AraTaiohi

For people working with young people

SNAPSHOT 2015

A REPORT ON THE SUPPORT SECTOR FOR RAINBOW YOUNG PEOPLE

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Snapshot 2015 aims to support existing work with and for Rainbow young people and help shape future directions for the Rainbow support and youth sectors. Snapshot 2015 was developed to explore the complex context of the support sector for Rainbow young people and identify strengths and gaps to support their work. Thirty Rainbow organisations answered our Snapshot survey or attended one of our three Snapshot forums.

Ara Taiohi undertook this work as part of a longer journey to ensure all young people are supported to thrive in Aotearoa. Snapshot 2015 builds on feedback from a national engagement process in 2012, Te Hautaki which recommended Rainbow issues be included in all facets of youth sector work and findings from the 2014 Ara Taiohi National Youth Sector Survey which identified Rainbow competency as a training need for the youth sector.

Also in 2014, Ara Taiohi established the Queer/Trans Grants Programme to support groups and organisations working specifically to empower Rainbow young people and help them feel connected, valued and have a positive sense of identity. This Programme was the first of its kind for Aotearoa New Zealand and received an overwhelming response from the Rainbow support sector.

Through this programme Ara Taiohi engaged with 57 groups working to support Rainbow young people around the country, and 48 organisations received funding under the programme. These groups formed the basis of our networks for Snapshot 2015.

Ara Taiohi will continue to work with the support sector for Rainbow young people to highlight Snapshot 2015 findings and share strengths, gaps and emerging themes with policy teams, mainstream youth organisations, funders and communities. We acknowledge the extraordinary work of the support sector for Rainbow young people, many of whom regularly volunteer their time to help keep Rainbow young people safe.

Snapshot 2015 demonstrates both the challenges of working with Rainbow young people in terms of environments in which they may not be safe, and the innovative, community-based solutions being provided by this sector.

TERMINOLOGY

We use Rainbow to include all peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand under the sex, sexuality and gender diversity umbrellas. This includes people who identify as akava'ine, asexual, bisexual, fa'fafine, fakaleiti, FtM, gay, gender fluid, gender-neutral, gender nonconforming, genderqueer, gender variant, hinehi, hinehua, intersex, lesbian, mahu, MtF, non-binary, palopa, pansexual, polysexual, queer, questioning, rae, tangata ira tane, takatāpui, tóngxì, trans man, trans woman, transfeminine, transgender, transmasculine, transsexual, vaka sa lewa, whakawahine, and more.

Please note that the terminology used in this report reflects the terms that were used in the survey and by respondents to safeguard data integrity.

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Rainbow support organisations actively support one another's work.**
   All Rainbow support organisations collaborate to maximise their ability to work well with Rainbow young people. Examples include national and local hui, pride and social events; co-facilitation or workshop delivery; shared resources and training; and cross-referrals for specific support needs.

2. **Burnout of staff and volunteers is a serious issue for the support sector for Rainbow young people. Adequate resourcing is necessary to continue this crucial, often life-saving, work.**
   The support sector for Rainbow young people is largely staffed by young people themselves and is heavily reliant on volunteers. The workforce is dedicated and coming up with innovative, community-based solutions to the issues young people are bringing to them.

3. **There are gaps for Rainbow young people from Māori and other diverse cultural backgrounds. While the under-resourced support sector for Rainbow young people is doing its best, these groups need specific resourcing to come up with culturally appropriate responses.**
   Many Rainbow support organisations are attempt to respond to culturally diverse populations of Rainbow young people without appropriate frameworks, leadership or staff and volunteers. This was identified as an issue for Rainbow young people identifying as Māori, Pacific, migrant, refugee and/or with disabilities.

4. **Suicide is a serious issue for Rainbow young people. There is a need for targeted planning, services and interventions that will prevent suicide and promote positive mental health for Rainbow young people.**
   76% of Rainbow support organisations are working with Rainbow young people who are suicidal; 65% are working with Rainbow young people who have had a friend or family member commit suicide; and nearly half of the organisations that answered had worked with a young person who had later killed themselves. Concerns over inadequate responses to suicide risks were raised by the majority of respondents.

5. **Homelessness is a serious issue for Rainbow young people. Emergency housing needs to be safer for Rainbow young people, and specialist housing should be scoped to respond to need.**
   59% of Rainbow support organisations had helped Rainbow young people find emergency accommodation and just over half had had a staff member offer personal housing to homeless young people because there was nowhere else safe for Rainbow young people to go. Respondents identified that the more marginalised Rainbow young people are the more likely they are to be homeless, confirming the need for culturally diverse responses.

6. **There are no Ministry of Health-level best practice guidelines for Rainbow healthcare and no accountability for healthcare responses for Rainbow young people.**
   Respondents described how health research and planning leave Rainbow young people out, resulting in their needs being invisible. Mainstream youth services rely on the under-resourced Rainbow support sector to deal with issues relating to Rainbow young people or to assist them in providing appropriate care. Healthcare services are not required to be trained in Rainbow health needs so cultural and personal safety can often be compromised. Respondents said many of the Rainbow young people they worked with had had negative experiences with mainstream health services or saw interacting with them as potentially harmful. Only a quarter of the respondent organisations refer young people to the mainstream health sector, due to concerns about lack of appropriate response. Many support organisations reported feeling that they are picking up the pieces after these harmful interactions.

7. **There are no Ministry of Education level best practice guidelines for Rainbow education and no accountability for education environments to Rainbow young people.**
Respondents supporting school-aged Rainbow young people said that their members were often unsafe in school environments due to discrimination, bullying and social exclusion. Respondents voiced frustration with lack of imperative for schools to act in this area when Youth 2000 survey data highlights the need to focus on Rainbow young people as a group with higher rates of bullying, self-harm, mental health problems and difficulties accessing healthcare.

ARA TAIOHI RECOMMENDS

1. **Sustainable resourcing and supporting the Rainbow support sector as a whole**, including paid positions, facilitation training and professional supervision.
2. **Sustainable resourcing and supporting kaupapa Māori support sector development** for Takatāpui, including paid positions, facilitation training and professional supervision.
3. **Adequate resourcing and sector development support is available** for Rainbow young people from diverse cultural backgrounds, including paid positions, facilitation training and professional supervision.
4. **Rainbow competency resources and training** for mainstream youth organisations, including health, education, youth work and other youth environments.
5. **Rainbow competency resources and training for crisis services** related to mental health and emergency housing.
6. **National networking**, **skill-sharing opportunities and nurturing collaboration** on a national level for organisations working with Rainbow young people across Aotearoa New Zealand.
7. **Rainbow data collection and Rainbow youth voices and participation** at all levels of strategic planning around suicide prevention, health and education services, and social services.

ARA TAIOHI'S JOURNEY WITH RAINBOW INITIATIVES

Ara Taiohi undertook this work as part of a longer journey to ensure all young people are supported to thrive in Aotearoa. This work builds on feedback from various engagement initiatives we have undertaken since 2012.

In the 2012-13 *Te Hautaki o Ara Taiohi Full Report*[1] the need for more local and national communication between Rainbow and mainstream youth organisations was identified, as was the fact that isolation and heteronormativity impact on many Rainbow young people's health and wellbeing. *Te Hautaki* also identified that mainstream youth organisations required support to address the needs and raise visibility of Rainbow young people, who often report feeling isolated, unseen and lacking a sense of belonging.

Te Hautaki recommended the youth sector incorporate Rainbow issues into all facets of its work. Mainstream health and education sectors were encouraged to raise awareness through education, challenging stereotypes within the wider community and encouraging open-minded and accepting attitudes and behaviours towards Rainbow young people.

It was identified during Te Hautaki that young people who are struggling with discrimination, stigma and exclusion related to Rainbow identities face higher risks of suicide and misuse of drugs or alcohol. It was also noted that there is a need to include young Rainbow voices in mainstream training and a need to support the Rainbow support sector to improve their youth work practice and connections to Tangata Whenua in their regions. *Te Hautaki* recommended this additional support should come from outside the already under-resourced Rainbow support sector.

In the 2015 *Braided Pathways: A Report on the 2014 Ara Taiohi National Youth Sector Survey*[2] respondents identified the need within the wider youth sector for competency training for people working with Rainbow young people. This competency training became a key focus area for Ara Taiohi resulting from that report.

The findings and recommendations of Snapshot 2015 are consistent with these identified needs, but give a more detailed picture of the scale and complexity of needs that the Rainbow support sector is managing.

METHODOLOGY

Snapshot 2015 includes information gathered via a survey and three community forums in early 2015.

The Snapshot survey was designed to capture the makeup, focus and capacity of Rainbow organisations, training and support of staff and volunteers, activities and scope of support for Rainbow young people, engagement with the wider community, and high risk areas. This survey was distributed to all Queer/Trans Grants applicants. We received responses from 24 organisations.

The three Snapshot 2015 forums were held in Christchurch, Hamilton and Auckland. Ten respondents in Christchurch represented six organisations; in Hamilton ten respondents represented three organisations and one high school; and seven organisations were represented in the Auckland forum.

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[1] Ara Taiohi (2013). Available at: www.arataiohi.org.nz/images/uploads/general/te-hautaki-2012.pdf
[2] Ara Taiohi (2015). Available at: www.arataiohi.org.nz/images/uploads/general/Braided_Pathways.pdf

Most organisations involved in the forums were Rainbow support organisations with a small number of general public respondents. The Snapshot forums discussed the local context for supporting Rainbow young people, including enduring and emerging themes, issues of concern and strengths of the Rainbow support sector. All three were facilitated by Ara Taiohi's Grants Administrator.

This report refers to everyone who participated in either the survey or the forums as respondents. Analysis has been completed by the Rainbow project team at Ara Taiohi, with input from other national office staff.

RESULTS

## Section 1: About the respondents: the make-up of the Rainbow sector
The thirty organisations involved in Snapshot 2015 were spread across Aotearoa New Zealand as shown in the following map. Two organisations indicated they have a national reach so are not shown on this map.

Figure 1: Location of Rainbow sector organisations

The dates of formation of respondent organisations spanned from 1972 to 2015. With young people identifying their sexuality and/or gender identity at increasingly younger ages, the need for formal support for Rainbow young people has increased rapidly in recent years. Eighteen of the 24 organisations answering the Snapshot survey were formed after 2002, many in smaller parts of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Figure 2: Rainbow Support Sector: Year of Formation
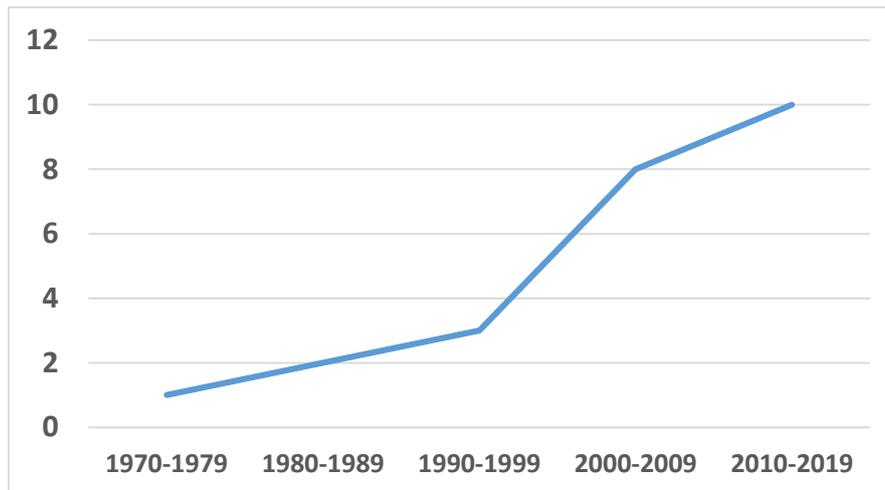
The self-described focus of survey respondent organisations included specific Rainbow identities and cultural groups, but the majority focused on LGBTIQ young people as a whole:
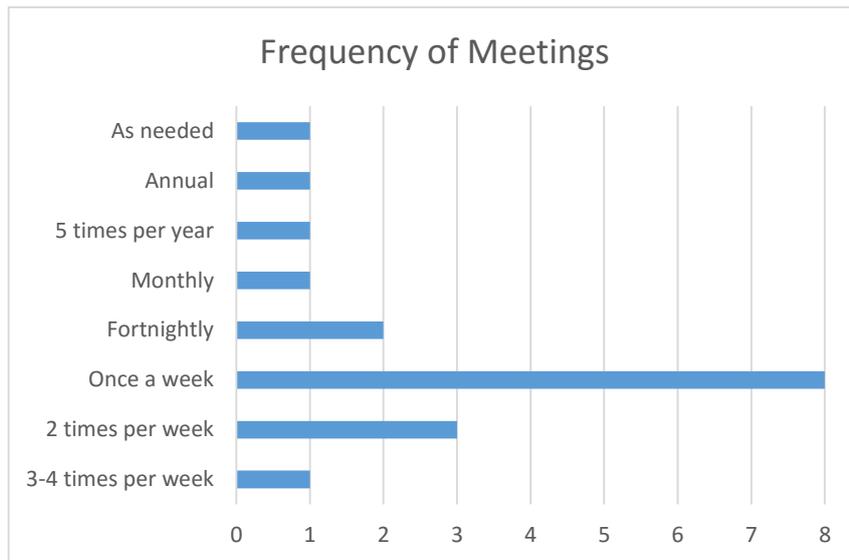

Section 2: Survey Findings

Twenty-four organisations completed the written survey.

Resourcing of Sector

Seventy-five percent (18) respondent organisations run regular[3] groups (either support or social groups). The frequency of the group get-togethers varies from meeting three to four times per week to meeting annually.

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[3] Regular groups meet weekly, more than once a week, fortnightly, or monthly

Figure 3: How often regular groups meet

Frequency of Meetings

Frequency	Value
As needed	1
Annual	1
5 times per year	1
Monthly	1
Fortnightly	2
Once a week	8
2 times per week	3
3-4 times per week	1

Fifty per cent (12) groups have an office space; 54% (13) meet in other organisations' spaces and 50% (12) meet in social settings. It is unclear whether this is through choice or through the lack of suitable safe spaces.

Figure 4: Where groups meet

Where groups meet

Location	Value
Church	1
Homes	3
Education	7
Social Settings	12
Other organisation	13
Own space	15
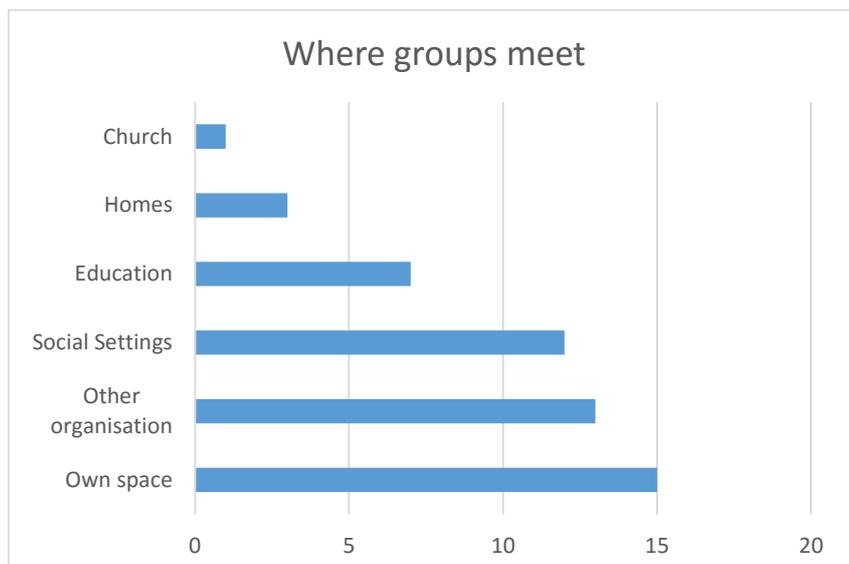
Group Participants

Attendance at regular groups ranges from 4 to 40 in each group session and the age range of participants ranged from 12-27 years old.

Non-regular groups included one that meets five times per year with up to 500 people aged 14-35 attending and one that meets annually with an average of 200 16-24 year olds attending.

Staffing, Support and Training

Fifty percent (12) of organisations are volunteer run, with the majority of volunteers being under 25. Thirty-three percent (8) of the volunteer-run organisations have a staffing age range of 13-35. The

number of volunteers across all organisations varies between 1 to over 100. Just 50% (12) of the organisations have paid staff.

The majority of the roles being carried out by the younger staff members (paid or volunteer) involve face-to-face/day-to-day contact with Rainbow young people needing support. The kinds of roles carried out by older staff members such as finance, healthcare liaison and/or advocacy roles.

Only 54% (13) of all respondent organisations have supervision available for their staff and volunteers, despite the complexity of the issues being raised by Rainbow young people.

Forty-one percent (10) of respondents reported they had received training in the Youth Work Code of Ethics, 63% (15) in The Treaty of Waitangi, 67% (16) in facilitation, and 58% (14) organisations have learned about boundaries and self-care.

Collaboration and Training

Rainbow Support Organisations

All respondent organisations work in some form of collaboration with other Rainbow support organisations. This functions in a variety of ways, including collaborating on hui, pride events and social events; co-facilitation or workshop delivery; shared resources and training; and cross-referrals for specific support needs.

This collaboration tends to happen regionally/locally, there is no current national network of Rainbow sector leaders working with young people.

Mainstream Youth Health Sector

The majority of the organisations (70% or 17) do not receive opportunities to collaborate with the mainstream youth health sector. When collaboration does occur, it most commonly involves Rainbow organisations receiving referrals from the mainstream health sector. Respondents reported that in some cases Rainbow organisations are based at a mainstream youth sector space and there are some individual health professionals who show an interest in Rainbow issues who get involved in the work delivered by the Rainbow sector, however this is not a requirement of their roles and does not happen in all areas.

Only a quarter of the respondent organisations (6) refer young people to the mainstream health sector, due to concerns about lack of appropriate response. Respondents raised concerns over a lack of knowledge, training, understanding and accessibility in mainstream health services for Rainbow young people, resulting in mainstream health services often struggling to meet Rainbow young people's healthcare needs and at times unintentionally causing harm through lack of awareness.

Education

The majority of the Rainbow sector (79% or 19 organisations) deliver training in education settings. The sector is delivering a wide variety of reactive training, responding to the need as and when mainstream sector raises this, often for free. This means the Rainbow support sector is not resourced sufficiently to develop a broad, comprehensive approach to training. Rainbow training is most likely to take place in one-off contexts due to lack of capacity and lack of strategic inclusion of the needs of Rainbow young people in mainstream youth and education contexts.

Topics included coming out stories, Rainbow identities, cultural safety, support services, non-Western and Pacific Peoples' understandings of Rainbow identities, HIV prevention, addressing discrimination, bullying, homophobia and transphobia. The education settings mentioned were schools, tertiary

institutions/wānanga and social work courses. The scope varied from one-off sessions with classes or assemblies to multiple school delivery. The majority of organisations are reaching only a small number of schools in their local area.

Wider Community

The majority of the Rainbow sector (79% or 19 organisations) is working with a variety of different organisations in the wider community, such as education institutions, New Zealand Police, sexual abuse/violence sector, helplines, local government, sexual health services, New Zealand Aids Foundation, and District Health Boards. Responses indicate the Rainbow sector makes every attempt to respond to requests for training or advice in terms of working with Rainbow young people. Eleven respondent organisations deliver training in professional settings. Topics include gender and sexuality diversity and cultural safety in the workplace. The professional settings mentioned were community organisations, New Zealand Police, student associations and government organisations.

Diversity and Intersectional Cultural Competency

The challenges of an under-resourced sector were highlighted in the survey responses to questions about capacity to respond to Rainbow young people who are Māori, Pacific Peoples, migrant or refugee, disabled and/or from faith backgrounds. Most respondents acknowledged working with young people from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds, and many acknowledged working with young people with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities and mental health issues.

But many organisations reported not yet having staff, volunteers, leadership or relevant models to inform working with culturally diverse Rainbow young people at this time. This risks creating environments which are not welcoming to all Rainbow young people.

Thirteen percent (3) of respondent organisations identified themselves as Kaupapa Māori, 13% had Māori leadership, and 17% (4) had Māori staff/volunteers. Eight percent (2) organisations had connections with local tangata whenua and 4% (1) collaborates with a Kaupapa Māori organisation. Thirteen percent (3) of respondent organisations are Pacific organisations using Pacific models, 13% (3) collaborate with Pacific organisations, 4% (1) respondent had Pacific leadership, and thirteen (3) organisations had Pacific staff/volunteers.

One respondent organisation had a refugee/migrant worker and one provides specific immigration support. There is no current Rainbow-specific support for refugees and migrants.

Twenty per cent (5) of respondent organisations consider accessibility in the development of their work, 13% (3) of organisations work in collaboration with disability organisations and 8% (2) work in collaboration with mental health organisations. One organisation has a disabled staff member.

Thirteen per cent (3) of organisations have staff or leadership with faith backgrounds, 13% collaborate with church leadership and one organisation hosts events at faith venues.

High Risk Issues - Suicide and Homelessness

This section of the survey had a trigger warning and was not compulsory. Seventeen organisations responded to questions about housing/emergency accommodation and suicide attempts/completions. Percentages reflect the number of respondents who answered this question.

Ten organisations (59%) had young people in need of emergency accommodation, and nine (53%) had housed young people themselves in personal housing situations because there was nowhere safe for Rainbow young people to go.

Thirteen organisations (76%) reported having young people disclosing suicidal thoughts to them, eleven organisations (65%) worked with young people whose friends had completed suicide, and eight organisations (47%) had worked with a Rainbow young person who had later killed themselves.

Only eleven organisations (65%) had access to suicide support services and suicide supervision support. Thirteen organisations (76%) have had suicide prevention training.

Section 3: Forum Findings

Strengths of the Rainbow Support Sector

All three forums highlighted the strength of community support within the Rainbow support sector and the willingness of Rainbow people to volunteer and to support each other. There is a lot of pride for the work that is being done and the increase in numbers of young people feeling they can 'come out' or who feel safe enough to come to groups.

The peer support and passing on of the mantle to future generations was also acknowledged. In Hamilton this was described as the "circle of life": young people have come along to the groups, shy and uncertain and had low self-confidence at first but after attending the groups, over time grew into inspiring adults and leaders.

Challenges for the Rainbow Support Sector

The forums reinforced the issue around burnout. Volunteer leaders are over-committed and become key people involved in a lot of work. The pressure on individual champions, especially young leaders, is increasing and there is not enough formal support for them, such as paid positions, annual leave, supervision and training opportunities. Levels of vulnerability are high and capacity is limited across the whole sector, which relies heavily on volunteers.

A lack of funding for regional and national skill-sharing and training and resource development was also highlighted, particularly for small organisations working in isolation in rural parts of the country.

When resources are developed by the Rainbow support sector for education providers and health services, many schools and/or health providers have historically refused to use the resources, denied there was a need for them to be used, or used them in an inadequate way. The forums identified the need for competency requirements for all health and education providers in order to ensure the safety of Rainbow young people.

The issue of cohesion and representation of minorities within the minority was raised at the forums. People who are under-represented in the mainstream Rainbow groups might not have a place they can turn to when they need support. This might include Māori, Pacific Peoples, refugee, migrant and other non Pākehā ethnicities, trans and gender diverse people, people with disabilities or age groups outside the support group focus. The safety of all Rainbow young people should be at the core of everything the whole sector does. The forums identified a need for better understanding and better resourcing of specialised services and support for these groups.

Whānau/Family Challenges for the Rainbow Support Sector

The forums identified several challenges for whānau/family including: small new businesses do not have Rainbow anti-discrimination policies; some rural Rainbow young people are living in heteronormative communities with less understanding of Rainbow needs and issues which creates more isolation and vulnerability; Rainbow young people face homelessness due to unsafe home environments; most services are based in centre of cities, so are not accessible for all young people;

very little support in Aotearoa New Zealand for families and partners to come to terms with sexuality/gender of their loved ones; Rainbow family resources and support are not available, such as support for starting a family or support around different types of relationships and families.

Intimate Relationship Challenges for the Rainbow Support Sector

Respondents discussed gaps in resources and responses to intimate partner and sexual violence for Rainbow people. Mainstream services for dating or for relationship support are not friendly to Rainbow young people. Sexual health education is designed for cis-straight people, condoms are the only barrier method freely available and there is no education around sexual activities other than heterosexual intercourse.

Social Services and Justice System Challenges for the Rainbow Support Sector

Rainbow young people frequently face unsafe situations in social housing, emergency housing and medical and mental health services. The forums identified an urgent need for better training and competency around working with Rainbow young people within the context of social services. The forums highlighted that Rainbow young people are over-represented in the areas of medical/mental healthcare, budgeting, advocacy with WINZ and dealing with homelessness, yet mainstream organisations are not prepared to adequately support Rainbow young people in these areas.

The Auckland forum in particular raised the issue of focus of services when a Rainbow young person presents seeking help. The staff at the social or justice sector generally focus on the young person's sexuality or gender identity as the problem, rather than the support needs of that young person.

Concerns were raised inside the forums about how New Zealand Police work with Rainbow young people. Better training was recommended to increase understanding and compassion towards Rainbow young people, especially when it comes to issues around gender.

Healthcare Challenges for the Rainbow Support Sector

All three forums expressed concern that Rainbow issues are not central to strategic planning in healthcare, particularly mental health and suicide prevention planning. Research does not investigate Rainbow specific experiences of healthcare and the impacts of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia have on mental health. Because Rainbow people are invisible in this research and planning, it is unclear how much misdiagnosis, inappropriate medicalisation, and lack of safety for Rainbow young people occurs across healthcare.

The issue of a lack of useable best practice guidelines for healthcare for Rainbow people was raised as was the issue of a lack of connection with training institutions and lack of motivation within the healthcare sector to improve the situation for Rainbow young people.

Respondents, some of whom work in healthcare sectors, raised concerns that Rainbow Competency training is not currently compulsory for healthcare providers, so accessing healthcare is often humiliating and disempowering for Rainbow young people. There is no current accountability for inadequate treatment of Rainbow patients.

The forums all expressed concern that Rainbow specific sexual health is not currently offered.

Education Challenges for the Rainbow Support Sector

Snapshot forum respondents had all experienced schools denying they have Rainbow students, even when the Rainbow support sector are in contact with Rainbow young people at these schools.

Gender and sexuality education which is appropriate and respectful of Rainbow young people is not compulsory in schools which contributes to unsupportive and often unsafe educational environments.

There is a lack of research into the impact of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia on educational outcomes. Educational institutional data collection does not include diversity of genders and sexualities, making Rainbow young people are invisible.

Systemic homophobia, biphobia and transphobia within education environments creates inconsistency around supporting Rainbow young people, increases bullying and risk of suicide amongst Rainbow young people and increases the pressure on the volunteers as they become the only source of support for Rainbow young people who are at schools.

Strategic Planning Challenges for the Rainbow Support Sector

The need for targeting funding was identified by the Rainbow support sector, including funding small organisations or groups in rural areas. Funding needs to be directed to things that the Rainbow support sector needs and wants as a whole and it needs to be put into the most vulnerable groups, including culturally specific and other minorities within the Rainbow support sector.

Respondents also felt that national, government, regional and organisational strategic planning must include Rainbow voices. This included identifying needs for the Rainbow support sector to have opportunities to come together at national and regional levels to increase the effectiveness of advice and consultation. Respondents across all three forums identified that too often when the Rainbow sector is 'consulted' by mainstream organisations, follow-up of this consultation and impact of the Rainbow voices on strategic development is unclear.

Responding to the needs of Rainbow young people means responding to every aspect of who people are including ethnic identity, rural/urban location, disability, age, as well as sexuality and gender identity. Support services of all types do not currently take into account the complexity of people's lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS