

Written evidence submitted by the LGB Alliance

Introduction

1. LGB Alliance was formed in October 2019 in response to the decision of Stonewall, once itself an LGB rights campaigning organisation, to ban 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 "gender identity theory" with its focus on the primacy of gender over 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.
2. LGB Alliance believes that gender identity theory reinforces outdated and regressive stereotypes.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.
3. LGB Alliance is a lesbian-led organisation. We have no wish to present lesbians as victims, but it is fair to say that in the UK in 2020 lesbians are among the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in society. They are a target both as women, and – even more threatening to some – as women who are not sexually interested in men. Discrimination, verbal and physical abuse start at an early age and continue throughout life.
4. While there are many social facilities and programmes for both LGBT youth and other disadvantaged groups, there is nothing specifically for young lesbians at all.
5. Under the prevailing culture, young lesbians are expected to blend into LGBT groups where it is "transphobic" to reject partners of the opposite sex who "identify" as lesbians.
6. In some cases, young lesbians are exposed to pressure from online platforms and peer groups that lead them to believe they are trans.
7. Many lesbians have found friendship, fun and refuge in sport. Here there is no need to conform to gender stereotypes. Sports teams can provide a haven away from the sexualised imagery of women and the consequent expectations imposed on women and girls regarding the "right" way to look.
8. We encourage all children and young people to get involved in sport: not only to build their physical and mental health but also to learn about teamwork, responsibility and leadership. It is especially important for lesbians – who have no other social meeting places for women and girls only.

Question 1 Are current sports governance models fit for purpose?

9. We support the Code of Sports Governance of UK Sport, outlined briefly as:
 - Increased skills and diversity in decision making, with a target of at least 30 per cent gender diversity on boards
 - Greater transparency, for example publishing more information on the structure, strategy and financial position of the organisation
 - Constitutional arrangements that give boards the prime role in decision making
10. We support the above, with one exception: we object to diversity being labelled as "gender". Instead we would urge that it be labelled "sex". These guidelines were published in 2017 and since then language regarding "gender" has changed. We would support representatives on a board at 50:50 sex-based split between male and female.

QUESTION 2 At what level of sport should the government consider spending public money?

11. We will not respond to this question since we do not have expertise in this area.

QUESTION 3 What are the biggest risks to the long-term viability of grassroots sport?

12. Covid is essentially a short-term threat, since a vaccine will provide protection once rolled-out nationwide to all groups.

13. A long-term threat to both adult and child participation in sport is gender ideology, often described misleadingly as “inclusivity”, in schools and grassroots clubs. This ideology is behind the idea that any biological male who “identifies” as a female should be allowed to play in women’s sport.

14. Under the cloak of “inclusion” women’s sports could gradually disappear. Women and girls would be reluctant to participate in sports in which they could not excel or win (due to the unfair competition created by including male-bodied people) or where they are at threat of injury or exposed to the opposite sex in changing facilities.

15. For children, specifically, we must consider the impact of gender ideology, which would allow males “identifying as females” to play in girls’ sports.

16. Both girls and boys benefit from single-sex sports. Sport can be:

- A place where there is fairness and opportunity and the possibility to develop friendship groups outside family and school
- A place where there is equal opportunity and the chance for self-improvement through training and practice. Again, this relates to single-sex sports
- A place where there is a sense of social acceptance where the emphasis is on health and strength and not on conformity or appearance. This is of particular importance to girls due to the social pressures that encourage eating disorders and self-hatred that can result in self-harm. Whilst eating disorders are becoming more common than before in boys as well, girls are ten times more likely to suffer from these problems than boys

[Anorexia and bulimia | Royal College of Psychiatrists \(rcpsych.ac.uk\)](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk)

17. Children get a great deal of satisfaction and confidence when they perfect a taught skill, can see themselves improving, and can achieve goals. A child may also have a talent or natural propensity for speed or endurance. Participating in a loved sport can support mental health and physical fitness.

18. Children also have an innate sense of fairness, they understand without being taught whether they are participating in something that provides a fair chance at something, whether they are competing on a level playing field. If a boy competes as part of an otherwise all-female team, the level playing field is removed, the risk of injury increases and the opportunity to win against your peer group is destroyed.

19. All children should be encouraged to be comfortable with their bodies, but they also have a right to privacy and should not be forced to get changed in the company of the opposite sex. This is for safeguarding reasons, both with coaches and teammates.

20. We have seen biological males now identifying as females dominating college athletics in Connecticut and other states in the US. We can expect to see some of these male athletes competing at the next Olympics in women’s events.

21. In Feb 2020 three Connecticut female athletes took a case to court challenging the fairness of competing against biological males Terry Miller and Andraya Yearwood. Alanna Smith, a

sophomore at Danbury high school, said: “Mentally and physically, we know the outcome before the race even starts. That biological unfairness doesn’t go away because of what someone believes about gender identity. All girls deserve the chance to compete on a level playing field.” <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/feb/13/transgender-athletes-girls-sports-high-school>

22. Whilst in the UK single-sex sports still exist, there are growing signs that this is changing. Most shocking was the recent announcement that one of the most dangerous contact sports of all, rugby, is now welcoming biological males into the female game. This was the decision of England’s Rugby Football Union. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2020/oct/14/rfu-clears-trans-women-to-play-womens-rugby-at-all-levels-in-england>
23. The RFU’s position is sharply at odds with World Rugby, which ruled on Oct 9th 2020 that trans women [could no longer play international women’s](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2020/oct/14/rfu-clears-trans-women-to-play-womens-rugby-at-all-levels-in-england) rugby after a major review of the latest science concluded that the risk of “significant injury” was “too great”. <https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2020/10/17/a-ban-by-world-rugby-could-prove-influential-for-transgender-sports>
24. In cricket we have also seen biological males taking places in women’s teams. Maxine Blythin, who is over 6ft tall, has a batting average of 124 and has hit four centuries. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7369619/Kent-transgender-cricketer-reignites-row-allowed-play-womens-sports.html>
25. There are many examples of men taking women’s places and medals across sports and countries. Some are well known – Hannah Mouncey represented Australia in men’s handball before transitioning & joining the women’s team. Lauren Hubbard represented New Zealand in weightlifting before transitioning. Hubbard won two golds and a silver in three of the women’s heavyweight categories at the Games in Samoa in July 2019. “She topped the podium ahead of Samoan runner up and Commonwealth Games champion Feagaiga Stowers in both categories, triggering outrage in the Pacific island nation” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-weightlifting-newzealand-hubbard-idUSKCN1UP0F0>
26. Earlier this week the Olympics announced that Paris 2024 will have more youth-focused events and will include “100% gender equality”. We are unclear whether this refers to biological sex or is shorthand for allowing biological males to enter women’s events.
27. IN CONCLUSION – LGB Alliance recognises the significant challenges faced by children and young people who do not conform to “gender stereotypes”. Many of them will grow up to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. Today, many children and young people spend time online trying to work out who they are and where they may find a place where they feel they belong. How much better it would be for girls and boys to find a sense of belonging in sport. No pressure to conform, just fair competition and skills development.
28. WE RECOMMEND DCMS rejects gender identity theory and makes clear to UK Sport that it is essential to continue to provide single-sex sports for the benefit of all women and girls – especially lesbians, whom we represent.

Final questions

We will not respond as we do not have expertise in this area.