

## **Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs**

### **Survey on Public Attitudes towards Homosexuals**

#### **Purpose**

This paper reports the outcome of the Survey on Public Attitudes towards Homosexuals commissioned by the Home Affairs Bureau.

#### **Background**

2. A telephone survey was conducted in 1995 to gauge the public's perception of different forms of sexual orientation, their acceptance of homosexuals/bisexuals in different contexts and situations, and their views on the measures the Government should adopt in addressing the problem of discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation in Hong Kong. The survey found that public acceptance of homosexuality and bisexuality was on the low side. Public education and publicity were considered to be the most effective means in tackling the problem of discrimination. Following public consultation on sexual orientation in 1996, the Government decided to pursue non-legislative measures to enhance public understanding and acceptance of different forms of sexual orientation.

3. Social values change as the society develops. It has been ten years since the Government last conducted a survey on sexual orientation. In November 2004, the Home Affairs Bureau commissioned an independent opinion survey firm to conduct a Survey on Public Attitudes towards Homosexuals.

#### **Survey Objectives**

4. The objectives of the Survey on Public Attitudes towards Homosexuals are to:

- (a) assess public awareness of homosexuality;
- (b) assess public attitudes towards homosexuality;

- (c) assess public acceptance of homosexuals in different contexts and situations;
- (d) assess the extent of the problem of discrimination faced by homosexuals; and
- (e) examine what can be done to address the problem of discrimination faced by homosexuals.

### **Questionnaire Design**

5. To ensure that the survey questionnaire would be fair and impartial, an independent Advisory Group, comprising Mr Christopher Chan Yiu-chong, Professor Fanny Cheung Mui-ching and Dr Priscilla Leung Mei-fun, was appointed in February 2005 to advise on the questionnaire design. The Home Affairs Bureau also conducted several rounds of discussions with various concern groups (including the sexual minorities, non-governmental organizations and religious groups) on the structure and design of the questionnaire. The views of the various concern groups have been taken into account by the Advisory Group in finalising the questionnaire. The survey questionnaire is at the **Annex**.

### **Survey Results**

6. The fieldwork of the telephone survey was conducted during 22-31 October 2005. A random sample of 2 068 respondents aged between 18 and 64 were successfully contacted for telephone interview. As 28 respondents indicated that they did not know what homosexuality is, only 2 040 respondents were enumerated. The response rate of the survey was 50.1%.

### ***Public Awareness of Homosexuality***

7. On public awareness of homosexuality, only a very small number of the respondents (28 out of 2 068) were not aware of what homosexuality is.

8. Of the 2 040 respondents successfully enumerated, the majority (76.5%) had no contact with homosexuals. 17.2% of the respondents had

infrequent contact with homosexuals, while only 4.8% had frequent contact with homosexuals.

***Public Attitudes towards Homosexuality***

9. The survey gauged the respondents’ attitudes towards homosexuality. An overwhelming majority (88.8%) of the respondents considered that there is no direct relationship between homosexuality and work ability, while 61.1% shared the same view with regard to the relationship between homosexuality and promiscuity. There were however divided views on whether homosexuals are psychologically normal people. 47.0% of the respondents considered homosexuals are psychologically normal people while 41.9% thought otherwise. Similarly, divergent views emerged on whether there is conflict between homosexuality and family values. 49.1% of the respondents considered there is conflict between homosexuality and family values, while 41.2% thought otherwise. 38.9% of the respondents opined that homosexuality contradicts the morals of the community, while 49.0% thought otherwise.

***Public Acceptance of Homosexuals***

10. On public acceptance of homosexuals in specific situations, the respondents tended to accept homosexuals more as colleagues (79.9%), neighbours (78.0%), superiors in office (77.5%), friends (76.1%) than as teachers (60.2%) and family members (40.0%).

**Acceptance of Homosexuals in Specific Situations**

<i>Acceptance of a homosexual as one’s</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>		
	<i>strongly acceptable / acceptable</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>strongly unacceptable / unacceptable</i>
Colleague	79.9	11.1	6.9
Neighbour	78.0	12.8	8.2
Superior in office	77.5	10.3	8.6
Friend	76.1	8.7	13.7
Teacher	60.2	8.9	28.3
Family member	40.0	5.0	51.4

### ***Discrimination Faced by Homosexuals***

11. The survey sought the views of the respondents on their perception of the seriousness of discrimination faced by homosexuals in Hong Kong. About one-third (29.7%) of the respondents considered that at present, discrimination against homosexuals because of their sexual orientation was “very serious/serious” in Hong Kong, while about a quarter (25.2%) found the situation “posed little problem/no problem at all”. By way of comparison, about two-fifths (41.1%) of the respondents who had frequent contact with homosexuals found the problem “very serious/serious”.

12. 29.7% of the respondents considered discrimination against homosexual students at school “very serious/serious”, while 30.3% considered it “posed little problem/no problem at all”. Less than one-fifth (13.2%-17.6%) of the respondents considered discrimination against homosexuals with regard to job application, flat rental and club membership “very serious/serious”. On the other hand, at least 30% (30.4%-39.3%) of the respondents opined that the situation “posed little problem/no problem at all”.

### **Discrimination Faced by Homosexuals**

<i>Area</i>	<i>Situation</i>	<i>% of respondents who considered the situation</i>		
		<i>very serious/ serious</i>	<i>average</i>	<i>posed little problem/ no problem at all</i>
<i>School</i>	A homosexual student is discriminated against at school.	29.7	29.0	30.3
<i>Employment</i>	An employer refuses to employ a person qualified for the job because he/she is a homosexual.	17.6	39.9	30.4
<i>Renting accommodation</i>	A landlord refuses to let his/her flat to a homosexual.	15.4	32.8	39.3
<i>Club membership</i>	A club/association refuses to admit a homosexual as its member.	13.2	36.4	37.4
<i>Overall</i>	At present, homosexuals are discriminated against in Hong Kong because of their sexual orientation.	29.7	41.7	25.2

### ***Ways to Address the Problem of Discrimination Faced by Homosexuals***

13. On the ways to address the problem of discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation, more than half (54.2%) of the respondents considered that the community should ensure equal opportunities for homosexuals. The majority (75.4%) of the respondents who had frequent contact with homosexuals supported such an approach. When asked whether the existing arrangement of addressing the problem of discrimination by means of public education is sufficient, only 23.5% of the respondents indicated agreement.

14. Respondents' views were sought on the introduction of legislation to outlaw discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation. 34.5% of the respondents considered that the Government should not legislate at this

stage, while 28.7% thought otherwise. 45.5% of the respondents who had frequent contact with homosexuals objected to the Government not legislating at this stage.

15. As regards the scope of such anti-discrimination legislation, 41.6% of the respondents supported legislating in the field of employment, 37.3% with regard to education, and 37.2% on the provision of services, facilities or goods. It is observed that more than half of the respondents who had frequent contact with homosexuals supported legislating in employment (65.1%), education (55.7%) and the provision of services, facilities or goods (51.4%).

#### Ways to Address the Problem of Discrimination Faced by Homosexuals

	<i>% of respondents who</i>		
	<i>strongly agreed/ agreed</i>	<i>stood neutral</i>	<i>strongly disagreed/ disagreed</i>
The community should <b>ensure equal opportunities</b> for homosexuals.	54.2	34.1	10.2
At present, addressing the problem of discrimination by means of <b>public education</b> is already sufficient.	23.5	31.4	41.6
The Government should introduce <b>legislation</b> to outlaw sexual orientation discrimination <b>in the field of employment.</b>	41.6	30.1	24.9
The Government should introduce <b>legislation</b> to outlaw sexual orientation discrimination <b>in the field of education.</b>	37.3	35.8	22.4
The Government should introduce <b>legislation</b> to outlaw sexual orientation discrimination <b>in the provision of services, facilities or goods.</b>	37.2	30.1	29.2
The Government should <b>not introduce legislation</b> to outlaw sexual orientation discrimination at this stage.	34.5	33.7	28.7

### ***Social Impact of Introducing Legislation to Outlaw Discrimination***

16. When asked about the impact of introducing legislation to outlaw discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation, about a quarter (27.9%) of the respondents considered that legislating would encourage homosexual behaviour, while about half (47.8%) opined that by legislating, Hong Kong would become a more harmonious and accommodating society.

### **Advice Sought**

17. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

**Home Affairs Bureau**  
**March 2006**

## Survey on Public Attitudes towards Homosexuals

Surname and Title of Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. No. of Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ No.: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) No. of Q'naire completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Start: \_\_\_\_\_ End: \_\_\_\_\_

**INTRODUCTION:** Hi! Good evening/afternoon! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am an interviewer from MVA, an independent opinion survey firm. We have been commissioned by the Home Affairs Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to conduct an opinion survey on public attitudes towards homosexuals. The interview will not be long and the information you provide will be kept confidential. Thank you for your cooperation.

### SCREENING

S1 To help us select a person in your household for this interview, please tell me which household member, including your domestic helper(s), has just had his/her birthday? This household member must be aged between 18 to 64 and should usually stay in the household for at least five nights a week.

If the answer is the respondent himself/herself..... 1	→ Skip to A1
If the answer is another household member..... 2	→ Continue with S2

S2 Could I conduct an interview with \_\_\_\_\_ (answer of S1 – the selected respondent) now ?

Yes..... 1	→ Repeat Introduction ; continue with A1.
No / Refusal..... 2	→ Terminate: "Thank You."
Not at home..... 3	→ Arrange for another interview (Date and time : _____)

### SECTION A AWARENESS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

A1 Do you know what is homosexuality or not?

Know.....1	→ Continue with A2.
Don't know.....2	→ Terminate: "Thank You."

A2 Have you had any contact with homosexuals? (If the answer of the respondent is "Yes", continue to ask "Is it frequent or not?")

Yes (Frequent) .....1  
 Yes (Not Frequent) .....2  
 No .....3  
 Not Sure / Don't Know .....999

## SECTION B ACCEPTANCE LEVEL OF HOMOSEXUALS

Will you accept or not accept the following situations? **[Read out B1 – B6 one by one.]** (If the answer of the respondent is “Acceptable”, then ask whether he/she finds the statement “Strongly Acceptable” or “Acceptable”. If the answer is “Unacceptable”, then ask whether he/she finds the statement “Strongly Unacceptable” or “Unacceptable”.)

		Strongly Acceptable	Acceptable	Neutral	Unacceptable	Strongly Unacceptable	Don't Know / No comment
B1	You work with a homosexual	1	2	3	4	5	999
B2	A homosexual holds a senior position in the organization you work for	1	2	3	4	5	999
B3	A teacher who is a homosexual	1	2	3	4	5	999
B4	You make friends with a homosexual	1	2	3	4	5	999
B5	Your neighbour is a homosexual	1	2	3	4	5	999
B6	Your family member is a homosexual	1	2	3	4	5	999

## SECTION C DISCRIMINATION FACED BY HOMOSEXUALS

The following are some possible situations faced by homosexuals. **[Read out C1 – C5 one by one.]** Do you find such situations very serious, serious, average, pose little problem or no problem at all in Hong Kong?

		Very Serious	Serious	Average	Pose Little Problem	No Problem At all	Don't Know / No comment
C1	An employer refuses to employ a person qualified for the job because he/she is a homosexual	1	2	3	4	5	999
C2	A club/association refuses to admit a homosexual as its member	1	2	3	4	5	999
C3	A landlord refuses to let his/her flat to a homosexual	1	2	3	4	5	999
C4	A homosexual student is discriminated against at school	1	2	3	4	5	999
C5	At present, homosexuals are discriminated against in Hong Kong because of their sexual orientation <sup>#</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	999

<sup>#</sup> If the respondent does not understand the term “sexual orientation”, please read “Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction to another person. It includes homosexuality, heterosexuality and bisexuality”.

## SECTION D WAYS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF DISCRIMINATION FACED BY HOMOSEXUALS

The following are the views some people have on how to address the problem of discrimination faced by homosexuals.

**[Read out D1 – D6 one by one.]** Do you strongly agree, agree, stand neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the view?

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Stand Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / No comment
D1	The community should ensure equal opportunities for homosexuals	1	2	3	4	5	999
D2	At present, addressing the problem of discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation <sup>#</sup> by means of public education is already sufficient	1	2	3	4	5	999
D3	The Government should introduce legislation to outlaw discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation <sup>#</sup> in the field of education e.g. school admission, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	999
D4	The Government should introduce legislation to outlaw discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation <sup>#</sup> in the field of employment e.g. recruitment and promotion, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	999
D5	The Government should introduce legislation to outlaw discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation <sup>#</sup> in the provision of services, facilities or goods e.g. renting apartments, purchase of goods, using swimming pools and tennis courts, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	999
D6	At this stage, the Government should not introduce legislation to outlaw discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation <sup>#</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	999

## SECTION E SOCIAL IMPACT OF INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO OUTLAW DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUND OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The following are the views some people have on the social impact of introducing legislation to outlaw discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation. **[Read out E1 – E2 one by one.]** Do you agree or disagree with their views? (If the answer of the respondent is "Agree", then ask whether he/she "Strongly Agrees" or "Agrees" with the statement. If the answer is "Disagree", then ask whether he/she "Strongly Disagrees" or "Disagrees" with the statement.)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Stand Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / No comment
E1	If the Government introduces legislation to outlaw discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation <sup>#</sup> , homosexual behaviour would be encouraged	1	2	3	4	5	999
E2	If the Government introduces legislation to outlaw discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation <sup>#</sup> , the community of Hong Kong would become more harmonious and accommodating	1	2	3	4	5	999

## SECTION F ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMOSEXUALITY

The following are the views some people have regarding homosexuality. **[Read out F1 – F5 one by one.]** Do you agree or disagree with their views? (If the answer of the respondent is "Agree", then ask whether he/she "Strongly Agrees" or "Agrees" with the statement. If the answer is "Disagree", then ask whether he/she "Strongly Disagrees" or "Disagrees" with the statement.)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Stand Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know / No comment
F1	Work ability is not directly related to homosexuality	1	2	3	4	5	999
F2	Promiscuity is not directly related to homosexuality	1	2	3	4	5	999
F3	There is no conflict between homosexuality and family values	1	2	3	4	5	999
F4	Homosexuals are psychologically normal people	1	2	3	4	5	999
F5	Homosexuality contradicts the morals of the community	1	2	3	4	5	999

<sup>#</sup> If the respondent does not understand the term "sexual orientation", please read "Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction to another person. It includes homosexuality, heterosexuality and bisexuality".

## SECTION G DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENT

For the purpose of analyzing the survey results, I would like to know some of your personal particulars. The information you provide will be used for analysis only and will be kept strictly confidential. **(DO NOT READ OUT ANSWERS)**

G1 Could you tell me your age?

18-19.....	1	40-44.....	6
20-24.....	2	45-49.....	7
25-29.....	3	50-54.....	8
30-34.....	4	55-64.....	9
35-39.....	5	Refused to answer.....	999

G2 Could you tell me your sex? **(Or to be recorded by the interviewer)**

Male.....	1
Female.....	2
Refused to answer.....	999

G3 Could you tell me your level of education?

Below Primary.....	1
Primary.....	2
Lower Secondary (F.1 to F.3).....	3
Upper Secondary (F.4 to F.7).....	4
Post-secondary or above.....	5
Refused to answer.....	999

G4 Could you tell me your ethnic origin? **(Read out answers)**

Chinese.....	1
Caucasian.....	2
Southeast Asian.....	3
East Asian.....	4
South Asian.....	5
Others <b>[Do not read out]</b> .....	6 ( Please specify _____ )
Refused to answer.....	999

G5 Have you lived outside Hong Kong for more than one year continuously ?

Yes.....	1	→	G5a Where? <b>(Multiple answers allowed)</b>	
			Mainland China.....	1
			Europe.....	2
			North America.....	3
			Southeast Asia.....	4
			East Asia.....	5
			South Asia.....	6
			Others (Please specify).....	7
No.....	2			
Refused to answer.....	999			

G6 Could you tell me your marital status?

Single.....	1
Married.....	2
Cohabiting.....	3
Others (including widowed, divorced, separated).....	4
Refused to answer.....	999

G7 Do you have any children, including adopted children?

Yes..... 1  
 No..... 2  
 Refused to answer..... 999

G8 Do you have any religion?

Yes..... 1 → G8a Which religion? **(Multiple answers allowed)**  
 Catholicism.....1  
 Protestantism.....2  
 Buddhism.....3  
 Others (Please specify) .....4

No..... 2  
 Refused to answer..... 999

G9 Could you tell me your occupation?

Owner/Self-employed..... 1  
 Manager/Executive ..... 2  
 Professional ..... 3  
 Clerk..... 4  
 Service/Sales ..... 5  
 Craftsman/skilled worker ..... 6  
 Domestic Helper..... 7  
 Elementary occupations (e.g. street vendors, security guards, construction labourers)... 8  
 Student..... 9  
 Homemaker ..... 10  
 Retired ..... 11  
 Unemployed..... 12  
 Others (Please specify) ..... 13  
 Refused to answer ..... 999

G10 Could you tell me your monthly total personal income (in Hong Kong Dollars)? Total personal income should include all your monthly salary, bonus, housing allowance, social security (e.g. Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, Disability Allowance), investment income, etc.

No Income..... 1	HK\$20,000 – HK\$29,999 ..... 7
Less than HK\$4,000..... 2	HK\$30,000 – HK\$39,999 ..... 8
HK\$4,000 – HK\$6,999 ..... 3	HK\$40,000 – HK\$49,999 ..... 9
HK\$7,000 – HK\$9,999 ..... 4	HK\$50,000 or above ..... 10
HK\$10,000 – HK\$14,999 ..... 5	Refused to answer ..... 999
HK\$15,000 – HK\$19,999 ..... 6	

**Thank you very much for your cooperation.**