

Written evidence submitted by LGB Alliance

Call for evidence from DCMS

Major Cultural and Sporting Events

Submission from

LGB Alliance May 14th 2021

INTRODUCTION TO LGB ALLIANCE

LGB Alliance is the only registered charity promoting the rights of people with same-sex sexual orientation in the UK. LGB Alliance was formed in October 2019 in response to the refusal of Stonewall, once itself an LGB rights campaigning organisation, to engage in any discussion on issues of sex and gender and how they relate to Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people.

Specifically, there were serious concerns about Stonewall's adoption of "queer theory" with its focus on the primacy of "gender" over biological sex. This theory promotes the controversial notion that everyone has a "gender identity" – a concept about which there is no scientific consensus – as separate from, and overriding, biological sex. It goes so far as to refer to "same-gender" instead of "same-sex" attraction, which is unacceptable to us since it redefines and negates LGB sexual orientation.

LGB Alliance believes that "gender identity" theory reinforces outdated and regressive stereotypes. We would like to see a world where any boy or girl, man or woman, can dress and be whoever they would like to be as long as they respect the rights of others. Our main areas of interest are the human rights of LGB people, fact-based education of children and young people, an end to the medicalisation of children and young people with gender dysphoria, and the creation of a positive environment for all "gender non-conforming" people in the UK.

REASON FOR SUBMITTING EVIDENCE

LGB Alliance is submitting evidence in support of our charitable objects, which are:

- *to promote equality and diversity for the public benefit, in particular by:*
- *the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation;*
- *advancing education and raising awareness in equality and diversity in respect of lesbian, gay and bisexual people;*
- *conducting or commissioning research on equality and diversity issues and publishing the useful results to the public; and*
- *cultivating a sentiment in favour of equality and diversity for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.*

- We recognise the importance of major cultural and sporting events in bringing the four nations of the United Kingdom together and encouraging participation in sports and cultural activities by a wide range of people from all backgrounds.
- Gay, lesbian and bisexual people are as involved in sports and culture as the general population, and in fact history tells us that LGB people have been *more* likely to be involved in cultural activities including art, theatre, music and fashion than heterosexual people.
- We know that in many cases LGB people have had to hide their sexual orientation in order to take part in cultural and sporting events, or have been “out” and had to endure unpleasant and difficult examples of prejudice throughout their careers.
- We remember Justin Fashanu, the first “out” professional footballer, who committed suicide in 1998. “Exactly 30 years ago, footballer Justin Fashanu hit the headlines as the first professional player to come out as gay. What impact did he make - and why have no others followed him?” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-54617759>
- We think of Martina Navratilova, who was once vilified by some sport commentators and many members of the public for not being “feminine enough” and whose sponsorship was far less significant than that offered to heterosexual tennis players. Today, in a sad mirror image of that discrimination, she is attacked by LGBTQ+ activists for saying that biological males should not be allowed to compete in women’s sports categories. Navratilova was once the target of traditional homophobia. In 2021 she is the target of those who promote gender identity theory – in our view a revised and updated form of homophobia
- In an interview in 2014, actor Rupert Everett re-stated his belief that being gay stifled his acting career, telling the Daily Telegraph “there’s only a certain amount of mileage you can make, as a young pretender, as a leading man, as a homosexual. There just isn’t very far you can go”. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/jul/04/being-gay-was-a-huge-issue-in-my-career-says-rupert-everett-gay-actors-closet>
- We want all this to change. We wish to ensure that LGB people are able to take part in cultural and sporting events *without fear of discrimination* and where there is a *sentiment in favour of equality and diversity for lesbian, gay and bisexual people*

DCMS QUESTIONS

1. What does the UK public want from major cultural and sporting events, and how effectively is this being reflected in the planning and programming for events in 2022?

The UK public wants to see people from all backgrounds being able to take part in these events without fear. Cultural events should challenge, inspire, and entertain. Sporting events should be based on rigorous principles of fairness and safety.

- In the view of LGB Alliance, the planning and programming for Festival UK reflect a missed opportunity.

- Festival UK sets out to “showcase the UK’s creativity and innovation to the world”.
- We would have liked to see the programme include a project that harnesses creativity and new technological solutions to address what we see as one of the greatest problems in society: the atmosphere of fear that prevents public debate on controversial issues.
- From our perspective, this means the debate on sex and gender.
- Would it not have been a powerful, ground-breaking innovation to present new apps or interactive online platforms that bring people with diverse views together for respectful exchanges of views, as opposed to the current situation in social media, which encourages polarisation and tribal “bubbles”?
- If the very suppression of diverse views on this issue is so successful that certain views are overlooked, or delegitimised and deliberately excluded from the planning process, this is a self-perpetuating problem.

As for the Commonwealth Games, our foremost concern is the protection of fairness and safety in women’s sporting events.

Since World Rugby published its comprehensive survey of the scientific literature on the participation of people who have gone through male puberty in women’s sporting events,¹ we have seen few other sporting bodies display the courage that is evidently now needed to defend safety and fairness in women’s sport.

This is a matter of concern to LGB Alliance for three reasons:

1. Many lesbian and bisexual women compete in sporting events. LGB Alliance supports these women.
2. Those who express concerns about being forced to compete against male-bodied competitors are currently being told to keep quiet. LGB Alliance stands for open dialogue and transparent, unbiased, evidence-based decision-making.
3. This issue is frequently presented in the media as being about “LGBT rights”. This misrepresentation is harming the reputation of the LGB rights movement.

When we speak out in favour of safety and fairness in women’s sport, we receive overwhelming support. We believe most LGB people and many trans people support safety and fairness in women’s and girls’ sport and are being badly misrepresented by groups that were once fierce advocates of gay and lesbian rights. From this LGB vantage point we want to make the following points:

The Commonwealth Games is a fantastic opportunity to showcase women’s sports with the aim of increasing women’s and girls’ participation in sports and also to bring the country together.

¹ https://resources.world.rugby/worldrugby/document/2020/10/09/a67e3cc3-7dea-4f1e-b523-2cba1073729d/Transgender-Research_Summary-of-data_ENGLISH-09.10.2020.pdf

Participation in sport has been shown to promote a positive body image in adolescent girls,² which may offer protection from both mental and physical health problems. We believe that every opportunity must be taken to inspire girls and young women to participate in sport. This will enable them to gain the physical and mental health benefits that can make it easier to navigate the process of growing up.

If, through the inclusion of male-bodied competitors in women's sports, we find women side-lined and losing their place on the podium (as has already happened in the 2019 Pacific Games³) it will actually discourage young women from taking up sport – the very opposite of what is needed.

It will also damage any prospect of national pride at the Games – the optics of people with male bodies competing and winning in women's sports would outrage the British sense of fair play. Most people agree that women's sport should be for females only.⁴ Allowing male-bodied people to compete in women's sport will be regarded as simply Not Cricket.

2. *What needs to happen for major events to successfully bring people from all four nations of the UK together?*

- The best way to bring people from all four nations together is to ensure equal representation in planning and to spread the venues evenly among the four nations.
- If there is explicit "LGBT" representation it should be recognised that all groups currently supporting what is known as the "LGBT community" now focus on "gender identity", thereby excluding people who define themselves in terms of same-sex sexual orientation.
- We therefore strongly urge organisers to include representatives of LGB groups alongside "LGBT" groups in any such planning and organisational processes.
- We note that LGB Alliance groups are active in all four nations and would be enthusiastic to be involved in such processes.

3. *How should the success of major cultural and sporting events be measured and what should their legacies be?*

Success measures

We recommend a mix of key performance indicators for major cultural and sporting events, based on answers to the following questions:

² [\(PDF\) BODY IMAGE AND SPORTS PARTICIPATION OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS \(researchgate.net\)](#)

³ [Transgender Athletes At The Pacific Games \(fijisun.com.fj\)](#)

⁴ [Most people agree that women's sport should be for females only • Fair Play For Women](#)

1. Are LGB groups⁵ included in the planning of such events?
2. Will there be visible gay, lesbian or bisexual individuals with prominent roles during these events?
3. Will LGB competitors be encouraged and supported to be “out” so as to inspire others – particularly young people watching?
4. Will women’s and girls’ sporting events be restricted to biological females?
5. Will any Diversity & Inclusion policies or statements promote the view that any child should be allowed to grow up and fulfil their potential fully regardless of their sex?
6. Will investment be split 50/50 male/female in all events – thus redressing the historical and continuing imbalance in sports and event funding?
7. Will staffing at all levels reflect the population as a whole, so that LGB individuals are hired on an equal basis to others?
8. Will facilities like changing rooms, showers, WCs etc be provided for the two sexes separately in order to guarantee the privacy and safety of women and girls?
9. Will any Diversity & Inclusion policies for staff or participants ensure that these relate accurately to the Equality Act and avoid LGBTQ+ ideology, which prioritises “gender identity” over sex?
10. Will support for LGB people who wish to attend be made clear in promotional material and at the events themselves?

Legacies - sports

- Major sporting events should leave a legacy of increased grassroots sports participation.
- We hope that the legacy of the Commonwealth Games will be the greater visibility of gay and lesbian participants in sport, providing more role models for young people.
- Major sporting events should also leave a legacy of increased enthusiasm of women and girls for taking part in sport. Allowing male-bodied people to take part in women’s events, in our view, would achieve the opposite: it would discourage women and girls from taking part in sport.
- The legacy of major sporting events should be to bring the country together. This cannot be achieved if the women’s events are marred by controversy and a sense of unfairness at women losing places in their own sports to males.

⁵ N.B. When we refer to “LGB groups” we mean groups that uphold the position that someone with a penis is not, and cannot be, a lesbian. Similarly, someone with a vagina is not, and cannot be, a gay man. This is obvious to most of society but *all* “LGBTQ+” groups reject this fundamental reality.

4. *What are the challenges facing the delivery of major cultural and sporting events in 2022, and the bid to host the World Cup 2030?*

The programme of Festival UK is divided into five sectors: Science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. None of these sectors operates in a social vacuum. The restrictions on freedom of expression in present-day UK society are severe and growing all the time. A festival that praises creativity and innovation but fails to identify – let alone try to address – this problem is missing the “elephant in the room”. In other words, it is sadly avoiding creativity and innovation in the area in which these are most needed.

Multiple examples of people being fired from their jobs or other positions, or banned from social media, for holding views about sex and gender, or merely for stating facts, make it clear that we are living in intolerant times. Technology has contributed to this situation, but technology may well help to find solutions – provided creative, innovative people focus on trying to find them. LGB Alliance urges the organisers of Festival UK to rise to this challenge.

The challenge facing the Commonwealth Games, as noted above, is to protect women’s sport and to resist demonstrably false propaganda, disseminated by gender identity extremists, that promotes the notion that gender identity matters more than biological sex. This is factually incorrect in many areas of life – sport being one of them. Gender identity has nothing whatever to do with sports classifications. We hope that the organisers will rise to the challenge of protecting women’s sport.

As for the bid to organise the World Cup in 2030, we sincerely hope that in the same way football authorities have joined forces to fight racism, they will make an effort to combat homophobia. The challenge facing the organisers, from the point of view of LGB Alliance, is to help to create an atmosphere in which gay male soccer players feel free to come out without any repercussions, whether in terms of loss of sponsorship or any other form of discrimination.