



# **Sport NI – Sport Matters**

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# Presentation

## The Rainbow Project

Issues for LGBT People in Sport

Actions to consider

# The Rainbow Project

**Founded 1994 address HIV among gay/bisexual men**

**Initial primary concern was the specific health inequalities experienced by gay and bisexual men**

**Focus has developed to include other service areas, the inclusion of policy and the full spectrum of sexual orientation and gender identity**

**Organisations principles rooted in Human Rights for all and respect for, and promotion of Equality and Diversity**

**Now the largest organisation providing services to and advocating on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender people in Northern Ireland**

# The Rainbow Project

## Services:

- **Co-cultural counselling service (1-on-1, couples, group)**
- **Rapid HIV & syphilis testing**
- **Community-based clinics**
- **Personal Development courses**
- **Positive Men's Group**
- **Gay Ethnic Group**
- **Family Ties**
- **Youth Services (North West)**
- **Advocacy Service (Employment, Housing, Policing)**

# The Rainbow Project

## **Policy Areas:**

- **Health (sexual and mental)**
- **Employment**
- **Policing and Justice**
- **Local Government**
- **Housing**
- **Culture and Sports**
- **Equality and Human Rights**
- **Education**
- **Lobbying Function**

# Identified issues in Sport for LGB people

- Lack of research into the experiences of LGB people in sport
- Invisibility
- Research that does exist shows:
  - (i) 75% believe there are top gay players in the English Premier League
  - (ii) 70% fans have witnessed anti gay abuse
  - (iii) 60% people believe that anti-gay abuse dissuades gay players from coming out
  - (iv) two in three people would feel comfortable with a gay player in their team

Stonewall: Leagues Behind – Football’s failure to tackle anti-gay abuse

- 70% of parents are concerned that their children hear homophobic abuse at sporting events

Home Office – [ivillage.co.uk](http://ivillage.co.uk)

# Identified issues in Sport for LGB people

**Whilst there is a basic awareness among stakeholders that there are issues relating to LGBT people that have to do with participation, discrimination and homophobia in sport, there is a lack of expertise (and in some cases desire) to do what is required to address them.**

**Homophobic discrimination and gender stereotyping are not just damaging to those who may be LGBT but risk affecting performance and participation amongst wider groups.**

A literature review of sexual orientation in sport - Sport Scotland, Sport Northern Ireland, Sport England and UK Sport November 2008

# General Considerations

- It is estimated that between 6% - 10% of the UK population are Bisexual, Gay or Lesbian.
- This would mean that between 168,500 and 101,100 people in Northern Ireland fit into this group

There is a distinct lack of openly gay players in sporting teams in Northern Ireland

Invisibility

Lack of role model



# Commitment from Government

**There is no clear leadership on this issue and even some in government positions appear to be hesitant to take a stand on the issue**

A literature review of sexual orientation in sport - Sport Scotland, Sport Northern Ireland, Sport England and UK Sport November 2008

**Government committed to publishing a sexual orientation strategy in 2012, as part of that Strategy Minister Caral NiChuilin MLA:**

**“Ensuring a welcoming environment for LGBT people in sport is entirely consistent with the aspirations of DCAL’s sports strategy, Sport Matters, which aims to bring sport to all people in the north of Ireland. I would therefore call on all sports in the north to fully support this important initiative which is in the best interests of sport as a whole”**

# Actions

Three areas of work that will help begin to address the under representation of minority sexual orientations in sport and tackle homophobia:

(i) Demonstration of Support

(ii) Understand the issue

(iii) Provide support to address the issue

# Demonstration of support

Promote the GEO Charter on Homophobia and Transphobia in Sport – link it to the Sport NI Equality Standard and throughout schools

Develop leadership training about SO and GI equality and impact assessment guidance, to be delivered to all lead sport body CEO's and key public officials working in sport\*

# Understanding the issue

Carryout or commission research identifying patterns of representation and reasons for under-representation

Add a question/questions around sexual orientation into the Northern Ireland Sport and Physical Activity Survey

# Providing Support

Develop and provide practical and policy guidance on ensuring inclusive sport for LGBT people, especially for clubs, governing bodies and elite sports organisations\*

Develop and disseminate advice and guidance materials and systems for sports people dealing with SO\*

Incorporate issues around SO and GI awareness into official programmes for coaches and officials, particularly those working with young people.

# Actions

There are different dimensions to sport: team vs individual, elite vs recreational, health and social benefits of participation, sports influence on fans and spectators. Each of these brings different challenges and opportunities for LGBT inclusion and equality. A literature review of sexual orientation in sport - Sport Scotland, Sport Northern Ireland, Sport England and UK Sport November 2008

All actions must therefore be aimed at amateur participants, professional participants, employers, officials, spectators and fans to ensure effectiveness.

# Questions

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