

Research report

Attitudes to transgender people

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Executive summary

Data from the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey in 2019 suggests that public attitudes to transgender people are broadly positive. The public sees transphobia as wrong and is more likely to have positive than negative feelings about transgender people. However, this isn't the whole story; attitudes to transgender people are more nuanced in relation to specific situations and vary according to demographic characteristics.

There were some specific situations where fewer respondents held positive views about transgender people. In these situations, respondents who expressed feelings that were not positive were divided fairly evenly – between those who were uncertain and those who expressed definite negative views. Little more than half of respondents agreed that transgender people should be able to change the sex on their birth certificate (53%, compared with 24% who did not agree). There was also ambivalence about whether a transgender woman should be able to access refuges for women who were victims of domestic violence; 51% were comfortable with this, compared with 24% who were not comfortable.

Where data from previous years is available, positive attitudes to transgender people either remained consistent, or slightly declined. Notably, attitudes to transgender women accessing refuges for women experiencing domestic violence, and transgender people's use of public toilets, were more negative compared with 2016, although the majority were still comfortable with both.

There were high levels of approval towards the employment of suitably qualified transgender people as police officers (84%) and primary school teachers (75%).

There were some marked differences in attitudes to transgender people across a range of demographic characteristics; women, younger people and those with higher educational qualifications were most likely to be positive in their views.

One in six respondents identified themselves as prejudiced towards transgender people. They held distinctive views about the nature of transition and the place of transgender people in the wider community. For example, while 15% of the population overall agreed with the statement that transgender people go through the process of transition because of 'a very superficial and temporary need', this increased to 49% of respondents who described themselves as prejudiced.

The findings suggest that sympathy with transgender people does not necessarily equate to full acceptance of their gender identity.

The findings of this report come from the 2019 BSA survey. Carried out by the National Centre for Social Research annually since 1983, the BSA survey is an authoritative source of data on the views of the British public. It uses a random probability sampling methodology to yield a representative sample of adults aged 18 and over living in private households in Britain. In 2019, 3,224 adults were interviewed face-to-face, and 2,636 of them additionally answered questions in a self-completion format.

Introduction

Despite some work that highlights the issues faced by the transgender community by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), and the work of organisations who represent the transgender community, there is still little known about attitudes to transgender people and how they have changed. At the same time, the public profile of transgender people and their rights has risen exponentially, particularly in the context of potential reform of the Gender Recognition Act. Public attitudes are of critical importance to the day-to-day experience of transgender people, especially because they shape public policy and the way that our institutions interact with the transgender community.

In 2019, the EHRC commissioned a number of questions in NatCen's British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey asking about the British public's attitudes towards transgender people. These questions were originally developed on behalf of the Government Equalities Office for inclusion in the 2016 BSA survey. The same wording of the questions has been used in subsequent years, including 2019, to ensure comparability over time.

The questions were introduced to survey respondents with this definition, developed for the EHRC in 2011.¹

People who are transgender have gone through all or part of a process (including thoughts or actions) to change the sex they were described as at birth to the gender they identify with, or intend to. This might include by changing their name, wearing different clothes, taking hormones or having gender reassignment surgery.

This report presents an analysis of the findings. A list of the questions referred to in this report are included in the appendix.

¹ Balarajan, M., Gray, M., & Mitchell, M. (2011), [Monitoring equality: Developing a gender identity question](#). London: National Centre for Social Research. [Accessed 16 July 2020].

Carried out annually since 1983,² the BSA survey is an authoritative source of data on the views of the British public. It uses a random probability sampling methodology to yield a representative sample of adults aged 18+ living in private households in Britain. Most questions are asked by an interviewer face-to-face in the form of a Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI), while a smaller number are answered by respondents in a self-completion booklet. The questions commissioned by EHRC were included in both sections of the survey.

NatCen collected data between July and October 2019 in England, Wales and Scotland, with a response rate of 44.3%.³ The achieved sample for the face-to-face questionnaire was 3,224, and the achieved sample for the self-completion booklet was 2,636.⁴ The data has been weighted to account for unequal selection probabilities and non-response bias, and calibrated to match the population profile on the basis of age, sex and region. All differences described in the text (between different groups of people or survey waves) are statistically significant at the 95% level or above, unless otherwise stated.

² Apart from in 1988 and 1992 when its core funding was used to fund the British Election Study series.

³ This is the lower limit of the response rate, which is calculated as a range from a lower limit where all unknown eligibility cases (e.g. address inaccessible, or unknown whether address is residential) are assumed to be eligible and therefore included in the unproductive outcomes, to an upper limit where all these cases are assumed to be ineligible and therefore excluded for the response calculation. The upper limit of the response rate for BSA 2019 was 44.8%.

⁴ Respondents were randomly allocated one of four versions of the questionnaire and self-completion booklet. Questions commissioned by EHRC were included in all four versions.

Prejudice towards transgender people

Participants were asked whether they thought prejudice towards transgender people was wrong (general prejudice) and also if they would describe themselves as very, a little, or not at all prejudiced towards transgender people (self-reported prejudice). Overall, the public feels strongly that prejudice directed towards transgender people is wrong and that it is unacceptable to hold such views themselves.

About three in four (76%) respondents said that prejudice against transgender people was always or mostly wrong. A further 17% thought it was sometimes wrong while 5% said it was rarely or never wrong.

These patterns are broadly consistent with self-reported prejudice as 82% of people said they were not prejudiced towards transgender people at all. About one in seven (14%) reported that they were a little prejudiced, 2% said they were very prejudiced and a further 2% did not know.

Attitudes over time

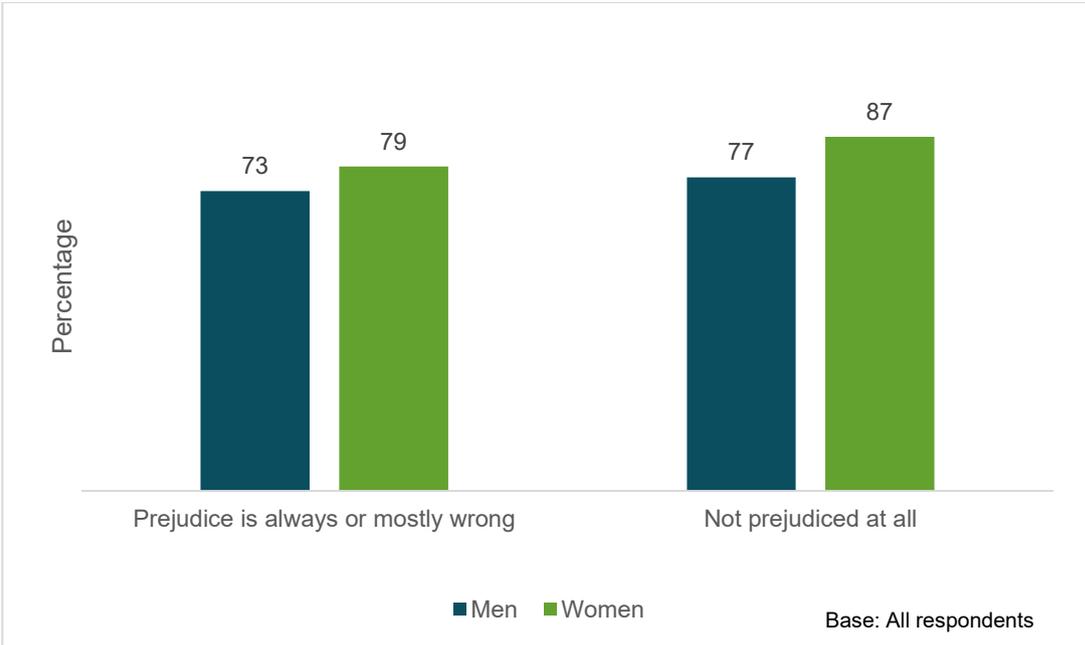
Attitudes towards transgender people have remained broadly stable over time. In 2017, 76% of people said that prejudice against transgender people was always or mostly wrong, compared to 76% in 2019. Similarly, the proportion of respondents who said they were not personally prejudiced against transgender people has remained at similar levels, between 82% and 84% since 2016.

Prejudice by demographic characteristics

Views about transgender people varied by respondents' sex, age, education and occupational class.

Women were significantly more likely than men both to say that prejudice was wrong and to describe themselves as not prejudiced at all.

Figure 1: General and self-reported prejudice against transgender people by sex

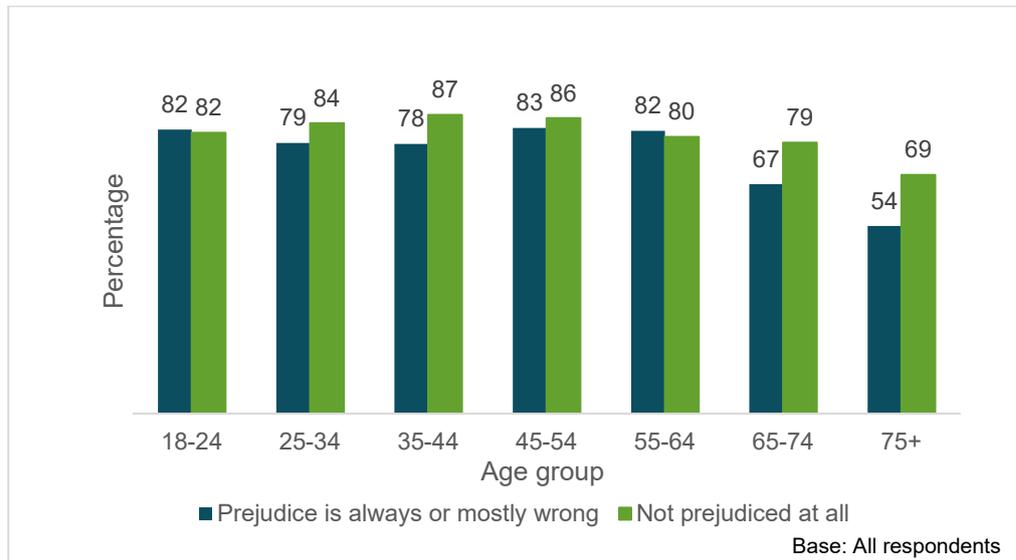


Attitudes to transgender people

There were also differences in attitudes across age groups. While the majority of adults in every age group agreed that prejudice was wrong and said they were not prejudiced at all, these views were less pronounced among respondents aged 65 and over.

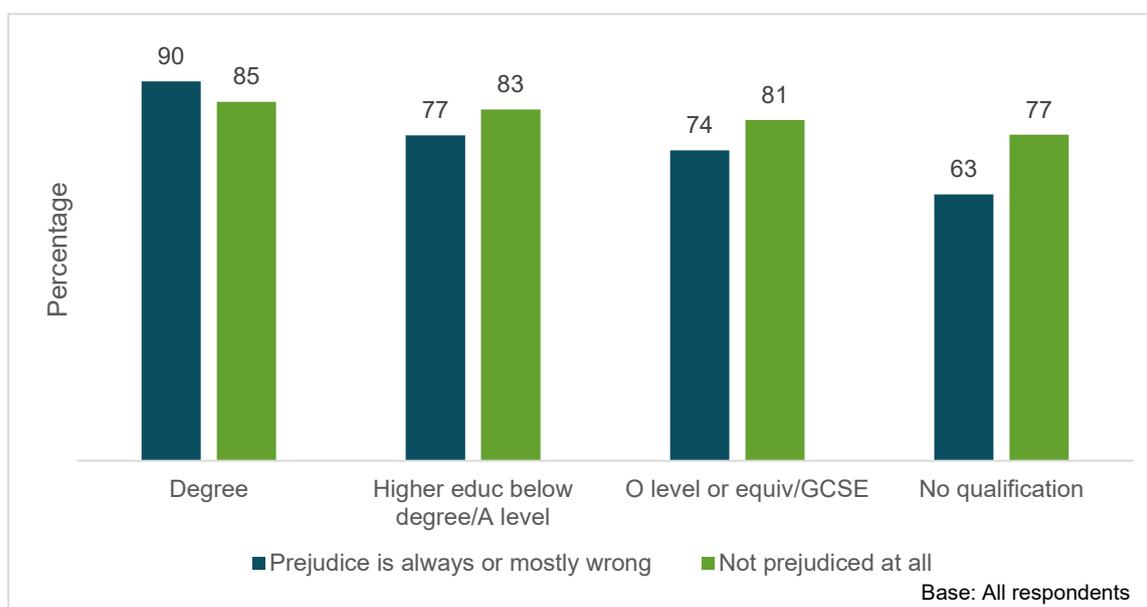
There was a distinct trend among older respondents; they were more likely to report themselves as not at all prejudiced, than they were to feel that prejudice in general was wrong. About four in five (79%) people aged 65 to 74 described themselves as not being prejudiced at all, yet only 67% of the same group said that prejudice against transgender people was wrong. Although this pattern was mirrored, to some extent, in younger age groups (25 to 54-year-olds), this trend was most pronounced among those aged 65 and older.

Figure 2: General and self-reported prejudice against transgender people by age



University graduates were most likely to feel that prejudice in general was wrong. This proportion declined with level of qualifications, from 90% of those with degrees to 63% of those with no educational qualifications. There was a similar but less pronounced difference in whether people described themselves prejudiced, with 85% of those with degrees saying that they were not at all prejudiced, declining to 77% of those with no qualifications.⁵

Figure 3: General and self-reported prejudice against transgender people by highest educational qualification



There was a similar difference according to class in attitudes to prejudice in general. People in managerial and professional occupations (85%) were more likely to think that prejudice was wrong than respondents from other social classes (between 63% and 77%). However, differences in self-reported prejudice were not observed across social class.

Across regions, the proportions of respondents who thought that prejudice against transgender people was always or mostly wrong did not vary significantly. The proportions of respondents who reported that they were not at

⁵ Graduates differed from other groups, being more likely to disapprove of prejudice in general than to report themselves as not at all prejudiced.

all prejudiced differed more, from 73% in the East Midlands in England to 87% in the South East of England.⁶

There were no significant differences in generalised or self-reported prejudice by political affiliation.⁷

⁶ Comparisons here and elsewhere between regions within Great Britain should be treated with caution both because of relatively small base sizes and also because the pattern of responses may reflect different demographic profiles of each region.

⁷ Political affiliation was measured by aggregating responses to five questions about attitudes to the balance of income and influence in society. Scores have been divided into thirds (tertiles), representing left, centre and right. These are relative descriptions.

Personal feelings about transgender people

How does the public feel about transgender people?

Respondents were asked to choose from a list of words to describe their feelings about transgender people. They could choose as many as they liked.

One-third (31%) said that they could not choose from the words on offer. Respondents who did choose were more likely to have positive than negative feelings about transgender people. Just under half of all respondents (45%) said that they felt 'respect', and 21% said that they felt 'admiration'. Those who had negative feelings were most likely to say they felt 'pity' (16%). Relatively few said they felt 'disgust' (3%), 'fear' (2%) or 'resentment' (1%). Only two people in the sample said they felt 'envy'.

Although there was variation across regions and demographic groups, the pattern remained similar.

Variation by geography

There were differences between regions.⁸ Just over half of Welsh respondents (56%) reported that they respected transgender people, as did almost half of people in the northern and southern regions of England (48% or 49%). Respondents in the North East of England and in Wales were also more likely to feel admiration for transgender people than people in other parts of Britain (30% and 28%, compared with 24% or less elsewhere). Positive feelings were lowest among respondents in West Midlands, where 37% said they felt respect and 14% admiration. Part of this difference was accounted for because people in the

⁸ But, as noted above, comparisons between regions within Great Britain should be treated with caution both because of relatively small base sizes and also because the pattern of responses may reflect different demographic profiles of each region.

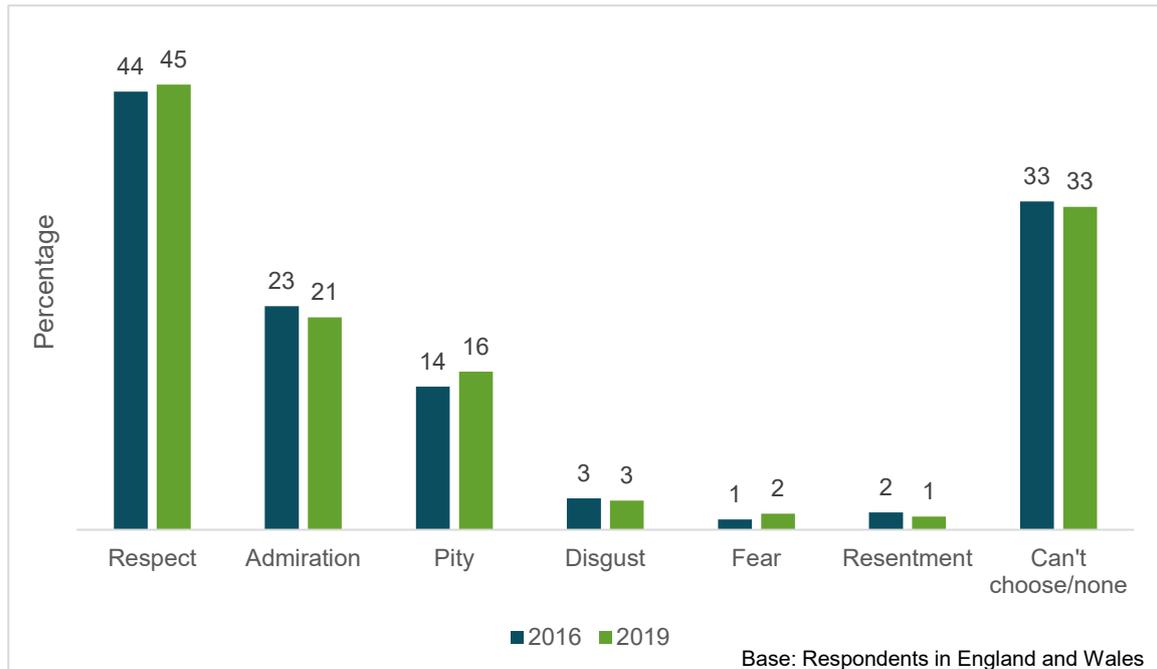
West Midlands were most likely to indicate that they could not choose (41%). This proportion was lowest in Wales (21%).

There was considerable variation in the proportions who said that they felt pity for transgender people, from 11% in the North West of England to 23% in Scotland.

Feelings over time

In 2016, respondents were asked to describe their feelings about transgender people in England and Wales only. Overall, there was no significant change between 2016 and 2019.

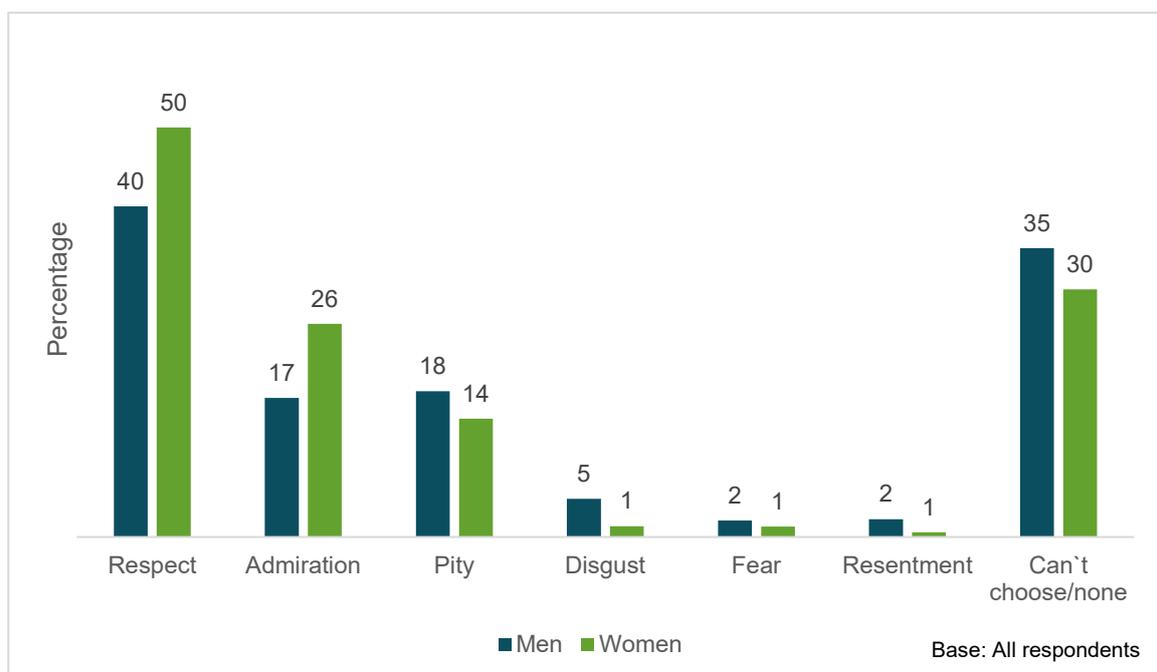
Figure 4: Feelings towards transgender people, 2016 and 2019



Feelings towards transgender people by demographic characteristics

There were differences in views across demographic groups. Women were more likely than men to have positive feelings about transgender people. Half of the women who responded said that they felt respect, compared with two in five men (50% and 40% respectively). Women were also more likely than men to feel admiration (26% and 17%). Men were more likely to say that they felt pity (18%) or disgust (5%), compared with women (14% and 1% respectively). Men were also more likely than women to not choose any of the words offered.

Figure 5: Feelings towards transgender people by sex



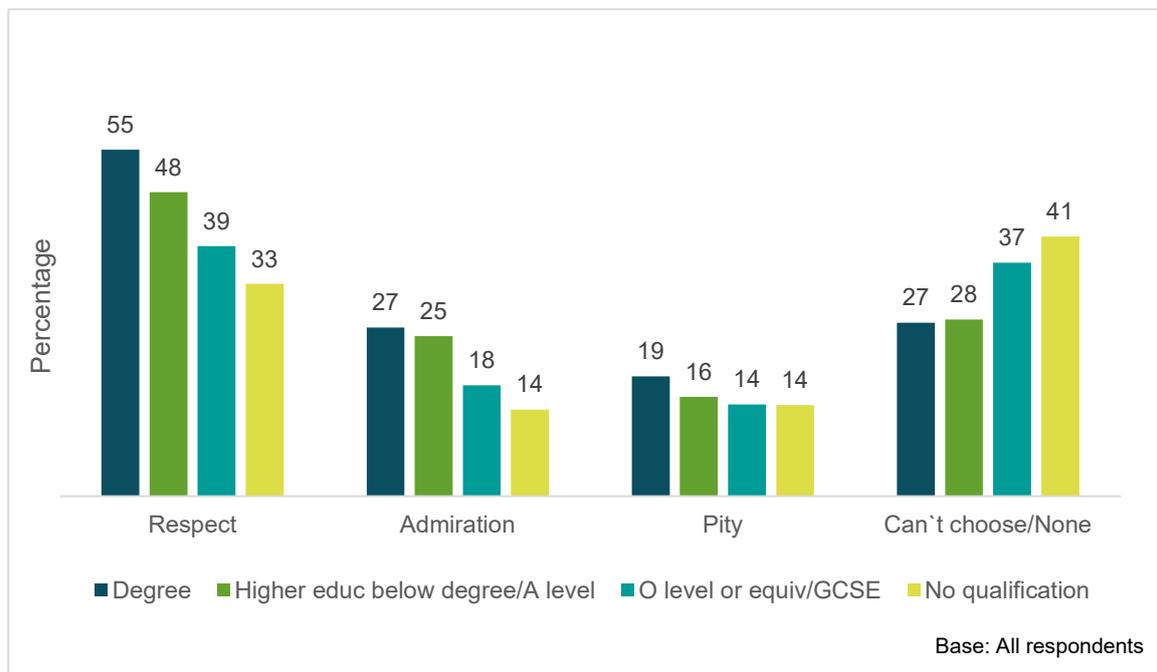
How respondents felt about transgender people varied with age. The proportion of people who had positive feelings declined broadly with age. For example, 54% of the 18-24 age group felt respect and 30% felt admiration. The corresponding proportions aged 75 and over who felt the same way were 35% and 6% respectively.

A greater number of older people said they felt pity for transgender people compared with younger adults (22% of those aged 65 and over, compared with between 11% and 16% in younger age groups). However, those aged 18-24 were most likely to feel disgust (6%, compared with 1-4% of older adults).

University graduates were most likely to feel respect (55%), admiration (27%) or pity (19%). In general, the proportions of people who felt these things were lower among those with educational qualifications below degree level and lowest amongst those with no qualifications (33%, 14% and 14% respectively).

Those with no qualifications or with GCSEs, O Levels or similar qualifications were more likely than those with higher qualifications to say that they couldn't choose words that described their feelings towards transgender people (36-38%, compared with 27-28%).

Figure 6: Feelings towards transgender people by highest educational qualifications



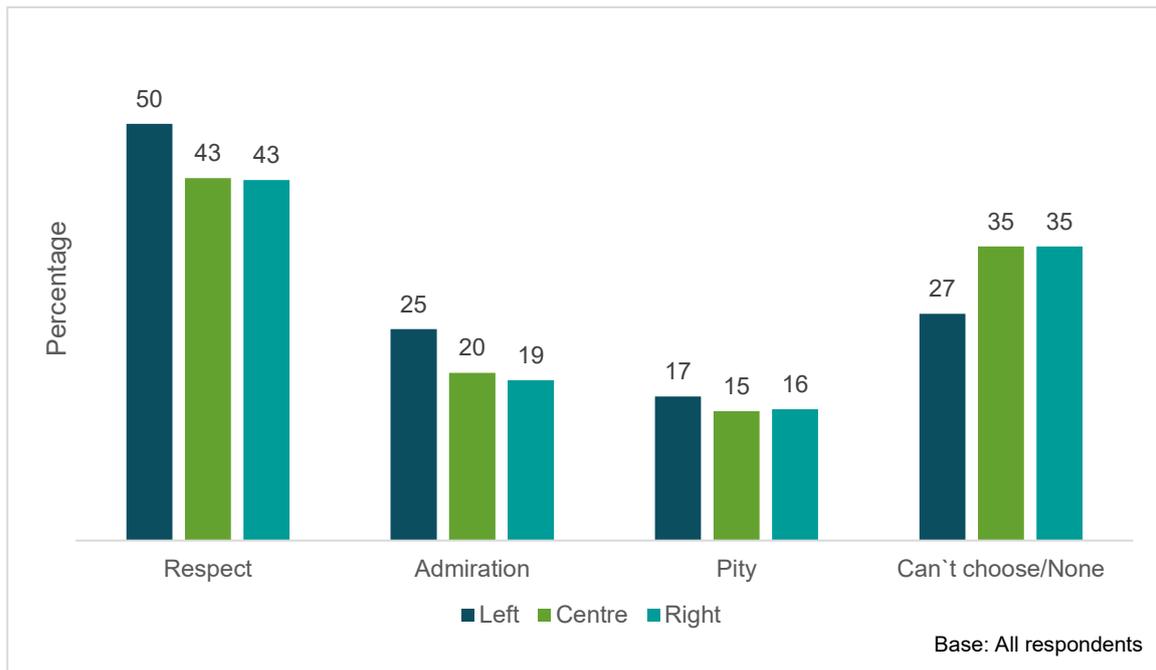
Similarly, respondents from higher social class groups were more likely to say that they felt respect for transgender people, compared with those from lower social class groups (from 51% of those in managerial occupations declining to 35% of those in lower supervisory and technical occupations). A similar trend was recorded for those who reported feelings of admiration (24% to 16% respectively).

Two in five from the lower occupational classes did not choose an option (39%).

Feelings towards transgender people by political affiliation

Half of respondents on the left of the political spectrum felt respect, 50% compared with 43% of those in the centre or on the right. Those on the left were also more likely to say that they felt admiration rather than those in the centre or on the right (25%, 20% and 19% respectively). Among those who felt pity, there were no significant differences based on political affiliation.

Figure 7: Feelings towards transgender people by political affiliation



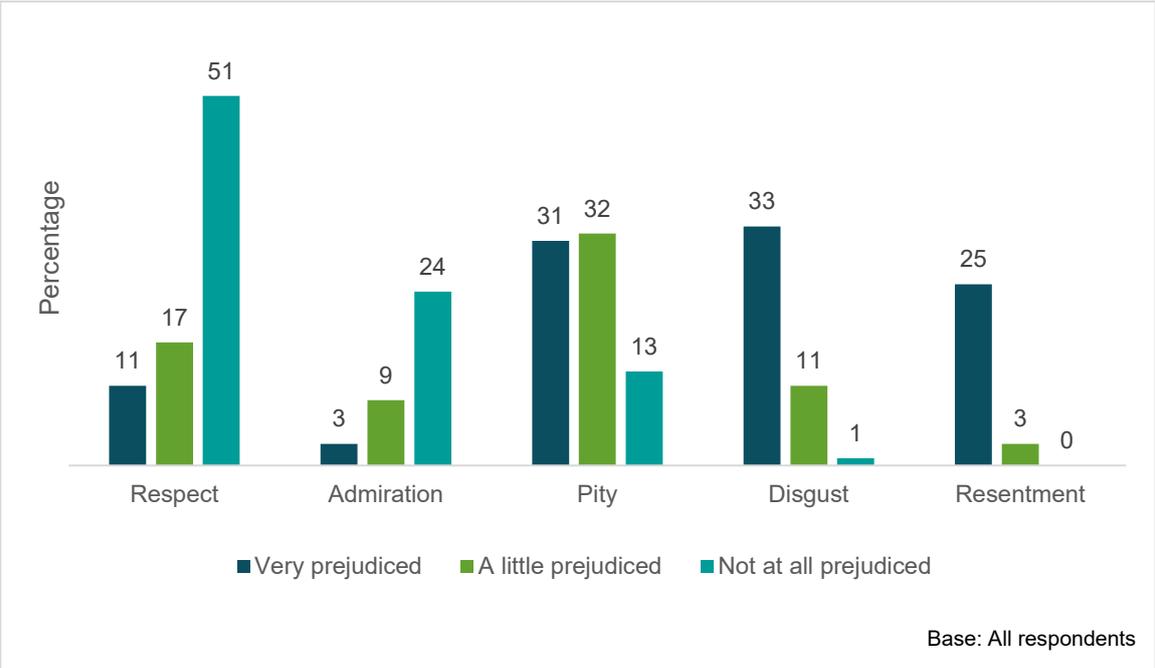
Prejudice and feelings towards transgender people

Unsurprisingly, attitudes were significantly affected by how prejudiced people said they were. Those who described themselves as 'very' or 'a little' prejudiced against transgender people were much more likely to feel pity than those who said that they were not at all prejudiced (31% and 32%, compared with 13%). Similarly, one-third of respondents who said that they were very prejudiced answered that they felt disgust (33%) and one-quarter said that they felt resentment (25%).

Half of the respondents who identified as not at all prejudiced said that they felt respect for transgender people and one-quarter felt admiration (51% and 24% respectively), compared with 11% and 3% of those who identified as very prejudiced. None of the people who identified as not prejudiced said that they felt resentment.

These results indicate that the majority of the public think of themselves as not prejudiced towards transgender people, and feel broadly positive towards transgender people. The minority (16%), who describe themselves as having some prejudice, reflect this in their specific feelings about transgender people.

Figure 8: Feelings towards transgender people by levels of self-reported prejudice



Transgender identity

Attitudes to the process of transitioning and transgender people's right to change the sex on their birth certificate

Three in five (61%) of the total population disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that transgender people go through the process of transition because of 'a very superficial and temporary need'. More than one-fifth (22%) said that they neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Just 15% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

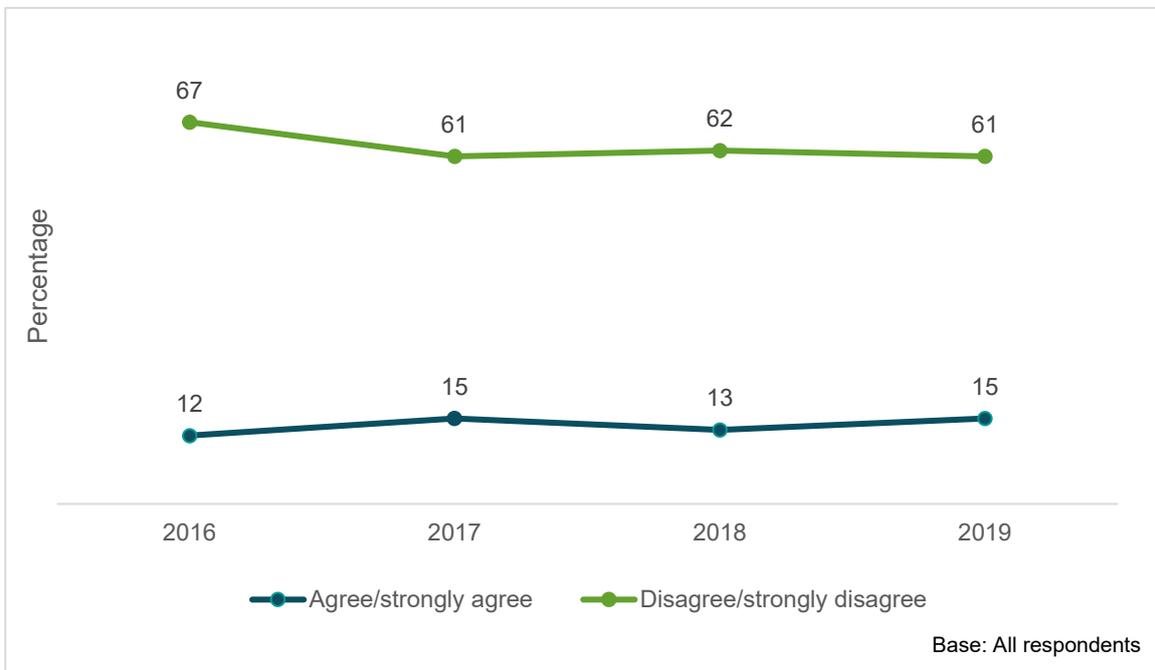
More than half of respondents (53%) said that they agreed or strongly agreed that transgender people should be able to have the sex on their birth certificate changed if they wanted to, compared with 24% who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this, and 21% who neither agreed nor disagreed.

While the public as a whole feels prejudice against transgender people is wrong and describe themselves as not prejudiced, we can see that there is less support for this substantial change to the legal entitlements of transgender people.

Attitudes over time

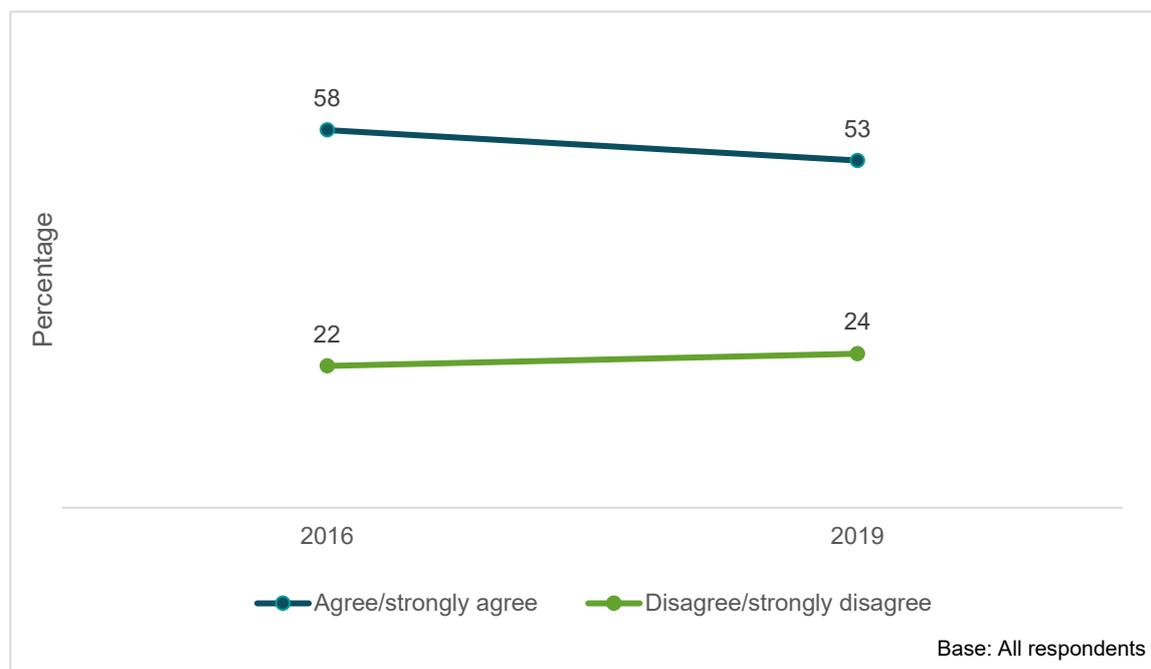
Views about whether transgender people’s motivations to transition were ‘a very superficial and temporary need’ remained relatively constant since 2016. In 2016, 12% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement compared with 15% in 2019. The proportion of respondents who disagreed with this statement declined slightly from 2016 to 2017 and remained constant since 2017. In 2016, 67% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement compared with 61% in 2019.

Figure 9: Views about whether transition is motivated by ‘a very superficial and temporary need’, 2016-2019



The proportion of respondents who agreed that transgender people should be able to change their sex on their birth certificate declined slightly from 2016 to 2019 (58% to 53%), with a corresponding increase in the proportion who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement (22% in 2016 to 24% in 2019).

Figure 10: Views about whether transgender people should be able to change their sex on their birth certificate, 2016-2019



Variation by demographic characteristics

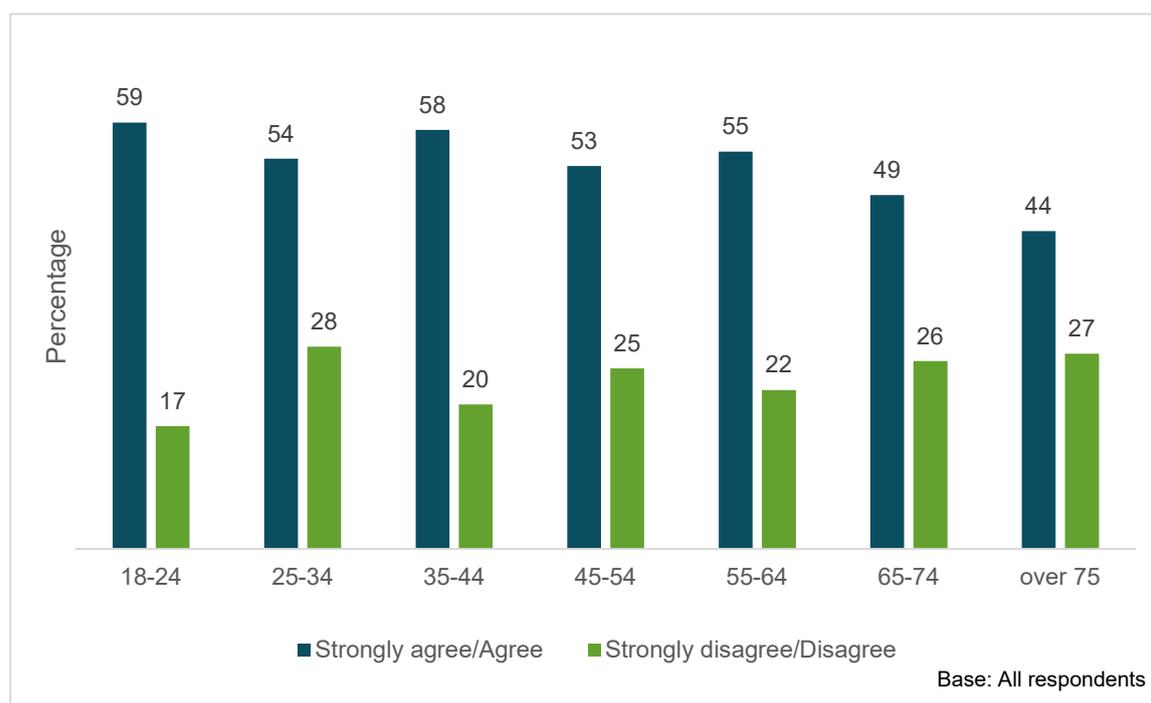
These attitudes towards transgender people varied by age, sex, education and occupational class.

The proportion of people who agreed or strongly agreed that the motivations to transition were 'a very superficial and temporary need' increased with age. While around 12% of respondents aged under 45 agreed, the proportion increased with age to 24% of respondents aged over 75.

Men were also more likely to agree with the statement compared with women (18% to 12% respectively).

The proportions of respondents who agreed that transgender people should be able to change their sex on their birth certificate varied with age. Between 53% and 59% of respondents aged under 65 agreed with this, with no clear pattern by age. Those aged 65 and over were less likely to agree: 49% of those aged 65-74 and 44% of those aged 75 and over. Women were more likely to agree or strongly agree compared with men (55% to 51% respectively).

Figure 11: Attitudes towards whether transgender people should be able to change their sex on their birth certificate by age

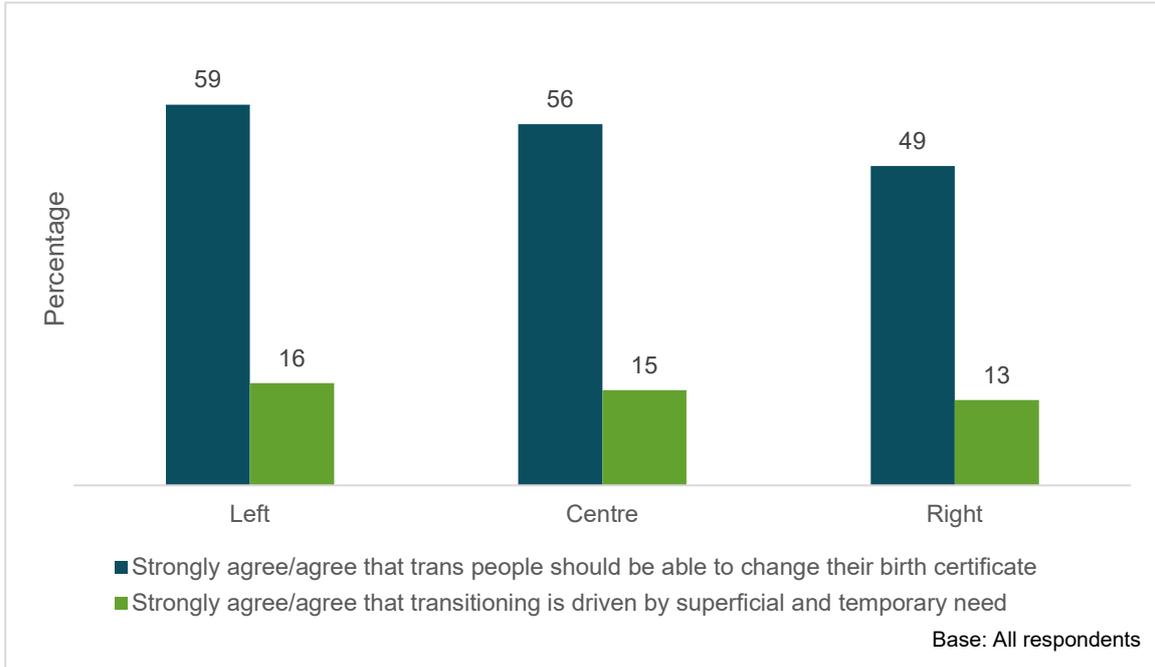


The proportions of respondents who agreed that the process of transitioning was driven by a 'superficial and a temporary need' increased from 8% of those with a degree to 23% of those with no educational qualifications. In addition, the proportion who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement increased from 14% of university graduates to 35% of those with no qualifications. Differences between educational groups in the proportions who agreed that a transgender person should be able to change the sex on their birth certificate were of borderline statistical significance.

There was a similar pattern across occupational classes: those in the professional and managerial classes were least likely to say that they thought transitioning was driven by a 'very superficial and temporary need'. Differences in the proportions who agreed that transgender people should be able to change their sex on their birth certificate varied between occupational groups with no clear pattern.

Differences in views about transgender people changing the sex on their birth certificate varied with political affiliation. Those on the left of the political spectrum were more likely to agree that transgender people should be able to do this, compared with less than half of those on the right (59% and 49% respectively). There was no such difference in opinions about whether transitioning was driven by a 'superficial and a temporary need'.

Figure 12: Attitudes towards transitioning by political affiliation

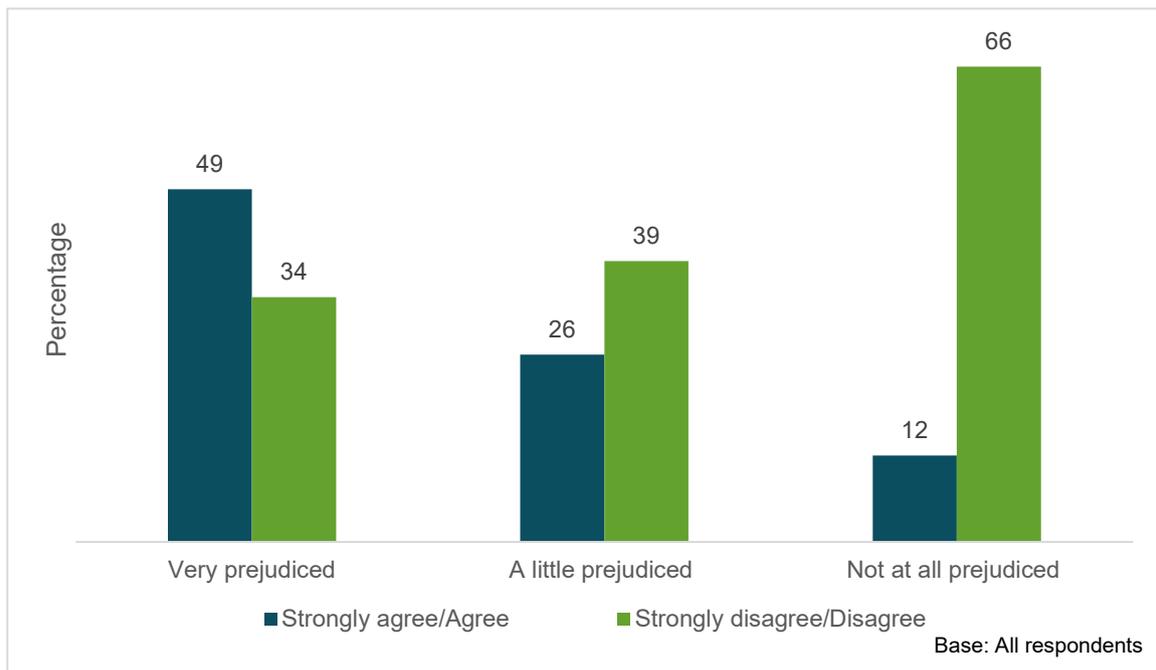


Prejudice and views about the motivations to transition and changing sex on a birth certificate

Views about the process of transitioning and the right to change sex on a birth certificate were affected by how prejudiced respondents were towards transgender people. Almost half of those who self-identified as ‘very prejudiced’ agreed that the motivations to transition are ‘superficial and a temporary need’ (49%) compared with 12% of those who said they were not prejudiced.

Only 11% of the British public who self-identify as very prejudiced agreed that transgender people should be able to change their sex on their birth certificate. The proportion increased to 60% among those who said that they were not prejudiced. As with other questions, here we can see a distinctive set of attitudes held by the minority of the population who describe themselves as prejudiced towards transgender people.

Figure 13: Self-reported prejudice and belief that the process of transitioning is driven by ‘a very superficial and temporary need’



Transgender people in the public sphere

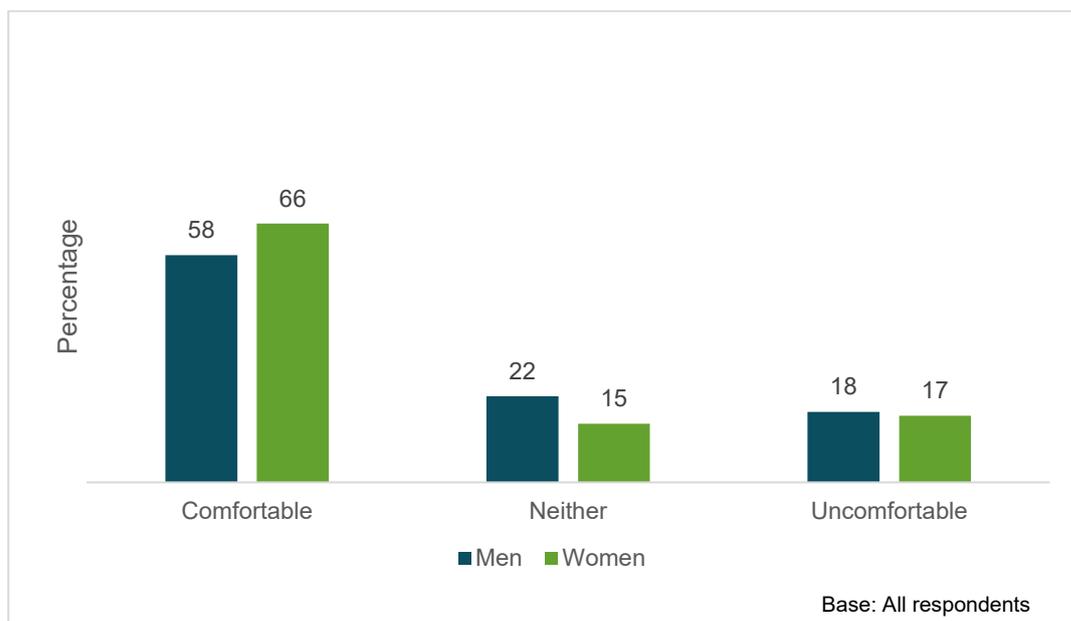
Attitudes to transgender people in gender-specific situations

Public toilets

Men and women were asked separately about how comfortable or uncomfortable they would be with a transgender person using the same public toilets as them. Most women (66%) said they would be very or quite comfortable with this while 17% said they would be very or quite uncomfortable. A lower proportion of men (58%) said they would be very or quite comfortable with a transgender man using men's public toilets, and 18% of men said they would feel very or quite uncomfortable.

Men were more likely to say that they were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable (22%) than were women (15%).

Figure 13: Attitudes to transgender men and women using public toilets corresponding to their gender identity



Women's refuges

All respondents were asked how comfortable or uncomfortable they would feel about a transgender woman using a refuge for women experiencing domestic violence. Just over half (51%) said they would be quite comfortable or very comfortable with this. Just under a quarter (24%) said they would be quite uncomfortable or very uncomfortable, and 22% said they would be neither comfortable nor uncomfortable.

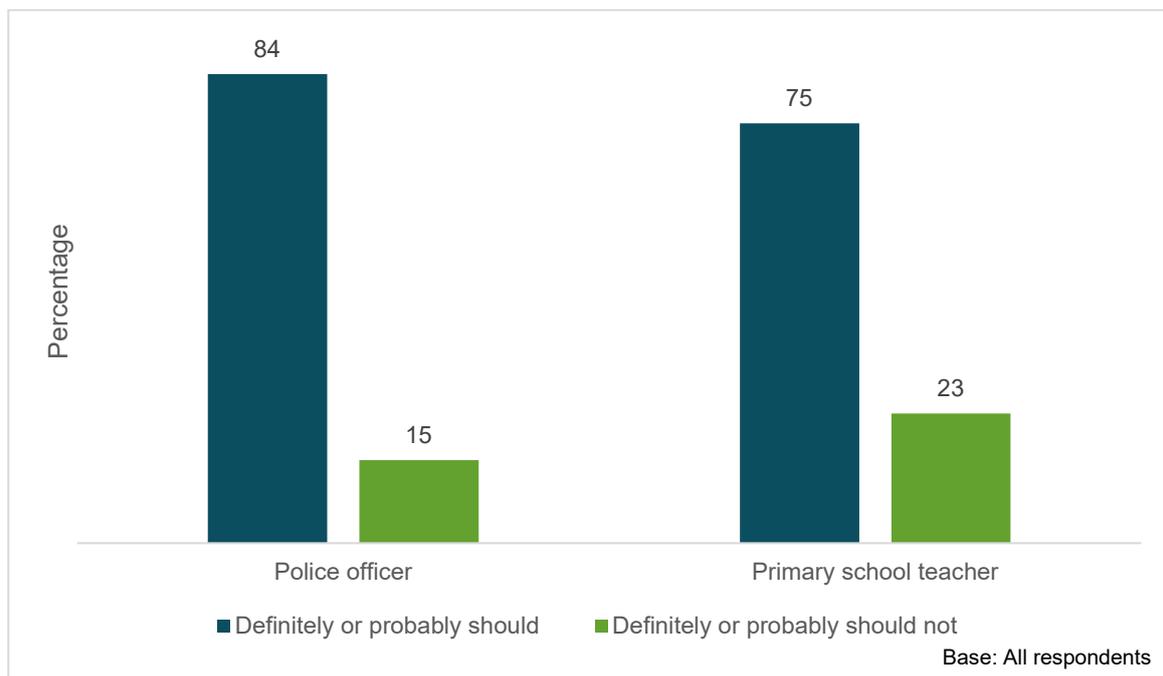
Women were slightly more likely to say they would feel uncomfortable about a transgender woman using a women's refuge (22%), than a women's public toilet (17%).

Transgender people and professional roles

Respondents were also asked whether they thought that transgender people should be employed as police officers or primary school teachers, which are examples of roles seen as dependent on public trust. Most people (84%) thought that transgender people definitely or probably should be employed as police officers.

A slightly smaller proportion (75%) thought that transgender people definitely or probably should be employed as primary school teachers. This finding suggests that for some people, positive attitudes to transgender people do not extend to seeing them as appropriate carers or role models for children.

Figure 14: Attitudes to whether transgender people should be employed in certain roles

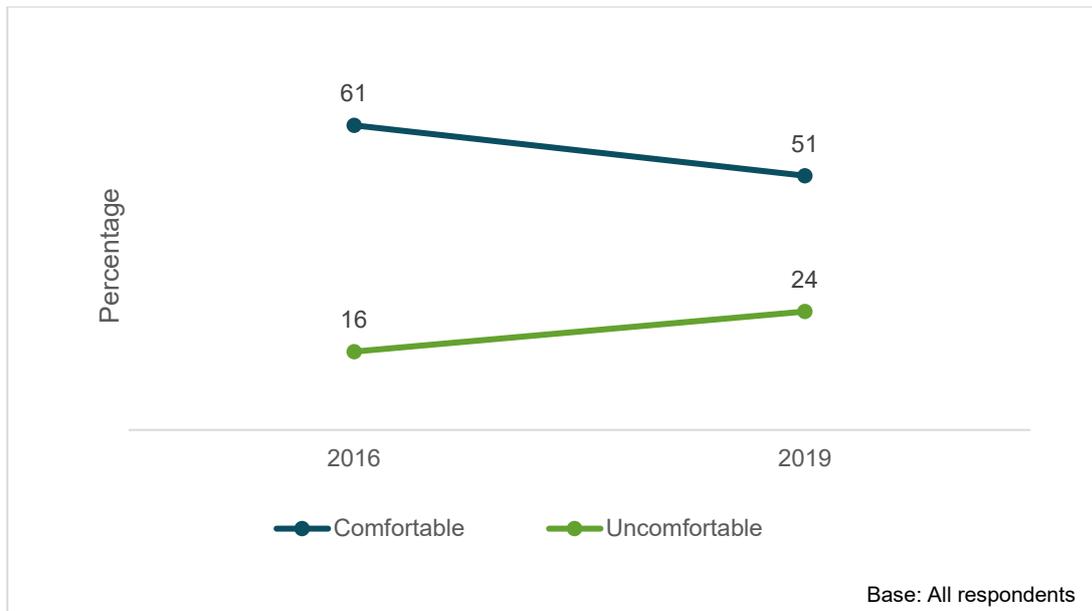


Changes over time

The questions about transgender people’s access to certain spaces were also asked in 2016. The proportion of women who reported themselves to be comfortable with a transgender woman using women’s public toilet decreased over this period from 72% to 66%. The proportion of men who said they would be comfortable with a transgender man using men’s toilets also fell from 64% to 58%, although this was outside the limits of statistical significance.

The proportions of respondents who felt comfortable with transgender women using refuges for women experiencing domestic violence fell over this period by 10 percentage points from 61% to 51%. There was a corresponding rise in the proportions who felt uncomfortable with this from 16% in 2016 to 24% in 2019.⁹

Figure 15: Attitudes to transgender women using a refuge for women experiencing domestic violence, 2016-2019



The proportions of the public who thought suitably qualified transgender people should be employed as police officers or primary school teachers remained at similar levels between 2016 and 2019.

⁹ Access to women’s refuges has been a focus of recent debate in the context of potential reforms to the Gender Recognition Act 2004 to simplify the process by which transgender people could change their legal sex.

Differences by region

There were differences in attitudes between regions.¹⁰ For example, the proportions of women who would feel comfortable with a transgender woman using women's public toilets varied from 54% of women in the West Midlands of England, to 75% of women in Wales. The proportion of men who would feel comfortable with a transgender man using men's public toilets was lowest in Scotland (44%), and highest in Wales and the South East of England (both 65%).

The proportions of respondents who would feel comfortable with a transgender woman using refuges for women experiencing domestic violence varied between 43% in the West Midlands and 64% in the North East in England.

There were also regional variations in the proportions who felt transgender people definitely or probably should be employed as police officers (from 77% in the West Midlands and Scotland to 89% in Wales) or primary school teachers (from 66% in the West Midlands to 82% in the North East and the South East of England).

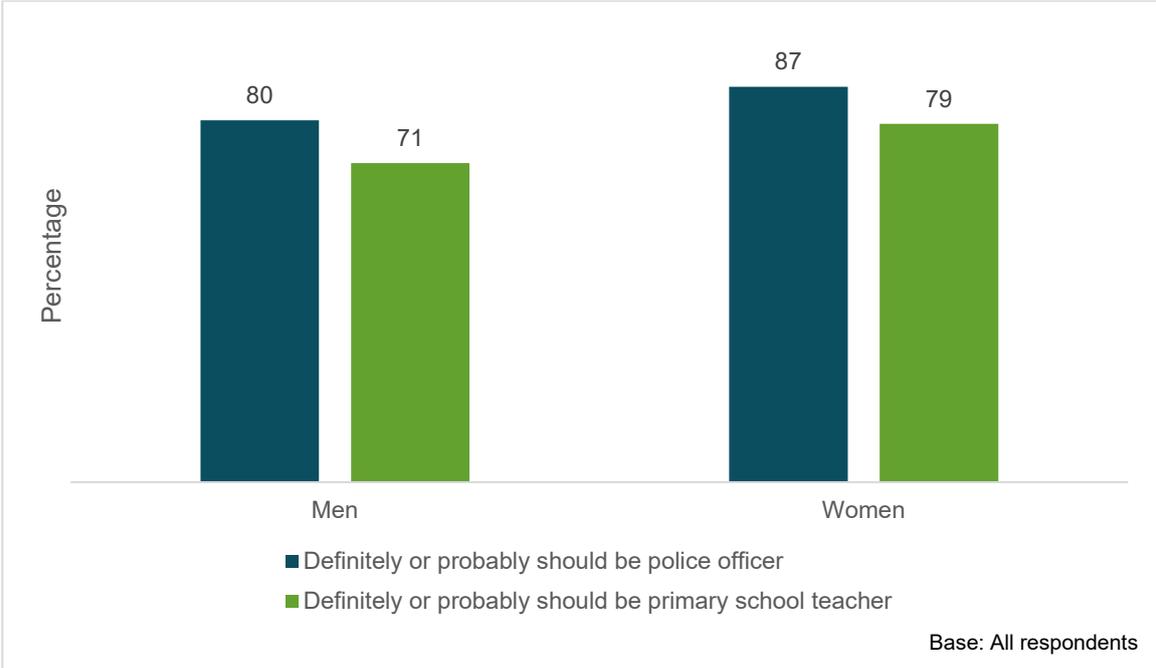
Differences by demographic characteristics

Women were more likely to feel comfortable about transgender women using women's toilets than men were about transgender men using men's toilets (66% and 58% respectively). The proportions who felt uncomfortable with each were similar. Women were also more likely than men to feel comfortable about transgender women using refuges for women experiencing domestic violence (55%, compared with 46%). There were similar proportions of men and women who reported to be uncomfortable about this.

¹⁰ But, as noted above, comparisons between regions within Great Britain should be treated with caution both because of relatively small base sizes and also because the pattern of responses may reflect different demographic profiles of each region.

Women were also more positive about transgender people being employed as police officers and primary school teachers. 87% of women felt that suitably qualified transgender people should be employed as police officers, compared with 80% of men. Similarly, 79% of women felt that transgender people should be employed as primary school teachers, compared with 71% of men.

Figure 16: Attitudes to whether transgender people should be employed in certain roles by sex

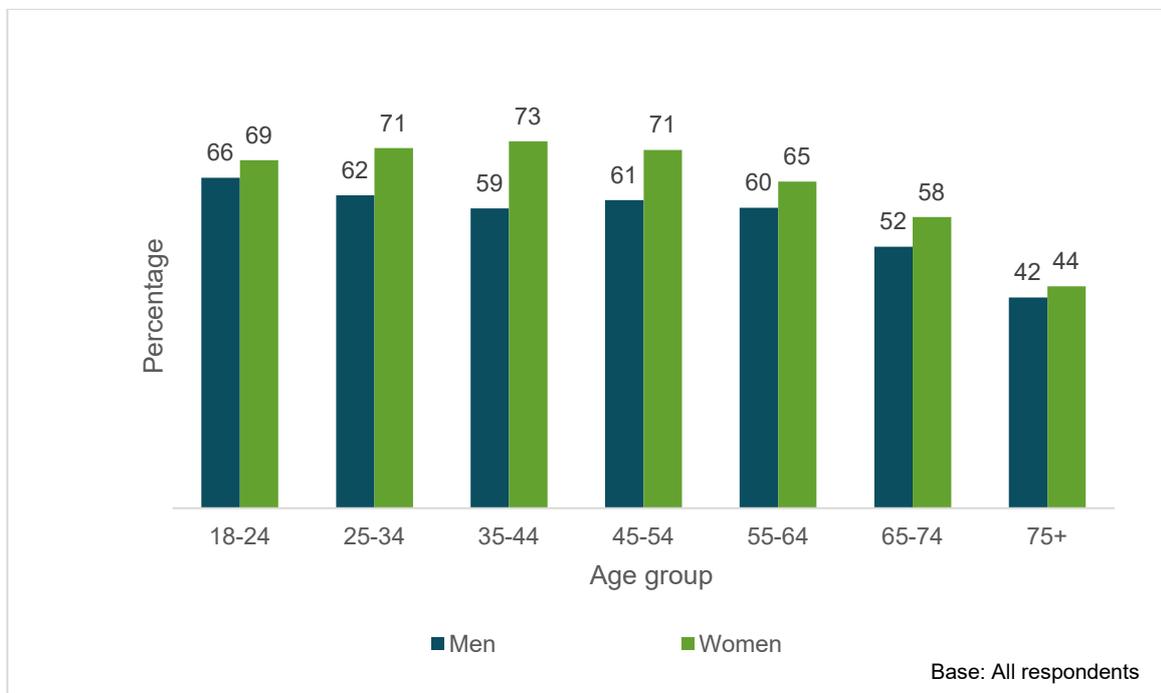


Attitudes to transgender people

Older women were much less likely to feel comfortable about transgender women using public toilets than younger and middle aged women. Around seven in ten women aged under 55 (between 69% and 73%) would be comfortable with this. This proportion fell among older age groups, and less than half of women aged 75 and over felt comfortable with this (44%).

There was a similar, but less pronounced, pattern in the proportions of men who feel comfortable with transgender men using men's toilets. Only 42% of men aged 75+ said they would feel comfortable, compared to 66% of men aged 18-24.

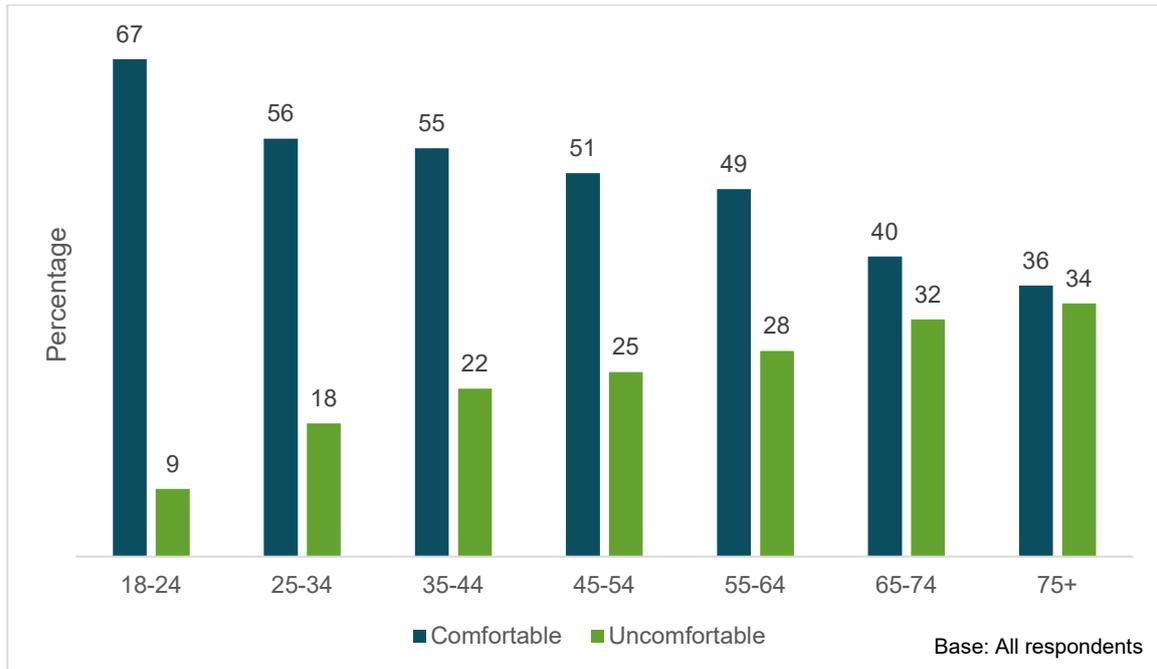
Figure 17: Proportions who would feel comfortable with transgender men and women using public toilets corresponding to their gender identity by age and sex



Attitudes to transgender people

Older people were also less comfortable with transgender women using refuges for women who have experienced domestic violence. The proportions who were comfortable declined with age from 67% of those aged under 25, to 36% of those aged 75 and over. The proportions of respondents who said that they were uncomfortable with this increased corresponding with age, from 9% to 34%.

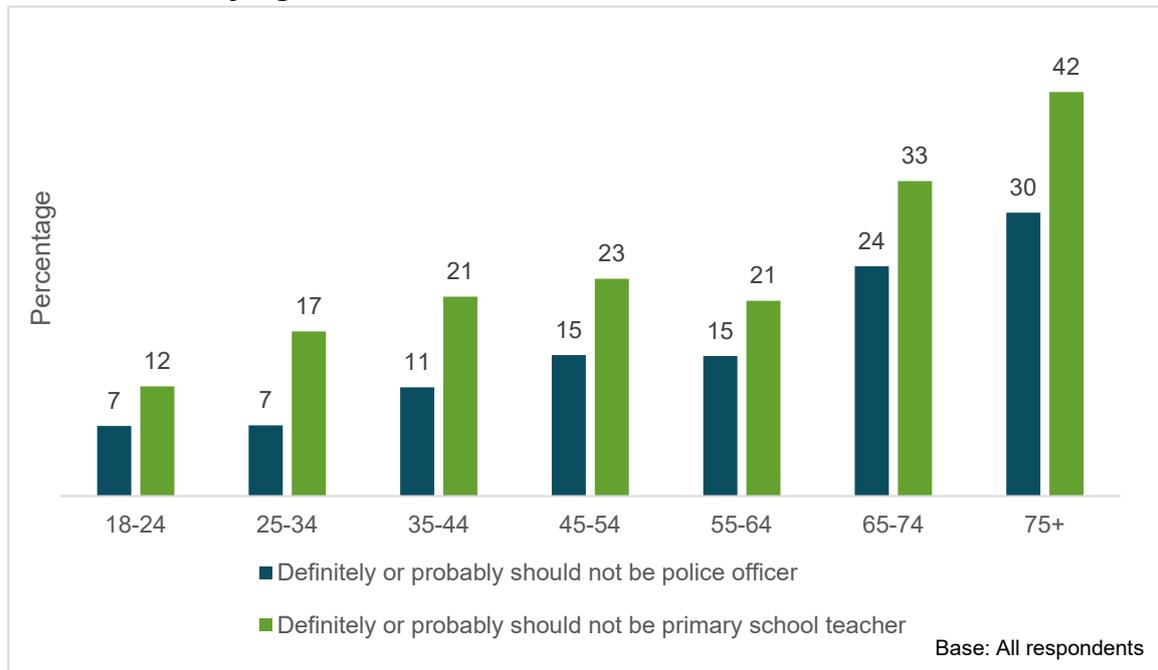
Figure 18: Attitudes to transgender women using refuges for women who have experienced domestic violence by age



Older people also tended to be less accepting of transgender people being employed in positions of responsibility. The proportions of respondents who thought that suitably qualified transgender people probably or definitely should not be employed as police officers increased broadly in line with age, from 7% of those aged 18-24 to 30% of those aged 75 and over.

A similar pattern was seen in attitudes to whether transgender people should be employed as primary school teachers. Around 42% of those aged over 75 said they did not think transgender people should be employed as primary school teachers, compared with 12% of those aged 18-24.

Figure 19: Attitudes to whether transgender people should be employed in certain roles by age

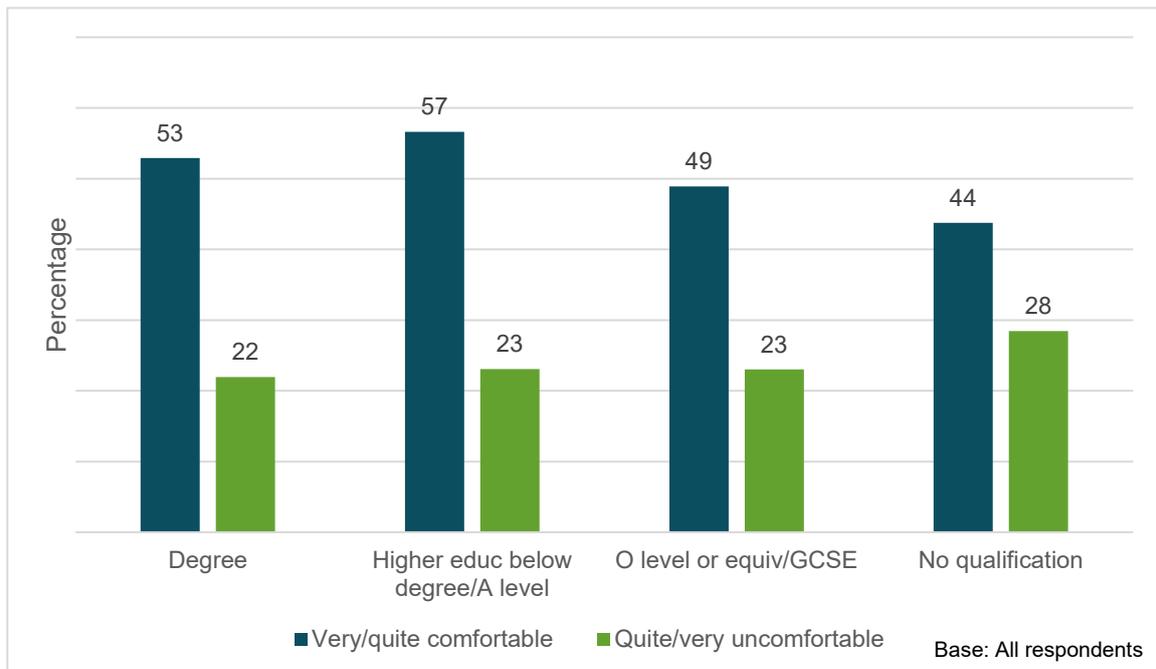


Attitudes to transgender people

Women with degrees (73%) or qualifications at A Level or above (70%) were more likely to feel comfortable with transgender women using women's toilets than were those with lower qualifications (64%) or no qualifications (51%). There was a similar pattern of difference in the proportions of men who felt comfortable about transgender men using men's toilets, from 69% of men with degrees to 46% of those with no qualifications.

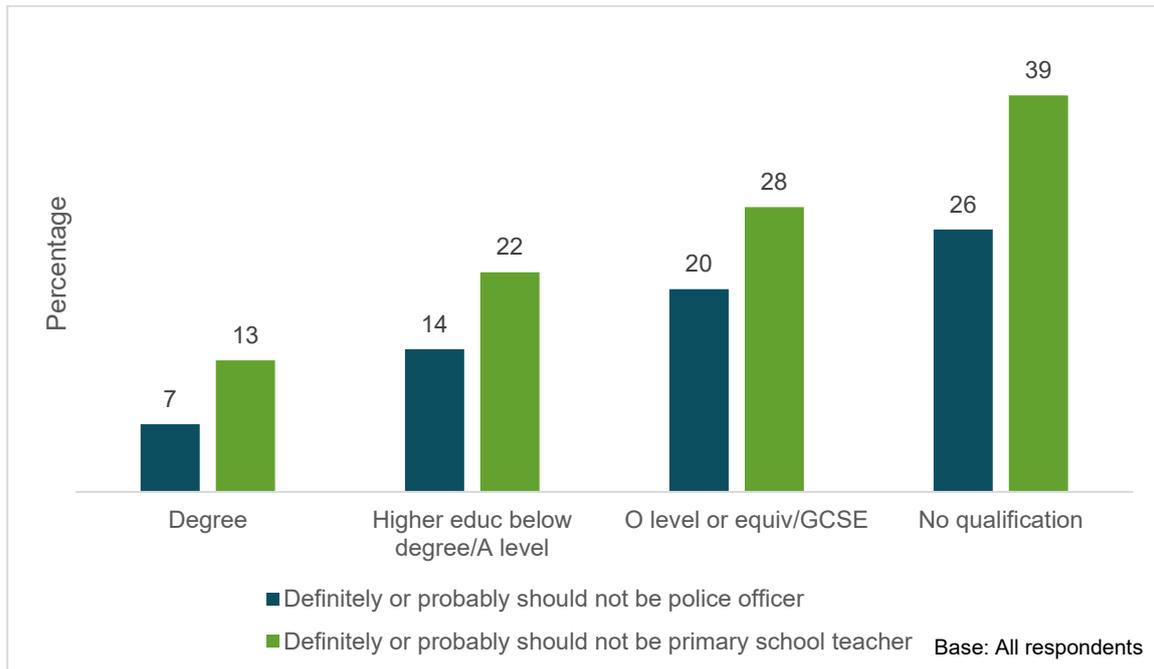
Attitudes to a transgender woman using a refuge for women experiencing domestic violence also varied with education. 53% of university graduates and 57% of people with A Levels or equivalent qualifications were comfortable about this, compared with 49% of those with lower qualifications and 44% of those with no qualifications.

Figure 20: Attitudes to transgender women using a refuge for women experiencing domestic violence by highest educational qualification



There were pronounced differences according to educational qualifications in attitudes to transgender people doing specific jobs. The proportions of respondents who thought that transgender people probably or definitely should not be employed as police officers increased from 7% of university graduates to 26% of those with no qualifications. There was a similar pattern in the proportions who believed that transgender people should not be employed as primary school teachers, from 13% to 39% respectively.

Figure 21: Attitudes to whether transgender people should be employed in certain roles by highest educational qualification



Differences in attitudes according to self-declared prejudice

Those who described themselves as ‘very prejudiced’ or ‘a little prejudiced’ against transgender people were, unsurprisingly, less likely to be comfortable with transgender people in certain situations and more likely to think that transgender people should not be employed in positions of responsibility.

More than two in five women (43%) who described themselves as a little prejudiced or very prejudiced against transgender people said they were uncomfortable with transgender women using women's toilets, compared to 13% of those who said they were not prejudiced towards transgender people at all. Similarly, 42% of men who described themselves as a little prejudiced or very prejudiced against transgender people said they were uncomfortable with transgender men using men's toilets, compared to just 11% of those who said they were not prejudiced towards transgender people at all.

There was a similar pattern in relation to transgender women using refuges for women experiencing domestic violence. Almost half (46%) of those with self-reported prejudice towards transgender people said they would be uncomfortable with this, compared to 19% of those who said they were not prejudiced at all.

Those who reported themselves as prejudiced against transgender people were more likely to think that transgender people should not be employed as police officers (37%), compared to those who said they were not prejudiced (9%). Similarly, over half (51%) of those who said they were prejudiced against transgender people thought that transgender people should not be primary school teachers, compared to 15% of those who thought they were not prejudiced.

Conclusions

The BSA data suggests that although attitudes vary across groups in society, public attitudes to transgender people are broadly positive. The public sees transphobia as wrong and is more likely to have positive rather than negative feelings about transgender people. However, attitudes are more nuanced in specific situations.

There were high levels of approval towards the employment of transgender people as police officers and primary school teachers. Approval levels were lower in relation to transgender people using public toilets corresponding to their gender identity, although the majority were still comfortable with this. Just half of respondents were comfortable with a transgender woman using a refuge for women who were victims of domestic violence. Little more than half thought that transgender people should be able to change the sex on their birth certificate.

Although a majority disagreed that transgender people went through the process of transition because of a 'very superficial and temporary need', this was lower than the proportion who thought that prejudice against transgender people was wrong.

When asked to choose words to describe how they felt about transgender people, respondents were most likely to select 'respect'. This was still the choice of fewer than half.

Where data from previous years is available, it suggests that positive attitudes to transgender people remained at similar levels. However, views about access to refuges for women who have experienced domestic violence and use of public toilets were more negative than they were in 2016.

Attitudes towards transgender people varied across different groups within the population, with women, younger people and those with higher educational qualifications most likely to be positive in their views. There were also regional differences, although these may be influenced by population characteristics. In general, people in Wales and the northern and southern regions of England were most likely to be positive about transgender people. Those in the English Midlands and Scotland, less so.

Finally, one in six of the public identify as prejudiced towards transgender people and hold distinctive views about the nature of transition and the place of transgender people in the wider community.

Appendix: BSA 2019 questions for the EHRC

CAPI (interview) questions

- Q419** **ASK ALL (ALL VERSIONS)**
 [TGIntro]
 READ OUT:
 The next set of questions is about people who are transgender.
 People who are transgender have gone through all or part of a
 process (including thoughts or actions) to change the sex they were
 described as at birth to the gender they identify with, or intend to.
 This might include by changing their name, wearing
 different clothes, taking hormones or having gender reassignment
 surgery.
1 Press 1 and <Enter> to continue.
- Q420** **ASK ALL (ALL VERSIONS)**
 [Tranneed]
 CARD F1
 Thinking about the reasons why transgender people have gone
 through this process, please tell me whether you agree or disagree
 with the following statement... READ OUT...
 Most people who are transgender have gone through this process
 because of a very superficial and temporary need?
1 Strongly agree
2 Agree
3 Neither agree nor disagree
4 Disagree
5 Strongly disagree
8 (Don't know)
9 (Refusal)

ASK ALL (ALL VERSIONS)

Q421

[Prejtran]

How would you describe yourself... READ OUT...

- 1 ...as very prejudiced against people who are transgender,
- 2 a little prejudiced,
- 3 or, not prejudiced at all?
- 8 (Don't know)
- 9 (Refusal)

IF 'Female' AT [Rsex]

Q422

[TWomToil]

CARD F2

Please think about a transgender woman - that is a man who has gone through all or part of a process to become a woman.

How comfortable or uncomfortable would you be for a transgender woman to...

...use female public toilets?

- 1 Very comfortable
- 2 Quite comfortable
- 3 Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- 4 Quite uncomfortable
- 5 Very uncomfortable
- 8 (Don't know)
- 9 (Refusal)

IF 'Male' AT [Rsex]

Q423

[TManToil]

CARD F2

Please think about a transgender man - that is a woman who has gone through all or part of a process to become a man.

How comfortable or uncomfortable would you be for a transgender man to...

...use male public toilets?

- 1 Very comfortable
- 2 Quite comfortable
- 3 Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- 4 Quite uncomfortable
- 5 Very uncomfortable
- 8 (Don't know)
- 9 (Refusal)

ASK ALL (ALL VERSIONS)

Q424

[TWomRefu]

CARD F2 AGAIN

Please think about a transgender woman - that is a man who has gone through all or part of a process to become a woman.

How comfortable would you be for a transgender woman to...

...use a refuge for women who have experienced domestic violence?

- 1 Very comfortable
- 2 Quite comfortable
- 3 Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- 4 Quite uncomfortable
- 5 Very uncomfortable
- 8 (Don't know)
- 9 (Refusal)

ASK ALL (ALL VERSIONS)

Q425

[TBirCert]

CARD F3

How much do you agree or disagree that a person who is transgender should be able to have the sex on their birth certificate changed if they want to?

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly disagree
- 8 (Don't know)
- 9 (Refusal)

Self-completion questions

The next set of questions is about people who are transgender. People who are transgender have gone through all or part of a process (including thoughts or actions) to change the sex they were described as at birth to the gender they identify with, or intend to. This might include by changing their name, wearing different clothes, taking hormones or having gender reassignment surgery.

Do you think that prejudice against transgender people is always wrong, mostly wrong, sometimes wrong, rarely wrong or never wrong?

Please tick **one** box only

- Always wrong
- Mostly wrong
- Sometimes wrong
- Rarely wrong
- Never wrong
- Can't choose

When you think about people who are transgender, which of the words below describe your feelings?

Please tick **all of those that apply**

- Admiration
- Pity
- Respect
- Disgust
- Envy
- Resentment
- Fear
- Can't choose

If they are suitably qualified, do you think that people who are transgender should be employed as...

Please tick **one** box on each line

a. ...police officers ?

Definitely should	Probably should	Probably should not	Definitely should not	Can't choose
<input type="checkbox"/>				

b. ... primary school teachers?

Definitely should	Probably should	Probably should not	Definitely should not	Can't choose
<input type="checkbox"/>				

Contacts

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