

Report highlights lack of support services for young LGBTQ+ community

Young people who identify as LGBTQ+ say there are few health and care services in Wiltshire to support them, and a lack of understanding from healthcare professionals has left them feeling unheard and disrespected.

These are the key findings of a project carried out by our Young Healthwatch Wiltshire volunteers, focusing on what young LGBTQ+ people aged 11-25 thought of the support they had received, and the support they would like to see in their schools, colleges, workplaces, and local communities.

More LGBTQ+ education in schools and better access to advice and information were seen as vital ways to help close the current gap in LGBTQ+ support for both young people and adults in the county.

What young people told us

- There is a need for LGBTQ+ support in Wiltshire and there is currently a gap in services.
- Education was seen as key in addressing the lack of understanding and discrimination faced by the LGBTQ+ community. This included changes in language and normalising the use of pronouns.
- Advice and information was seen as an important area where young people could make informed decisions about the support they needed, but finding support was difficult.
- Sex education was identified as a support need and for sexual health services to be LGBTQ+ inclusive.

- Transgender healthcare was raised as an issue with long waiting lists for HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) and a lack of gender reassignment surgeries.

Young Healthwatch Wiltshire volunteer **Robyn** said: "It was great to be involved in this project and hear directly from LGBTQ+ young people, particularly those in more rural areas where young people are often more isolated and even less visible. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community who grew up in Wiltshire, it was also important to me personally, and the feedback really resonated with me.

"I'd like to see far more awareness of and support for non-binary and transgender young people, especially in healthcare and mental health provision. I'm also looking forward to seeing the impacts from the new relationships and sex education legislation on the information and support available to all young people."

Stacey Sims, Healthwatch Wiltshire Manager, said: "We're grateful to the young people of Wiltshire's LGBTQ+ community for sharing their experiences and ideas with us and to our young volunteers for producing this report. It is clear from our survey that there is a need for LGBTQ+ support - for both young people and adults - in Wiltshire and that there is currently a gap in services. We look forward to working with the commissioners of local services to see how support for the LGBTQ+ community can be improved."

[Read the report on our website.](#)