knowledge and care in primary and general care as well as a lack of access to specialised care, such as gender-affirming care and care for people with conditions that affect sex development. Poor treatment and lack of access to care have also led to negative consequences for the individual, such as increased vulnerability, deterioration in health or avoidance of seeking care.

Summary of results from surveys on the health and living conditions of young LGBTQI people

The results of the National Youth Survey and the National Public Health Survey show, in line with previous knowledge, that young LGBTQ people are in poorer health than young cisgender people. This is true for both physical and mental health, but the difference is greatest for mental health. Among young LGBTQ people, a clear minority consider themselves to have good mental health or are satisfied with it. The results show that cis boys have better mental health compared to cis girls, in line with previous knowledge about mental health among young people. The results of the youth survey show that this is also true within the LGBTQ group, more specifically for LGBQ cis boys compared to LGBQ cis girls and non-binary boys.

In terms of serious mental health problems, the results also show that diagnosed depression, suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts are more common among young LGBTQ people compared to young cisgender people. About one in five young LGBTQ people have at some point considered taking their own life, and suicidal thoughts are about four times more common among young LGBTQ people than among young cisgender people. It is relatively common for young LGBTQI people to experience challenges in contact with the healthcare system. This is particularly common among binary transgender and intersex

people, while a lower proportion of LGBTQ cis boys have faced challenges in contact with healthcare.

Feeling satisfied with life as a whole and having a positive outlook on the future are less common among young LGBTQ people compared to young cisgender people. With these issues, the trend among young LGBTQ people has been negative since 2012, and the gap between young LGBTQ people and young cisgender people has widened. This is particularly true for the percentage of people who are satisfied with life as a whole, where the trend among young LGBTQ people has shown a steady downward trend in the National Youth Surveys conducted by MUCF since 2012.

When it comes to various risk factors for mental and physical health, the results do not show any difference between young LGBTQ people and young cisgender people in terms of alcohol consumption. In the past, young homosexual and bisexual girls have been higher risk consumers of alcohol compared to heterosexual girls (Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2014). In contrast, the use of various drugs, such as cannabis but also other drugs, is more common among young LGBTQ people than among young cisgender people.

Factors that can contribute to good mental health include good relationships with family, friends and even good romantic relationships. The results show that young LGBTQ people are generally less satisfied with these relationships compared to young cisgender people. There is also a lower proportion of young LGBTQ people who feel included in their family compared to young cisgender people.

When it comes to deeper relationships and having someone to share one's innermost feelings with, this is relatively rare among young people, but more common among young LGBTQ people compared to young cisgender people.

Finally, the results also show that young LGBTQ people are more likely to seek advice and support regarding their health from adults other than their family. This is true for young LGBTQ people in both good and poor health. Given that the group as a whole is in many ways in poorer health than young cisgender people, a higher propensity to seek advice and support is very positive. At the same time, the fact that young people seek support outside the family could be due to the fact that young LGBTQ people feel less included in their own family.

Summary of interviews and accounts regarding the health and living conditions of young LGBTQI people

Interviews with young LGBTQI people reveal that most have experienced mental illness and that many describe their mental health as worse than their physical health.

For many young LGBTQI people, friends, parents and sometimes siblings are important for their well-being. They describe good and accepting relationships as important in different ways. Conversely, it is clear that the lack of acceptance and supportive close relationships with family and friends has a negative impact on young people. The lack of acceptance and support from the

wider community is also described by transgender people in particular as having a negative impact on their mental health.

It is clear from the young people's accounts that poor mental health can be related to both LGBTQI-specific aspects and other factors. For example, several young people describe that being subjected to prejudice and lack of understanding from family, friends and those around them negatively impacts their well-being. Young transgender people describe experiences of gender dysphoria combined with difficult access to care, and young LGBTQI people with migration experience describe PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and other mental health problems linked to vulnerability as an LGBTQI person, particularly in other countries. Young LGBTQI people also describe other mental health problems that are linked to disability or cannot be clearly linked to factors related to being LGBTQI.

The interviews with young LGBTQI people reveal two overarching challenges in healthcare – shortcomings in how this community is treated by healthcare professionals and a lack of access to healthcare.

The interviewees have mixed experiences in terms of how they are treated by healthcare professionals. There are positive examples of healthcare providers being open and unbiased, or adapting quickly when the young person's LGBTQI identity was revealed. At the same time, several young people describe shortcomings in the way they are treated. This can be a healthcare provider assuming that the person is heterosexual or cisgender, as well as prejudiced treatment and questioning of the person. There are examples of this having negative consequences for the individual, such as the young person choosing to end the care contact or counselling, or the young person avoiding seeking healthcare and support.

Several also highlight challenges with access to care. This applies to general care related to mental health and specialised care for gender dysphoria. For example, it has been pointed out that it takes a lot of effort from the individual to access care. For transgender people in need of gender-affirming care, long waiting times and lack of knowledge outside of specialised care are highlighted. Some young people also report that they have been refused referrals for assessment and that their gender identity has been questioned or not respected. Several transgender people describe that the consequences of lack of access to care contribute to poor mental health and that they are forced to seek treatment in other ways, for example through private healthcare providers abroad, which the young people pay for themselves, or by financing parts of the care themselves in Sweden. There are also examples of young transgender people using medication without prescription and follow-up due to long waiting times in healthcare.

Mental and physical health of intersex people

The intersex people interviewed by MUCF describe challenges in care, for example, in that the individual is assumed to be best served by treatment that strives for the individual to fit into the norm of two binary genders. This has meant that one person has undergone non-medically-necessary surgery at a

very young age, another has felt pressured to undergo treatment and the young people describe a lack of information about what options are available. Some of the responses to the survey by young people with conditions affecting sex development indicate similar experiences. At the same time, it also appears that several respondents find it stressful not to fit into the norms of women and men. The young people with conditions affecting sex development who responded to the MUCF survey rate their mental health lower than their physical health. While it is not possible to draw conclusions about the entire group of young people with conditions affecting sex development from the survey, it may still be relevant to point out that the respondents' experiences of their health status are similar to those of young people in general. The survey also asked questions about healthcare. Most respondents were quite satisfied with the healthcare they received in general and in relation to their condition. At the same time, a majority of respondents reported that they had not been offered psychosocial support, and about half felt that they had not had the opportunity to have a say in their healthcare while growing up.

Education

Summary of the chapter's findings

The Education Act, the curriculum and the Discrimination Act give a clear signal that discrimination and harassment of LGBTQI persons is not allowed. However, despite clear laws and guidelines, traditional norms persist in the school world, creating vulnerability in school for young LGBTQI people.

Even well-meaning behaviour by school staff can contribute to minority stress by exposing pupils' LGBTQI identity or making victimisation a matter of a person's own courage and ability to stand up for themselves. There are positive examples of individual teachers and other school staff supporting LGBTQI students, but support for young LGBTQI people in schools is largely personal and thereby vulnerable. In the interviews with young people, there are examples of school staff allowing abuse, such as debates about the mental health of transgender people, and leaving it to the young people themselves to put a stop to it.

As school is compulsory up to grade 9 and upper-secondary school is a requirement for higher education, a challenging situation arises for young LGBTQI people who feel victimised but are dependent on continuing to attend school. In order to improve the situation of young LGBTQI people, curricula need to be more closely adhered to, the level of knowledge of teachers needs to be raised and LGBTQI perspectives, including discussions on norms, need to be better integrated into instruction.

Summary of results from surveys on the education of young LGBTQI people

With regard to young people's educational choices and educational attainment, the results of the surveys do not show any differences between LGBTQ and cishet individuals. However, the results show that young LGBTQ people are less satisfied with their school situation and their education in general, compared to young cishet people.

A relatively high proportion of young LGBTQ people say they do not always feel safe at school. Several findings also indicate that young LGBTQ people are more vulnerable than young cishet people to different types of victimising behaviour, such as bullying and ostracism at school. Such behaviour comes from not only other pupils but also teachers and other adults in the school.

Certain groups of young LGBTQ people appear to be particularly vulnerable. This is particularly true for young LGBTQ people with disabilities. The Agency has previously shown that young people with disabilities are at greater risk of bullying, for example, even within the group of all young people aged 16–25 (MUCF, 2017).

The EU LGBTI Survey II shows that a majority of young LGBTQI people have been ridiculed, teased, humiliated or threatened by school peers or school staff. Intersex and non-binary young people were more likely than other LGBTQI people to report being victimised by school staff or teachers. One in

five young LGBTQI people in the study also reported that they had considered leaving school because of their LGBTQI status. A majority have also often or always hidden the fact that they are LGBTQI at school.

Summary of interviews and accounts regarding the education of young LGBTQI people

The analysis of the interviews shows that stereotypical or traditional gender norms persist in the interviewees' schools, with some exceptions. This means that almost all LGBTQI people are at risk in school – as are others, such as cishet boys, who may be perceived as violating the norms. Discrimination and harassment are mainly verbal, but also occur in the form of threats and material damage. More serious threats and physical violence also occur. This school climate affects the well-being of young LGBTQI people and in some cases has even led to a change of education programme or school. The interviewees also describe teachers who are passive when victimising behaviour occurs, make light of such behaviour, or treat the rights of LGBTQI people as a matter of opinion.

The interviewees describe shortcomings in the teaching of LGBTQ issues and ask for more of it. It is important for young LGBTQI people to receive education and that it is in line with reality. If traditional gender norms and their effects are not discussed at school, they will not change and young LGBTQI people will be invisible. The interviewees testify that they themselves have taken the initiative to speak about LGBTQI issues to their class, and that teachers have asked them to do so. The fact that someone talks about LGBTQI issues themselves does not necessarily have to be negative, but it shows that there is a lack of knowledge among teachers and that schools act passively or only when someone has the courage to point out the shortcomings. The LGBTQI interviewees also report some good examples of LGBTQI instruction, either by an individual teacher with knowledge or, in some cases, a whole school working in a structured way.

The young LGBTQI persons have expectations that schools should be more active in preventing victimising behaviour. They reflect on what a lack of knowledge on the part of staff means in practice and how they themselves should act. They suggest things that could help society to see LGBTQI issues more as “normal”, such as more training for school staff and more integration of LGBTQI perspectives in teaching and earlier in the school career.

Transgender people report particular vulnerability, for example in relation to physical education classes. How changing clothes is to be handled is resolved when the issue arises, and the solution depends on the design of the premises, or there is no acceptable solution and physical education classes become inaccessible. Both research and interviewees indicate that possible and relatively simple solutions that could suit many people, including cishet people who want privacy, are within reach. For young transgender people who change their name, there are also problems with administrative procedures that do not take the name change into account, resulting in the old name appearing on documents and being used by teachers.

Legislation affecting young LGBTQI people's educational opportunities

There are several pieces of legislation that regulate different school forms. The Education Act (SFS 2010:800) regulates the school system, which includes preschool, compulsory school, upper-secondary school and variants of these school forms. The Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100) regulates the activities of higher education institutions, the Regulation on State Funding for Adult Education (SFS 2015:218) regulates the activities of folk high schools for adult education and the Regulation on Higher Vocational Education (SFS 2009:130) regulates the activities of higher vocational education institutions.

According to the Education Act, education must promote the development and learning of all pupils and inspire a lifelong desire to learn. The Education Act also states that education must also convey and anchor respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based, such as the inviolability of human life, the freedom and integrity of the individual, the equal value of all people, equality, and solidarity between people. It is important for young LGBTQI people that education is designed in such a way that all pupils are assured of a safe school environment that is conducive to learning, as described in Chapter five of the Education Act, while Chapter six sets out how schools should deal with victimising behaviour that is not regulated by the Discrimination Act.

The Higher Education Ordinance, the Regulation on State Funding for Adult Education and the Regulation on Higher Vocational Education contain only a few references to the responsibility of the education provider for basic democratic values and the situation of students. The Higher Education Ordinance states that "higher education institutions shall also be responsible for other tasks of a social nature which support students in their study situation or facilitate the transition to working life, and for ensuring that students have a good study environment in general". State funding for adult education is intended, among other things, to contribute to the strengthening and development of democracy and to the common values of everyone being of equal worth and gender equality. The Regulation on Higher Vocational Education does not specify the education provider's responsibility in relation to values.

The Discrimination Act (SFS 2008:567) is another piece of legislation that regulates the activities of schools. The Act stipulates that anyone who carries out activities referred to in the Education Act or other educational activities (education provider) may not discriminate against any child or any pupil or student who participates in or applies for the activities. If an education provider becomes aware that someone attending or applying to the education provider's activities believes that they have been subjected to sexual or some other form of harassment in connection with the activities, the education provider is obliged under the Act to investigate the circumstances of the alleged harassment. Where appropriate, the education provider must take such steps as may reasonably be required to prevent future harassment.

The school system is also regulated by curricula for preschool (SKOLFS 2018:50), for compulsory school, preschool class and school-age educare (SKOLFS 2010:37) and for upper-secondary school (SKOLFS 2011:144).⁴⁴

The curricula have similar wording on the responsibility to combat gender patterns that limit pupils' learning, choices and development or to actively and consciously promote women's and men's equal rights and opportunities. Schools must also take into account the needs and development of each individual pupil. School values, as set out in the curricula, require schools to work in a way that embraces human rights and fundamental democratic values, and that promotes equal treatment and combats discrimination and victimising behaviour. The work to combat discrimination is examined by the Equality Ombudsman (DO). In an analysis of complaints of discrimination received, the DO has seen patterns which indicate, among other things, that there are shortcomings in the schools' work to adapt to the individual needs or circumstances of individual pupils. The analysis shows that education providers' work on harassment is deficient in many respects and that school staff are key actors in the perceived discrimination, either by harassing a pupil themselves or by neglecting incidents that may constitute discrimination (DO, 2014).

Since 1994, the curriculum has required sex and relationship education to be integrated into teaching across subjects. Initially, the school principal was responsible for ensuring that this took place; now there are detailed specifications for the various school subjects (National Agency for Education, 2013). The LGBTQI area is not mentioned explicitly, but is expected to be covered by the general descriptions that exist for teaching. In 2018, the National Agency for Education was tasked with reviewing the curricula for better sex and relationship education. In the announced changes that will apply from 1 July 2022⁴⁵, LGBTQI issues or LGBTQI perspectives are still not mentioned as part of the instruction or as part of the knowledge to be imparted by school staff to pupils (SKOLFS 2021:5).

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is responsible for reviewing the instruction in schools. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate found that there was some subject integration of sex and relationship education, but that sex and relationships were not linked to the school's values work (Swedish Schools Inspectorate, 2018). The same review found that there were major shortcomings in the teaching of norms and LGBTQ issues.

Work, finances and housing

Summary of the chapter's findings

The findings of the chapter show that young LGBTQI people experience fewer opportunities in the labour market and have poorer financial prospects compared to young cisgender people. Both quantitative and qualitative results indicate that exposure to victimising and unfair treatment are factors that affect the labour market situation of young LGBTQI people. Young people's own accounts also reveal a more complex picture of the challenges of being a young LGBTQI person in the workplace. In addition to being subjected to victimising behaviour and intrusive questions, uncertainty about the attitudes of employers and colleagues towards LGBTQI people affects both the search for work and the working environment in a workplace. As a result, young LGBTQI people need to develop strategies to deal with various difficult or discriminatory situations that they may encounter in the workplace. Additional challenges may arise if the young LGBTQI person also violates other norms, such as norms of functionality. In order for young LGBTQI people to feel welcome in the workplace, explicit support for LGBTQI people is an important factor.

Summary of results from surveys on the work, finances and housing of young LGBTQI people

In short, the results of the 2021 National Youth Survey by MUCF and the 2019 EU LGBTI Survey II show that young LGBTQI people experience several challenges in the labour market. The results also show that young LGBTQI people are less satisfied with their financial situation and their housing situation than young cisgender people.

When it comes to work, young LGBTQI people are less satisfied with their current job situation than cisgender people are. Both current and past unemployment are also more common among young LGBTQI people.

Young LGBTQI people experience greater vulnerability at work compared to young cisgender people. They are also less likely to feel safe at work and more likely to have experienced unfair treatment by someone at work.

The results of the EU LGBTI Survey II also show that many young LGBTQI people experience a general negative attitude towards LGBTQI people at work. Only a small proportion responded that they are always open about their LGBTQI identity at work.

Young LGBTQI people are less satisfied with their finances compared to young cisgender people. Young LGBTQI people are also more likely to have had difficulty covering living expenses, such as food and rent, compared to young cisgender people.

In terms of housing situation, compared to young cisgender people, young LGBTQI people are less satisfied with their current housing situation, less

satisfied with the place/location where they live, and believe they will have fewer opportunities to find good housing when they want to move. The results of the EU LGBTI Survey II also show that it is relatively common for LGBTQI people to have experienced some form of housing problem. Non-binary people are more likely to have experienced housing problems compared to other LGBTQI people.

Summary of interviews and accounts regarding the work, finances and housing of young LGBTQI people

In the interviews with young LGBTQI people, they talk about different experiences of working life. Some have experience of working for a long time or for several employers, while others have very little experience of working. Among those with work experience, the extent to which being an LGBTQI person has affected their working life differs.

While few have experienced direct harassment in the workplace, several describe having experience of feeling uncomfortable being open at work or having colleagues' comments negatively affect them. The conditions for choosing to be open with colleagues and employers differ among young people. Some have actively chosen to disclose that they are LGBTQI, while for others the issue has not come up and they have not disclosed the fact on their own. Still others have chosen not to tell anyone at their workplace because they are unsure how it will be received. For some transgender people, it is not possible to choose whether or not to disclose at the workplace that they are transgender. The interviews also show that the lack of knowledge about the attitude of colleagues and employers towards LGBTQI people affects young people's sense of security both when looking for work and in the workplace. Some also describe that it can be difficult to determine whether they are being discriminated against or not, as it can be difficult to know what the motive of an employer is when they do not offer more shifts or a hire them for a job.

While few express that the employer or union would not be able to help them in the event of victimising behaviour, none describe having received or sought help to address internal problems of such behaviour and negative attitudes towards LGBTQI people in the workplace, or say they would seek help if problems arose. Young people state that they would instead choose another workplace or that they have tried to deal with it on their own.

Several interviewees also state that they believe that attitudes towards LGBTQI people differ between different sectors and workplaces, and some say that this has influenced their career choice or that they are unsure of their opportunities in a particular sector. Some young people indicate that they violate other norms not related to being LGBTQI, such as also having a foreign background or a disability, and that this also affects their opportunities in the workplace.

In the interviews, some reflect on what can contribute to a good working environment for LGBTQI people. They highlight that explicit acceptance of LGBTQI employees, the presence of more LGBTQI people in the workplace

and more knowledge would lead to them feeling more secure in the workplace and when applying for a job.

It is important to point out that there are also positive experiences of the world of work and some interviewees have not reflected much on being an LGBTQI person in relation to work.

Leisure and community involvement

Summary of the chapter's findings

Ensuring that all young people have meaningful leisure time and are involved in building society are priority areas in the work on the youth policy objective. This chapter shows that there are both similarities and differences in the leisure time and community involvement of young LGBTQ and young cishet people. While most young LGBTQ people feel they have opportunities to participate in leisure activities, they also encounter barriers to meaningful leisure time to a greater extent than cishet people. Some barriers are directly related to their LGBTQI identity, while others are indirectly related. From the interviews, it appears that norms and experience and the risk of being subjected to LGBTQI phobia impact young LGBTQI people's leisure time.

Summary of results from surveys regarding young LGBTQI people's leisure time

The results of the youth survey show that the majority of young LGBTQ people feel that they have ample or fairly ample opportunities to participate in various leisure activities. However, young LGBTQ people are more likely to refrain from participating in activities due to various barriers that young cishet people do not experience to the same extent. For example, young LGBTQ people are more likely to refrain from participating in leisure activities because it has been too difficult to get there, they have not felt welcome or that they fit in, the activity was not adapted to the individual and parents/family did not allow them to participate. Within the LGBTQ group, the results indicate that people with disabilities, people from foreign backgrounds and binary transgender people are more likely than others to experience barriers to participating in various activities. At the same time, the results show that young LGBTQ people are members of, or otherwise participate in the activities of, at least one club/association to the same extent as young cishet people.

When it comes to sports, the results of the youth survey show that many young LGBTQ people exercise or play sports regularly and that, like for young cishet people, it is most common for the exercise and sports to be done outside of sports associations/clubs. However, young LGBTQ people are less likely than young cishet people to exercise or play sports. This is true for both organised sport and exercise (through a club or association) and unorganised sport and exercise (not through a club or association). The results also show that young LGBTQ people visit sports facilities (gyms and sports halls) less often than young cishet people. Non-binary people are less likely to visit these types of facilities than other LGBTQ people, which may be explained by the fact that the changing rooms in the vast majority of facilities are separated for "boys" or "girls".

This chapter also looks at young LGBTQ people's interest in community issues. The results show that there is a high level of interest in social issues

among young LGBTQ people. Compared to young cisnet people, they are more interested in politics, social issues and what is happening in other countries. However, interest varies depending on whether the person lives in a rural area, has a disability, has a Swedish or foreign background and the level of education of their parents. Many young LGBTQ people want to influence issues in their community, but most, like other young people, feel they have limited opportunities to voice their opinions to those in power.

Summary of interviews and accounts regarding young LGBTQI people's leisure time

The young LGBTQI people interviewed participate in similar leisure activities as other young people in Sweden. For example, the interviewees have a multifaceted community involvement because they find it fun, are interested in specific issues and want to influence in different ways. The internet and social media help interviewees navigate physical life, are a source of knowledge and community, and make it easier for them to “come out” as an LGBTQI person. The young interviewees also described how they act strategically to protect themselves and remain anonymous on the internet to avoid threats and hatred. The interviewees feel that LGBTQI meeting spaces can provide safety, affirmation and community, especially for those interviewees who live in families where their LGBTQI identity is not accepted.

In addition to the activities above, which are important to the interviewees, they bring up various barriers to participating in their leisure activities. For example, the young people describe a fear of being subjected to victimising behaviour, which causes them to refrain from leisure activities and in some cases may lead to them not being open about being LGBTQI. Where there are clear norms about who the “typical” participant is, it can be difficult to participate and interviewees describe the risk of a normalisation process that diminishes the victimising behaviour that takes place at the leisure activity. The interviewees indicate that participation becomes more difficult when, for example, they need to come out at their leisure activity or debate issues related to their own personal situation. In several cases, the barriers can be compared to the National Youth Survey response that the leisure activity was not adapted to the individual.

Transgender people in particular report concerns about access to sports facilities. Strong assumptions and norms about gender that are continually reasserted mean that gyms and other sports facilities are perceived as unsafe, and that gender-segregated spaces are perceived as a barrier. Lack of access to meeting spaces is a recurring theme in the interviews and relates to distance, time, travel costs and lack of information that a meeting space exists at all. This is a particularly significant barrier for young people of a younger age. Bisexual interviewees talk about how prejudices and preconceptions about bisexuals affect them, not only in life in general but also in the LGBTQI context. The interviewees also talk about how it is difficult to deviate from several of society's norms, such as being both an LGBTQI person and having a disability, as the norms interact and contribute to greater vulnerability.

Safety and vulnerability

Summary of the chapter's findings

The youth policy objective makes it clear that all young people should enjoy human rights and have access to security and a life free from discrimination (Skr. 2020/21:105). The findings in this chapter show a continued higher level of vulnerability and insecurity among young LGBTQ people compared to young cishet people. Young LGBTQ people are less likely than cishet people to feel safe in public places and are more likely to be subjected to certain crimes, such as threats, physical abuse and sexual assault, as well as bullying and ostracism. Interviews with young LGBTQI people also show that many of them have experienced victimising behaviour towards LGBTQI people, themselves and others, and that they are negatively impacted by the fact that LGBTQI people are generally more vulnerable than other young people. Other discrimination grounds and socioeconomic factors also influence the risk of being victimised. There is no uniform perception among young people that attitudes towards LGBTQI people have improved in recent years. In particular, young transgender people express that attitudes towards transgender people have become more negative.

Summary of results from surveys regarding the safety and vulnerability of young LGBTQI people

The results of MUCF's national Youth Survey show that, compared to young cishet people, young LGBTQ people feel less safe in all the places examined in the survey. The place where most young LGBTQ people always feel safe is with their family. However, about one-fifth of young LGBTQ people do not always feel safe with their own family. The corresponding proportion among young cishet people is about one in ten. The relative difference in perceived safety between young LGBTQ people and young cishet people seems to be greater in public settings (such as on public transport or in the city). Cis boys are the group who feel most secure overall. The difference is greater in public settings. This is true for both cishet boys compared to cishet girls, and LGBQ cis boys compared to people with other gender identities within the LGBTQ group.

Compared to young cishet people, young LGBTQ people are more likely to have been subjected to bullying, threats and physical abuse in the past six months. Within the LGBTQ group, cis boys are more likely to be subjected to both physical abuse and threats than cis girls.

There are no statistically significant differences based on sexual orientation within the LGBTQ group. However, the results show that some groups are more vulnerable than others. These include:

- Young LGBTQ people with disabilities, who are more likely to be subjected to bullying, threats and physical abuse than young LGBTQ people without disabilities.
- Young LGBTQ people living in a rural municipality, who are more likely to be subjected to bullying and physical abuse than young LGBTQ people not living in a rural municipality.
- Young LGBTQ people in a younger age group (age 16–20), who are more likely to be subjected to bullying than young LGBTQ people in an older age group (age 21–25).
- Young LGBTQ people with a foreign background and young LGBTQ people whose parents have no post-secondary education. These groups are more likely to report being threatened than young LGBTQ people with a Swedish background or young LGBTQ people whose parents have a post-secondary education.

In the EU LGBTI Survey II, a majority of young LGBTIQI people say they have experienced victimising behaviour or threats in the past five years. It is most common for young LGBTIQI people to be subjected to abusive or threatening comments by someone they are in the same place as, and for this to be done with gestures and looks. Young non-binary and young intersex people are more likely to be threatened, especially compared to cis boys, who are least likely to be threatened. It is most common to be targeted in public places and to be targeted by men.

Half of young LGBTIQI people have been physically or sexually assaulted at least once in the past five years. The perpetrators were almost exclusively men and the violence was mainly committed outdoors. Bisexuals were more likely than others to know the perpetrator and cis girls were more likely than others to be victimised in a café, restaurant, pub or nightclub.

The survey also shows that young LGBTIQI people who experience discrimination, victimising behaviour, threats and violence rarely report what has happened. This is because, among other reasons, they do not think it will lead to anything, do not think the police can or would do anything about it, do not perceive the incident as serious enough or have not considered that it is possible to report it, and the victim does not trust the police.

Young LGBTIQI people have different perceptions of how prejudice and intolerance have changed over the past five years, with 20 percent reporting that prejudice and intolerance have remained the same, while 40 percent feel that it has increased and 40 percent feel that it has decreased. Non-binary people are most likely to feel that prejudice and intolerance have increased, while cis boys are most likely to feel that it has decreased.

Summary of interviews and accounts regarding the safety and vulnerability of young LGBTQI people

The safety and vulnerability of young LGBTQI people is closely linked to societal attitudes, as evident in the young people's accounts. Most young LGBTQI people have not experienced physical violence in public themselves. However, many have experienced verbal abuse, looks that are perceived negatively and threats. Many know an LGBTQI person who has been subjected to physical violence. Some interviewees also describe being subjected to sexual harassment or assault that can be linked to their being LGBTQI. Social media is also described as a place where direct harassment and threats are made and hatred towards LGBTQI people is spread. It is also clear that many young people, regardless of whether they have been victimised themselves or not, are affected by the knowledge that there are people who have negative attitudes towards LGBTQI people, and that such people may harass, threaten or commit acts of violence against LGBTQI people. Young people indicate that both the risk and the fear of being targeted are affected by whether they pass as a cisgender person in their surroundings. This leads, among other things, to young people adapting their behaviour in certain contexts in order to pass as cisgender and to young people who do not pass, for example, avoiding certain places in order not to be targeted. Several young LGBTQI people with a foreign background also indicate that they experience a particular vulnerability, where they both risk being subjected to racism everywhere in society and describe a greater vulnerability to LGBTQI phobia in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas.

Young people have somewhat different perceptions of how attitudes towards LGBTQI people have evolved over time. Some argue that attitudes towards LGBTQI people have generally improved, while others, particularly transgender people, indicate that attitudes towards transgender people have worsened over time. They link the negative trend to the public, media and political debate on transgender rights.

The interviews reveal that some young people, particularly transgender people, have low levels of trust in society. This low trust applies to public authorities, politicians and the news media. The young people report that they feel that both those in power and the public authorities do not act to ensure the rights of transgender people and that they even directly work against them. LGBTQI people who have sought asylum because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression also show a lower level of trust in public authorities and those in their immediate environment, which is closely linked to experiences of oppression and vulnerability from society, family and public authorities in their former home country or during migration.

Most interviewees have not had contact with public authorities in such a way that their LGBTQI identity has come up. Those for whom it has come up have had mixed or mainly negative experiences. Asylum-seeking young LGBTQI people in particular young LGBTQI people in particular report negative experiences. Those who have sought asylum because of persecution as an LGBTQI person in their home country describe the asylum process as stressful and insecure and state that decisions are not comprehensible to them. Other

young LGBTQI people also report hesitation to contact the police in cases of suspected hate crime because they do not see it as serious enough or believe, or have previous experience of, the case will be dropped.

Vulnerability of young LGBTQ people to conversion attempts

Summary of the chapter's findings

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) has been specially tasked with identifying the vulnerability of young LGBTQ people to what is known as conversion therapy, referred to in the report as conversion attempts. In this report, conversion attempts are defined as attempts to get someone to change, permanently hide or refrain from living in accordance with their sexual orientation or gender identity or from expressing gender in the way they want.

MUCF's data indicates that there are young LGBTQ people who are subjected to conversion attempts in Sweden. However, it is not possible to estimate how many young people in Sweden may have been subjected to conversion attempts. This is due to several factors, such as the lack of systematic documentation of cases of conversion attempts. It is also difficult to draw a clear line between all types of honour-related violence and oppression against LGBTQ people and conversion attempts in an honour context. In some cases, it may also be difficult to draw the line against other forms of vulnerability, such as vulnerability to hate crimes.

There are also few support services that come into contact with young LGBTQ people who are in controlling environments other than honour-related ones, which also makes it difficult to know about their vulnerability.

Summary of results from the National Youth Survey

In the 2021 National Youth Survey, 18 percent of all LGBTQ people reported that someone had tried to influence their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Most of them had been told to change. Having been told to change may be an attempt to convert, but it does not have to be. Transgender people are more likely to be pressured in this respect than LGBQ cis people. Homosexual and queer young people are also more likely to be subjected to this type of pressure than bisexual/pansexual people and people who have not defined their sexual orientation or are unsure of their sexual orientation. Among homosexuals, more girls report having been pressured than boys, which may be related to the fact that girls are generally at greater risk of honour-related violence and oppression.

There is also a lower proportion of homosexual girls who say they have the opportunity to marry who they want. LGBTQ people with a foreign background also have fewer opportunities to choose whom they want to marry compared to cisnet people with a foreign background and people with a Swedish background. Of all vulnerable LGBTQ people, most have been pressured by other young people or by their family.

5 percent of the LGBTQ people also reported being subjected to more serious forms of conversion attempts, such as:

- some form of “treatment”
- threats to be taken out of Sweden
- threats of being sent on a “reformatory trip”
- threats of forced marriage
- being taken out of Sweden
- being sent on a “re-education trip”
- being forced to marry
- other forms of pressure, threats, coercion or harm.

Summary of interviews and accounts from young people and support services

MUCF has also heard accounts from young people and support services who work with young people about the following practices aimed at changing or persuading young people to permanently hide their sexual orientation or gender identity.

- physical violence: beatings, restricted access to food
- sexual violence: forced marriage, sexual abuse
- psychological violence: strong control, explicit or veiled threats (for example, about what LGBTQ people should suffer or what has happened to other LGBTQ people), social isolation or exclusion, verbal abuse
- being taken abroad under false pretences or against their will
- attempts to “cure” through contact with a doctor, prayer or ritual.

In addition, several describe that the social context in which they find themselves is characterised by silence and taboo regarding LGBTQ issues and a perception of LGBTQ people as sick or sinful. As the data is limited, there may be pressure tactics or contexts of which MUCF is unaware.

The Agency has not interviewed young people who have been subjected to any form of “camp” in Sweden. However, MUCF has received reports from support services and a researcher that individuals have been encouraged to seek such environments abroad or that young people have been taken abroad against their will in order to control them. There are also examples of religious leaders or groups trying to “cure” the individual through prayer, talks or rites. The examples that MUCF has seen are said to have taken place within churches, Muslim congregations, families or a wider social community.

Most of the young people interviewed by MUCF have not been subjected to physical violence, nor have they sought support outside their family or circle of friends to deal with the situation. Where interviewees had sought or received support from public authorities or healthcare, their experiences of contact with the authorities and healthcare differed. The support services have several examples of young LGBTQ people who have been subjected to violence. The support services point out that there are challenges in existing support structures. While there are good examples of the actions of authorities and other

actors, there are also several examples of young people who have been victimised finding it difficult to get adequate help and support.

Several support services express that there is a need for development in terms of professionals' competence on the vulnerability of LGBTQ persons and information to young LGBTQ persons subjected to conversion attempts and/or honour-related violence and oppression and other controlling environments.

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Swedish Agency for
Youth and Civil Society

