

DITCH THE LABEL

YOUR WORLD, PREJUDICE FREE



THE ANNUAL BULLYING SURVEY 2015

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ABOUT DITCH THE LABEL

About Ditch the Label

We are one of the UK's largest and most ambitious anti-bullying charities. Our award-winning work spans across the UK and each year, we provide support to thousands of young people aged 13-25, through our work and partnership with schools, colleges, parents/guardians, young people and other youth organisations. Innovation is at the core of all that we do and we believe that we can, and will beat bullying.

Some of our recent work includes:

- Working with schools and colleges across the UK on a variety of research projects designed to boost our intelligence of behaviours, attitudes and trends relating to bullying and the lives of young people.
- Delivering packages of tailored support and interventions to combat specific bullying and prejudice based problems

within schools and colleges.

- Training teachers, pastoral care, mental health practitioners and those involved with the safeguarding of young people.
- Working with partners such as Habbo and The Student Rooms to provide one-to-one advice sessions to young people in digital environments. This also includes group peer-advocacy sessions and training.
- Promoted wider issues of equality, diversity and bullying within the world's media, with features including The Guardian, The Times, The Independent, The New York Times, BBC 1, BBC 2, ITV, Channel 5, BBC Radio 1, BBC Radio 5, plus most major national news outlets.

We believe that nobody is ever born a bully, as we know from our research and work with young people that it is a learned behaviour and is often an aggressive response to a

traumatic situation. The issue of bullying has been ongoing for decades, if not centuries. We believe that as with all societal issues, there is a solution and we won't stop until we achieve it. Our priorities lie in delivering interventions that are innovative, fresh and with real, measurable and long-lasting results.

Our message is clear: It doesn't matter if you're white, black, gay, straight, asexual, disabled, skinny, curvy, old, young, interested in sports, work in a salon or feel good in drag - we think that you are amazing.

Things like the colour of your skin, your sexuality, appearance, interests or disability should not define you.



About The Annual Bullying Survey

The Annual Bullying Survey is our flagship study of bullying and associated behaviours, produced in collaboration with schools and colleges from across the United Kingdom on an annual basis.

Approximately 70% of our survey features the same questions so that we are able to measure long-term trends and shifts in behaviours and attitudes. We reserve the remaining 30% to research a specific topic. In 2014, we identified the relationship between bullying and grade performance and the likelihood of exhibiting prejudice based attitudes. Our findings went on to make significant changes in the ways in which schools and colleges started to view and deal with bullying.

We consistently identify that a significant majority of young people feel that they are targeted because of attitudes towards how they look. This edition has a strong focus on appearance related bullying. We have been

able to identify the wider consequences of appearance-based bullying by asking young people to tell us if and how they would adapt their appearance.

This year we introduced new questions, specifically the following:

- Bullying outside of educational environments
- Perpetrator perspectives - a greater understanding as to why bullies bully
- A stronger integration between bullying and crime
- A measure of the biggest opinion influencers young people have within their lives

In addition to The Annual Bullying Survey, we also produce a range of other related reports; all of which are freely available at www.DitchtheLabel.org.

With Special Thanks

We would like to thank everyone who has helped us produce, analyse and disseminate

our research. Special thanks goes to:

- Liam Hackett, Ditch the Label CEO
- Professor Ian Rivers, Ditch the Label Chairman
- Sue Jones, Ditch the Label Partnership Co-ordinator
- Tolu Osinnowo, Ditch the Label Education Co-ordinator
- Yuri Yakovlev, Ditch the Label Research Co-ordinator
- Bullet PR
- Proof Reading Service UK
- Hackett and Tiger
- Nicola Barnes
- Plus all of the schools and colleges who participated, with special mention to: North Halifax Grammar School Academy Trust, Bolton College, Merchiston Castle, Hugh Baird College, Lowestoft Sixth Form College, Sussex Coast College Hastings, Kesgrave High School, Oasis Academy Lords Hill and Winstanley College.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Each year, we consistently cite attitudes towards the appearances of young people as the most common reason for bullying in the UK. The implications of appearance-based bullying are significant and can have devastating, long-term impacts upon self-esteem, confidence and feelings of self-worth.

The evidence is clear: young people are now considering drastic and invasive measures to alter their appearances due to insecurities and bullying. Teens as young as 13 are adding things such as liposuction and breast implants on their wish list because they want to feel accepted by their peers and society.

Our research suggests that young people who deviate away from ideal visions of beauty represented within the media are at highest risk of bullying. For example, we have found that males below average height and females who have broader than average body shapes are at significantly high risk of bullying.

We continue to find that all forms of difference have been characterised by bullying. Some of the highest risk categories also represented some of the most vulnerable young people, such as those from extremely poor backgrounds, those with a disability, racial minorities and the LGBT community. We question the impact of bullying on identity and how young people perceive themselves and the others around them.

This year, we further explored the emotional and behavioural impact of bullying and the results are, we feel, sobering to the figureheads in society who believe that bullying is 'just part of growing up'. Eating disorders, drug abuse, suicide attempts and risky sexual activity are not and should never 'just be part of growing up'.

The confidence in support services from young people is low, which explains why almost half of those who experience bullying, or those who are doing the bullying, refuse to speak up through fear of things getting worse or for being ignored. We believe that bullying is a societal issue and that everybody is a stakeholder in this. Whilst a large responsibility is often placed on teachers, parents/guardians and safeguarding professionals, we must work together to ensure that bullying is no longer normalised within our culture.

General satisfaction with support from teachers suggests a significant need for continuous, innovative and updated training that is in constant supply, in addition to providing further support for our teachers so that they feel equipped and confident to deal with these complex issues. In the past 12 months, we have trained over 2,000 teaching professionals to help them overcome bullying within school and college environments.

As a result of this research, we persist to review and amend our interventions, support services and public campaigning on a continuous basis to reflect the complex and changing needs of young people.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L HACKETT". The signature is stylized and includes a flourish at the end.

Liam Hackett
Founder and CEO

METHODOLOGY - SAMPLE

Methodology

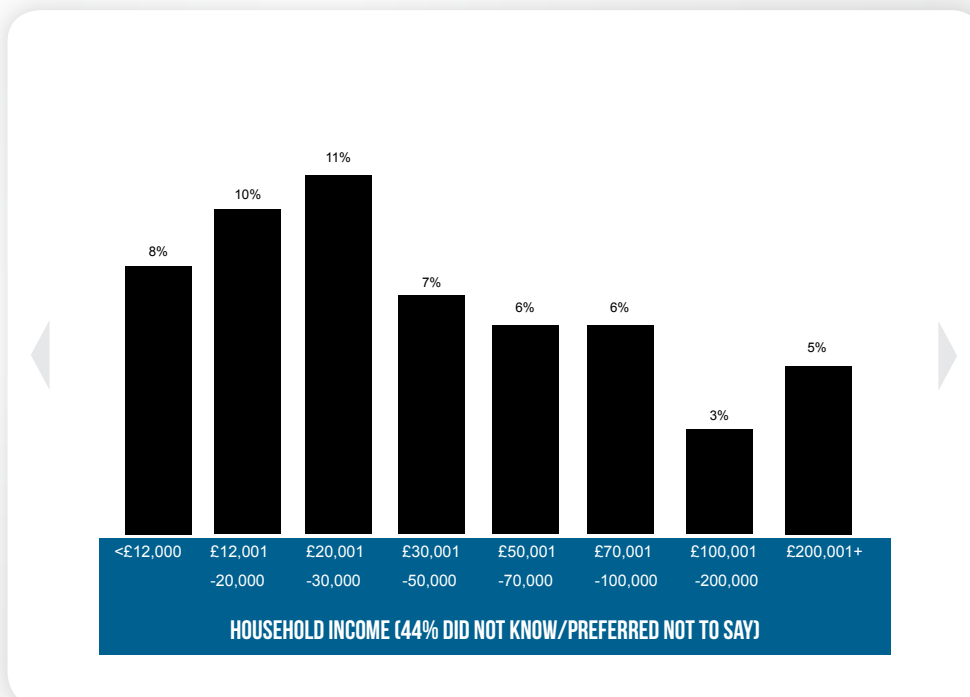
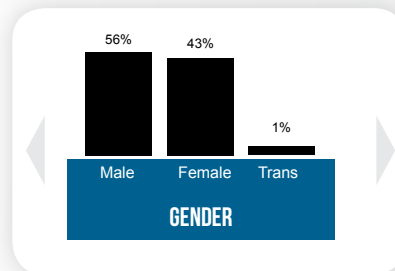
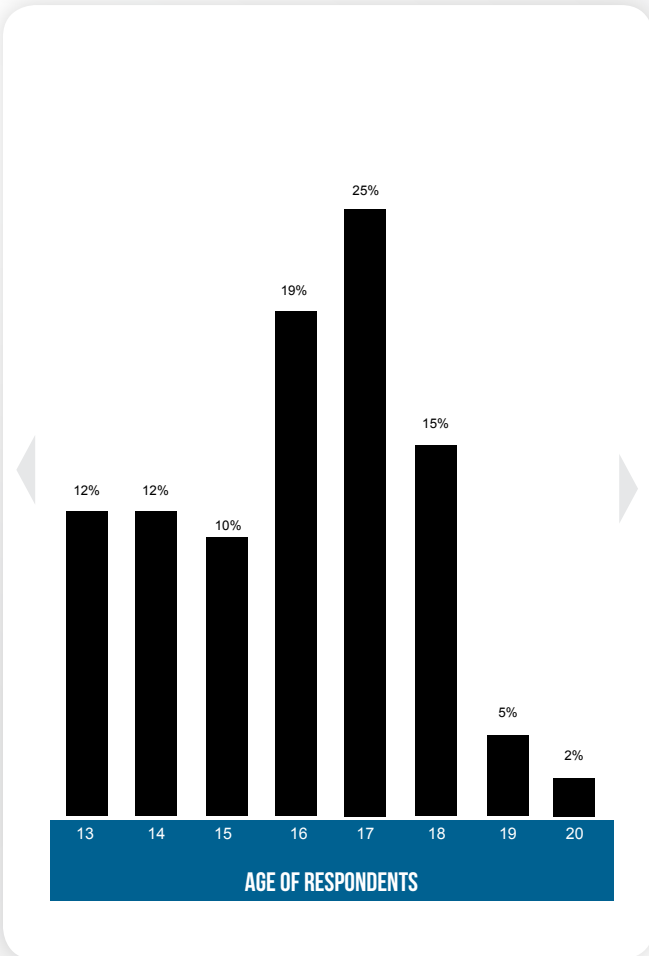
The Annual Bullying Survey 2015 was conducted in partnership with schools and colleges from across the United Kingdom, with students from 73 different establishments taking part. Each establishment was given a unique identifier for their students to gain access to the survey.

The unique identifier also enabled us to compare and contrast geographical data and create tailored reports for those who required them.

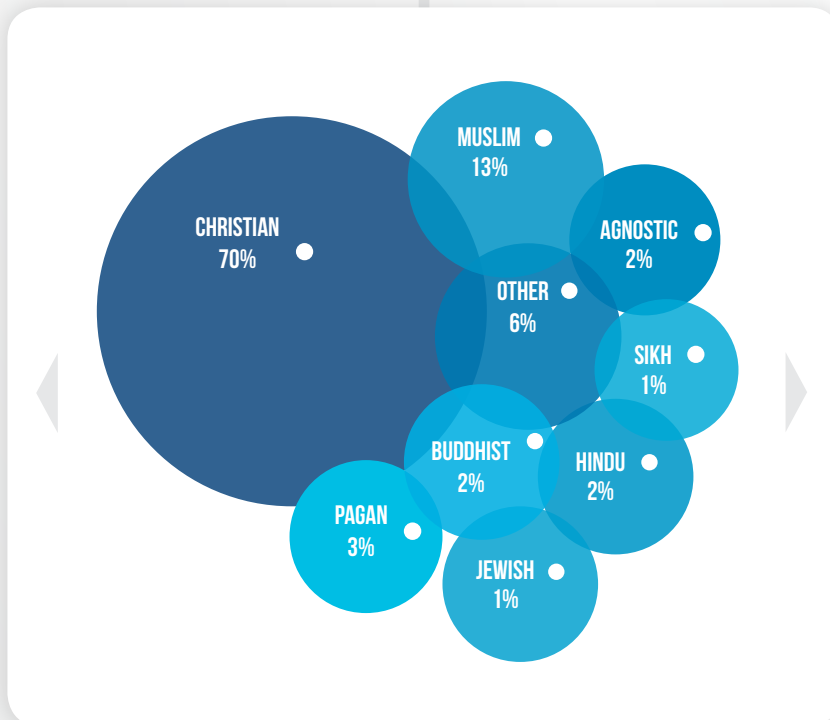
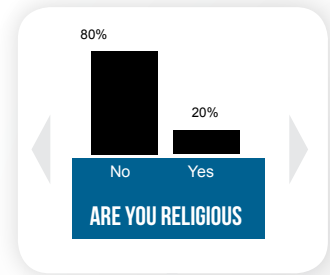
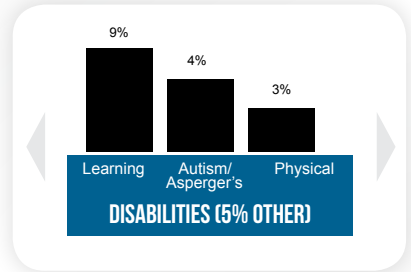
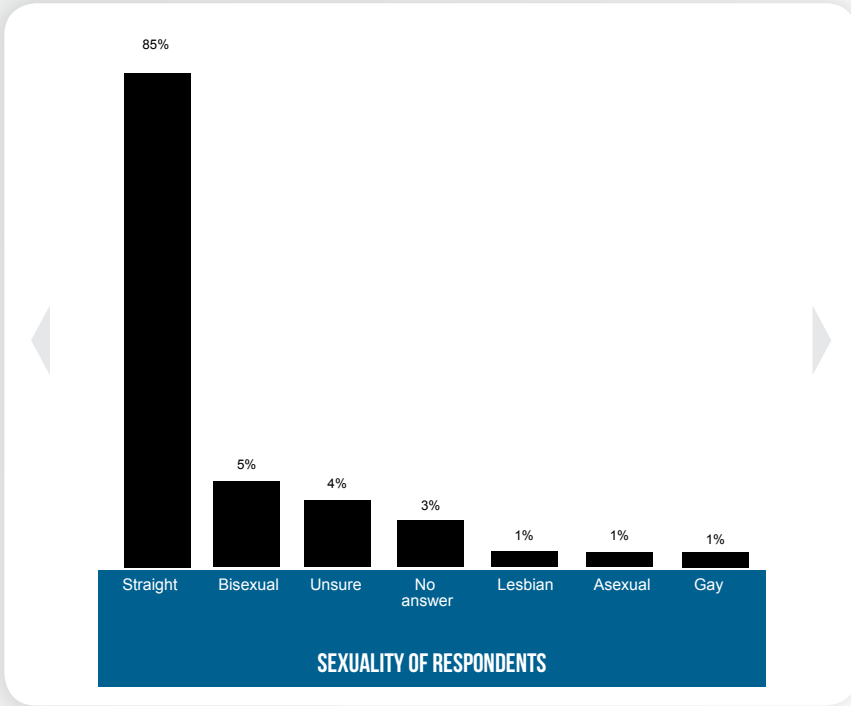
The survey was available online from 2nd October 2014 until 28th February 2015 and students were allocated time during registration and PSHE sessions to complete the survey independently.

Upon collection, the data was manually cleaned to remove incomplete and non-factual submissions. Our original data sample was at 4853; upon cleansing this was reduced to 3023.

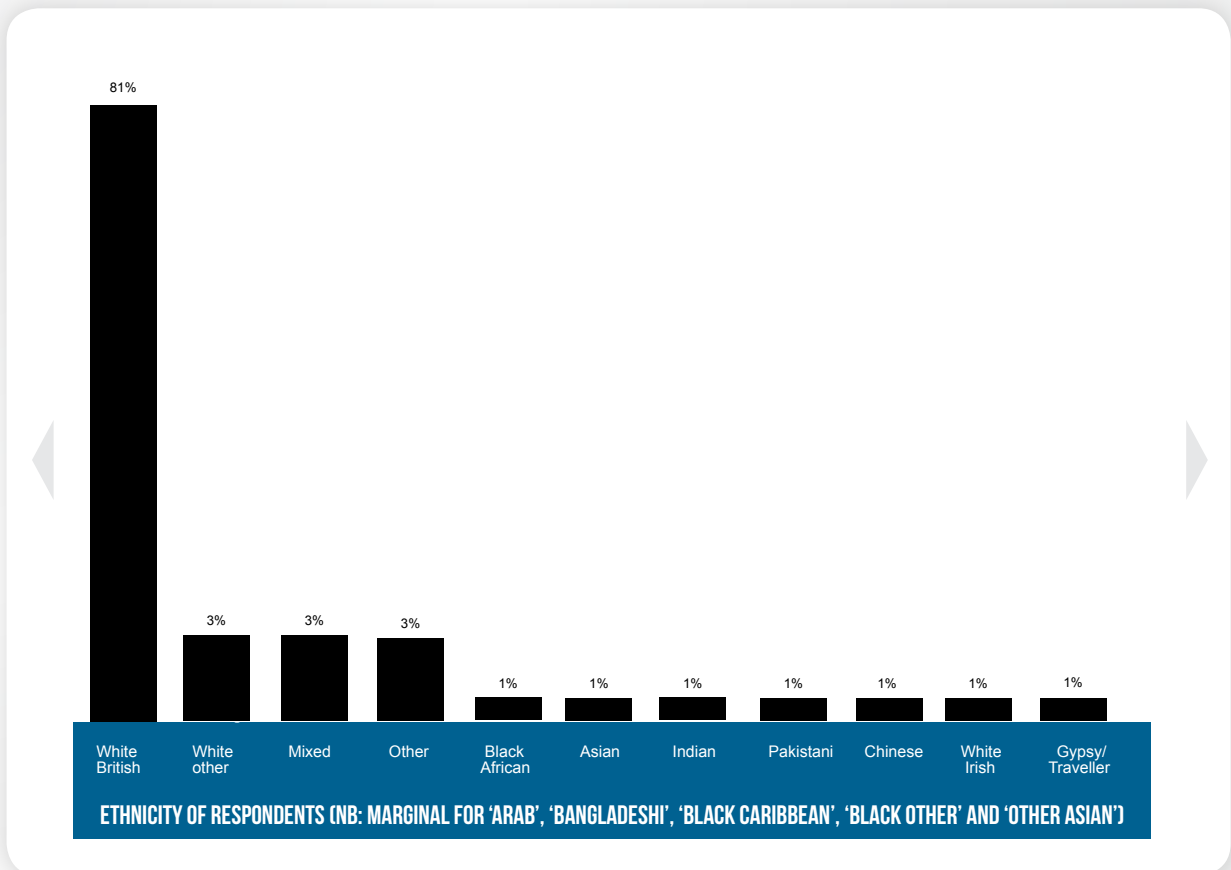
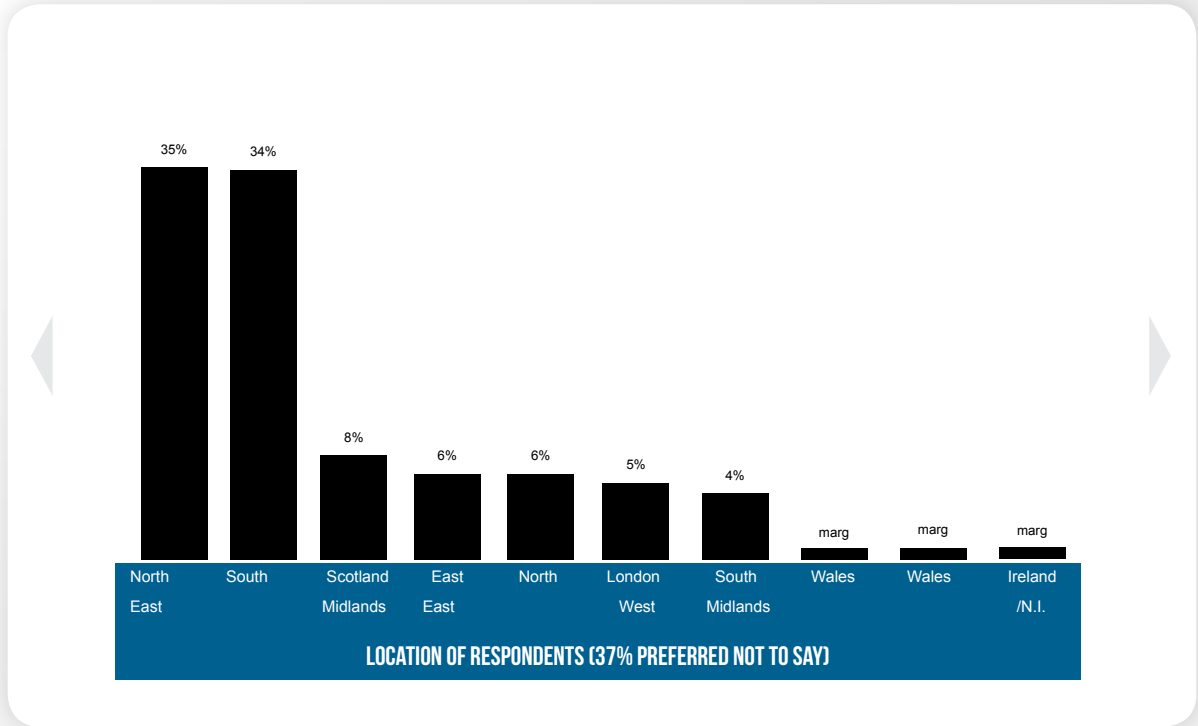
Once cleaned, the data was then analysed using SPSS data extrapolation software. Data was then checked using internal auditing procedures and verified by our chairman, Professor Ian Rivers of Brunel University.



METHODOLOGY - SAMPLE



METHODOLOGY - SAMPLE



FROM THOSE WHO HAVE BULLIED OTHERS

Findings from young people who have bullied others at least once.

◀ **50%** ▶
HAVE BULLIED

HOW FREQUENTLY HAVE YOU BULLIED SOMEBODY ELSE?

👁️ **21% DID IT AT LEAST SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK**

👁️ **30% DID IT AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK**

- 💬 8% daily
- 💬 13% several times per week
 - 💬 9% once a week
 - 💬 6% once a fortnight
 - 💬 8% once a month
 - 💬 10% once a term
- 💬 11% once every 6 months
- 💬 35% once every 12 months

WHAT DID YOU DO TO BULLY OTHERS?

Findings from young people who have bullied others at least once.

HAVE YOU EVER TAKEN OR DAMAGED SOMEBODY'S THINGS TO PURPOSELY UPSET THEM?

11% have

*6% of females have, 14% of males have and 18% of transgendered have
45% of people who have done this told us that they had bullied somebody*

HAVE YOU EVER SAID SOMETHING NASTY TO SOMEBODY ONLINE?

27% have

*23% of females have, 29% of males have and 32% of transgendered have
32% of people who have done this told us that they had bullied somebody*

HAVE YOU EVER PURPOSELY EXCLUDED SOMEBODY FROM A SOCIAL GROUP?

20% have

*15% of females have, 22% of males have and 30% of transgendered have
41% of people who have done this told us that they had bullied somebody*

HAVE YOU EVER PHYSICALLY ATTACKED SOMEBODY?

25% have

*14% of females have, 31% of males have and 43% of transgendered have
35% of people who have done this told us that they had bullied somebody*

HAVE YOU EVER SAID SOMETHING TO PURPOSELY UPSET SOMEBODY?

30% have

*41% of females have, 51% of males have and 40% of transgendered have
27% of people who have done this told us that they had bullied somebody*

Do they know it's bullying?

The definition of bullying is subjective, meaning that everybody has a different opinion of what bullying actually is. As part of our research, we asked respondents to define bullying and then asked them if they had ever bullied another person, based on their own definition.

Later on in the survey, we asked respondents if they had ever engaged in behaviour that we consider to be bullying and we found that the percentage was significantly higher, suggesting that many young people may be bullying others without particularly knowing or acknowledging the fact that their behaviour is not acceptable.

We found that 50% of young people had bullied somebody based on our examples. 16% of respondents told us that they had bullied somebody at least once.

FROM THOSE WHO HAVE WITNESSED BULLYING

Findings from young people who have witnessed bullying at least once.

◀ **69%** ▶
**HAVE WITNESSED
BULLYING**

**HOW FREQUENTLY HAVE YOU
WITNESSED SOMEBODY ELSE
BEING BULLIED?**

👁️ **32% SAW IT AT LEAST SEVERAL
TIMES A WEEK**

👁️ **43% SAW IT AT LEAST ONCE
A WEEK**

- 👁️ 14% daily
- 👁️ 18% several times per week
- 👁️ 11% once a week
- 👁️ 7% once a fortnight
- 👁️ 10% once a month
- 👁️ 12% once a term
- 👁️ 10% once every 6 months
- 👁️ 18% once every 12 months

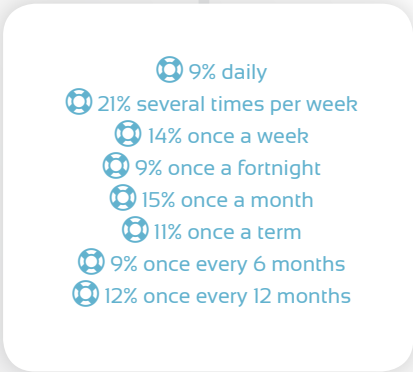
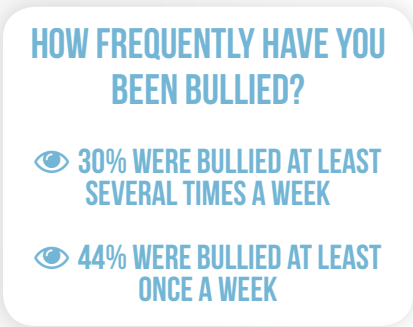


**WE CAN HELP MAKE YOUR SCHOOL OR COLLEGE
BULLY FREE.**

**WE ARE ALREADY WORKING WITH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES ACROSS THE UK WITH
FANTASTIC RESULTS. FIND OUT MORE AT DITCHTHELABEL.ORG OR CONTACT US VIA
INFO@DITCHTHELABEL.ORG.**

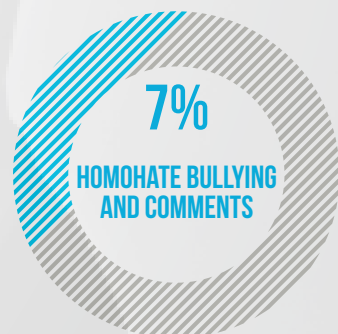
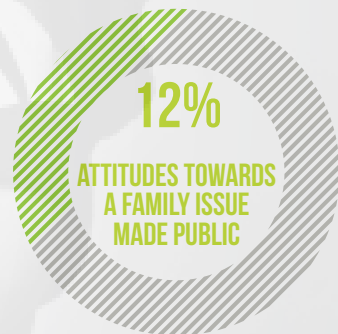
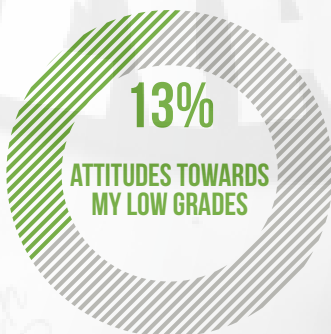
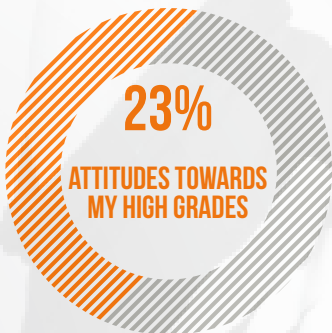
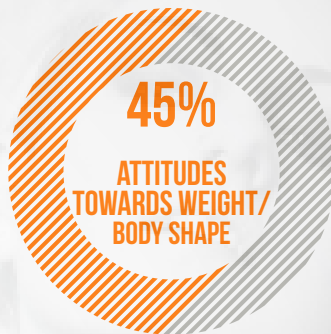
FROM THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BULLIED

Findings from young people who have been bullied at least once.



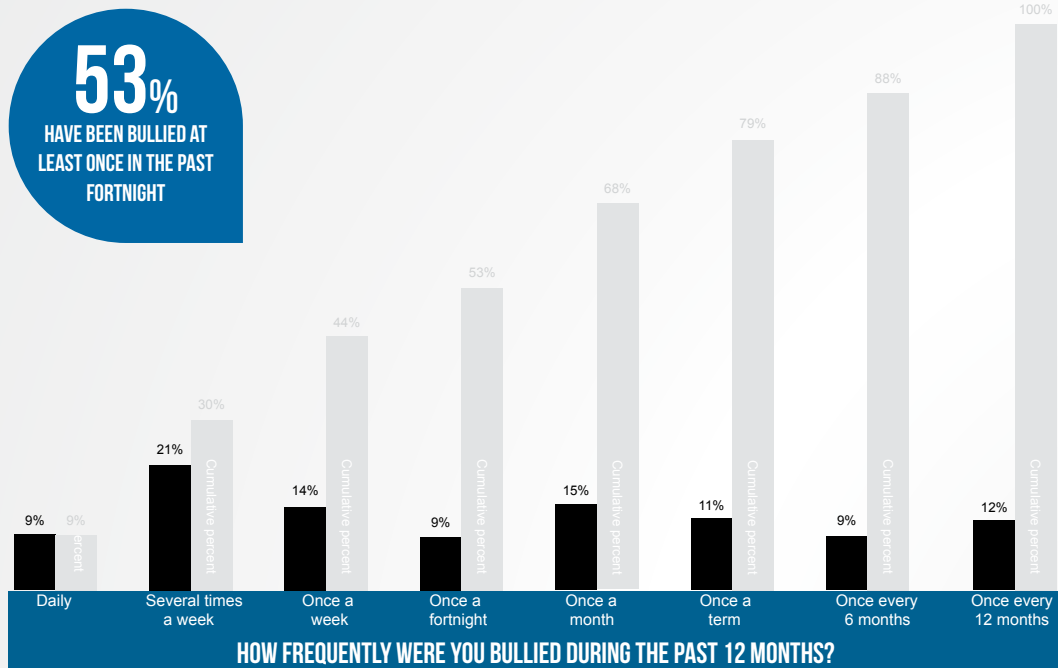
WHY DO YOU THINK YOU WERE BULLIED?

We asked them to explain the nature of the bullying that they have experienced. Below are the reasons why young people felt that they were being targeted.



WHO ARE YOU AND HOW FREQUENT WAS IT?

We asked them to tell us how frequently they had experienced bullying; from this we were able to identify 'high risk' groups.



> Variance by gender

Our data suggests that females are more likely than males to experience bullying. However, this may be down to a social bias towards gender stereotypes resulting in fewer males reporting bullying.

- Male: 35% were bullied
- Female: 54% were bullied
- Transgender: 56% were bullied

> Variance by household income

Our data suggests that respondents from the lowest income backgrounds were significantly more likely to experience bullying than others. It is important to consider the wider impact of household income on things such as appearance, fashion, interests and access to opportunities.

- <£12k: 58% were bullied
- £12-20k: 51% were bullied
- £21-30k: 46% were bullied
- £31-40k: 47% were bullied
- £41-50k: 41% were bullied
- £51-70k: 40% were bullied
- £71-100k: 31% were bullied
- £101-200k: 44% were bullied
- £201k+: 25% were bullied

> Variance by sexuality

Sexuality continues to be a key driver of bullying, with our data suggesting that all those who deviate, or are perceived to deviate away from heterosexuality, are significantly more likely to experience bullying.

- Straight: 39% were bullied
- Bisexual: 75% were bullied
- Curious/unsure: 69% were bullied
- Lesbian: 76% were bullied
- Gay: 61% were bullied
- Asexual: 75% were bullied

> Want more?

For more demographic comparison data, please visit DitchtheLabel.org/research.

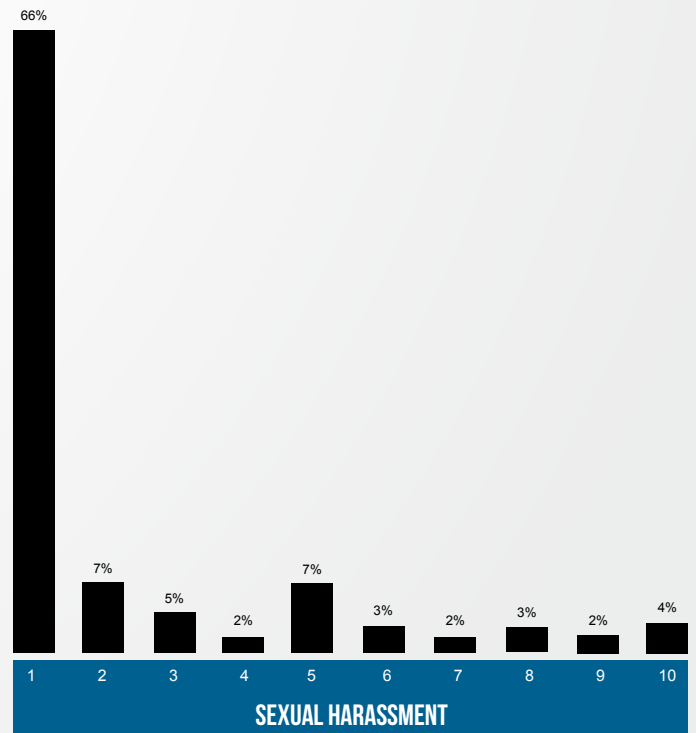
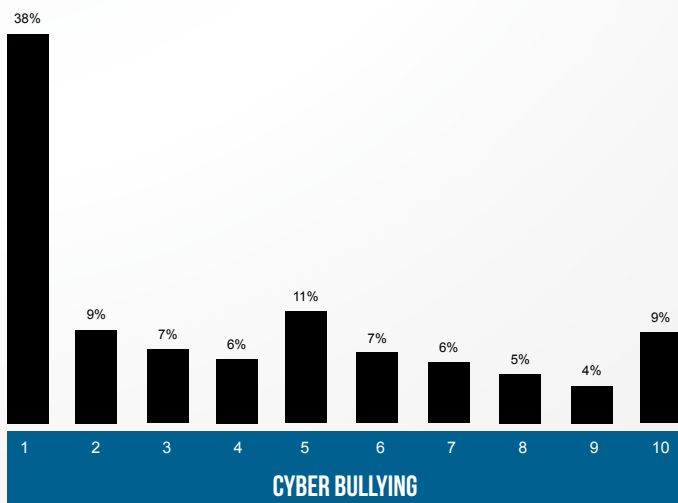
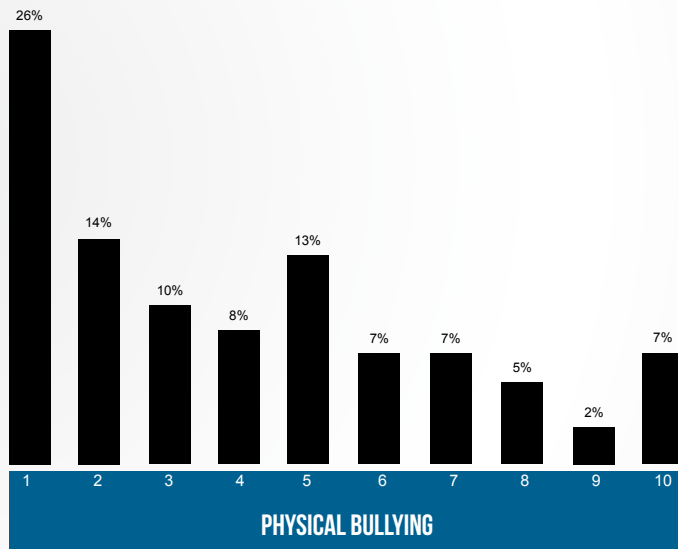
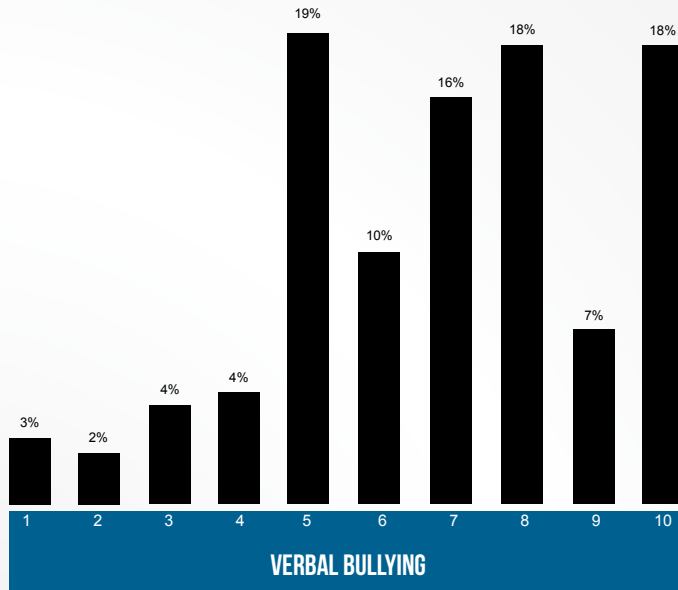
> Variance by disability

Our data consistently shows that respondents with a disability are more likely to experience bullying than respondents without a disability. This has further implications with consideration to the added vulnerability of such respondents.

- No disability: 40% were bullied
- Physical disability: 58% were bullied
- Learning disability: 62% were bullied
- Autism/Asperger's: 67% were bullied

WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF THE BULLYING?

We asked them to rate on a scale of 1-10 the frequency of the bullying that they have experienced to help us understand the nature of bullying (1 indicates never, 5 often and 10 highly frequently).



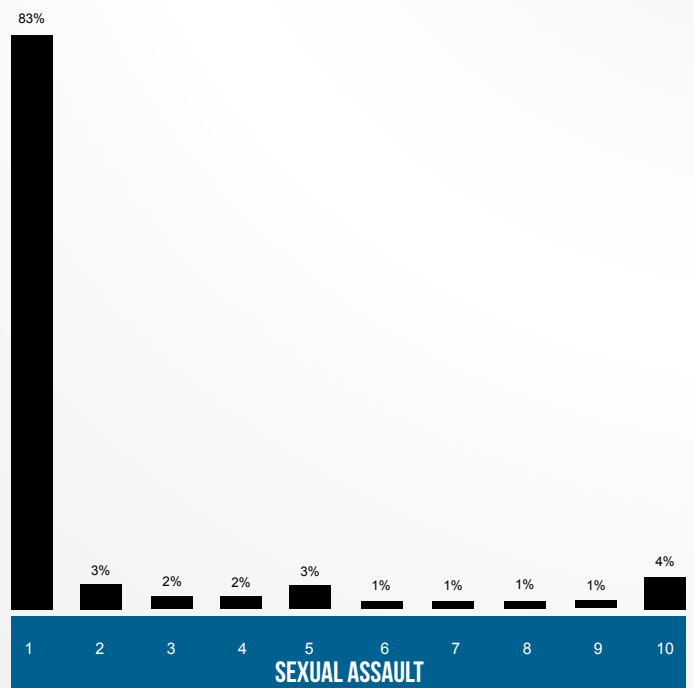
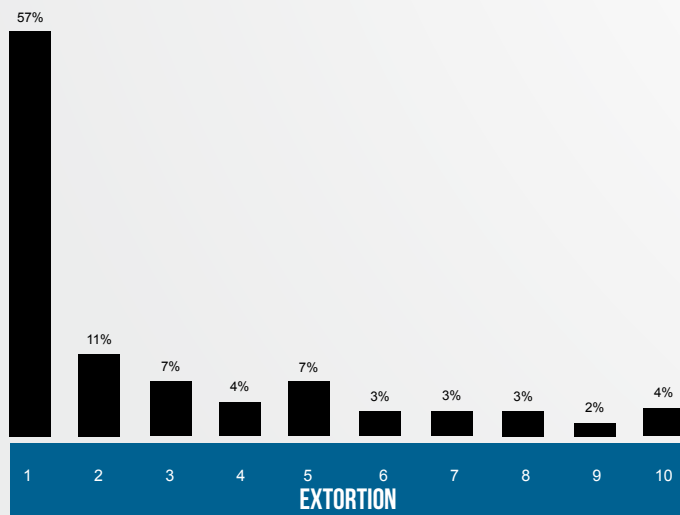
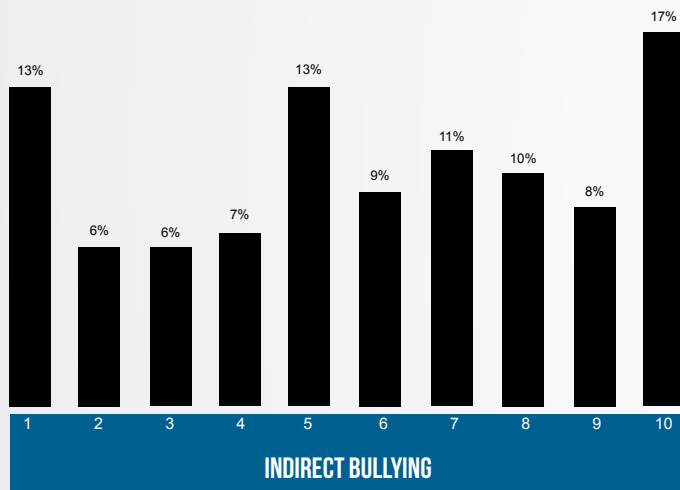
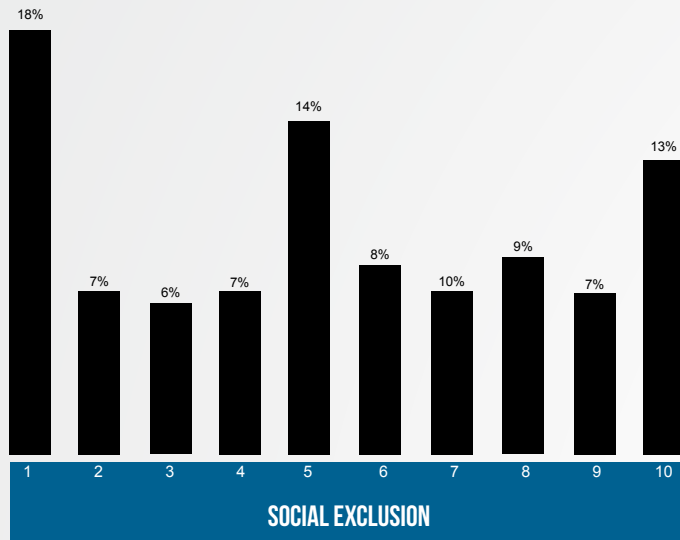
Definitions

For the purpose of this research, the following definitions were communicated with respondents:

- **Verbal bullying:** anything that is said to offend, including insults, teasing, abusive and threatening language.
- **Physical bullying:** any type of aggressive contact, such as hitting, tripping, pushing and shoving.
- **Cyberbullying:** any bullying online or via phone, i.e. on social networking sites, via text or email. Includes insults, threats, harassment and abusive language.
- **Sexual bullying:** unwanted comments, verbally and electronically, of a sexual nature and physical acts such as groping and sexual harassment.
- **Social exclusion:** being purposefully ignored or excluded from groups.
- **Indirect bullying:** spreading rumours, gossip, silent treatment and purposely breaking up friendships.
- **Extortion:** personal belongings being stolen or damaged, including money.
- **Sexual assault:** involuntary sexual act in which a person is threatened, coerced, or forced to engage against their will, including rape.

WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF THE BULLYING?

We asked them to rate on a scale of 1-10 the frequency of the bullying that they have experienced to help us understand the nature of bullying (1 indicates never, 5 often and 10 highly frequently).



43%
HAVE EXPERIENCED EXTREME
VERBAL BULLYING
(RATED 8-10)

74%
HAVE BEEN PHYSICALLY
ATTACKED
(RATED 2-10)

62%
HAVE EXPERIENCED
CYBERBULLYING
(RATED 2-10)

34%
HAVE EXPERIENCED
SEXUAL BULLYING
(RATED 2-10)

82%
HAVE FELT PURPOSELY
EXCLUDED BY THEIR PEERS
(RATED 2-10)

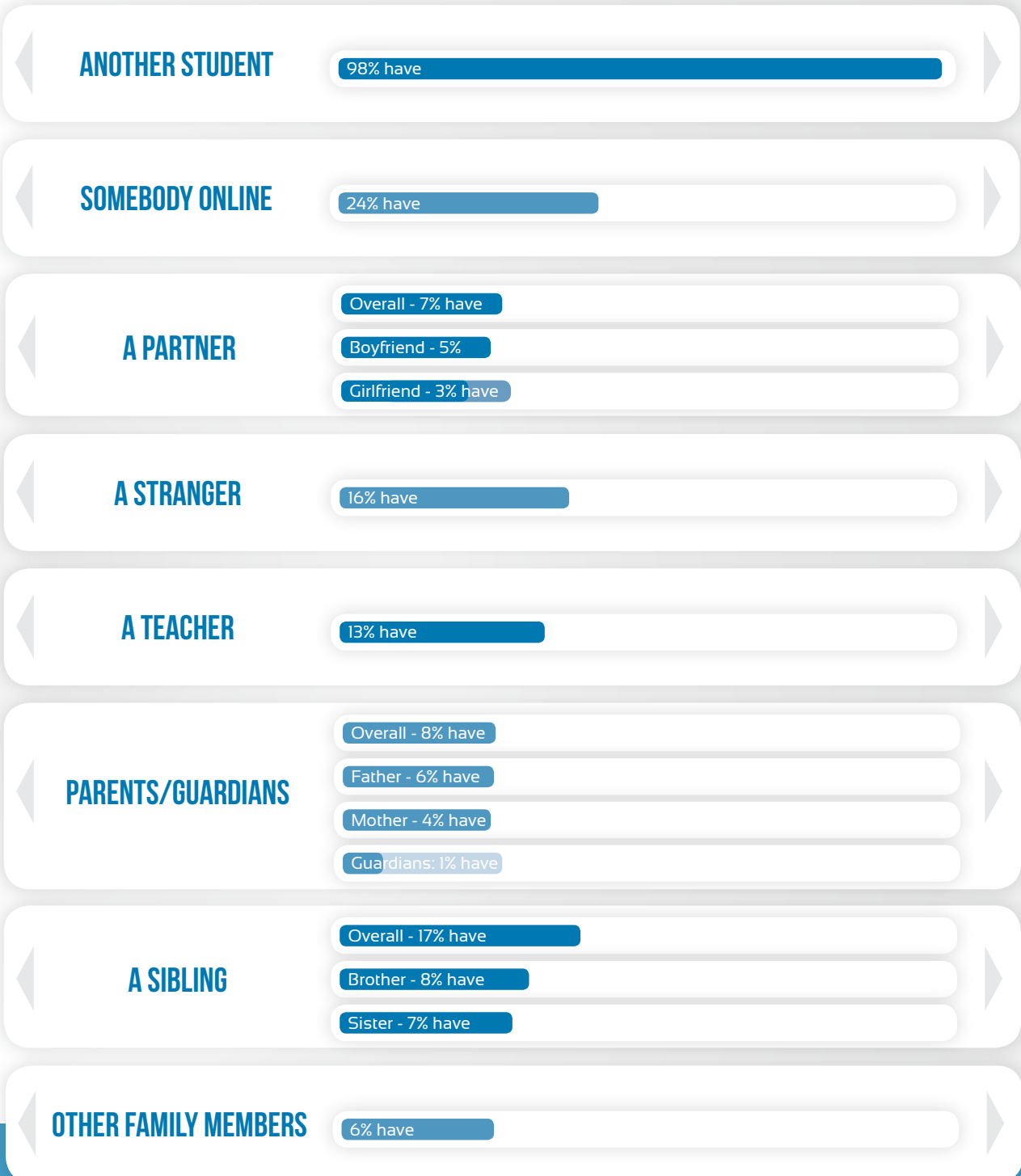
87%
HAVE BEEN INDIRECTLY
BULLIED
(RATED 2-10)

43%
HAVE EXPERIENCED
EXTORTION
(RATED 2-10)

17%
HAVE EXPERIENCED
SEXUAL ASSAULT
(RATED 2-10)

WHO BULLIED YOU?

We asked them to explain the nature of the bullying that they have experienced. Below are the reasons why young people felt that they were being targeted.



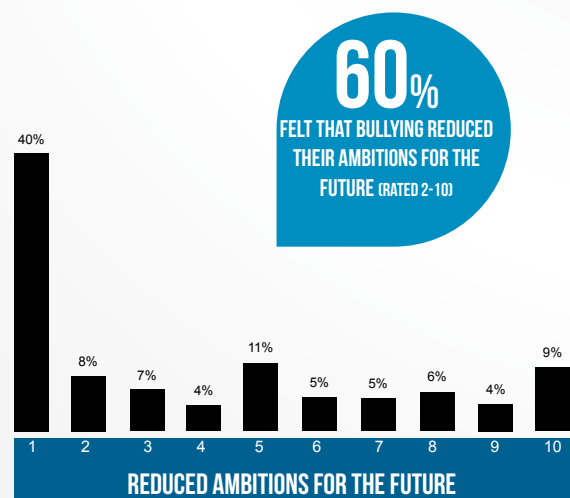
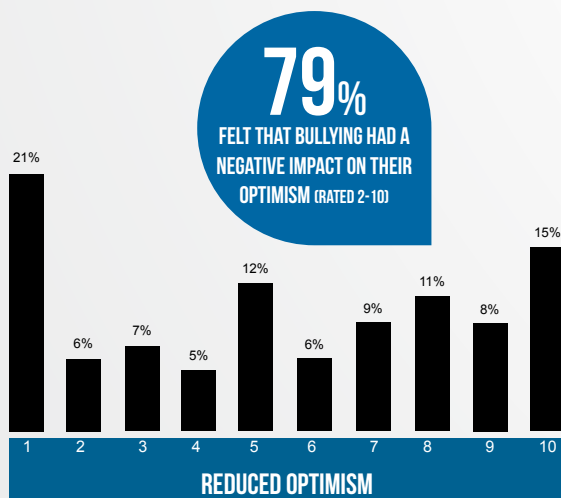
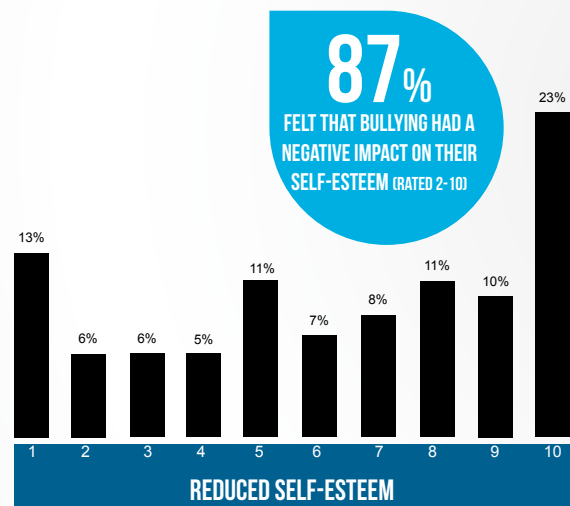
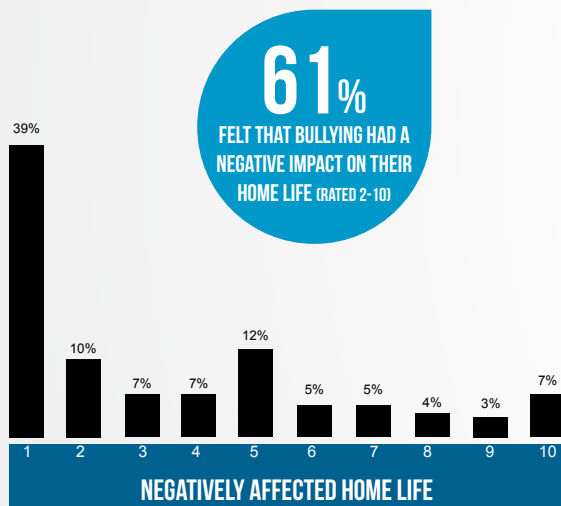
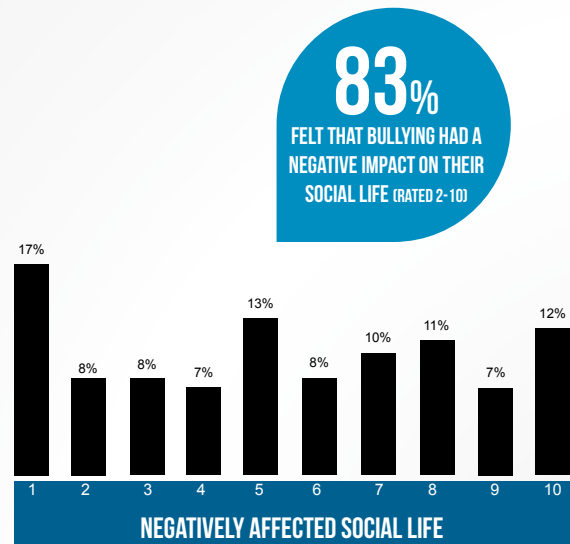
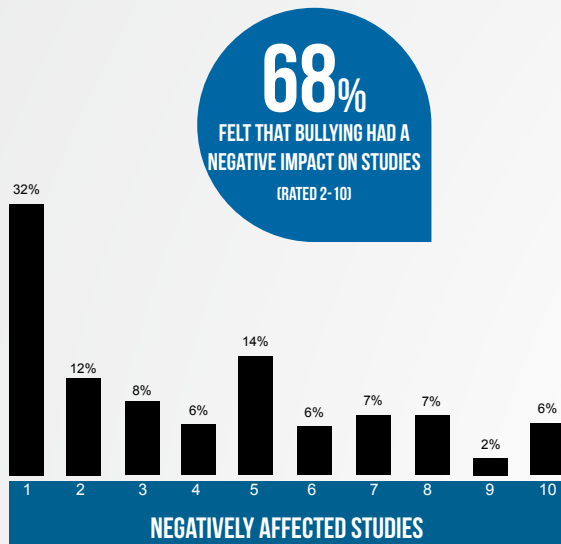
Beyond the confines of a classroom

The assumption of bullying is often that it occurs exclusively within a school or college environment and is something that only impacts young people. This is a dangerous assumption as it not only normalises bullying from other sources but also overlooks the need to outstretch support and awareness beyond educational environments. We asked the 43% of young people who had experienced bullying to tell us where it came from.

There is, however, a real limitation of subjectivity. Some respondents may not consider abuse to be bullying and others may consider innocent behaviours such as an assertion of authority from teachers, for example, to be bullying.

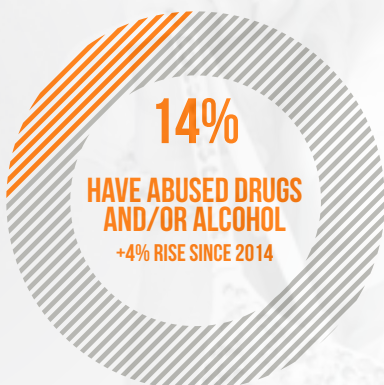
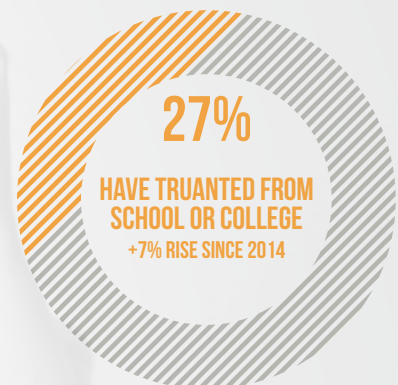
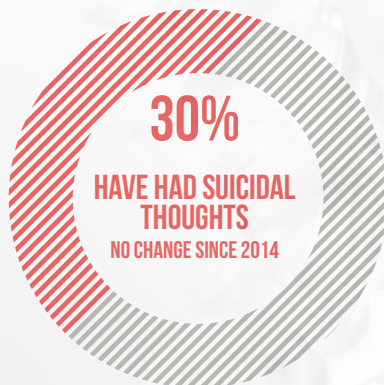
HOW DID IT MAKE YOU FEEL?

We asked them to rate on a scale of 1-10 the impact that the bullying had on varying aspects of their lives (1 indicates not at all, 5 somewhat and 10 an extreme impact).



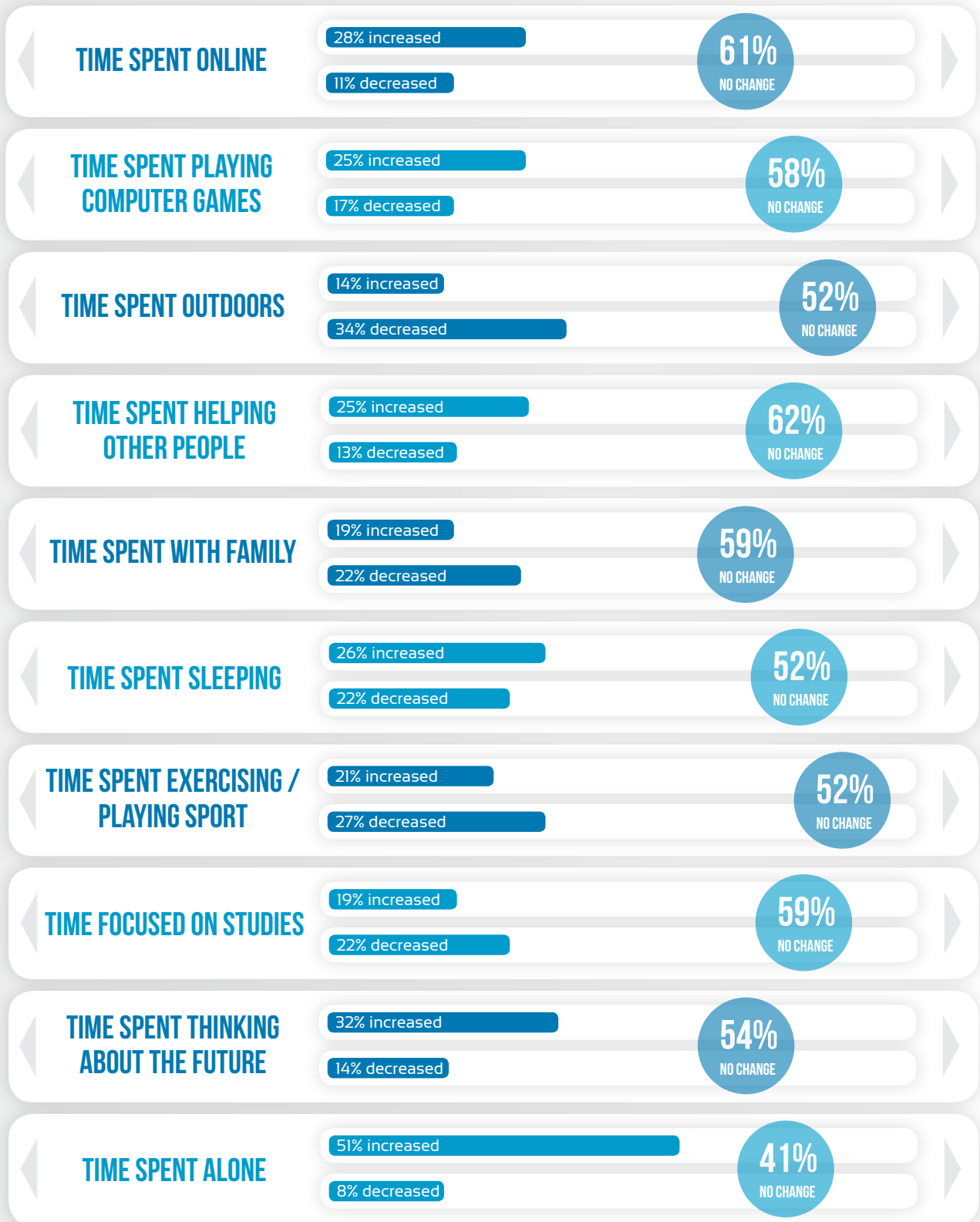
WHAT HAPPENED AS A RESULT?

We asked them what happened as a direct result of bullying.



DID YOU BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY?

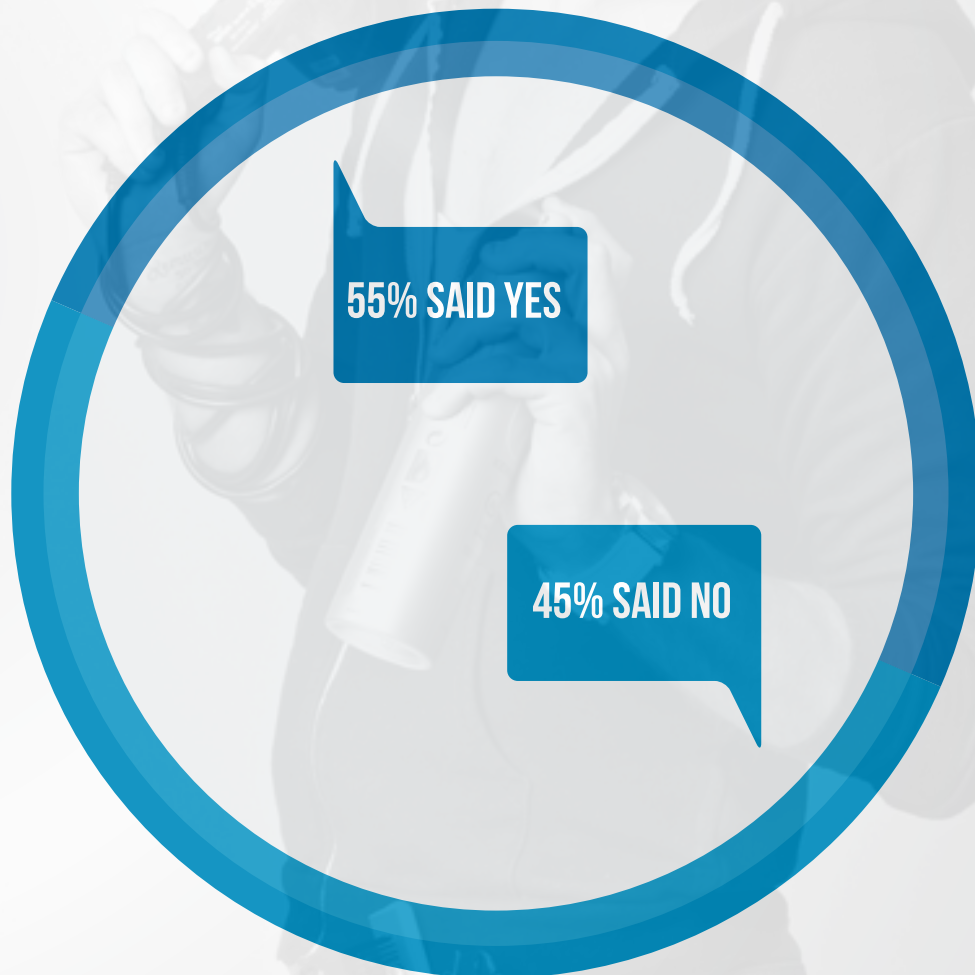
We asked them if they felt that any of their day-to-day behaviours were impacted by bullying on a scale of increase, same and decrease.



DID YOU TELL ANYBODY?

We asked them if they had ever told anybody that they were being bullied.

DID YOU TELL ANYBODY YOU WERE BEING BULLIED?



WHO DID YOU TELL?

We asked them to tell us who they had reported the bullying to and then asked as to whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the support they received.

**92% TURNED
TO A TEACHER**

51% WERE DISSATISFIED

**86% TURNED
TO A FAMILY
MEMBER**

18% WERE DISSATISFIED

**69% TURNED
TO A FRIEND**

28% WERE DISSATISFIED

**32% TURNED
TO A
COUNSELLOR**

47% WERE DISSATISFIED

**22% TURNED
TO A HEALTH
PROFESSIONAL**

47% WERE DISSATISFIED

**22% SPOKE
TO THE POLICE**

53% WERE DISSATISFIED

**19% TURNED
TO SOCIAL
MEDIA**

57% WERE DISSATISFIED

**15% CALLED
A HELPLINE**

53% WERE DISSATISFIED

In order of satisfaction: **family member** (82% satisfied), **friend** (72%), **counsellor** (53%), **health professional** (53%), **teacher** (49%), **helpline** (47%), **the Police** (47%) and **social media** (57%).

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ANYBODY?

40% FELT THEY
COULD DEAL WITH
IT ALONE

40% SAID IT
DIDN'T AFFECT
THEM ENOUGH

33% FELT LIKE
IT WOULDN'T BE
TAKEN SERIOUSLY

31% DIDN'T
THINK IT
WAS SERIOUS
ENOUGH

32% WERE TOO
EMBARRASSED
TO TELL ANYONE

26% WERE
SCARED OF IT
GETTING WORSE

26% WERE
SCARED OF
BEING CALLED A
SNITCH

18% HAVE
REPORTED IN THE
PAST AND NOTHING
HAPPENED







51%

**TOLD US THAT THEY WERE BULLIED
BECAUSE OF ATTITUDES
TOWARDS THEIR APPEARANCE**

WHICH PART OF YOUR APPEARANCE WAS TARGETED?

26%
SAID WEIGHT

HIGHEST RISK CATEGORIES:
FEMALES BELOW 10 STONE (58%)

11%
SAID HEIGHT

HIGHEST RISK CATEGORIES:
MALES SHORTER THAN AVERAGE (35%)
FEMALES TALLER THAN AVERAGE (23%)

21%
SAID BODY SHAPE

HIGHEST RISK CATEGORIES:
FEMALES WITH LARGER BUILD (31%)
FEMALES WITH MUSCULAR BUILD (20%)
MALES WITH LARGER BUILD (20%)

7%
SAID SKIN CONDITION

HIGHEST RISK CATEGORIES:
PSORIASIS (22%)
ROSACEA (22%)
ACNE (13%)

8%
SAID HAIR COLOUR

HIGHEST RISK CATEGORIES:
GINGER HAIR (23% FEMALES, 16% MALES)
DYED BRIGHT COLOUR (16% FEMALES, 25% MALES)

5%
SAID SKIN TONE/COLOUR

HIGHEST RISK CATEGORIES:
BLACK SKIN (12%)
BROWN SKIN (8%)

9%
SAID GLASSES

18%
SAID CLOTHING

4%
SAID BIRTH MARK/SCAR

14%
SAID FACIAL FEATURES

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR APPEARANCE?

Note that these questions were asked to ALL participants and not just those who had experiences with bullying.

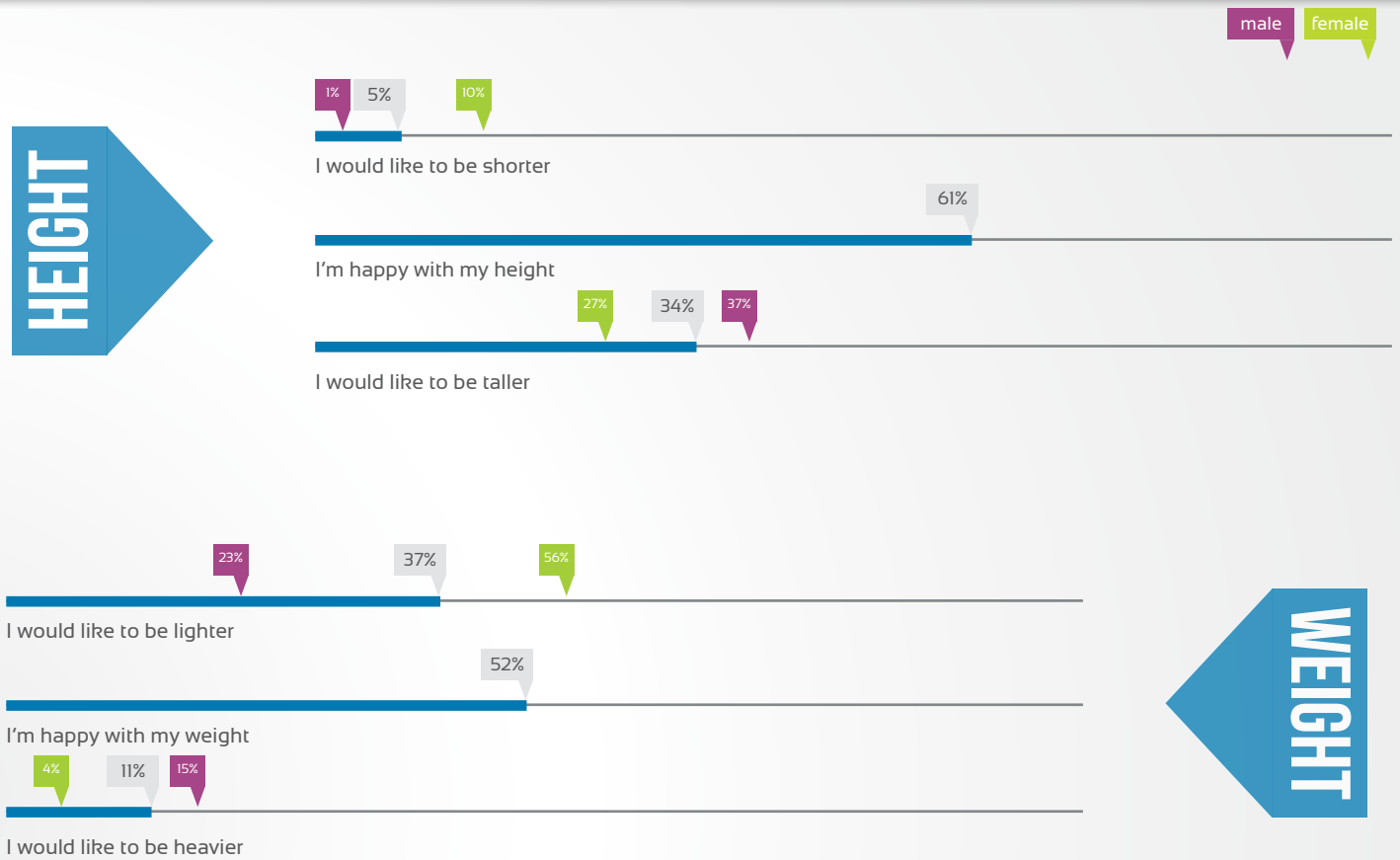
WOULD YOU CHANGE YOUR APPEARANCE?

HOW?

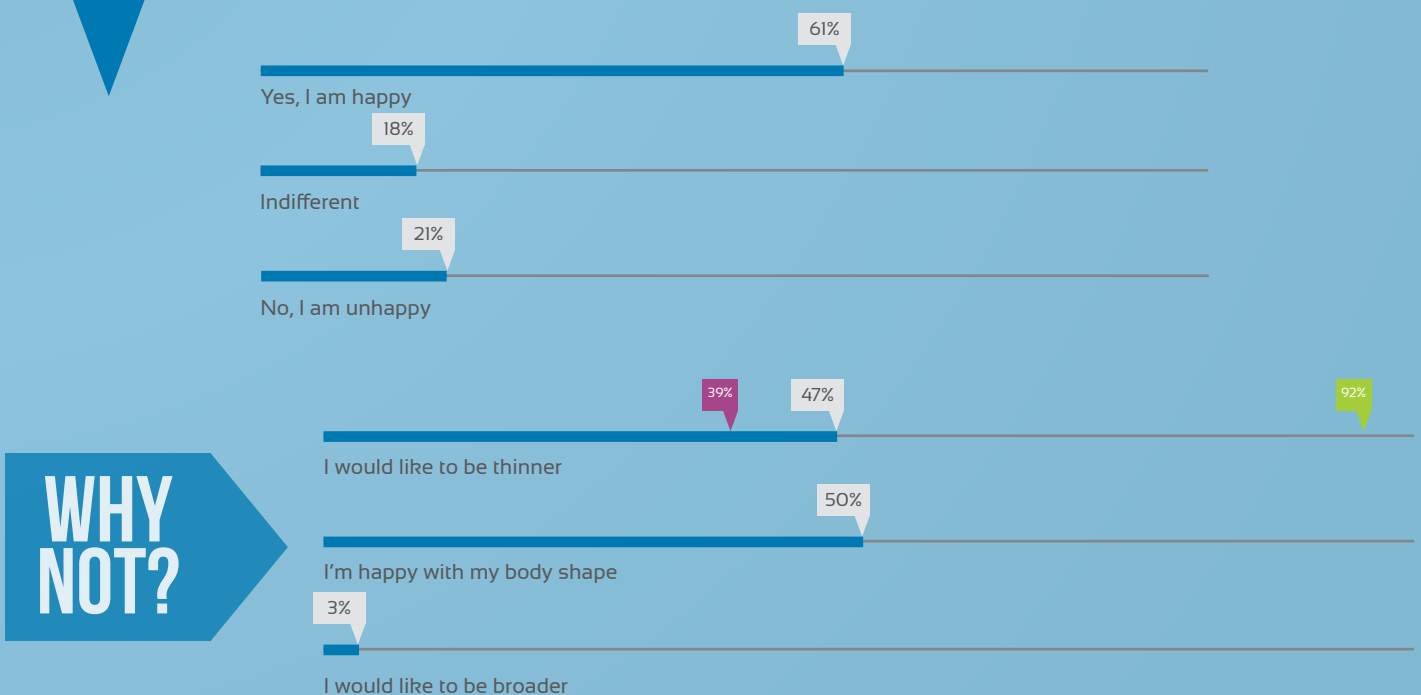


HOW WOULD YOU CHANGE YOUR APPEARANCE?

Note that these questions were asked to ALL participants and not just those who had experiences with bullying.



ARE YOU HAPPY WITH YOUR BODY SHAPE?

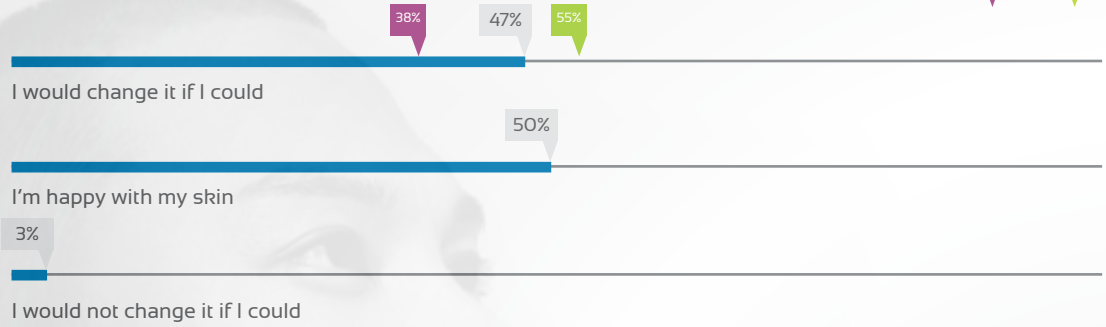


HOW WOULD YOU CHANGE YOUR APPEARANCE?

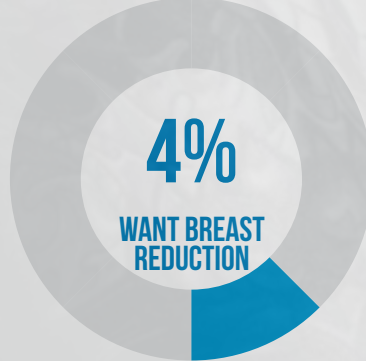
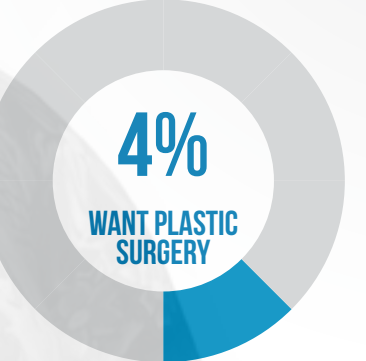
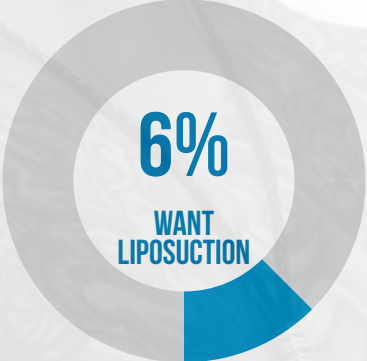
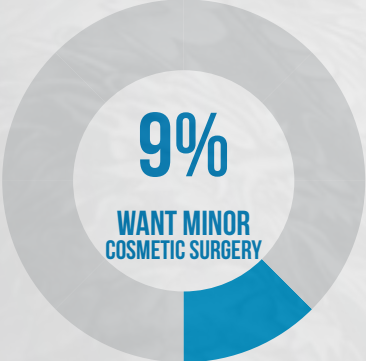
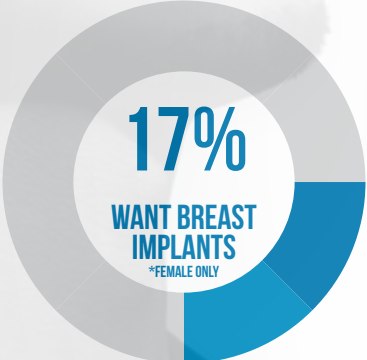
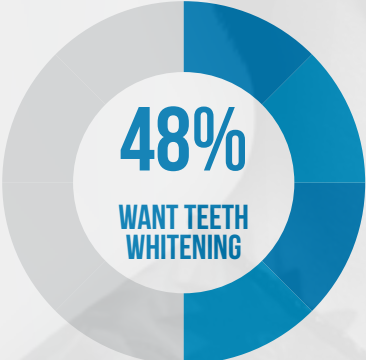
Note that these questions were asked to ALL participants and not just those who had experiences with bullying.

male female

SKIN CONDITION



WOULD YOU CONSIDER PROCEDURES TO ALTER YOUR APPEARANCE?





**WE CAN HELP MAKE YOUR SCHOOL OR COLLEGE
BULLY FREE.**

**WE ARE ALREADY WORKING WITH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES ACROSS THE UK WITH
FANTASTIC RESULTS. FIND OUT MORE AT DITCHTHELABEL.ORG OR CONTACT US VIA
INFO@DITCHTHELABEL.ORG.**

HOW DO YOUR INSECURITIES SURFACE?

Note that these questions were asked to ALL participants and not just those who had experiences with bullying.

male female trans

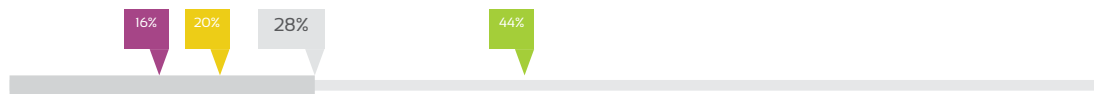
I'M SCARED OF SHOWING PEOPLE WHAT I LOOK LIKE IN THE MORNING



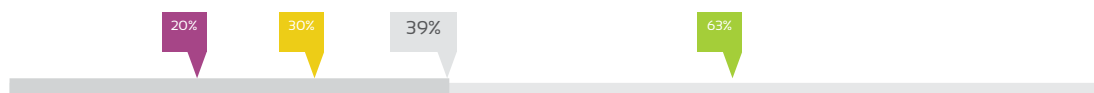
I DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT LEAVING THE HOUSE WITHOUT GETTING READY



I SPEND A LONG TIME ON MY APPEARANCE



MY FRIENDS ARE BETTER LOOKING THAN ME



I THINK THAT I AM GOOD LOOKING



I EDIT MY PHOTOS BEFORE I POST THEM ONLINE



IN TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE

Note that these questions were asked to ALL participants and not just those who had experiences with bullying.

36%

OF THOSE WHO ADMITTED TO BULLYING OTHERS HAVE BEEN IN TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE

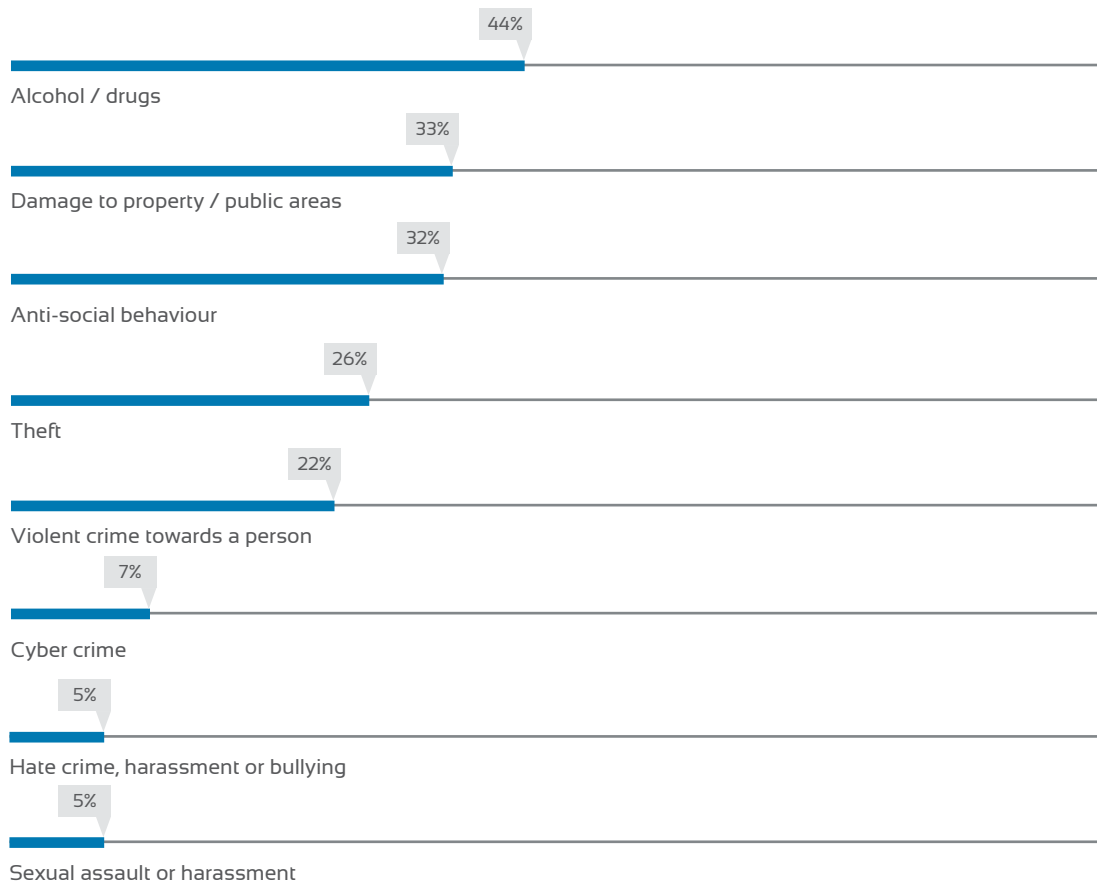
23%

OF THOSE WHO HAVE WITNESSED BULLYING HAVE BEEN IN TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE

22%

OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BULLIED HAVE BEEN IN TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE

WHAT GOT YOU INTO TROUBLE?







CASE STUDIES

We would like to thank the students who bravely submitted their case studies for use in this report. Please note that we have withheld personal details to protect the identity of respondents.

“IT ONLY HAPPENED AT MY OLD SCHOOL, NOT HERE. IT DROVE ME TO SELF-HARM AS I FELT IT WAS MY FAULT FOR BEING LIKE I WAS.”

- MALE, AGED 15, NORTH EAST.

“IT WAS VERBAL AND LASTED FOR APPROXIMATELY A MONTH. I EXPLAINED MY BELIEFS TO THEM AND SHOWED GOOD CHARACTER, EVENTUALLY THEY UNDERSTOOD MY BELIEFS AND DIDN'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH ME ANYMORE. EVENTUALLY THEY BECAME MY FRIENDS.”

- MALE, AGED 14, NORTH WEST.

“I WAS BULLIED REALLY BADLY AT A PREVIOUS SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR TWO YEARS. IT STARTED OFF AS VERBAL BULLYING AND I WAS EXCLUDED FROM ALL OF THE FRIENDSHIP GROUPS IN MY YEAR GROUP. I WAS SINGLED OUT BECAUSE AT THE TIME I WAS A CHRISTIAN, AND ALSO A LITTLE OVERWEIGHT. THE BULLIES FOUND IT ENTERTAINING WHEN I'D GET UPSET OVER A NEGATIVE COMMENT THEY'D MAKE. THIS CONTINUED FOR THE ENTIRETY OF MY TIME THERE. IN MY FIRST YEAR OF SECONDARY SCHOOL I STOPPED EATING AND BECAME BULIMIC, WHICH MEANT I LOST TWO STONES. I FEEL LIKE IT IS ALL MY OWN FAULT.”

- FEMALE, AGED 17, SOUTH EAST.

“I WAS BULLIED. MY PARENTS TOLD ME IT WAS BECAUSE THE PERSON WAS JEALOUS OF ME, JEALOUS THAT I WAS CLEVER, JEALOUS THAT I WAS IN MORE SCHOOL TEAMS THAN HER AND JEALOUS THAT THE TEACHERS LIKED ME MORE. THAT ISN'T HOW IT FELT, SHE WOULD PERSECUTE ME DAILY, COMMENT ON WHAT I WAS WEARING, LAUGH AT ME ACROSS THE PLAYGROUND, SPREAD LIES AND RUMOURS AND TRIED TO TURN MY FRIENDS AGAINST ME, SHE VANDALISED THE SCHOOL TOILETS WITH ‘(MY NAME) IS A B*TCH’. SHE MADE ME GO HOME AND CRY MYSELF TO SLEEP. BEING BULLIED HAS AFFECTED MANY PARTS OF MY LIFE, BUT FOR THE BETTER, SHE HAD A HARSH UPBRINGING, WHICH EMERGED AFTER I HAD LEFT PRIMARY SCHOOL. HER BIRTH PARENTS WERE REGULAR TAKERS OF ILLEGAL DRUGS AND THEN THROUGHOUT PRIMARY SCHOOL LIVED WITH HER ADOPTED FAMILY. IN A WAY SHE TAUGHT ME, THAT I WANT TO DO BETTER FOR MYSELF, I WANT TO RISE ABOVE ALL THE NEGATIVE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE, SO I STARTED STUDYING HARDER, AND BEING A MORE POSITIVE PERSON, AND THAT'S WHY I AM WHERE I AM TODAY.”

- FEMALE, AGED 14, NORTH WEST.

“THEY MADE ME HATE MY BODY IMAGE AND HATE LIFE IN GENERAL. I HONESTLY JUST WANT TO GIVE UP SOMETIMES AND I'VE ONLY JUST STARTED GETTING BETTER AFTER 6 YEARS OF DEPRESSION.”

- TRANS*, AGED 16, NORTH WEST.

“WAS BULLIED BY SOME BOYS BASED ON MY APPEARANCE AND WEIGHT, WHICH STOPPED ME FROM EATING AND I WAS STARVING MYSELF FOR 2 MONTHS AND ALSO SELF HARMED DURING HIGH SCHOOL. I ALSO WOULD SKIP CLASSES. I WAS CYBERBULLIED BECAUSE ONE PERSON JUST DIDN'T LIKE ME. THIS STOPPED ME FROM GOING TO SCHOOL.”

- FEMALE, AGED 16, LONDON.



**WE PRODUCED THIS REPORT AND MADE IT FREELY
AVAILABLE WITHOUT ANY FUNDING.**

**CAN YOU HELP FUND OUR WORK SO THAT WE CAN CONTINUE TO EFFECT POSITIVE CHANGE
FOR THOUSANDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE? PLEASE VISIT [DITCHTHELABEL.ORG/DONATE](https://ditchthelabel.org/donate)**



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

For Schools, Colleges and Safeguarding Professionals

> Appearance and Body Weight, Size or Shape Based Bullying

Appearance and weight related bullying is incredibly damaging to self-esteem and can have long-term impacts on confidence and self-perception. Body-positive messages need to be promoted throughout educational establishments. Workshops with guest speakers to promote positive body image, health campaigns featuring different healthy body shapes and sizes, and PSHE lessons on health issues such as anorexia and extreme dieting are some examples of positive measures.

> Interests and Hobbies Based Bullying

Interest derived bullying was the third greatest reason given for bullying. It is important to provide the opportunity for a wide range of extra-curricular activities

and enrichment programmes that represent the interests of your students. Embracing events such as Black History Month, culture weeks, special days, LGBT&T pride, talent shows, and school or media projects can be a great way to bring different demographic groups together and celebrate diversity.

> Gender Stereotype Based Bullying

Bullying for not conforming to gender stereotypes affects a large proportion of bullied students. Educating and engaging with young people about preconceived gender role ideas and stereotypes can help in ensuring they understand the limitations this puts on both genders. Males and females should be encouraged to take part in a range of activities, courses and positions of authority within the school or college community. Gender neutral facilities are, in addition, positive ways of removing gender barriers.

> Bullying of Minority Groups

A large proportion of bullying was prejudice based and due to attitudes towards a disability, race/culture, gender identity and sexual orientation. It is important to ensure that all minority groups are well represented and that appropriate support services are made available and endorsed. Education holds a huge opportunity to teach young people about different cultures, religions, lifestyles, and disabilities. PSHE lessons are a valuable space to reinforce the importance of acceptance and equality for all groups in society. Schools and colleges should diversify the range of charities they fundraise for by including a wide variety of causes. Time should always be set aside to engage pupils in raising awareness of a charity and its associated issues to promote altruism and a care for the wider community.

> Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault

A zero-tolerance approach must be implemented to ensure that students are fully aware of the seriousness of unwanted physical contact, sexual advances and sexual jokes.



> Who has the biggest influence over how you perceive those who are different from you?

- #1: Parents/guardians
- #2: Friends
- #3: Family members
- #4: Boyfriend/girlfriend
- #5: General public
- #6: Teachers
- #7: Celebrities
- #8: Bloggers and YouTubers

> Which media has the biggest influence over how you perceive those who are different from you?

- #1: Social media
- #2: TV programmes
- #3: Music
- #4: Movies
- #5: Reality TV shows
- #6: Magazines
- #7: Newspapers
- #8: Online blogs
- #9: Radio

Students need to be aware of the criminality of these actions and should feel confident in reporting such behaviour to teachers, their parents and the Police. It is advisable to have guest speakers and workshops around issues of appropriate sexual behaviour and the right to say 'no'.

> Cyberbullying

Of those who reported bullying, 6 in 10 had experienced bullying online. It is essential that schools and colleges take cyberbullying seriously and treat it on the same level as other bullying issues. Teachers should proactively monitor the potential signs of cyberbullying as they can be less obvious than verbal or physical bullying in the classroom.

Education is key in arming all students with the knowledge of how to stay safe online and how to report offensive content; PSHE lessons and workshops are effective spaces for this. Information should constantly be updated to reflect the changing nature of

social media and online trends. Please do get in touch for our updated resources.

> Mediation and Restorative Justice Techniques

Although zero-tolerance policies may be appropriate at times, we heavily suggest that schools and colleges utilise mediation and restorative justice techniques wherever possible.

Mediation can be effective in rebuilding friendships where bullying has occurred as a result of a fall-out between friends or peer groups. It can create empathy for the person being bullied and can prevent those involved from engaging in bullying behaviour again. Other restorative justice techniques can be effective in enabling the person bullying to reflect on their behaviour and challenge their views and actions. This can prevent that young person from going on to bully others in the future.

> Reporting to Teachers and Family

Even though teachers were the second most turned-to source of support for students for help, students were typically dissatisfied with their response. It is essential that teachers are regularly trained in bullying protocol and are approachable, proactive and fully aware of anti-bullying procedures. It is positive to keep an open dialogue of training and consultations between teachers and parents/guardians.

> Those who Bully

It is important not to overlook the fact that many students who bully others often do so as a coping mechanism when going through a stressful situation. It may be that the student is being bullied themselves or there could be abuse in their home life. Try to compassionately understand a student who is bullying to the best of your ability as a means of understanding the source of the problem. Responding with negativity and punishment may not be a strategy that meets the complex needs of all students. It is progressive to avoid the villainisation of those who bully.

> Suicide and Self harm

Coping with bullying can be very difficult for young people who, as a result, experience extreme feelings of isolation, loneliness and worthlessness. It is absolutely essential that teachers, parents/guardians and peers are aware of warning signs and have an understanding of these issues. Appropriate support services must be made readily available and heavily publicised throughout the school or college establishment.

> Counselling for Support

Bullying has a huge impact on all areas of life, especially on self-esteem, social lives and optimism. Bullying can have long-term mental health implications such as anxiety and depression. Counselling services are vital in helping young people cope, rebuilding lives and ensuring positive mental health.

Available services should be heavily promoted and even rebranded in order to encourage more students to use them and end stigma surrounding such services. To increase satisfaction levels with counselling services, a variety of therapy options should be available; sessions should commence promptly after referral and be offered on a rolling basis or maximum possible timeframe.

> Helplines and Social Networking Sites for Support

For those too scared or embarrassed to speak to someone face to face, anonymous services, such as helplines, are essential in providing much needed support. Helplines and online forums should be advertised around the school or college. Online and printed information should be provided to all students by default.

For Parents and Guardians

First and foremost, we advise parents to build open and honest relationships with their children. It is important they feel comfortable approaching parents for help as it can be daunting for young people to speak about their experience as they may be embarrassed, or even afraid of the potential repercussions of doing so.

A few common signs that a young person may be experiencing bullying include a low mood, loss in appetite, a desire for isolation and sudden changes in behaviour; many of which have been identified in this report.

If it is a child being bullied, families must familiarise themselves with the school's anti-bullying procedures, contact the school and follow up with what action is being taken.

If unsatisfied with the result, it is advisable to speak to the local authority or submit a formal complaint with the school's Governing Body – the school will have a Complaints Policy with guidelines on how to do this. If a satisfactory response is not achieved, then a complaint can be made online to the Department of Education.

We also strongly recommend that parents familiarise themselves with social media platforms such as social networking sites and apps that are popular with young people in order to advise them on how to report content. Young people often tell us they do not think their parents will understand or take cyberbullying seriously. It is important to be aware of the severe consequences of bullying. For more information visit DitchtheLabel.org.

For Young People

We strongly advise all young people to report all forms of bullying so that it can be dealt with immediately before it gets any worse. Teachers and parents should be the first point of contact; young people could request that teachers or a school counsellor mediate between themselves and the person doing the bullying so that both parties can discuss what has happened. If the bullying continues, it is important to let the school or college know this.

We advise that young people never retaliate as this could get them into trouble. It is a good idea to keep a record of any incidences.

Young people should never have to deal with bullying on their own. It is important to be vocal and talk to others about their experience to a person whom they can trust, such as a teacher, parent/guardian, family member or friend.

Sometimes, bullying can have extreme impacts on those who experience it, especially if it is over a prolonged period of time. In cases of self-harm or suicidal thoughts, it is important to speak to an adult or trained professional. We recommend the Samaritans (08457 909090) and Childline (0800 11 11). In addition, therapy and counselling services are available via schools, colleges, the GP and privately.

Further help and support are available to anyone who has been, or is, experiencing bullying, including those who are bullying others, via our website at DitchtheLabel.org.

For Government

Our research demonstrates that bullying behaviour is having a detrimental effect on millions of young people in the UK. It not only has a huge impact on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of young people, but also has a significant impact on their grades and future education and career prospects. We urge the government:

- To invest in new approaches to inform and engage young people on social issues to tackle bullying based on appearance, body image and interests.
- To strengthen education around minority issues, particularly on race, religion, disability, sexuality, gender identity and different cultures.
- We also advise an innovative approach to educating young people about cyberbullying which not only includes up-to-date information on reporting

mechanisms, but also fosters a socially responsible online experience.

- To increase the funding available for innovative anti-bullying work and interventions that do not regurgitate old methodologies.
- To increase funding in mental health support such as counselling and therapy services.

If you are a Governmental representative, we would love to hear from you.

Can You Help Us?

> Donate and Fundraise

As an independent charity, we are heavily reliant upon fundraisers and donations from our supporters. To see how your help could benefit young people, please visit www.DitchtheLabel.org.

Just £2.27 enables us to help one additional young person who has been impacted by bullying. You can now donate via SMS text messaging; simply message:

DITC12 and the amount you'd like to donate to 70070. For example, to donate £5, simply message DITC12 £5.

Please get the bill payer's permission before donating via SMS.

> Volunteer

If you have a desire to help others affected by bullying and would be interested in working with us, we often recruit volunteers for exciting roles within our organisation, so please visit: www.DitchtheLabel.org/careers.

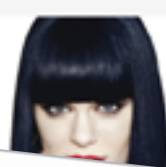


ALEX'S STORY

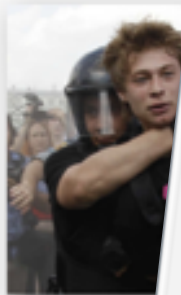
- Read the story about Alex and discuss the following questions in class:
 1. How responsible was Ashley for what happened to Alex?
 2. Did Alex use suitable methods to combat the cyberbullying?
 3. Were people breaking the law when they threatened Alex?



STEREOTYPING



- In the past few years, hundreds of YouTube videos have been uploaded showing young people being tortured and bullied by gay groups and individuals. There has been no punishment for the perpetrators
- Gay people in Russia face discrimination and violent abuse. Laws make it even harder for the LGBT community.
- Many gay rights activists have been beaten and killed



DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION



It means that this woman thinks it is not her that needs to be fixed, but society.

By this, she means that society and people's attitudes are disabling, not the disability itself.

She is referring to the Social Model Theory.

According to this theory, disabled people are not treated equally in our society and are not given equal opportunities to achieve their potential or fulfill their dreams. Do you think this is true?

The Social Model Theory is an argument that certain things in society are disabling.

For Schools and Colleges: How We Can Help You

We provide a range of interventions aimed at tackling prejudice-based bullying; promoting equality and raising awareness of bullying-related issues. These include:

- Cyberbullying and Sexting
- Disability Equality
- Sexuality and Homophobia
- Race and Racism
- Cultural Identity
- Religion
- Gender Identity, Gender Roles, Transphobia and Sexism
- Appearance
- Interests

Aimed at all students, our interventions challenge prejudice and relate bullying behaviour to wider societal discrimination in the school or college community and beyond. Students become more socially aware, analytical, think more critically and are encouraged to respect the differences between people.

Furthermore, our interventions are designed to aid educational establishments in reaching OFSTED requirements of ensuring a safe environment in which young people respect one another and are free from harassment and bullying. They further demonstrate that your establishment

is striving to promote a harmonious environment and taking a proactive approach to eliminating bullying.

> What is included?

Materials for presentation, in-class activities, discussion topics and project ideas. We also include pre- and post- intervention surveys that not only measure the increase in students' existing knowledge on the topic, but also gauge change in social attitudes.

> Which interventions do we need?

As part of the process, we will arrange a consultation with your management to discuss any particular issues in your school or college. We will also request to see copies of your OFSTED report and any information that you have on demographic profiles within your environment. We can also additionally tie in a data extrapolation service called 'The Route of Bullying' within your pre-intervention survey. Using this tool, we are able to extrapolate data to identify which demographic groups are most susceptible to bullying within your school or college. Many establishments choose to start with one or two strategies simultaneously and then look to further develop their interventions at a later date.

> How successful are the interventions?

Our interventions have a high, measurable success rate and in all instances have

reduced bullying and positively impacted the motion of equality amongst participating students.

"The material provided by Ditch the Label was extremely engaging, original and user friendly. Our pastoral teams were able to use it effectively in their PSHE programmes. The students were able to reflect and engage in mature discussions and develop these into projects. The work that they achieved will have positive, long-term effects for our school. The pre-intervention survey analysis provided was extremely informative and useful to our Pastoral leaders, Form tutors and Senior team. It enabled us to initiate plans for future school practices, procedures and PSHE content for the coming terms. It has also formed a part of our SEF, which is an essential part of our School's evolution."

- Mr R Alleyne, Inclusion Manager, The UCL Academy London

> Find out more

Please contact Info@ditchthelabel.org for further information.

**DITCH THE
LABEL**

YOUR WORLD, PREJUDICE FREE .