



## Summary for Ireland on Homophobia in Sport

*Out on the Fields* is the first international study and largest conducted on homophobia in sport. Nearly 9500 people took part including **501** lesbian, gay, bisexual and straight **Irish** people. The study focused on issues of sexuality in team sports and the English speaking countries. Repucom conducted the research with the study being initiated by Bingham Cup Sydney 2014 and supported by a coalition of sports organisations. **The study methodology and results were reviewed by a panel of seven academics from six universities including Victoria University (Australia), Penn State University, University of Massachusetts (USA); Brunel University (UK); University of Winnipeg and Lavel University (Canada).**

## KEY FINDINGS

### Sport Participation

- The majority of lesbian, gay and bisexual people said they played a wide variety of sports in Ireland, particularly in their youth (under 22)
- 1 in 4 (26%) gay men did not play youth team sports with many of these men saying negative experiences in school PE class (32%) turned them off team sports or they feared they would be rejected because of their sexuality (27%)

### Sporting Culture

- **46% of all participants and 54% of gay men believe LGB people are 'not accepted at all' or only 'accepted a little' in sporting culture**
- 58% of all participants and 71% of gay men believe homophobia is more common in Irish sports than the rest of society

### Homophobia and Discrimination

- **75% witnessed or experienced homophobia in sport (both straight and LGB)**
- Participants were more likely to have witnessed homophobia than experienced it personally. Half (54%) of gay men, 40% of lesbians and 19% of straight men said they had personally experienced homophobia

### Of those who have been personally targeted:

- **75% of gay men said they have received verbal threats of harm**
- 41% of gay men and 7% of lesbians have been bullied
- 20% of gay men have been physically assaulted
- 83% of gay men and 89% of lesbians have received verbal slurs such as "faggot" or "dyke"

Research Conducted by

Study Initiated and Managed by

REPUcom



Full report at [www.outonthefields.com](http://www.outonthefields.com)



## Youth Sport (under 22)

- **75% believe youth team sports are not welcoming or safe for LGB people**
- 43% of gay youth said they were at least partially in the closet, keeping their sexuality secret from all or some of their teammates
- These youth said they stayed in the closet because they feared multiple forms of discrimination, for example 55% of gay youth and 21% of lesbians feared they would be bullied and 35% of gay youth and 14% of lesbians were worried about discrimination from coaches and officials. Meanwhile, 58% of gay youth and 44% of lesbians were worried about being rejected by teammates

## Spectator Stands

- **82% of Irish participants believe an openly gay, lesbian or bisexual person would not be very safe as a spectator at a sporting event**
- Spectator stands (43%) followed by school PE class (23%) are the most likely locations for homophobia to occur

## How Ireland Compares to other English speaking countries

- Irish participants were the second most likely (after the USA) to believe LGB people are not welcome or safe playing youth team sports
- Ireland also had the highest drop in team sport participation by gay men between youth and adult sport. More gay men in Ireland than in any other country cited fears of discrimination as reasons they didn't play adult team sport with 31% citing fears of rejection because they were gay and 31% cited negative experiences in school PE class
- However, overall, Ireland performed well on many other measures
- Ireland had the second lowest number of participants who thought homophobia is more common in sporting culture than the rest of society and lowest number of participants who said they witnessed or experienced homophobia in sport

- Irish gay men were also the second lowest (after the UK) to report homophobic slurs

## SOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants were asked to select a range of possible solutions or could submit their own. The top three solutions selected were:

1. Start early with schools, coaches and parents taking homophobia and bullying seriously in sporting environments
2. National sporting organisations need to adopt and promote clear anti-homophobia and LGB inclusion policies for professional and amateur players
3. More LGB professional sporting stars need to come out of the closet to set an example

## Recommendations from Researchers

- In many parts of the world PE teachers receive no training about homophobia or supporting LGB athletes. Coaches, physical education teachers and sport officials need mandatory training on how best to support LGB athletes
- Sporting organisations, schools and teams need to adopt a zero tolerance for players and fans who engage in homophobic behaviour

## About the study

The data for Out on the Fields was collected through a 10-15 minute online survey with recruitment focused primarily on the UK, USA, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Ireland. The study focuses on issues of sexuality, not gender, which is why LGB is used rather than the now standard LGBTI. People from all sexualities took part, including nearly 25% heterosexual.