

# out for sport



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## tackling homophobia and transphobia in sport

summary report



AWARDS  
FOR ALL  
SCOTLAND

LOTTERY FUNDED

EQUALITYNETWORK  
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights in Scotland



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# introduction

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**Sport has an important and positive role to play - in our communities, in our culture and in improving Scotland's health. By its very nature, sport is also an ideal arena in which to tackle discrimination and to champion equality of opportunity and fair play for all. There should be no place for homophobia, biphobia or transphobia in sport.**

This research report represents the most comprehensive work so far undertaken into homophobia and transphobia in Scottish sport, and into LGBT sports participation. We have sought to engage a wide range of people and stakeholders, to give us the widest picture possible, and to make recommendations which are practical, positive and achievable as a starting point to tackling these important issues.

With the Olympics being held in Britain this year, and with the Commonwealth Games set for Glasgow in 2014, this is an ideal time to send a clear message that there is no place for discrimination in sport and that increasing LGBT participation is good for individuals, good for sport and good for Scotland.

**This document is a summary of the Out for Sport Research. A copy of the full report is available from [www.outforsport.org.uk](http://www.outforsport.org.uk) or by contacting the Equality Network.**

We would especially like to thank all the participants who took part and the BIG Lottery Awards for All programme for funding this research.

## Methodology

The research utilised both qualitative and quantitative research as well as a literature review. Research interviews took place with 48 individuals from across 20 LGBT sports groups and 35 individuals representing 28 sports sector organisations, with a further 7 Sports Sector Organisations and 3 elite athletes submitting written questionnaire responses. The Out for Sport survey was a 20 question survey completed by 1722 self-selecting respondents.

The project focuses mainly on Scotland although it draws also on the UK context where relevant. Quotes in this report have come from either the Out for Sport survey or research interviews. Demographic information has been included in the latter case.

## section 1

# key research findings

### 1.1 Key Statistics

**79%**

of respondents think there is a problem with homophobia in sport.

**66%**

of respondents think there is a problem with transphobia in sport.

**62%**

of LGBT respondents have witnessed or experienced homophobia or transphobia in sport.

**73%**

of LGBT respondents think homophobia and transphobia are barriers to people taking part in sport.

**5%**

of respondents think enough is being done to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport.

**94%**

of respondents think sport would be better off without homophobia and transphobia.

**93%**

of respondents think society would be better off without homophobia and transphobia in sport.

**79%**

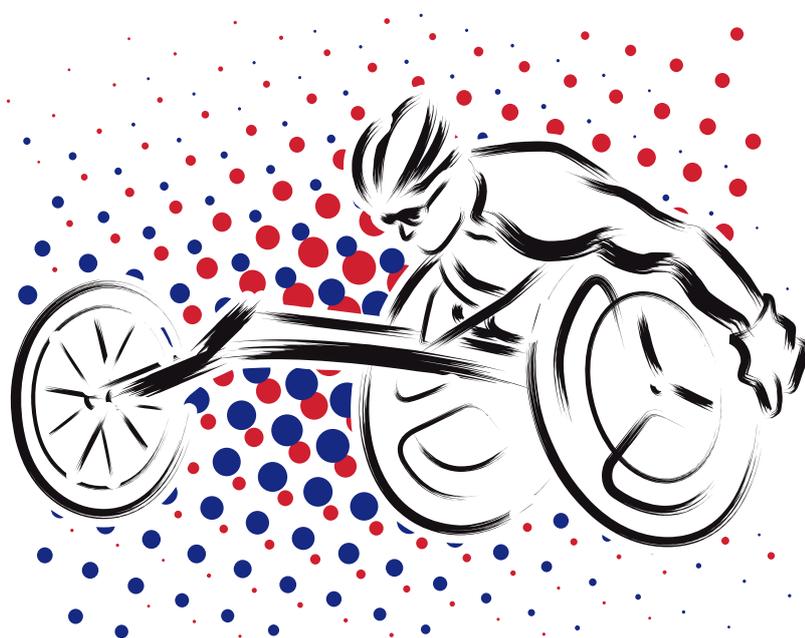
of respondents think there should be a high profile campaign to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport.

**57%**

of LGBT respondents would be more likely to participate in sport if it was more LGBT friendly.

## 1.2 Key Attitudinal findings

- » LGBT people continue to face homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and other barriers to participating in sport, and to a lesser extent in other physical activity. This has a negative impact on the numbers of LGBT people taking part in sport.
- » While sports bodies are content to take positive action around equality in general there appears to be hesitancy on taking action related to sexual orientation or gender identity.
- » Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying continues to be a major problem. The use of the word "gay" to mean something that is negative is endemic within school sports environments. This often goes unchallenged by teachers or coaches and affects both LGBT and non LGBT people.
- » There is a tendency for Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs) to assume a tick box approach to the Equality Standard for Sport (the Standard) process as it impacts on LGBT people. Organisations can currently acquire a level of the Standard without addressing any specific issues around LGBT participation.
- » There remains a lack of understanding and awareness of key pieces of legislation affecting LGBT people. These include the Equality Act 2010, the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012 and the Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Act 2009.



### 1.3 Key Strategic findings

- » Little or no specific action is currently being taken by the Scottish Government and Scottish sports bodies in terms of tackling homophobia, biphobia or transphobia, or increasing LGBT participation in sport.
- » **sportscotland**, SGBs, local authorities and clubs are all looking to the Scottish Government for clear leadership on this issue.
- » There remains a significant disconnect between the aspirations of high level equality policies and legislation and the experience of sport services for LGBT people on the ground.
- » Within SGBs, local authorities and grassroots club provision, there continues to be a hierarchy of equality provision within which LGBT participation is largely ignored. This is due to a number of reasons including:
  - lack of available participation data.
  - work on other equality issues being prioritised within organisations.
  - failure to accept that barriers to LGBT participation exist.
  - risk averse positions taken by organisations and individuals due to reactions or potential reactions from parents, club members or spectators.
- » LGBT young people remain a group with particular needs. Present arrangements around club accreditation and the protection of vulnerable groups can leave teenage LGBT people in positions where it is difficult to access specific LGBT sporting opportunities.
- » The particular sports needs of Scotland's transgender community, for example, in terms of changing facilities, continue to be misunderstood and sidelined. Few SGBs seem to have policies in place covering the issue of transgender people taking part in competition.
- » The recommendations of the 2008 Literature Review of Sexual Orientation in Sport<sup>1</sup> have not been acted upon in any systematic way.
- » The UK Government's Sports Charter to Tackle Homophobia and Transphobia in Sport was generally viewed as a positive action. Of the 3,300 sporting bodies and individuals who have signed it only 3 bodies were from Scotland.
- » There are few examples of best practice in the delivery of LGBT sport and physical activity participation and no evidence of best practice being shared.

## 1.4 Key Positive findings

- » Hundreds, if not thousands, of LGBT people are taking part in sport and physical activity on a regular basis within LGBT branded clubs, teams and groups. Their experience of sport in those settings is overwhelmingly positive.
- » Unquantifiable numbers of LGBT people are also taking part in sport and physical activity within mainstream sports clubs, teams and groups. However, a high percentage of those people are not open about their sexual orientation or gender identity within those sports environments.
- » Whilst there are no openly LGBT footballers in the Scottish Premier League there are a number of openly LGBT elite athletes playing in other sports, particularly within women's sport.
- » Partly as a result of engagement with the Out for Sport project, there are positive signs that some sports bodies and partners are willing to take action to improve the culture and practice of Scottish sport as it impacts on LGBT people.
- » The Scottish Government has recently funded national LGBT organisations to carry out work in the sports sector. They have also funded the newly constituted LEAP Sports which will act as a support body to Scotland's LGBT sports teams, clubs and physical activity groups.
- » There are opportunities to work with partners on significant pieces of on-going work to make sure that LGBT people's requirements are addressed. These include
  - **sportscotland's** work around refreshing of the Equality Standard and the roll out of the Positive Coaching Scotland programme.
  - Children First and NSPCC's continuing work into sidelining bad and abusive behaviour in sport.
  - work with Scottish Student Sport on links between University sports and LGBT societies and on campaigns to raise awareness.
  - work with the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee around equality issues for the 2014 Games.
- » Each and every one of the sports sector bodies and Scottish Government representatives interviewed were committed to the full inclusion of LGBT people in Scottish sport, and to taking positive steps to remove any barriers to full and active participation, where necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> Brackenridge, C et al, Literature Review of Sexual Orientation in Sport, Sport Scotland, Sport Northern Ireland, Sport England, UK Sport, 2008

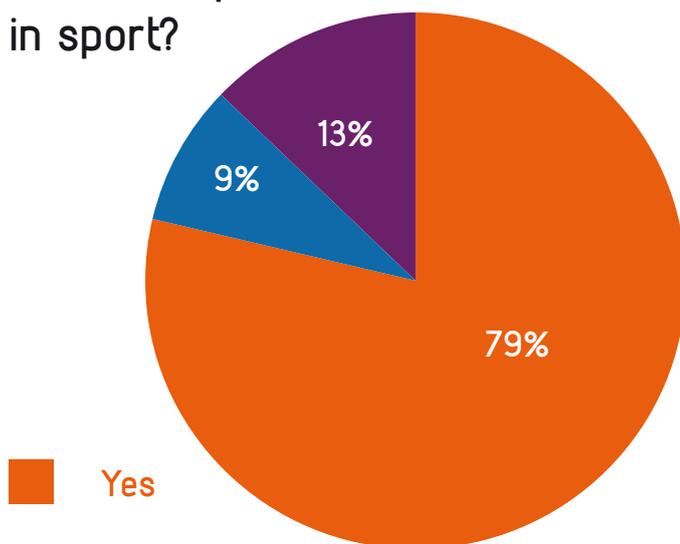
## section 2

# the problem of homophobia & transphobia in sport

### 2.1 Perceptions of Homophobia and Transphobia in Sport

The survey questions asked about homophobia and transphobia in sport.

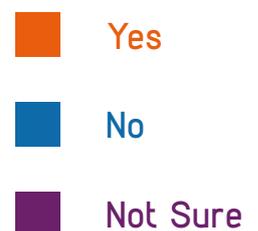
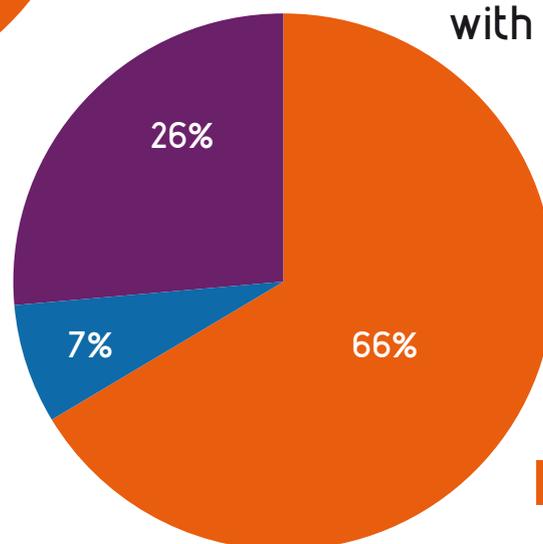
Do you think there is a problem with homophobia in sport?



"Sport seems the last place in society where it's ok to be bigoted and homophobic. There have been massive moves towards tackling racism, but not sectarianism or homophobia."

"Hardly any out gay sportspeople, homophobic insults as a norm... Sport is not a safe place to be gay."

Do you think there is a problem with transphobia in sport?



"There are obvious barriers to transgender people taking part in sport – gendered teams, changing rooms, confidence, etc. – which are rarely tackled."

"It's not as obvious as homophobia, but there are significant problems for athletes to compete at elite level after gender re-assignment."

## 2.2 Homophobic and Transphobic Incidents

Many LGBT people avoid taking part in sport because they fear that they might be subjected to homophobic or transphobic abuse.

**49%**

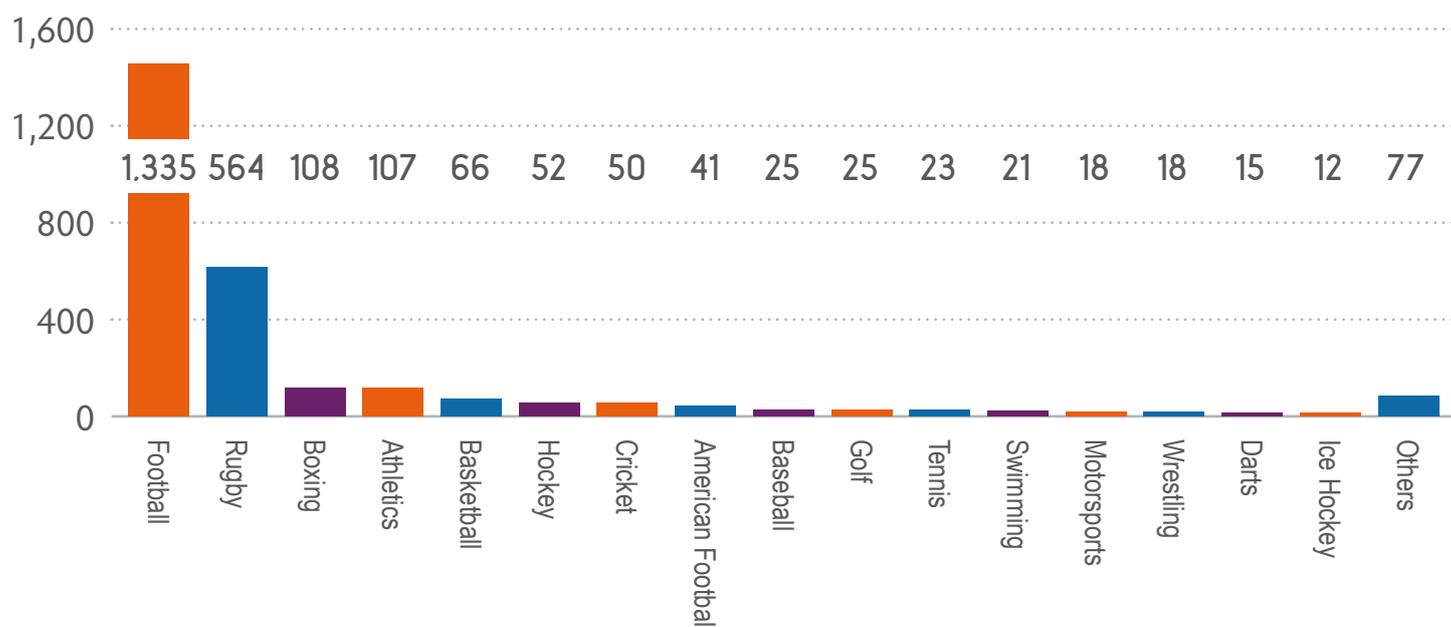
had witnessed homophobia or transphobia in sport

**17%**

had experienced homophobia or transphobia in sport

**98%** of the incidents were described as verbal and **13%** as physical. 670 people gave further details of the incidents and their comments are a powerful testimony to the diversity of the abuse, bullying, emotional harm and intolerance experienced and witnessed by both LGBT and non LGBT Scots.

Not surprisingly, given its prominent role and impact on Scotland's sporting culture, football figured significantly in the comments and views expressed by research participants and was identified in the survey responses, by a significant margin, as the sport which had the greatest problems with homophobia and transphobia.



These experiences were backed up in interviews with LGBT people.

"At school I was subjected to open, direct abuse. They bullied me, teased me, physically attacked me and called me names. When I was in the 6th form at school we went to a local college to swim. There was a swimming instructor there and one of the kids pointed at me and shouted out that I was gay when we were queuing. The instructor joined in saying 'bums to the wall lads'" (Gay man. 35-44. Badminton)

"The majority of the other football teams we play are straight. Last week was the first time there's been a homophobic incident. The manager of the other team shouted something onto the pitch and I think it was borne out of frustration that we were beating them." (Gay man. 24-35. Saltire Thistle)

### 2.3 LGBT Experiences of Mainstream Sport

Many of those interviewed in LGBT sports groups were also taking part or had taken part in mainstream sports settings. Most of the experiences they had had there were positive; however a large number of them chose not to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity at their mainstream clubs.

Many other LGBT people had been put off mainstream sports settings because of earlier negative experiences at school and elsewhere. A number of people felt that while a mainstream setting would be fine for those who were out and confident, that it would possibly prove more difficult for those struggling with their sexual orientation or gender identity.

"It was good to be part of that group of people but you do overhear guys in the locker room calling each other names. It's not a direct attack on you but it makes you feel uncomfortable. They don't necessarily mean to be exclusive but you are excluded and the things they say can be hurtful." (Gay man. 25-34. Running)

"Even at university I didn't want to mention my boyfriend because you don't know what sort of reaction you're going to get. You were just starting out in a team and you didn't want to be seen as different." (Gay man. 25-34. Running)

"I avoided mainstream sport. It comes from the negative experiences at school with sports that I've carried on into adulthood. I wasn't sporty and that was seen as a negative thing at school. If you weren't good at it you were picked on and you suffered." (Trans man. 45-54.)

## 2.4 Information Gaps and challenges to research around LGBT Participation

The Literature Review of Sexual Orientation in Sport which was jointly commissioned by **sportscotland** and the other UK sports councils in 2008 and conducted by Professor Celia Brackenridge and colleagues from Brunel University identified significant gaps in data around LGBT participation<sup>2</sup>.

There are a number of reasons for the gaps in information. These include self-censorship by LGBT individuals and a reluctance by sports organisations to ask for information.

As a result of this Out for Sport research we now know that there are several hundreds of LGBT people participating in sports clubs and groups which brand themselves as LGBT specific or friendly. We know that there are many other LGBT people taking part in mainstream sport; however there is no statistical evidence available to quantify this.

There are a number of reasons why people choose not to disclose their sexual orientation or transgender identity. Previous negative experiences can affect people's trust and confidence; they might still be coming to terms with their sexual orientation or gender identity; or they might have concerns about how they will be treated or have concerns related to confidentiality.

This invisibility can represent a problem both for LGBT sportspeople themselves and for sports organisations. As this report shows, many LGBT people do not believe that they would be welcome in certain sports environments. By recording data which might show LGBT people were taking part, others might be more inclined to get involved.

**"One of the problems is we have no participation statistics for LGBT. If we had them maybe people would be more likely to think sport's for them and come along. People aren't happy to come out in a sports setting so we don't have stats. It's a Catch 22 and it can stop action being taken by governing bodies." (Gay man. 25-34. First Steps Fitness)**

Lack of data is also problematic when sports sector organisations are making funding decisions or decisions about what work programmes and policies to pursue. Local authorities, arm's length leisure providers or Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport (SGBs) will all look for baseline demographic data to be able to monitor whether or not a course of action or a funding decision is justified in advance and whether or not it has been successful on completion.

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<sup>2</sup> Op cit. footnote 1.

### 2.5 Barriers to LGBT Participation

Another of the main aims of this research was to investigate ways in which the numbers of LGBT people participating in sport might be increased. Central to that is understanding what, if any, barriers are in the way of LGBT people taking part in sport.

Some of the LGBT community participants identified issues around gender discrimination and the hetero-normative nature of sport. The culture of sport is often seen as being a very macho, male dominated one where there is a need for a clear hierarchy and certainty in relation to gender. A few mentioned the fact that a strict adherence to binary genders and separating males and females in sporting competitions and contexts represented particular challenges for those who are transgender.

A number of the research participants flagged up a range of popular gender stereotypes around the labelling of sports as “boys’ sports” and “girls’ sports”. For some gay and bisexual men, a limited range of sports available at school, twinned with this gender labelling meant that they had little alternative but to play football, rugby and other ‘male’ sports, when they would have preferred to have played sports that were deemed out of bounds. Meanwhile some women who took part in the research were excluded from playing football, rugby and other sports at school.

**“I have gay friends who’ve had bad experiences at PE who tell me they don’t want to take part because ‘Gay guys don’t do sports!’” (Gay man. 16-24. Football)**

### 2.6 Transgender Specific Barriers to Participation

There are particular barriers to transgender people taking part in sport both at community and elite performance levels. The two major issues raised by transgender people who took part in the research were issues around changing rooms, and access to competition.

In terms of competition, there can be a lack of clarity from sports governing bodies about which rules will be applied, if they do not have a specific policy or criteria in place. SGBs should address this so that potential trans participants are clear about how they will be dealt with.

**“A transgendered friend of mine had scars on his chest from his mastectomy and a stupid man at the swimming-pool, who probably knew what the scars were about started calling him names.”**

## 2.7 Sports-related Homophobic/transphobic school bullying

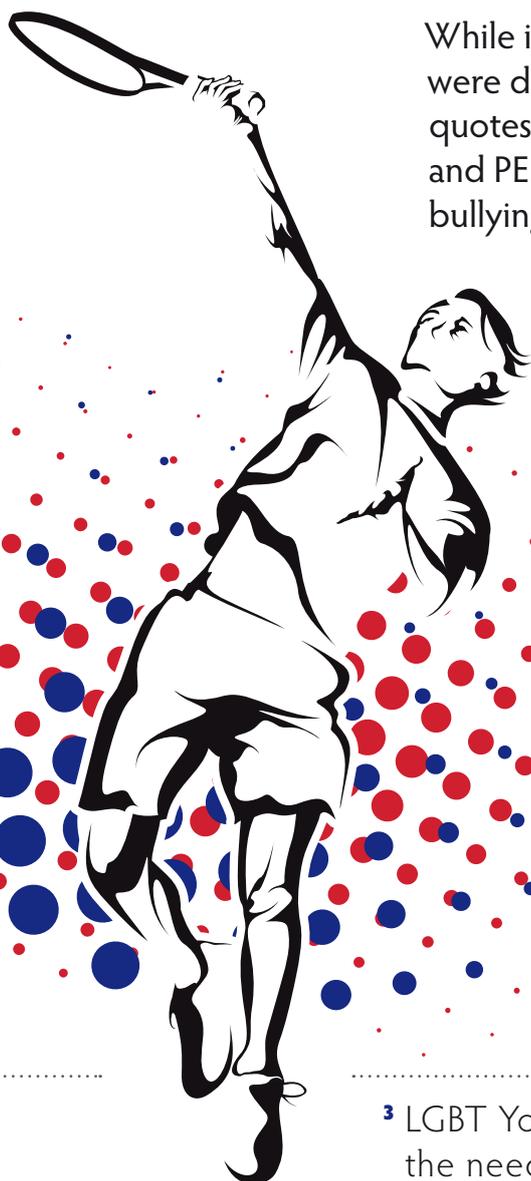
Sports related homophobia and transphobia in schools is a significant problem and has a major effect on the participation of LGBT young people in sport which is continued into later life.

Many people shared examples of having experienced or witnessed homophobia or transphobia. For many, these experiences were rooted in childhood and early adulthood in school.

"I hated it just for the changing room element alone. You were expected to shower together, you were forced to. In a same sex changing room the peer group support was greater for the bully. But there are also schools that just see being gay as wrong and will not discuss it. How do you deal with that if you're being bullied cos you're gay?"

While it would be reassuring to think that these incidents were diminishing as Scottish society becomes more tolerant, quotes from LGBT Youth Scotland's work with schoolchildren and PE teachers in the Borders suggests that homophobic bullying remains a major issue<sup>3</sup>.

"In PE it started in the changing room, when I bent down the girls all shouted she's looking up so and so's skirt. When I'm getting changed they accuse me of flashing my boobs and trying to lure them in. I hate PE. I write my own notes to get out of it."  
(LGBT Young person)



<sup>3</sup> LGBT Youth Scotland Presentation to PE Teachers, Meeting the needs of LGBT Young People in Schools, 2011

## section 3

# tackling prejudice & improving participation

**It is important to recognise that improving participation and tackling homophobia and transphobia in sport are not mutually exclusive, and tackling discrimination will undoubtedly have a big impact on participation while the reverse will also be true. It is also important at this stage to emphasise that a positive approach, of partnership working and engagement, will have the greatest impact on tackling the problem.**

Sport does not exist in a vacuum and it is important that organisations within the sports sector do not feel that more is being expected of them in this respect than is expected of society in general.

### 3.1 How to tackle homophobia and transphobia

Research participants made a number of suggestions as to how these issues might be tackled, as well as raising the need for improved communication and partnership working between key partners.

While it is clear that little has been done to date around LGBT issues in a sporting context in Scotland, there is a need and an opportunity for LGBT national and community organisations to engage with sports sector partners to address the gaps, challenges and issues raised by this research in a way that has not been done previously.

Critically, the fight to tackle homophobia and transphobia is one which requires clear and visible leadership from the Scottish Government, UK Government, **sportscotland** and Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport (SGBs). Many sports sector professionals encountered during this project still believe there are few, if any, barriers to LGBT participation and this will require to be addressed if progress is to be made.

We asked participants in the survey what action should be taken to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport.

Survey comments

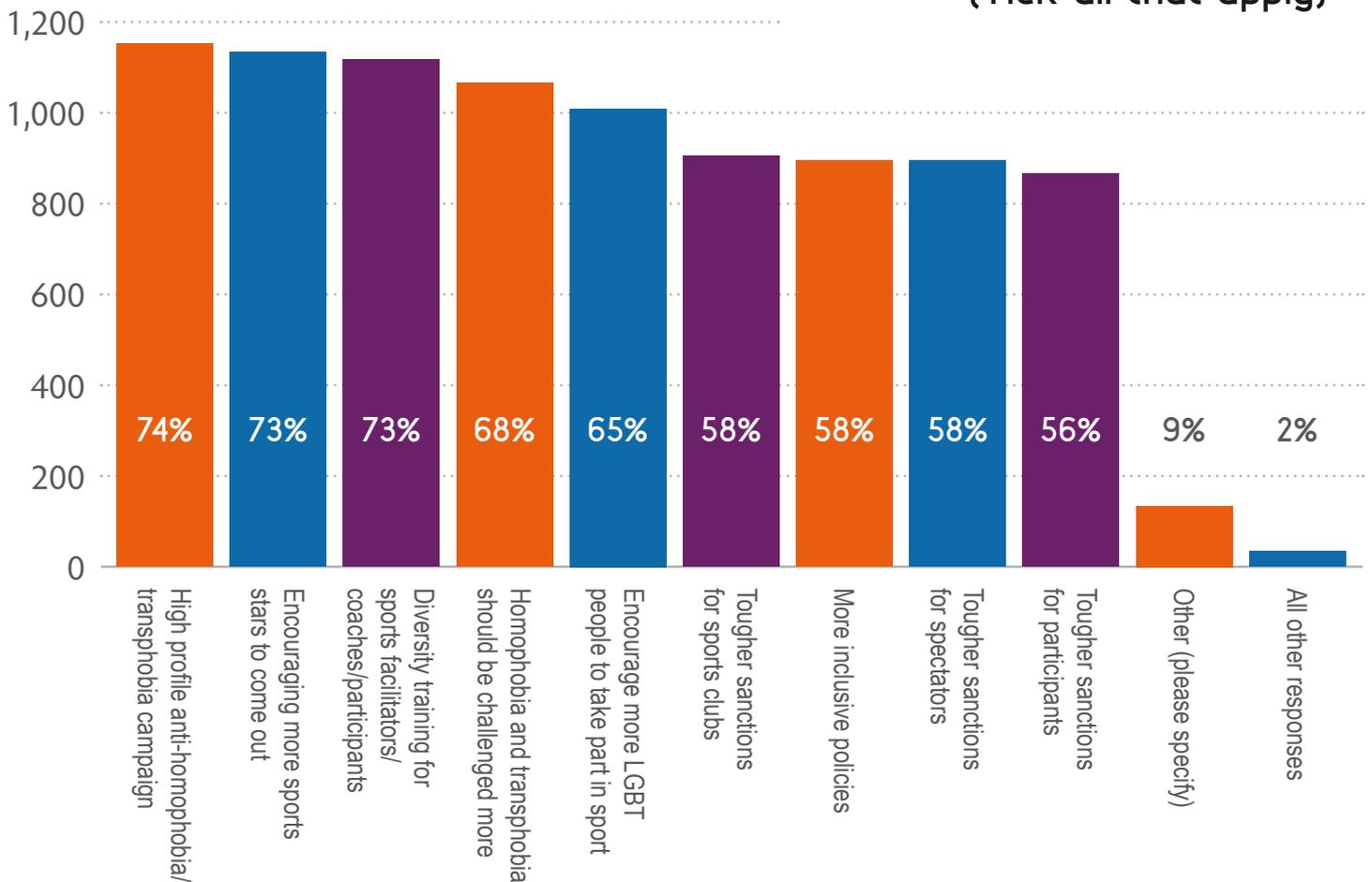
"I think high profile campaigns condemning homophobia in sport are the best way to go, as well as campaigns run by openly gay athletes."

"Training for generalist teachers in primary schools and PE teachers in secondary schools."

"The carrot not the stick, education is the key."

"Campaign groups like Show Racism the Red Card and Nil by Mouth have done a great deal to highlight racism and sectarianism. Similar bodies are needed to highlight the issue of homophobia."

What do you think should be done to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport?  
(Tick all that apply)



## 3.2 Leadership

It is clear from many of the comments made by sports sector representatives, LGBT community sportspeople and those taking part in the survey that many are looking for strong and decisive leadership on the issue of homophobia and transphobia in Scottish sport from both the Government and from the decision makers within Scottish sport.

### Survey comments

“Need to see more vocal leadership on this from the Scottish Government and major sports bodies.”

“Sports bodies need to show leadership on the issue of homophobia and clamp down harshly on those who abuse others verbally or physically.”

“Political leadership is lacking, as is leadership in sporting bodies, who talk the talk but do not walk the walk.”

Interviewees and respondents also sought strong leadership from the sports sector. **sportscotland** are the lead agency for the development of sport in Scotland, and also participated in the research.

“I think **sportscotland** are committed to getting everyone out doing sport and eating healthily. I think they’ll work with anyone to do that however, I don’t think **sportscotland** are making it clear they’re committed to this particular issue. They need to be more pro-active about supporting the LGBT community. I don’t know if they’re scared someone at the top doesn’t want to talk about it but generally their ethos is to support all sport so I’d like to see them be more open about this.” (LGBT Community Coach)

**sportscotland** cited a number of pieces of work which they felt were a starting point to tackling the problem, including updates to the **sportscotland** website, good signposting for governing bodies and updated monitoring forms that SGBs will use which now include a question covering transgender people. **sportscotland** have also started to establish partnerships with organisations like the Equality Network and Stonewall Scotland.

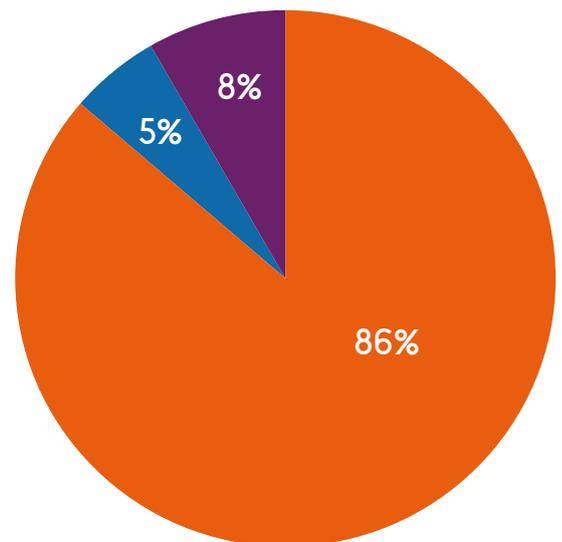
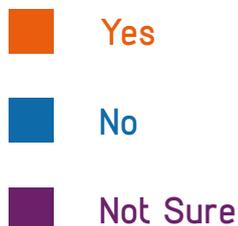
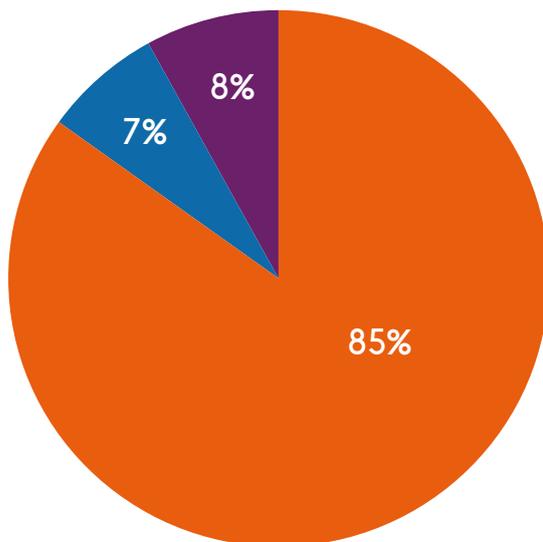
### 3.3 Role Models

The vast majority of those taking part in the survey thought that it was important that there are 'out' sports stars. **85%** thought it was important, with only **7%** taking a different view. Amongst LGBT respondents the figure was even higher with **90%** thinking it was important. Many people view elite LGBT athletes as important leaders in this arena.

Large numbers pointed to the importance of high profile LGBT sports stars as role models, particularly for young LGBT people. Many people felt that the visibility of 'out' LGBT stars was helpful in encouraging others to feel comfortable about being open about their own sexual orientation or gender identity whatever level of sport they were engaged in.

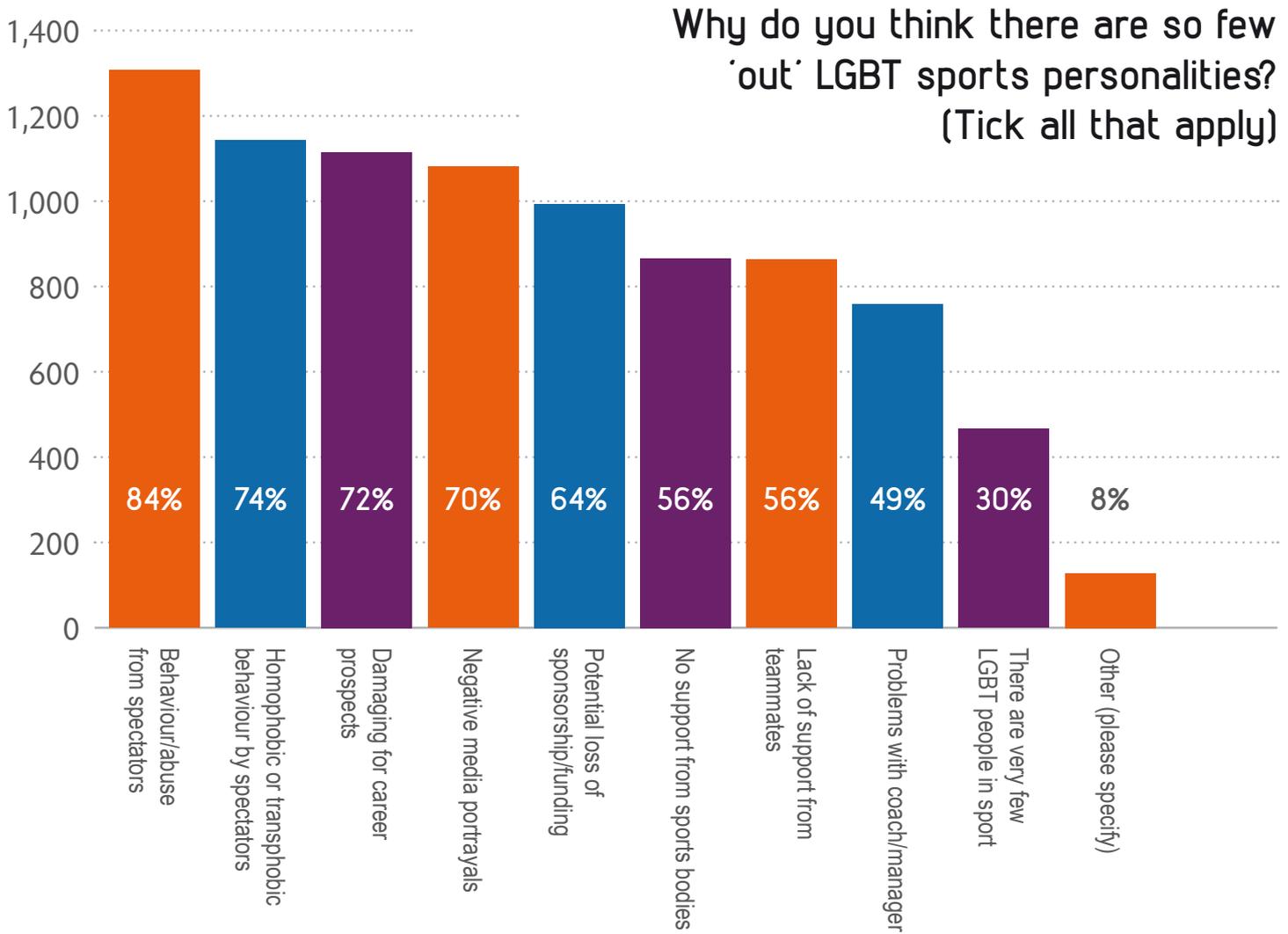
Do you think it is important that there are 'out' LGBT sports personalities?

Do you think that it is difficult for sports personalities to be openly LGBT?



There have still been no more than 100 out gay sports stars worldwide; however some of them are amongst the greatest athletes of all time, including Martina Navratilova and Billie Jean King.

More recently former Welsh and British Lions rugby international, Gareth Thomas, has inspired many of those taking part in this research, by coming out.



### Survey comments

"Sports models are role models and by 'coming out' set an example for others who are still afraid to do so."

"There simply has to be LGBT players within every sport using the law of averages. Over 5000 professional male footballers in Britain and none of them are LGBT – I think not."

### Community comments

"There is fear. You don't know till you've come out whether or not people will have a problem." (Trans woman. 35-44. Walking)

"Obviously there are gay footballers out there, they're just too afraid. I think most fans wouldn't care as long as the player did what they were meant to do on the pitch. If they were gay and scored 30 goals a season home fans wouldn't care." (Gay man. 25-34. Football)

### 3.4 Supporting and Safeguarding LGBT Young People

Both the Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport, Shona Robison MSP, and **sportscotland**, when interviewed by us, focussed on the need to address problems with young people dropping out of sport.

Homophobic bullying can have a massive impact on young people's enjoyment of and participation in sport.

The Minister agreed with many of the survey responses when she focussed on the important part education should play in the equality agenda and the fight against homophobic bullying.

**"Education is a key issue and there has been a lot of work done on homophobic and transphobic bullying. There are opportunities through Curriculum for Excellence to make sure that's not ignored, opportunities to work with Education Scotland to make sure it's there in the curriculum and also in school sport because we know lots of people have real challenges in PE."**

While elite athletes can be role models for LGBT young people, at the grassroots level physical education teachers and coaches can also occupy a significant position as role models for young people. They are also central in creating an inclusive sports environment within PE classes and sports clubs.

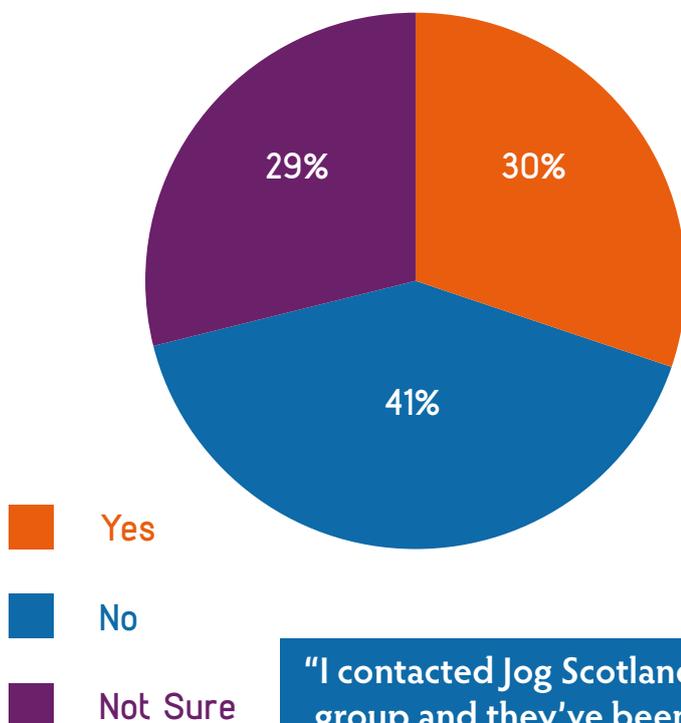
The importance of the coach's role was picked up on by a large number of survey respondents, community interviewees and sports professionals.

**"It would be great if we could have more out LGBT coaches, more black coaches, more female coaches. We need to inspire young people to aspire to be coaches, whatever their background. We're not helping young LGBT people to access role models." Sportscoach UK**

### 3.5 Capacity building within the LGBT sports sector

Over the past decade or so many LGBT people have opted to take part in LGBT sports teams and clubs. They tend to be less well established than their mainstream counterparts but, similarly, they range from fairly informal groups to more organised, constituted teams and clubs. They are more likely to act in isolation and not affiliate to SGBs and they are much less likely to be involved in local sports councils.

Do you think there is a need for LGBT-specific sports clubs, teams or activities?



The existence of LGBT branded teams and clubs is welcomed by many as a safe, welcoming environment in which to play sport. Others, including some of the mainstream sports policy makers interviewed were more sceptical and felt LGBT people should be encouraged to take part in all inclusive, mainstream sports clubs.

Most of the LGBT sports groups interviewed were informal groups, so the vast majority had had little to do with SGBs or organisations such as sportscotland. Amongst the larger and more established teams there had been some engagement with SGBs with differing levels of success.

“I contacted Jog Scotland when we were setting up the running group and they’ve been great” (Gay man. Inverness Running Group)

“Two years ago Hotscots the football team I played with were denied access to the SFA’s public liability insurance because they didn’t play in a league. When they did play straight teams they were subjected to homophobic abuse. Yet we were the team not getting SFA support. I don’t think homophobia is on the SFA’s agenda.” (Gay man. 25-34. Hotscots Football)

Development support is crucial to the establishment of LGBT clubs in Scotland. As LGBT sports clubs are less likely to be affiliated to SGBs, the support provided to LGBT sports groups by organisations like the Equality Network and the LGBT Centre for Health and Wellbeing played an important role in the development and sustainability of new groups. It is therefore welcome that a new national organisation, LEAP Sports Scotland, which aims to support the development of LGBT sports clubs has now been established.

### 3.6 **LGBT Equality Policy and Practice in Scottish sport**

Scottish Governing Bodies of sport have a key role to play in addressing inequalities in sport. **90%** of survey respondents felt they should be taking the lead in tackling homophobia and transphobia in sport.

The Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport was launched by the UK Sports Councils, including **sportscotland**, in 2004, to help address the inequalities that exist within the sports sector. It is a framework to guide SGBs, sports councils and national sports organisations towards achieving equality.

The Standard has been developed to reflect current legislation so **sportscotland** has recently refreshed the Standard to reflect the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and the nine protected characteristics including sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

There are a number of key intermediate organisations working in Scottish sport to assist local sports clubs, SGBs, higher and further education and individuals. Many LGBT community participants expressed the view that the national LGBT equality organisations such as the Equality Network should work in partnership with **sportscotland**, SGBs and other groups to improve participation. Respondents also felt there were roles for local authorities and university sports providers.



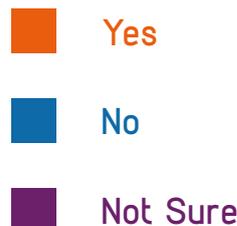
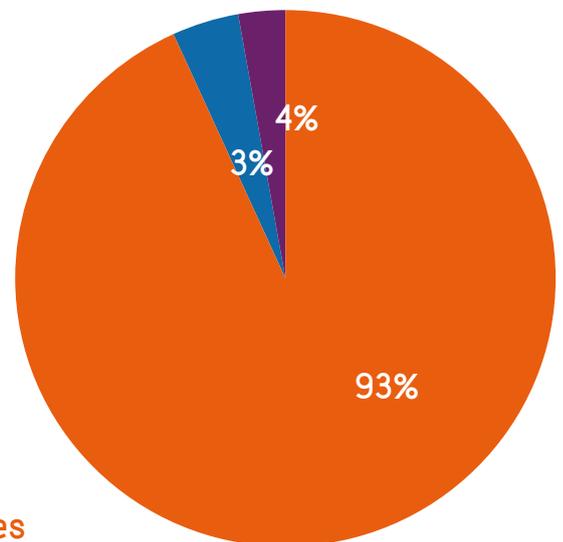
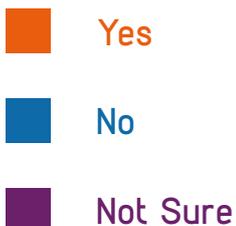
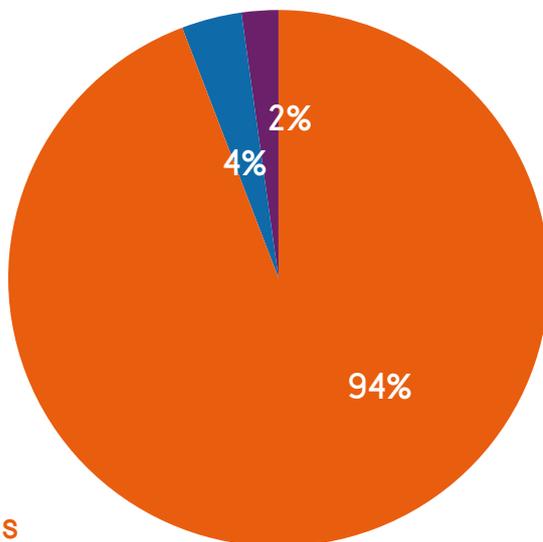
## section 4

# why tackle homophobia & transphobia in sport?

### 4.1 The need to take action

Do you think sport would be better off without homophobia and transphobia?

Do you think Scottish society would be better off without homophobia and transphobia in sport?



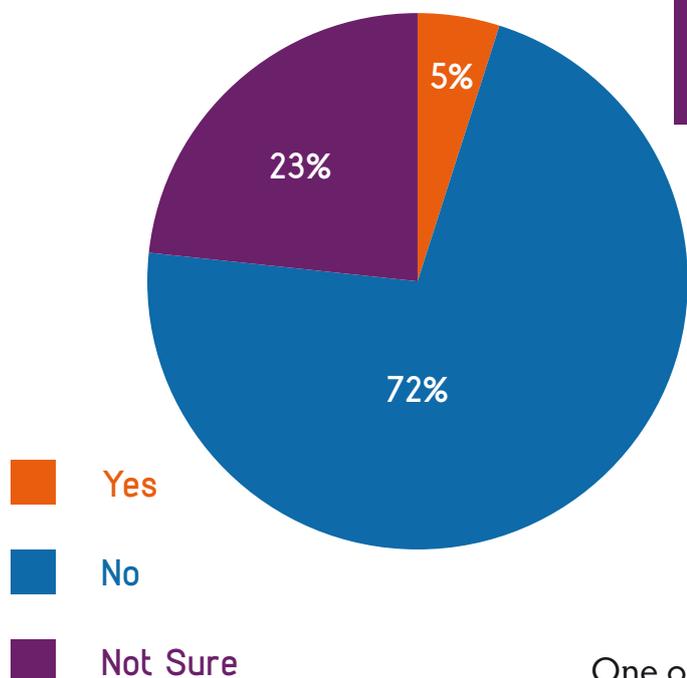
"Because sport should act as a way that brings sections of society together"

"Across the board, sport makes a huge difference to our lives, and whilst any discrimination exists it will put up barriers to people getting involved, and have a negative effect on people's physical health and emotional wellbeing."

"Scottish society would be better off without homophobia and transphobia, full stop."

"Obviously all of society would be better without these prejudices, however I think if sport pushed for this it would make a difference."

Do you think enough is being done to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport?



### Survey Comments

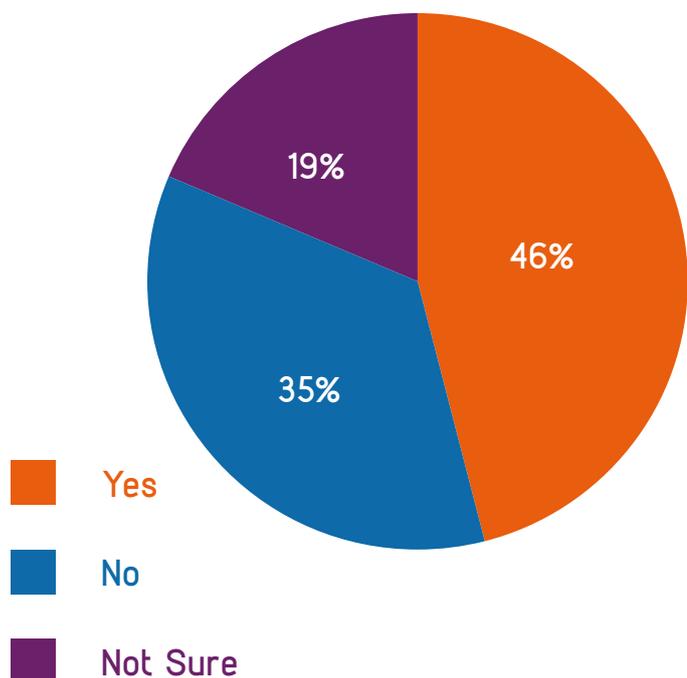
"Totally inadequate. 'Not a problem here' is the usual response. Did they ever ask any LGBT person? I think it's a problem with all bullying, but particularly homophobia."

"Nothing is being done in Scotland as far as I'm aware. If something is being done it needs to be better publicised to be effective."

"I'm sure leaders like football and rugby managers and politicians could speak out more about this as they do with racism."

One of the main reasons given by those who thought that action was not required was the issue of lack of participation data. Some people again expressed the view that LGBT people were already participating and the big challenge was to change the culture so they could feel confident enough to be open about their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Would you be more likely to participate in sport if sport was more LGBT-friendly?



Amongst LGBT respondents the figure who would be more likely to participate if sport were more LGBT friendly rose to a significant **57%**, and amongst LGBT people who had stated they were not currently taking part in sport, it was an encouraging **47%**.

"I was so badly burned by the experiences in sport that I would have to have a great deal of support and encouragement to even consider getting back into any sport", as the abuse I received dehumanised me: I could never court that feeling again."

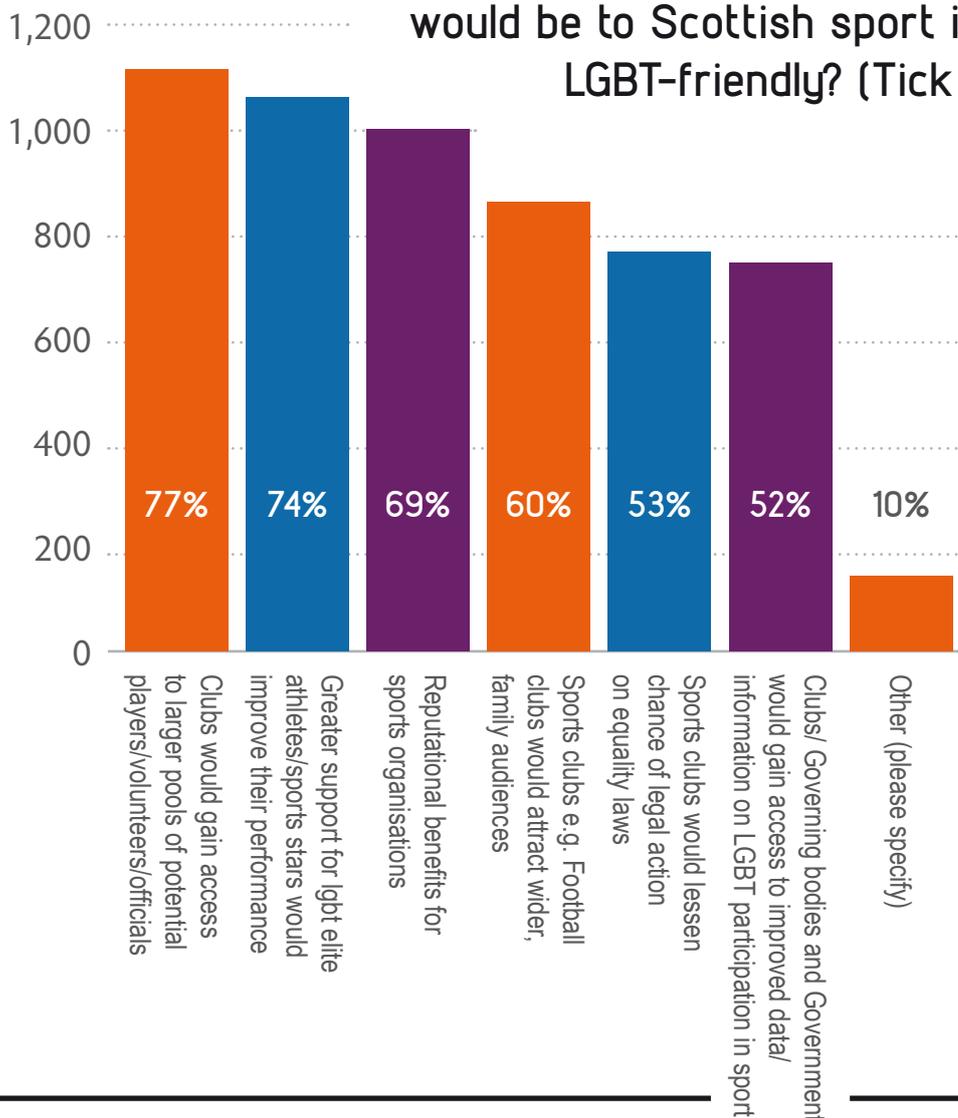
## 4.2 Positive benefits to Scottish sports community

The vast majority of LGBT sports groups as well as those who completed the survey felt there would be a number of positive benefits to Scottish sport if it was more LGBT inclusive.

“It would be a benefit throughout Scottish society. If you have participants accepting LGBT participation in sport that will be reflected in their lives, their connections, networks. If LGBT people can be themselves in a sporting arena then that gives them confidence to be themselves elsewhere. If a mainstream sports organisation like a football club signs up to this it’s saying they respect LGBT fans. It sends a clear message.” (Gay man. 25-34. Squash)

“It would be good for football if LGBT fans could go to watch football knowing they won’t feel alienated. I think it would be a good business decision as well for clubs.” (Gay man. 35-44. Football)

What do you think the positive benefits would be to Scottish sport if it were more LGBT-friendly? (Tick all that apply)



## section 5

# recommendations

**We all want a Scotland free from prejudice and discrimination, and we recognise the significant role and influence sport has in achieving that aim. We also want a healthy Scotland where, again, sport plays a vital role, and the barriers to the full and active participation in sport should therefore be examined and removed.**

Overall, the recommendations in this report seek to achieve three key objectives:

- » Leadership to ensure the elimination of homophobia and transphobia in Scottish sport.
- » Practical action to lift barriers to LGBT inclusion and to encourage greater LGBT participation in sport at all levels.
- » A better understanding of the issues relating to homophobia and transphobia in Scottish sport and what should be done to tackle the problem.

These recommendations are designed to be carried forward by a range of stakeholders and action on these recommendations should reflect a level of proportionality and capability for the different stakeholders involved.

### 1. **Visible Leadership**

The Scottish Government and the sports sector, which includes Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs), Local Authorities, Clubs, Local Sports Councils, Leisure Trusts and Sport facility providers, should demonstrate visible leadership on the issue of homophobia and transphobia in Scottish sport, in order to tackle prejudice and encourage greater inclusion and participation of LGBT people.

- » A Scottish LGBT Sports Charter should be created to facilitate the full inclusion of LGBT people in Scottish sport.
- » SGBs of sport should visibly display support for LGBT participation in their sport (e.g. on official websites, social media, annual reports and through other publications).

- » There should be visible support from the sports sector and the Government for initiatives that tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport.

## 2. National Coordinating Group

There should be a coordinating group established to bring together the stakeholders working for better inclusion of LGBT people and to combat homophobia and transphobia in sport, and to act as an information distribution point. Membership should include the key stakeholders in this work, for example LGBT sector organisations, local authorities, SGBs, sportscotland and others. The aims of the coordinating group would be:

- » To develop an Action Plan taking into account the recommendations of the Out for Sport research.
- » To discuss strategies and monitor progress.
- » To facilitate a partnership approach and share information.
- » A means to facilitate discussion with the Government.
- » A vehicle to provide practical and policy guidance.

## 3. Action Plan

The coordinating group should develop an Action Plan to tackle prejudice, and increase LGBT inclusion and participation in sport, including:

- » A clear strategy with deliverable and measurable outcomes to tackle prejudice, and encourage inclusion and participation.
- » Actions would be informed by the Out for Sport recommendations. They would be prioritised against deadlines, with allocated responsibilities.
- » This action plan should be monitored and evaluated periodically.

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## 4. Policies

Scottish Governing Bodies of sport, and those delivering sport, should have clear, embedded and proportionate equality policies which make a positive difference for LGBT participants at all levels.

- » Scottish local authorities, universities and other public sector sports bodies should be supported to comply with the general and specific duties of the Equality Act 2010. This includes proactively considering equality when carrying out their work, and paying due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across the range of protected characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender identity.
- » Leisure trusts, SGBs and clubs that are in receipt of public money should be supported by **sportscotland** and/or local authorities, where appropriate, to work to the principles of the Equality Act 2010 in terms of all protected characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender identity.
- » Scottish public authorities should make sure that they collect data from, and consult with, all sectors of the LGBT community as effectively as possible, to meet their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 as well as providing better, more LGBT accessible services.
- » Scottish public authorities should be encouraged to set new equality outcomes based upon these Out for Sport recommendations.
- » SGBs should be encouraged to work with **sportscotland** towards the achievement of the Equality Standard for Sport at a level which is proportionate to the size and investment of the governing body.
- » **sportscotland** should make sure that all SGBs know that they are able to take specific and targeted action to address homophobia and transphobia.

## 5. Education

Diversity training should be rolled out to ensure a greater understanding of the needs and issues of LGBT people, and to develop a more inclusive approach.

- » LGBT organisations should build long-term, sustainable relationships with **sportscotland** and Sports Coach UK to develop coaching, training provision and CPD.

- » Mainstreamed equality training which includes awareness of sexual orientation and gender identity issues should be developed for basic level coach education for level 1 and/or 2 coaches as part of their UKCC qualification.
- » Training should be developed for teachers and staff working in schools, clubs and elsewhere, on sexual orientation and gender identity issues including the identification, prevention and challenging of homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- » Local authorities and leisure trusts should make sure leisure centre staff have basic equality training so they can fulfil their requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

## 6. Changing Attitudes

There should be a public awareness campaign to tackle homophobic and transphobic prejudice, and encourage greater inclusion and participation of LGBT people in Scottish sport.

- » The campaign should be supported by relevant departments within the Scottish Government, local authorities, and SGBs.
- » The campaign should be rolled out in clubs, schools, leisure centres and other key areas.
- » The campaign should actively involve SGBs, local authorities and clubs and include sport personalities in order to maximise impact.

## 7. Tackling abuse

Homophobic and transphobic behaviour in Scottish sport should be actively and effectively challenged.

- » SGBs and clubs should visibly challenge homophobic and transphobic behaviour by participants and spectators.
- » Coaches, PE teachers, sports club welfare officers, SGB community development officers, and other key role models and influencers should exercise zero tolerance of homophobic and transphobic abuse.
- » Homophobic and transphobic abuse in all sports should be dealt with by the Police and prosecutors robustly where appropriate, as a prejudice aggravated breach of the peace or threatening behaviour.

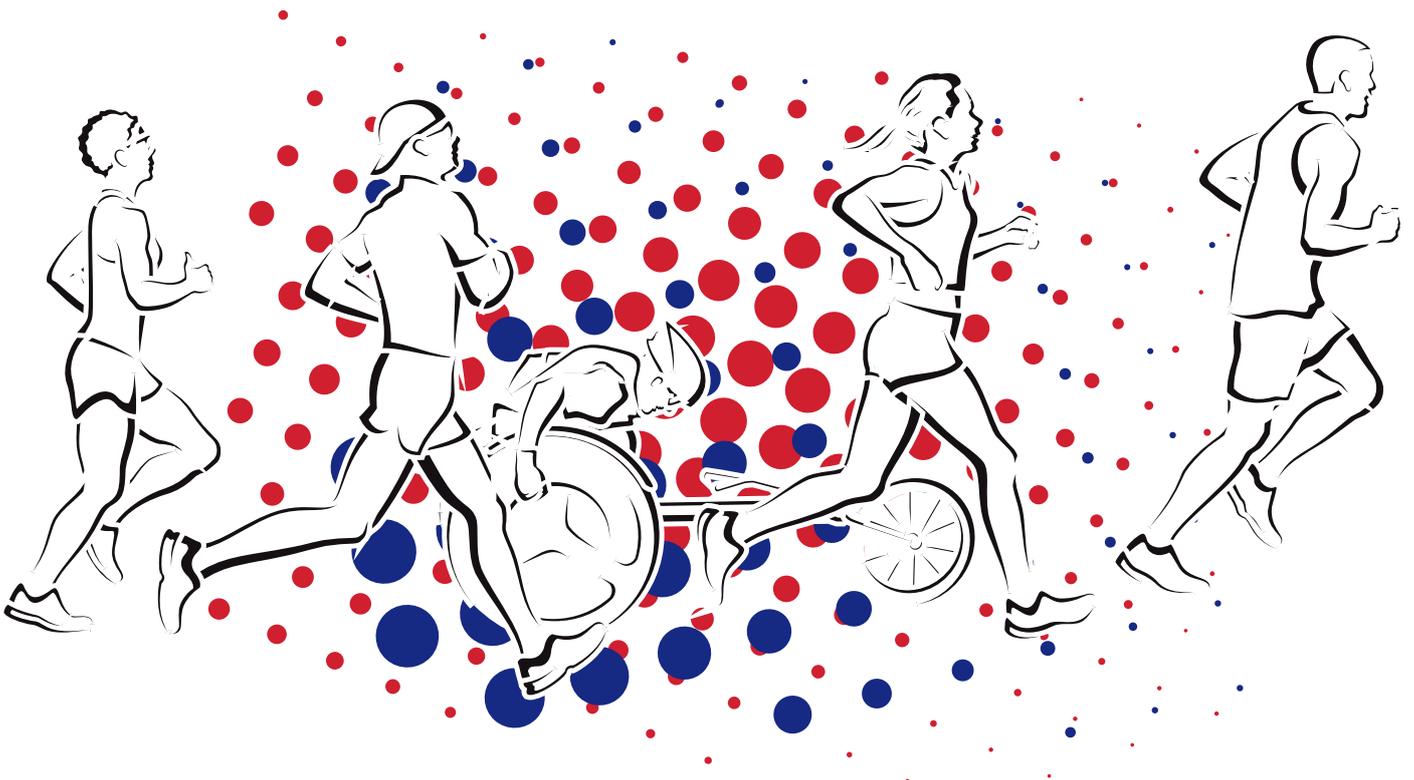
- » The Scottish Government should take steps to educate the public, SGBs, local authorities and clubs that the Hate Crime and Offensive Behaviour at Football legislation also covers homophobia and transphobia as well as racism and sectarianism.
- » The Offensive Behaviour at Football Act should be implemented robustly to challenge and eradicate homophobia and transphobia.
- » The law on threatening communications should be reviewed to ensure that homophobic and transphobic abuse on the internet can be dealt with appropriately.

## 8. Supporting LGBT Participation

Sports bodies should provide support to encourage LGBT participation in sport.

- » The LGBT sector should offer ongoing assistance to SGBs as they develop actions around LGBT participation and homo/bi/transphobia. This could include working with the SFA on the Football Supporters Charter to tackle issues around spectator behaviour and make football a more welcoming place for everyone.
- » There should be an early and sustained focus from the Government on the issues faced by LGBT young people participating in sport and physical activity, to help reduce the teenage drop off in sports participation by LGBT people. This could include looking at homophobic bullying in sports contexts, the equality agenda in PE teacher training and the the range of sports offered in schools.
- » The Equality and Human Rights Commission and the LGBT sector should encourage and assist local authorities, arm's length leisure providers, SGBs, and tertiary education sports facility providers, to gather diversity data in line with best practice on LGBT participation. Too often, diversity monitoring only covers some protected characteristics such as gender but not sexual orientation or gender identity.
- » Exceptional work to increase LGBT sports participation and tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport should be showcased, by local authorities and SGBs, recognised and encouraged.
- » Local Authorities, which deliver **90%** of Scotland's sports spend, should be encouraged to share and showcase good practice.
- » The Scottish Government, **sportscotland**, SGBs and local authority partners should work with equality organisations, including LGBT organisations, to make sure sports clubs and community sports hubs are LGBT friendly.

- » Local authorities, local Sports Councils (where appropriate) and SGBs should be encouraged, through consultation and relationships with LGBT sports groups, to identify and remove any barriers to the full and active participation of such groups in club accreditation schemes and in local club sport generally.
- » Sports facility providers should be encouraged to publish or display information about the changing facilities within particular leisure facilities on their websites. This would include whether they have private cubicles or gender specific changing areas. Particular types of changing arrangements can be a barrier to transgender participation as well as to ethnic groups and others.
- » The Commonwealth Games should champion the positive nature and fellowship of sport and should re-iterate that sport is for everyone, regardless of their background. The Organising Committee should ensure that equality issues including the treatment of LGBT participants and spectators are captured within relevant codes of conduct.
- » Policies around the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) including children should be inclusive of the needs of LGBT young people, protecting them from discrimination as well as from abuse but allowing them to play sport in safe environments where they feel comfortable.
- » LGBT people should be risk assessed and dealt with within PVG systems on the same basis as anyone else, that is, on evidence and not on the basis of prejudice and stereotypes.



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## 9. Capacity Building

LGBT sports clubs should be developed and supported to deliver access to sport and sports programmes across Scotland.

- » SGBs should build links with, and provide support for, LGBT friendly teams/clubs and groups within their sport.
- » LGBT national organisations working in partnership with Scottish Student Sport could assist in developing projects and better links between university and college sports clubs /facilities and LGBT societies.
- » LGBT organisations should assist in the establishment and development of new LGBT and LGBT-friendly sports clubs in order to increase the participation of LGBT people within sport, outdoor activity and physical activity across Scotland.
- » LGBT organisations should develop training and networking opportunities for new and established LGBT sports clubs.

## 10. Employment

SGBs should work with LGBT sector organisations to improve LGBT-friendly employment practices. This work should be supported by **sportscotland** and could be carried out in a proportional way aligned to the work that SGBs do through the Equality Standard for Sport.

- » SGBs and other stakeholders should work to widen the diversity of SGB Board members.
- » SGBs with significant numbers of staff should be encouraged to set up workplace LGBT networks.
- » SGBs should work with LGBT sector organisations to ensure LGBT-friendly employment practices.

Whilst improving employment practices for staff will not solve the issue of homophobia and transphobia in sport on its own, we believe strongly that diverse workplaces better reflect the needs of LGBT people, and such efforts would benefit the wider agenda of LGBT inclusion.



The **Equality Network** is a charity that works for equality and human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Scotland.

[www.equality-network.org](http://www.equality-network.org)



[www.outforsport.co.uk](http://www.outforsport.co.uk)

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