



Summary for the United Kingdom on Homophobia in Sport

Out on the Fields is the first international study and largest conducted on homophobia in sport. Nearly 9500 people took part including **1796** lesbian, gay, bisexual and straight British people. The study focused on issues of sexuality in team sports and the English speaking countries. Repucom conducted the research with the study being initiated by Bingham Cup Sydney 2014 and supported by a coalition of sports organisations. **The study methodology and results were reviewed by a panel of seven academics from six universities including Victoria University (Australia), Penn State University, University of Massachusetts (USA); Brunel University (UK); University of Winnipeg and Lavel University (Canada).**

KEY FINDINGS

Sport Participation

- The majority of lesbian, gay and bisexual people said they played a wide variety of sports in the UK, particularly in their youth (under 22)
- 1 in 3 (36%) gay men did not play youth team sports with many of these men saying negative experiences in school PE class (48%) turned them off team sports or they feared they would be rejected because of their sexuality (29%)

Sporting Culture

- **49% of all participants and 53% of gay men believed LGB people are 'not accepted at all' or 'accepted a little' in sporting culture**
- 63% of all participants and 70% of gay men believe homophobia is more common in UK sports than the rest of society

Homophobia and Discrimination

- **77% of participants witnessed or experienced homophobia in sport (both straight and LGB)**
- Participants were more likely to have witnessed homophobia than experienced it personally. More than half (60%) of gay men and lesbians (54%) and 24% of straight men said they had personally experienced homophobia

Of those who have been personally targeted:

- **26% of gay men and 18% of lesbians said they personally have received verbal threats of harm**
- 37% of gay men and 20% of lesbians have been bullied
- 21% of gay men and 14% of lesbians have been physically assaulted
- 81% of gay men and 80% of lesbians have received verbal slurs such as "faggot" or "dyke"

Research Conducted by

Study Initiated and Managed by

REPUcom



Full report at www.outonthefields.com



Youth Sport (under 22)

- **70% believe youth team sports are not welcoming or safe for LGB people.**
- 70% of gay youth and 73% of lesbian youth in the UK said they were at least partially in the closet, keeping their sexuality secret from all or some of their teammates
- These youth said they stayed in the closet because they feared multiple forms of discrimination, for example 52% of gay youth and 28% of lesbians feared they would be bullied and 31% of gay youth were worried about discrimination from coaches and officials. Meanwhile, 46% of gay youth and 39% of lesbians were worried about being rejected by teammates

Spectator Stands

- **85% of UK participants believe an openly gay, lesbian or bisexual person would not be very safe as a spectator at a sporting event**
- Participants in the UK believe spectator stands (49%) followed by school PE class (27%) are the most likely locations for homophobia to occur

How the UK Compares to other English speaking countries

- UK gay men who played youth team sports were more likely than in any other country to be out of the closet and UK lesbians were the second most likely to be open about their sexuality (after the USA)
- However, the UK participants were the second most likely (after the USA) to believe LGB people are “not accepted” in sporting culture
- Spectator stands at sporting events stood out as a major area of concern. Those in the UK were the most likely to believe spectator stands were the most likely environment for homophobia to occur and also that openly gay, lesbian or bisexual people would not be very safe as spectators
- The UK had the lowest number of gay men who said they played team sports and UK gay men were the second most likely (after New Zealand) to say negative experiences in school PE class turned them off playing team sports

- The fact UK lesbian and gay people are more likely to be out of the closet may explain why they are also the most likely to report personal experiences of homophobia. Lesbians in the UK were the most likely to report assaults and second most likely to report physical threats. Gay men in the UK were the second most likely to report assaults (after Canada)

SOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants were asked to select a range of possible solutions or could submit their own. The top three solutions selected were:

1. Start early with schools, coaches and parents taking homophobia and bullying seriously in sporting environments
2. National sporting organisations need to adopt and promote clear anti-homophobia and LGB inclusion policies for professional and amateur players
3. More LGB professional sporting stars need to come out of the closet to set an example

Recommendations from Researchers

- In many parts of the world PE teachers receive no training about homophobia or supporting LGB athletes. Coaches, physical education teachers and sport officials need mandatory training on how best to support LGB athletes
- Sporting organisations, schools and teams need to adopt a zero tolerance for players and fans who engage in homophobic behaviour

About the study

The data for Out on the Fields was collected through a 10-15 minute online survey with recruitment focused primarily on the UK, USA, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Ireland. The study focuses on issues of sexuality, not gender, which is why LGB is used rather than the now standard LGBTI. People from all sexualities took part, including nearly 25% heterosexual.