



MOVING WITH PRIDE: 2BU VOICES

LGBTQ+ People in Somerset Experiences in Sport & Physical Activity

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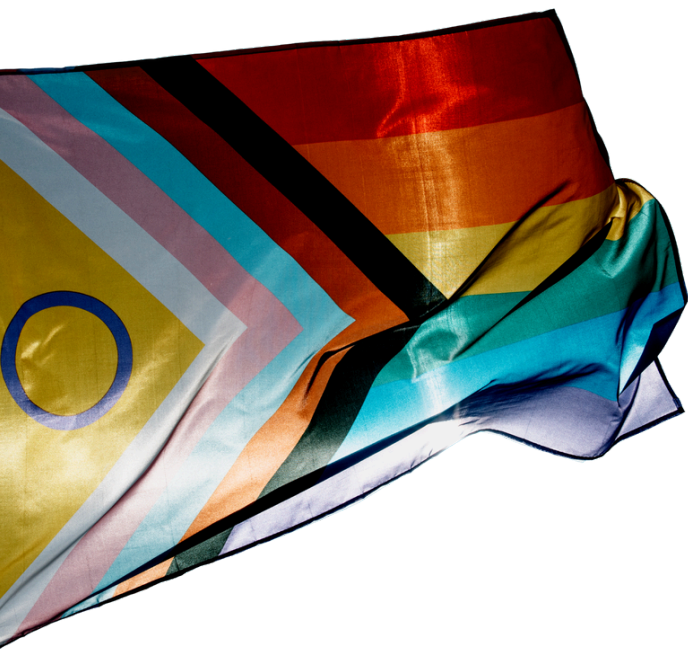
INTRODUCTION

At 2BU, we believe that physical activity should be accessible, affirming, and relevant to all people, especially those from LGBTQIA+ communities. Working in partnership with SASP, this project set out to understand how LGBTQIA+ young people experience sport and movement across Somerset. Our findings highlight both the barriers and the opportunities. They show how the journey into movement for LGBTQIA+ young people is uniquely complex, shaped by cultural exclusion, safety concerns, and a lack of representation in settings ranging from school PE to community sports clubs.

This report brings together the voices of young people, highlighting what activity means to them and setting out clear priorities for change. Throughout the document, you will find clickable links to hear directly from LGBTQ+ people in Somerset, sharing their experiences in their own words

WHY THIS WORK MATTERS

This isn't just about inclusion, it's about access, action, and belonging. Movement is more than sport. For LGBTQIA+ young people, being active can be an act of resilience, connection, and self-expression. Yet, for too many, movement is also tied to discomfort, exclusion, or risk. These findings reflect a culture where LGBTQIA+ young people often feel unsafe or invisible.



We also know that “activity” doesn’t always look like traditional sports. For many LGBTQIA+ people, especially those living at the intersections of identity, access and movement means more than just opening the door, it means reshaping the culture inside. That requires time, intention, and collective support.

Our vision for Somerset is to create a place where LGBTQIA+ people can move, connect, and thrive. This might take the form of swimming, climbing, walking groups, or simply spending time together in spaces that feel safe and welcoming. At 2BU, we believe in a world where it is not only okay to be yourself, but where being LGBTQIA+ is recognised and celebrated as an important part of our shared community.

“It’s hard to tell what groups are safe for LGBTQ+ people” (Participant age 21)

WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

VISIBILITY

Young people told us that seeing LGBTQIA+ identities reflected in sport and activity spaces matters. Representation through role models, inclusive language, and affirming imagery helps them feel recognised and valued. A lack of visibility often reinforces the sense of being “othered” or excluded.

“I don’t want to go to places...” (Participant age 15)

“If there are one or two trans people already using the space...” (Participant age 24)

“If I saw a 2BU sticker...” (Participant age 19)

The absence of LGBTQ+ role models in sport, alongside a lack of inclusive imagery and leadership, leaves many young people feeling unseen. Without visible representation, their sense of belonging in physical activity spaces is reduced.

“I’ve never seen anyone like me in sport adverts or posters.”

“If I saw more LGBTQ+ coaches or leaders, I’d feel like I belonged there too.”



THE ACTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The spaces where activity takes place, gyms, clubs, community centres, and outdoor areas play a crucial role in shaping whether young people feel safe to participate. For some, environments are welcoming and supportive; for others, they carry risks of judgement, harassment, or misgendering. Trust is cultivated through consistency, safety, and visibly inclusive practice.

"If there was clear policies..." (Participant age 16)

"It would be hard to go alone..." (Participant age 21)

"If you were finding it difficult..." (Participant age 16)

Experiences of verbal harassment, hostile stares, and being physically excluded from activities were frequently reported. Even when not directly targeted, many young people feared negative judgment in gyms, school sports, or team environments.



"People would laugh or make comments when I joined in, so I just stopped trying."

"I feel like gyms aren't for people like me. I'm always worried about being judged."

*** # : !!**

PE AT SCHOOL

School-based physical education was one of the most significant areas of concern. Many LGBTQIA+ young people described PE as a site of exclusion, discomfort, or invisibility. From gendered changing rooms to a curriculum that doesn't reflect diverse needs, PE often fails to create a space where they can enjoy movement. Trans and non-binary students also spoke about feeling unsafe or unsupported in school-based sport.

"Educating educators is the first step to change..." (Participant age 24)

"I only felt safe..." (on behalf of participant age 14)

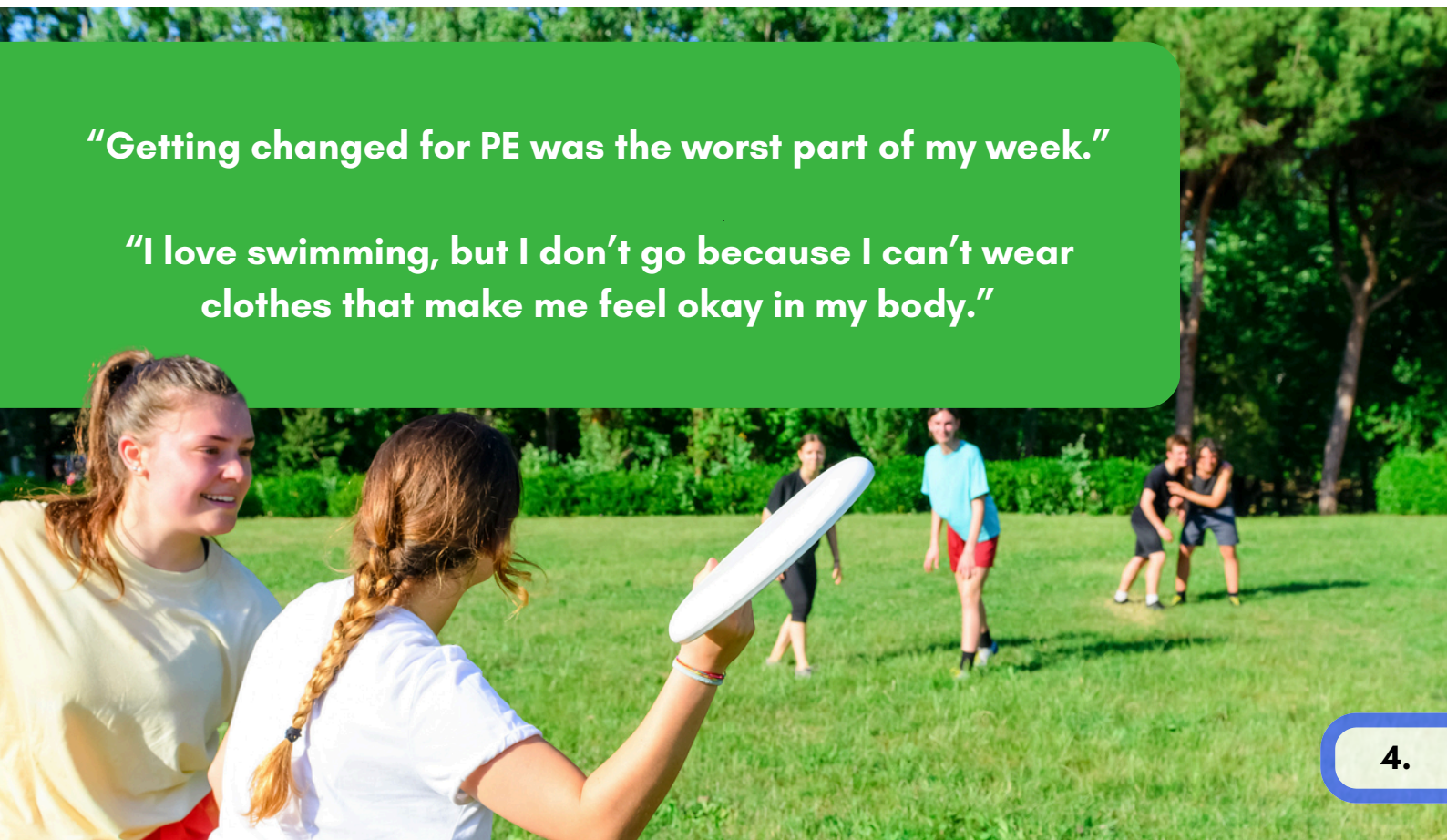
"Sport, school & Binders..." (Participant age 16)

Young people highlighted how dysphoria can be heightened during changing, swimming, or wearing sports uniforms and revealing clothing. For many, a lack of comfortable and accessible clothing options, for example, safe binding while being active, creates additional barriers to participation.

"As much as I really like doing PE..." (Participant age 16)

"Getting changed for PE was the worst part of my week."

"I love swimming, but I don't go because I can't wear clothes that make me feel okay in my body."



GENDERED STRUCTURES IN SPORT

Binary divisions in teams, changing facilities, and PE classes continue to exclude non-binary and trans young people. Many described the distress of being forced to participate based on their assigned gender, which often led to disengagement or avoidance.

“PE was always split into boys and girls, and I never felt like I fit in either space.”

“I stopped going to after-school clubs because I didn’t want to explain my gender over and over.”

EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

Anxiety, Fear & Insecurity: Many young people reported feeling unsafe, ostracised, and vulnerable in sport and physical activity spaces. Anticipated or past trauma often resulted in withdrawal or avoidance.



“Even before PE started, I’d feel sick with worry about what was going to happen.”

“I stopped going to training because I was always scared someone would say something about me.”

Loneliness & Isolation: A lack of peer support or community in sport leaves many LGBTQIA+ young people feeling alienated. Several described giving up on team sports or PE altogether because of social exclusion.

"I quit football because I never felt part of the team, they made it clear I didn't belong."

"Everyone else had a group, and I was just on my own."

Frustration with Media and Political Climate: Participants expressed widespread anger and disappointment at anti-trans narratives in the media and harmful political discourse. Many felt that sports policies were becoming less inclusive and more hostile.

"Every time I see the news, it feels like they're saying people like me don't deserve to play."

"It's exhausting when the media keeps debating your right to even exist in sport."

"If you googled trans and sports..." (on behalf of participant age 15)

A CALL TO ACTION

Many people with LGBTQIA+ identities live at the intersection of multiple experiences, where gender, age, race, disability, and other factors overlap. At this crossroads, it can often feel as though no one truly sees or understands you. Representation remains scarce, and the systems around us frequently fail to reflect the realities of diverse communities.

People with LGBTQIA+ identities face systemic barriers that cannot be ignored. Toxic media narratives, harmful policies, and body-based oppression are embedded throughout society, shaping the environments in which young people live, learn, and play. Addressing these challenges requires bold, unapologetically radical action. We call on schools, community organisations, sports clubs, and policymakers to join us in confronting systemic oppression head-on. By acting together with courage and purpose, we can build a future where freedom, safety, and authenticity are realities for everyone.

OUR SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE

The people we spoke with shared clear and actionable ideas for making movement, sport, and physical activity more inclusive and affirming.

Their insights fall into four main areas:

1.

More LGBTQ+ Specific Opportunities

One of the key recommendations from young people is the provision of queer-only gym sessions, introductory clubs, and casual sport meetups. These spaces offer an environment where participants can feel safe, affirmed, and free from judgment. By creating settings specifically for LGBTQIA+ people, organisations can reduce barriers to participation and encourage more consistent engagement in physical activity.

Young people told us they liked the idea of a peer-led or buddy-based approach. They spoke about the value of having supportive peers or mentors to guide them through new activities, offer encouragement, and reduce anxiety. Having someone by their side not only makes it easier to attend but also builds confidence and fosters a sense of allyship. This kind of support helps young people feel part of a community, making sport and movement more accessible, enjoyable, and hopefully 'something that sticks'.

*"I'd join a gym if I knew it was a queer-only session,
I wouldn't feel like I had to hide who I am."*

"I wish there was someone I could talk to who gets it."

"We need groups that say clearly, 'You are welcome here.'"

7.

2.

Mixed-Gender & Mixed-Ability Options

Young people expressed a strong desire for non-gendered team allocation and games that welcome all abilities. Creating mixed-gender and mixed-ability opportunities ensures that everyone can participate without being limited or excluded based on gender or skill level. They also highlighted the importance of inclusive practices across school and community activity settings, including clear expectations for respect, safety, and accessibility. Implementing these practices helps to create environments where all young people feel valued, supported, and able to fully engage.

"I want to join football, but I'm not a boy or a girl. Where do I go?"

3.

Training & Representation

Young people highlighted the need for more staff training on LGBTQ+ inclusivity, anti-discrimination, and creating safe spaces. They explained that equipping staff with this knowledge and understanding would help ensure that all participants feel respected, supported, and able to engage confidently in activities. Several told us that it would make a real difference to know this kind of training had happened in their school.

Young people also called for greater visibility of LGBTQ+ people in leadership roles, club membership, activities and events or on social media. They explained that representation at all levels demonstrates that LGBTQ+ people belong in every aspect of sport and community life. Seeing role models in these spaces helps foster a strong sense of inclusion, belonging and confidence amongst participants.

"If teachers had proper training, maybe they'd know how to support us instead of ignoring things."

"I'm tired of hearing jokes about people like me like it's normal."

"It doesn't feel like anyone actually cares what we say."

"What's the point if nothing ever gets better?"

4. Clear Policies for Inclusion

Young people were passionate about the importance of clear codes of conduct, effective reporting systems, and inclusive changing facilities. These measures create environments where participants feel safe and confident that any concerns will be addressed promptly and fairly. They also highlighted the need for legal and structural safeguards to ensure safe participation for all, reinforcing accountability and protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ young people across schools, sports clubs, and community settings. Some young people suggested using visual reminders, such as posters showcasing intersectional identities throughout facilities, to reinforce these policies and signal that inclusion and safety are a priority.

"It would make such a difference if there was a clear policy that said: you're protected here."

IN SUMMARY

Creating environments that are both physically accessible and culturally affirming is essential for supporting LGBTQIA+ young people in movement, sport, and community life. By implementing targeted opportunities, inclusive practices, strong representation, and clear policies, organisations can ensure that young people feel safe, supported, and empowered to participate fully. These actions are not just about access, they are about fostering belonging, agency, and resilience.

What if we started thinking about activity in a different way. “Being active” isn’t just about traditional sports, it can be cycling, walking, fitness classes, or just hanging out and moving around with friends. The important thing is that every young person can find something that feels safe, fun, and right for them.

Listening to the community is just as important. By making sure LGBTQIA+ voices shape how we design, run, and improve our programs, we can tackle the real challenges young people face and support what they actually want and need.

And it’s not just up to one school, club, or group. Inclusion works best when everyone works together – across schools, health services, and community spaces. That’s how we create a culture where LGBTQIA+ people feel seen, supported, and celebrated every day.



THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Raw data (attached pdf)

.....

DESK TOP POLICY SEARCH

Overall, the policies written by larger organisations were fairly comprehensive, inclusive and diverse. I found that consistently, organisations had a clear plan to support LGBTQ+ people in engaging with their sports.

Grassroots organisations and community led groups tended to have little to no policies focused on inclusivity for the LGBTQ+ community. For many of the local groups and organisations, there was little to no policies available at all and for those that did have them, they were often outdated or unclear on how accessible their organisation was for LGBTQ+ people wanting to engage with their sports.

Towards the end of researching the policies that are in place from sporting organisations, I noticed some policies being taken down or being harder to find on some of their websites. One of these being Rugby England. Additionally, during this time, multiple sporting organisations including the FA (football association) and the ECB (England Cricketing Board) banned transgender people from participating/competing within their sports under their gender identity. This meant that for much of my research, the policies that I had been looking into would be likely to change from April 16th 2025.

I found that LGBTQ+ participation in sport and physical activity has been particularly challenging for the trans community for quite some time due to bans on participation from multiple organisations. In 2022, the British triathlon became the first British sporting body to create a separate category for transgender athletes to compete in. Some sporting bodies have put in eligibility criteria for transgender athletes to be allowed to compete within their sports. Despite only 20 transgender athletes being registered under the FA to compete, the FA has now banned the participation of transgender athletes in the category that matches their gender identity.

The ruling of the supreme court has resulted in a lack of clarity for transgender athletes and trans people that wish to participate in sport and physical activity on whether they will be able to participate with the gender that they are or if they will have to participate in the group that aligns with their sex assigned at birth. It is unclear on whether grassroots sports groups will follow the policies of sporting bodies that have decided on a ban for transgender athletes competing within the category of their gender identity. From the research I have completed, it is hard to find policies around LGBTQ+ people participating within their sports groups or physical activity prior to the supreme court ruling and therefore without any policies it is unclear on how supportive and inclusive grassroots organisations are to the LGBTQ+ community.

From the research into policies from local sporting organisations, sporting bodies and sports charities, it is clear that the voices of the LGBTQ+ community need to be heard in order to understand how people feel about participating in sports and where people would like to see changes made. Additionally, there is a clear need for improvements to be made amongst policies for organisations to show their inclusivity for LGBTQ+ people participating in their sports. With the current climate making it very unclear on whether LGBTQ+, and particularly trans+, people are able to join sports groups or compete in sports/physical activity at a local level, it is more important than ever to have clear policies to have clear inclusivity within an organisation compete in sports/physical activity at a local level, it is more important than ever to have clear policies to have clear inclusivity within an organisation.

CASE STUDY 1

Cis-male, gay

Age Bracket: 26-30

Data collected: 1/5/2025

Interview to gather information

Physical activity:

- Walking to work
- Heavy lifting at work/work based activity
- Minimal sport/physical activity outside of work

KEY QUOTES

"I would like to do more physical activity but I wouldn't go to a gym because I find that intimidating. Manly men would be like 'what the hell are you doing here?' Times have progressed well but you never know, especially in a gym changing room"

"If there was clear policies on a website/at a gym then I would be more likely to go to that gym because your safety is a little bit more secure. They would be able to monitor if bullying or victimising was happening."

"Any form of training around LGBTQ+ people is good. It helps people understand what we are, what we want and how to deal with not great situations."

"I think LGBTQ+ classes would be a good start to getting into physical activity. You know you're with like minded people and you wouldn't be as nervous. It would be a safe place to learn and when you go into more general spaces you would know that the staff there are supportive and have good knowledge of the queer community."

"I didn't feel unsafe or uncomfortable at school doing physical activity. I got really lucky."

"It would be good for places to change to become more inclusive of the queer community. It would be easier for queer people to get into sports and more people would engage in physical activity because of this."

"If change in places isn't possible, it would be good for more queer spaces to be set up for queer people. There is a LGBTQ+ group that meets up in Wells which is nice because we have our own space so if we did that for sports and physical activity, that would make it easier to get involved with."

CONTINUED...

"I'm worried I will be judged. It is stereotypical for the queer community and gay guys to not know what they're doing and I wouldn't know what to do going to the gym. I don't want to be a stereotype but I'm nervous about getting started."

"I have had positive experiences in physical activity. Work has always been inclusive. There are several queer people in work and we've never been stereotyped or told 'you can't lift that box'. Most workplaces I've been to have been very inclusive."

"My teachers were fairly inclusive and when I was in school everyone was trying to push inclusivity. In PE and the changing rooms nothing really changed when I came out and if something had then the school would have done something. Teachers making changes where needed and being vocally supportive helped me feel safe in PE lessons."

"If I went to a gym I would be researching them and I would be more likely to go if they were inclusive. I'd mainly look at their social media and if it was clearly safe for queer people from that I would be likely to go."

"You could read a website and be very overwhelmed but if there was a bit about staff being trained or being inclusive it would feel a lot less overwhelming. It needs to be advertised as a friendly and safe space or queer people won't go and won't feel included in that space."

CLOSING POINT:

"It is nice to see sporting people come out. I know if I had that when I was younger, I would have done more sports. It's a positive thing to see. I wish it wasn't such a big deal but its nice that it is because it can change things."

CASE STUDY 2

Trans Male/Non-binary, Questioning

Age Bracket: 24

Data collected: 9/5/2025

Interview to gather information

Physical activity:

- Work based, minimal due to chronic illness
- Pilates/yoga

KEY QUOTES

"I would never put sports and queer friendly in the same sentence with the way that [things] are in the world."

"Politics has made sport more and more actively non inclusive of queer people. I hate that when I think about sports or physical activity or just generally doing something that takes effort in relation to being queer I think about the fact that we just aren't allowed to do those things without getting tested or proving our gender."

"Being chronically ill and queer means that sport is just something I can't do. I think that could change if there were places that were run by people who get it. If I knew that yoga was being run by a lesbian who has diabetes or the gym was owned by a queer couple I would go because I know I am safe."

"Visibility matters a lot but I'm tired of the performative visibility. I don't want to go to the places that put the pride flag in the corner of a room for June and then take it down when July starts. Be visible all year or don't bother. I don't want to be used as a tick box."

"School PE was awful. Teachers had no idea what it was like for us, they didn't understand chronic illness and they would yell if you didn't work hard enough. It made me hate sports."

"I only felt safe and had a good time when we got to pick our PE classes and the teacher running it wore a pride lanyard. She opened up a bit to us at the time and ended up being a good teacher. I wish she had been more like that for longer and felt able to be openly supportive before my last year because that might've changed my perception of sport."

School is your first real try at sport. If it's bad, sport is then bad. If it's good, sport can be good. Things need to be tackled at the root of the problem and the way that educators do sports is the way that younger generations will formulate their future thoughts and feelings and opinions on sports."

CONTINUED...

"Educating educators is the first step to change. People learn from them at the very start and then they will copy the behaviours they have learned in their future careers. If a PE teacher is homophobic or leans into harmful stereotypes, their students will do the same if they become teachers."

"Queer sports clubs could make it easier to have positive experiences in sports. I don't have positive experiences with doing sport and physical activity. I associate it with upsetting politics, pain, exhaustion and fear. If I could think about sports and physical activity as a fun time with friends, things might be different."

"It would be hard to go to anything alone. I wouldn't go to a queer physical activity thing without researching it and having somebody to go with."

CLOSING POINT:

"Education, REAL visibility, kindness and queer spaces could make big changes for participating in sport and physical activity. I think that goes for everything both with the queer community but also for people who are neurodiverse and chronically ill. Again, the educators are the root of the problem a lot of the time so educating them is a good starting point to make change."

CASE STUDY 3

Cis Female, Bisexual

Age Bracket: 51

Data collected: 16/5/2025

Interview to gather information

Physical activity:

- Gardening
- Yoga
- Walking the dogs
- Workplace based activity

KEY QUOTES

"I'm very lucky compared to you guys. I present female and I am not visibly LGBT+. That means my only fears when doing physical things are linked to my body image instead of fearing for my safety."

"I think that politics at the moment is ridiculous. Transgender women are being targeted for no real reason. It is making something that was already hard for LGBT+ people to do even harder. If you were finding it difficult to join a sports group before, you sure as hell are going to find it ten times harder now!"

"It feels like everything is going a bit backwards. Nobody really had an issue with LGBT+ people when I was in university. My best friend was gay and played in the university basketball team and nobody cared. I think if that happened now people would have something to say about it and I don't understand it."

"You shouldn't have to make separate spaces to feel safe but unfortunately I think the only way that LGBT+ people might feel more safe doing sporty things is if there was a specifically LGBT+ group for it. I would definitely feel safer in that sort of group."

"The real difference is that if I went to a yoga class and said I am bisexual, that would be all I am to people but if I went to an LGBT+ yoga class and said the exact same thing, it wouldn't matter. That is how it should be. I am a person first with interests outside of liking men and women!"

CLOSING POINT:

"It is not fair for the world to be so cruel and unaccepting towards a group of people that are already struggling with acceptance and do not receive enough kindness. Change needs to happen and it needs to be a positive change!"

CASE STUDY 4

Genderfluid, Pansexual

Age Bracket: 19

Data collected: 12/5/2025

Informal conversation

After a conversation explaining what research I am doing, this person agreed to me using content from our conversation within my research as I felt this was relevant.

KEY QUOTES

"I actually really enjoy sports, when I have recovered from my knee injury I would like to return to sports"

"I think that the system needs to change for queer people to feel safe to participate in sport. If you googled 'trans' and 'sports' or searched those words together on social media you would find an overwhelming amount of negative things."

"You should make changes from the root causes for there to be changes in the whole system. PE and PE teachers need to learn and then others will learn from there."

"I don't really feel like I have barriers to participating in sport and stuff linked to who I am. It would be different if I was visibly queer though."

"I go with my queer friends to the gym because they don't feel safe going alone. They feel safer going with people that don't look queer."

CASE STUDY 5

Trans Male, Bisexual

Age Bracket:25

Data collected: 22/5/2025

Interview to gather information

KEY QUOTES

"I find sports and physical activity a bit of a challenge mentally and physically. Navigating the mix of worrying about binding and the impacts of binding whilst exercising whilst trying to manage my gender dysphoria and fears around stereotyping is really hard."

"It's hard to tell what sports groups/clubs are safe for LGBTQ+ people. Especially in sports separated into mens and women's. Are they splitting it based on sex or gender? I don't want to find out when I arrive that I'm not welcome somewhere after it will have taken a long time to build up the courage to show up."

"Sport and physical activity became a bit easier in school when we were given the option of different curriculums taught by different teachers in PE. There was a low impact curriculum option which the majority of LGBTQ+ students chose making the classes feel safe and non judgemental."

"I've always wanted to go to the gym and get involved in physical activity properly but I don't know where to start and I'm terrified that if I asked a personal trainer, they would judge me when I tell them the look I'm trying to achieve because I am not a cis man."

"Unfortunately the main sport I'm interested in isn't really available to play in this area. I enjoy indoor volleyball a lot but I struggle to find anywhere that does it or advertises it."

"I'd be a lot more willing to try physical activity or sports in local community groups/gyms if I knew the places both had training and supportive/inclusive staff."

FOCUS GROUP 1

Data Gathered: 21/5/25

Age Group: 13 – 18

The group was asked how they feel about sports and physical activity in Somerset, their positive and negative experiences of sport/physical activity and how things could improve.

- School is focused on technique rather than actually playing sports.
- Sports are gendered
- Teachers act like we have a lack of autonomy.
- Medical issues are not treated well. You're often told to run it off or not believed when medical issues arise.
- Even when you're unwell, you are forced to change into PE kit.
- Teachers are the worst part of PE.
- Harassment in the changing rooms is hard and a fear.
- PE teachers get away with favouritism towards individuals a lot more than other teachers would.
- Schools/PE classes being run one way leads to clubs being run that way and it ends up in a vicious cycle.
- Challenging teachers for the language and tone they're using doesn't feel safe to do
- Students should be able to easily report teachers.
- In public school, there is 1 or 2 lessons of mandatory PE and this is split by sex which makes me excluded quickly.
- I was picked on in secondary school PE so I don't do sports or physical activity anymore.
- Changing rooms are hell.
- You are expected to know the rules of a lot of sports.
- Harassment in school feels like it is amplified more in sports because things are more competitive so the environment gets more hostile.
- School forces you to play sports but then shuns you if you don't play well enough.
- Sports are good in my school as they have different sports for each season and you have lots of options to pick the sport you want to do. They have light sport options and also accessible options and dance classes which are relaxed and fun.
- I like that the competitive sports in seasons are split by gender because I'm scared of getting injured and I don't like being around boys in changing rooms.
- The boys tend to get the better teachers which isn't very fair.
- It feels like the PE teachers are on a constant power trip.
- There isn't much autonomy/we don't get much autonomy in PE classes.
- School put me off sport. There was a lack of accessibility and inclusion so I assumed that's how it would be everywhere.
- Team games and competitive games are split by gender which is frustrating for me

The only offer in public school for sport is team sport. Minimal options are offered and the sport that gets picked tends to be chosen by majority vote so I often had to play sports I didn't enjoy.

FOCUS GROUP 1

CONTINUED...

- The culture around sports is overall negative
- I enjoy swimming, tai chi and surfing but these are because they are sports that I don't associate with school.
- I get good feelings around sports lessons that happen outside of school
- Gendered changing rooms cause me to have panic attacks
- My averseness to sports stems from my experiences in school
- I have a disability so I also think that accessibility issues make sports harder for me to participate in.
- Bad experiences in school made me not want to try sport or physical activity later in life
- The people who were PE outcasts will not want to do more sports
- Everyone has teacher horror stories, but they shouldn't. Teachers are taking on the role of guardians 5 days a week whilst we are away from home so they should be acting like guardians.
- It is normalised for PE teachers to yell. They are away from other teachers so can get away with it.
- The split of boys and girls is gender essentialism. It feels like feminism taking a step back
- Sports should be mixed up to a certain point but then they should be split by skill level.
- Every system that is in place can be abused. Everything should be divided by skill, capacity, build and sport.
- Boys aren't able to play with girls, but girls are able to play with boys which feels unfair
- What is taught in schools ends up being the same in the rest of the world which means the same patterns are repeated.
- I decide on where to go for sport/physical activity based on google, research, friends and word of mouth. I would research what certain things mean, what facilities are there and how are LGBTQ+ people included. I would also make sure that their inclusivity is non-tokenistic and find out how I would be protected there.
- If there are a one or two trans people already using a space I would assume that that space is safe.
- If I saw a 2BU sticker in a place of sport/physical activity I would enquire but it wouldn't guarantee that I will go 100%
- Separation of groups/genders encourages misogyny. Sexism is encouraged and it creates an environment where this is okay.

FOCUS GROUP 1

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- Organisations should be there WITH queer people not just for queer people.
- There should be environments like the 2BU family day for sports/physical activity taster days.
- Pride flags would help spaces feel more inclusive as long as they aren't there just for pride month but a sticker in the window/in a space to show an organisation is trained and approved would feel more safe and inclusive.
- Trained staff, clear inclusivity on social media posts, queer events, queer friendly events and policies will help improve ease of access to sport and physical activity for LGBTQ+ people.
- Have a space for us to be people safely, somewhere we are able to exist.
- Better education for PE teachers
- Schools treating students with autonomy as this only seems to happen when you reach 16+.
- Mixed groups
- Single cubicle changing rooms/options for changing. The feeling of privacy is important.
- This is also inclusive as privacy helps everyone and leads to the curb affect where inclusion will happen on its own.
- Mixed groups from a young age as friendships will be made.
- Having knowledge and information of when peak times are at sports facilities so that people can go when it is quieter when starting out.
- 'Jim the gym guardian' – having a clear person in gyms and sports facilities that you can go to with the knowledge that they will immediately tackle any discrimination from an educated standpoint.
- A queer sport logo that is put up in places to let new attendees know that that organisation is trained and educated on the LGBTQ+ community.

EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

- The most positive PE lesson I had was when there was no teacher and the groups were mixed together
- PE teaching team work and how to exercise.
- PE feeling less like PE and being more about peer to peer
- Doing things for creativity and fun instead of for progression and competition.
- Invitation or facility to entertain what you want to do.

FOCUS GROUP 2

Data Gathered: 1/7/2025

Age Group: 11 - 16

Group was asked to describe how they feel about sport/physical activity in 3 words and asked *'what could make sport and physical activity easier for you as an LGBTQ+ person?'*

KEY WORDS

- Fun, competitive, enjoyable
- Exciting, energetic, fun
- Scary, sweaty, bad
- Uncomfortable, terrifying, not fun
- Stressful, unfair, transphobic
- I hate sport
- Not very inclusive

"Changing rooms make doing sport really hard. All of the changing rooms are split into boys and girls but I'm not a boy or a girl, so I'm forced to go into a changing room that doesn't match who I am."

"I think sports are really good and I enjoy doing them, but I think that we need to have more options of what we can do so that people that aren't very competitive or don't want to do a sport that is just boys or just girls can do sport and have fun without gender being important."

"As much as I really enjoy doing PE, I don't like that we have to wear a uniform for it. I don't have to wear a uniform to the gym so why do we need to wear uniform in PE."

"The PE uniform makes me feel dysphoric and I hate it."

APPENDIX 10

Data Gathered: 19/6/2025

Somerset youth forum, visit to talk about the LGBTQ+ sports research and look at the research currently found by the Somerset youth forum.

.....

Somerset youth forum are currently conducting research into what young people think about sports in their school or college. I attended one of their youth forum online calls to hear about their research and talk to them about the research we have been doing.

From the youth forums initial findings, they found that sports offered in their school and college are wide and varied but a lot of this is offered within extra curricular instead of in their main curriculum.

One quote from their research that relates to ours well is ***“There is a sign of a split in sports available by gender with a request for girl’s football and for whether sports are played mixed or single gender – this can be alienating.”***

Their research also mentioned stereotyping and how boys may not participate in dance and girls may not participate in football. From the discussion I had with the group, we talked about how stigmas and stereotypes around certain physical activity can impact on young peoples participation in sports.

LIST OF QUOTES

VISIBILITY

SCHOOL/PE

ENVIRONMENT

1.

If there was clear policies on a website/at a gym then I would be more likely to go to that gym because your safety is a little bit more secure. They would be able to monitor if bullying or victimising was happening.

2.

I think that could change if there were places that were run by people who get it. If I knew that yoga was being run by a lesbian who has diabetes or the gym was owned by a queer couple I would go because I know I am safe.

3.

Visibility matters a lot but I'm tired of the performative visibility. I don't want to go to the places that put the pride flag in the corner of a room for June and then take it down when July starts. Be visible all year or don't bother. I don't want to be used as a tick box.

4.

I only felt safe and had a good time when we got to pick our PE classes and the teacher running it wore a pride lanyard.

5.

Educating educators is the first step to change. People learn from them at the very start and then they will copy the behaviours they have learned in their future careers. If a PE teacher is homophobic or leans into harmful stereotypes, their students will do the same if they become teachers.

6.

You shouldn't have to make separate spaces to feel safe but unfortunately I think the only way that LGBT+ people might feel more safe doing sporty things is if there was a specifically LGBT+ group for it. I would definitely feel safer in that sort of group.

7.

People need to learn to be more accepting. I had no idea how binding could impact you when doing sports but I have learned more recently and it is scary that teachers and sport leaders probably have no idea about this.

8.

I think that the system needs to change for queer people to feel safe to participate in sport. If you googled 'trans' and 'sports' or searched those words together on social media you would find an overwhelming amount of negative things.

9.

School put me off sport. There was a lack of accessibility and inclusion so I assumed that's how it would be everywhere.

10.

Everyone has teacher horror stories, but they shouldn't. Teachers are taking on the role of guardians 5 days a week whilst we are away from home so they should be acting like guardians

24.

LIST OF QUOTES

CONTINUED...

11.

Sports should be mixed up to a certain point but then they should be split by skill level.

12.

If there are a one or two trans people already using a space I would assume that that space is safe.

13.

If I saw a 2BU sticker in a place of sport/physical activity I would enquire but it wouldn't guarantee that I will go 100%

14.

As much as I really enjoy doing PE, I don't like that we have to wear a uniform for it. I don't have to wear a uniform to the gym so why do we need to wear uniform in PE. The PE uniform makes me feel dysphoric and I hate it

15.

I'm worried I will be judged. It is stereotypical for the queer community and gay guys to not know what they're doing and I wouldn't know what to do going to the gym. I don't want to be a stereotype but I'm nervous about getting started.

16.

It is nice to see sporting people come out. I know if I had that when I was younger, I would have done more sports. It's a positive thing to see. I wish it wasn't such a big deal but its nice that it is because it can change things.

17.

I would never put sports and queer friendly in the same sentence with the way that [things] are in the world.

18.

Being chronically ill and queer means that sport is just something I can't do.

19.

School PE was awful. Teachers had no idea what it was like for us, they didn't understand chronic illness and they would yell if you didn't work hard enough. It made me hate sports.

20.

It would be hard to go to anything alone. I wouldn't go to a queer physical activity thing without researching it and having somebody to go with.

25.

LIST OF QUOTES

CONTINUED...

21.

If you were finding it difficult to join a sports group before, you sure as hell are going to find it ten times harder now!

22.

The real difference is that if I went to a yoga class and said I am bisexual, that would be all I am to people but if I went to an LGBT+ yoga class and said the exact same thing, it wouldn't matter. That is how it should be. I am a person first with interests outside of liking men and women!

23.

I don't really feel like I have barriers to participating in sport and stuff linked to who I am. It would be different if I was visibly queer though.

24.

I go with my queer friends to the gym because they don't feel safe going alone. They feel safer going with people that don't look queer.

25.

It's hard to tell what sports groups/clubs are safe for LGBTQ+ people. Especially in sports separated into mens and women's. Are they splitting it based on sex or gender? I don't want to find out when I arrive that I'm not welcome somewhere after it will have taken a long time to build up the courage to show up.

26.

Navigating the mix of worrying about binding and the impacts of binding whilst exercising whilst trying to manage my gender dysphoria and fears around stereotyping is really hard.

27.

Sport in school was tough initially. I wore a binder for the majority of it and my teachers had no idea so became frustrated with me when I had to take more breaks. I refused to do swimming because of the dysphoria that came from the swimming costumes.

28.

I've always wanted to go to the gym and get involved in physical activity properly but I don't know where to start and I'm terrified that if I asked a personal trainer, they would judge me when I tell them the look I'm trying to achieve because I am not a cis man

29.

I was picked on in secondary school PE so I don't do sports or physical activity anymore.

30.

Gendered changing rooms cause me to have panic attacks



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