

APRIL, 2021

# THE DIVERSITY POLICY AND THE JCF: A QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Examining the implementation of the **Diversity Policy** by members of the **JCF** when working with members of the **LGBT Community** and how it can be improved to benefit all concerned.

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# TABLE OF CONTENT:

## 03 Executive Summary

## 04 Introduction

## 05 Objectives of the Qualitative Assessment

The specific objectives of this assessment are:

1. To identify the challenges faced by the police in implementing the diversity policy and to interact with members of the lgbt community.
2. To provide recommendations on how to improve the challenges identified.

## 06 Methodology

- Sampling Strategy
- Data Collection
- Ethical Consideration
- Limitations
- Lessons Learnt

## 08 Presentation and discussion of findings

JCF members' knowledge of and implementation of the diversity policy.

Interaction with members of the LGBT Community and individual moral and ethical persuasion.

Organizational challenges and challenges experienced from the community in implementing the policy.

## 16 Conclusion and Recommendations

## 18 Appendix 1

An illustration at the top of the page shows six police officers in dark uniforms with reflective vests, standing in a stylized cityscape with white buildings and purple clouds. The officers are arranged in two groups of three, with their arms outstretched as if presenting or gesturing. A large, blue, torn-edge banner is overlaid on the bottom left of the illustration, containing the title 'Executive Summary' in white, bold, sans-serif font.

# Executive Summary

The **Jamaica Constabulary Force** is a dynamic organisation which has the needs of our customers at the forefront of our mandate. As such, it was found necessary to implement **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)** to guide all police officers in the execution of their duties.

The Diversity Policy is a standard operating procedure (SOP) developed by the Jamaica Constabulary Force to guide all police officers in the execution of their duties. It states that all Jamaicans are to be treated fairly and their human rights and dignity be upheld by the servants of the State mandated to do so.

This policy took effect on August 25, 2011 and was found to be necessary and timely as it was evident that there were instances where persons were discriminated against and their reports not treated in the manner in which they ought to have been treated.

Despite the implementation of this and other policies, individuals are still apprehensive to attend the station to have their reports made as there is still the fear (whether real or perceived) that they will be discriminated against.

Given the growing importance of fostering strong relationships with citizens of the country and the local security forces, the need for partnerships with subcultures or organisations can only serve to promote relationship building by giving people a voice which demonstrates neutrality. It is the ability of local law enforcement to maintain its core mission of protecting communities and promoting public safety for all our citizens and visitors alike through clear guidelines and the allocation of suitable resources to have the customers' needs met.

To achieve the aforesaid it is being recommended that there be on-going training in Customer Service delivery especially for members who man the Reception areas and mobile patrol teams as also cooperation from members of the LGBT community in understanding that they are to conduct themselves in a manner which bears in mind that the police station is a shared public space; where all who attend would like their issues addressed.



# Introduction

In our society today, there is renewed cry to embrace cultural and individual diversity for and acceptance of individuals, regardless their colour, race, creed, physical capabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religious and political persuasion or affiliation.

In its duty to serve and protect, the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) strives to maintain the status of a professional and service-oriented organization and has undergone significant changes over the years to improve its services to all Jamaicans and including the LGBT community and visitors to our shores.

Among the changes noted is the introduction of the Diversity Policy in 2011, which speaks to the duty of police officers in addressing complaints from any minority or vulnerable group, including to respect the rights of everyone and recognize that some Jamaicans are members of 'diverse communities.' The policy provides guidelines when LGBT persons and others, including religious minorities, report an incident perpetrated against them. In addition to this, all police recruits are sensitized around human rights at the police training college and as probationary officers. Some police who are in service have also benefited from sensitization and capacity building training workshops undertaken by NGOs such as Jamaica AIDS Support for Life (JASL).

However, despite these initiatives, LGBT Jamaicans continue to report to their organization about negative experiences with law enforcers, including when making reports of incidents perpetrated against them. This has, over time, reportedly impacted on the number of persons who express willingness to report incidents to the police despite the changes that continue to be made to improve service to persons from vulnerable and marginalized communities.

A survey was conducted between March and April 2021 to identify the challenges being faced by law enforcers in collecting and treating with reports from the Jamaican LGBT community. The survey sought to identify the challenges and arrive at solutions aimed at garnering more trust from the LGBT community, providing the assurance that their issues are of concern to law enforcement and will be treated with the urgency, respect and confidentiality that is so required. The results and conclusions of the analysis will form the basis of future initiatives, interactions and partnerships between the aforementioned entities.



# Objectives of the Qualitative Assessment

The specific objectives of this assessment are:

1. To identify the challenges faced by the police in implementing the diversity policy and to interact with members of the LGBT community.
2. To provide recommendations on how to improve the challenges identified.

# Methodology



This case study uses a convenience sampling technique to glean information about the experiences and challenges faced by police officers when interacting with members of the Jamaican LGBT community. The researcher selected a research approach that allows for the exploration of in-depth meaning and contextualized ideas associated with implementation of the Diversity Policy by members of the JCF when working with members of the LGBT community and how it can be improved to benefit all concerned.

The survey was conducted between March and April 2021 and sought to identify the experiences and challenges to inform the development of evidence-based strategies for advocacy and programmes aimed at improving the service provided by the police to the LGBT community.

## Sampling Strategy

Using the convenience sampling technique, a total of five police stations that fall under the jurisdiction of the St. Andrew Central Division were identified for the study. The station selections were done on the premise of convenience, location within the jurisdiction, the social construct of the communities and the possibility of members treating with reported cases of a diverse nature from members of the LGBT community. The stations selected were the Half-Way-Tree, Matilda's Corner, New Kingston, Crossroads and August Town. A total of sixty persons at the rank of Constables, Corporals and Sergeants were targeted for participation in the assessment. Twelve (12) persons were targeted at each station.

## Data Collection

Survey was the only method utilized in this assessment. The purpose of the survey was to get an unbiased and realistic view of the day-to-day operationalization of the policy.

- Step 1:** The survey was drafted with 10 questions; closed ended and open-ended. See *appendix 1 for a copy of the instrument*. The estimated time to complete each survey was ten (10) minutes.
- Step 2:** The survey was distributed to sixty (60) police officers.
- Step 3:** Data was computed and presented in both bar charts and table formats.

		RANK			SEX	
AGE RANGES (YEARS)	NUMBER	SGT	CPL	CONS	MALES-	FEMALES
18-30	11	7	7	24	27	11
31-48	18					
49-60	10					

A total of thirty-eight police—twenty-seven (27) males and eleven (11) females completed the survey. The aggregation of these results enabled a statistical and quantitative analysis of the findings. The table below shows the ranks and age distribution of those who completed the survey according to their sex.

## Ethical Consideration

Participation in the survey was voluntary. Confidentiality was ensured through the elimination of a name or station requirement to participate in the survey. The researcher also obtained written informed consent from participants to ensure ethical conduct in this research project. This consent form was attached to all questionnaires; however, participants were not required to affix their signature to maintain strict confidentiality and trustworthiness.

## Limitations

In conducting the study, a few limitations were identified. They are:

- A total of thirty-eight (38) surveys were completed and returned. Due to time
- constraints the report had to be done without the remainder.
- There was a challenge in getting some members to complete the survey after having
- read what it was about.
- A number of survey documents were not returned as members indicated that they did
- not finish completing the document.

## Lessons learnt

- Defence mechanisms played a part in behaviours exhibited.
- Ones upbringing, moral beliefs and perceptions foster biases.
- Despite traditional and religious backgrounds discrimination was not always a factor in customer service delivery.
- Everyone has a role to play in terms of achieving an understanding between different communities to garner trust, confidence and satisfaction.
- Continued sensitization through training can achieve a greater level of tolerance



# Presentation and discussion of findings

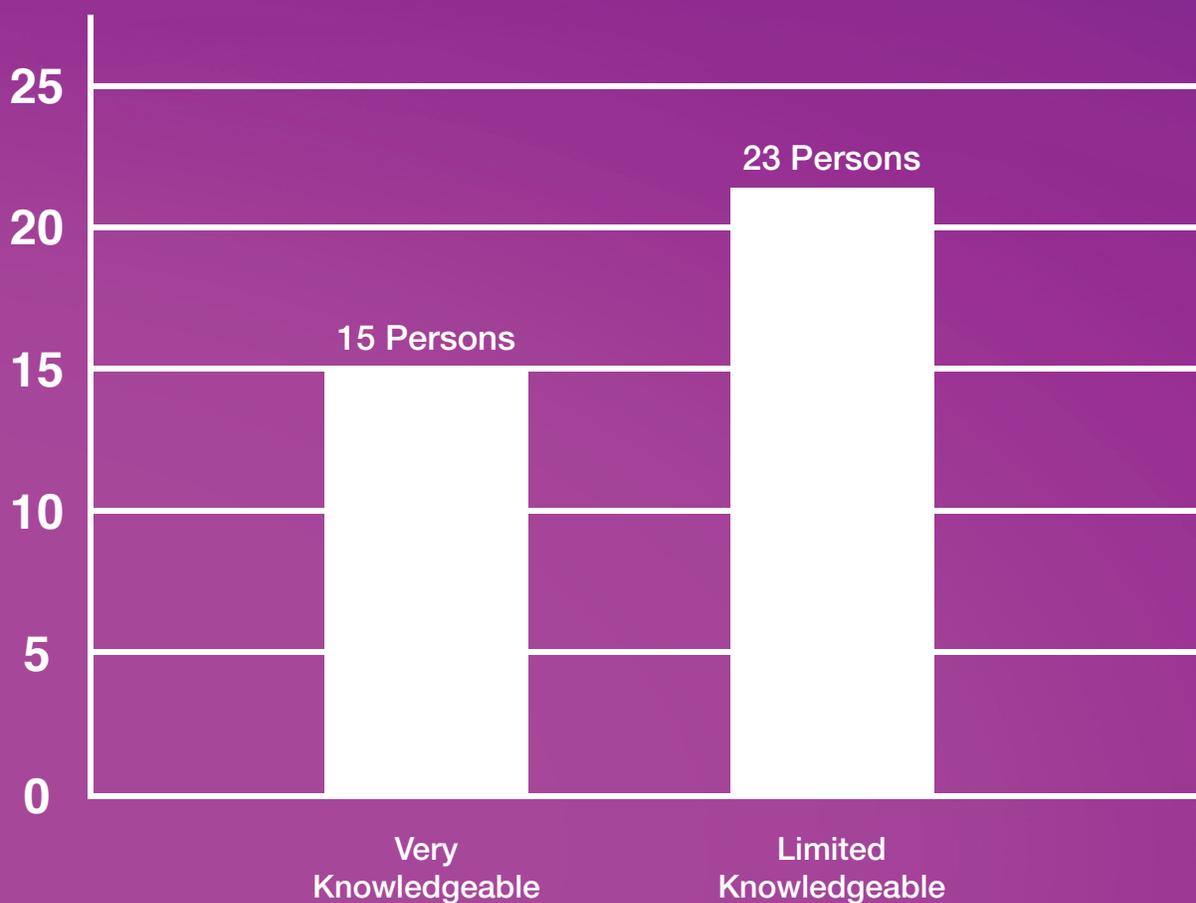
This section of the study presents findings according to themes. From the data presented, three (3) themes emerged relating to how members of the JCF implement the Diversity Policy during their interactions with and in the process of appreciating reports from members of the LGBT community as well as how it can be improved to benefit all concerned. These emerging themes are as follows: JCF members' knowledge of the policy, interaction with members of the LGBT community and individual moral and ethical persuasion and organisational challenges and challenges experienced from the community in the implementation of the policy.

## JCF Members' Knowledge of and Implementation of the Diversity Policy

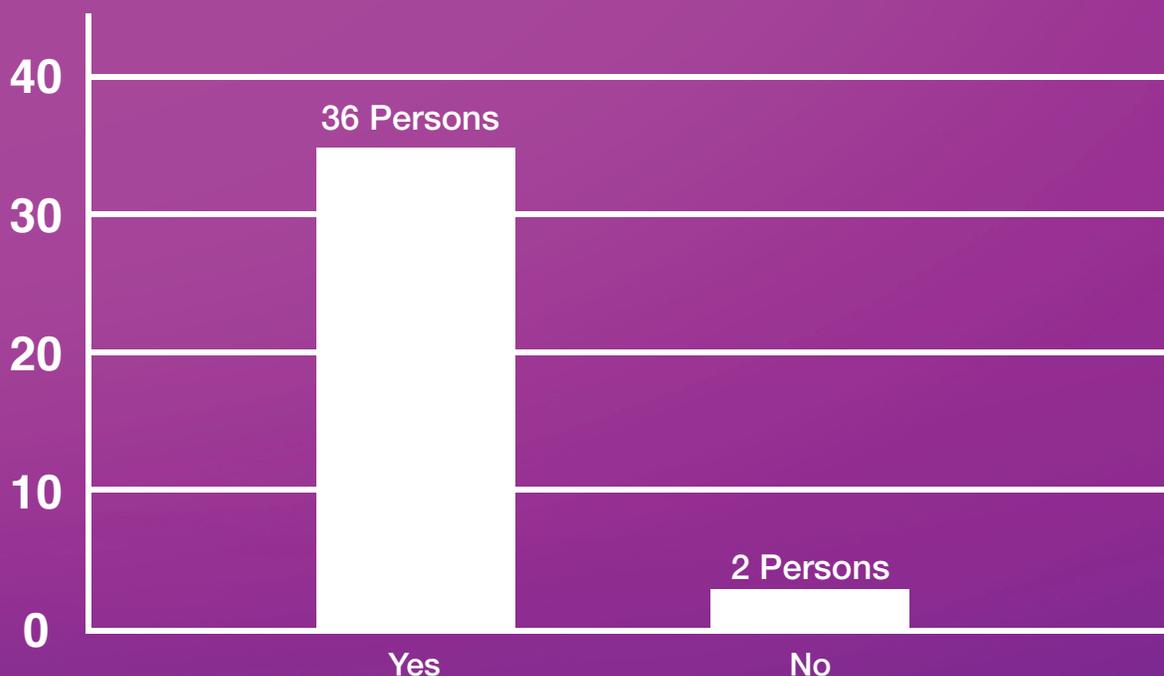
Whenever there is a need to implement any policy within the JCF, there is a publication of such policy in the weekly Force Orders. Such publication is accompanied by strict instructions directing Portfolio Officers, Area and Commanding Officers as to the time period in which the policy must form a part of the subject of all internal briefing and debriefing exercises as also station lectures. This is usually complemented with a request for a return to be submitted to Headquarters upon the expiration of the instructed period. This is primarily to evaluate the success and performance outcome to the implementer and beneficiaries.

The responses obtained from the participants confirmed that majority of the thirty-eight police who participated in the research were knowledgeable about the Diversity Policy. It was, however, revealed that more persons (23) were unaware of the other categories of individuals who fall within the Diverse Category. The findings also revealed that police were fully aware of the need for confidentiality in treating with the reports of members of the LGBT community and as reflected in the data, most officers (21), in the performance of their duties, provided such services by utilizing a private room. On the contrary, a significant number of officers purported that such services were never offered to LGBT Jamaicans; this was primarily so as some officers indicated that during the initial interviewing process, the nature of the report being made was not of a diverse nature, hence, community members were not offered a private room, but the general courtesies as a normal member of the general populace.

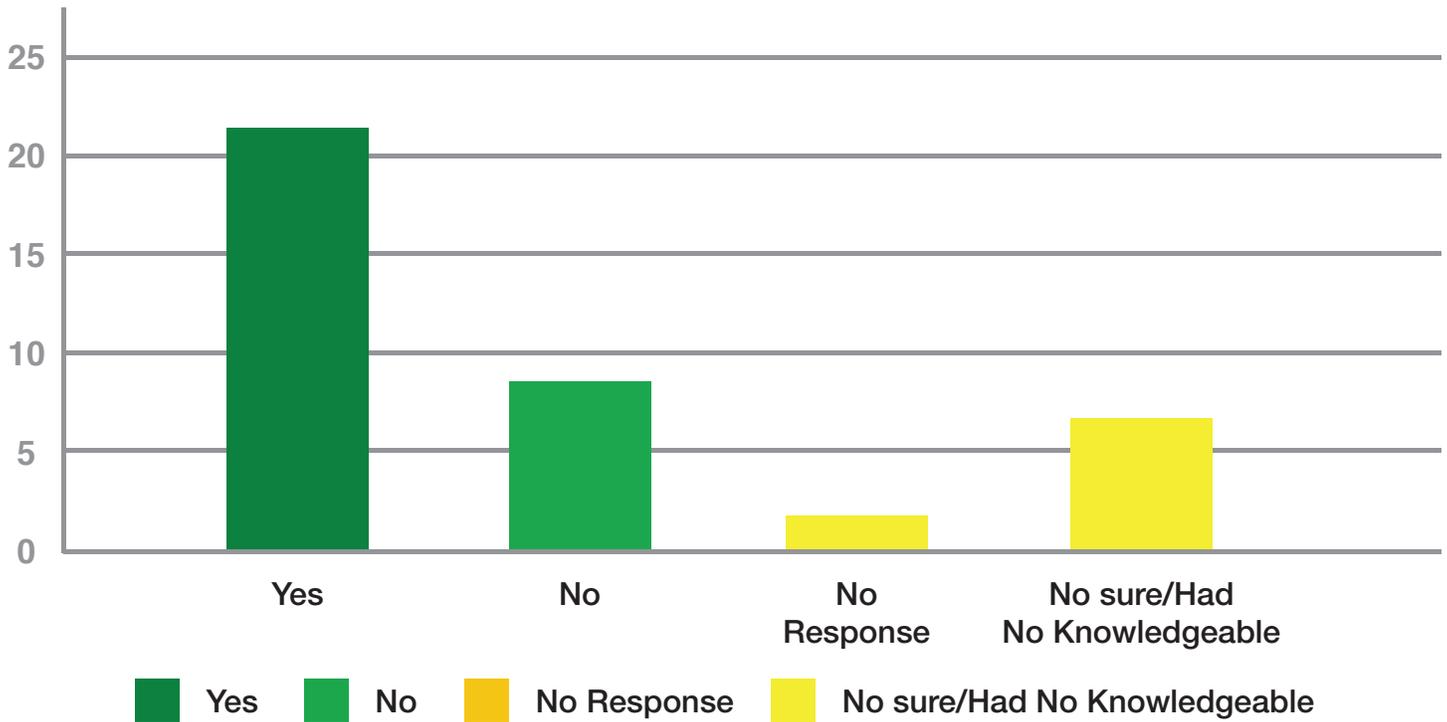
## Are you familiar with Force Orders and the policy that treats with Diversity?



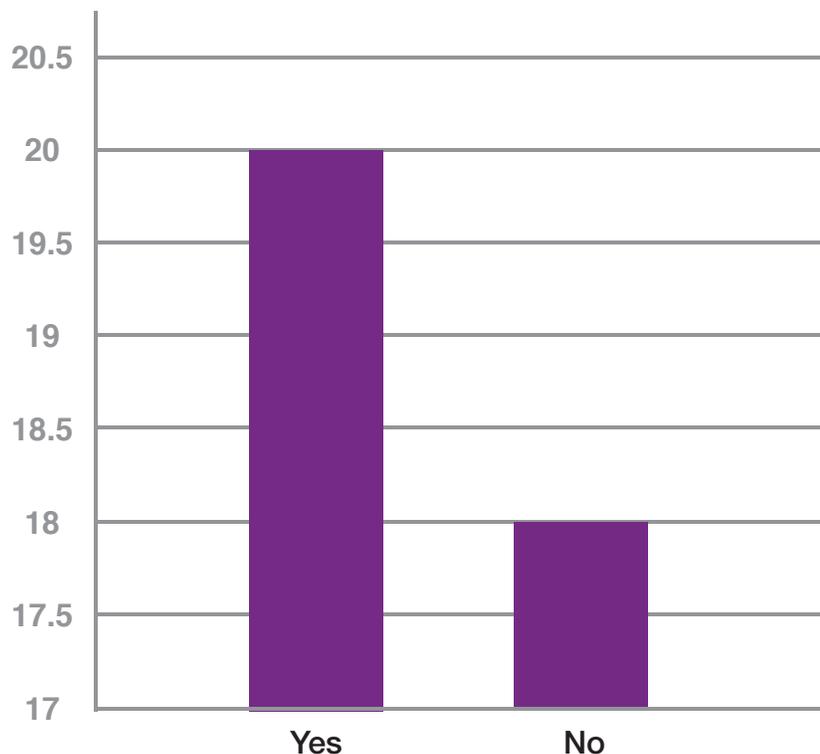
## How knowledgeable are you regarding individuals that fall in the Diverse Category?



**If during the interview process with the member of the LGBT Community, it is discovered that the report of adverse nature, is the Sub-Officer in charge notified?**

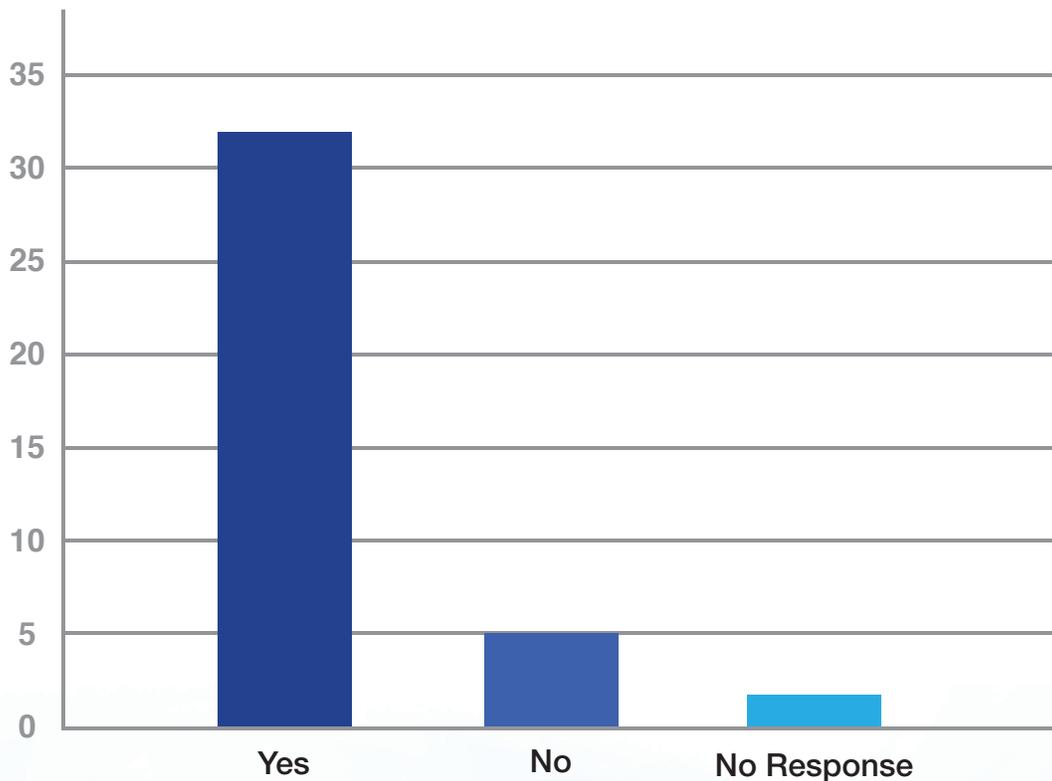


**When a member of the LGBT Community visits the station to make a report, are they provided with the services of a private and confidential room?**

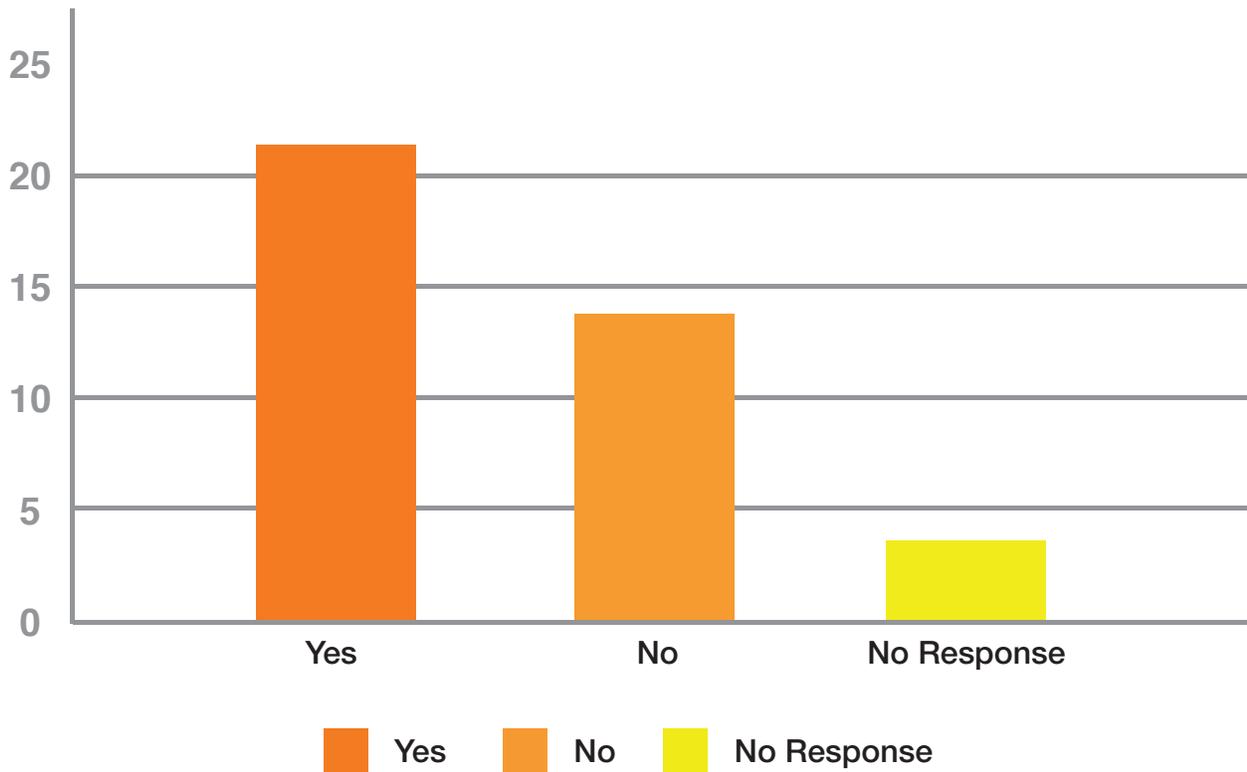


Additionally, most police officers (twenty one (21) disclosed that follow-up exercises were done in these cases as stipulated by policy. However, the data also revealed that a very high number of participants (sixteen (16) were not able to state whether or not such action was done. A similar sentiment was echoed by most participants (twenty-one (21) that in treating with cases of a 'diverse nature' the Sub-Officer in charge were notified as outlined in policy document. For continued investigation, twenty one (21) officers or fifty five percent (55%) just over half of officers were able to attest to this exercise being conducted. Others asserted that this was either not done, were not sure if it was done or had no response.

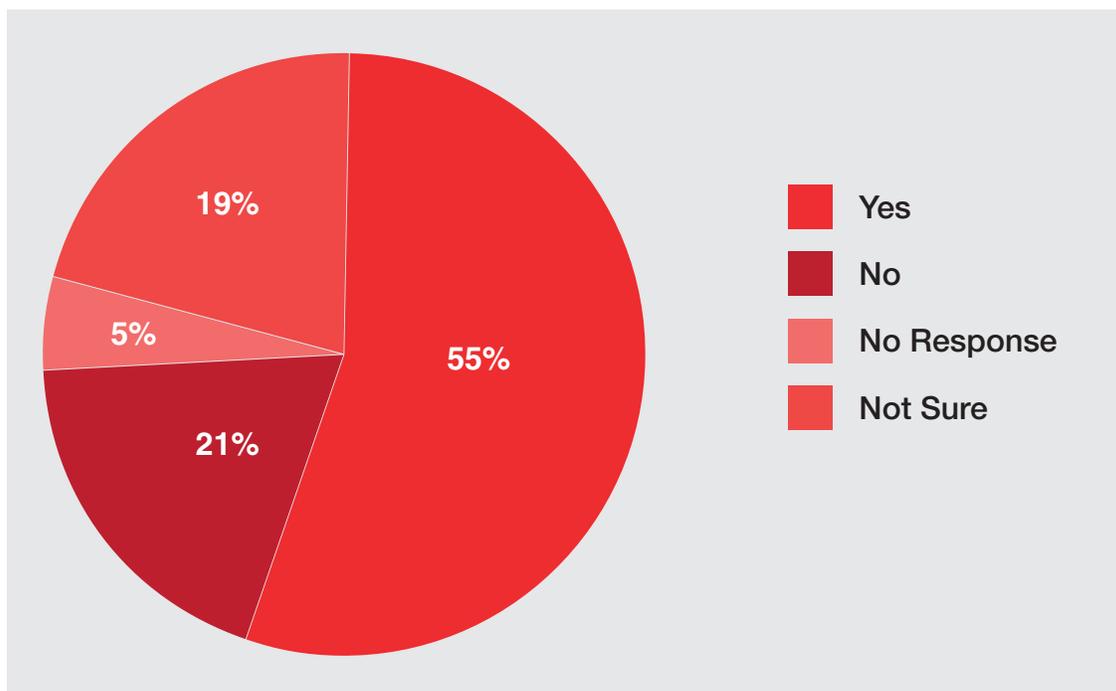
## While on the job, has a member of this Diverse Category ever reported a matter to you?



## How knowledgeable are you regarding individuals that fall in the Diverse Category?



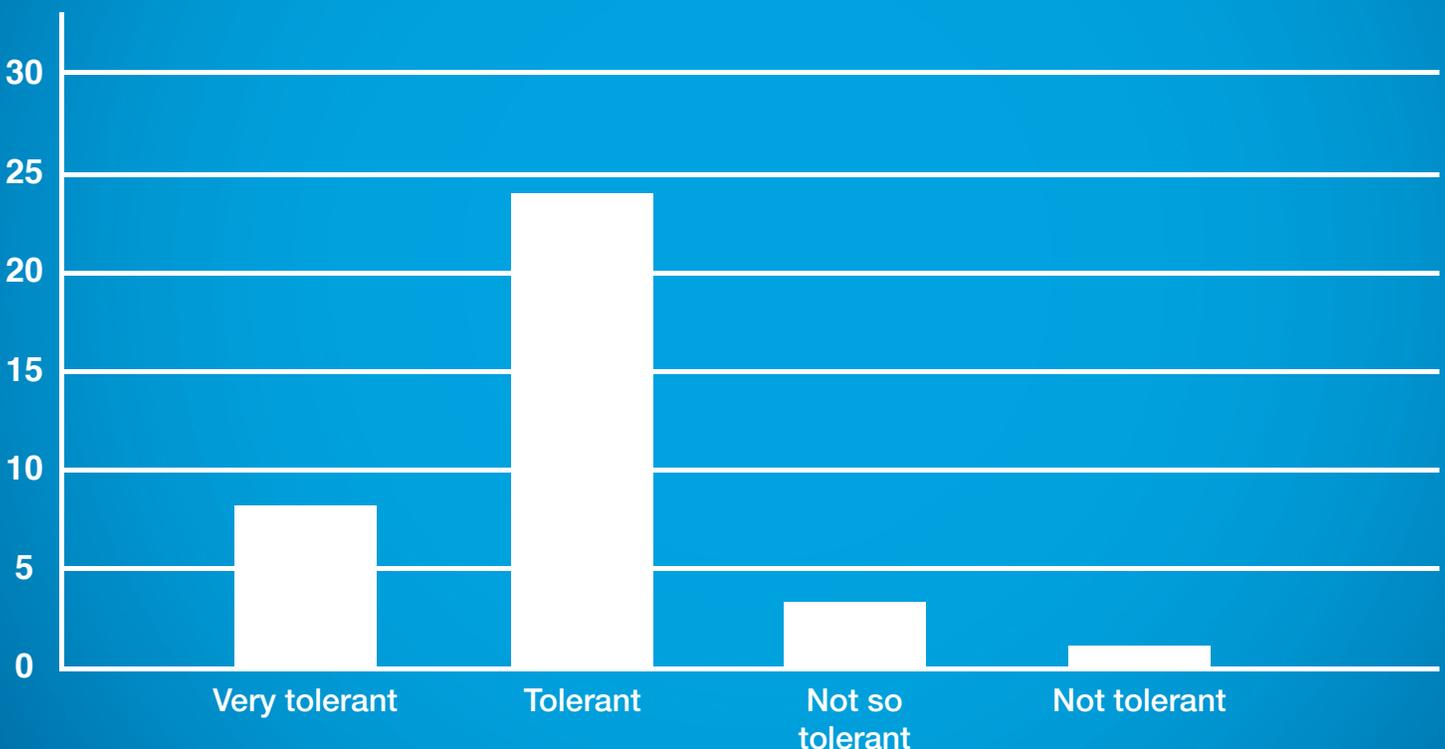
## Is the report submitted for further investigation by the sub officer?



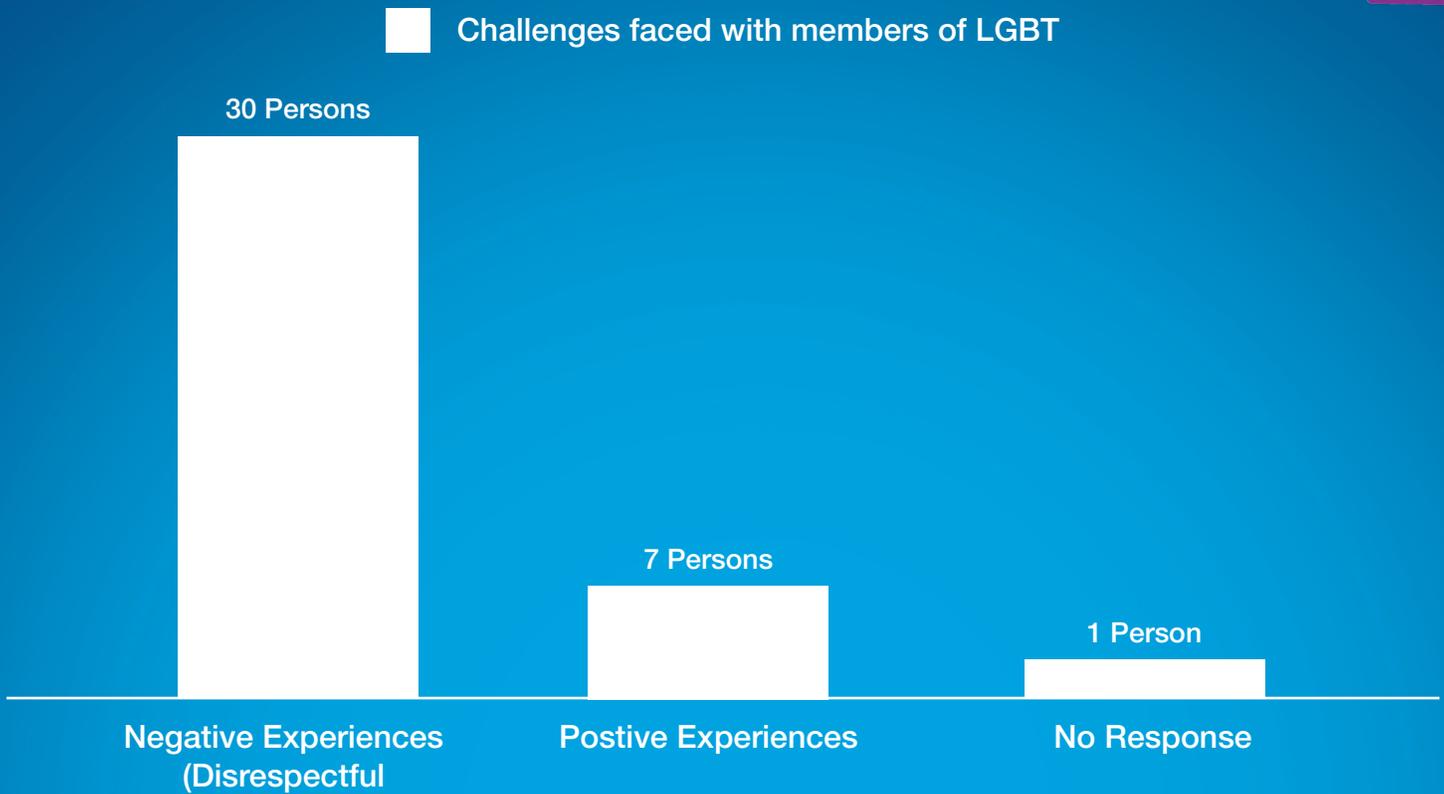
# Interaction with members of the LGBT Community and Individual Moral and Ethical Persuasion

The data revealed that majority of the officers who participated in the study have taken reports from members of the LGBT Community. Majority police officers who had the opportunity to interact with members of the LGBT community asserted that they were tolerant in treating with those reports. A substantial number of participants disclosed that they were very tolerant in treating with these reports whilst minority officers (three (3) of the thirty eight (38) stated that they were either not so tolerant or not tolerant. It was also found that some members have a challenge with focusing on the individuals report and not on the individual making the report. In instances where this is readily identified, Sub-Officers intervene by actioning the report themselves or having someone else do so. However, this is not unique to reports of a diverse nature, but is a standard operating procedure based on the level of experience which is required for any report/investigation. Some also have a challenge with the content of the report and how it is delivered. For example: a male making a report that he was beaten by his male spouse.

## What is your reaction regarding members of the LGBT Community who attend the station to make reports?



## Challenges faced with members of LGBT

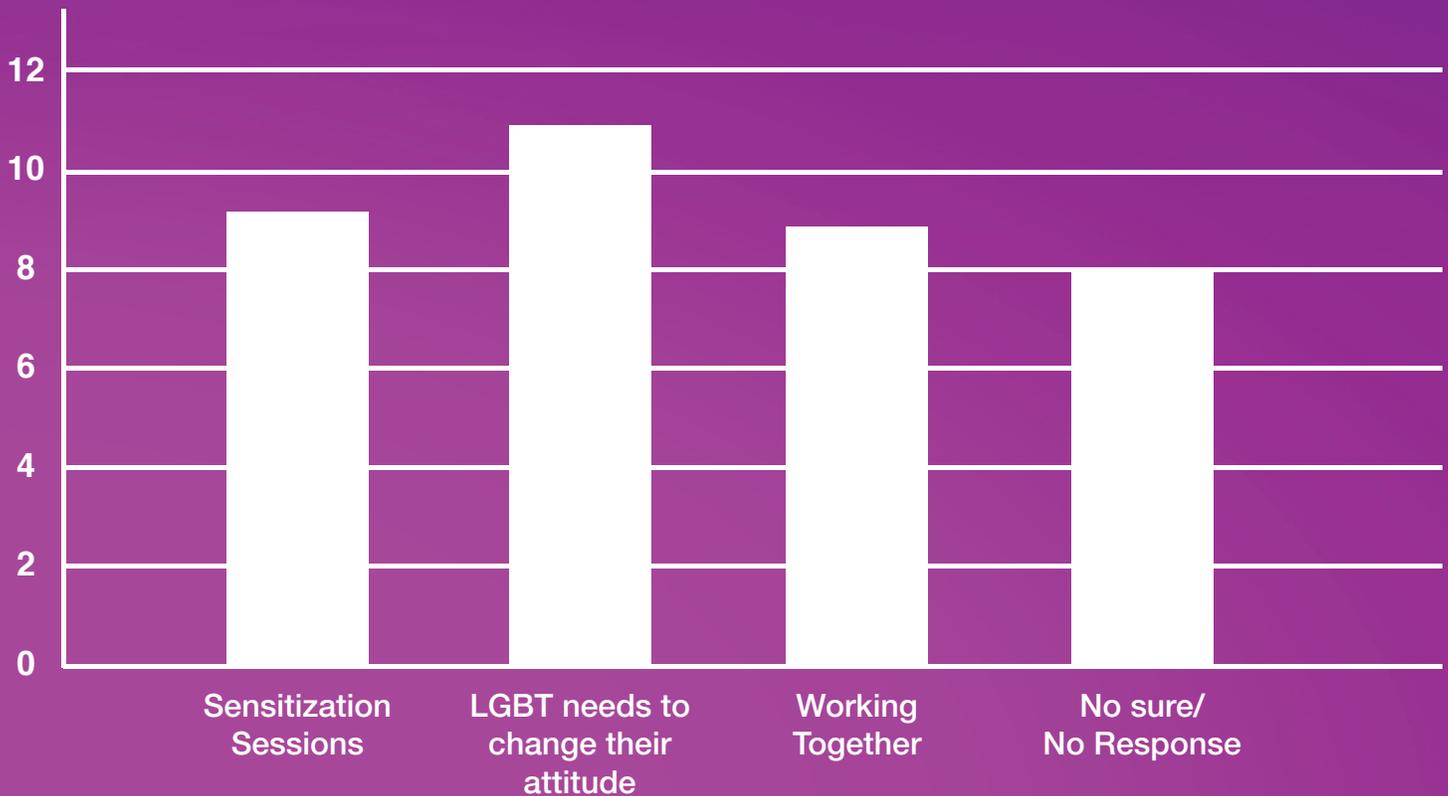


## Organizational challenges and challenges experienced from the community in implementing the policy

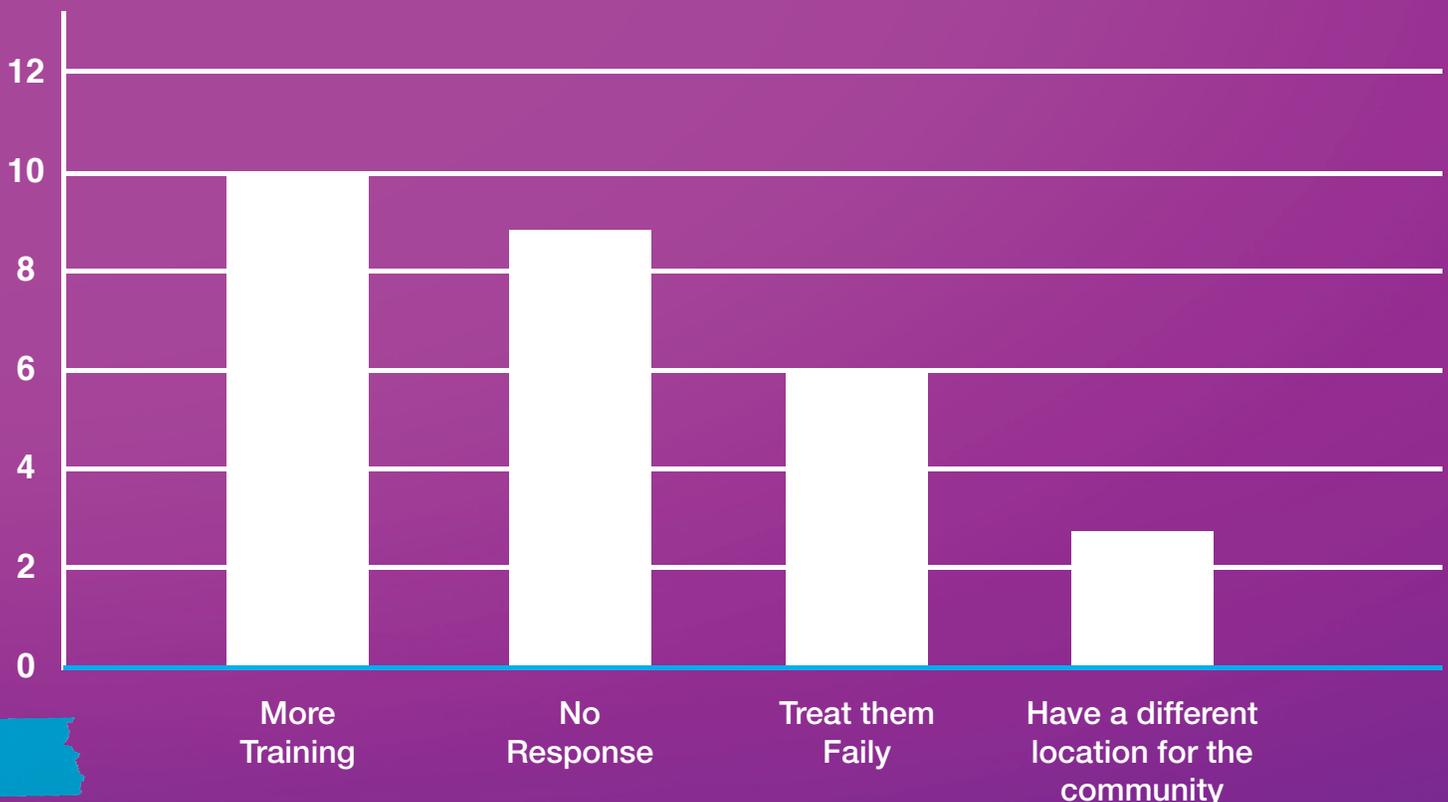
To ensure effective performance and strict compliance to any policy, the support of the organisation(s) seeking to enforce such policy is very critical. The data revealed there was need for more training and sensitization sessions between stakeholders. The data suggest, based on the experiences of officers in the assessment, that the behaviour of majority of the members from the LGBT community were disrespectful in their interaction and reporting process. Notwithstanding, some officers disclosed that they had positive experiences with members of the Jamaican LGBT community during the performance of their duties.

CHALLENGES POLICY

## How can cooperation between police and lgbt members be improved?



## What can be done to improve communication between the police and the lgbt community?



# Conclusion and Recommendations

In an era where the demand of the society dictates and requires diversity, members of the JCF are to be made fully aware of this new thrust and should be equipped with the requisite skills and competencies to treat with matters that fall under the “diverse category,” to treat with the changing needs of the different groups such as the LGBT community. It is also evident that **some** members of the JCF continue to construe ‘cases of diversity’ under the umbrella of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons, and need to foster a more open mind when engaging and providing service to the populace, whoever these persons may be.

While there are organisational issues that are in need of immediate attention on the part of the JCF, such as continued education, training and resource allotment, there is also a need for other stakeholders such as the J-FLAG to educate members of the community they serve about the role they play in ensuring that the interaction is a positive one for all concerned. This education and empowerment must include appropriate or desired behaviour of community members during their interaction with members of the JCF and by extension other persons who also have to utilize the same space at the stations to also have their reports logged.

Community members must begin to develop a level of trust and openness to relate to the police in a professional manner and to also be aware that if they are dissatisfied with their encounter at the station, there are systems in place to treat with that as well. It is advisable and encouraged that community members are not swayed by the narratives of the general populace but to have their own experience. Additionally, the J-FLAG and other organisations working with the LGBT community can use this as an opportunity to not just encourage persons to make reports when they are threatened or experience harm but educate them on the various mechanisms internal and external of the JCF such as The Inspectorate and Professional Standards Oversight Bureau (IPROB) and INDECOM; that they can use to hold officers accountable if they’re refused service or feel as if they’re being discriminated against.

The assessment has revealed that much work still needs to be done to improve service delivery to the LGBT community. The fact that of all the persons surveyed, though 94% are familiar with 15 the Force Orders treating with the Diversity Policy, 66.5% of the participants stated they had limited knowledge about individuals who fall in the ‘diversity category.’ It is evident from the results of this survey that there are challenges on the part of the police officers which need addressing to enhance service delivery and to reassure LGBT persons that they will be treated respectfully by the police. Importantly, note must be made of the impact of officers’ belief system and their experiences with some members of the LGBT community.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are being made:

- There is a need for continued communication between key stakeholders
- There is a need for further empowerment and awareness raising through capacity building training and sensitization of police and LGBT Jamaicans
- There is a call for greater collaboration between the JCF and J-FLAG by partnering with on-going training, highlighting the needs of the LGBT Community. This partnership is deemed critical to fully address the needs and ensuring the provision of better service to the community.
- Establishment of a centre which treats specifically with reports falling under the Diversity Policy, just as how reports of rape were removed from a station level reporting to a centralized reporting. This in itself may prove to be a challenge

# APPENDIX I

## Questionnaire Disclaimer/Consent Form

You are invited to participate in this qualitative case study that seeks to examine the implementation of the Diversity Policy by members of the JCF when working with members of the LGBT Community.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalized.

The procedure involves completing a survey that will take approximately five (5) to ten (10) minutes. Your responses will be confidential, and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, email address and station assigned. The survey questions will be about the Diversity Policy and groups associated.

We will do our best to keep your information confidential. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will identify you personally. The results of this study will be used to guide programmes and initiatives to improve services to the LGBT community.

If you have any questions about the research study, Shadeana Mascull, Programme Officer at Equality for All Foundation at **876 875 2328**.

# Questionnaire

Please put a tick ✓ in the box next to the answer of your choice or write in the space provided.

1. Sex  Male  Female
2. Age  18-30 years  31-48 years  49-60 years
3. Rank  Cons.  Cpl.  Sgt.
4. Are you familiar with Force Orders and the policy that treats with diversity?  Yes  No
5. How knowledgeable are you regarding individuals that fall in the 'diverse category'?
- Very knowledgeable  Somewhat knowledgeable
- Not knowledgeable
6. While on the job, has a member of this Diverse Category ever reported a matter to you?
- Yes  No  Not Sure
7. What is your reaction regarding members of the LGBT Community who attend the station to make reports?
- Very Tolerant  Tolerant  Not so tolerant  Not tolerant
8. When a member of the LGBT community visits the station to make a report, are they provided with the services of a private and confidential room?
- Yes  No

If no, state reason(s)

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9. If during the interview process with the member of the LGBT Community, it is discovered that the report of a diverse nature:

- a. Is the S.O i/c notified  Yes  No

If no, state reason(s)

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b. Is the report submitted to the Commanding Officer through the S.O.i/c for continued investigation?  Yes  No

If no, state reason(s)

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10. Is there follow-up done with members within seven (7) days and every fourteen (14) days after?  Yes  No

If no, state reason(s)

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11. What are the challenges experienced when dealing with persons in the LGBT Community?

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12. To what extent do you think cooperation between the police and the LGBT community can be improved?

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13. What do you think can be done to solve the problems or challenges faced by police officers when appreciating reports from members of the LGBT community?

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**End of questionnaire. Thank you!**



# J-FLAG

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📍 [www.equalityjamaica.org](http://www.equalityjamaica.org)

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