

SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF SPORT ALLIES TO HOUSE OF COMMONS CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT COMMITTEE ON HOMOPHOBIA IN SPORT

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Sport Allies is a relatively new organization, specifically created to investigate and address the role of sport in facilitating homophobia, particularly in youth settings.
- 1.2. The organization aims to promote a more inclusive culture in sport through producing evidence-based free-to-view media aimed directly at young people.
- 1.3. Our work is informed by the following key findings:
 - 1.3.1. Homophobia is not just an LGBT+ issue – it relates to broader issues of how we “curate” masculinity in our culture.
 - 1.3.2. Our culture lacks provision for LGBT+ young people – creating a void too often filled by misinformation, bullying and institutionalized prejudice.
 - 1.3.3. The culture of team sports presents particular problems for LGBT+ youth, and those problems persist into adult life, with serious implications for life opportunities.
- 1.4. We believe there needs to be greater focus on the role that sport in education plays in perpetuating outdated concepts of gender and masculinity.
- 1.5. We call for greater recognition of the value that the LGBT+ community can contribute to supporting the healthy development of all young people, and of LGBT+ young people in particular.

2. About Sport Allies

- 2.1. Sport Allies is a non-profit organization (currently applying to become a UK registered charity). Our mission is “to promote sport, and especially team sport, as an inclusive and supportive route to personal growth for everyone” and our vision is a world where “sport is a leader in promoting diversity”. Our primary mechanism for achieving these outcomes is production and dissemination of free-to-view media aimed directly at young people.
- 2.2. The organization was conceived in 2014. It grew out of (and remains entirely funded by) the success of Warwick Rowers, a calendar launched in 2009 to raise funds for the rowing programme at the University of Warwick. Featuring the predominantly heterosexual male rowers of the university’s rowing team and produced by an LGBT photographer and film-maker, the calendar project has won an international following as an exemplary gay/straight alliance and as a “straight allies” project that champions greater LGBT inclusion in sport. **See Appendix 2 for supporter testimonials.**
- 2.3. When the calendar team decided to commit a share of profits to furthering the message of the calendar through non-profit work, their research led them to conclude that there was a gap to be filled by a new organization. However, Sport Allies is committed to partnership working wherever possible and has made contact with several organisations working in this field, including: Stonewall; Sport and Recreation Alliance; Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH); Football Association; Gay Gooners (Arsenal’s LGBT Supporters Club).
- 2.4. In 2014, the Warwick Rowers were presented with the Pink News Award for Community Group of the Year at Speaker’s House by the then Minister for Equalities, Nicky Morgan. The calendar has won six National Calendar Awards, including twice being the UK’s Charity Calendar of the Year. In November 2015, calendar team members attended an event in New York City to promote LGBT tourism to the UK in partnership with Visit Britain, as an exemplar of contemporary British attitudes to LGBT inclusion.
- 2.5. Sport Allies aims to capitalize on the Warwick Rowers’ success in viral media. The calendar’s viral promotional films have generated nearly 35 million views in 147

countries on the internet, and a 2014 US promotional tour generated half a billion page impressions across both mainstream and specialist media, including the New York Times, Huffington Post and BuzzFeed.

- 2.6. Sport Allies is in the process of becoming a UK registered charity. It has a board that includes professionals expert in media production, education, charity management, financial governance and sport, as well as a youth representative who has worked on both sides of the calendar project at the University of Warwick.
- 2.7. To date, the organization has focused on recruiting a suitable team of board-level volunteers, developing robust governance structures, establishing a rigorous evidence base for its work, and developing a strategic plan based on that evidence. As part of our commitment to academic rigor, we are currently building a collaborative relationship with Leeds Beckett University's School of Social Sciences, who have particular expertise in the areas (gender identity, masculinity, heteronormative culture) we are exploring.

3. Scope and Focus of our Work

- 3.1. The initial scope of our work was defined by the experience of supporters of the Warwick Rowers calendar project. The rowing team began to receive expressions of appreciation from gay men, predominantly in the English-speaking countries of North America and the British Commonwealth, for their stance against homophobic bullying. It was particularly significant for these correspondents that the men delivering the message were mainly "straight jocks" – precisely the group from whom many had experienced homophobic abuse in their youth.
- 3.2. Specifically, many of the correspondents cited their own, very negative experiences of systematic abuse, both from teachers and other students, during mandatory sport at school. It was also notable how many correspondents felt that the Warwick Rowers' work had had a "healing" effect, offering a counter-balance to their experiences at school. We therefore decided to focus our attention on tackling homophobia in school sport, with a secondary ambition of supporting people who had had negative experiences of sport culture in their youth.
- 3.3. When we reached out to other organisations to support us with extending the Warwick Rowers message into schools, we were surprised to be told by the chief executive of a charity dedicated to tackling homophobia in education that it would be difficult or even impossible for the rowers to visit secondary schools themselves, on the grounds that they had appeared in a "naked" calendar. Set against a backdrop of the rising ubiquity of pornography among young people, this suggests to us that there may be a substantial disconnect between what is officially permissible within a school culture and the reality faced by the students within their day-to-day lives. Whatever the causes of this disconnect, we believe that it risks costing vulnerable young people the support that they need to come to terms with their gender and sexual identity in a rapidly changing world.
- 3.4. We commissioned a relatively informal review of the existing research into homophobia in sport, with a specific focus on young people and sporting culture within schools and other youth or educational settings. This review has informed the development of our strategic objectives. We are now formalizing a collaboration with Leeds Beckett University's School of Social Sciences to expand the review into a fully-fledged and academically rigorous report, and we will be publishing this report in due course.

4. Key Points from our Evidence Base

- 4.1. **Homophobia is not just an LGBT issue.** Our initial review of the existing literature challenged our understanding of what homophobia is. We have come to understand that homophobia is more about gender identity than sexuality, and

- affects all of us. A copy of this review is appended to this document at Appendix 1, containing a fully referenced and more detailed version of the points made here.
- 4.2. **Homophobia is about masculinity.** A study about the high rate of suicide among men referred to the way that society ‘polices’ masculinity and the effect that failure to conform to the accepted model of masculinity often results in that person being marginalised. The person is also likely to be subjected to homophobic bullying, whether or not they are homosexual.
 - 4.3. **Our culture has set ideas about what masculinity is, and who is allowed to have it.** The more we looked, the more evidence we found to show that ‘difference’ in relation to masculinity is at the root of homophobia and that some writers have been pointing to this for some time, but have been ignored.
 - 4.4. **Traditional ideas of masculinity are in fact recent and invented.** The concept of modern masculinity dates back to the 1800s, according to Angus McLaren’s book **The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries 1870 – 1930**. This work traces the way in which healthy and diseased concepts of masculinity were created and the function they served in society. McLaren states that Teddy Roosevelt raised the spectre “race suicide” and claimed that the European and North American male was a dying breed. The book also suggests that it was the emergence of the word homosexual – a term only coined in the 1860s – that was “both the cause and effect of the growing fear of the male ‘other’.” It also coincided with a new obsession with protecting boys from any form of ‘deviant’ behaviour ranging from smoking to using pornography and the belief that heterosexual excess could lead to homosexuality.
 - 4.5. **How we curate masculinity in our culture is not just a problem for men.** The threat to our cultural definition of masculinity comes not just from the unmanly man, but from the unwomanly woman, according to McLaren. (p.31) He identifies a belief that women redefining themselves and the relations between the sexes caused the crisis in masculinity. This led to an increase in misogynistic attitudes and along with it the tendency to see a ‘new woman’ as lesbian. Susan S. Klein says:

”Homophobia creates inequities for both heterosexual and homosexual males and females. Reportedly, females opt out of sports and athletics, especially coaching and officiating, due to rampant sexism and the fear of being labelled ‘dyke’ or ‘jock.’ On the other hand any male who resists participating in sports or violence is bombarded with derision and cried of ‘faggot’, wimp’ and ‘sissy’ and other attacks on his masculinity.”
 - 4.6. **Gender is culturally and socially determined, whereas sex itself is merely biological.** Michael Kimmel says that homophobia is men’s fear of losing power or being emasculated, because masculinity is all about power. The construct of what is feminine is the opposite. As Kimmel also puts it: “The fear of being labelled a ‘sissy’ dominates the cultural definition of masculinity.”
 - 4.7. **Our culture lacks provision for LGBT+ kids.** One study found that, whereas youth from other minority groups tend to have “social allegiances, educational resources and cultural support”, the LGBT+ youth have nothing because society says that being gay is an “adult only’ activity. We believe that this is a critical problem in enabling LGBT young people to experience a healthy adolescence.
 - 4.8. **Heteronormative environments are places where heterosexism and gender norms are institutionalised.** Schools are a classic location. And when schools fail to discuss LGBT+ topics in the curriculum, non-heterosexual identities remain invisible. Schools may have policies to address homophobic bullying but it is rare for them to ever challenge the “centrality and dominance of normative heterosexuality”. Susan S. Klein in her book *Sex Equity and Sexuality* suggests that “Schools have depended on rigid sex-role definition to control their students. Homophobia helps keep boys and girls in their place better than any written rule.”
 - 4.9. **Homophobic and transphobic bullying is still an everyday part of school life for many young people in the UK.** A Stonewall report concluded that more than 55% of young LGBT+ people had been directly bullied in school, whilst 99% of

young people had had heard the term ‘gay’ used negatively e.g. ‘that’s so gay (bad)’, whilst 96% of young people had heard terms such as ‘poof’ and ‘lezza’ used. However, homophobic bullying doesn’t just happen to gay kids – boys and girls who don’t fit the gender norms are also victims.

- 4.10. **Team sport presents a particular problem for LGBT youth.** A comprehensive study for SportScotland showed that the LGBT+ community is active in sports, but it is most unlikely that this sporting activity takes place in affiliated community sports clubs. So, while there is a popular perception that gay men are not sporty, while lesbians are, the statistics refute that. They show that LGBT+ males are just as likely to enjoy sport as heterosexual males, but that they feel unable to take part in ‘club’ or ‘team’ sports and tend to opt for more solitary exercise like running, tennis or going to the gym.
- 4.11. **LGBT youth attitudes to team sport persist into adult life.** An Australian study analyses the role of social definitions of masculinity and femininity in determining the experience of LGBT+ students in university sports settings, and finds that school experiences set the tone for later experiences. It also highlights why it is important for sport to be inclusive: “Sport is one of the prime sites of socialisation for many students prior to entering university. It strongly informs the way they see the world and how they interact with others. Homophobic taunts for the purpose of ‘motivating’ athletes, as well as for demeaning players, opposing spectators and sport officials are particularly common in sport. It effectively teaches young people that there is something inherently wrong about gay people, and that it is all right to put gay people down.” This is confirmed by an NUS study which showed that LGBT+ students who take part in sport at university are 50% less like than their heterosexual counterparts to take part in *team* sports. According to NUS and other research, it is primarily the experience of sport at school, and the homophobia in school sports, that prevents LGBT+ adults from taking part in team sports unless they are with LGBT+ teams.
- 4.12. **The culture of team sport is the problem.** According to the NUS research, the main barriers to participating in sport at university is:
 - 4.12.1. 46.8% find the culture surrounding sport “alienating and unwelcoming”
 - 4.12.2. 42% had a negative experience at school, so they don’t want to get involved at university
 - 4.12.3. 14.3% had experienced homophobia
 - 4.12.4. 18.7% were put off by ‘gendered’ sports teams (38.9% for trans students)
 - 4.12.5. 12.8% found the changing facilities were not inclusive (36% for trans)

5. How We Plan to Respond to the Evidence

- 5.1. We plan to create media content that will promote greater consciousness of the impact, both positive and negative, that school sport can play in everyone’s development.
- 5.2. We are informed by the principles set out in Hillary Clinton’s 1996 book, *It Takes A Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us*. Clinton focuses on the impact (both good and bad) that individuals and groups outside the family have on a child’s well-being, and advocates a society which recognizes that diverse perspectives and experiences are necessary to meet all of a child’s needs.
- 5.3. Sport Allies is privately funded by supporters of the Warwick Rowers calendar franchise. Many of these people are members of the LGBT+ community and lack any meaningful access to sharing their perspectives or life experience with younger people. We aim to represent this group and ensure that their experiences are shared in a way that helps not only young LGBT+ people, but all young people who are impacted by the culture of heteronormative policing in school sport.

- 5.4. We believe our funding mechanisms may help us to avoid falling foul of the disconnect that we have identified at paragraph 3.3 between what is officially acceptable within school culture and the reality of students' lives.
- 5.5. We recognize our responsibility to create helpful, evidence-based content that can make a genuine and positive difference in the lives of young people. We have a senior educator on our board and currently building a collaborative relationship with Leeds Beckett University's School of Social Sciences to support formulating and testing our content effectively.
- 5.6. Our first campaign is in development. It will be constructed from a project that will bring together eminent athletes with young people who feel excluded from sport in school because their personal experience of masculinity differs from the norm.

6. Our Thoughts on a Wider Response to Homophobia in Sport

- 6.1. We believe there needs to be greater focus on the role that sport in education plays in perpetuating outdated concepts of gender and masculinity. These concepts impact significantly on many young people, beyond those who will come to define themselves as LGBT+, but also reinforce negative perceptions of non-heterosexuality.
- 6.2. We call for greater recognition of the value that the LGBT+ community can contribute to supporting the healthy development of all young people. Specifically, we believe that mechanisms must be put in place to enable more input to be delivered by this community, either directly to young people, or through a more receptive and less censorious institutional culture in education.

Appendix 1

SPORT ALLIES REPORT - DRAFT

Sections

1. Gender and Stereotypes

Gender and Homophobia

Homophobia and Bullying

2. The LGBT+ Teen Experience

3. LGBT+ Teens, Adults and Homophobia in Sport

4. The Gay Professional Athlete

5. UK and International Charters, Frameworks and Initiatives

6. Sports Clubs & Community Initiatives

Section 1: Gender and Stereotype

It is widely accepted that homophobia is an antagonism towards people who are considered to have a non-conformist sexuality. Many academic studies assume that members of the LGBT+ are the main targets of homophobic aggression. However, during the process of compiling this review, Sport Allies came to understand that the roots of homophobia may go deeper than a 'dislike of homosexuality'; indeed they may go right down to the gender identities that western society is based on.

We were alerted to this perspective on homophobia by a Guardian newspaper article about the high rate of suicide among men. (1) Although the article is primarily about the mental health challenges faced by men, it refers to the way that society 'polices' masculinity and the effect that failure to conform to the accepted model of masculinity often results in that person being marginalised. The person is also likely to be subjected to homophobic bullying, whether or not they are homosexual.

The realisation that gender stereotypes are critical to understanding homophobia in general and particularly in sport sent Sport Allies' research down a new and very important track. The more we looked, the more evidence we found to show that 'difference' is at the root of homophobia and that some writers have been pointing to this for some time, but have often been ignored.

In "**Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School**" (2) writer C.J. Pascoe says:

"Evidence shows that non-normatively gendered behaviour, such as enjoying schoolwork or drama class, was just as likely to turn boys into targets as were their sexual identities." (p xi)

Further on she discusses the high rates of suicide among high school and university males and says in relation to this:

" I would encourage researchers and those who work with youth to ask about the role of masculinity in all these tragedies. This is what the conversation needs to be about, not some generic discussion about bullying or homophobia." (p xiv)

Plus, in reference to male suicides caused by homophobic bullying using new media – Pascoe says:

"Framing these events solely as bullying, cyber bullying or simple homophobia elides the centrality of definitions of masculinity to these tragedies."

The construction of modern masculinity dates back to the 1800s according to Angus McLaren's book **The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries 1870 – 1930**. (3) This work traces the way in which healthy and diseased concepts of masculinity were created and the function they served in society. McLaren states that Teddy Roosevelt raised the spectre "race suicide" and claimed that the European and North American male was a dying breed. Writers urged readers to "be men" and army generals claimed they couldn't find men to enlist.

There was, of course, no shortage of men, but there were too many men of the "wrong type." Psychologist, William James revealed the effects of labeling men 'cad' and 'degenerate', --

labels tend to make people behave accordingly--although he couldn't explain why such 'name calling' reached a peak at the turn of the century.

The book also suggests that it was the emergence of the word homosexual –a term only coined in the 1860s – that was “both the cause and effect of the growing fear of the male 'other'.” It also coincided with a new obsession with protecting boys from any form of 'deviant' behaviour ranging from smoking to using pornography and the belief that heterosexual excess could lead to homosexuality. (p30)

The Brackenridge report on **Sexual Orientation: A Literature Review** (2008) opens by saying:

“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. “ (p.15)

The Unwomanly Woman

The last threat to masculinity was not the unmanly man, but the unwomanly woman, according to McLaren. (p.31) Some believed that women redefining themselves and the relations between the sexes caused the crisis in masculinity. This led to an increase in misogynistic attitudes and along with it the tendency to see a 'new woman' as lesbian. (p.32)

Gender is culturally and socially determined, whereas sex itself is merely biological, according to Rebecca Reed's study **Intersections of Masculinity and Femininity as Homophobia**. (4) Michael Kimmel says that homophobia is men's fear of losing power or being emasculated, because masculinity is all about power. The construct of what is feminine is the opposite.

She quotes Kimmel " We are afraid of other men. Homophobia is a central organizing principal of our cultural definition of manhood. Homophobia is more than the irrational fear of gay men, it is more the fear that we might be perceived as gay."

Or as Kimmel also puts it: "The fear of being labelled a 'sissy' dominates the cultural definition of masculinity." (4 to 7)

Italian academic Elisabetta Ruspini in **Changing Femininities, Changing Masculinities, Social Change, Gender Identities and Sexual Orientations (21)** claims that:

“The social issues associated with changing gender identities and the shift between "old" and "new" models of femininity and masculinity challenges the two-gender system. Homosexuality, bisexuality and trans-sexuality show how greatly the processes of identity construction have changed in present-day societies and how different they are in these processes, compared with those of modern or traditional societies.”

Ruspini explores the need to reduce the power of heteronormativity—which we consider further on in this report-- and looks at the 'silence across Europe' over changing gender identities.

As very recent examples of attempts to police gender, the current spate of "Bathroom Bills" (which seek to prevent transgender students using bathrooms and changing facilities that do not correspond to their birth gender) in US states such as North Carolina, Wisconsin and Tennessee shows that the blurring of traditional gender boundaries is still threatening to many people.

Gender and homophobia

In his journal article **The quest for modern manhood: masculine stereotypes, peer culture and the social significance of homophobia** (8) David C. Plummer investigated boys' use of homophobic language. He says:

"Homophobia was found to be more than a simple prejudice against homosexuals. Homophobic terms like "poofter" and "faggot" have a rich developmental history and play a central role in adolescent male peer-group dynamics."

He also makes the point that use of this language starts in primary school before a boy has any sense of the sexual connotations of the terms. However, the result is:

"Nevertheless, far from being indiscriminate terms of abuse, these terms tap a complex array of meanings that are precisely mapped in peer cultures, and boys quickly learn to avoid homophobia and to use it decisively and with great impact against others. Significantly, this early, very powerful use of homophobic terms occurs prior to puberty, prior to adult sexual identity and prior to knowing much, if anything, about homosexuality."

In Chapter 10 of **Children Behaving Badly: Peer violence between children and young people**. **Barter C. & Berridge D (Eds)** (9) Ian Rivers discusses homophobia and peer violence.

He first defines the characteristics of homophobia:

" Any form of physical, verbal or social aggression perpetrated against an individual because of his or her actual or perceived sexual orientation, or because that individual's behaviour is not typical of her or his sex." (p.137)

Rivers say that among adolescents: "homophobia has a number of signature characteristics that separate it from other forms of peer aggression." (p.137)

For example: "Homophobia tends to be perpetrated by groups of peers (male or female) rather than individuals." (p.137)

He also adds that while boys are subjected to name calling and possibly physical violence in school classrooms and corridors, girls tend to use 'social weapons' such as spreading rumours and excluding the person socially. This makes it more difficult to spot than male homophobic bullying. (p.137)

Gregory Herek in **Beyond "Homophobia": Thinking about sexual prejudice and stigma in the twenty-first century** (19) asks us to consider the language we use to talk about homophobia. He discusses George Weinberg and the introduction of the term 'homophobia' in the 1960s and how it challenged traditional thinking about homosexuality and began the process of focusing more attention on anti-gay prejudice and stigma. However, Herek points out the limitations of the term 'homophobia': "including its underlying assumption that antigay prejudice is based mainly on fear and its inability to account for historical changes in how society regards homosexuality and heterosexuality as the bases for social identities."

Herek claims a new vocabulary is needed to discuss homophobia and progress our understanding of it. In his paper he discusses: "*sexual stigma* (the shared knowledge of society's negative regard for any non-heterosexual behavior, identity, relationship, or community), *heterosexism* (the cultural ideology that perpetuates sexual stigma), and *sexual prejudice* (individuals' negative attitudes based on sexual orientation). The concept of *internalized homophobia* is briefly considered.

Heterosexism and Homophobia

The EACH report on Homophobic Bullying notes the importance of heterosexism in creating the necessary condition for homophobia to exist. It says “One example of heterosexist behaviour is the pejorative use of the word ‘gay’ amongst young people to describe something as dysfunctional, broken or wrong (e.g ‘that’s so gay’). This use of language does not necessarily constitute bullying as it is often used to describe situations and objects rather than harass individuals” It adds “However it does function to privilege heterosexual over LGB identities by making the latter ‘synonymous with ineptitude, undesirability and isolation.” (Ref. 17 p.15)

EACH’s research into gender roles states:

“Many of the beliefs around what is acceptable and normal is informed by gender and the way that certain behaviours, characteristics and qualities are culturally aligned with being a man or a woman. Boys who identify with a masculine ideal or norm often define themselves in opposition to girls, feminine behaviour and gay/bisexual men, while girls tend to construct their femininity in opposition to boys, masculine behaviour and lesbian/bisexual women (Renold 2005: 63; ATL 2008). When we essentialise homophobic bullying as solely an issue of LGB sexual orientation we ignore the role that **homophobia plays in policing every young person’s expression of their sexual orientation or gender identity.**“

“Studies suggest that homophobic bullying is an expression of anxieties and fears aimed at those who do not conform to stereotypical expectations of masculine or feminine behaviour” (p.16) according to EACH’s research into existing academic studies.

It is important to note that where academic studies found a decrease in homophobic behaviour it was because there was “an expansion in the gendered behaviours available to young people,” This refers to **McCormack’s 2012 research The declining significance of homophobia: how teenage boys are redefining masculinity and heterosexuality. (18)**

Heteronormative Environments

Heteronormative environments are places where heterosexism and gender norms are institutionalised. Schools are a classic location. And when schools fail to discuss LGBT+ topics in the curriculum, non-heterosexual identities remain invisible. Schools may have policies to address homophobic bullying but it is rare for them to ever challenge the “centrality and dominance of normative heterosexuality” according to research by Epstein et al in 2003 mentioned in McCormack’s research above. (18 p.16)

The EACH report suggests that by making homophobic bullying **an individual issue** that is somehow separate from an overall social structure, we miss an opportunity to prevent bullying and change attitudes. “We need to look beyond bullying and explore the negativity that surrounds non-heterosexual identities and gender nonconformity in all social settings, including schools,” says EACH. (18 p. 16)

EACH recommends that anti-homophobia initiatives challenge the misconception that homophobic bullying is just an LGB issue. Although LGB young people are disproportionately affected by homophobic bullying, research continues to underestimate the extent of the problem by focusing on ‘homophobia’ rather than the heteronormativity that fuels homophobic and sexist prejudices and behaviour.

Homophobia in School

Ian Rivers reports that research in London schools into homophobia in the 1980s that was then replicated in 2004, showed an increase in homophobic bullying of LGBT+ youth, rather than an expected decrease. He attributes this to Clause 28 of the Local Government Act (1988, which prohibited the teaching of homosexuality as a “pretended family relationship” and that this impacted on school’s willingness to combat homophobia effectively. (? p.138)

The EACH report states that the repeal of Section 28 in 2003 was a “watershed moment” when the barrier to social change was broken down somewhat and institutional heteronormativity was challenged. (17 p. 16)

Homophobic and transphobic bullying is still an everyday part of school life for many young people in the UK. **Stonewall’s School Report** recently concluded that more than **55% of young LGB people had been directly bullied in school**, whilst **99% of young people** had had heard the term ‘gay’ used negatively e.g. ‘that’s so gay (bad)’, whilst **96% of young people** had heard terms such as ‘poof’ and ‘lezza’ used. (10)

Another student said :

“If you’re bad at maths, you’re just bad at maths. No one’s going to give you any grief for being gay in maths. But in PE its totally different and it’s not just that whole competitive thing with other teams where you’re trying to beat them into the ground. When you’re gay, its your own team trying to beat YOU into the ground”

Coronation Street actor Charlie Condrou gives an account of his personal school experience in The Guardian. (11) He comments that while there are many more LGBT+ role models in public life compared to when he was at school – at a time when Larry Grayson was the public representative of being gay—at least two-thirds of gay school kids are still the targets of homophobic bullying and wonders why things are only changing very slowly.

He also points out that homophobic bullying doesn’t just happen to gay kids – he says that boys and girls who don’t fit the gender norms are also victims. He cites the murder of 10-year-old Damilola Taylor as an example of homophobic bullying that had no connection to sexuality. The child was taunted with “faggot” and ‘gay” and beaten for months before the final attack near his home. He may or may not have been gay, but he appears to have been attacked for being different to his peer group.

Homophobic Bullying

The 2013 study **Homophobic Bullying** by Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) says : “Homophobic bullying does not persist only because bullies are targeting individuals with same-sex related orientations. It exists because many young people are living and studying in environments where negative attitudes towards, and stereotypes about, LGB people are socially acceptable and where bullying based on these prejudices goes unchallenged.

The report starts by saying that two concepts found in academic literature ‘heterosexism’ and ‘heteronormativity’ offer a new perspective on homophobia. Homophobia is a negative attitude to LGBT+ identities and heterosexism is the belief that ‘hetero’ is the norm. Anything else is inferior or unacceptable.

Expectations about how a ‘proper man’ or a ‘proper woman’ should behave intertwine with ideas about sexuality, which leads to a ‘heteronormative’ environment. This leads to negativity

about a non-heterosexual identity or behavior that deviates from the gender norm in a range of social situations.

“It is important to remember that homophobic bullying doesn’t exist in isolation from wider social and cultural norms – it is directly informed by them. “ (EACH)

EACH defines homophobic bullying as repeated harassment or abusive behaviour characterised by negative attitudes towards those who identify as, or who are perceived to be LGB, and relationships, which are associated with non-heterosexual kinships or affiliations.

Anyone can be homophobically bullied but it is often directed towards people who identify as LGB, are perceived to be LGB or are associated with LGB people such as family or friends. (p.8)

“However, homophobic bullying can impact on anyone regardless of sexual orientation. Young people are often targeted because **they are perceived as being different in some way and these differences usually have more to do with gender.** “ (p.10)

The Teachers’ Union report on **Tackling Homophobic Bullying (12)** examines the effects of homophobia on both teachers and pupils, and reminds us that teachers can be victims of homophobic bullying as well. The report looks at the law and recommends policies.

Susan S. Klein in her book **Sex Equity and Sexuality (13)** says: “Schools have depended on rigid sex-role definition to control their students. Homophobia helps keep boys and girls in their place better than any written rule. “

Ofsted’s 2012 report **No Place for Bullying (20)** states that disabled learners and pupils who are perceived as being homosexual experience a disproportionate amount of bullying in UK schools. The report has a number of case studies that show how several schools have tackled the issue of homophobia and transphobia. There were **seven key approaches** to success in fighting the problem:

- **Acknowledging the problem** – this included surveying pupils, parents and governors to identify awareness of use of homophobic language and bullying behaviour.
- **Securing a commitment from senior leaders** –successful schools had a strong vision, ethos and drive from senior staff to tackle homophobic and transphobic behaviour and language.
- **Training for all staff** – all staff from janitors to head teachers received training in recognising, challenging and recording this type of behaviour. As a result, staff became knowledgeable and confident about this aspect of their work.
- **Updating policies and procedures** - All policies were reviewed and updated to ensure that they included lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) pupils and, importantly, adults. Systems to safeguard pupils, such as training for the designated officer for child protection, and policies such as those for behaviour and anti-bullying policies were amended to ensure that staff had a good level of knowledge about tackling prejudice-based bullying.
- **Tackling homophobic and transphobic language strongly** - Each school ensured that any use of such language, such as „gay“ as a derogatory term, was recorded and followed up. Incidents were taken seriously and could be reported anonymously to protect the pupils. Incidents were measured and evaluated frequently. Similarly, any anti-gay or anti- transgender attitudes were followed up and staff worked with pupils to change their perceptions. All of these schools were fearless in tackling prejudice-based behaviours and included parents and carers, governors and the community in helping to combat poor behaviour.
- **Developing the curriculum to meet the needs of LGBT+ learners** - All of these schools reviewed their curricula and systems to ensure that they met the needs of

these groups of pupils. They ensured that staff did not make assumptions about pupils' families and sexuality and included references to same-sex couples and families. They ensured that lessons, books and topics covered all strands of diversity including sexuality and gender identity. Most schools used role models and resources provided by external organisations to create an inclusive culture within their schools. Displays, posters and information to visitors ensured that everyone entering the school knew about its values of respect for all forms of diversity. These schools did not single out sexuality or gender identity but ensured that the curriculum covered all types of diversity.

- **Creating a safe environment** - In these schools this combination of actions ensured that there was a high level of tolerance and safety for all members of the community. Consequently pupils, adults and teachers could feel safe in being „out“ or being themselves in school without fear of retribution.

The Ofsted report contains a series of Case Studies on pages 45 to 58.

The Church of England is also attempting to rise to the challenge of homophobia in education with its 2014 report **Valuing All God's Children: Guidance for Church of England Schools on Challenging Homophobic Bullying (16)**. Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury launched the report saying "the world had changed" following the same-sex marriage debate on the House of Commons and the Lords and said that C of E schools must commit to combating bullying and homophobic bullying. The first of the 10 key recommendations for action is a call for a message of inclusion and recognition of diversity. Teacher training in techniques for recognizing and challenging homophobic language and behaviour is also highly important. Training in pastoral care for questions over sexual identity is another recommendation. Perhaps most significantly, No. 3 states:

"Schools should ensure that their behaviour policies include clear expectations that homophobic behaviour and language will not be tolerated and that there can be no justification for this negative behaviour based on the Christian faith or the Bible."

Cyberbullying

Online bullying is an added dimension to the issue. The report **Out Online (14)** published by the Gay Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in 2014 shows that LGBT+ youth are three times as likely to be bullied online than their 'straight' peers and twice as likely to be bullied via text messages.

On the upside of this, LGBT+ youth are highly engaged with civic causes online – between 50% and 77% had used the Internet to support a cause, comment on blog posts, and find supporters for an event or activity. They're also more likely to use the Internet to connect with like-minded people. LGBT+ youth are also more likely to have online friends than non-LGBT+ youth – 50% compared with 19%.

University Students and Bullying

Another 2014 study of 4,000 LGBT+ students at 80 UK universities, produced by the National Union of Students (NUS) called **Education Beyond the Straight and Narrow**, (15) indicates that 20% of LGBT+ students and 33% of transgender students have been bullied on campus. Also, 51% of trans students have considered dropping out of their courses because of harassment. Some 56% of LGBT+ students say the feeling that they "don't fit in" is the main reason for considering dropping out.

The report also says: "A focus group with trans students found that the main difficulties faced on campus for trans students are the lack of gender-neutral toilets and facilities, the lack of

policies to update their name and gender in the student register, issues with university security services; and the prevalence of transphobia.”

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Section 2: The LGBT+ Teen Experience

The general experience of the LGBT+ teen can have a profound effect on their life opportunities and outcomes.

The 'gay' teen faces the gender stereotype issue. Some teens will accept their sexual identity more readily than others, who may struggle to conform rather than face the 'problem' of being different. A **Human Rights Campaign** study of young LGBT+ people in America asked school-age students what their main concerns were. For heterosexual students, the 'Big 3' concerns are exam grades, finances and career. Contrasting with this, LGBT+ students worried about non-acceptance by their family, bullying and fear of being out.

In the USA an Education Taskforce reported that 50% of gay male teens reported being rejected by their families because of their sexual orientation and 80% of all LGBT+ youth said they felt isolated and had no support.

Lack of Resources for LGBT+ Youth

Educationalist Gerald Unks adds in his introduction to "**The Gay Teen**" a series of essays by leading educationalists and sociologists on the problems facing LGBT+ youth, that whereas youth from other minority groups tend to have "social allegiances, educational resources and cultural support," the LGBT+ youth have nothing because society says that being gay is an "adult only" activity.

LGBT+ teens say they have "no place to go and nowhere to meet people like me."

Unks says they are essentially powerless.

Sport could be a place to go – but sport as it is currently practised in schools is the exact opposite of supportive.

Young people, especially LGB young people, are often viewed as inherently 'vulnerable' or 'at risk of being bullied', and their experiences of bullying may even be regarded as inevitable. Treating LGB young people as 'natural victims' not only places the blame for homophobic bullying on LGB young people themselves but also furthers the idea that LGB identities are undesirable and inferior to heterosexual identities (**Formby 2013; Monk 2011**). It can also hinder efforts at supporting young people to develop resilience. (**Ref. 17 EACH p.11**)

Free Your Mind: The Book for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth – and their Allies by Ellen Bass and Kate Kaufman is a guide for young people that includes the experiences of other gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth as a help in explaining the processes young people go through and how they can make it easier to develop. The book is divided into six parts that speak to the basic aspects of the lives of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth: (1) "Self Discovery"; (2) "Friends and Lovers"; (3) "Family"; (4) "School"; (5) "Spirituality"; and (6) "Community." It also focuses on the ways in which schools have been hostile environments for the young person of gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientation, as well as the ways some schools are beginning to change to become more accepting and supportive of gay youth. Overall, this is a tool to help young LGBT+ recognise that they aren't isolated and that there are millions of teens in the same situation.

Teens and self harm

A recent article in the *Daly Telegraph* by Theo Merz (22) reports that self-harming among males aged 10 to 19 is at a four-year high in 2014. About 5,000 were admitted to A&E departments with self-inflicted injuries and youth service workers believe that figure is just a tip of the iceberg. Girls self-harm in far greater numbers, but the significance of this rise in young males is that it highlights the enormous pressure boys are under to "be men" when they're still boys. Lucie Russell of mental health charity Young Minds says:

“Look at the pressure that young people are under, the boys as much as the girls: family breakdown, school stress, bullying, cyberbullying, 24/7 online culture. Early sexualisation is happening just as much to boys; they think they should be testosterone-fuelled men but actually they’re not ready.”

She also points out that efforts to support boys who self-harm must take a different form to the face-to-face chats that girls are given. Talking about emotions is more natural for females and she says boys are more likely to respond to activity-based initiatives. This is an important consideration for Sport Allies initiatives.

According to a study in the **British Journal of Social Work** (23) and in her book **Bullying: A Guide to Research, Intervention and Prevention** (24) Faye Mishna et al claim that most research into bullying doesn’t consider sexual orientation. Their research revealed that bullying is a “risk to coming out” and is often fuelled by media prejudice. LGBT+ youth are often targets of “conversion bullying”. This is bullying designed to make them change their sexual orientation and become ‘normal.’ She also states that interventions must be targeted and multi-sectoral.

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Section 3: LGBT+ Teens, Adults and Homophobia in Sport

In this section we look at the LGBT+ experience of sport and why sport is often the place where members of the LGBT+ community feel most threatened.

It seems clear from the body of research that sport is a major problem area for LGBT+ young people, not least because it is typically very gender specific. In Stonewall's School report one student said:

"If you're bad at maths, you're just bad at maths. No one's going to give you any grief for being gay in maths. But in PE its totally different and it's not just that whole competitive thing with other teams where you're trying to beat them into the ground. When you're gay, its your own team trying to beat YOU into the ground" (10)

Brackenridge et al (2008) state that there are studies describing sport as a site for "hyper-masculinity or hyper-heterosexuality," where exaggerated or 'macho' representations of masculinity are valued above all others. (p.15) It is also part of a matrix of domination that is constructed **of race, class and gender**.

In the study **Perception of Homophobia and Heterosexism in Physical Education**, Morrow and Gill state that educators have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for all pupils but that LGBT+ youth typically face a hostile environment. Their research surveyed both physical education teachers and pupils about their perceptions of homophobic and heterosexist behaviors within physical education and teachers' use of inclusive behaviors. Most teachers and both gay and straight students had witnessed heterosexist and homophobic behavior, and most lesbian and gay students had personally experienced homophobic behavior. These data indicate that homophobic and heterosexist behaviors are common in secondary schools, that teachers intend to provide a safe space, but that teachers fail to confront heterosexist or homophobic behaviors and take proactive steps to create an inclusive environment.

Susan S. Klein in her book **Sex Equity and Sexuality (3)** says: " Homophobia creates inequities for both heterosexual and homosexual males and females. Reportedly, females opt out of sports and athletics, especially coaching and officiating, due to rampant sexism and the fear of being labelled 'dyke' or 'jock.' ...On the other hand any male who resists participating in sports or violence is bombarded with derision and cried of 'faggot', wimp' and 'sissy' and other attacks on his masculinity."

The **NSPCC** briefing paper on **Homophobic Bullying in Youth Sport** says:

"Social attitudes have meant that there has been a reluctance even to acknowledge participation in sport by those whose sexual orientation is anything other than heterosexual, which can be challenging for that individual. Discrimination can run deep: it may be implicit through cultural attitudes as well as explicit through more overt homophobia, and often results in self-censorship by lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people."

And it acknowledges: "Discriminatory views about heterosexual and homosexual behaviour are evident in all areas of society but are especially prominent in sport."

It is therefore both a huge challenge and a great opportunity to make sport a means to increasing inclusiveness regardless of sexuality. Research by Kivel and Kleiber: **Leisure in the Identity Formation of Lesbian/Gay Youth: Personal but not Social** shows that leisure pursuits play an important role in helping LGBT+ youth with forming a sense of identity at

school and university. The study of 18 to 22 year-olds in the USA looked at media consumption, music and sports and revealed that:

“the influence of leisure contexts in terms of the integration of personal and social identity formation was mitigated by the extent to which young people felt the need to conceal their sexual identity.”

Eric Anderson who has written several books and academic studies on masculinity says in the abstract of his article **Inclusive Masculinity in a Physical Education Setting (x)** that there is a decrease in homophobia amongst English 16 to 18 year-old males in organised sport:

“There is a strong relationship between the cultural practices of competitive, organized youth sport and compulsory physical education. The hyper-masculine, violent, and homophobic culture traditionally found within boys segregated sporting spaces is mirrored when youth are compelled to participate in physical education. However, cultural homophobia is on rapid decline in Western countries. Recent research shows high school and university sport to be an increasingly inclusive environment for openly gay male youth. I explore this cultural shift among high school (sixth form) physical education students in England. Using three months of ethnography, and conducting 17 in-depth interviews with 16-18 year old ostensibly heterosexual boys, I show an absence of homophobia and homophobic discourse, the abatement of violence, the absence of a jock-ocratic school culture, and the emotional support of male friends. Thus, I show that while the structure of sport education has remained the same, the hyper-masculine culture surrounding it has changed.”

This sense that homophobia is declining, among older students is supported by Anderson’s work with Mark McCormack of Brunel University. In **It’s Just Not Acceptable Anymore; The erosion of homophobia and softening of masculinity at an English Sixth Form (x)** they conclude:

“This ethnographic research interrogates the relationship between sexuality, gender and homophobia and how they impact on 16- to 18-year-old boys in a coeducational sixth form in the south of England. Framing our research with inclusive masculinity theory, we find that, unlike the elevated rates of homophobia typically described in academic literature, the boys at ‘Standard High’ espouse pro-gay attitudes and eliminate homophobic language. This inclusivity simultaneously permits an expansion of heteromale boundaries, so that boys are able to express physical tactility and emotional intimacy without being homosexualized by their behaviours. However, we add to inclusive masculinity theory by showing the ways in which boys continue to privilege and regulate heterosexuality in the absence of homophobia: we find that heterosexual boundary maintenance continues, heterosexual identities are further consolidated, and the presumption of heterosexuality remains. Accordingly, we argue that even in inclusive cultures, it is necessary to examine for the processes of heteronormativity.”

The highlight of this research is that inclusiveness still rests on the concept that heterosexuality is the norm.

In another study, Anderson and McCormack argue in **Cuddling and Spooning: Heteromale and Homosocial Tactility among Student-athletes (x)** that there is ‘homosocial tactility’ among University student athletes that challenges the meaning of ‘heteromale’ among young British males.

“This article examines the prevalence of homosocial tactility and the contemporary status and meaning of heteromale among British male youth. Drawing on in-depth interviews with forty student-athletes at a British university, we find that thirty-seven participants have cuddled with another male. In addition to this cuddling, participants also engage in “spooning”

with their heterosexual male friends. Demonstrating the pleasurable aspects of being a man in this culture, we argue that the expansion of esteemed homosocial behaviors for heterosexual men is evidence of an expansion of changing conceptions of masculinity in contemporary culture. We call for the discussion of heteromasculinities and contextualize our findings using inclusive masculinity theory.”

Research on LGBT+ Sports Participation

In 2008, Prof. Celia Brackenridge et al undertook one of the most extensive reviews of research existing. **Sexual Orientation and Sport: A Literature Review (2008)** on behalf the UK national sports associations contains an 80 page bibliography as well as summations of gaps in the knowledge. In the executive summary, the authors suggest the following are key to the issue:

- 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. (p.10)

Importantly for Sport Allies, the report also says:

- 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. (p.10)

Brackenridge et al. (2008) also discovered the following knowledge gaps in Sexual Orientation in Sport (**SO** is sexual orientation) during their extensive Literature Review. They summarise these in terms of themes within the published evidence as follows:

- Identity is the dominant theme and is the central topic of at least 50% of published studies
- Policy and management of SO in Sport is the next most dominant theme, yet only 11% of studies focus on it
- Bisexuality is invisible as a theme
- Transsexuality studies are scarce and only mentioned in relation to identity, policy and management
- The SO/race nexus is under-researched
- The SO/health nexus is under-researched
- Investigation of homophobia against lesbians in sport appears to be of greater interest or concern than homophobia against gays in sport
- Studies on females are more concerned with feminine identity than with lesbians
- Literature about men and masculine identity far exceeds studies on gay men
- Studies on men/masculinity now far outstrip studies on women.

The authors suggest that the recent emergence of studies on masculine identity and sport may reveal a return to the typical hierarchy in which it’s men first, women second, lesbians third and “the rest” follow. (p.34)

LGBT+ Sports Participation

A comprehensive study for SportScotland titled **Sexual Orientation and Sport: A Literature Review by Brackenridge et al (2008)** showed that the LGBT+ community is active in sports, but it is most unlikely that this sporting activity takes place in affiliated community sports clubs. So, while there is a popular perception that gay men are not sporty, while lesbians are, the statistics refute that. They show that LGBT+ males are just as likely to enjoy sport as straight people, but that they feel unable to take part in 'club' sports and tend to opt for more solitary exercise like running, tennis or going to the gym.

According to NUS and other research, it is primarily the experience of sport at school, and the homophobia in school sports, that prevents LGBT+ adults from taking part in team sports unless they are with LGBT+ teams.

Scotland's Equality Network report "**Out for Sport**" shows that 79% of respondents said there was a problem with homophobia in sport and 62% had witnessed or experienced it.

The recent NUS study of LGBT+ students and sport "**Out in Sport**" provides the following topline statistics:

- 59.1% of LGBT+ students participate in an individual sport or fitness activity
- Only 34.6% take part in a team sport
- By contrast 52% of lesbians take part in a team sport – esp. Rugby
- Running is the most popular sporting activity overall – 18.8%
- Nearly 62.2% of students taking part in a team sport are 'out' to their team mates
- But 17.1% aren't open to anyone about sexuality and 20.5% of them are afraid of abuse, so keep quiet.

Barriers to taking part in sport

According to the NUS research, the main barriers to participating in sport at university is:

- 46.8% find the culture surrounding sport "**alienating and unwelcoming**"
- 42% had a negative experience at school, so they don't want to get involved at university
- 14.3% had experienced homophobia
- 18.7% were put off by 'gendered' sports teams (38.9% for trans students)
- 12.8% found the changing facilities were not inclusive (36% for trans)

A study for the State of Victoria in Australia by Jenny Walsh et al. **Getting over it; homophobia sport and university education (xx)** discusses the lack of safety for LGBT+ students in university sports settings also concur that school experiences set the tone for later experiences. It analyses the role of social definitions of masculinity and femininity as the root of the issue. It also highlights why it is important for sport to be inclusive. The authors say"

"Sport is one of the prime sites of socialisation for many students prior to entering university. It strongly informs the way they see the world and how they interact with others. Homophobic taunts for the purpose of 'motivating' athletes, as well as for demeaning players, opposing spectators and sport officials are particularly common in sport. It effectively teaches young people that there is something inherently wrong about gay people, and that it is all right to put gay people down."

On Pages 10 to 14 of this report the authors set out suggestions for devising 'inclusion' initiatives, creating a safe climate and setting the rules. It also contains four case studies of ways to approach specific situations.

An Australian study by Caroline Symons et al at the University of Victoria **The Impact of Homophobic Bullying during Sport and Physical Education Participation on Same-Sex Attracted and Gender Diverse Young Australians Depression and Anxiety Levels** is rich in statistics on 14 to 23 year old youth. In summary, socially stressful and discriminatory environments experienced, especially during adolescence when much identity formation and physical development takes place, can have a large and detrimental influence on SSAGD young people. **PE and sports are contexts in which the physical body is very visible and negative experiences in these domains may have detrimental effects on young people's wellbeing.**

Suggestions for a Research Agenda on Homophobic Bullying in Sport

Source: **Brackenridge et al: Sexual Orientation in Sport: A Literature Review (2008)**

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.

The Role of Coaches

Pat Griffin of the Women's Sport Foundation and the authors of **LGBT+ Youth Northwest Including Young LGBT People in Sport** among others, echo what Susan S. Klein says above and suggest that sports coaches have a significant role to play in tackling homophobia.

LGBT+ Youth Northwest says:

"Young people at LGBT+ Youth North West thought that coaches were taught too much about the technical aspects of athlete development and not enough about diversity and inclusion, and yet it is essential, if sport is to increase its talent pool and continue to grow in participation, that coaches who are able to meet the needs of a diverse athlete population are required at all stages of the athlete pathway. Often coaches can be hugely influential in young people's lives and acceptance can make the difference between a young person excelling in their chosen sport or dropping out at an early age.

Over the past ten years, the average age of 'coming out' as lesbian, gay and bisexual has lowered from nineteen to fifteen. This means that youth sport needs to engage with LGBT+ inclusion at all levels, in order to safeguard the young LGBT+ people in its care. "

As far back as 1993, Pat Griffin linked teen suicide amongst American High School students and the role that sport might play in preventing this. She points out in **Homophobia in Sport**, that around the same time that the government realised the connection between the suicide rate and homophobia, there were a number of studies on hostility towards LGBT+ college and professional athletes. She says there was also a reluctance to recognise the existence of gay and lesbian coaches and that there was no support from the major athletics organisations.

In her article on the Women's Sports Foundation website **Why Coaches Need to Address Homophobia in Athletics**, Griffin addresses the issue of why coaches need to take a lead in creating a safe, healthy space for all athletes. The main reasons she cites for this need are:

- Athletes will be living in a society and world in which LGBT+ people are present and increasingly visible
- Young people need to have an opportunity to develop attitudes and beliefs not based in fear or ignorance
- Coaches are important figures in athletes lives – coaches work with the LGBT+ youth who feel isolated and suicidal – therefore coaches have a responsibility to set an example for athletes about tolerance of differences
- Homophobia constrains the behavior of heterosexual young people because they are afraid of being perceived as LGBT+. They restrict extracurricular interests, career choices, and friendships to avoid association with being lesbian or gay
- Unless coaches take action against homophobia, the next generation of young coaches will inherit the same prejudices many of us who are coaching now have lived with
- Because it is the right thing to do.

In the book *Taking the Lead: Strategies and Solutions from Female Coaches* edited by Sheila Robertson, author Guylaine Demers writes about the “wall of silence” that surrounds homophobia in sport. From Canadian perspective, Demers proposes a number of practical solutions. She supports the findings of Brackenridge et al who state that the process of making sport free of discrimination and harassment **for LGBT+ people has been hampered by (1) social attitudes and (2) lack of information.** (see page 7 of Brackenridge report for SportScotland)

Demers proposes the following practical solutions for sports coaches:

- Take time to read up on homosexuality and homophobia
- Don't tolerate disparaging remarks about gays or lesbians
- Use inclusive language and don't assume all your athletes are heterosexual
- Find out about community support groups for LGBT+ people
- Launch awareness –raising activities in your community
- Make it clear to everyone that you're open to diversity in your sport

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Women's Sports Foundation (USA)**Why coaches need to address homophobia in athletics: Pat Griffin**<https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/en/home/athletes/for-athletes/know-your-rights/coach-and-athletic-director-resources/why-address-homophobia>**Griffin, Pat: Homophobia in Sport (extract)**<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/40364633?uid=3737952&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&sid=21104581601823>**Dr Ian Rivers – Professor in Sports Science at Brunel University****Blog on LGBT+ Sport**<http://ianrivers.wordpress.com/LGBT+-sport/>**Getting over it; homophobia sport and university education; Jenny Walsh, Caroline Symons and Dennis Hemphill, Victoria University, Australia**<http://www.glhv.org.au/files/gettingoverit.pdf>**The Impact of Homophobic Bullying during Sport and Physical Education Participation on Same-Sex Attracted and Gender Diverse Young Australians Depression and Anxiety Levels. Caroline Symons et al, University of Victoria 2014**<http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/1272794/homophobicbullying.pdf>**Taking the Lead: Strategies and Solutions from Female Coaches: Ed. Sheila Robertson****Ch. Homophobia in Sport; Fact of Life , Taboo Subject by Gulaine Demers**

Section 4: The Gay Professional Athlete

During the 2012 Olympic Games only 23 'out' gay participating athletes could be named by the LGBT+ press, and only one of these, Carl Hester, the equestrian athlete was from the UK. During the Paralympics only two gay athletes could be named, both of these were from the UK, Claire Harvey (sitting volleyball) and Lee Pearson (equestrian). LGBT+ Northwest (x) suggests that while the visibility of LGBT+ professional athletes may have a number of influences, when you compare it to the number of 'out' lesbian and gay MPs, which is significantly higher, then one must conclude that there is something specific about the sport environment that makes it difficult for people at the 'top' of their careers to be public about their sexuality.

In **Updating the Outcome: gay athletes, straight teams and coming out in educationally based sports teams**, Eric Anderson reports findings from interviews with 26 openly gay male athletes who came out between 2008 and 2010. He compares their experiences to those of 26 gay male athletes who came out between 2000 and 2002. The athletes in the 2010 cohort have had better experiences after coming out than those in the earlier cohort, experiencing less heterosexism and maintaining better support among their teammates. He places these results in the context of inclusive masculinity theory, **suggesting that local cultures of decreased homophobia created more positive experiences for the 2010 group.**

In Eric Anderson's book **In the Game: Gay Athletes and the Cult of Masculinity**, he mentions Canadian research by Brian Pronger in 1990 that "asserts homophobia can be stratified between combative and non-combative sports. He predicts that sports requiring physical contact between men (whether team or individual) will yield a higher level of homophobia than others. (p.132) Another researcher, Messner believe that homophobia is necessary to negate sexualised contact between men in contact sports.

Transgender Athletes

The case of South African athlete **Caster Semenya** has been well documented in the media and studied by academics such as **Ian Rivers**. The International Association of Athletics federations forced to have gender tests after she won the 800 metres at the World Championships in 2009. They IAAF only allowed her to return to competitive sports in 2010 and she has gone on to win medals since. However, the attitude of the IAAF to Semenya, showed the attitude towards athletes that don't fit gender types physically. The IAAF handled the case badly and several top athletes criticised the organisation for demanding a test to see if Caster Semenya was a man or a woman. The IAAF claimed they had to see if she had an unfair advantage against other female competitors.

The **Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport** published two position papers on **Homophobia in Sport and Transitioning Athletes** (xx) These papers approach the issue from historical, ethical, educational, and scientific perspectives, and observe that contrary to popular belief, there is no empirical evidence to either support or refute the assumption that transitioned athletes compete at an advantage or disadvantage compared with physically born females and males.

Football

Football deserves a special mention, not because it has made great advances in challenging homophobia, but more because of its lack of progress. Stonewall's 2009 report **Leagues Behind – Football's failure to tackle anti-gay abuse** (xx). As Stonewall points out, football

is Britain's national game, so a failure to tackle homophobia in this game dilutes the efforts of other sports. It's not just football players who get taunted; LGBT+ fans are also targets.

Seven in 10 fans have heard homophobic language on the terraces and three in five fans think that this attitude dissuades the professional players from 'coming out.' Over 50% of football fans think the FA and the major clubs are not doing enough to tackle anti-gay abuse.

Some of the top premier League clubs including Manchester Utd, Chelsea, West Ham and Arsenal support 'Football v Homophobia', but still no top player has come out. But a **BBC Sport report** (xx) says that of the other clubs supporting the initiative only 17 of 72 clubs plan to have a "visible stance against homophobia."

Arsenal was first club to receive 'Kick It Out's' Advanced Level of Equality Standard in 2011. It also has a Gay Gooners fan club - first Premier League club to have representatives at London Pride. It was also the first club to support London's bid to host the 2018 Gay Games.

There have been no openly gay footballers in the English league since Justin Fashanu in 1990. Sadly, he committed suicide, which underlines the problem. You have to look towards the lower echelons of English football before you find any players will to admit to being gay. Others who have come out, such as Robbie Rogers of Leeds or Thomas Hitzlsperger of Aston Villa both waited until they had stopped playing before speaking out. Ironically, the reaction to their announcements was very positive.

ELIXHER (Magazine USA)

Where YOU Belong: The Intersection of Youth, Sports and LGBT+ Equality (June 2014)
<http://elixher.com/where-you-belong-the-intersection-of-youth-sports-LGBT+-equality/>

NY Daily News: Caster Semenya forced to take gender test

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Anti homophobia crusaders fail to enlist gay footballer for DVD

The Guardian 21 September 2011

<http://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2011/sep/21/anti-homophobia-fight-football>

Stonewall and Football reports and initiatives in football

http://www.stonewall.org.uk/what_we_do/9258.asp

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BBC Sport -Man Utd and Chelsea back ‘Football v Homophobia’ campaign

<http://www.bbc.com/sport/0/football/26021176>

Anti homophobia crusaders fail to enlist gay footballer for DVD

<http://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2011/sep/21/anti-homophobia-fight-football>

Arsenal for Everyone

<http://www.arsenal.com/news/news-archive/club-celebrating-arsenal-for-everyone>

Arsenal became the first football club to receive Kick It Out’s Advanced Level of the Equality Standard at the end of 2011, in recognition of the Club’s actions to promote and celebrate its community, its engagement with fans and the development of Club policies and processes to create equal opportunities for all.

Gay Gooners

<http://www.arsenal.com/fanzone/gay-gooners>

A fanzone for LGBT+ Arsenal supporters.

Section 5: UK and International Charters, Frameworks and Initiatives

The UK

UK Government Initiative: Fight against homophobia and transphobia in sport 2011

Government charter supported by the main UK sporting bodies. The charter is part of a new cross-government LGBT+ action plan. The Charter has four statements of intent:

- Everyone should be able to participate in and enjoy sport
- Sport is about fairness and equality, respect and dignity
- We will work together to rid sport of homophobia and transphobia
- We will make sport a welcome place for everyone

Europe

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights ; Homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in the EU member states; part 1 – Legal Analysis

The report examines the situation of homophobia in the 27 EU Member States. It analyses comparatively key legal provisions, relevant judicial data, such as court decisions, and case law in the Member States. In addition, the report identifies and highlights 'good practice' in the form of positive measures and initiatives to overcome underreporting of LGBT+ (Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals) discrimination, to promote inclusion and to protect transgender persons. FRA 's legal analysis is the first of two reports related to homophobia and discrimination experienced by members of the LGBT+ community.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights ; Homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in the EU member states; Part 2 – The Social Situation

The report finds that discrimination, harassment and violence against LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) persons are widespread throughout the EU. The FRA calls on political decision-makers to further improve equality legislation and ensure accurate reporting, in order to improve the situation.

Australia

Bingham Cup 2014 – Anti-homophobia and inclusion framework for Australian Sport

Supported by Australia's main 5 sporting bodies, this document provides a framework of what an inclusion policy for all sports and clubs should follow, should contain. It has case studies of some dozen LGBT+ Australian sporting professionals.

Red Aware (AU) Dear Year 7 Self – Straight People against Homophobia/Transphobia

A video education resource for schools and youth services in which young 'straight' people talk about their experiences with LGBT+ friends and why homophobia and transphobia is wrong.

South Africa

A.H. Butler et al. Gay and Lesbian Youth experiences of homophobia in South African secondary education

In post-apartheid South Africa, the tenets of inclusivity, nondiscrimination, and tolerance are actively encouraged and legislated across all sectors of society, including education.

However, in examining the coming out experiences of 18 South African gay and lesbian youth (1997-2000), it became apparent that they had all experienced discrimination, isolation, and nontolerance within their high school contexts. Due to the marginalized nature of the participants, a variety of nonpurposive sampling techniques were utilized. This article provides insights into the homophobic incidents and experiences as articulated by these sexual minority youths, namely, peer harassment, harassment inflicted by teachers and school administrators, ineffective school counsellors, avoidance, rejection and isolation, and a lack of information and curriculum in high schools for gay and lesbian youth. Implications for practice are considered in the context of South Africa's new constitution and the implementation of Curriculum 2005.

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Bingham Cup 2014 – Anti-homophobia and inclusion framework for Australian Sport

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Sydney Morning Herald 15 May 2014-08-26

World-first study to measure homophobia in sport

<http://www.smh.com.au/rugby-union/union-news/worldfirst-study-to-measure-homophobia-in-sport-20140515-zrdxc.html>

Out on the Fields Rugby Research Project Australia

www.outonthefields.com

The Guardian 16 July 2014

Homophobia in sport: study reveals abuse is still widespread

<http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2014/jul/16/homophobia-sport-study-abuse-still-widespread>

Australian study with quantitative data as well as anecdotes from LGBT+ sports stars.

The Guardian 10 April 2014-08-24

Action against homophobia in sport is long overdue

<http://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2014/apr/10/anti-homophobia-campaign-australia-sport>

A.H. Butler et al. Gay and Lesbian Youth experiences of homophobia in South African secondary education

Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education; Vol. 1 Issue 2, 2003

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/VASFWEuPDjQ>

Red Aware (AU) Dear Year 7 Self – Straight People against Homophobia/Transphobia

Education resource for schools and youth services

<http://www.redaware.org.au/tools/workshop/dear-year-7-self/>

Section 6: Sports Club and Community Initiatives

In **Brackenridge et al (2008)** 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)

At the time of the Brackenridge study in 2007/8, only three respondents knew of any examples of good practice that delivered Sexual Orientation in Sport awareness in Britain, although they were aware of some Australian initiatives.

Other comments about initiatives in a sporting context tended towards the negative:

“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.’”

Peer Education Initiatives

Peer education is one approach to tackling homophobia in sport and while there may not be many actual initiatives within sport itself yet – something Sport Allies plans to correct – there are some excellent example of how young people can support and educate each other in other social issue scenarios, that Sport Allies may be able to draw on.

Advocates for Youth: Peer Education: Promoting Healthy Behaviors

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/publications-a-z/444-peer-education-promoting-healthy-behaviors>

A selection of studies shows that in sexual health, use of violence and substance abuse, peer education is often more effective because young people respond better to ‘learning’ from a person who is closer to their age and who they perceive as having similar issues. It has been shown to be effective in developing positive group norms.

Advocates for Youth: LGBT+Q Youth Initiative

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/about-us/programs-and-initiatives/740?task=view>

Links to strategy and resources that use LGBT+ youth to lead the initiatives. Not sport related, most are drugs and sex related. Also, young LGBT+ people of colour face additional problems that are better handled by their peers.

Education Scotland: Peer Education

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningteachingandassessment/approaches/peereducation/>

Explains the benefits of peer education in the context of education generally. It links to the specialists – the Scottish Peer Education Network. In addition it provides links to video and learning resources for adults involved in providing a peer education initiative.

Scottish Peer Education Network

http://www.spen.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16&Itemid=104&summaryref=26&type=new#search-results

Provides links to Home Office paper on the effectiveness of peer education and drug use. Comments from teens about what they value about peer education. This organisation promotes peer education across many social issues.

Pink News: Birmingham leads the fight against homophobic bullying by focusing on primary schools

<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2013/11/11/schools-out-birmingham-leads-the-fight-against-homophobic-bullying-by-focusing-on-primary-schools/>

The 'Educate and Celebrate' programme from Birmingham's LGBT+ schools advice team – the CHIPS (Challenging Homophobia in Primary Schools) is a free resource for teachers to give them confidence in tackling homophobia and use of language such as "that's so gay." Schools report that using the resource has had a "positive impact."

The Equality Authority: Addressing Homophobic Bullying in Second Level Schools

<http://www.equality.ie/Files/Addressing%20Homophobic%20Bullying%20in%20Second%20Level%20Schools.pdf>

Contains a study of the Irish situation and what has been learnt from international studies. It contains a series of case studies of initiatives in Irish schools plus a section on policy development.

Business In The Community: Minister's Visit Supports Anti-Bullying Initiative in Business Class

<http://www.bitc.org.uk/news-events/news/ministers-visit-supports-anti-bullying-initiative-business-class-school>

The Bridge Academy in Hackney has UBS LGBT+ volunteers has an initiative to combat homophobic and transgender bullying in schools. Includes **link to a case study**.

You Can Play – Anti-homophobia in Sport

<http://youcanplay.com.au>

Australian initiative video, resources, reports and infographics. Launched by Play by the Rules – see below

<http://www.playbytherules.net.au>

APPENDIX 2

WHAT THE WORK OF SPORT ALLIES MEANS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The following is a selection from a wide number of responses that the Warwick Rowers project has received from supporters, expressing why the calendar project and Sport Allies is meaningful to them.

I would like to share with you on behalf of M&G Investments and our Pride Allies Network our appreciation for the participation of the representatives of the women and mens' rowing clubs in a panel discussion yesterday evening around the theme of greater inclusiveness in sport, in particular from an LGBT perspective. The students' passion for their project was really inspiring and a credit to the university. They are clearly reaching a global audience in helping break down barriers and prejudice and I really hope that the Rowing Club continues to inspire its new members to continue with this good work. Encouragingly momentum seems to have been well established.

Kind regards

Jonathan McClelland
Director of Legal Services
M&G Investments

I volunteer for an LGBT suicide and crisis prevention hotline. Most of the calls I receive are from teenage and college guys who are struggling with their sexuality. I live in Utah, so many of my calls are from guys who live in conservative religious families (Mormon and other Christian denominations) and most of the rest are from guys who are being bullied or ostracized at school or at university. Quite often, the bullying is from those who fit macho stereotypes. Athletics is a hotbed of homophobia in conservative and rural areas of the United States.

I admire so much the work that you guys do. You are a great positive example I can share with those who are in crisis when they believe it's not possible for straight and gay men to have "normal" friendships and enjoy platonic camaraderie.

I came to an acceptance of myself the hard way. I followed my religion and suppressed my identity. I served a mission for my church and married a woman. I was married 12 years before it became unbearable and I accidentally survived a suicide attempt. I wish there had been a group like yourselves when I was growing up to look to. I knew I was alone and no one could possibly understand me and if they knew, they could never be my friend. You guys prove all of that wrong. I don't want another person to ever feel or experience the things that I did. What you do isn't just nice and a good idea. It's important. It's vital. It saves lives. Thank you!

Jeffrey

I support Sport Allies because sexuality in sport should not matter, what you can achieve as an athlete does! :-)

Stefan

I support Sport Allies because they help provide men and women with a positive attitude. In this day in age it can be so hard to be gay, especially in sports. You think people will make fun of you, or not support you for your views. But with the encouragement and support from Sport Allies, it gives men and women everywhere the confidence boost, and knowledge that there are people everywhere to help them, and that is the greatest thing. I fully support Sport Allies and everything they do, and my hope is that they continue to spread their incredible message around the world.

Thank you for what you continue to do!

Katie

I support Sport Allies because as an athlete from the age of four to present (32), I continue experience discrimination being a gay man, and I want to make sure that all of the kids that I coach do not feel like they have to sacrifice who they are for the sport they love to compete in!

Eric

I support Sport Allies because sexuality in sport should not matter, what you can achieve as an athlete does! :-)

Stefan

I support Sport Allies because, all titillating references aside, the work that is being done in the trenches (or in this case, in the locker rooms, on the fields, in the boathouses, etc.) is critical to saving human beings. Sport is such a great place to develop character, self-esteem, enthusiasm for life, self-confidence. Often it is the genesis of creating the infrastructure a strong person. Information is power! Having allies is critical to deflecting the prejudices that exist, in order to be the best athletes and human beings that we can be.

Martha

I support Sport Allies because as someone who has recently come out as gay after living as a straight man for almost 29 years I find it extremely comforting knowing that there are people out there like the Warwick Rowers who are doing such great work for the LGBT community.

I'm currently in an amazing relationship with my boyfriend of almost a year. He recently moved to New York for a new job (I live in Rhode Island) and the last few weeks have been extremely hard on us. I would just be overwhelmed with joy if I had the chance to visit him in NY to go to the Out There Mag US Launch of their "Great British Issue" and meet the Warwick Rowers in person. Both my boyfriend and I have the 2015 calendars up in our room and plan on getting the 2016 calendar for the next year (in fact, my plan is to get it for him for his birthday in December, but what better gift than taking him to see TWR!!). Thank you for all of the work you do in the LGBT community, hope to see you next week!

Jonathan

My name is Bryan, and I am a college student from Boston, MA. I support Sport Allies because as a gay man in sports, the cause really hits home to me. I was a runner all throughout high school, earning 11 varsity letters, but was never able to muster the courage to come out to people. It was only when I went to college that I felt comfortable enough. It means a lot to me that Sport Allies is taking such visible and effective steps to eliminate homophobia in sports. Raising awareness on this issue is huge, and I believe that Sport Allies does a great job in getting the word out and motivating people to make a difference. The calendars have had such massive success and they have been distributed around the globe, which really shows the waves that the organization is making. Meeting some of these athletes, who have fully committed themselves to the cause, would be hugely exciting to me. I hope to hear from you soon!

Bryan

I support Sport Allies because it promotes discussion about important LGBT issues and helps athletes excel at whatever they do regardless of their sexual orientation. Physical activity is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle and sexual orientation should never interfere with an individual's potential to participate in a sport. I grew up in a conservative Asian-American part of the United States, where any discussion of sexual orientation was swept under the rug or shamed. I was fortunate enough to attend a school with zero tolerance for homophobia but even then playing on the school's sports team could be intimidating. Personally, open discussion about inclusiveness would have been incredibly encouraging and useful as I navigated high school. In an area where progress can sometimes be slower, Sport Allies stands out as a leader in promoting LGBT awareness and equality!

Tim

I support Sports Allies because as someone who works with people who are disenfranchised and discriminated against every day, it is wonderful to see an organization that is trying to fight against that. I am getting my Masters in Social Work and I see people every day who are trying so hard to have a team, have a support system and yet they are excluded because they are LGBTQ. Sports teams are supposed to be that support system for people, but when they are excluded the consequences are two-fold: First of all the people no longer have a team that they have as that support system, and secondly they now have been singled out for being different, and being intentionally made to feel alone. Sports Allies is great because it tries to repair and prevent that damage from being done, as no one should be discriminated against for their sexual orientation or gender, because it shouldn't matter who you love as long as you can love and support others, such as on a sports team.

Cassandra

Sport Allies gave me the strength and confidence to come out to my straight teammates and peers. Sport Allies taught me that we are all equal, regardless of orientation, and made me feel comfortable and proud to stand up for who I really am, and feel like I am finally accepted.

Samir

Though I have never ordered a calendar I have followed you all very closely and I must say you all have helped me fight a cumbersome illness as well. I have been struggling to fight a very stubborn tumor, during that time as a gay man I have had to fight homophobia as well. Often I have struggled to understand why straight men can be so viciously indifferent when no

threat is present. It has been my life work for the last decade. to seek out the wounded and those who languish in the corners of our society, forgotten and dejected because of sexual orientation or more precisely, being themselves. I've often said the name Warwick Rowers, to help make my point. Thank you all for making that possible, people have went home and looked you all up to return to me with an "attitude adjustment". My best friend happens to be a rower and even he has changed his opinion and evolved even further. As I battle my cancer and the plight of homophobia it has been encouraging to know that with at least one of these fights there are men who are almost the "Alpha" of our society, "taking it all off" in support of a noble cause. It has been encouraging to me. So thank you, continue to do the work. I will continue to fight my cancer and fight against homophobia as well. When the going gets tough as it sometimes will, when radiation has me bruised and battered i am comfortable that if i don't win, if it takes me away from the people i love and the work that needs to be done, people all over the world are working in favor of humanity. Again thank you, good luck on your fight!

Brandon

I'm a 17yr old Australian who recently came out as gay to his friends and family. I just wanted to say thank you, so very very much for what you guys do. The promo shots of your calendar and some of the pictures were some of the first ever photos of those kind that I saw. In fact it was the callendar images that made me realise my attraction and thus homosexuality.

But I think the most powerful aspects of the images are that they show that camaraderie and mateship is still possible when there are accepting people who don't care about your sexuality. They gave me the realisation that when I came out to my friends they wouldn't treat me any differently, but just like a mate. Infact the day I came out I put one of the posters on my phone lock screen as motivation to come out.

Anyway, I just wanted to say thank you for what you're doing, fighting homophobia and giving confused guys like me confidence in their attraction and eventual acceptance. As soon as I get a job I will buy one of the calendars and support this great cause, so hopefully you can keep helping others like me.

Angus