CARE+ CAMPAIGN
SURVEY
SURVEY SUMMARY FOR ALL CAMPAIGNS AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
INTRODUCTION

The following information was gathered from a survey the Cambridge SU LGBT+ Campaign sent out on the 1st of November. The survey’s aim was to establish—in the midst of a very chaotic situation—how COVID-19 response measures were affecting LGBT+ people in Cambridge and what the Campaign can do best to help.

There were 74 responses, over the course of 7 days. Though the data is by no means representative, it does provide useful insights. It includes experiences from across 26 colleges, 33 courses and a variety of year-groups, from first year undergraduates to PhDs.

There are specific and significant issues regarding its (under)representation of parts of the community, such as the comparative lack of representation for BME LGBT+ people. The Campaign must work actively to improve this. Where they affect the survey results, these issues have been pointed out where possible. In general, the low number of BME participants makes it hard to be confident in the representativeness of any conclusions reached.

The survey was sent out hours before the announcement of a second lockdown, so while the responses reflect conditions during the early stages of the second lockdown the questions were not written specifically with reference to these regulations.

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ACCOMMODATION

The overwhelming majority (79.7%) of respondents live in college-owned accommodation, with most of the rest occupying private accommodation within Cambridge. Only 4 respondents lived elsewhere.

Most respondents reported being able to find accommodation without too much stress and having been well supported by college during this, however significant minorities sound organising accommodation “very stressful” (19.2%) and college somewhat or wholly unsupportive (26.6%).

Experiences of being put into a household have varied greatly, both by college and by year. Respondents often felt they had very little control over the situation, meaning that the resulting household groups were often arbitrary and separated people from their friends. Many ballots had been conducted before COVID hit, meaning people had no control over how their rooms would be organised into households or who would be in these households, and were unable to make changes to their accommodation in light of the new situation.

Respondents mostly indicated that they are not close with many (or often any) of the people in their houses (59%) and many reported that they had been put into a house entirely with strangers (39.2%). Respondents would not trust their household to support them if needed (55%).

While most respondents (79.5%) reported that they have enough space to themselves, most do not have enough social space (52.7%).
RESTRICTIONS AND REGULATIONS

For those within college accommodation, a broadly standard set of restrictions emerged:

- Bans on visitors from outside college
- Bans on visits between households within college, although in some instances with allowances for visitors within the ’rule of 6’
- Curfew on non-household spaces

It was concerning to note that many respondents were unaware of the details of their college’s policy for isolating students. Those who were reported a variety of methods used by colleges to enforce restrictions and regulations including

- Porters, fines and the use of similar disciplinary measures are common.
- Additional essays (“on the consequences of stupid actions”)
- Community service
- Enforced isolation (the respondent wasn’t sure)

A significant proportion (23.1%) reported that their college had used the threat of eviction against students, and respondents weren’t sure if this was a possibility (58.4%). Only 13.8% (9 respondents) confirmed that their college had not threatened to evict students for breaching regulations.

Additionally, most of those who chose to comment said that they would not know how to appeal against any sanctions college issued and/or would not feel comfortable doing so.
Questions regarding sources of support also displayed a wide degree of variation, again reflecting the diversity of experiences currently faced by LGBT+ people right now.

Overall, responses skewed towards suggesting that colleges’ policies had negatively impacted how comfortable they felt accessing their welfare services. Nevertheless, the majority felt this was unchanged and a notable minority felt positively towards policies (although no-one reported policies having a “very positive” impact). However, the overwhelming majority of people (75%) said they would not feel comfortable seeking support from their colleges if they had been in breach of regulations. This pattern was consistent across all demographics: people do not feel comfortable seeking support from institutions in situations where they might be punished. These results have borne out recently in the outcry over Jesus College’s policy statements.

Responses were also quite mixed on sources of institutional support. J/MCRs were seen as particularly supportive, with 73.3% reporting that they supported them. In contrast, only 14.9% of the overall survey sample said the same of the University. Some comments for this section suggested that students feel the SU as a whole doesn’t care about what students think, an issue highlighted by the decision to campaign for all teaching to be online, which some felt hadn’t been carried out with enough consultation.

BME participants tended very clearly in the other direction from the overall survey; towards feeling unsupported. Ignoring the differences in sample size, the pattern of responses was practically inverted. However, the small sample size and wide variation in responses here makes it harder to be confident about this result.
INTERSECTIONS

TRANS AND NON-BINARY RESPONDENTS

Trans and Non-Binary (NB) respondents were slightly more likely to feel insecure in their living situation than average. We can confidently say they were also significantly more likely to feel unsafe.

They were also quite significantly more likely to cite government policy, news and social media, the university, and particularly their gender as factors contributing to them feeling unsafe. Being Trans and/or NB also correlated notably with feeling unsafe due to college and slightly more strongly the people respondents live with.

Trans and NB participants were also significantly more likely to say that their LGBT+ identity was a reason they felt uncomfortable accessing welfare.

Every respondent who reported experiencing harassment around their LGBT+ identity since the start of term was Trans and/or NB, which suggests that transphobia is particularly rife within the student body.

On a positive note Trans and NB people were significantly more likely to feel more connected to the community. However, conversely, Trans and NB people were somewhat more likely to feel less close to the people in their household.

BME RESPONDENTS

It is crucial to note that BME people were significantly underrepresented in the survey responses. 9 respondents of 74 (i.e. 12.2%) identified as BME. This very likely means that the results are not representative. The small sample size means that results are likely to skew towards extremes in either direction.

There was a very significant correlation between identifying as BME reporting a negative impact of college regulations on mental health. Worryingly, no BME respondents reported neutral or positive effects of regulations on mental health.
BME participants were far more likely to report worrying about their safety, to a high degree of statistical significance and noticeably more likely to report worrying about their security.

8 of 9 BME respondents reported their BME identity as a contributing factor in feeling unsafe, and were to a high degree of confidence significantly more likely to feel unsafe due to their financial situation. 3 BME participants reported that their race and 4 their ethnicity had been a cause of discomfort for them within their household.

The overwhelming majority (77.8%) of BME respondents also said that they didn’t trust many people in their house to provide support.

**DISABLED RESPONDENTS**

There was a strong tendency for disabled people to report that the government and very significantly pre-existing health conditions or disabilities contributed to them feeling unsafe. There was also evidence that university and college policies disproportionately made disabled participants feel unsafe. Additionally, there was a very strong correlation between identifying as disabled and saying their disability and/or pre-existing health condition was a cause for feeling unsafe.

All 3 reports of ablism in the survey were submitted by disabled respondents and hence, there was a very strong correlation between identifying as disabled and reporting living with someone who was ableist.

A large proportion of disabled respondents reported that the process of finding accommodation was very stressful (34%). Thus, there was a strong correlation between identifying as disabled and experiencing stress finding accommodation.

Positively, disabled respondents were somewhat more likely to report feeling close to people in their household and more likely to trust their households for support.
CLASS-ACT BACKGROUND RESPONDENTS

Participants identified as working class, from a low-income background, a first generation university student, estranged and/or a care leaver. These participants are being referred to as ‘Class Act’ participants, as they are represented by the Class Act campaign.

Class Act participants were much more likely than the norm to report lack of support and financial situation as reasons for feeling unsafe.

Otherwise, for most questions, identifying as a Class Act participant was not associated with significant differences from the overall survey.