



ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITY

This policy is inclusive and Supporting of all LGBT+ people – Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender, as well as individuals who are Intersex, Queer or Questioning, Asexual, Pansexual etc

UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

Sexual orientation refers to a person's emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person. Gender reassignment A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex [Equality act 2010]. This protects players, officials and coaches from discrimination. The club should support anyone taking steps to 'reassign their sex' (or transition), whether those steps are 'social' (e.g. changing their names and pronouns, the way they look or dress) or 'medical' (e.g. hormone treatment, surgery). The other characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, and sex.

LGBT+ young people come from all socio-economic backgrounds, religions, faiths, ethnicities, and cultures. It is estimated that six per cent of the population is LGBT+, so there's a good chance that in a group of 30 young people, at least two will be or will grow up to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. Most young people will know LGBT+ people too, including family and friends. In addition, a 2010 piece of research, funded by the Home Office, estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 people in the UK may identify as transgender.

However, LGBT+ people remain largely invisible across sports, and two thirds of LGBT+ young people say they don't like team sports. This lack of visibility, as well as the misapprehensions about LGBT+ people, contributes to an environment of homophobia and transphobia in sport. This can potentially cause LGBT+ young people to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued. We therefore all have a role to play in dispelling myths about LGBT+ people, challenging homophobia and transphobia when they occur, and creating a Rugby League environment where everyone feels included. It's important to remember that people realise they are LGBT+ at different stages of their lives; so if a young person seems to identify in a certain way, it doesn't mean they will remain that way in the future.

It's also worth remembering that, when young people come out or identify a wish to reassign their current gender it's often the first time they've told anyone and how they do that will often be in response to the way they think others will react. Let them decide how they feel and what, if any, identity, they feel they have, and be supportive.

"Many lesbian, gay or bisexual people in sport face discrimination simply because they are perceived to be different from the heterosexual 'norm': As well as causing many lesbian, gay or bisexual athletes to leave clubs or sport entirely, in the worst cases such negative treatment has resulted in self harm or suicide".

Source: CPSU Homophobic Bullying in Youth Sport, April 2011

Every young person has the right to be treated with dignity and respect; these include all young people who are openly LGBT+ or are thought to be. A club culture that permits casual use of homophobic or transphobic language makes it all the easier for players to suffer name calling and bullying. This can impact on a young person's sense of belonging, self-esteem and their achievement. Allowing inappropriate language and jokes to take place may hinder a young person in coming out as they may feel they will be subject to discrimination.



LGBT+ young people have the same needs as any other teenager. They'll enjoy, achieve and stay safe if they:

- Feel able to be themselves
- Feel valued for who they are
- Feel included and part of a community
- Have access to resources and information relevant to them
- Feel safe and supported
- Feel they have people to talk to if things aren't going so well

Don't make assumptions; it's impossible to tell whether a young person is LGBT+ by the way they act, talk, dress or by who their friends are.

If a young person comes out to you or just wants to talk it is important to know how to act appropriately. Remember you should take it as a matter of pride that this person had decided to confide in you

- offer them reassurance,
- listen and be supportive
- Direct them to where they can get further advice and guidance.

What you should **NEVER** do is

- discuss a young person's sexual orientation with others
- Discuss it with their parents/carers without the young person's permission.
- Make light or a joke of it as this could have been a hard/life changing decision to confide in you.

For further information visit

www.stonewall.org.uk or to speak with someone call 0800 050 2020.
www.lgbt.foundation or to speak to someone call 0345 3 30 30 30

Reducing Vulnerability

In view of the above it is important for our club to be extra vigilant in creating a safe culture, including:

- Finding ways of understanding and communicating with all children and young people
- Ensuring best practice at all times
- Promoting positive environments and behaviours in which difference (in a variety of senses) is embraced
- Raising awareness of what discriminatory bullying is, how you will respond and ensure effective reporting systems are in place to enable players to report incidents
- Implementation of a club code of conduct for spectators and players
- Acceptance of the special role club officials have in setting a good example of the way in which people should behave towards children and young people

It's recognised that empowering children and young people helps to protect them; ensure our club is a LISTENING CLUB, effectively communicating with its young players and listening to their needs and suggestions for change.

Acknowledgements

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