



**Pride in Our
Workforce
Resource**

Welcome!

This resource is designed to support you and your team (the workforce) to become more inclusive. It highlights potential barriers to LGBT+ communities engaging with and enjoying physical activity. It also offers recommendations to help you make positive changes.

Before you start, we want to take a moment to say **THANK YOU**. Thank you for engaging with this resource which we hope will support you and your colleagues to create a more inclusive culture.

Whatever your role, you unite communities through a common passion for physical activity and sport and by generally getting people more active.

TOP TIP When we refer to 'workforce' we mean anyone from coaches, volunteers or instructors to Leisure Centre Managers, reception staff or cafe staff. It could be anyone in a public-facing or leadership role who supports or could support others to be physically active.

'Your organisation' refers to leisure centres, sports clubs, community groups, or any other group that comes together to provide and encourage others to get active.

On average, **LGBT+** people's general health is worse than that of heterosexual people.

(National LGBT Survey, 2017)

Individuals who identify as **LGBT+** are more likely to access mental health services.

(Public Health, 2014)

LGBT+ people are less likely than heterosexual people to do enough exercise to maintain 'good' health.

(Pride Sports, 2016)

Physical activity reduces our risk of major diseases by up to 50% and our risk of depression by up to 30%.

(NHS)

“I think training is needed for coaches and volunteers so that they feel confident to challenge inappropriate behaviour and support people in understanding why there are better alternatives – particularly vocabulary in common use e.g. ‘don’t be a big girl’s blouse’ or ‘that’s so gay’ etc. Also, self-awareness – people don’t always realise we make assumptions based around sexuality e.g. ‘what does your husband do?’ etc.” Research participant

This resource

WILL:



Help you develop the knowledge and confidence to promote a safe space for members of LGBT+ communities.



Act as a prompt to get your organisation and staff thinking about inclusion, and what it means for your team and service-users.



Stimulate conversation at your organisation using several different scenarios.



Provide straightforward hints to becoming more inclusive and highlighting areas you might need more support in.



Help you to support members of LGBT+ communities in taking up your activity offer.



Give you confidence to engage with LGBT+ communities.



Help you understand that you might get things wrong, and that's OK - don't get defensive, see it as a learning opportunity.



Highlight the importance of getting to know your members and understanding their motivations and challenges. Great customer care is key!

TOP TIP

Inclusivity and creating inclusive cultures is EVERYONE'S responsibility, so get all of your workforce engaging in content and conversations.



Guide you to create a welcoming environment, promote inclusivity and a culture that best supports your participants. This will ensure positive experiences and greater retention.



Be a useful reminder that none of us have just one identity. We all have different needs and are happy sharing/not sharing various aspects of our lives. Never let a label that society has given someone dictate how you treat them.

WON'T:



Make you an instant expert on everyone from LGBT+ communities! We are all individuals with our own motivations and barriers.



Be the only thing you will ever need to read for information on supporting our workforce to be more inclusive.



Be a guide to what everyone from LGBT+ communities feel - we are all individuals with different viewpoints and feelings. If in doubt, ASK! Not everyone shares the same preferences.



Give you a definitive answer on how to make your organisation more inclusive. We would love that... but everyone's organisations are different and you will need to come up with the solutions to best fit yours. We do hope we have given you a range to choose from though to make it a bit easier!

“I would love for the workforce to make people feel confident to participate openly as an LGBT+ person.” Research Participant

“I’d love the workforce to take the time to develop an understanding of the individual person.” Research Participant

“Although I am open about my sexuality and partner in all areas of my life – family, work, life, sport participation – I am not open as a coach because I feel like it is something I can’t share. Consequently, I de-gender my partner when I talk about her or don’t mention her. If someone asked me, I would tell them, but it is strange that in this setting alone I feel so awkward.” Research Participant

Why we created this resource

No one comes with a single 'label', either one they have chosen for themselves or one that society has given them. It is therefore important that we see all people as individuals, don't make assumptions, and consider our own biases. The impact that we as the workforce have on people's physical activity experiences will be richer if we take time to learn about the people in front of us.

Funded by Sport England, we teamed up with Bournemouth University to explore the role the workforce could play in increasing LGBT+ access to physical activity and sport.

The resulting **Pride in Our Workforce research report** reveals barriers to LGBT+ communities' enjoyment of physical activity and sport. But importantly, it also highlights opportunities and a willingness to drive change and become better allies. This resource, based on research, will provide a clear and concise way to do this.

Findings highlight that more training or qualifications are not the only way to become more inclusive. Getting to know your members and supporting them where needed and allowing them to feel safe can be much more valuable.

“LGBT+ communities care less about the qualifications or experience of workforce members. A workforce perceived to be approachable and inclusive is a critical part of engaging with LGBT+ communities.”

Research Participant



ATTITUDES CHANGE OVER
GENERATIONS, OLDER GENERATIONS
MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND HOW
HURTFUL THEIR VIEWS CAN BE

Scribbles

We all like to think of ourselves as inclusive. Our research reveals that participants from LGBT+ communities look for signs that organisations are inclusive, such as displaying a rainbow flag.

Displaying a sign such as this comes with a responsibility to actually 'be inclusive'. Throughout this resource we aim to challenge you on this - not to highlight where you are going wrong, but to allow you as individual organisations to identify gaps in knowledge or actions and learn how to improve. You will probably find that any changes made will not only benefit members from LGBT+ communities but everyone else as well.

You are not expected to become an instant expert! Even the smallest of steps can make the world of difference. This is about considering how your offer is being shaped to ensure that everyone feels welcome and supported.

Let's get started!



Scribbleria

Scenarios

(SEE SCENARIO SLIDES)

The slides that accompany this resource feature 10 scenarios. These scenarios happen in real life and have been shared by research participants. You can work through them on your own or with your colleagues. They could form a great agenda item at a committee meeting or at a staff training session... even over a cuppa and catch up session!

Creating the space to review the scenarios, share thoughts and feelings and develop positive solutions is key. Alongside the scenarios is a crib sheet to help your conversations and enable you to decide on and agree appropriate action. Doing this as a group exercise will also help you understand different perspectives and acknowledge shared responsibility.

We have created some 'ideas and suggestions' for all scenarios if you feel challenged and just need some direct advice on the action to take.

“We are really keen to ensure we are inclusive but find we don't quite know where to start and really don't want to offend anyone by mistake. Having these scenarios really helps us focus our thinking and although some are very tricky – it does show that the answers can be pretty simple after all.”

LGBT+ Training Participant

Hints, tips & thoughts

FROM LGBT+ PARTICIPANTS AND THE WORKFORCE

Hopefully by this point you will have looked at one of more of the scenarios. We are sure these prompted some great conversations within your organisation. We know that responses to the scenarios might vary, and possible solutions and actions might be diverse - this is OK. The most important thing is taking action. If any presented a real challenge, we hope the rest of this toolkit will guide you to create some workable solutions for you and your team to implement.

We have extracted some simple snippets of advice from participants of the Pride in Our Workforce research, based on experiences.

Remember, you do not have to be an expert. A willingness to learn goes a long way! We have grouped these together to ensure you find exactly what help and advice you need.

coaches can't just not be homophobic.. they need to
CHALLENGE IT!

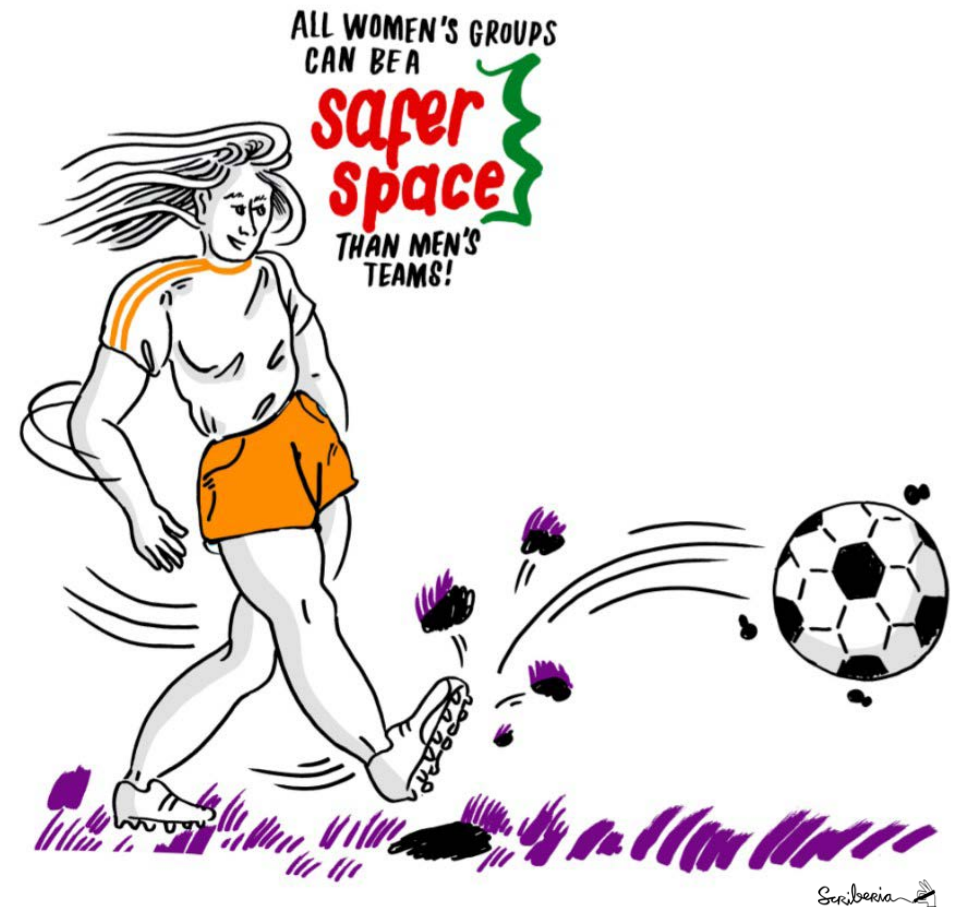
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Tips from the Participants

- ✓ Listen to what I have to say.
- ✓ Use gender neutral language like 'partner' or significant other.
- ✓ Reassure me about confidentiality and processes and procedures the organisation has in place to support me if needed.
- ✓ Respect my individual identity and use the same terms that I use for myself.
- ✓ Use the pronouns that I asked to be used. If you make a mistake apologise and move on.
- ✓ Be honest if you do not understand something.
- ✓ Create sign-up forms that allow me the option to state my gender preference.
- ✓ If available, let me use gender neutral changing facilities - and be discreet/sensitive about it.
- ✓ Targeted events are a great steppingstone into regular sessions and will be a preference for some.
- ✗ Do not make assumptions about me or what I need.

TOP TIP: Gender pronouns are words that an individual would like others to use when talking to or about them. The most commonly used pronouns are "he, him, his" and "she, her, hers".

People whose gender is neither male or female may use many different terms to describe themselves. Non-binary is the most common of these. Non-binary people may choose to use pronouns that don't conform to either male/female gender, such as "they, them, theirs".



Tips from the Workforce

✓ It is always good for participants to know **'who is who'** when it comes to workforce roles and those in leadership roles. It is much nicer if a participant can connect to the right person with a question or concern, so we get the chance to help them straight away.

✓ Anything that can be done to support us as the workforce to get to know our participants better is a great help e.g. understanding motivations and preferences.

✓ A bit of background information on participants always helps us to be that bit more **personable** and **welcoming**.

✓ As an organisation we must challenge any inappropriate language we hear, from participants or colleagues - it is important to take a zero tolerance approach even if people are dressing it up as 'banter'.

✓ Take time to notice, listen and see what is happening around you and respond as appropriate.

✓ Having some support (an assistant) at sessions (especially beginner sessions) is important as it gives me the chance to get to know new participants and welcome them.

✓ We need to consider our culture and how we demonstrate to current and prospective participants that we are welcoming and inclusive. Respect is key. Comfort in expressing sexual or gender identity is a personal thing, so there is not a one rule fits all approach. We need to be sensitive to the needs of everybody as individuals. What people choose to share, when and how should be dictated by them. We shouldn't make assumptions.



“I think training is needed for coaches and other volunteers so that they feel confident to challenge inappropriate behaviour and support people in understanding why there are better alternatives – particularly vocabulary in common use e.g. ‘don’t be a big girl’s blouse’ or ‘that’s so gay’ etc. Also, self-awareness – people don’t always realise we make assumptions based around sexuality e.g. ‘what does your husband do?’ etc.”

Research Participant

“Not for a moment do I think anyone is homophobic, but some language that is used – whilst it may not offend me, especially when it’s not directed at me – does make me feel a little unwelcome.”

Research Participant

Tips on Governance

Do you have a code of conduct or an equity policy, and are these up to date? These are important tools for defining and communicating acceptable standards of behaviour. So if you are not sure, or need to create one, [Club Matters](#) has some great guidance and templates.

Once you have one, a great question to ask yourselves is 'Do we test its content and is it co-created alongside and with participants?' If not, are you sure it is usable and makes sense to everyone?

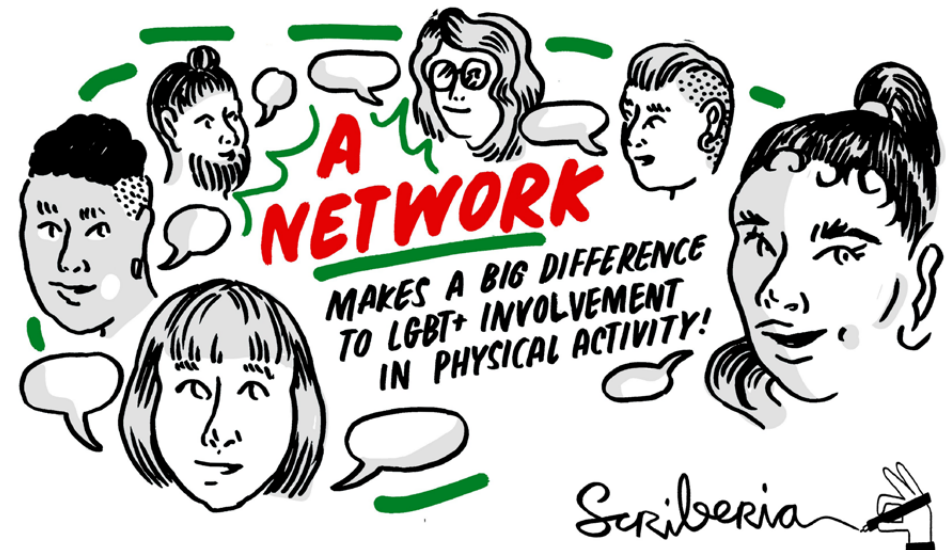
Having a Code of Conduct in place means you can refer to it if you need to when dealing with any challenges or disputes.

Your organisation should not support any behaviour that is disrespectful to others, and this should be set out in the code of conduct.

Please make sure you try to find out about other organisations who might be able to support you and your workforce. This might be your National Governing Body or your local Active Partnership. You might find specific support from other organisations mentioned at the end of this resource.

“As a coach I would love our National Governing Body (NGB) to communicate training available and not have to ask for it, just have it readily available. There is no mention of it on any/majority of our courses. I wouldn't know who to contact at the NGB to ask any questions.”

Research Participant



Tips on reaching out to LGBT+ communities

Could you run taster sessions linked to local Pride events, proactively reaching out to LGBT+ communities to show you are there and would welcome engagement? If you are looking for more information about local Pride events, your local council is a good place to start. For reference, Pride Month is June and LGBT+ History Month is February.

Could you look to run an LGBT+ session – as a stepping stone to the regular sessions within your organisation? Or perhaps a regular separate session - if in doubt ask! Our research indicated that not everyone will share a preference for this approach.

'Come and Try' sessions are a great idea. They enable people to get a feel for the activity and meet the team.

Invite people to come down for a tour (this could be a video on your social media) and a chat, get a feel for the environment and assess whether it feels right for them.

A handbook for participants could be created with everything they need to know about the organisation including a 'who's who' of your workforce. This could be online or a physical pack depending on the type of organisation you are. If you are unsure about the impact of your online presence, check out this [helpful resource](#)!



Tips on supporting yourself and/or your workforce

We need to encourage and support our workforce to learn, but not feel they need to be an expert right away. An organisational approach to inclusion should be encouraged as everyone has an equal responsibility and role to play. Share your Code of Conduct so people know what your organisation stands for and how they are supported, as well as how they are expected to support others. Check out Club Matters for templates if needed.

LGBT+ respondents in our research indicated it is less important that workforce members are qualified or experienced, and more important they are approachable, inclusive and understanding. This reinforces the view that having good customer care that values diversity is much more important than being an expert with regard to LGBT+ communities.

Can you create any opportunities that allow your workforce to get to know participants better? For example, providing a meet and greet session before the start of each block of sessions? Do you organise any social gatherings? Do you offer new participants a buddy option?

Supporting your workforce to be more inclusive

- ✓ Encourage and support your workforce to get to know members as individuals.
- ✓ Remember that everyone will have their own motivations and challenges.
- ✓ Become genuine allies for members from LGBT+ communities.
- ✓ Inclusion is everyone's responsibility, so encourage further learning and the opportunity to share that learning as a team.

Being inclusive and supportive of your workforce

- ✓ Create an environment where everyone is free to be themselves and be open about who they are if they wish to do so. Members of your workforce might be LGBT+ but it's not their sole responsibility to be an LGBT+ champion.
- ✓ Do not make assumptions about people.
- ✓ Support and listen to any problems your colleague might be facing and be a supportive ally when needed.
- ✓ Celebrate your workforce and encourage diversity.

Improving workforce environments:

Physical activity and sport venues could improve inclusivity in five ways

1

LGBT+ Leaders: The workforce requires role models, from elite through to grassroots physical activity and sport. Participants wanted to see more openly LGBT+ leaders at elite and grassroots levels - be it high-profile athletes and pundits (e.g. Gareth Thomas or Claire Balding) or LGBT+ individuals in the physical activity and sport workforce.

2

Stereotypical views, behaviour and language: Workforce members require training and upskilling to avoid the use of homophobic, transphobic and biphobic language, and other discriminatory behaviours.

3

Challenging discrimination: Workforce members need to confidently address discrimination, harassment and abuse when it occurs. They should also engage perpetrators in training to improve future behaviour.

4

Promoting inclusion: Study participants felt that visible symbols of inclusion are important aspects of venue and workforce marketing. This included symbols like the Pride flag to signify inclusion, targeted communications for certain groups, and inclusive imagery within facilities.

5

Facilities and classes: Some venues are perceived to be unsafe and exclusionary because of the built environment and nature of class/group sessions. For example, non-binary and transgender participants spoke about fears when using traditionally gendered changing spaces.

Next steps

1 By now you have had a chance to think about some simple things you could change or put in place. Hopefully you have also worked through some, if not all, of the scenarios. One of your next steps might be to consider your use of imagery across all your marketing platforms.

TOP TIP Consider using diverse images that represent a range of body types.

2 Look through some blogs or examples from others to see what they have been doing to help improve their inclusiveness. Have a read, a watch and see if any of these stories inspire you. If you have a story you would like to share, and you are based within Hampshire and IOW please contact helen.beckley@energiseme.org as we would love to share your experience.

- [BBC SOUNDS: The LGBT+ sport podcast](#)
- [SportsMediaLGBT Twitter](#)
- [LGBT+ History Month: Six LGBT+ sports people you should know more about](#)
- [Stonewalls tips on creating an inclusive workplace](#)



"I'd like to see more LGBT+ ambassadors - those who are 'out' and like me! Not just famous people, but local people too!" Research Participant

Amazing organisations to support you further

allsorts Youth Project listens to, supports and connects children and young people under 26 who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (LGBT+). They also run a wide range of training courses which we can highly recommend... because we have done them! So, if you are looking for a course to upskill your staff, families or anyone else involved with your organisation – reach out to allsorts.

Gendered Intelligence are a trans-led and trans-involving grassroots organisation with a wealth of lived experience, community connections of many kinds, and a wide knowledge of the trans community as well as their motivations and barriers.

Mermaids support transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse children, young people and their families

Pride Sports are a brilliant organisation who not only have been big supporters of this research but also have advised and guided us in the creation of this resource. They aim to challenge homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in sport and improve access to sport for LGBT+ people. Please look at their website for more information.

Stonewall stands for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people everywhere. They have some fantastic information around correct language and a very in depth **glossary of terms**.

Sports Media LGBT have some great content. They also have a great resource to refer to when you think about **marketing**.

UK Coaching and their digital **Duty to Care** tool kit. It is a great online resource! Please encourage all of your team to complete.





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