

# **A Review of Sexual Orientation in Sport**

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A research study for:

**sportscotland**  
Sport Northern Ireland  
Sport England  
UK Sport

by

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## FURTHER INFORMATION

This Research Report was commissioned by **sportscotland**, Sport Northern Ireland, Sport England and UK Sport to review sexual orientation in sport and other physical activity and draw out policy implications.

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The summary report, *A literature review of sexual orientation in sport: summary* by Professor Brackenridge and colleagues, is available with this main report on the following websites:

[www.sportscotland.org.uk](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk)

[www.sportni.net](http://www.sportni.net)

[www.sportengland.org.uk](http://www.sportengland.org.uk)

[www.uksport.gov.uk](http://www.uksport.gov.uk)

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

BOA	British Olympic Association
CAAWS	Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity
CoE	Council of Europe
COSO	Coalition on Sexual Orientation
EGLSF	European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission (UK)
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
FA	Football Association (England)
GFSN	Gay Football Supporters network (England)
GLAAD	Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation
GLAF	Gay and Lesbian Athletics Foundation
HB	Homophobic bullying
IGLFA	International Gay and Lesbian Football Association
IGLYO	International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth and Students Organisation
ILGA	International Lesbian and Gay Association
IOC	International Olympic Committee
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people
NCLR	National Center for Lesbian Rights (Sports Project) (USA)
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NGB	National Governing Body of sport
NGO	Non Government Organisation
ONS	Office for National Statistics
SGB	Scottish Governing Body of sport
SO	Sexual orientation
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
WSFF	Women's Sports and Fitness Foundation (UK)
WSF (US)	Women's Sports Foundation (USA)
WSI	WomenSport International

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NI Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM): Equality Unit

## FOREWORD

The sports councils in the UK have recognised the social and legal imperatives for sports bodies to support participation among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual<sup>1</sup> (LGBT) people and to oppose homophobia and related discrimination in sport. This issue has not previously had the priority that has been accorded to other equality strands such as gender, disability or ethnicity, and only in recent years has the process started of giving sexual orientation equal importance to the other equality strands. However, the forthcoming Single Equality Bill (expected to be passed early in 2009) is likely to require all equality strands to be given equal importance.

The process of implementing effective policies to ensure LGBT people are not subject to discrimination and harassment in a sports context has been hampered by two factors: social attitudes and lack of information.

- Social attitudes have meant that there has been a reluctance even to recognise that sports participation by those whose sexual orientation is anything other than heterosexual can be problematic. Discrimination can run deep: it may be implicit through 'heteronormative' attitudes<sup>2</sup> as well as explicit through homophobia, and does result in self-censorship by LGBT people.
- Information gaps are substantial. Whilst non-inclusive attitudes, homophobia and self-censorship are well-documented, they remain anecdotal – we cannot quantify how prevalent they are. We cannot even do the simple analyses – as we can for women, older people, those with a disability or from a minority ethnic background – that would tell us to what extent LGBT people undertake different levels of sports participation<sup>3</sup>. Such information would underpin the more in-depth understanding that qualitative investigations can provide and also ensure that sexual orientation is given a more prominent place in the sports policy agenda.

In order to improve and develop their policy advice, the sports councils commissioned Professor Brackenridge and colleagues to review what is known about sexual orientation in sport and to draw out implications and practical recommendations. The welcome result is this thorough analysis of a wide range

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<sup>1</sup> Transsexualism or transgenderism is not a sexual orientation; but given the commonality of equality issues and of some of the available documentation it was appropriate to commission a review that addresses issues relating to both LGB and transsexual people in sport.

<sup>2</sup> Attitudes that view heterosexuality as the 'normal' sexual orientation.

<sup>3</sup> In 2008 for the first time national data are being gathered through the Scottish Health Survey on both sports participation and sexual orientation. As there are no obvious reasons why these should differ significantly north and south of the border, they should provide a yardstick for the UK. Information is also beginning to emerge from equality surveys of their members by governing bodies of sport.

of research and policy documents, presented with a combination of academic rigour and strong advocacy for the issues raised.

The review describes the gaps in our knowledge and identifies further research needs. It also makes policy recommendations, including the following which should be achievable given the information we now have:

- Practical and policy guidance on assuring inclusive sport for LGBT people, especially for clubs, governing bodies and elite sport organisations. Such guidance is beginning to emerge, for example *Transsexual people and sport: guidance for sporting bodies*<sup>4</sup> (DCMS, 2005), and this review should inform the preparation of more.
- Development and dissemination of advice and guidance materials and systems for athletes dealing with sexual orientation issues.
- Case studies to illustrate how processes and practices in different sport contexts can be adjusted to include LGBT athletes and sports personnel. (A list of useful case studies is included in Appendix 4.)
- Preparation of advice sheets on service and facility provision for trans people<sup>5</sup> in different sports.
- Development of leadership training about sexual orientation equality and impact assessment guidance, delivered to all lead sports body chief executive officers and key public officials working in sport.

We strive for tolerance and adherence to standards by sports bodies and participants. However, as the authors conclude, we also need to go beyond that to achieve genuine inclusiveness for the benefit of sport as a whole.

Our thanks go to Celia Brackenridge, Pam Alldred, Ali Jarvis, Katie Maddocks and Ian Rivers for producing this important review which we hope will improve understanding and influence the development of policy and practice for sexual orientation and sport.

**sportscotland**

**Sport Northern Ireland**

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**UK Sport**

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<sup>4</sup> [www.ukssport.gov.uk/assets/File/Generic\\_Template\\_Documents/Standards\\_in\\_Sport/transsexuals.pdf](http://www.ukssport.gov.uk/assets/File/Generic_Template_Documents/Standards_in_Sport/transsexuals.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> 'Trans people' is a term that describes a complex range of overlapping individual circumstances. Broadly – and necessarily simplistically – trans people include transgendered people and transsexuals: transgender is a matter of identity and thus part of the 'queering' process; transsexualism is medically determined.



## **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this study was to review and critique the literature on sexual orientation in sport in order to inform equality impact assessments, support the implementation of the sports councils' equality schemes and inform the advice given by these agencies on developing sports participation among those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual (LGBT) and on tackling homophobia in sport.

The review focuses mainly on the UK context and English language sources but also draws on materials and policy references from other countries where these are relevant. All levels of the sport performance ladder are addressed, from recreational to elite.

The review involved:

- literature searches of major electronic databases related to sport and the social sciences (see Appendix 1a);
- a desk study of available information on sexual orientation in sport, including examination of the policy infrastructure of a small number of international sport and sport advocacy organisations (Appendix 1b); and
- telephone/email interviews with a small number of stakeholders in voluntary sector sport, non-sport and public sector bodies (Appendix 1c).

Sexual orientation usually refers to the direction of someone's erotic or sexual desire, and is usually expressed along a continuum from exclusively heterosexual (only being attracted to people of the opposite sex) to exclusively homosexual (only being attracted to people of the same sex). The researchers conducting this review began from the standpoint that sexual orientation (SO) is a dynamic rather than fixed set of statuses, that interpretations of SO depend on learned social roles, and that treatment of SO within sports organisations is politically and historically relative.

To help analysis of the literature and policy search a 'change model' was used to illustrate the various stages of action and expertise that influence progress in this area. From the analysis of interview transcripts, policies and research, gaps and priorities for further research were identified.

## **Key Findings**

- Research focusing on identity and experience research is the dominant theme in the literature, with considerable additional contributions from the literature on women/femininities and men/masculinities.

- Bisexuality and transsexuality are underrepresented in sports research and policy.
- Whilst there is a basic awareness among stakeholders that there are issues relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (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.
- Lack of data and evidence means these issues can be ignored or remain hidden.
- Equality issues around sexual orientation and gender identity are still seen differently from comparable issues on race, gender or disability and the underlying prejudices are different.
- Much of the prejudice and negativity around LGBT issues in sport can be traced back to the application of gender stereotypes and perceptions of masculinity and femininity.
- Attitudes within sport both reinforce and are underpinned by wider social attitudes. It would be unfair to judge sports organisations by higher standards than those demonstrated elsewhere.
- Young people are seen as key to effecting change because they often express more enlightened attitudes to diversity than older generations. Sport can be a powerful influence both on young people's own personal development and on their attitudes to others, so young people's openness to diversity is likely to continue even after their personal involvement in sport ceases.
- There are many different dimensions to sport: team vs individual, elite vs recreational, health and social benefits of participation, sport's influence on fans and spectators. Each of these brings about different challenges and opportunities for LGBT inclusion and equality.
- In relation to effective service delivery, there is little evidence of integrated policy or thinking related to sport, health, education and social inclusion. Bringing these elements together more effectively could create a step-change in some of the issues relating to LGBT and equality, and help to add value to governments' efforts to work in a more joined-up way across health, sport, education and industry.
- Homophobic discrimination and gender stereotyping are not just damaging to those who may be LGBT but risk affecting performance and participation amongst far wider groups.
- There is no clear leadership on this issue and even some in government positions appear to be hesitant to take a stand on policy.

# Recommendations for Research and Policy

## Research

- 1 Quantitative research to identify patterns of representation.
- 2 Targeted qualitative research on the experiences of bisexual sports people, coaches and other support roles.
- 3 Research into the impact of queer/ing<sup>6</sup> on individuals and organisations and implications for policy.
- 4 Inclusion of SO-related items within all standard public survey measures in sport.
- 5 Embedding of SO as a criterion within all publicly-funded sports research agendas on age, race, disability, religion and class.
- 6 Qualitative retrospective research to assess the types, extent and impact of homophobia on LGBT athletes and their entourages at the elite/performance level.
- 7 Relational studies of the interactions of LGBT and heterosexual sports people, coaches and other support roles.
- 8 Comparative analyses of LGBT equality in sport and other related areas such as health and education.
- 9 Replication of studies on SO diversity management in the public sector such as Munro (2006) and Colgan et al (2007).
- 10 Development of a methodology for conducting a cost-value analysis of SO diversity management in elite sport.
- 11 Prevalence studies of SO-related violence and harassment for LGBT sports people, coaches and other support roles.
- 12 Development of case management systems to collect and collate incidence data on these themes.
- 13 Mixed method policy research to audit whether, how and why providers (especially governing bodies of sport) do or do not address SO and to collect case studies of good practice.
- 14 Development of research and educational materials to support impact assessments.

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<sup>6</sup> 'Queer' is a term applied to those for whom the very notion of a defined sexual identity is restrictive and essentialist and who therefore perform or 'do' sexuality in a variety of ways designed to test the boundaries of the 'normal' in society.

## Policy

- 1 Provision of lifestyle support expertise for talented and elite athletes, focused on coming out, working with LGBT/heterosexual peers, managing SO in different cultures, dealing with homophobia.
- 2 Practical and policy guidance on assuring inclusive sport for LGBT people, especially for clubs, governing bodies and elite sport organisations.
- 3 Development and dissemination of advice and guidance materials and systems for sports people dealing with SO issues.
- 4 Preparation of advice sheets on service and facility provision for transsexual people in different sports similar to that produced by Press for Change<sup>7</sup> and DCMS (2005).
- 5 Case studies to illustrate how processes and practices in different sports contexts can be adjusted to include LGBT sports people, coaches and other support roles.
- 6 Adaptation of and/or engagement by sports organisations with Stonewall's Equality Index<sup>8</sup> and Diversity Champions Programme<sup>9</sup>.
- 7 Development of leadership training about SO equality and impact assessment guidance, delivered to all lead sport body CEOs and key public officials working in sport.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.pfc.org.uk](http://www.pfc.org.uk)

<sup>8</sup> [www.stonewall.org.uk/cymru/english/workplace/642.asp](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/cymru/english/workplace/642.asp)

<sup>9</sup> [www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace/1447.asp](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace/1447.asp)

# SECTION 1: CONTEXT

## Chapter 1 Background

### 1.1 Purpose

This review of sexual orientation (SO) in sport was commissioned by **sportscotland**, UK Sport, Sport Northern Ireland and Sport England, in order to:

- inform equality impact assessments;
- support the further development and implementation of the sports councils' equality schemes; and
- inform the advice given by these agencies on developing sports participation among those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual (LGBT) and on tackling homophobia in sport.

The review is intended to:

- investigate issues relating to SO and sports participation (from grass-roots to elite levels) and non-participation, including homophobia;
- identify barriers and evidence of overcoming barriers;
- present such data as might exist on LGBT rates of participation;
- describe policies and case studies including good (and bad) practice relating to SO, participation and homophobia;
- report on the evaluation of related programmes and policies concerning SO in sport;
- identify potential questions for further research; and
- inform policy aimed, in particular, at increasing participation among LGBT people, reducing homophobia in sport and complying with relevant legal and human rights imperatives.

### 1.2 Scope

This review is based on English language studies only. It focuses mainly on the UK context but also draws on some materials and policy references from other countries where these are relevant. All levels of the sport performance ladder are addressed, from recreational to elite.

## 1.3 Process

The research comprised the following stages:

- A desk study of databases and grey literature (such as reports and short-life documents), focusing mainly on the UK but also addressing appropriate international comparisons where these were available, concentrating especially on aspects of SO and homophobia in sport and related physical activity (the search strategy is outlined in Appendix 1a).
- A comparative study of associated research and policy literature (Appendices 1a and 1b indicate the sampling frames for these).
- Consultations with expert informants (Appendix 1c).
- Close liaison throughout the review with the Project Steering Group and its lead officer.

## 1.4 Approach

### 1.4.1 Definitions

Contrary to widespread public assumption, sexual orientation (SO) is not necessarily determined by genetics nor is it aligned neatly with biological categories (male/female) (Hood-Williams, 1995). Indeed, genetic sex itself cannot be demarcated in this way since ‘sexual ambiguity’ (Lungqvist and Genel, 2005, pS42) arises from a variety of genotypes. SO generally refers to the direction of someone’s erotic or sexual desire, and is usually expressed along a continuum from exclusively heterosexual (only being attracted to people of the opposite sex) to exclusively homosexual (only being attracted to people of the same sex). There are many divisions of lesbianism (women-identified women), some linked to political differences and some to sexual differences; similarly, gay men do not all share the same political or sexual perspective. Bisexual people are neither exclusively gay/lesbian nor straight (heterosexual). ‘Trans people’ is a term that describes a complex range of overlapping individuals circumstances. Broadly – and necessarily simplistically – trans people include transgendered people and transsexuals: transsexualism is medically determined; transgender is a matter of identity and thus part of the ‘queering’ process. ‘Queer’ is a term applied to those for whom the very notion of a defined sexual identity is restrictive and who therefore perform or ‘do’ sexuality in a variety of ways designed to test the boundaries of the ‘normal’ in society. According to Jayne Caudwell, arguably the leading British researcher of queer/ing in sport, ‘queer’ describes “activism, theory, politics, identity and community” in ways that undermine compulsory and dominant sex/gender relations (Caudwell, 2006, p. 2).

### 1.4.2 Social Change and the Heterosexual Imperative

The historical emergence of 'the heterosexual' (Ward, 2008) coincided with the foundations of modern sport as a social institution in the late nineteenth century. Both constituted responses of white middle-class masculinity to modernisation, urbanisation and increased prominence of women and black and immigrant men in the labour market. Sport still appears to be inescapably constituted as a sex-segregated social institution: indeed, Kolnes argues that sport is not only based on gender divisions but also that heterosexuality is an 'organising principle' (Kolnes, 1995), yet in other cultural spheres such as music, theatre or literature this is not the case. The reasons for this are biological/physical, socio-historical and political.

The separation of sports into male and female on biological grounds is reinforced by powerful ideological and political mechanisms that also strengthen heterosexual norms. What might seem 'natural' (ie, based on bio-genetic sex differences) is actually 'social' (ie, based on culturally constructed gender differences). Woven into these gender divisions is the heterosexual imperative that privileges particular expressions of masculinity above others and above all types of femininity. Sex segregation is embedded in the organisational systems of sport and in the ideological and cultural domination enjoyed by a particular kind of heterosexual masculinity. Whannel (2007, p7) after Connell (1995, p71) points out that it is not possible to discuss masculinity except in relation to femininity since both are relational concepts. Similarly here, it is not possible to consider LGBT people in sport without interrogating the heteronormative – and associated homonegative – gender order of sport (Krane, 1997b).

Many eminent feminists and pro-feminists have argued persuasively in recent years that sport is a prime site for the (re)production of a particular kind of hegemonic (all-pervasive or dominant) heterosexual masculinity (Lenskyj 1992b; Hall 1996; Messner 1992, 1996; Messner and Sabo 1994). Some even describe it as hyper-masculine or hyper-heterosexual (Kirby et al, 2000) by which exaggerated or 'macho' representations of masculinity are pursued and valued above all others. Messner (1996, p223) argued that the social construction of sexual identities is a process which contributes to a matrix of domination that also includes race, class and gender. In other words, heterosexual privilege and power is linked to the other major social hierarchies in society. This analysis is reflected in the six equality strands now addressed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) – gender, race, disability, age, religion and sexual orientation. According to Aitchison (2007, p1), however, it is gender and sexuality that are most closely intertwined in the construction of individual identities, identity politics and identity relations.

Early feminist theories focused on lack of women's rights (to, for example, the vote, access to university education, and abortion) in ways that reinforced the male/female (sex), masculine/feminine (gender) divisions in society. More recently, however, social theories have challenged previous thinking and have

opened up the possibility that, rather than being fixed or stable categories or identities, gender and SO are in fact fluid, changeable and multiple (hence masculinities, femininities and sexualities). In so doing, such theorists have presented a major challenge to social and gender policies and practices. Nowhere are such challenges as starkly evident as they are in sport, which is historically laden with fixed gender expectations and which is deeply segregated on grounds of sex (see section 3.2.9). In most but not quite all sports, men and women compete separately even if they are regulated by single-sex organisations. Even though age, race, ability, religious and geographic divisions are commonplace in sport competitions, it is by gender that we most frequently divide.

One of the prompts for this review was the recognition by the commissioning agencies that policy and practice in sport lags behind both modern theorising about sexual identity and, perhaps more importantly, behind legal statutes and everyday practices. Many (especially young) people – urged by politicians and advocacy groups to take part in sport and other physical activity – find themselves alienated by sports organisations whose origins lie in nineteenth-century stereotypes, outdated social norms and expectations to conform. For them, the discomfort of ‘fitting in’ may simply not be worth it when set against other, more welcoming leisure or career choices.

### **1.4.3 Sport and LGBT Activism and Policy**

According to the Council of Europe (CoE) (2007) it was lesbian and gay urban subcultures that paved the way for the European LGBT movements in Europe and the USA from the 1920s and 30s. In Berlin, the Netherlands, San Francisco and, most famously, in New York – where the so-called Stonewall riots in 1969 gave their name to today’s most famous LGB lobby group – gay leisure and political groups evolved. Initially separatist organisations, such lobby groups also gained impetus from both the Civil Rights and the ‘women’s liberation’ or second wave feminist movements through the 1960s and 1970s (see Table 1). Well-publicised moments of resistance against heterosexual culture helped to raise awareness of LGBT issues, not always with successful results. Now, the International Lesbian and Gay Association, the International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth and Students Organisation and several other advocacy groups press for social and legal acceptance of LGBT people.



**Table 1 Some highlights in the history of LGBT activity and scholarship in sport**

(Sources include: *The Advocate*, ESPN cited in Garfield (2003); Greendorfer and Rubinson (1997); and others)

Date	Political context	LGBT activity and activism in sport	LGBT policy and scholarship in sport
1900-20s	First wave feminism		
1920s-30s	Urban gay and lesbian subcultures in Europe	Bill Tilden, American tennis player and Wimbledon champion of 1920, 1921 and 1930, and other LGBTs in sport, feel compelled to stay in the closet.	
1940s	First LGBT organisation - the Netherlands Shakespeare Club	Babe Zaharias remains a closet-lesbian golf champion through the 1930s and 40s.	
1950s			
1960s	Civil Rights protests spark new awareness of gender inequalities  1969 Stonewall riots prompt coordinated activism for lesbians and gays.,	In 1968, Tom Waddell, a 30-year-old army physician, comes sixth in the Olympic decathlon. Waddell, who is openly gay, becomes involved in gay politics.	
1970s	Second Wave Feminism emerges from the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam protest movements	In 1975 in the USA, David Kopay, an NFL running back, becomes the first pro team-sport athlete to come out - doing so three years after retiring.  Richard Raskind underwent sex reassignment, became Renee Richards, and began playing women's pro tennis. To do so, she challenged a ban from the US Open by the USTA and won a landmark case.	In 1974 the US Women's Sports Foundation is formed by Billie Jean King and run by Eva Auchincloss from San Francisco. Founder Billie Jean King suffers public struggles over her own SO issues. Lesbianism is overshadowed by sexism as a campaigning issue but there is little published research on this theme.
1980s	UK political climate for equal opportunities campaigning is 'chilly' because of Thatcherite hostility	In 1981 in the USA, tennis player Billie-Jean King, while married to Larry King, is 'outed' when her ex-lover Marilyn Barnett sues her for 'galimony'. She loses all her endorsements. Then Martina Navratilova reveals she is gay and loses \$12m in sponsorship.  In 1982, Tom Waddell's San Francisco Arts and	The first studies of homophobia in women's sport appear (Bryson, Guthrie, Cobhan)  In 1984 the UK Women's Sports Foundation is formed.

		<p>Athletics runs the first 'Gay Olympic Games' (subsequently known as the Gay Games).</p> <p>In 1985, American pro footballer Ed Gallagher, jumps from a dam 12 days after his first sexual encounter with another man. He survives but is left a paraplegic. Gallagher says that before his suicide attempt, he had become unable to reconcile his image of himself as an athlete with gay urges. He later admits that the incident forced him to reconcile his sexuality.</p> <p>In 1988, Dave Pallone, a pro baseball umpire, is fired for his alleged involvement with a teenage sex ring. The charges are deemed groundless and the investigation is dropped. According to Pallone, the real reason he was fired was the fact that he was gay. He had privately come out to the league's president.</p> <p>In 1988, Bruce Hayes, a gold medal winning Olympic swimmer in 1984, comes out publicly at the Gay Games and wins seven gold medals in competition.</p> <p>In the UK in the late 1980s, the first sports council policies for women and sport emerge but ignore SO. The South West Region Sports Council women's policy is the first to mention the issue. SO is subsumed within women's policy discourse.</p>	
1990s	Election of new Labour in 1997 brings a liberalisation of attitudes towards LGBT issues	<p>In 1990, English footballer Justin Fashanu, reveals he is gay in the <i>News of the World</i>, the first athlete in a UK team sport to come out during his sport career. He commits suicide in 1998, aged 36.</p> <p>In 1992 the first EuroGames is held, a gay and lesbian multi-sports championships subsequently held every year that there is no Gay Games (<a href="http://www.gaysport.info">www.gaysport.info</a>).</p> <p>In 1992, Matthew Hall, a Canadian figure skater, comes out, as does pro American footballer Roy Simmons, during an appearance on the Phil Donahue Show.</p>	<p>SO research in physical education and sport is still neglected but more starts to emerge (eg, Birrell, Clarke, Cole, Greendorfer, Griffin, Guthrie, Hall, Hargreaves, Kane, Kolnes, Lenskyj, Palzkill, Peper, Sykes, Woods, Young).</p> <p>'Popular' books/media also begin to draw attention to homophobia and sexual oppression (eg, Cahn, Nelson, Robinson, Rogers, L. Williams)</p>

		<p>In 1993, Glenn Burke, a US professional baseball player, comes out. Released by Oakland when he was just 26 in 1979, he believes he was traded because the Dodgers suspected he was gay. By the early 1990s, he was living on the streets in the Bay area, plagued by personal problems and a drug addiction. He died of AIDS complications in 1995.</p> <p>In 1994, Greg Louganis, America's four-time Olympic diving gold medallist (and now HIV-positive), comes out at the fourth Gay Games in New York City. The event attracts more than 11,000 participants, making it the largest athletic competition in history.</p> <p>In 1995, Ian Roberts, one of Australia's most popular rugby players, speaks about being 'part of a different group... an outsider'. He becomes the first major sports figure in Australia to come out. He soon becomes a fixture at gay events and his endorsements increase.</p> <p>In 1996, American golfer Muffin Spencer-Devlin, an 18-year veteran on the women's professional tour, speaks about being a lesbian in <i>Sports Illustrated</i>.</p> <p>In 1998, Canadian former world figure skating champion Brian Orser is revealed to be gay in a palimony suit filed by an ex-boyfriend.</p> <p>1998 Gay Games held in Amsterdam.</p>	<p>In 1997 the first issue on SO and women's sport appears in the <i>Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal</i> (edited by Krane).</p> <p>Pro-feminist men start to challenge SO inequalities (eg, Connell, Messner, Rotella, Sabo, Whitson).</p> <p>In 1994 the European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation (EGLSF) publishes <i>A Documentation on the Discrimination of Gays and Lesbians in Sports</i> with 25 examples of discrimination. An update called <i>Offside</i> is published in 1999, presented at the Building Bridges conference in The Hague.</p>
2000s	New equalities and human rights legislation aids mainstreaming of LGBT issues	<p>Gay Games held in Sydney (2002), Chicago (2006) and will be in Cologne in 2010.</p> <p>Inaugural National Gay and Lesbian Athletics Conference, held in Boston, USA (2003).</p> <p>Still very few openly gay athletes. Exceptions include French tennis player Amelie Mauresmo and ex pro basketball player John Ameachi.</p>	<p>Official Statement of Council of Europe (CoE) sports ministers on <i>Sport and Fair Play &amp; Tolerance</i> including recognition of the fight against discrimination on the ground of SO within sport. (Nicosia, 27 Apr 2001)</p> <p>CoE motion for a recommendation on homophobia in sport is approved.</p>

		<p>The Y Touring theatre play on homophobia in football tours the UK (2008).</p> <p>Kristen Worley, a male to female transsexual, came close to qualifying for the 2008 Canadian Olympic cycling team. (<a href="http://chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2008-08/12/content_6927001.htm">chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2008-08/12/content_6927001.htm</a>) (August 2008)</p> <p>Summer 2008 Gay World (Football) Championships held, supported by the English FA.</p>	<p>Official Report on homophobia in sport by the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE, including Recommendations, is agreed by the Committee of Ministers.</p> <p>2004 The FA hosts a meeting to address homophobia in football and in Nov 2005, it adopts a policy on homophobia and holds a <i>Homophobia Summit</i>.</p> <p>July 2006, FAREnet.org - UEFA back challenges to homophobia. EGLSF continues to work as a core-partner of Football Against Racism Europe (FARE) to tackle discrimination and homophobia in football.</p> <p>Jul 2006 the Montreal International Conference, <i>Out in Sport - The right to be different</i> results in the <i>Declaration of Montreal</i></p> <p>1-2 Dec 2006 the Lyon conference, <i>International Colloquium about Sports, Identities, Homosexuality and Homophobia</i></p> <p>Scholarship on sexual difference and identity in sport grows apace.</p>
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In sport, the major lobby groups for LGBT issues were originally the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF US) in the USA and the Gay Games Federation, but such groups have proliferated as the confidence and political visibility of LGBT and Queer people have grown. Similarly, the first pressure for diversity in sport groups in the UK came through the women's (Women's Sports Foundation, now Women's Sports and Fitness Foundation, WSFF) and race equality (Sporting Equals) movements but political and legal changes have helped to accelerate and reinforce advocacy for the acceptance and celebration of diverse SO in sport. One of the motivations for this review, however, was concern that sports organisations in the UK might not yet be properly equipped to manage issues of diversity in SO.

As suggested above, recent theoretical interpretations of sexual identity, as something in flux that can be shaped and re-shaped, open up new ways of thinking about SO and even offer new ways of being, free of the constraints of traditional expectations with their inevitable, restrictive, and linear sex-gender-sexuality associations. Indeed, even the labels of LGB and T are, arguably, restrictive since they tempt us to make assumptions about sporting interests, needs, resources and aspirations of individuals who are all very different. It would be unfortunate, therefore, if policy making for LGBT people in sport fell into the same trap as did so much policy making for 'women in sport' when it failed to acknowledge that women are not 'a' homogeneous group. There is perhaps an even stronger case for acknowledging heterogeneity within LGBT populations: for example, there are well-worn political divisions between lesbians and gays and similar divisions and contestations between bisexual people and other non-heterosexuals (Birrell and Cole, 1990; Seidman, 1996).

Failure by sports organisations to adjust to new social and legal equalities discourses could have significant and negative impacts on participation. Unless sport is able to reinvent itself and to accommodate and celebrate diversity in SO, as it has already begun to do with race, (dis)ability and gender, then it will become increasingly irrelevant to many 'outsiders' for whom a non-heterosexual SO is a significant and perhaps defining feature of their identity.

## 1.5 Methods

For the research review, the major electronic databases were searched as were hard copies of books and reports going back some 35 years. A small number of organisations' websites were also examined to see whether and what policies were being used in relation to SO in sport. Inevitably in an exercise such as this, limited in time and resources, some material of value will have been missed. However, we are confident that the main themes to emerge in this report reflect those that apply more widely to the field of SO equality and sport.

It was agreed with the Project Steering Group that a small number of stakeholder interviews would add qualitative insight and practical examples. The overall objectives of the project were to:

- inform equality impact assessments;
- support the implementation of equality schemes;
- tackle homophobia in sport; and
- inform agencies on developing sports participation among those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual.

Interviewees were advised at the outset that this was the context for the questions being asked and encouraged to add any views and/or specific examples that might inform any of these areas.

Seven interviewees were selected from a range of stakeholders in an attempt to reflect a range of interests in the topic. These ranged from national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) to grass-roots LGBT organisations and from Government policy officers to those already directly involved in LGBT sports participation. An introductory letter was sent outlining the purpose of the research (as above) and briefly identifying why they had been selected. All letters were followed up by a longer telephone conversation (or email exchange) further explaining the research, their involvement and addressing any immediate queries they might have. From this, a date and time was agreed to conduct the interview.

All but two of the planned interviews were conducted between 3 and 10 June 2008, taking an average of 33 minutes (two contacts preferred not to be interviewed). An interview topic guide tailored to each type of stakeholder was used, although interviewees were encouraged to develop their thinking beyond this (see sample at Appendix 2). Where an organisation offered a choice of interviewee, usually a choice between a generic equalities specialist or a policy officer working specifically on sport, the focus was placed on the sports policy officer to more effectively assess the level of mainstreaming that had occurred on equalities issues.

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework

Requirements for SO equality in sport constitute, for most organisations, a challenge to the status quo. The stages through which this challenge is met resemble many similar policy development models (see Fig. 1). We suggest that organisations need first to build and demonstrate awareness of the issue through a number of mechanisms, such as wider publicity, feedback, requests and complaints from members, challenges to exclusionary rules or norms and so on. Once awareness develops, then this gives impetus for seeking knowledge about SO within a given sport or organisation, for example by adjusting participation measures, disaggregating trend data, monitoring uptake of services and facilities

or seeking out advice from partners. Once armed with awareness and knowledge, the organisation is equipped to deliver its programmes and services more equitably and to promote SO equality through cultural symbols such as more inclusive language or imagery, or through institutional regulations such as revised membership rules or disciplinary procedures.

Changes in delivery can be assessed through the familiar mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation – both quantitative and qualitative – to chart progress towards successful cultural change. Finally, the organisation can broadcast its revised vision and values through multiple communication channels to claim the benefits of its newly-established diversity and inclusivity.

This apparently linear process is, of course, merely an ‘ideal type’, often muddled by the realities of everyday life. Indeed, responses to SO issues in sport vary widely; to acknowledge this, we adopted a model to plot these possible variations (Fig 2). The various stakeholders (agencies responsible for advocating or delivering equality in sport or other physical activity) include NGBs (SGBs in Scotland), not-for-profit groups such as Stonewall and the Women’s Sports and Fitness Foundation, and Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) such as the sports councils. We have not delved below the national level in the consultation for this review but acknowledge the wide network of clubs and other organisations that are involved in delivery, each of which could also be plotted on the model according to its ‘activation’ (ie, inactive, reactive, active etc – see Brackenridge et al, 2005) or preparedness to engage with SO equality.

**Fig 1 Challenging the status quo: steps to converting awareness into practice in achieving sexual orientation equality in sport**



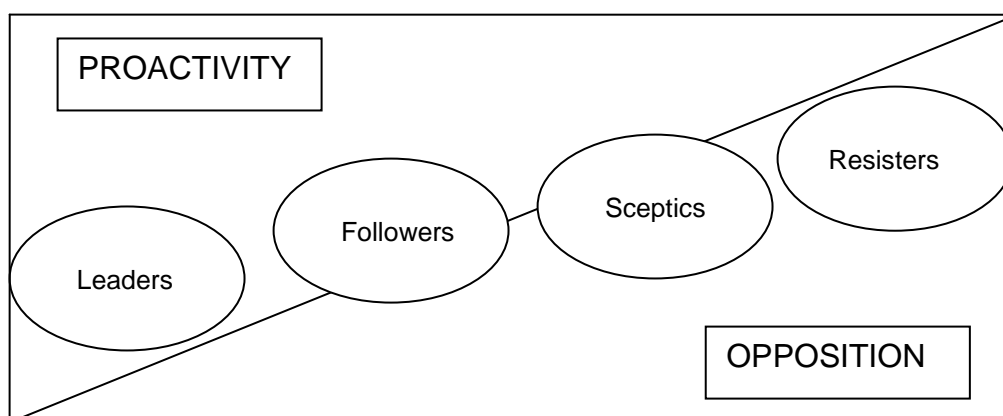
***Policy Approaches***

***IMPROVED PRACTICE***

<b>AWARENESS</b>	<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>DELIVERY</b>	<b>MEASUREMENT</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Challenges</li> <li>• Complaints</li> <li>• Changing social norms</li> <li>• Increased visibility of the issue</li> <li>• PR / news stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Qualitative</li> <li>• Quantitative</li> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Participant experiences</li> <li>• Staff / user engagement</li> <li>• Participation rates</li> <li>• Disaggregated LGBT data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural change</li> <li>• Challenging prejudice</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Practice</li> <li>• Mainstreamed</li> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Processes</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline</li> <li>• Diversity targets</li> <li>• Rate of change</li> <li>• Inhibitors/ accelerators</li> <li>• Exponential growth factors</li> <li>• Audit</li> <li>• Staff / user survey</li> <li>• Continuous and one-off improvements expected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision</li> <li>• Organisational values</li> <li>• Benefits from change                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individual</li> <li>○ Group</li> <li>○ Social</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Expectations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Standards</li> <li>○ Outputs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Attraction/ recruitment/retention                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff, elite, volunteers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Participation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Access for all</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



**Figure 2 Conceptual model of stakeholder responses to equality and sexual orientation**



We classified possible organisational responses to SO equality in sport as follows (Fig 2):

**Leaders.** These stakeholders will be willing to cooperate and be proactive in implementing SO equality even if there is no pressure or requirement to do so. This might be because they have had challenging experiences of homophobia and/or because they are culturally committed to making things better. They may have equality-related skills within their own ranks from outside sport – perhaps through members who are social workers, teachers or lawyers – and have used these to reinforce the equality values and ideals as well as to challenge homophobia. They will offer to others models of good practice (not necessarily evaluated yet as **best** practice). *Their responses to the consultation about SO equality in sport are likely to be broadly positive.*

**Followers.** These stakeholders will happily conform to requirements for SO equality when told exactly what to do but will not take the initiative. Their participation in this will depend on their lead organisation(s) monitoring them closely and constantly reminding them of expectations. *Their responses to the consultation about SO equality in sport are likely to be a mix of neutral/ambivalent and positive.*

**Sceptics.** These stakeholders will be hesitant, disbelieving or unwilling to cooperate with SO equality, for a variety of reasons, and therefore might delay or undermine efforts to advance SO equality. In a climate without monitoring or explicit standards they might get away with minimal compliance. They might come round eventually but will require a lot of education, support and advice along the way. *Their responses to the consultation about SO equality in sport are likely to be a mix of neutral/ambivalent and negative.*

**Resisters.** These stakeholders will object, complain or actively refuse to cooperate with the requirements of SO equality even when confronted by very determined and perhaps interventionist lead agencies. They may have their own internally-developed approaches to and procedures for achieving equality and therefore see the lead agencies' requirements as an irrelevance and/or resent what they see as interference from outsiders or scrutineers. *Their responses to the consultation about SO equality in sport are likely to be broadly negative.*

## **SECTION II: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Chapter 2: Awareness**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

LGBT issues have occupied an ambivalent space in UK sports policy for the past thirty or more years. Even when Second Wave Feminism finally impacted in sport in the early 1980s there were no national policies for SO in sport. Indeed, the first English Sports Council policy for women and sport – finally ratified by Sport England in the early 1990s – did not speak to the issue. It was the South West Regional Sports Council, in the mid-1980s, that first addressed SO and then only as part of their regional strategy for women in sport, effectively excluding gay and bisexual male and transsexual discourse. For example, White (1995, p207), describing the Sports Council's then-new approach to 'equality permeation' in policy, said: "Factors which currently determine inequity in sport [are] disability, gender, ethnicity, age and socioeconomic status", bypassing SO altogether. Gender in this document was also taken to mean 'women'.

Despite pressure on local authorities, public and voluntary organisations through the 1970s, the inclusion of SO equality in their policies stalled when the Tory government, ideologically opposed to interventions in issues like SO, came to power. This administration showed little support for 'gay friendly' policies and the passing of the Local Government Act in 1988, with its infamous Clause 28 that made it illegal for local authorities to "intentionally promote homosexuality", made LGBT policy development even more difficult. The spin-offs from this were felt keenly in areas where the voluntary and public sector worked with children and young people, including sports organisations and physical education (PE) (Clarke, 1997, 1998, 2001).

When the Labour government came to power in 1997 the climate of tolerance for LGBT inclusion improved and, from 2000, a range of equality duties was placed on the public sector including the Race Relations (Amendment Act) and various measures to prohibit discrimination on grounds of SO. In Colgan et al's study (2007), the human resources (HR) and diversity managers interviewed pointed to these statutory requirements as important for helping them to challenge resistance, to achieve change and to acquire previously inaccessible resources for SO equality work. Local authorities in England have attempted to adopt a comprehensive approach to equality through the Equality Standard for Local Government (Employers Organisation, 2001). Despite its initial focus on race, gender and disability, users have extended it to encompass anti-discrimination policies for age, sexuality, class and religion. They have been helped in this by the introduction of the Employment Equality (SO) Regulations (see Appendix 3).

Much of the relevant literature for this review emanates from North America, demonstrating that there has been a cultural time lag between North America and

the UK which has influenced the position of LGBT issues in policy agendas here. Additionally, the UK and US governance systems for sport are very different. From a policy perspective, the UK bears closer resemblance with Canada and Australia who, as in the UK, also have centralised facilitating agencies and devolved local, regional and sport-specific governing bodies. The extent to which policy initiatives for SO equality are effective at local or governing body level depends on a combination of the organisation's own motivation to engage with the issue and the incentives (sticks and carrots) operated by their federal agencies. Several countries have operated through the use of standards in exchange for awards or grant aid (carrots) and some have gone as far as using penalties such as withholding of grant or withdrawal of recognition/certification (sticks).

## 2.2 Policy and Discourse

### 2.2.1 Stakeholder Responses

All our interviewees were aware of ways in which LGBT people might be disadvantaged in relation to sport and where prejudice could have a negative impact. This fairly basic awareness, however, has largely come from localised anecdotal experience or the very broad external media coverage of homophobia in sport. Couple this with the more general shifting and opening up of social attitudes around SO and no one felt able to claim that this was not an issue. Equally, however, no interviewee could give examples of specific complaints or challenges that they had encountered around discriminatory treatment in their area. It was frequently noted that there is a lack of visibility/open discussion of these issues within the 'sports community' and that it is often easier just to avoid the topic:

... have attempted to 'normalise' the perceptions around women, sport, masculinity and sexual orientation but ... [other organisations] didn't want to touch it with a barge-pole.  
(NGB respondent)

... it remains a big elephant in the room that no one wants to address ... There is too much silence and muddled thinking around sexuality and sport. People are unsure how to deal with it.  
(NGO respondent)

Still few LGB(T) role models in sport and then tend to come out late into their careers ... and then conform to stereotypes, eg figure-skating, women's football. (NGO respondent)

It was also felt that, because of the discrimination and prejudice that is still perceived to exist, many LGBT people either remove themselves from sport participation altogether or attempt to compartmentalise and hide that part of their identity.

For men it's about homophobia and their negative early years' experience where sport just drops off the radar for them.  
(NGO respondent)

The issue that many sports leaders publicly deny their own sexual identity was raised very strongly by one interviewee and alluded to by others.

They don't want the tag but are the type ... [they] hide behind it so they don't have to deal with the issue up front across all sports. This comes from closeted leadership that just don't want to open the issues up. (NGB respondent)

The two Government departments approached proved very wary of the research and generally reluctant to participate in an interview which they felt might be better done by **sportscotland**, Sport England or Sport Northern Ireland as the delivery agencies. When it was pointed out that NDPBs are hugely influenced by the strategic lead of their Government departments, and that it was this high-level strategic direction we were interested in exploring, they agreed to participate. One agreed to provide just a written response which was only forthcoming after four weeks of gentle prompting. Interestingly though, neither department was prepared to say that they did not wish to participate.

Policy analysis from our small sample of organisations revealed an extremely varied picture. Internationally, the most advanced sports organisation appears to be the USA Women's Sports Foundation which has developed a range of resources and materials (see below). These reflect high awareness in relation to gay and, especially, lesbian athletes; it is unclear whether bisexual and transsexual athletes are as effectively supported. In the UK, governing bodies are perhaps not surprisingly still tied to the notion of the Equality Standards which now suffer from a policy and legal time lag. Apart from a (good) response about trans athletes by the UK Women's Sports and Fitness Foundation to a government consultation (Donohue, 2003), there did not appear to be any substantive awareness of SO issues within the policies that we sampled.

### **2.2.2 Policy on Transgender and Transsexual Issues**

'Gender verification', originally named the 'sex test', has been an ongoing cause of concern in women's sports organisations for many decades (Chappelle, 1986; Skirstad, 1999). Indeed, it was largely through lobbying by women's sport advocates, supported by some key sports medics such as Arne Lundqvist of the IOC Medical Commission, that this practice was virtually outlawed (Lundqvist and Genel, 2005, p1). As with the IOC's *Consensus statement on sex reassignment* (IOC, 2004), the guidance of the IOC is now generally accepted within sporting circles (Australian Sports Commission, 2007; Cavanagh and Sykes, 2006; Coggon et al, 2008; Sykes, 2006; Teetzel, 2006). This does not mean that discrimination against gender reassigned athletes has ended, however (McKindra, 2006a). Both Grossman (1992) and Kivel (1994) have published general articles about inclusion in leisure service provision for LGBT youth, and we located one policy guidance note for the leisure industry on the use of sport facilities by trans people (Press For Change, 2005) and, the same year, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published its own guidance for sports bodies targeted specifically at sports administrators (DCMS, 2005). We

would recommend that all sports and leisure organisations follow by preparing such advice sheets that are tailored to their sport-specific needs.

### **2.2.3 Policy on Elite sport and SO Diversity**

The two most common rationales offered for equality and diversity policies in organisations are the **business case** and the **social justice** case, backed up by legislative force, sanction and rewards and by strong advocacy and education. However, these two rationales have not yielded much success in achieving substantive change, especially with respect to SO in elite sport. The business and social justice cases have also been proffered in sport yet their prospects for success seem just as limited. For national and international sports agencies, such as UK Sport or the British Olympic Association (BOA), the only game in town appears to be performance and the legitimate differentiation between people on the basis of their sporting talent. Nonetheless schemes such as Sporting Giants have been introduced to ‘massify’ the entry into the talent system, not because diversity itself is necessarily prized but because there is a strong assumption that more people will somehow inevitably lead to more medals. The blunt truth is that, for the elite end of competitive sport, there will probably need to be a very good performance-related rationale for diversity before significant change is embraced with any enthusiasm.

### **2.2.4 Policy on Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying**

Research by Stonewall with over 100 LG and B people from 21 public and private sector organisations showed a clear link between workplace productivity and organisational climate for lesbian and gay workers (Guasp and Balfour, 2008, [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/peak\\_performance.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/peak_performance.pdf)). Indeed, their report strapline – ‘People perform better when they can be themselves’ – is directly applicable to sport. According to Tim Hopkins of the Equality Network (cited in **sportscotland**, 2006), sport can be an unwelcoming environment for LGBT people. In the same article, Fergus McMillan of LGBT Youth suggests that ‘sporty’ girls and ‘non-sporty’ boys are subjected to taunting and name-calling and that homophobic name-calling in the school setting is most prevalent in the gym or playing field. Some data to support the assertion are presented by Brackenridge et al (2007) but these are secondary data and we could find no specific prevalence data about the nature, extent or locations for homophobic bullying in sport settings other than those embedded in wider studies of sexual harassment (such as Kirby et al, 2000).

Homophobia has arguably been a major limiter of participation and sporting achievement and has created fear, negativity and mistrust among many athletes and sports personnel, regardless of their SO (Ashburn et al, 1995; Blinde and Taub, 1992b; Brownsworth, 1991; Gonolda and Fitzpatrick, 1985; Griffin, 1989, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998). Among many other things, examples given in the literature include: victimisation by team mates, malicious accusations of sexual harassment, barracking by fans and spectators, and selection

discrimination by coaches (see section 3.2.4). The psychodynamics, relational processes and personal consequences of homophobia have been relatively well explained in the research literature. What is not yet clear, however, is the economic cost of athlete attrition caused by homophobia in elite sport. Given the emphasis that is now being placed on talent identification and development, and the amount of public investment in this process, it would seem important to develop a methodology for conducting a cost-value analysis of SO diversity (mis)management in elite sport.

The Canadian equivalent of the WSFF – Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) – is generally seen as a leader in relation to gender-related sports policy and has a position statement on homophobia (CAAWS, 2006). The US Women's Sports Foundation has developed and run highly a successful education programme, led by lesbian advocate Pat Griffin. Several good policy statements are available on websites, together with lists of advocacy activities and good practice ideas, including many related to football (FA, 2004a, 2004b), the Gay Games (van Leeuwen, 1988), the US WSF and others (Council of Europe, 2001, 2003a, b, c). It is unclear how far these have permeated the psyche and action agendas of sports organisations in the UK. Cunningham (2006, 2007, 2008) offers a number of useful references on generic diversity in sports organisations, and the European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation (EGLSF) has issued a declaration on equal treatment in relation to SO in sport (EGLSF, 2007).

## 2.3 Policy Gaps

Sport is not alone in its failure to move policy into practice in this field. The study by Colgan et al (2007, p590), conducted outside sport, found that, following the introduction of the new SO regulations, there was an 'implementation gap' between equality/diversity policy and practice on SO. This gap is not new and has been repeatedly identified by researchers of equality legislation over the past 20-30 years. Employees in this study – and athletes might be considered closely analogous – voiced concerns about the fact that they would have to make a complaint about sexual harassment or discrimination in order to trigger action. They identified their managers as important for providing proactive leadership and stopping the SO strand being, in their words, the 'poor relation' in the organisational drive for equality and diversity. The Colgan study is important for us because it gives a glimpse into the worlds of LGBT employees – in private, public and voluntary sector organisations – and their experiences under the new legal regime (see Appendix 3).

One in five of the LGBT respondents in the Colgan et al (2007) research was unaware of recent changes in legislation and the SO regulations. Interestingly, the private companies involved in this study thought themselves to be 'ahead of the game' on SO equality because of their obvious commitment to the business case. We recognise that sport as an institution has been relatively slow to

embrace LGBT rights at the level of policy and practice compared with its responses to gender, race and disability. Some governing bodies have struggled to adjust constitutionally and culturally to lesbian and gay rights in sport and many are still not at the point where they either wish to, or know how to, adjust to bi and transsexual rights in sport.

The poor state of preparedness for Equality Impact Assessments within sport was brought home to us by an enquiry for help from a local authority contact during the course of this research (Smith, 15 July 2008). This asked specifically for advice on services for bringing through young sporting talent and for ensuring activity for all. SO was one of three areas identified by the officer where he felt more could be done, especially in relation to LGBT youth. The enquiry listed the following issues:

- 1 Few positive LGBT images or role models in sport are available.
- 2 “A kind of institutional homophobia” exists whereby LGBT youth are unwelcome in sporting teams and activities.
- 3 Negativity about LGBT undermines the confidence of LGBT youth to engage in sport.
- 4 The gender culture (stereotypes) makes LGBT youth less inclined to pursue sports that are outside the cultural norm.
- 5 LGBT adults feel that they have missed out on sports participation earlier in life and are less likely to be able to rectify this.

... and the following questions:

1. Is it appropriate to take account of SO when dealing with children and young people?
2. How should a local authority treat potentially LGBT youth ‘equally’ in a climate where Section 28 still affects many people’s thinking?
3. Is there concrete evidence for under-participation and/or under-performance by LGBT people?

If this enquiry is typical, then a great deal more work needs to be done to address such questions and to develop an effective policy and education infrastructure within sport.



## Chapter 3: Knowledge

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the type and extent of knowledge about SO that is evident in the research and policy literature and reported by our policy consultees. As government calls for 'evidence-based practice' we are reminded that knowledge is inescapably linked to cultural change, and ignorance to policy stagnation and prejudice. It is therefore of interest to us to identify the current evidence on which SO policy in sport is, or might be, built.

### 3.2 Research Evidence

#### 3.2.1 The Published Evidence Base

From the literature searches conducted, yielding 916 items in all, we have compiled a summary table to show the frequency with which certain themes recurred (see Table 2). This table accounts for 710 sport-related sources (excluding 17 theses) and a further 189 generic references are listed at the end of the themed bibliography that accompanies this report (see Annex).

It is necessary to acknowledge a number of caveats about this information. Interest in and publications on sexual orientation do appear to be growing at a fast pace. Our sample was limited at one end of the scale by recent items which have not yet appeared in the electronic databases and, at the other, by the availability of historic and out-of-print texts. It was also, of course, circumscribed by our own knowledge. Whilst the literature sample is certainly not comprehensive, we nevertheless feel that it represents a fair reflection of the field at this time.

Some key points of note from this table are as follows:

- Identity is the dominant theme, providing half of all items.
- Policy and management is the second most prominent theme overall yet still has only 11% of items.
- Bisexuality is invisible in all themes.
- Transsexuality items are scarce and then only apparent under the themes of identity, and policy and management.
- The SO/race nexus in sport is under-researched.
- The SO/health nexus in sport is also under-researched.
- Investigation of homophobia against lesbians in sport appears to be of greater interest or concern than homophobia against gays in sport.

- Within the theme of identity, literature on women/femininities is far more prominent than that focused only on lesbians; literature on men and masculinities is three times more prominent than that focused exclusively on gay men and represents one in five of the total items; and there is almost double the amount of literature on men/masculinities than that on women/femininities. Although we have not done a temporal analysis, it seems that the more recent field of men/masculinities has quickly outstripped the longer-established field of women/femininities. Notwithstanding the 7% of 'mixed' items under the identity theme, these data could signal the (re)emergence of an unwelcome but familiar hierarchy of interests in sport: men first, women second, lesbians next and 'the rest' following on.

All of these points have implications for the future research and policy agendas that are discussed later in this report (see Chapter 7).

**Table 2 Summary data for literature search items, by theme**

(Excluding theses and generic sources)

THEME	CATEGORY OF LITERATURE							Sub-totals n (%)
	Lesbian n (%)	Women/ Femin inity n (%)	Gay n (%)	Men/ Mascu linity n (%)	Bisexual n (%)	Trans- sexuality n (%)	Mixed n (%)	
<b>Biography</b>	9 (1)		8 (1)		0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	17 (2)
<b>Health</b>	1 (0)		2 (0)		0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (1)	9 (1)
<b>Homophobia</b>	24 (3)		6 (1)		0 (0)	0 (0)	27(4)	57 (8)
<b>Identities</b>	48 (7)	79 (11)	18 (3)	149 (21)	1 (0)	5 (1)	52 (7)	352 (50)
<b>Media</b>	25 (4)		27 (4)		0 (0)	0 (0)	24 (3)	76 (11)
<b>Policy &amp; management</b>	10 (1)		3 (0)		0 (0)	14 (2)	54 (7)	81 (11)
<b>Race</b>	2 (0)		5 (1)		0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (1)	13 (2)
<b>Teaching &amp; coaching</b>	11 (2)		1 (0)		0 (0)	0 (0)	19 (3)	31 (4)
<b>Theory</b>	46 (7)		4 (1)		0 (0)	0 (0)	25 (4)	75 (11)
<b>Sub-totals</b>	<b>176 (25)</b>	<b>79 (11)</b>	<b>74 (11)</b>	<b>149 (21)</b>	<b>1 (0)</b>	<b>19 (3)</b>	<b>213 (30)</b>	<b>711 (100)</b>

### **3.2.2 Biography**

The cultural turn in sociology has assisted a revival in biographical and narrative research. Even so, there are still relatively few biographical accounts of LGBT life histories. Those that we found focused mainly on high-profile athletes such as Billy Jean King, founder of the US Women's Sports Foundation, and Tom Waddell, founder of the Gay Games movement. Biographies of the 'ordinary' LGBT athlete or coach would certainly enhance our understanding.

### **3.2.3 Health**

Self-harm, HIV/AIDs, disordered eating and suicidality all appear in the relatively short list of health-related references applying to LGBT athletes. The mental health impacts of repressed LGBT identity ('passing') might well become a research focus and sports psychologists could assist policy-makers and sports managers – not to mention LGBT athletes – by examining some of the hypotheses associated with this theme.

### **3.2.4 Homophobia, Homophobic Bullying and Harassment**

Such was the pervasiveness of homophobia in the women's soccer system that they studied that Mennesson and Clement (2003) described 'homophobia as policy'. Both bullying (Duncan, 1999; Rivers, 2004) and sexual exploitation (Brackenridge, 2001; Lenskyj, 1991, 1992) mediate sport choices and experiences. The gendered nature of homophobia in sport is apparent in the references: homophobic bullying is targeted at boys who are poor at or uninterested in sport and at girls who are good at and like sport. This has clear implications both for policy and for education.

Methods of homophobic bullying include jokes, gossip and name-calling; physical, sexual and emotional abuse; cartoons; and forcing someone to engage in heterosocial activities against their will or making assumptions about what constitutes a good social event such as attending lap dancing clubs, going on heterosexual blind dates, sending heterosexual Valentines cards, inviting wives or husbands to club dinners, giving gender-specific gifts (such as ties for 'husbands' or headscarves for 'wives')... the list is endless.

Colgan et al (2007) found that just under a quarter of their LGBT survey respondents reported having experienced harassment at work based on their SO and Palmer (1993) reported even higher rates. If such figures transfer to the sports context then we can argue that about one in four LGBT athletes is suffering because of their SO in ways that might be damaging to their training or performance, or simple enjoyment of sport.

Strategies for responding to homophobia include resistance, appropriation and accommodation:

**Resistance.** This can occur through personal challenge (confronting the individual(s), trying to establish a dialogue, asking for the behaviour to stop), making a formal challenge (making a complaint, lodging a grievance), or whistle blowing (alerting authorities on behalf of a victim). Colgan et al (2007) found that LGBT workers were reluctant to report acts of discrimination or harassment in the workplace and had to rely on others to advocate for them. As with sexual harassment and abuse, in elite sport especially it seems unlikely that LGBT athletes will want to rock the boat by confronting their oppressors for fear of reprisals and/or deselection (Brackenridge, 2001).

**Accommodation.** This can occur through denial. The LGBT individual who cannot face homophobia may choose denial rather than confront the consequences of coming out. 'Passing' and adopting 'apologetics' (behaviour, jewellery, clothing and heterosexual self-presentation) carry costs, as LGBT athletes have to learn to de-dramatise their sexual selves and instead to adopt heteronormative social and sexual scripts. The attempt to play safe restricts their existential life but allows them to continue in the sport and to appear, at least, to be 'normal' ie heterosexual. The strain of denial should not be underestimated: some athletes have taken their own lives rather than confront their oppressors or admit publicly their identity (see Table 1). Compartmentalising one's life is a second strategy of accommodation. Some sports people try to keep their private and public lives separate by simply not discussing their family or partnership status within sport. The extent to which this can be done successfully is arguable. As described above, many sports people are expected to attend social functions, formal or informal, such as dinners, galas, prize-giving ceremonies, after-event meals and so on. In some sports there are social traditions that reinforce homo-negativity which makes it uncomfortable at best, and downright hostile at worst, for LGBT people. Diplomatic absences or refusal to engage in heterosexist displays (songs, jokes, pranks (Dunning, 1973)) or hazing (Kirby et al, 2000) are noticed by others after a while and the sporting equivalent of 'office gossip' serves to draw attention to the apparent gaps or contradictions in someone's life. This can lead them to use lies and deceits which, in themselves, threaten to break the trust that an athlete has with his or her coach or peers – trust that lies at the heart of many successful sporting relationships. This strategy thus places huge burdens on the individual to keep a consistent story, to use up emotional energy in remembering who knows and who does not, to police both oneself and one's confidants to spot possible leaks in one's cover (see Table 1; Nell Warren, 2006; and Ameachi, 2007). The effort expended in maintaining this fragile status is enormous and is almost certain to undermine the performance potential of the athlete.

**Appropriation.** Some more confident LGBT people in sport turn the homophobic tables on their 'straight' colleagues by deliberately celebrating their minority status ('pride') as in 'out and proud' in the same way that 'black is beautiful' has been used to challenge racism. This does not always succeed as it can exacerbate homophobia and exclusion. It has even been argued that this

form of 'pride' necessarily emerges from recognition of the 'shame' of difference (Owen, 2006) and thus binds the gay athlete to an oppressive framework.

In relation to homophobic bullying, Brackenridge et al (2007) offered the following research hypotheses (Table 3):

**Table 3 A research agenda on homophobic bullying**

(Source: Brackenridge et al, 2007, p135)

A research agenda on homophobic bullying could explore a number of assumptions about LGBT athletes, partly through reviews of extant literature and partly through new empirical investigations. We hypothesise, for example, that lesbian and gay athletes:

1. form a minority of athletes;
2. have been part of a sport system for years that has done little to tackle their social exclusion;
3. face pressure to conform because of their gender atypical behaviour;
4. experience higher rates of harassment and bullying than heterosexual athletes;
5. suffer enforced invisibility if male but enforced visibility if female;
6. have faced homophobic bullying as a part of their sport experiences from a very young age;
7. experience fear of harassment, assault and/or social isolation as a strong form of social control, regardless of actual experience;
8. therefore, attempt to hide their sexual orientation;
9. experience loss of friendships and significant other support as a result of their sexual orientation;
10. experience victimisation by sports peers that is matched by both active and passive support for homonegativity from their coaches and other authority figures in sport; and
11. may be less likely to report harassment and bullying if from an ethnic or cultural minority because of the convergent silences of racism and homophobia.

**3.2.5 Identities and Experience**

There are almost no quantitative data available on which to gauge the extent of LGBT representation in sport. Despite occasional qualitative accounts (Jarvis, 2006; Ravel and Rail, 2008), we found no statistics about the numbers of LGBT people in sport who are out about their SO to those in their sport organisations.

Colgan et al's (2007) study of nominally 'good practice' employers found that over 40% of LGBT respondents in these organisations were not 'out' to all their colleagues, a third were 'out' to some colleagues and 8% were 'out' to very few people or nobody at work: others may not have responded to the survey. Fewer gay men than lesbians were in the last category. It would be very interesting to test these figures against sports organisations where we hypothesise that gay athletes will be even less likely to be out than their non-sport counterparts.

Coming out is irreversible. The consequences for an athlete, especially one in elite sport, can be severe (Navratilova and Vecsey, 1985; Nell Warren, 2006; Ameachi, 2007). Martina Navratilova, for example, lost all her sponsorship virtually overnight. Extrapolating from this literature, we assess the coming out process in sport to be facilitated or inhibited by a number of factors (Table 4) and homo-negative or positive/gay (un)friendly environments in sport to have particular impacts (Table 5). Each of these could, in themselves, constitute a research question.

**Table 4 Coming out in sport: facilitators and inhibitors**

<b>Facilitators: more likely to be out if...</b>	<b>Inhibitors: less likely to be out if ...</b>
Equal opportunities policy that covers SO	History of gender exclusion or previous bad/inequitable experiences
Sense of safety from the positive organisational culture/feeling	Organisational culture is hostile to LGBT issues
Presence of an organisational LGBT group	No respect shown to partner/partner's wishes
Support from beyond the organisation, eg from an athletes' commission, Sports Council, coaches or managers or other professionals	Attitudes and behaviour of male colleagues/peer athletes
Others in the organisation who are already out	Temporary employment/athletic status (especially for those at elite level)
Out LGBT representation in leadership positions	No visible senior staff/athletes
Privacy respected	Lack of respect for privacy
Religious and SO tolerance observed by colleagues	Fundamentalist/evangelical anti-gay religious attitudes openly expressed by peers or colleagues
Selection/job security and transparent procedures for advancement or sanction	Fears about selection/job security and/or unclear procedures for advancement or sanction
For lesbians, all-female organisations	For G, B or T men, all-male organisations
Performance success and credibility already well established	Performance success and credibility not well established

**Table 5 Impacts of a gay-(un)friendly sports organisation**

<b>Personal impacts of LGBT negative environment</b>	<b>Personal impacts of LGBT positive environment</b>
Frustration	Happiness and openness
Fear and self-censorship	Freedom/willingness to speak
Exclusion	Greater confidence and sense of inclusion
Ostracism	Feeling of support
Lower productivity/performance success	Greater productivity/performance success
Difficulty focusing in training and competition	Enhanced enjoyment
Burnout and desire to leave	Pride in and loyalty to the organisation
Survival/internal focus: various forms of self-harming	Capacity to focus on supporting others
More liable to pursue SO-related grievances	Less need to but more confident about pursuing SO-related grievances
Fearful about openly relying on personal support networks	Able to more easily/publicly access support of partner, friends or key mentors
<b>Organisational impacts of LGBT negative environment</b>	<b>Organisational impacts of LGBT positive environment</b>
Increased friction between individuals	Enhanced cohesion
Higher attrition/turnover of personnel	Lower attrition/turnover of personnel
Damaged reputation in the wider sports community	Enhanced reputation for the sport
Increased risk of litigation	Better compliance with national standards and with the spirit and letter of legislation
Greater absenteeism/illness	Lower absenteeism/illness
Less likely to hit collective performance goals	More likely to hit collective performance goals

LGBT community and identity are relatively well researched yet the findings of many studies have not yet translated into policy or social change (see Appendix 5). This could be because of academic detachment or lack of commitment to advocacy – unlikely among feminist and pro-feminist researchers – or more probably because of political and structural inertia in a sports system which is notoriously slow to change.

### **3.2.5 Media**

The media references about lesbianism in sport refer mainly to case studies, such as the complaint of lesbian selection bias by a straight Australian female cricketer (Burroughs et al, 1995), and analysis of media representations in

particular events, such as tennis (Kennedy, 2000), or particular individuals, such as Martina Navratilova (Hamer, 1994) and Nancy Lopez (Jamieson, 1998). There is also a sizeable list of fiction about lesbian sport. In relation to gay sport, mediated masculinity and the deconstruction of sexual stereotypes appear to be the main themes (eg, Sabo and Jansen, 1992; McKay and Middlemiss, 1995; Messner et al, 1999; Wright and Clarke, 1999; Knight and Giuliano, 2003). Bisexuality and transsexuality are, again, absent in this literature about media.

### **3.2.6 Policy and Management**

Some of our consultees still saw SO as a relatively unimportant 'rights issue' or did not acknowledge how sport was relevant to social policy more widely:

This is not our organisation's priority... [name of org] focuses on education, health/wellbeing and hate crime, so sport for us is a much lower priority. (NGO respondent)

Policies on LGBT inclusion, sometimes subsumed under 'gender' policies, were found, and there were also several examples of anti-homophobia policies, training courses and information sheets (Football Association, 2004b; CAAWS, 2006; Williams, 2007; and the US Women's Sports Foundation programme *It Takes a Team*, outlined in Appendix 4 and in Griffin et al, 2002).

Some managers and coaches were clearly sceptics or even resisters (Fig 2), showing reluctance to get involved in social change. For example:

...when asked for their opinions on the subject [of homophobia in football] as part of a Five Live investigation, all 20 Premier League managers declined the opportunity.  
(Matt Williams, 2005 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/4426278.stm>)

Even when policy has been developed, this kind of attitude is likely to hinder policy implementation. Sport can learn much from employment and management research studies by replicating and adapting these studies of the policies, impacts and experiences of LGBT people and from sharing the benefits of education on SO diversity in the workplace.

### **3.2.7 Race**

Sport researchers have often been accused of failing to acknowledge gender, race and social class biases in their work. It appears that such criticism is also justified in published studies of SO and sport. A notable exception is Scraton, Caudwell and Holland (2005) who offer an analysis of the intersection of race and gender in women's football based on both surveys and interviews conducted in the North of England. Studies on men typically address issues of race and masculinity rather than specifically SO (eg, Morissey, 1996; Carrington, 1998; Woodward, 2004). Clearly, links between race and SO could be much more fully explored.



### 3.2.8 Teaching and Coaching

SO has long been a thinly-veiled issue in women's PE and coaching (Cobhan, 1982; Squires and Sparkes, 1996; Clarke, 1997), with common assumptions made about lesbianism regardless of individuals' chosen identities. Institutionalised fear brought about by Clause 28 increased the oppression of many lesbian PE teachers and its legacy is still pernicious, but the closet status of the profession was known about for years before this law reached the statute book. Indeed, 'romantic', if not sexual, friendship (Faderman, 1985) has always been a tacit feature of the British women's PE tradition but, until the research of people like Gill Clarke, it was not something that was publicly acknowledged or discussed. Less well researched is the context of support or judgement within which LGBT students and young athletes experience their PE or coaching.

Perhaps one of the most damaging myths for schoolteachers and youth coaches is the conflation of SO and sexual predation, which has led to worries that being out might provoke paedophile accusations (Brackenridge, 2001). There are genuine issues, however, for policy makers who manage 'open age' participation structures where youth and adults play sport together and then mix in social situations. Child welfare policies and education can help to address such concerns and should be equally applied in relation to all expressions of SO.

[there is a] ... perception that LGBT issues [are] more quickly linked to child protection than comparable heterosexual situations. (NGO respondent)

### 3.2.9 Theory

Research on lesbianism has been integral to feminist analyses of sport for the past 30 years or so, spurred by Second Wave Feminism. Theoretical development has passed through a number of phases, each stimulated by key feminist authors whose work was then applied to sport. The focus of sport and gender theory in the 1970s was on sex and gender differences (see Hall, 1988, 1993b and Hargreaves, 1994) then applied to quests for 'equal opportunity' for women but largely ignoring the plight of non-heterosexual women and of gay, bisexual and transsexual athletes. Pro-feminist men, such as Messner and Sabo, followed and, as Table 2 and our bibliographies indicate, quickly colonised debates about SO. Despite the mass of literature now available on SO and sport (see Annexes A and B), acceptance of the theme among the community of theoreticians and researchers is no guarantee of practical acceptance in the somewhat conservative community of sport. Perhaps one of the challenges of this review is to bring these communities closer together.

The 'queering' of sport is relatively new activist project, informed by the theoretical and political critiques of heteronormative hegemony (dominance). Queering involves deliberate subversion of traditional heterosexual categories and is based on performing identities in ways that challenge the status quo, through dress, language, behaviour and various other modes of representation

and organisation. Examples of queer sport are available in the literature (see especially Caudwell's edited volume, 2006) but there is no systematic research as yet on the impact this is having on the institutional structure of sport. Queer theorists in sport might argue that we have played, if not exactly a 'straight bat', then certainly 'safe' in this review by aligning our analysis with the body of normative material. Certainly, texts by leading proponents of queer/ing in sport such as Heather Sykes (1998), Mary McDonald (2001) and Jayne Caudwell (2006) have pushed the boundaries of our thinking and practice in sport and are welcome for that as part of an overall challenge to the exclusions born of heteronormativity. Indeed, unlike the 1970s, where the practice of sport forged ahead of theorising, it now seems that the reverse is the case. We would argue however that there are (very) wide gaps between conceptual imaginings and theoretical possibilities, and practical experience, for the majority of those currently engaged in practising or organising sport. We have attempted to start where sport is rather than where it could be. Whether the research and policy changes resulting from this study will satisfy queer critics is perhaps doubtful. But we hope that such critics will continue to destabilise the taken-for-grantedness of sport and thereby open up new possibilities for discourse, policy and practice.

### 3.3 Knowledge Gaps

- LGBT experiences of elite athletes, including influences of homophobia on sport satisfaction, decisions to come out and attrition/loss of talent.
- Bisexual and transsexual identities and experiences.
- Management of LGBT identities and experiences, including coaching.
- The intersections of LGBT issues with race, age and class.
- Prevalence of homophobia.
- Practical and institutional impacts of queer/ing in sport.

## Chapter 4: Delivery

### 4.1 Introduction

As we moved from the left to the right of our model (Fig 1) in our enquiry, we anticipated finding less and less material to report and this was the case. This short section describes the practical measures in place, many of which are listed in Appendix 4.

### 4.2 Programmes

Only three of our interviewees had done anything practical by way of delivery in this area and, of these, each had a different focus. None of them could give examples of good practice from anywhere else in Britain, though seemingly effective SO awareness work done in Australia was cited as part of their government initiated anti-abuse in sport programme.

One governing body of sport had embedded policy on SO across its activities in response to high lesbian participation rates and a sense that the sport was being 'stigmatised' as a result of this.

LGBT/SO issues addressed through training, welfare, guidance, discipline, inclusivity initiatives and policies, eg bullying, behavioural standards. (NGB respondent)

Another organisation had been more focused on challenging prejudice and supporting cultural change through their campaigning work around sport and SO discrimination. This had resulted in them engaging in an advisory capacity with a number of influential sports organisations although they felt they were often 'fobbed off' with comments like:

This is all too much, too soon. We must take things slower, the fans won't accept it. (NGO respondent)

Finally, a third organisation had focused on providing non-discriminatory participation opportunities in a given sport with the emphasis placed on creating a gay-friendly mixed environment (although they felt that even a positive integrated approach was undermined by homophobic media coverage). This organisation's main priority was to encourage greater participation. Despite that fact that it had been invited to share its experiences (of gay-friendly service provision) with its national governing body, this agency did not seem concerned about pursuing an institutional change agenda for LGBT equality.

Most interviewees spoke specifically about the relevance of school-based sport and PE and how important these were in influencing young people's attitudes (both positively and negatively) from an early age. They highlighted these activities as opportunities to effect long-term change, both in sport and also in

wider social attitudes, and also as places where perceived problems begin (particularly in relation to bullying and gender stereotyping).

Can see how sport could be a good route to engage young people as an entry into equalities issues. (Government respondent)

Very linked to gender stereotyping and this is particularly problematic for school-age children where social attitudes are formed. (NGO respondent)

No leadership was demonstrated on this dimension from the Government representatives where sport in education had received little consideration in relation to LGBT equality, with a firmly expressed belief that this was the devolved responsibility of local government to deliver and that they had no role to influence this. There also appeared to be more concerns about child protection when considering school-aged participation and inclusion policies relating to SO.

More generally, however, in the absence of structured programme support, high profile figures in sport still go to great lengths to hide their SO. The publicist Max Clifford has identified that he has been approached by two FA Premier League clubs to 'manage' the media portrayal of the sexuality of some of their players. He comments in his autobiography on this unusual achievement:

So far, none of my clients has been outed – but it's been a 40-year battle, and in the past ten years, as the media have become more intrusive, it's become much harder work. But that's part of the fascination. (Max Clifford and Angela Levin (2005) *Max Clifford: read all about it!* Virgin Books)

Sport thus appears to mirror what Colgan et al (2007) found, that is an implementation gap between SO equality policy and practice in the private, public and voluntary organisations that they studied. "The gap was explained as a consequence of a clash between the social justice and business case arguments in progressing equality and diversity" (p601). There was also tangibly more reluctance to promote SO equality than had been the case with earlier efforts towards gender, race and disability. The implementation gap was also explained as a function of what Young (1987) called the 'appreciative context' or culture of the organisations. SO equality work in the organisations she researched, and in those studied by Cooper (2006) and Monro (2007), was perceived to progress slowly, unevenly and through the advocacy of committed individuals.

More positively, Garfield (2003) describes how Mark Tewksbury, the Canadian swimming gold medallist, made a successful transition from being closeted to being out:

At the height of his fame, Tewksbury's agent had denied that he was gay, and invented a girlfriend for him. Tewksbury believed that agents did this sort of thing all the time, but he now knew there was also another way. 'The fear is always of being alone,' he said. 'But it's clear that we're not alone at all.' He talked of how his sexuality became a liability, of how he was told never to speak of being gay. 'But the only person who didn't benefit from that was me. Sport should do what sport does best – transcend boundaries and prejudice and bring people together.'

### 4.3 Delivery Gaps

- Educational products and training on SO in sport, especially for CEOs and senior personnel in sports organisations.
- Practical support for LGBT athletes, and rights-based information.
- Competition structures that accommodate SO diversity.

## Chapter 5: Measurement

### 5.1 Introduction

How are we to measure LGBT engagement in sport and physical activity? Although demographic variables are common features of social surveys, the use of SO as a 'variable' needs to be problematised: it is either **not** used or, if present, may be ignored. There is a potential skew between the structuralist tendencies of sport – rules and regulations, committee structures, selection, adherence to training schedules, rewards and disciplinary regimes – and the subtleties of contemporary LGBT identity politics. This is linked to the frequent use of the terms 'barriers' and 'constraints' when discussing participation. Such language assumes a social structural interpretation of the choices facing LGBT people (for example, that once 'barriers' are removed, all will be well) and does not necessarily capture the complexity of their statuses in the contexts of their work, leisure and private lives. Same-sex couples, for instance, may face cultural negativity long after restrictions on leisure club 'family' membership are lifted. Indeed, the Equality and Human Rights Commission itself has now shifted towards a focus on autonomy and choice rather than one on barriers and constraints.

Measurement of sport and other physical activity rates has presented a wide range of logistical, statistical and political challenges to demographers and sports policy agencies over the years. Margins of error in typical measures such as taking part in moderate exercise three times per week or playing sport at least once in the month preceding a survey are compounded by the issue of transparency for LGBT people. Many such people will not wish to identify as LGBT, even for an anonymous survey, and some may not have a clear understanding themselves of which of these boxes to tick. Lifestyle criteria based on consumption patterns or socio-demographics are also unlikely to reveal the 'true' picture of LGBT engagement in sport and other physical activity because of the complex personal and organisational politics that attach to being 'out'. Indeed, it is for these reasons that qualitative and biographical studies about LGBT people in sport are so essential if a cultural comfort zone in sport is ever to be established.

### 5.2 Participation and Impacts

With regard to assessing organisational progress on SO equality in sport, we might turn to the lessons of the sport-for-development community (Coalter, 2007) and perhaps develop measures based on process and capacity building rather than bald outputs and key performance indicators. The continuous improvement model of quality assurance that this approach encompasses would probably receive a more positive reception from sports bodies than just the setting of quantitative targets. Such an approach should also include measures of cultural

change since the gay (un)friendly climate of sport is one of the main factors in recruiting and retaining participants.

According to Ward (2008, p1), "...minority sexuality is arguably the most difficult and under-researched of all diversity areas in work organizations, resulting in a comparative paucity of well-researched qualitative data". We would argue that this comment not only applies to sports organisations but is also the case in relation to quantitative data, for SO is not generally used as an analytic category in sports research. Further, few people in sport who identify as non-heterosexual are prepared to draw attention to their SO either by volunteering to take part in qualitative research or by risking breaches of anonymity in surveys. It was for this reason that a pilot for the 2011 Census led the Government to drop plans to measure LGBT prevalence. Demographic data are, however, being collected in Scotland through the 2008 Scottish Health Survey (Scottish Executive, 2008) (although the survey excludes questions on transsexual status) but it is possible that non- or low response will undermine the validity of the data.

In the stakeholder consultation, lack of evidence was cited by all interviewees as a major issue and, except for a few generalised pieces of research and odd statistics, no interviewee was able to provide any disaggregated data or information on participation rates, attitudes or experiences specific to the sporting environment.

In the absence of clear data and evidence, there was some confusion about what the wider implications were of sport not being perceived to be 'gay friendly'. Once it had been acknowledged that this might generally **reduce** participation levels, create hostile atmospheres for all involved and limit the pool from which elite performers might come, some interviewees were able to use their wider experience and information to demonstrate a broader understanding of societal impact:

Sport can be a gateway to other issues such as health and well-being, personal development and fulfilment, maturity, social contact and networks, belonging etc. If LGB people are not involved they miss out on all these other opportunities that are not just part of physical activity or competitive involvement. (NGO respondent)

In their study of local authority and voluntary bodies, Colgan et al (2007) used purposive sampling and 'snowballing' – through multiple access routes (email; intranet sites; organisational newsletters; invitations and workshops; trade unions and campaigning groups; 16 'good practice' organisations from the Stonewall Diversity Champions' list; a survey and 154 qualitative interviews with respondents who felt comfortable with participating). They found:

There is a lack of robust statistical evidence concerning the population of the UK who identify as LGB (p591).

The lack of statistical data regarding sexual orientation either in the general population or in organisations means that probability sampling is not possible (p592).

For a variety of reasons, many LGBT people will not identify as such in survey returns. For elite athletes, particularly in certain sport subcultures, the fear of coming out, with its associated costs (loss of sponsorship, threats to peer esteem, concerns about selection and the effects on significant others) may prompt them to 'pass' ie to act and respond as heterosexual (Griffin, 1998).

The methods by which distributive data are captured, for example participation rates or data about representation in sports management, officiating or coaching positions, therefore need to be very carefully interrogated.

Many sports organisations have adopted the mechanism of standards to raise the awareness and measurable level of equality (**sportscotland**, 2006). Governing bodies of sport working through *The equality standard: a framework for sport* (Sport England, 2004, [www.sportengland.org/the\\_equality\\_standard.pdf](http://www.sportengland.org/the_equality_standard.pdf)) are required to collect an equality profile of their staff, Board, members, players, coaches and officials. At levels 1 and 2 (Foundation and Preliminary) they are asked for data on four equality strands – age, gender, disability and race. It is not until level 3 (Intermediate), however, that they are **required** to collect data on sexual orientation and religion/belief. However, such information is regarded as 'added value' evidence at Foundation and Preliminary levels.

The Equality Standard for sport has undoubtedly played a vital role in focusing on the evidence base for SO equality since 2004. However, the early, restricted equality focus within sport – on just gender, race and disability – arguably left the other equality strands (religion, age and SO) even further behind than they were before. It might also have led sports organisations erroneously to equate SO equality with **gender** equality. Since 'gender' has often been interpreted as applying only to women and girls, this further compounds the problem. SO applies to **all** under the LGBT banner – and some, such as Johnson and Kivel (2007) would also include in this Q or 'Queer' – so it makes no sense to hide SO statements in the back of policies for 'women and sport'. The different equality strands may be conceptually and legally linked but they are existentially separate, looming large for some and small in others' identity politics. Interestingly, several of the more far-sighted governing bodies have in fact chosen to collect the data for all six strands at either Foundation or Preliminary level, recognising that it is good practice to treat this strand with equal importance to the rest.

According to our interviewees, nothing is yet being done in this area as they have not got the earlier base of knowledge to enable them to draw comparisons or even to extract disaggregated data. For those subject to the public duties around equalities and who were aware of 'goods, facilities and services' legislation (see Appendix 3) there was a recognition that this could leave them exposed.

Compared with other areas of public policy where monitoring of equality is being addressed (such as the police or health services) there is still a real fear around monitoring on SO in sport that does not apply with, for example, gender or race



equality. The range of reasons for not monitoring included (ill-informed) beliefs that it was prohibited under data protection legislation, that respondents would be forced to 'out' people against their will and that it would provoke a negative backlash from others (parents were mainly cited as the problem here). This demonstrated a level of institutional ignorance but also provided a convenient excuse for not tackling what is still widely perceived to be a controversial and risky issue.

SO is difficult because it's a private issue.

(NGO respondent)

Sport England Active People survey does not include sexual orientation. We've been told a case would have to be made for gathering this data that demonstrates existing discrimination but this becomes a circular problem. ...a lack of evidence about discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual people in itself demonstrates a warped thinking about how to challenge discrimination and affect change and this forms a subtle institutional barrier.

(NGO respondent)

Ironically, the organisation that is perhaps furthest ahead in policy infrastructure and measurement on issues of SO and gender identity has achieved that through having to directly address a perceived 'over-representation' of lesbians in the sport. This has resulted in a holistic approach that addresses all SOs equally rather than trying to use 'positive action' measures but such an approach had to be embraced originally because of the negativity around high lesbian involvement.

There is a stigma attached to [name of sport] that you have to be gay to play. This has caused almost a reverse issue where heterosexual people have not participated. For us it has to be a 'stealth attack' given the starting point of [name of sport] and trying not to give this issue any higher a profile than it has already had. Most important thing is to make policy and practice drive it so there is consistency, inclusivity and transparency.

(NGB respondent)

According to **sportscotland** (2006, citing Department of Trade and Industry figures from research on the financial implications of the Civil Partnership Act), an estimated 6% of the population is LGBT. However, such estimates may be based on large skews in the baseline data arising from underreporting, ambiguity or resistance and lack of trust in the security of personal data collected by surveys. Such factors make it very difficult to get a representative sample and honest answers to sensitive questions. If we extrapolate such figures to sport there may be even larger errors in the data for we cannot say accurately whether sport reflects the population at large. Indeed, other participation studies have shown that sport is already biased to particular class (ABC1), race (white British), gender (male) and age (16-24) groups (Sport England, 2008). Based on our reading of the literature, there may be good reason to suggest that sports participation rates among LGBT people are also strongly gendered, with gay men less likely to engage in organised sports and lesbian women more likely to. The argument that sport is a 'safe haven for lesbians' has been supported in qualitative studies but we could not locate any quantitative evidence to support this proposition.

The only example of an Equality Impact Assessment in sport that we identified was reported to us by the Scottish Government respondent: this had been conducted on the national strategy for sport *Reaching higher* (Scottish Executive, 2007). However, we were not provided with, and could not find, any details of the evaluation framework that might inform progress of the ‘carrot and stick’ approaches that could help guide and accelerate delivery. The strategy states: “Some people fear intimidation on the basis of their sexuality... and others may not find the sporting environment welcoming” but there is nothing in the document, for either the participation or performance goals, which joins up efforts across **sportscotland** and other relevant agencies in striving for SO equality in sport. The presentation of a written policy is far distant from the proactive approaches that are needed to ensure its effectiveness in practice.

### 5.3 Measurement Gaps

- Flexible measures of LGBT identities and experiences in sport.
- Prevalence data on LGBT participation in all sports roles.
- Qualitative and biographical data about LGBT people in sport.
- LGBT people’s own priorities for policy and practice in sport.
- What counts as good practice for LGBT people in sports organisations’ policy, service delivery and capacity building.
- Information on bisexuality in sport.

## Chapter 6: Communication

### 6.1 Introduction

For many sports organisations there is little yet to communicate about SO diversity: for a variety of reasons, it does not appear to be a policy imperative. Where we found enthusiasm for advocating SO diversity we found ambivalence about sport, and vice versa. The work of the international and European gay sport movements might thus have lessons to offer UK sports organisations as they celebrate both SO diversity **and** sport. The longer-term aim of our lead bodies for sport must therefore be to render the invisible – SO diversity – visible, in policy, in practice, in education and in the media, mass marketing and celebration.

### 6.2 Dominant Discourses

None of the organisations or individuals interviewed for this review felt they yet had a clear communication message on the issue. For some this was driven by a fear of drawing attention to it or feeling it would overemphasise its importance; for others it was more a concern about their own lack of expertise and risks of getting it wrong. This lack of clear communication increasingly results in a 'don't ask, don't tell' culture where relevant policy issues can end up being ignored. There were aspirations expressed for this to change but it was universally recognised that the starting point is well behind other equalities issues, that there is still significant prejudice underlying the stated positions, and that to get to the point where this issue is 'normalised' first requires making it visible.

Need to get to a stage where it is a non-issue and sport for sport's sake is inclusive. Must not overemphasise or overreact to certain issues at the potential expense of others – address some of the attitudes behind the expressed concerns and perceptions.

(NGB respondent)

There is a perceived risk that a few glossy and positive statements will be made without really addressing the underlying issues. It was clear from the interviews that some of those currently charged with assisting others in the furtherance of an LGBT equality and inclusion agenda in sport simply do not have the expertise or understanding themselves to do that effectively. At best, they show well-intentioned ignorance and at worst they ignore the detail completely, claiming that it is part of their overall equalities approach (yet offering nothing whatsoever to evidence this claim).

Some sources of advice and help were available via websites (Appendix 4 and Annex). The language and imagery of sport has been challenged and disrupted by some academics and advocates, especially those working from a queer perspective. Owen (2007, p129), for example, reported that a queer rowing crew facing a veteran's boat laughed uproariously when the umpire told them that he

would not start the race until the boats were “both straight”. Other examples include gay athletes who cross-dress or wear deliberately provocative or flamboyant sports clothing to undermine what they see as the stuffy image of heteronormative sport, or the adoption of visual images in posters, websites or marketing materials that are deliberately ambiguous about sexual identity (playing with hair styles, clothing, jewellery or postures) in order to upset the habit of fixed gender labels in sport – “to disturb and destabilise the familiar” (Caudwell, 2006, p3). Despite these examples, however, the possibilities for changing the discourse around LGBTQ in sport are still circumscribed by the sceptics and resisters (Fig 2) who appear to dominate our decision-making roles.

Using the ‘stick’ approach to organisational change (eg, withholding grants, removing statuses such as Club Mark, not using venues for events) are less likely to effect change than offering the ‘carrot’. It is possible that the tide of resistance to SO diversity in sport is turning and that young athletes themselves, who have more liberal attitudes and practices, will eventually succeed their older, more sceptical sports administrators. It is they who have the chance to expand the discursive spaces of SO in sport through protest action, putting the sexual into the public domain, playing with and subverting the mores of conventional sport.

UK Sport’s membership of the Diversity Champions programme, its development of recruitment guides, delivery of governing body workshops on SO and the commissioning of this research are all tangible and welcome examples of an increasingly open approach to SO equality in sport. But it would also be a welcome and massive advance if every gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans person already in a position of authority at the top of British sport would accelerate this process by having the courage to come out. For this to happen, such individuals will first have to feel comfortable, supported institutionally and personally, and assured that there will be no negative repercussions for their role or sport career. At present, there is still widespread fear among decision-makers on this issue, albeit reported to us privately rather than through research data. The discourse – talking up the issue of SO diversity in a positive way – could itself become data and this, in turn, could accelerate change.

### 6.3 Communication Gaps

- Open discussion about SO diversity and equality at every level of decision-making in sport.
- Events and protocols for welcoming LGBT people in all roles and at every level of sport.
- Information channels to disseminate knowledge, challenge myths and address concerns for LGBT and ‘straight’ people in sport.
- Partnerships with the media/journalists to inform and challenge them.

- Incorporation of LGBT language and symbols in materials, images, texts and speech.

## **SECTION III: CONCLUSIONS**

### **Chapter 7: Summary**

#### **7.1 Key Themes**

We found that the research literature in this field is populated mainly by studies of lesbians and lesbianism in sport. This is no surprise since it was feminism that first addressed the politics and practice of sexual diversity in sport, specifically lesbianism, and feminism that was the springboard for later pro-feminist research and the start of men's/masculinity studies (Whannel, 2007). Early 'sports feminists' struggled to be heard both within sport which was not interested in women, and within feminism which cast sport as an exclusively male institution. The literature is also weighted towards identity and experience studies, with significant gaps in the areas of policy and management.

Our policy analysis reinforced the findings of the interviews and research literature searches. SO continues to attract intense interest among scholars from diverse intellectual traditions – in sociology, history, psychology, education studies, cultural studies, health studies, tourism studies and many others – and varied theoretical positions such as feminist, pro-feminist and critical perspectives. But the scholarship in the field is weighted heavily towards analyses of identity and experience, and then mainly of gays and lesbians in sport rather than bi, transsexual or queer athletes. There is very little literature on policy and management implications of SO equality in sport yet it is arguably in policy and management that sports organisations face their greatest need.

It would be wrong to expect sports organisations to be the leaders on this issue but in some cases, such as the FA, they are. This is perhaps because sport is inextricably linked to debates about the body, physicality, sex roles and fairness. More often, however, sport is simply doing its best to follow the letter and spirit of the new legislation and of prescriptions for meeting the various equality standards. However, from the evidence we have gathered, it seems that there are currently few organisations in the 'leader' role (Fig 2). Those whose core business is sport look elsewhere for guidance on SO and those whose core business is equality are all-too-often afraid to engage with sport or see it as a marginal activity in the political landscape. To help change this, in Appendix 5 we offer one set of possible indicators for a model sports organisation.

To help the analysis of the literature and policy search, a 'change model' was employed to illustrate the various stages of action and expertise that will influence progress in this area. It was clear that all interviewees' experience and thinking was currently heavily skewed towards the early stages of this model. Whilst some organisations showed commitment, few had the awareness or knowledge needed to manage effectively for SO diversity and equality in sport.

In summary:

- Research focusing on identity and experience research is the dominant theme in the literature, with considerable additional contributions from the literature on women/femininities and men/masculinities.
- Bisexuality and transsexuality are underrepresented in sports research and policy.
- Whilst there is a basic awareness among stakeholders that there are issues relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (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.
- Lack of data and evidence means these issues can be ignored or remain hidden.
- Equality issues around sexual orientation and gender identity are still seen differently from comparable issues on race, gender or disability and the underlying prejudices are different.
- Much of the prejudice and negativity around LGBT issues in sport can be traced back to the application of gender stereotypes and perceptions of masculinity and femininity.
- Attitudes within sport both reinforce and are underpinned by wider social attitudes. It would be unfair to judge sports organisations by higher standards than those demonstrated elsewhere.
- Young people are seen as key to effecting change because they often express more enlightened attitudes to diversity than older generations. Sport can be a powerful influence both on young people's own personal development and on their attitudes to others, so young people's openness to diversity is likely to continue even after their personal involvement in sport ceases.
- There are many different dimensions to sport: team vs individual, elite vs recreational, health and social benefits of participation, sport's influence on fans and spectators. Each of these brings about different challenges and opportunities for LGBT inclusion and equality.
- In relation to effective service delivery, there is little evidence of integrated policy or thinking related to sport, health, education and social inclusion. Bringing these elements together more effectively could create a step-change in some of the issues relating to LGBT and equality, and help to add value to governments' efforts to work in a more joined up way across health, sport, education and industry.
- Homophobic discrimination and gender stereotyping are not just damaging to those who may be LGBT but risk affecting performance and participation amongst far wider groups.
- There is no clear leadership on this issue and even some in government positions appear to be hesitant to take a stand.

## 7.2 Main Gaps and Recommendations for Research and Policy

No.	Gap	Research Recommendations
1.	Baseline distributive data on the representation of LGBT athletes in sport at all levels and in all roles.	Quantitative research to identify patterns of representation.
2.	Knowledge of the place, experiences, coaching and management of bi athletes.	Targeted qualitative research on the experiences bisexual sports people, coaches and other support roles.
3.	Personal and institutional impacts of queer/ing in sport.	Research into the impact of queer/ing on individuals and organisations in sport and implications for policy.
4.	Interrelationships between SO and with all other demographic statuses (disabilities, age etc).	Inclusion of SO-related items within all standard public survey measures in sport.
5.		Embedding of SO as a criterion within all publicly-funded sport research agendas on age, race, disability, religion and class.
6.	SO and performance level, especially the experience of LGBT (in)equality and homophobia of elite athletes and their entourages.	Qualitative retrospective research to assess the types, extent and impact of homophobia on LGBT athletes and their entourages at the elite/performance level.
7.	Knowledge of how LGBT and hetero athletes, coaches and other support roles interact.	Relational studies of the interactions of LGBT and heterosexual sports people, coaches and other support roles.
8.	Relative progress (policy and practice) of sport when compared with cognate services, eg health, performing arts and education.	Comparative analyses of LGBT equality in sport and other related areas such as health and education.
9.	Shared learning on SO diversity management.	Replication of studies on SO diversity management in the public sector such as Munro (2006) and Colgan et al. (2007).
10.	Cost-benefit analyses of athlete attrition (drop out) and performance decrements and loss of medals caused by homonegativity.	Development of a methodology for conducting a cost-value analysis of SO diversity management in elite sport.
11.	Incidence and prevalence data for homophobia as a distinct category of violence and harassment for LGBT athletes, coaches and sport personnel.	Prevalence studies of SO-related violence and harassment for LGBT sports people, coaches and other support roles.
12.		Development of case management systems to collect and collate incidence data on these themes.
13.	Responses of sport organisations and individuals athletes and others in sport to particular issues e.g. trans eligibility, sport competition structures, suspension and appeals processes relating to SO.	Mixed method policy research to audit whether, how and why providers (especially governing bodies of sport) do or do not address SO and to collect case studies of good practice.
14.	Prescriptions on Impact Assessment under the SO regulations/guidance for sport.	Development of research and educational materials to support impact assessments.



No.	Gap	Policy Recommendations
1.	Support systems for elite LGBT sports people.	Provision of lifestyle support expertise for talented and elite athletes, focused on coming out, working with LGBT/heterosexual peers, managing SO in different cultures, dealing with homophobia.
2.	Systems for assuring inclusive sport for LGBT sports people.	Practical and policy guidance on assuring inclusive sport for LGBT people, especially for clubs, governing bodies and elite sports organisations.
3.		Development and dissemination of advice and guidance materials and systems for sports people dealing with SO issues.
4.	Specific advice on transsexual people and sport.	Preparation of advice sheets on service and facility provision for transsexual people in different sports similar to that produced by Press for Change and DCMS.
5.	Shared learning on SO diversity management.	Adaptation of and/or engagement by sports organisations with Stonewall's Equality Index and Diversity Champions Programme.
6.	Willingness to prioritise the issue, either in lead government departments or in sports organisations.	Development of leadership training about SO equality and impact assessment guidance, delivered to all lead sport body CEOs and key public officials working in sport.

### 7.3 Conclusions

It was clear from our consultation that our interviewees all had a level of awareness that 'issues' exist in relation to sexual orientation and sport. The detail of this awareness, the understanding of what might be done and the commitment to take anything further differed greatly, however, even within the small sample. Whilst most subscribed to a general sense that more should (and could) be done in this area, a number of commonly-raised factors would suggest that this issue will not be seen as an immediate priority unless there is clear leadership on it and a direct investment of time and resource.

We found:

- a lack of hard data/evidence as to the extent of any problems, meaning that something everyone 'knows' exists remains largely invisible;
- no shared sense of where responsibility for action may lie;
- few examples of good practice or guidance to follow;

- other more pressing priorities under the 'equalities' heading;
- an element of fear and/or defensiveness about this particular 'equality strand' which is still seen differently from race, gender or disability; and
- a sense that either socially or organisationally the challenge of addressing LGBT issues in sport successfully is still some way off.

Why, if sport can be so hostile to LGBT people, should we spend time attempting to change it? Why not simply abandon sport to those who prefer unreconstructed sexual divisions? Because, as is so often argued in both research and policy literature, sport can be a site of affirmation as well as one of exclusion, it can lead one to be both dominated and also empowered (Aitchison, 2007). Also, the gains for LGBT people of a review such as this should, eventually, be gains for all.

As suggested earlier, it would be a mistake for sexual orientation policy in sport to facilitate the replacement of hegemonic heterosexuality with a different kind of hegemony, that of gays over lesbians, gays and lesbians over bi people, or gays, lesbians and bi people over trans people. Such false hierarchies help nobody in the end for they divide rather than integrate. The challenge for all of us committed to diversity in sport is to find both policies and cultural practices that are more than just tolerant or accepting, more than merely compliant with some externally defined standards, but which enhance and enrich the lived experience of sport and other physical activity for everyone involved.

## SECTION IV: APPENDICES

### Appendix 1a: Sampling Frame – Electronic Databases

All database searches were restricted to English language sources only. Grey material, policy documents, some from overseas, and books on sport sociology dating back to the 1970s were also searched and approximately 900 additional journal lists. Databases accessed were: Sport Discus (BSCO), Sociological Abstracts (CSA). Electronic searches were undertaken against the following themes:

Equity	AND	Policy OR
Equality		Advocacy
Equality Impact Assessment		Programmes
Equal opportunities		Participation
Sexuality		Scotland
Sexual orientation		Northern Ireland
Sexual identity		England
Heterosexual		Ethnicity
Gay		Ethnic minorities
Lesbian		Disability
Bi-sexual/bisexual		Age
Transgender		Volunteering
Transsexual		Employment
LGBT		Monitoring
Gender reassignment		Evaluation
Homophobia		Well-being
Bullying		Exclusion
Masculinity		
<hr/>		
WITH	Sport OR	Physical activity
		Physical education
		Recreation
		Elite sport/performance
		Olympic
		Paralympic
		Team sport
		Individual sport
		Femininity
		Heterosexism
		Sexual bullying
		Sexual victimisation
		Sexual harassment
		Sexual exploitation
		Social exclusion
		Social inclusion
		Heteronormative
		Queer
		Sex discrimination
		Single Equality Scheme
		Equality and Human Rights
		Commission
		Equity impact assessment
		Equality duty

## **Appendix 1b: Sampling Frame – Policy Analysis**

### UK-based Organisations

Women's Sports and Fitness Foundation

English Football Association

English Basketball Association

Amateur Rowing Association

Lawn Tennis Associations

UK Athletics

British Cycling

### Overseas or International Organisations

Sport Australia/Australian Sports Commission

US Women's Sports Foundation

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS)

Promotion Plus (British Columbia, Canada)

European Women and Sport Group

International Olympic Committee, Medical Commission

Netherlands Olympic Committee/National Sports Confederation

## Appendix 1c: Sampling Frame – Telephone Interviews

Coalition on Sexual Orientation (<http://www.coso.org.uk/>)

The Coalition on Sexual Orientation was established by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) groups in Northern Ireland in order to provide a voice for the LGBT Community in debates and consultations surrounding the rights of the community.

International Gay and Lesbian Football Association  
(<http://www.iglfa.org/home.htm>)

The mission of the International Gay and Lesbian Football Association is to foster and augment the self respect of gay women and men throughout the world, and engender respect and understanding from the non-gay world, through the medium of football (soccer).

Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Northern Ireland (Equality Unit) (<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/>)

The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is a fully functioning department of the Northern Ireland administration with a wide range of responsibilities. Among other things, its strategic objectives include promoting better community relations, a culture of equality and rights.

Scottish Government (Health and Well-being)  
(<http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/az.html>)

The Scottish Government Health and Community Care is responsible for NHS Scotland and for the development and implementation of health and community care policy.

Stonewall UK (<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/>)

Stonewall was founded in 1989 by a small group of women and men who had been active in the struggle against Section 28 of the Local Government Act (that was designed to prevent the so-called 'promotion' of homosexuality in schools); as well as stigmatising gay people it also galvanised the gay community. Their aim was to create a professional lobbying group that would prevent such attacks on lesbians, gay men and bisexuals from ever occurring again. Stonewall has subsequently put the case for equality on the mainstream political agenda by winning support within all the main political parties and now has offices in England, Scotland and Wales.

### Women's Rugby Football Union

([http://www.rfu.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/rfuhome.community\\_detail/storyid/5972](http://www.rfu.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/rfuhome.community_detail/storyid/5972))

The WRFU is the women's arm of the official governing for Rugby Football Union in England. It was first formed in 1994.

### Women's Sports & Fitness Foundation (<http://www.wsf.org.uk/>)

The WSFF (originally the Women's Sports Foundation) was formed in 1985 as a pressure group for women and girls in sport. Its current mission is "A society which encourages, enables and celebrates active and healthy women and girls".

## Appendix 2: Sample Interview Schedule

This schedule was used with governing body interviewees. Other groups such as NGOs and Government departments were asked similar questions that focused more on their level of strategic influence, practical experience or specific function.

1. Please tell me briefly what your role is in your organisation?
2. How 'gay-friendly' would you say that your sport was?
3. How does your organisation address LGBT issues?
4. Do you have a formal policy about SO?  
If so, when was it introduced?  
May I see a copy?
5. Can you provide us with any statistics about the representation of LGBT people in your sport? (eg, participation surveys, sport census data, club/members records...)
6. Would you say that the experience of LGBT people in your sport different for males and females? If so, in what ways(s)?
7. Have there been any instances where individuals have complained about the presence of LGBT members? (eg, competition eligibility...)
8. Tell me of any instances where individuals have complained about the treatment of LGBT members (eg, bullying, harassment, homophobia, spectator behaviour...)
9. Describe any special initiatives or campaigns that your organisation has undertaken, led or joined to tackle homophobia? (eg, research, promotional/themed events...)
10. Have there ever been special/segregated competitions or events for LGBT people in your sport? (eg, tournaments, festival days, camps...)
11. Have transsexual issues ever been raised as an issue in your organisation?  
If so, on what grounds (eg, fairness, exclusion, transphobia...). What happened? (How) were these issues resolved?
12. Describe any monitoring or evaluation that has been done in your organisation on the subject of LGBT participation.
13. Do you give consideration to how your policies or programmes might impact on LGBT people?
14. What barriers exist to better integration for LGBT people, both in your sport and in sport more generally?
15. You will be aware that your organisation is required not to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender reassignment in employment or the provision of facilities, goods, services. What organisations or individuals do you consult to assist you with compliance on these issues?
16. Please add any further comments you would like to make about LGBT people in your or other sports.

## Appendix 3: Background Note on the Legal Framework Governing LGBT Equality Issues in Sport

**NB: This is an explanatory note only and should not be used in place of qualified legal advice on any specific issues.**

The experience of LGBT people within sport is likely to be shaped by three key elements:

- The requirements of anti-discrimination and equality legislation.
- Current social attitudes and expectations around LGBT issues.
- Good practice based on knowledge of what can be done matched by the skills and motivation to take action.

All three are important and, whilst local commitment and progress in any one area can, in the short term, compensate for deficits in the other two, compliance with legislation should provide a minimum standard.

Equalities legislation is reserved to the UK government, has been developing for over 30 years and stems from a principle of eliminating discrimination. However, changes brought about by recent amendments to sex, race and disability discrimination statutes have placed an additional emphasis on public sector organisations to focus on more proactive promotion of equality and good relations between different groups in society.

Unfortunately, piecemeal developments over this time driven by different external catalysts have created subtly different definitions, levels of protection and remedies by race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, transgender, religion/belief and age. The Government has made a commitment to 'harmonising' equalities legislation through a proposed Single Equalities Act but, according to the current timetable, this is not expected until Spring 2009.

The sorts of issues affecting LGBT people in sport are currently covered by a number of different legislative instruments relating to:

- the exercise of public functions;
- employment;
- vocational training and qualifications;
- provision of and access to goods, facilities and services;
- the practices of members' clubs or associations; and
- individual discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation.



## Workplace Equality

**The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003** cover discrimination, harassment and victimisation in work and vocational training. They make it unlawful to deny people jobs, promotion, training or anything else that is available to others because of prejudice about their sexual orientation. This legislation covers people who are heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual or gay.

Similar employment protection for **transgender people** is provided through amendments in 1999 to the Sex Discrimination Act.

## Equal Access to Goods, Facilities and Services (GFS)

**The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007** arose from the Equality Act 2006 and require **any** providers of goods, facilities or services to ensure that they do not discriminate against actual or potential users based on their sexual orientation. This applies to all individuals and organisations who provide any kind of services, whether it is paid for or not. Two groups particularly relevant to sport are specifically mentioned within these regulations:

- **Public authorities**, which include any person or organisation delivering functions of a public nature, must ensure that all their services are provided in such a way that users are not disadvantaged by reason of sexual orientation. They must also ensure that employees and agents acting on their behalf behave in the same way, using contractual or other controls as appropriate to achieve that result. This would cover most publicly-funded national bodies as well provision of PE in schools, local authority sports programmes, etc.
- **Clubs or associations** with over 25 members are covered by this regulation whether they are corporate or unincorporated, and whether or not their activities are carried on for profit, meaning that most sports clubs and associations will be affected.

**The Sex Discrimination (Amendment of Legislation) Regulations 2008** cover similar ground to the above and mean that, from April 2008, it became unlawful for providers of goods, facilities and services to discriminate against or harass people on grounds of gender reassignment.

In relation to race, gender and disability equality, in addition to the protections around employment and GFS, currently public authorities (and those carrying out public functions on their behalf) have to manage **general and specific duties** to promote equality and good relations. No such duties yet exist in relation to sexual orientation, religion or belief and age but good practice would suggest that similar approaches should be taken in these three areas and current proposals for a future Single Equality Act introduce such requirements.

## Appendix 4: Practical Schemes – What Works?

### Organisations

**Brighton Bandits** – is a football club in the city of Brighton and Hove for gay and gay-friendly men and women. <http://www.banditsfc.org>

**Brighton Lesbian and Gay Sports Society (BLAGSS)** – consists of about 150 people keen on tennis, badminton and swimming. <http://www.blagss.org>

**Caledonian Thebans** – is Scotland’s first specifically gay-friendly rugby club for men. <http://www.thebans-rfc.co.uk>

**European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation (EGLSF)** – is doing lobby work within the Council of Europe in order to abolish discrimination against LGBT people in sports. As an official NGO it enjoys participatory status with the CoE. <http://www.eqlsf.info>

**Federation of Gay Games** – perpetuates the quadrennial Gay Games and safeguards its founding principles of Participation, Inclusion and Personal Best™. An all-volunteer organisation, the Federation is made up of individuals and organisations representing four continents. <http://www.gaygames.com>

**Gay and Lesbian Athletics Foundation (GLAF)** – is a 100% volunteer staffed non-profit organisation based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. <http://glaf.org/about.html>

**Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation (GLAAD)** – is dedicated to promoting and ensuring fair, accurate and inclusive representation of people and events in the media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. <http://www.glaad.org>

**International Lesbian and Gay Organisation (ILGA)** – is a worldwide network of national and local groups dedicated to achieving equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people everywhere. <http://www.ilga.org>

**National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR, USA) – Sports Project.** This project aims to level the playing field for LGBT players and coaches. [http://www.nclrights.org/site/PageServer?pagename=issue\\_sports](http://www.nclrights.org/site/PageServer?pagename=issue_sports)

**Out Proud Olympians (OPO)** – is a worldwide organisation of sportsmen and sportswomen who have participated at the international level of sport. “Our mandate is to eliminate homophobia in sport, encourage active healthy living in the LGBT community, and facilitate participation of this group at major sporting events.” <http://www.o-p-o.org/about.htm>

**Outsports (USA).** Outsports is based in Los Angeles and was founded in 2000. Its mission is to build the broadest, deepest, most informative and most entertaining gay sports community. <http://www.outsports.com/founders.htm>

**Press for Change.** The largest organisation for trans people in the UK. It has published *Use of sports and leisure facilities by trans people* (2005) which gives clear guidance on how to integrate trans people in the provision of healthy leisure and physical activities. Based at BM Network, London WC1N 3XX. <http://www.pcf.org.uk>

**Village Manchester FC.** A Gay Men's football club formed in 1996. <http://www.vmfc.co.uk/index.php>

**Village Spartans RUFC.** "The only gay rugby team in Britain to have a formal association with a heterosexual team, the Salians, and, as a result, the two share a ground and drink the same beer... first gay club to become properly established was the Kings Cross Steelers in London, in 1995. The Steelers are members of the sport's governing body, the Rugby Football Union, and participate in national leagues. In the UK, they have since been joined by the Caledonian Thebans in Edinburgh and the Spartans; in New Zealand by the Ponsonby Heroes; and in Argentina by a team in Buenos Aires. All are members of IGRAB, the International Gay Rugby Association and Board, which is dedicated to encouraging gay men and lesbians everywhere to play rugby... New clubs spring up in the US almost every other week. Meanwhile, big name sponsors such as Nike have begun putting their names to events... international gay sevens tournament at the Millennium Gay Games in London and sent two teams to the second international sevens tournament in Washington DC in 2001.... Spartans will soon be off to Cologne for a (straight) sevens tournament and, in August, they are to host a (gay) sevens competition as part of the Europride festival."

Source: Cooke, R. (2003) 'The groundbreakers', Sunday May 4, guardian.co.uk © Guardian News and Media Limited 2008.

<http://www.villagespartans.co.uk/mvsrufc/index.html>

## Events and Initiatives

**VIII Gay Games, Cologne,** July 31 to August 7, 2010, 12,000 participants from more than 70 countries will converge for the Gay Games VIII Cologne 2010 <http://www.games-cologne.de/en>

[Out in Sport - The right to be different Declaration of Montreal](#) Montreal International Conference, 26-29 Jul 2006.

[International colloquium about Sports, Identities, Homosexuality and Homophobia](#) Lyon conference, 1-2 Dec 2006.

**International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO Day)** – provides a platform for everyone to make a powerful statement to demand improvements in the quality of life for LGBT people both overseas and in the UK. <http://www.idaho.org.uk>

**Stonewall: Workplace Equality Index** – is a national benchmarking exercise showcasing Britain's top employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. Sports organisations could be encouraged to apply for this. The questionnaire and guidance details may be downloaded at:  
<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace/1477.asp>

**Stonewall: Diversity Champions Programme** – is Britain's good practice forum in which employers can work with Stonewall and each other to promote lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the workplace. Sports organisations could engage in this or establish a sports equivalent. Details are available at:  
<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace/1447.asp>

**World Outgames.** “An international event for the body, the mind, and the spirit. We celebrate the talents and contributions of homosexual, bi-sexual and transgender men and women from every corner of the globe.” World Outgames will be held from 25 July to 2 August 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark.  
<http://www.copenhagen2009.org>

## Education and Training Resources

**CAAWS** ‘Seeing the Invisible, Speaking about the Unspoken: A Position Paper on Homophobia in Sport’. <http://www.caaws.ca/e/resources/downloads>

**NSW Department of Education and Training (Australia).** *Mates: HIV and AIDS related discrimination.* [video and teaching materials] (1994), Sydney: NSW Department of Education and Training. HIV/AIDS Anti-discrimination pack for Schools in NSW Australia which revolves around an athlete (swimmer) who is gay. <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au>

**International Working Group on Women and Sport** (2002a) The Montreal Tool Kit. <http://www.canada2002.org/e/toolkit/index.htm>

**International Working Group on Women and Sport** (2002b) Tools for Advocating Change <http://www.canada2002.org/e/toolkit/advocating/index.htm>

**It Takes a Team!** (WSF USA). “It Takes A Team! is an educational program designed to end homophobia in sport. It Takes A Team! Director, Pat Griffin, organized and participated in a panel at the Women’s Basketball Coaches Association Conference in Tampa on April 5 2008 entitled ‘Seeking Common Ground: Conversations among Lesbians, Christians and Christian Lesbians’.”  
<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/Issues-And-Research/Homophobia.aspx>

**The USA NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association)** – held a panel on LGBT athlete issues at its annual conference. UK sports organisations could do the same. <http://www.ncaa.org/wps/ncaa?ContentID=13203>

**Tucker Centre for Research on Girls and Women in Sport**

<http://cehd.umn.edu/tuckercenter/resources/bibliographies/homophobia.html>

(Retrieved 4 3 08)

**University of Minnesota (USA).** Homophobia in Sports page.

<http://cehd.umn.edu/tuckercenter/resources/bibliographies/homophobia.html>

**Women’s Sports Foundation (USA) Resources**

Take Action! Support Title IX Data Reporting in High Schools [Take Action!](#)

It Takes A Team! Education Kit. [It Takes A Team! Education Kit](#)

It Takes A Team! Archives [Past News Features](#)

LGBT Issues in Sport 101 [FAQ about LGBT People in Sport](#)

Curriculum and Teaching Resources:

[It Takes A Team! Video Introduction and Lesson Plan](#)

[Discussion Questions for Coaches](#)

[Discussion Questions for Athletes](#)

[Discussion Questions for Parents](#)

[Case Studies for Discussing LGBT Issues in Athletics](#)

Policy, Practice and Action Guides:

[Action Guide for Coaches](#)

[Action Guide for Athletes](#)

[Action Guide for Administrators](#)

[Action Guide for Parents](#)

[Guide for Addressing Anti-Gay Harassment](#)

[Addressing Concerns About LGBT Athletes and Coaches in the Locker Room](#)

[Athletic Team Hazing and Sexual or Gender Humiliation](#)

[Coach-Athlete Sexual Relationships](#)

[Inclusion of Transgender Athletes on Sports Teams](#)

[Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Athletes Coming Out to Coaches](#)

[Negative Recruiting and Homophobia in Women’s Sport](#)

[LGBT Athletes of Color: Intersections of Racism, Sexism and Heterosexism](#)

[Sexual Harassment Among Athletes and LGBT Issues in Sport](#)

[Religion and Homosexuality in Athletics](#)

[Same-Sex Teammate Romantic and Sexual Relationships](#)

[Resources for Parents on LGBT Issues in Sport](#)

Legal Resources and Information:

[Title IX and Sexual Orientation Discrimination](#)

[Laws and Legal Resources](#)

[Laws, Policies and Procedures](#)

[What to Do If You Think You Have Been Discriminated Against](#)

Stickers and Posters:

[Purchase Stickers and Posters](#)

[Safe Space Campaign in Athletics](#)

Research and Resources

[General Resources on LGBT Issues in Sport](#)

[LGBT Issues in Sport Research Bibliography](#)

## Appendix 5: A Model Sports Organisation...

- Has a written policy on equality/diversity that bars discrimination and explicitly mentions SO
- Offers 'gay-friendly' inductions
- Has a working group on diversity that encompasses LGBT issues
- Names a lead individual for SO issues at executive/board level
- Has set up an LGBT support and consultation network group
- Conducts regular audits to monitor compliance with Employment (SO) Regulations and the Civil Partnership Act
- Offers diversity awareness training that refers explicitly to 'sexual orientation' and gives practical, context specific examples
- Provides support for and sponsorship of LGBT organisations or events such as the Gay Games
- Runs organisational campaigns highlighting inclusion and safety for LGBT members and staff, through materials, intra- and internet sites and so on
- Enforces SO equality policy compliance
- Uses LGBT media to place ads for staff, volunteers or members
- Includes SO-related questions on all member/staff/supporter surveys and other monitoring tools
- Provides targeted mentoring on LGBT issues, especially in relation to performance lifestyle programmes for elite athletes
- Gives opportunities for LGBT leadership training and resources, sourced internally or externally
- Celebrates key LGBT individuals within the organisation, especially those at senior levels
- Ensures that all members feel accepted and comfortable by avoiding assumptions about SO and partner status or partner gender, eg references to "wives and girlfriends", gender-specific gifts such as ties for men or headscarves for women, describing "wives' events" on conference programmes...
- Integrates equality and diversity into all role specifications and performance management or appraisal systems

## **Appendix 6: Homophobia and Sports Policy Recommendations**

### **The US Women's Sports Foundation Position (2008)**

#### **Safety**

- No athletic department, sport organization personnel, athlete, parent, fan or school community should harass or threaten (anti-gay slurs, pushing or shoving, property damage, graffiti directed at a particular person or group) a coach or athlete on the basis of sexual orientation.
- Lesbian and bisexual coaches and athletes should be able to participate on a team or in an athletic department or setting free of hostility.
- Organization or institution Sexual Harassment Policies should include specific references to harassment based on sexual orientation.
- Coaches, athletes, other athletic department personnel, or students who participate in the harassment of lesbian or bisexual athletes or who contribute to a hostile environment for these athletes and coaches should be appropriately disciplined.
- The provisions of all policies on sexual harassment and sexual relations between coaches and athletes should be completely applicable without regard to the sexual orientation of athletic department/sport organization personnel.

#### **Fair Treatment/Equal Access**

- Athletic Department non-discrimination policies should prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the department and on teams.
- Lesbian and bisexual athletes and coaches should be able to identify themselves if they choose to without fear of negative consequences (loss of job, scholarship, starting position; negative performance evaluation; dropped from team).
- Lesbian and bisexual coaches and athletes should be welcomed to bring spouses/partners to department or team functions when other athletes or coaches are invited to bring their spouses/partners and inclusive language should be utilized to acknowledge the possibility that same-sex partners may attend.
- Partnership benefits available to heterosexual coaches and other department personnel should also be available to lesbian and bisexual coaches and staff.



- A coach or athlete's sexual orientation should not be a factor in determining their eligibility for teams, coaching positions, or athletic or academic honors or awards.
- Lesbian and bisexual athletes and coaches should be allowed to participate in community or school-based LGB social, educational or political events or organizations without fear of reprisal.

## Support

- Lesbian and bisexual athletes and coaches should have access to school or community-based counselling, and LGB social and educational groups.
- Parents of lesbian and bisexual athletes should have access to school or community-based support and educational groups for parents with LGB children.
- Coaches should have access to school or community-based groups who can provide assistance in addressing anti-gay incidents and the needs of lesbian and bisexual athletes.
- Administrators should support coaches and athletes in addressing anti-gay incidents.

## Education

- Staff development programs for coaches and other support staff should include addressing homophobia in athletics and include departmental policies addressing anti-gay discrimination.
- Educational programs for athletes should address homophobia and include departmental policies addressing anti-gay discrimination.
- Educational and/or recruitment material or programs addressing homophobia and department policies addressing homophobia should be given to prospective athletes, coaches, parents of athletes. Such material will identify the existence of local or state statutes limiting gay or lesbian lifestyles.

### Source:

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/Content/Articles/Issues/Equity%20Issues/H/Homophobia%20%20Homophobia%20and%20Sport%20Policy%20Recommendations%20The%20Foundation%20Position.aspx> (Retrieved 6 8 08)

## SECTION V: BIBLIOGRAPHIES

### Annex A: Complete Bibliography

#### Note on the Limitations of the Sources

This main bibliography focuses only on published works related to sport, physical activity, masculinities, femininities and sexual orientation. It excludes conference papers, dissertations, doctoral and masters theses (these are listed separately under the themed bibliographies in Annex B). The items derive mainly from academic, policy or biographical sources and some from fiction. In some cases it has proved difficult to distinguish the sexual orientation relevance of sources, eg those on 'women and sport'. For that reason, references on 'women/femininities' and 'men/masculinities' are also separated out in the section on 'Identity' in the themed bibliography in Annex B. Clearly, any bibliography is partial; we acknowledge that the divisions in the themed bibliography could well be contested and that new sources are available or in press that have not yet entered the electronic database system and so do not appear here. We hope, nonetheless that the sources provided are a fair representation of the field.

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<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2007/mar/04/features.sport4> - John Amaechi British NBA basketball coming out story

<http://irs.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/38/4/397> - abstract looking at doping, heterosexuality and lesbians

<http://www.eglsf.info/eglsf-media.php> - European Gay and Lesbian Sports Foundation – part of europe against discrimination – some useful links and media connections incl. the international declaration against homophobia in sport (declaration of Montreal) and reference to Lyon [International colloquium about Sports, Identities, Homosexuality and Homophobia](#) (1-2 Dec 2006).

## Annex B: Themed Bibliography

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Below are selective, themed bibliographies, drawn from the main list. They are grouped as follows, each with sub-headings for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Mixed references:

- Biography
- Doctoral and Masters theses
- Health (including disability)
- Homophobia (including gender- and sexuality-related bullying and violence)
- Identity (including sex and gender role socialisation, experience). Note: this theme has additional sub-headings for Women/Femininities and Men/Masculinities.
- Media
- Policy and management (including regulation)
- Race (including ethnicity)
- Teaching and coaching
- Theory

Generic material, drawn from both within and beyond sport, is grouped at the end in one alphabetical list.

### Biography

#### Lesbian

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## Bisexual

## Transgender

## Mixed

## Doctoral and Masters Theses

### Lesbian

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## **Transgender**

## **Mixed**

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## **Health**

## **Lesbian**

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