



**Gendered
Intelligence**

Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion in Sport and Physical Activity: A Report

October 2024

(Based on 2019 data)

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Welcome from Gendered Intelligence's CEO

Welcome to GI's report on **Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion in Sport and Physical Activity**. I'm pleased to introduce this report, and I hope it will be of help to all those who are keen to improve inclusion for trans and non-binary people.

It contains a wealth of information about trans and non-binary people's lived experiences regarding sport and physical activity (SPA). These experiences, both positive and negative, illuminate the range of issues trans and non-binary people face when accessing sports and activities, and show ways those issues can be addressed.

Background to the Report

The research in this report was carried out in 2019 – the report's introduction elaborates on why and how the material was gathered, and how we used it at the time. We didn't originally intend to publish a stand-alone report. However, five years on from the research, there are reasons we feel we should make the key content publicly available.

Why Publish Now?

Since 2019, trans and non-binary people's inclusion in (or exclusion from) sport has become an increasingly regular topic of media articles and opinion pieces. The matter is often debated without nuance or kindness in public forums, by those who know little or nothing about the topic, or about the realities of trans and non-binary lives.

This is part of a wider picture of growing hostility towards marginalised people generally. Since the data in the report was collected, hate crime against trans people has increased enormously. Alongside this, the health of trans and non-binary people has reduced.

It has never been more important for SPA to be inclusive. We all know that there are huge benefits to participation in SPA, and that everyone, including trans and non-binary people, should have an opportunity to take part. Those benefits include improvements to mental and physical health as well as the joys of interacting with others, finding friends and community and reducing

isolation, which we know is a major issue for trans and non-binary people in the UK and beyond.

However, in the sporting world, a number of National Governing Bodies (NGBs) have taken decisions which reduce access for trans and non-binary people, rather than improving it. All the while, trans and non-binary people remain significantly under-represented in SPA.

Trans women and trans feminine people in particular bear the brunt of these decisions and debates, and often encounter considerable hostility surrounding their participation.

How Can the Report Help?

In this current context, GI realised that much of the information we gathered back in 2019 remains highly relevant to the matter at hand.

The report contains valuable insights that can contribute positively to discussions. Whilst the report shows clearly that many trans and non-binary people often do not feel welcome in SPA, finding it inaccessible, it also shows grassroots inclusion is possible and often straightforward. The report contains examples of organisations, clubs and teams – and individuals within them – making the effort to be welcoming and inclusive.

The extensive quotes included in this report are from surveys and focus groups with trans and non-binary people, and represent a hugely rich source of information. They give in-depth insight into the reality of being trans / non-binary in sport and physical activity. I particularly encourage you to delve into these, as this is the material which offers real understanding of people's lived experiences, and examples of inclusive practice.

A Big Thank You

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to the research and added their voice, without whom this report would not have been possible. We know it is not always easy to recount personal experiences, and we don't ask it of people lightly. Your time, your insights and your experiences are valued. They have already made a difference in the work we have done over the last five years, and by publishing this report, we anticipate they will have continued impact.

Dr Jay Stewart, CEO of Gendered Intelligence

Introduction

About Gendered Intelligence (GI)

Gendered Intelligence (GI) is a trans-led registered charity that works to increase understandings of gender and improve the lives of trans people.

We work with over a thousand trans, non-binary and gender questioning people each year through our Youth and Community Services. We deliver training and consultancy to organisations and professionals who are looking to improve their trans inclusive practices as part of our Professional and Educational Services. In addition, we engage with public policy and seek to influence legislation, the media, policy and research at a national level.

All our services are closely interlinked and our shared learning across the organisation provides a major benefit for all who come into contact with us. Our connections to trans and non-binary people, combined with our expertise around trans inclusion have facilitated this research.

About the 2019 Research

In 2019, Gendered Intelligence (GI) carried out research into trans and non-binary people's experiences in sport and physical activity (SPA). The purpose of this research was to gather anecdotal information and experiential quotes to inform and illustrate training sessions and written guidance on trans and non-binary inclusion in grassroots SPA.

We sought input from trans and non-binary people themselves about their own experiences and what they would like such training and guidance to address.

We also sought input from National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Active Partnerships (APs) and similar organisations regarding the subject matters, questions and issues they would like the training and guidance to cover, and about their experience around trans inclusion.

Everyone was asked about both positive and negative experiences that they had had in relation to trans and non-binary inclusion in SPA.

The research gathered a wealth of information which was used to inform and illustrate GI's SPA training sessions and has appeared in published guidance¹ as planned.

¹ See "Including Transgender People in Grassroots Sport" hosted on the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission website at:
<https://nihrc.org/our-work/other-sites/sport-human-rights>

The Public Report

The information we have included in this publicly available report is a subset of the original 2019 information.

It covers information from the following:

- Survey of trans and non-binary people (16+)
- Survey of NGBs, APs and selected other organisations
- Focus group of adult trans and non-binary people (18+)
- Focus group of young trans and non-binary people (<18)
- Focus group of NGBs, APs and selected other organisations

Although 5 years old, the central themes of the research remain pertinent:

- Trans and non-binary people often do not feel welcome in SPA, finding it inaccessible, and there is considerable negative impact on them when they are left out in the cold.
- Trans and non-binary people can be included in SPA when organisations, clubs and teams – and the individuals within them - make the effort to do so. There are often small and simple things that can be done to make people welcome and enable their participation.

Our Hopes

- If you are already trans and non-binary inclusive, we hope the information here will reinforce why it is so important to hold firm in that position.
- If you are unsure where you stand, we hope it will show you that inclusion is possible and valuable.
- If you are part of an environment with exclusionary practices, we hope it will encourage you to make a change.
- And to trans and non-binary people, we say: You have a place in sport and physical activity. We hope you have found / will find that place, and be welcomed, supported and happy there

**Gendered Intelligence,
October 2024**

NOTES:

1. The original research used the word 'trans' throughout. It was made clear at the time that this was intended to be inclusive of all those who described themselves as trans, non-binary, gender fluid, agender, and anyone with an experience of gender like or similar to this, as well as those who were gender questioning.
Language evolves, and we have since moved towards using 'trans and non-binary' in much of our writing. As the original intent was to be non-binary inclusive, and we received plenty of responses from non-binary people in 2019, we have used the term 'trans and non-binary' in the 2024 text. Where the text is the original from 2019 (such as survey questions or quotes), and uses only the term 'trans', we have not changed this.
2. The research was funded by Sport England and we remain grateful for the support given to us by Sport England at that time.
3. The research is not, and was not intended to be, statistically significant.

Summary

Two different surveys were issued, one for trans and non-binary people 16+ and one for NGBs / APs / other selected organisations.

We ran 3 focus groups – one for trans and non-binary people under 18; one for trans and non-binary adults, and one for NGBs / APs / similar organisations.

About the Surveys

The trans and non-binary people's survey was widely promoted, including to organisations and individuals connected with under-represented groups, including Black people / people of colour, and people of faith (over 40 organisations / 15 well-connected individuals). Despite this, the response demographic was overwhelmingly white and atheist/agnostic which is something observed in previous surveys in the field.

123 people responded to the survey for trans and non-binary people 16+, of which 116 were valid responses (others fell outside the demographic sought).

The organisational survey was sent directly to 115 specifically identified organisations, mainly NGBs and APs.

58 organisations responded to the survey for NGBs, APs and other selected organisations. 11 were NGBs, 27 were APs and 20 were other kinds of organisation.

The NGBs governed a range of different sports including individual and team sports and contact / non-contact sports. All said they considered their sport to be a 'gender affected' sport.

About the Focus Groups

As part of the surveys, respondents were asked if they would be willing to take part in further consultation. This gave us our primary contacts for invitation to the trans adult and NGB/AP+ focus groups.

Note: As people under 16 need parental consent to take part in online surveys we had more limited ways to reach out effectively to that group, and this contributed to low numbers in the under 18s focus group (only 2 people).

All three focus groups were for a maximum of 10 people each.

Whilst actual numbers were in some cases low, the material gathered was very useful. The offset of having just two young people in the U18s group was the depth of information we were able to gather.

Key Themes/Points: Survey for Trans and Non-binary People 16+

Positive experiences:

- Friends/community
- Body image
- Mental health/positive outlook
- Supportive institutions
- Identity/empowerment

It is notable that only one person identified any form of 'winning' or sporting success as a positive (they noted 'receiving a medal' in a team sport).

Negative experiences:

- Stopped participating since transition
- Transphobia/bullying
- Safety
- Lack of inclusivity (gendered spaces, rules on hormones etc)
- Confidence/dysphoria
- Gendered sports/clothing
- Fear of being outed
- Lad culture

What organisations could do:

- Policy for inclusion / intolerance of transphobia
- Promote diversity / celebrate trans and non-binary athletes
- Education on needs of trans and non-binary people
- More gender inclusivity for changing rooms, kit, and teams
- Events only for trans and non-binary people
- Make space where being trans / non-binary is not commented on
- LGBT Coaches
- Ask for pronouns / gender inclusive language

56% of respondents currently participate in sport and named a wide range of different sports and physical activities, including gym, running, swimming, cycling, rugby, walking/hiking, martial arts, yoga, gymnastics, sailing/rowing, football, skating and pilates. The vast majority participated at least once a week.

Of the 44% not participating, 88% said being trans / non-binary was a factor. All 88% indicated a possibility that, if organisations were more inclusive, they might consider participating.

Roughly equal numbers of people chose she/her, he/him and they/them pronouns, with a small number choosing a different option.

Fuller detail including demographic information and a wide selection of example quotes is in the Detailed Report section below.

Key Themes/Points: Survey for NGBs, APs and other selected organisations

In broad terms, all respondents wanted much more information on how to make their settings inclusive of trans people in practical ways, with clear guidance, provision of education, and support around culture change being high on the list.

50% of those responding had had no difficulties with trans inclusion at the point of reply, with the other 50% listing a range of challenges or questions.

Top amongst the latter was the gendered nature of sport, with media narratives, a lack of training, and changing rooms being the other key points.

22 out of 32 organisations said they had examples of good practice, or ways in which they had approached trans inclusion that other organisations could learn from.

Please note: We haven't included the detail of the NGB / AP survey responses. The original NGB / AP survey sought appropriate consents to share, and whilst few organisations said 'no', many did not answer, so we have chosen to keep those responses confidential.

Key Themes: Focus Group - Adult Trans and Non-binary People (18+)

Number attending: 6

Demographic comments: Good mix of ages & genders

Key themes:

- Many participants take part in team sports – can be great to have a team which ‘has your back’
- Clothing – accessing clothing, what to wear, how gendered sports clothing is
- Laddish culture in men’s teams
- Changing rooms
- Importance of first impressions of a place / team
- Importance of the little things people can look for e.g. statements of inclusion
- Wanting to be confident a place is inclusive before paying money e.g. membership fees
- Wheelchair rugby is a particular example that feels more inclusive – based on ability not gender
- Trans women are not feeling at advantage, trans men are feeling at a lot of disadvantage, both physical and cultural

Key Themes: Focus Group - Young Trans People (<18)

Number attending: 2, 1 x 8yo, 1 x17yo

Demographic comments: One uses he/him and one uses she/her pronouns

Key themes:

- Lot of enforced participation in team sport
- More focus on / better experiences in individual sport – swimming, cycling
- Assumption that people will know how to play e.g. netball – no one explains the rules / how to play
- Huge difference with interaction and experience depending on whether gender is acknowledged or denied

A notable distinction here between the adults and the young people is the value adult trans and non-binary people placed on being part of a team, whilst young trans and non-binary people have had negative experiences of being forced into team sport, and preferred individual sport as a result.

Overall, there are a number of comments that pick up on wider issues such as ‘lad culture’, ‘toxic masculinity’ and general inclusivity issues.

Key Themes: Focus Group - NGBs / APs / Selected Others

Number attending: 8

Demographic comments: Good mix of NGB / AP / others

Key themes:

- Recognising the culture change dimension, including developing sports in non-gendered directions; excitement about this alongside acknowledgement of the size of the ask
- Need for clear, consistent, central guidance and information
- Really important to have visible policy
- Little things like email signature pronouns – can get quick sign off
- Make sure things are not tokenistic
- Intersectionality needs to be considered
- Capturing / reporting on numbers of LGBT+ people depends on monitoring systems, which are often outdated and need to change
- Long term strategy required – independent 10-year plan rather than being tied to government 4-year plan
- Funding needed to back things up; this needs to be long term too
- Training and guidance should be carefully timed for greatest impact and not just a drip, drip effect
- NGBs have structure, others less so, so can find it harder to implement practices / change
- Thinking about equality standards should be established as a pre-requisite for affiliation / funding.

Detailed Report

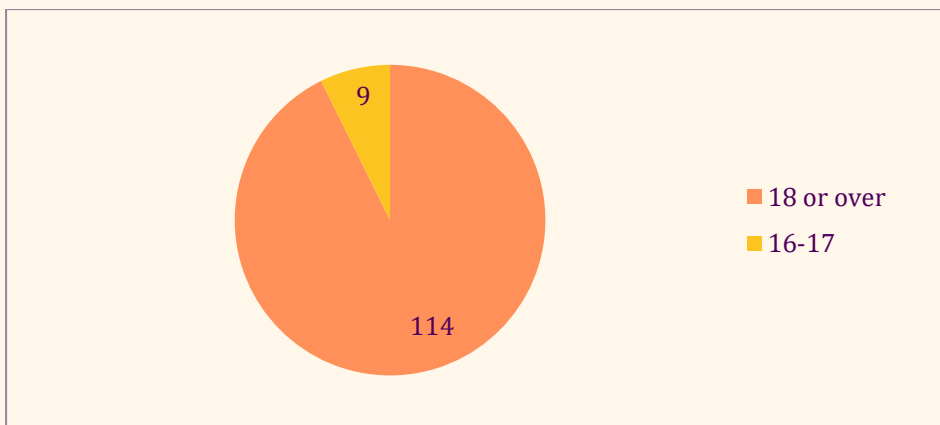
Surveys

Survey of Trans and Non-binary People (16+)

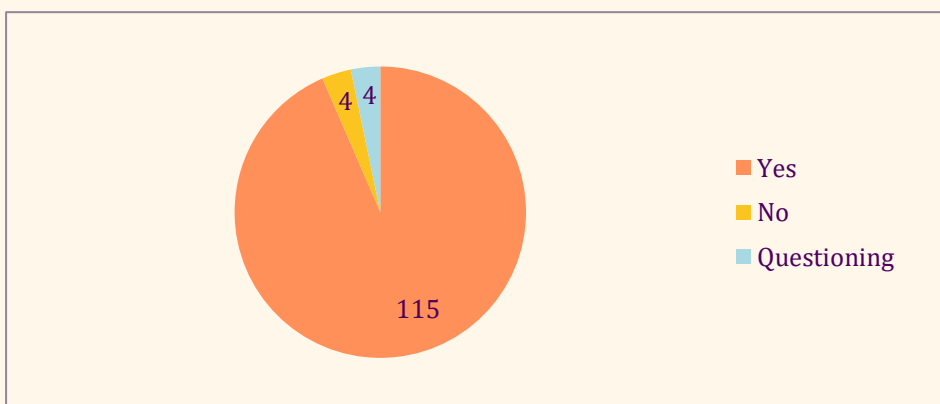
123 people responded to the survey for trans and non-binary people 16+, of which 116 were valid responses. (Target number: 75).

The other 7 were filtered out by the first 3 questions, which filtered people who were not trans, non-binary or gender questioning, not old enough to take part, or outside the UK

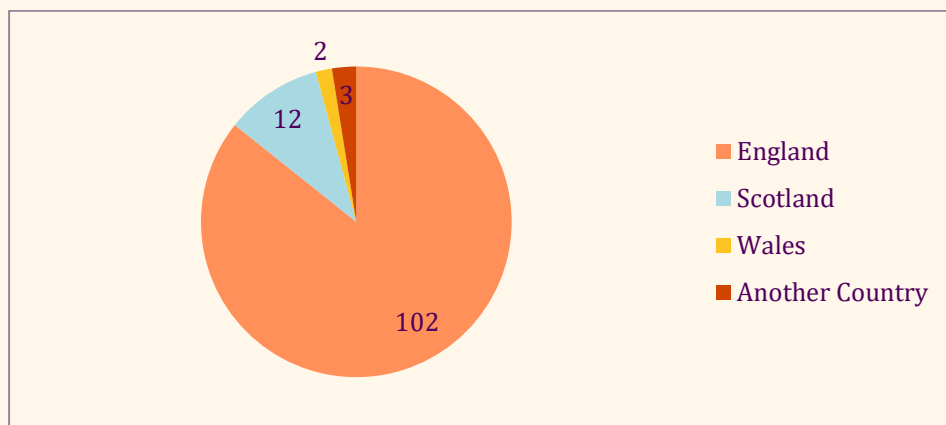
Age Group



Is your gender different from the gender you were assumed to have based on your sex assigned at birth or in early childhood?



Where do you live?

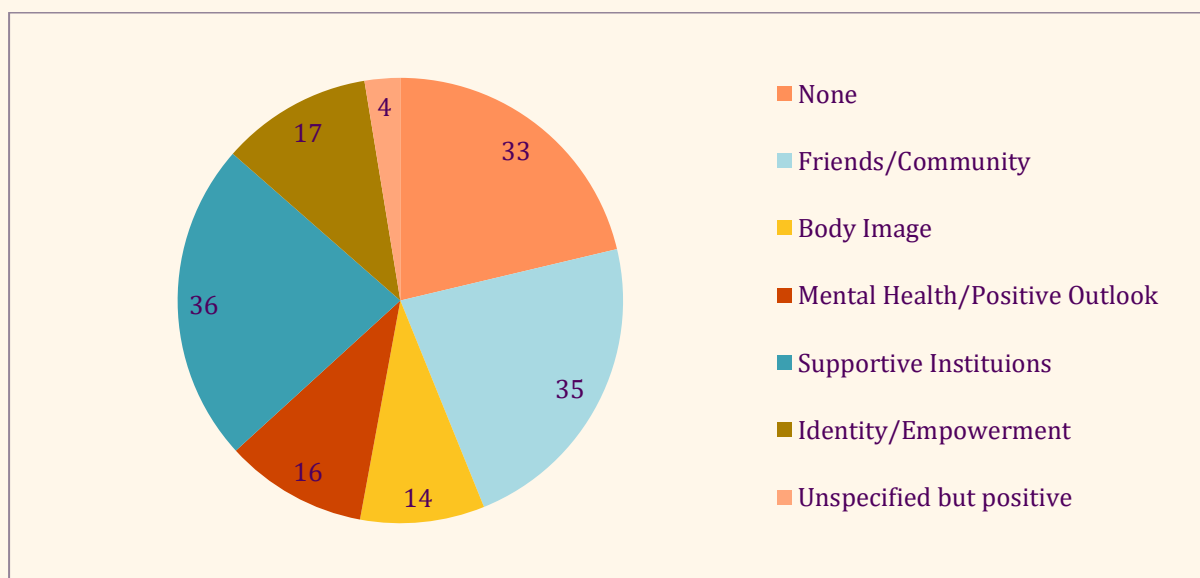


The following represent the core survey questions:

(Please note that answers for some will add up to >116 as some people gave multiple answers)

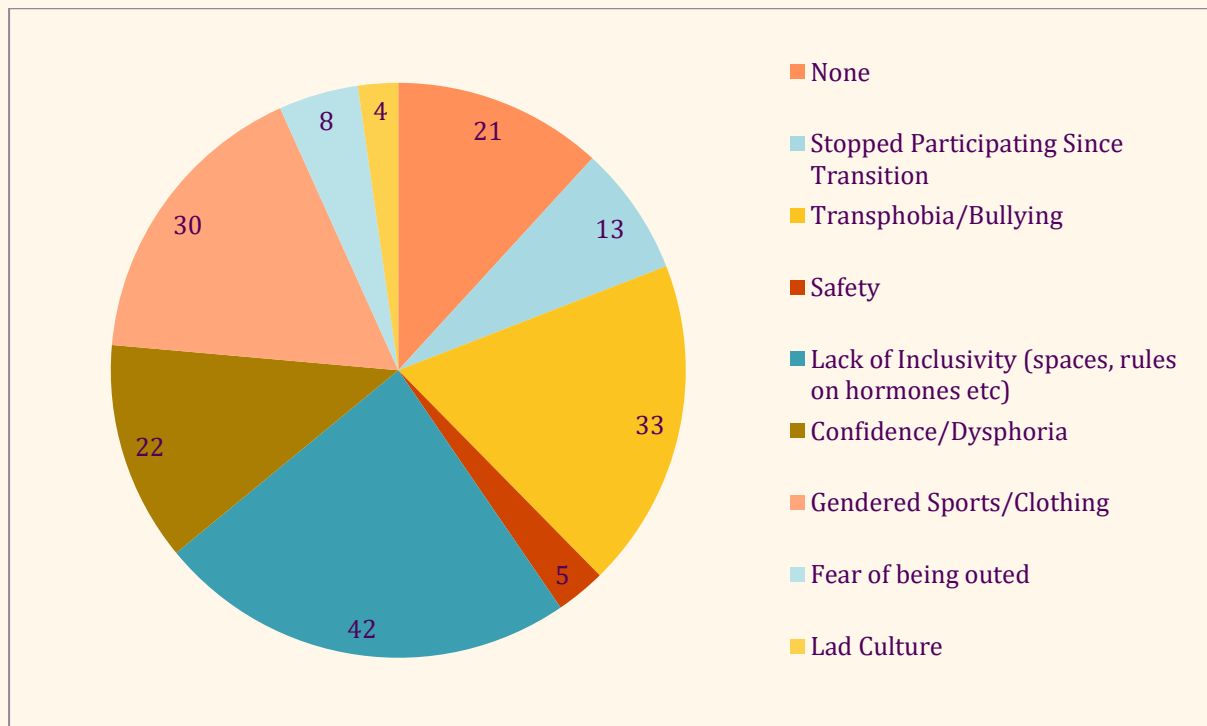
What positive experiences have you had regarding being trans and taking part in sport or physical activity?

(Total 155; 122 excluding 'none')

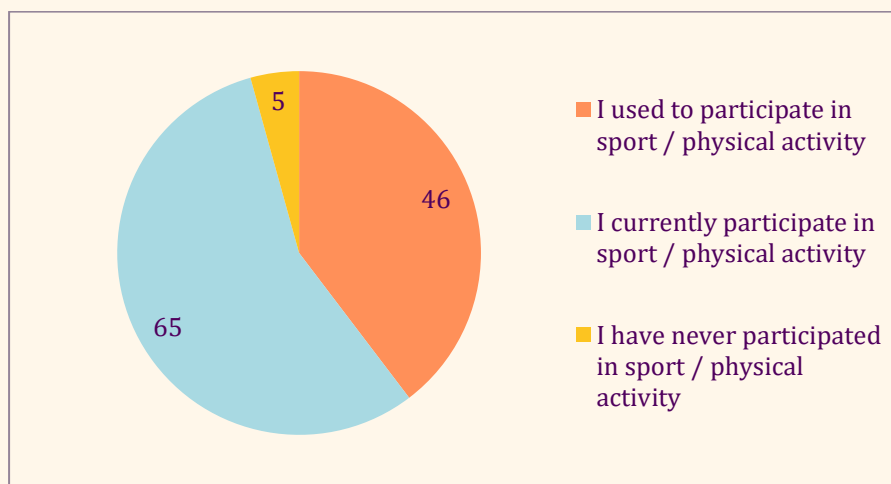


What negative experiences have you had regarding being trans and taking part in sport or physical activity?

(Total 178, 157 excluding 'none')

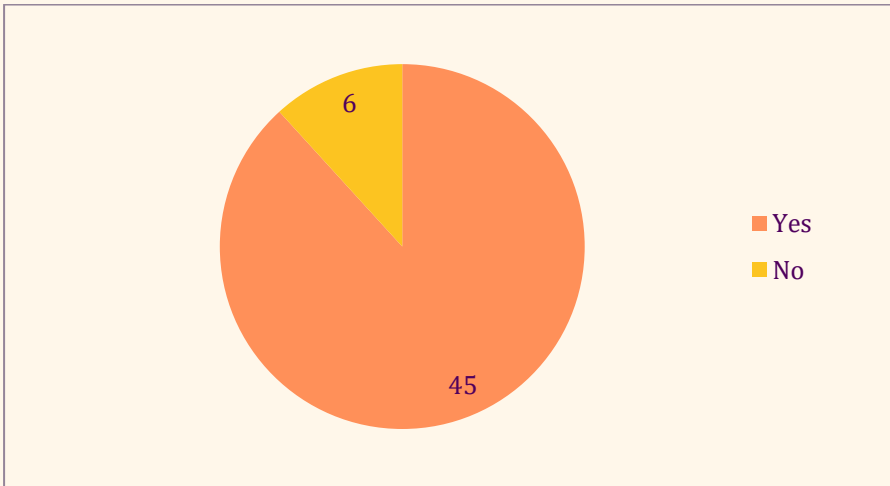


Which best describes your engagement with sport/physical activity:

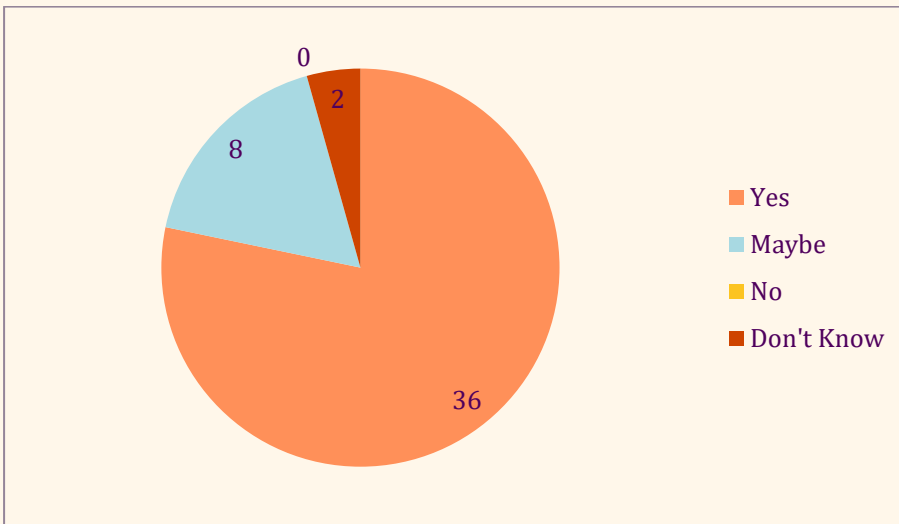


People who answered 'used to' or 'never':

Has being trans influenced your decision not to take part?

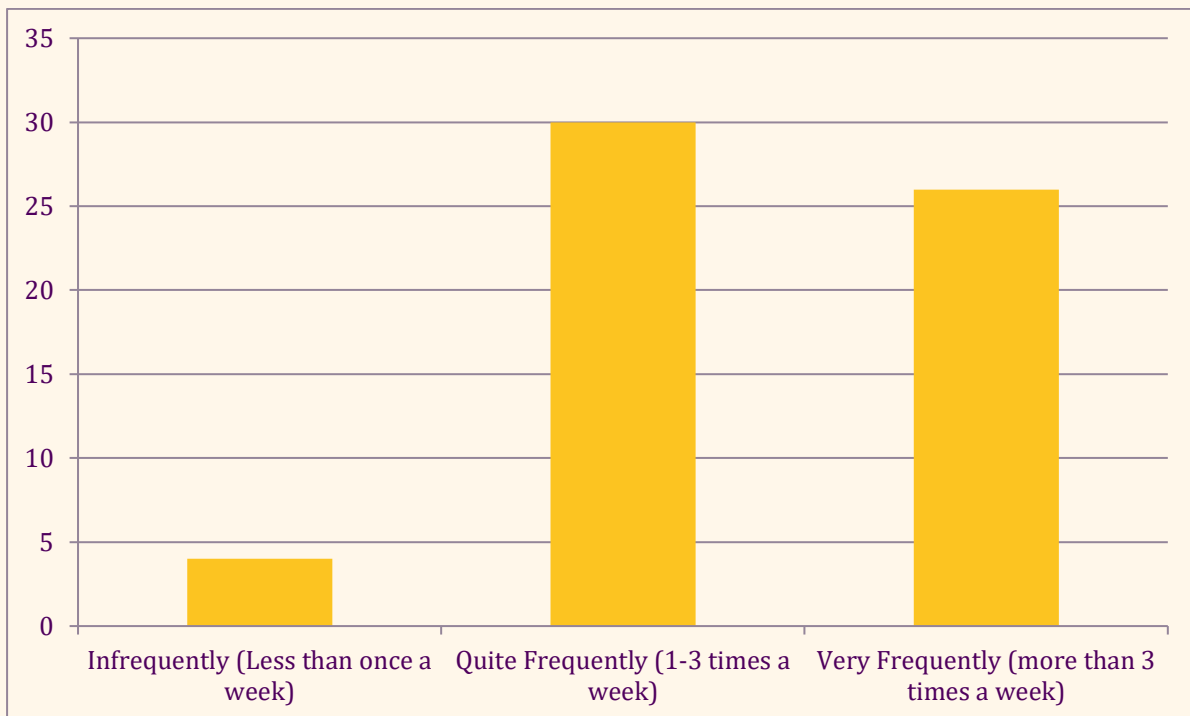
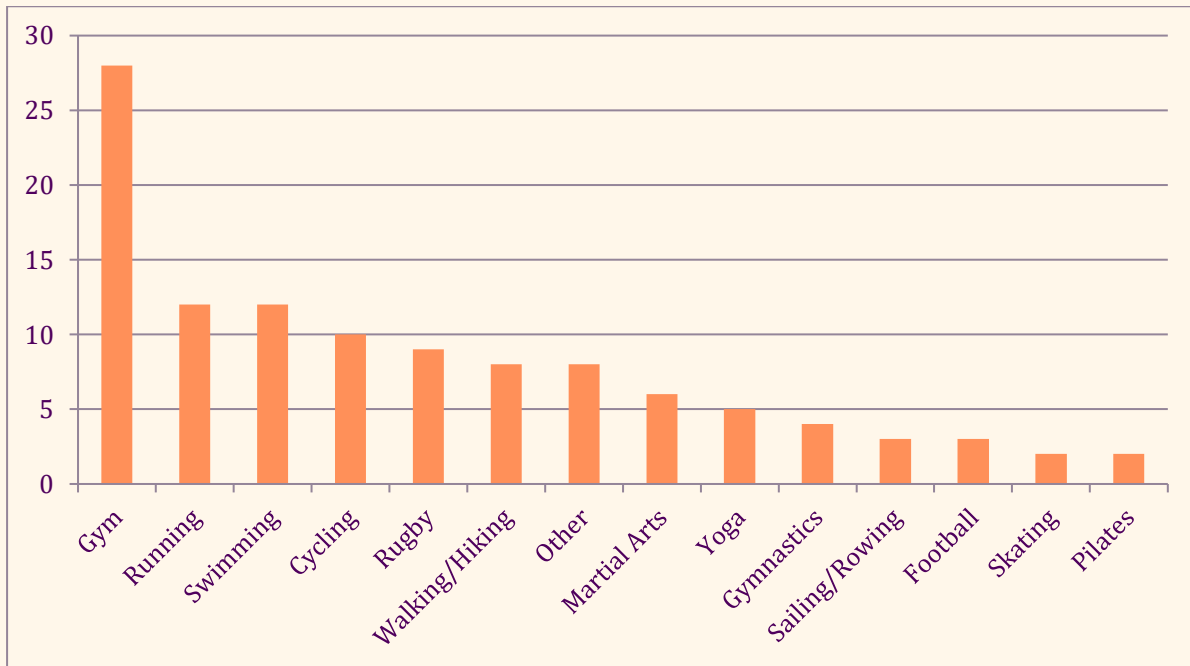


People who answered 'used to' or 'never': If providers were more inclusive, would you like to take part in future?



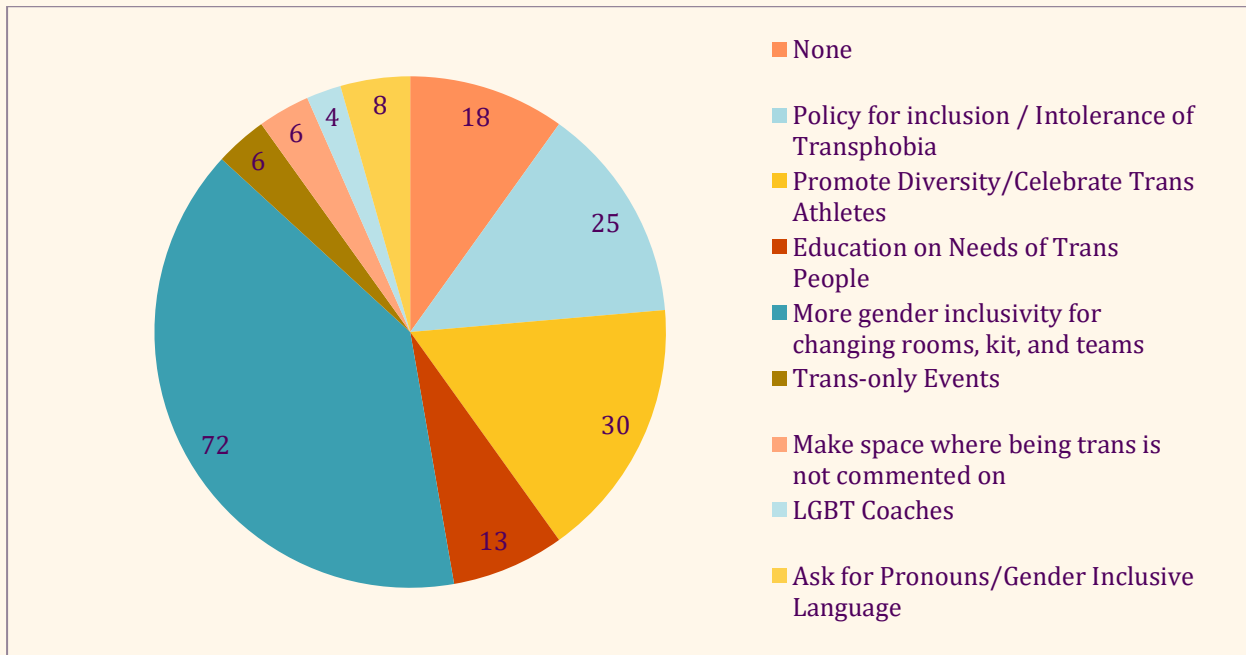
People who answered 'currently':

Please tell us briefly what sport / physical activity you do (e.g. I go to the gym 3x a week; I play badminton once a week)

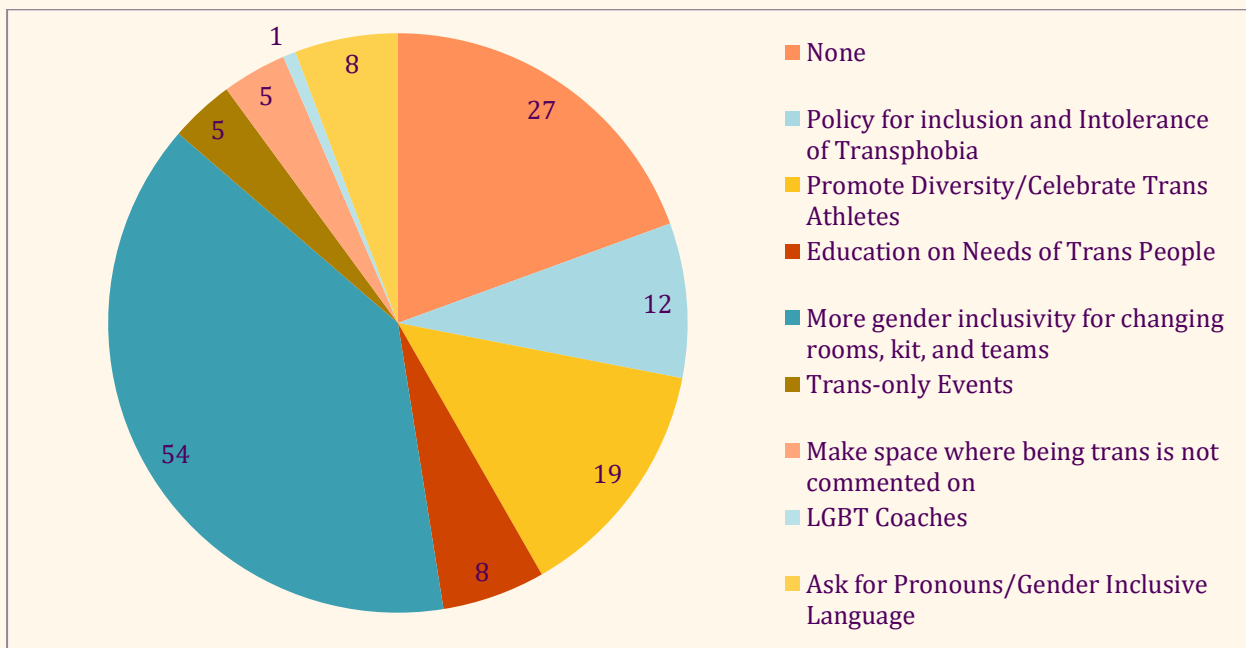


What would you like sport / physical activity providers to do, that would make you as a trans person feel welcome and able to take part?

(Total 179, 161 excluding 'none')

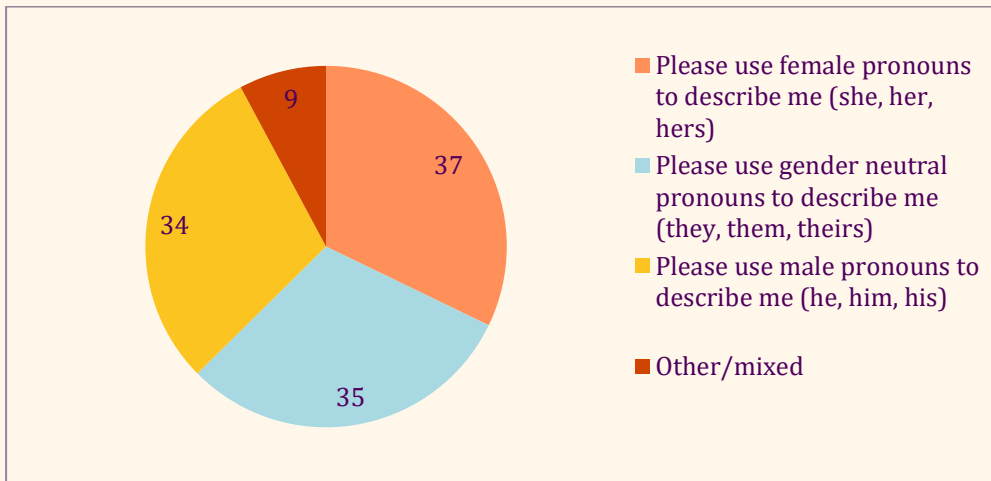


From the range of things you have mentioned in the previous question, which is/are the most important to you? (List a maximum of three)

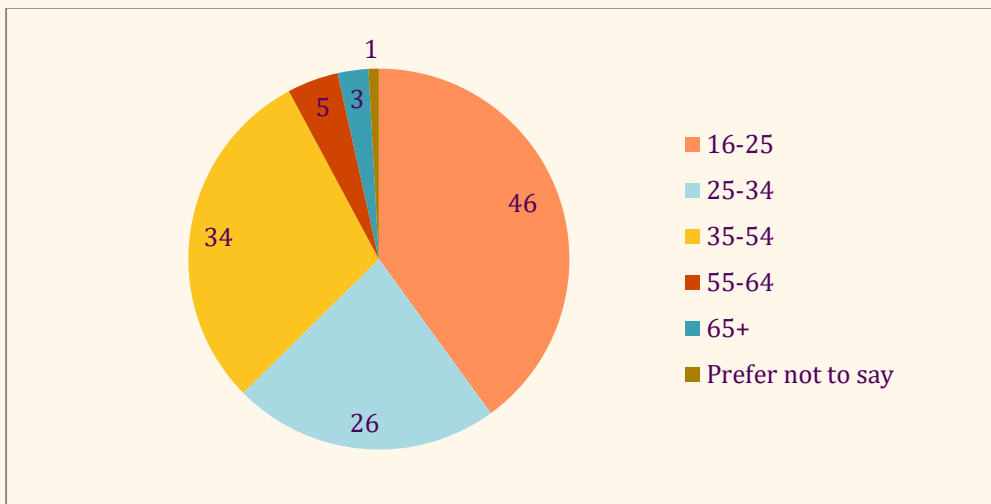


Demographic Information:

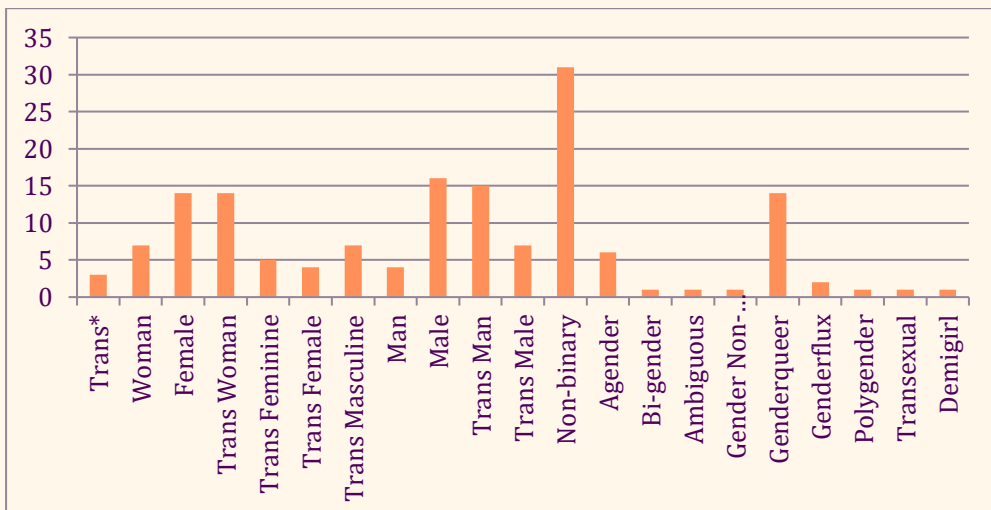
Choice of Pronouns:



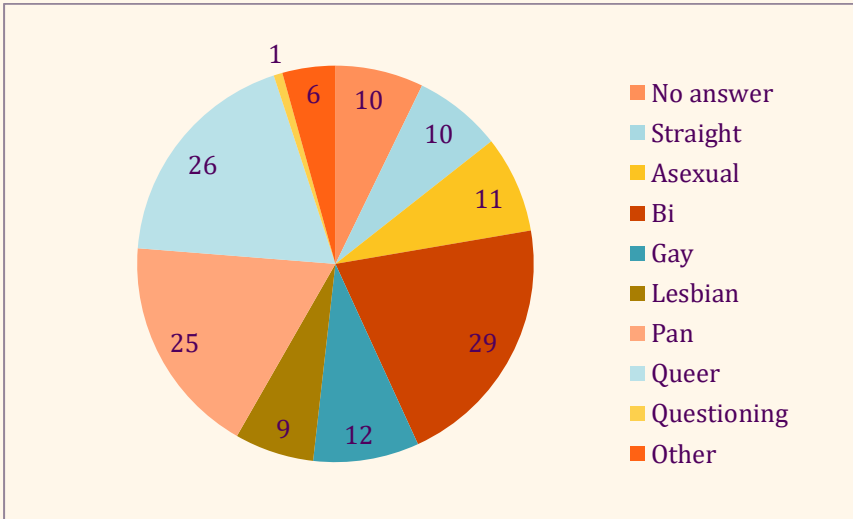
Age:



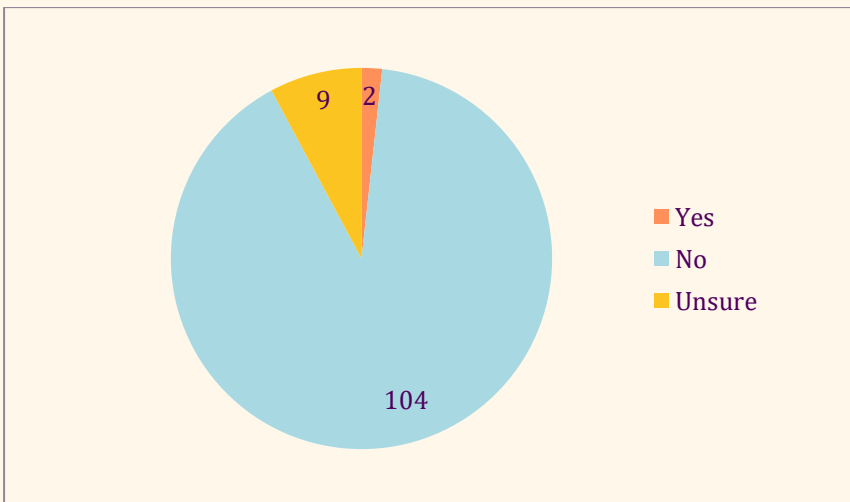
Gender Identity:



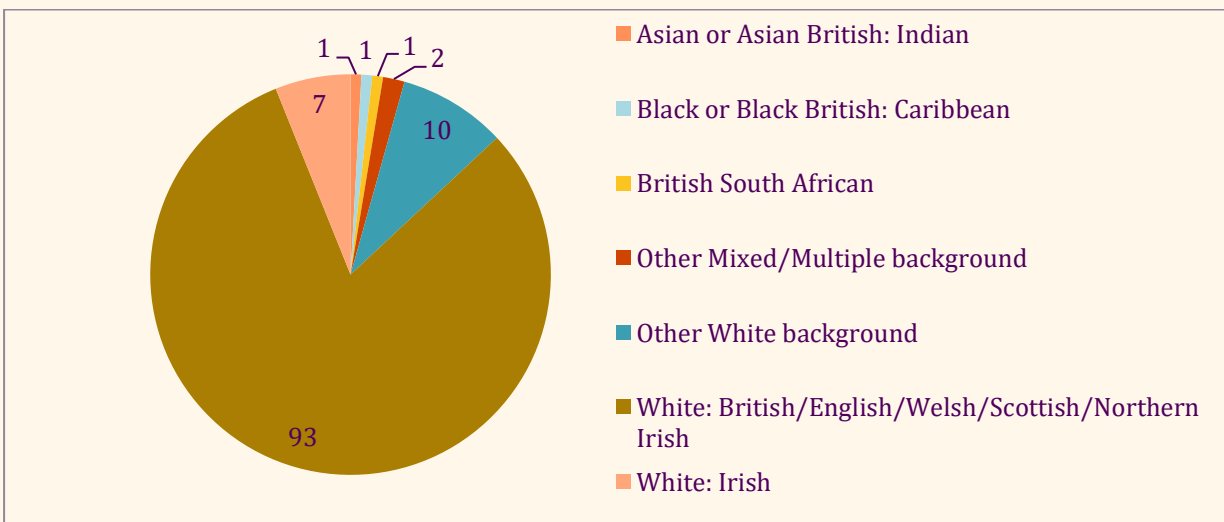
Sexual Orientation:



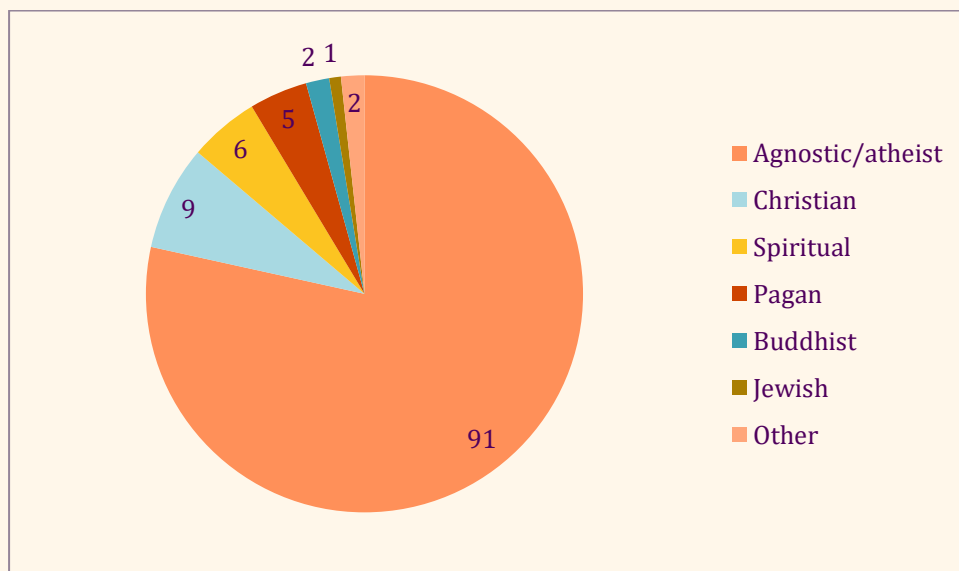
Are you a person of intersex experience?



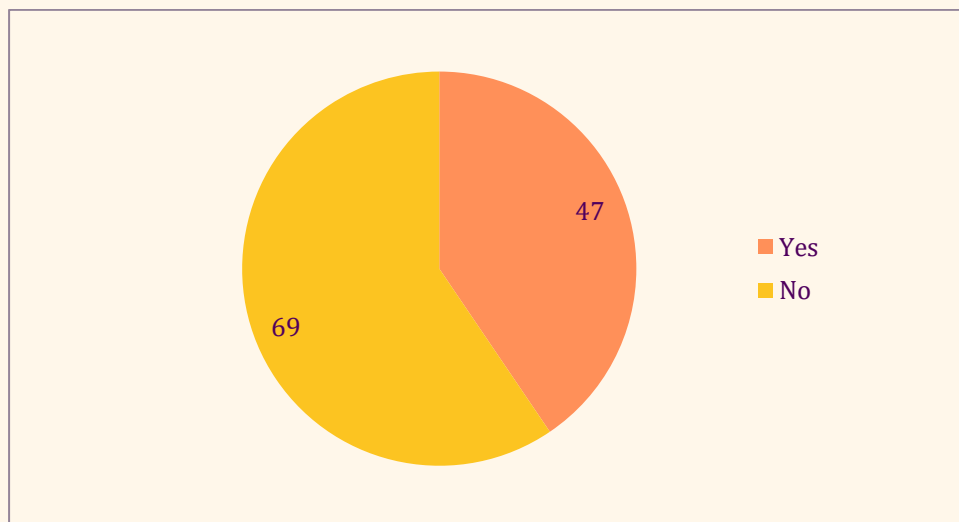
Ethnic group:



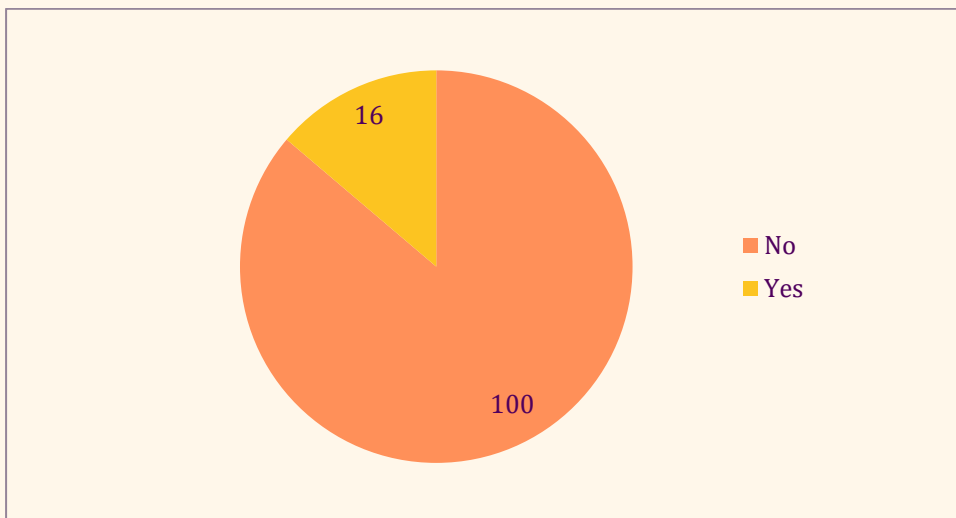
Do you have a religion?



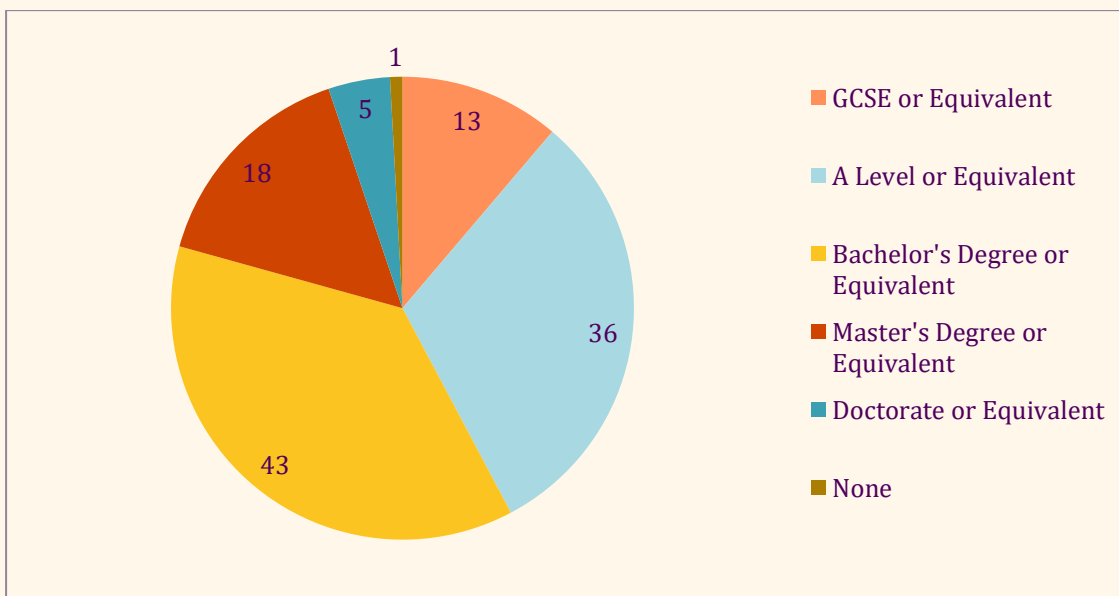
Do you have a disability?



Do you have any caring responsibilities?



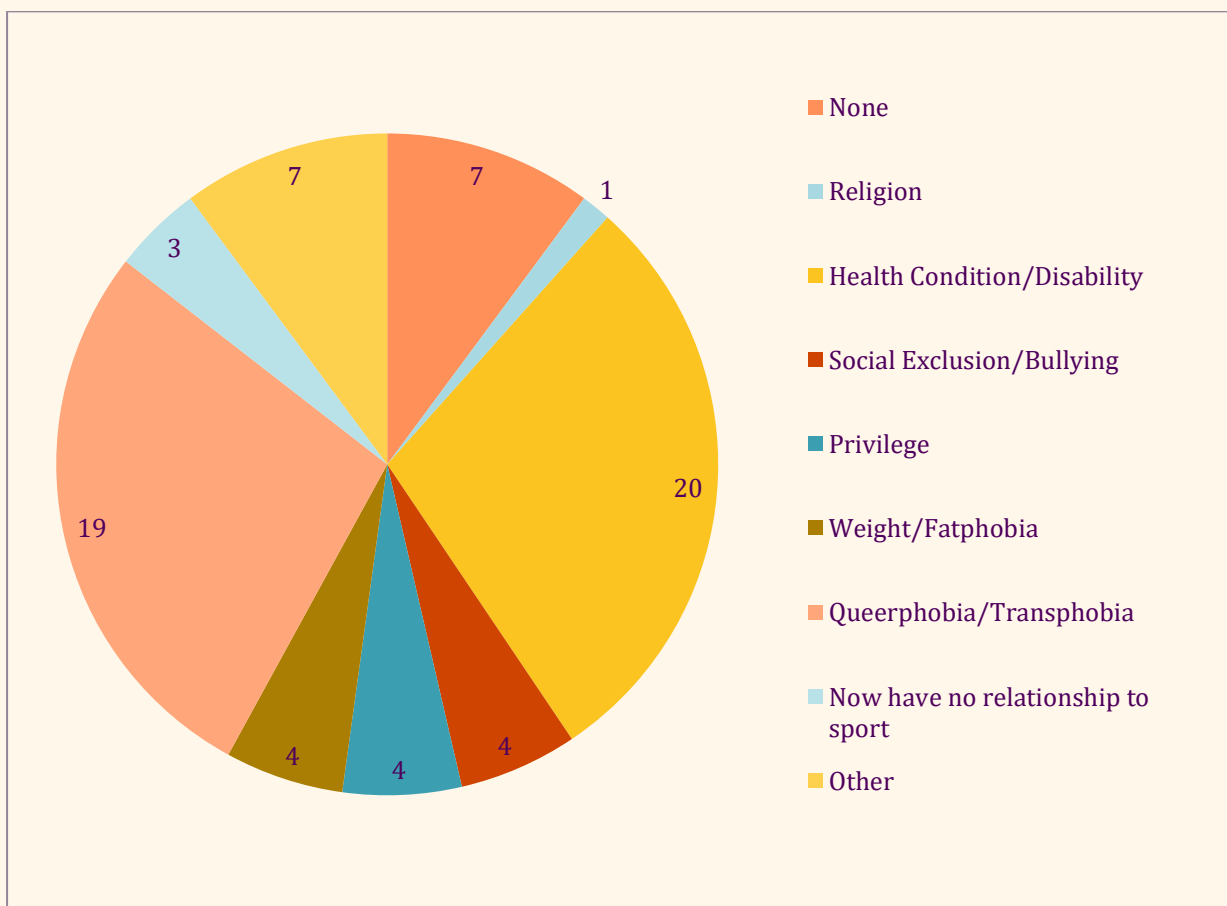
What is your highest level of education?



How would you describe your socioeconomic (class) status?



Thinking about different life experiences such as (but not limited to) the ones listed in "About You", have any of these other aspects of your identity and lived experiences also impacted on your relationship to sport?



Example Survey Quotes: Trans and Non-binary People (16+)

Note: Certain positive comments relate to experiences and opportunities which were possible at the time of the 2019 research, but that have since been eliminated via NGB policy decisions, for example being a trans woman playing women's rugby.

What positive experiences have you had regarding being trans and taking part in sport or physical activity?

Friends/Community

"I was part of a wheelchair basketball team at University which was incredibly welcoming. The organisation running the league allowed for nonbinary genders when applying to play, and my whole team were really lovely, making sure people from other teams didn't misgender me and using inclusive language."

"When I came out as trans masculine, I was skating with a women's roller derby team. They were very supportive, and helped me come out on my own terms, and determine for myself what was appropriate in terms of my roll with the team. I started skating with the local men's team the women's team was partnered with. They were immediately inclusive and welcoming, and respectful of the experience I'd gained with my former team. Later, after I was no longer able to skate with them regularly due to my job, the "men's" team wanted to take further steps to be inclusive of non-binary skaters, and became an all-gender team. I really respected the way they handled that both internally and when explaining the composition of the team to potential opponents. Cis skaters made it clear that trans inclusion and gender diversity were principles they shared and were unwilling to compromise on, and were educated enough to do the work."

"I've been supported by my teammates and accepted by my opponents in Table Tennis, including when I recently competed in a mixed doubles event, something I was hesitant about doing."

"Before moving to the UK, I played with my secondary school's boys ice hockey team. I LOVED being part of a team. Some of those boys are still close friends 15 years later. ... I just want that again."

"I currently do kickboxing at a club which explicitly welcomes trans and nonbinary people, and it is the first time I've felt comfortable in a group sport environment."

Body Image

"It's helped me to craft a body I feel more comfortable in."

"Exercise has helped boost my mood and building a bit of muscle has made me feel more comfortable in my body."

"I play in an LGBT+ water polo team. Everyone is very supportive and welcoming and I'm not afraid to be myself or to have my (top surgery) scars out. Being able to play again has reminded me what I love about my body and it doesn't matter what I look like."

"Sport and fitness really helped me - mental health, body image and self-esteem. It's been really important for me in terms of accepting and being proud of my body as it is, instead of seeing it as 'less than' or weird/different."

Mental Health / Positive Outlook

"I sail both dinghies on inland water and yachts, inshore and offshore. I haven't met any other trans sailors though I know they exist. My being trans hasn't really been an issue but my participation in the sport definitely helps with my positivity."

"Sport has been a consistent and important part of my life since I was a young child. Since I was not academic, sport enabled me to build self-esteem through my achievements on the sports field which compensated for the sense of failure I felt in other areas of school life.

Since I suffer from mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, in addition to ADHD, sport has helped manage these conditions, relieve stress and channel my frustrations into healthy activities.

From puberty onwards I have suffered with gender dysphoria relating to my body and sport had enabled me to focus on what my body can do, rather than what it looks like which has helped cope with dysphoria whilst waiting for hormones and surgery.

At both university, and afterwards when I moved to a new city, sports teams have been the easiest way for me to make friendship groups which I have otherwise struggled to do. This in turn has given me a support network and sense of community."

"Sport and exercise has helped me feel more comfortable with my body, given me a way of controlling my mental health, and helped me make lots of new friends."

“Sport is something I always enjoyed and while it’s difficult as my disability has progressed it’s been something very helpful in working through trauma in the past and it’s something I enjoy despite it being difficult, so it’s something I want to find a way to continue. It’s also something that would be helpful in my transition, as more muscle would help me be less dysphoric, I think.”

“I’ve met loads of friends through doing sports, it helps my mental health and helps me to manage my dysphoria.”

Supportive Institutions

“I came out in school (FTM), and my school provides a separate changing room for me to use, as I would’ve felt uncomfortable in the men’s due to the fact many of the people who would bully me about being trans were in there. Also, I stopped attending a dance club (that had both boys and girls) I went to before I came out. When we told them why they welcomed me to come back, and assured I would be able to join the boys’ group and everyone would use my correct name and pronouns.”

“Swimming with TAGS [*a trans-only swimming group*] early in my transition gave me a regular place to meet other trans people locally while doing an activity - this was an easy-going setting to meet people and felt like a place to exercise and socialise for trans people which can be more approachable than groups for trans adults that may meet in bars or support groups.”

“I started doing taekwondo early in transition and the instructor was really supportive. He listened to concerns about binding when exercising and took that into account. I was completely accepted as male in training and when being assessed.”

“The rowing club dinner was the first place I felt safe in black tie rather than a dress, the rowers have been really good accepting pronouns etc, especially if I’m the first trans person they’ve met, let me use Mx without a fuss.”

“I had great support from my personal trainer at the gym, who worked with me to develop a program that would help me build an appropriate new physique. Within my sport of Judo, my NGB were really supportive, despite very limited prior experience, and really willing to learn and work with me. At my club I had very positive reactions, in particular from the parents of the children I coach. Overall the club went out of its way to make sure the transition was straightforward for me.”

Identity / Empowerment

"Roller derby is very important to me as it is the one area of my life where I feel like I can be truly myself. As someone who identifies as non binary, roller derby is *mostly* a space where I can say my pronouns and no one questions it."

"Being able to take part in sport after transition has been a really good way for me personally to connect with my own masculinity, and to feel empowered. I prefer exercising alone, but I feel really strong and powerful when I swim or run or cycle and I love it."

"It restored a lot of my sense [of] self when I returned to my sport."

"British Mountain Bike Orienteering allowed me to compete as a woman after self-certification of my testosterone level. Some ladies were doubtful but soon realised my performance had declined. Am now semi-retired... Have had no issues regarding continuing ... riding with my cycling friends."

What negative experiences have you had regarding being trans and taking part in sport or physical activity?

Stopped Participating Since Transition

"I stopped engaging with sport after transition. I used to ride in semi-professional cycling. The team were often homophobic and transphobic and I did not feel comfortable being with them or participating any longer. Often people would use homophobic slurs to describe others."

"I played football for a team from the age of 8 to 16. I was 16 when I realised I was trans and felt that I could no longer take part in the sport. I never came out to my team. I felt that I wouldn't be able to compete with male teams and join a male football team as I was pre medical transition so I stopped taking part altogether."

"I have not taken part in sports in a club as of yet as I'm still searching... sports has always been a big part of my life, but as clubs don't openly say they are open to all, I have AVOIDED playing sports."

"I can't compete anymore and I can't partake in team activities. I don't even do sports lessons at school anymore. Not being able to compete has been a real loss."

"I have not done any team sports since coming out as trans. ... As a transmasculine person, being on a women's team would make me feel dysphoric, but I am uncomfortable with the toxic masculinity of the men's teams. When sports teams and competitions are divided by gender, I don't feel

that I have a place. Now I only exercise at the gym on my own, but I miss the social aspect of sport.”

“I have stopped taking part in any activity where I suspect I could be outed. This particularly refers to any activity where I feel I might have to use communal changing or shower facilities. The level of anxiety I feel about this is too great to take the risk.”

“Felt uncomfortable when questioning and early on in transition, so left hockey team.”

“I've mostly stopped doing sports since transitioning. I'm trans-femme and the inspection of bodies is daunting for me. I am usually tired from being watched walking around the streets that the setting sounds like a lot of anxiety to deal with.”

“I am not a frequent sport user since transition, but I need to state how media focus on demonising trans people has taken away one of my methods of socialising and enjoying time with my son. Now I take him to soft play and hide in the back so no one confronts me.”

“Growing up I took part in sports, but when I came out as trans, knowing how sports environment tend to be, I decided that it wasn't my space. Hearing about all the abuse that some of my friends had gone through within sports and the culture around really put me off for a very long time. If I hadn't been doing activism in sports and known that the women's rugby team was very good, I probably never would have joined. And even with the rugby team, it was not always easy, with people slipping on pronouns a lot at the beginning.”

Transphobia / Bullying / Safety

“I had to leave a team I had been playing with for about 5 years and this was due to the team coach and a few other cisgender straight members of the team actually attacking me both physically, verbally and online about my gender, sexuality and autism. This has made me feel unsafe in a sport which promotes inclusivity, as the captain and national governing body did nothing.”

“Feel very uncomfortable and anxious about joining new teams or clubs because they often misgender me in front of everyone and assume my gender before I can correct them. It makes me feel incredibly uncomfortable. Hearing transphobic language from teammates.”

“Transphobia amongst sportspeople - I don't trust them generally. It's not worth the effort or the risk just to experience hate.”

"I had a very upsetting experience when I attended a local fencing class for the first time. A doctor who I'd seen at my local surgery turned out to be one of the volunteer tutors. He'd previously made transphobic comments to me following my private top surgery procedure. Even though he knew full well that I'm a man, he still made a scene at the fencing class and insisted I wore the female chest guard (with moulded breasts) because 'it doesn't matter which one you wear' even though I'd had top surgery, which he also knew. It was a horrible experience, I was distraught, and I haven't attended any sports group or class since."

"I was harassed, bullied and eventually chased out of changing rooms when younger. I was told that no-one would want to see me swim and that I was not welcome to participate in swimming when my schoolfriends and friends did."

"During transition I've received negative comments. I've also witnessed organised bullying of other trans women and exclusion from friendly competition."

"My dysphoria regarding my chest started in my early adolescence but was made very painful during my teens when I had to change in communal areas for sports. I would go and hide in the toilets to change, and was often told off for doing so despite my obvious discomfort. There was a lot of gossiping and teasing in the changing rooms that was never really addressed by school staff. There were some sports I was interested in and never pursued because I had such a distrust of the sports teachers."

"My football coach told him to present him with official documentation of me changing my name when I asked to be called my preferred name. He would tease me about the fact that I presented masculine and for my name. The other people on my team were classic teenage girls and would misgender and misname me even after I explicitly came out to them. When playing sports at school teachers told me I had to wear a skirt because of the school dress code and when I said I wouldn't like to participate then I got a detention for refusal and because they were annoyed as I was one of the only sport-enthused people in their classes. One time during a match a girl fouled me and then called me a tranny when I was awarded a free kick."

"I tried a salsa dancing class, but the person running it was transphobic, humiliating me in front of the class, then in private saying I would not be allowed to dance 'as a woman' at his class until further into my transition, though I could have private lessons with him. I have not tried salsa dancing since, even other classes. However, a couple of people attending asked if I was alright afterwards."

"It takes enormous effort to engage with society when the climate in the media is so damaging. Sport is one of the main areas of attack on trans people just now."

"The atmosphere around trans inclusion means I don't wish to end up as a news story or being attacked. My fitness has decreased and my mental state."

Lack of Inclusivity

"Extremely uncomfortable in all sports lessons and activity in school- avoided gendered changing rooms and scrutiny of team sports - would feign illness or genuinely make myself sick with panic attacks to get out of it. As an adult I've never shaken these associations. I cannot participate in competitive sports due to this anxiety, the sense of scrutiny and inadequacy and the fact almost all sports are gendered spaces."

"There is often no option for non-binary people to take part in competitive / team sports."

"Gendered sports in school put me right off sports/activity for decades, but now I have been on my journey for a while I'd like to get fit / into sport, but I'm scared of changing rooms."

"People doing sport are so often split up by gender - into different teams, different categories in competitions, different changing rooms, different kit. As a non-binary person, it's really annoying having to constantly align myself with one of the binary genders (i.e. men or women) when I'm neither."

"Gyms, changing rooms at gyms are very segregated, being a non-passing trans woman, it makes it hard to go into a women's changing room without a problem, but at the same it is super uncomfortable in the male changing rooms."

"Was told I couldn't use either changing rooms."

"No separate showers, only communal, made me not want to participate."

"School changing rooms had bullying + exclusion, and many 'out' trans students simply did not get to do PE."

"Initial enquiries with the RFU were confusing and disappointing as it appeared as soon as I start hormones, I couldn't play for ladies' rugby but equally I had to apply to play men's which may not be signed off for safety reasons. So I was left not being to play at all."

"Before starting testosterone, one of the main reasons I was hesitant is because I knew it would mean giving up water polo for a prolonged period of time. It was horrible, and definitely fed into the depressive episode that followed."

“While I was medically transitioning, I couldn’t play sport. It was, and now once again is a huge part of my life, and fulfils my social and exercise requirements. While I was unable to take part, it meant that my depression worsened, leading to a downward spiral.”

“I just felt more free to be me on the track. Like all the judgement didn’t matter when I was running, there’s just the runner and the experience and the process. I felt more who I was when I ran. There we were all in shorts, & vests and gender shouldn’t have made any difference. I just felt free-er when I ran. I loved that place of focus and the space it provided in my mind. When [I was] younger, people saw ... a ‘tomboy’ and accepted me. That changed over time. ... I’m trans and suddenly that wasn’t allowed or accepted. That never made any sense to me. ... ‘Tomboy’ was safe, after that it was all free fall. And everything, life, running, has to be approached from a place of over-thinking, anxiety, worry and negative expectation, because mostly people hate, or joke about, trans people. Experience teaches you to not be as hopeful and that’s sad for everyone. Hate and anger directed at me just closes me down & I don’t understand it. Every trans person only wants to be who they are, and to live.”

Confidence/Dysphoria

“I am limited in what exercise I can do because of health conditions; swimming would be the best for me, but swimwear is so gendered and wearing a women's swimsuit gives me such dysphoria that I rarely go. I've tried to get swimwear that covers a bit more but that kind of stuff doesn't really come in plus size.”

“Sport in public has always been really difficult, since I’m always very aware of my body and very dysphoric when active. I had a non-binary teaching assistant in high school once and the entire class did nothing but mock them the entire lesson and the teacher did nothing to support them or educate the other students, and I felt very isolated and unable to speak up against the rest of my classmates.

In class I would always exercise alone in the gym due to dysphoria while other students exercised in the main hall, but that led to a lot of bullying. Public sporting events were always very distressing for me. I do love sport but for most of my life I hated it because of a lot of negative experiences like that, and never felt able to continue with martial arts which I enjoyed as a child.”

“I quit ballet when I hit puberty because I hated seeing my body in the mirrors. With other sports, I didn't really know how it would go, what people would think, if I'd be accepted and be a part of the team or not. PE lessons at school still had me as part of the girls’ group and I was worried that if I did

other sports they would as well. Alternatively, I was worried that being around the boys in a sports environment, that people would be able to notice that I didn't have a flat chest like them; and that it might then lead to discrimination, especially from the other boys' parents."

"I'd just really like a place where I can go swimming and not feel conscious that there's people looking at the bulge under my bikini. I know it's a cliché, but I'd love to be able to go swimming again."

"Transphobic British media has forced me back inside as I am now scared of being assaulted. I haven't swum with my son for over a year."

"It takes a lot of bravery to try and take part. I pretended to twist my ankle at my son's sports day so I wouldn't have to take part in the Mum's race."

"I've never felt able to take part in most gendered sports, or any sports where I'd have to use a gendered changing room. I'm too afraid of being harassed and discriminated against. I've never been to a gym. I'd love to go swimming, but I don't feel confident enough to go to my leisure centre."

"I'd been too scared to participate in sports with teams which were not explicitly trans inclusive. There are many sports I'd like to try, but putting myself out there as both a trans person and a newcomer to the sport is too much."

Gendered Sports/Clothing

"I went to an all-girls secondary school where we only played stereotypically "girls" sports (netball and hockey) and, worse still, the PE kit required a skirt to be worn. Once I got to year 9, my gender dysphoria was so bad that I would hide in a toilet cubicle rather than join PE. Eventually the teachers relented and let me wear shorts, but they first brought my parents into school. I also really wanted to play football, but it wasn't an option at school."

"I currently play hockey for a women's hockey team, despite the fact that I am non-binary. I have now started taking testosterone and I am painfully aware that my days on this team are numbered because there will come a point when I am perceived as 'too male looking' to play, despite me not actually identifying as male. The idea of leaving a team that has been my family for the last 5 years breaks my heart, but I feel I have no choice as sport is so heavily based on sex and gender. I am not willing to play for a men's team as I find it intimidating and don't identify as a man so therefore I feel my hockey playing days are over."

"Non-binary people are essentially outside all of the categories when it comes to many sports. I have recently taken up paddleboarding as another sport, but I miss the sense of community I had from team sports and it feels somewhat

lonely in comparison. In addition to this, I find professional sport increasingly depressing seeing stories about people such as Caster Semenya being discriminated against and forced to take hormones to fit into a certain type of body composition. Sport feels like an area where trans people are always going to struggle to find their place."

"Having to wear a games skirt at school. While this was years ago, I remember it like it was yesterday. In my adult life - swimming costumes - I am always uncomfortable in swimming costumes."

Fear of Being Outed

"I currently swim and although the experience itself isn't negative as no-one realises that I'm trans, I am often nervous in the changing rooms, as there are no cubicles available and the showers are open plan. ...20 years after starting transition, most spaces are fine, but this is always a point where I feel exposed and vulnerable and I just have no idea how people might react if they see a guy who they realise is trans, or who doesn't have a penis.

This also happened in another private gym ...and I was told that it was tough, I just had to deal with it. They refused to listen to my concerns, even though I kept escalating it and when I sent in a formal complaint, I never had a reply."

"Not feeling like I will be accepted. Fear of competing because of how I might be treated. Luckily, I've had no issues, but the fear is there and it ruins my experience leading up to competition. Also fear of using bathrooms / changing rooms on the day. Fear of how people will perceive my level of strength / ability."

Lad Culture

"I tried to join the men's hockey club at university but it made me feel very inadequate as a man. Male uni sports culture is very drink and lad culture heavy, don't mind having a pint, but I don't like being told to drink because someone says so and to do so until I'm sick or blackout for others' amusement. This may not be permitted by the uni, but it's very ingrained in the culture. There not being gender neutral changing areas at the pool. I pass when dressed but I'm pre-op so when I go swimming, I prefer to just wear a swim suit, if there is no gender neutral changing room, I can't use the pool because as a man I cannot go into the women's changing room, but a person in the men's cannot walk out in a swimsuit."

What would you like sport / physical activity providers to do, that would make you as a trans person feel welcome and able to take part?

Common themes arising are listed below.

Unlike the previous section, the quotes aren't subdivided by theme, as most reflect several of these themes.

- Policy for trans and non-binary inclusion
- More inclusivity re changing rooms, kit, and teams
- Ask for pronouns / use gender inclusive language
- Education on needs of trans and non-binary people
- Visible inclusivity
- Don't tolerate transphobia
- Make space where being trans / non-binary is not commented on
- Promote diversity / celebrate trans athletes
- Have trans-only events / LGBT coaches
- Establish trans inclusion as part of wider inclusion for all

It's notable that the comments refer to inclusion in diverse ways; inclusion in (existing) gendered teams; providing more non-gendered options, and providing LGBTQ+ / trans-only options.

These are just a fraction of the comments we received:

"Ensuring there is a clear policy on letting trans people use the changing rooms they want to, but also providing gender neutral changing rooms for people who feel uncomfortable using either gendered changing rooms. Also, policies on letting trans people participate in activities/groups targeted towards the gender they identify as should be in place. There should be a way to anonymously report transphobia and harassment, and consequences for those who do it."

"Give assurances on your website that I would be able to change/shower in private. Ensure that staff are trained to be supportive without them making a fuss. Ensure that the space/group is explicitly an inclusive one (both in policy terms and in practice). Be proactive in dealing with any person making others feel unwelcome for any reason (whether they are a user or staff member). If people are made to feel uncomfortable for any reason (even as part of banter) I will not be confident that I would be supported if I were outed."

"Have an official policy of inclusion that allows trans people to participate, and use facilities including changing [spaces] ... Remove the need for hormone monitoring at grass roots level."

“Be more open. Use social media to break down barriers. Governing bodies to look at legislation and policies and offer support”

“Be openly trans inclusive, non-gendered teams, zero tolerance on lad culture and other toxic behaviours, more visible trans people in sports.”

“Reassuring protections, safe and inclusive changing spaces, more resilience to public pressure groups.”

“Gender neutral and/or trans-positive facilities. Being visibly vocal about trans inclusion. Removing other prejudices in sport (e.g. racism, homophobia, sexism).”

“I think if trans people could openly participate in professional sport, if education in schooling was greatly improved, if journalists weren’t openly transphobic and perpetuating transphobic misinformation about athletes, if sport/physical activity providers were openly supportive of trans people, even if there were just places that were specifically inclusive until the structural problems improved would be helpful.”

“I think the biggest thing is to be visibly supportive. I have no idea if anything happened, whether staff at the centre have any awareness or would be understanding, stand up for me and support me. It would also be nice to be taken seriously as recognising that this is something that can be a barrier to trans people accessing sports and to the levels of stress, anxiety etc it can cause.”

“Just advertising somewhere that you’re trans/non-binary friendly, or saying that you do pronoun introductions along with names at the start of group activities, would make me feel more at ease.”

“Educate people to at the very least use the pronouns and titles that customers ask for. Gender neutral changing rooms with individual, private changing cubicles and showers would be really welcome. To be honest, private cubicles and showers in male and female changing rooms would also be nice - not everyone feels comfortable being naked in communal areas, not even cis people.”

“Have more mixed gender activities. And have gender neutral facilities that are properly private (eg cubicles). Proactively communicate your commitment to welcoming all people and ensure that staff are properly trained. Have trans specific sessions or classes (eg swimming)”

“Explicitly say trans folk are welcome/have images of people who are clearly trans participating”

“Provide unisex changing options. Perhaps feature a trans person on website or some marker of LGBT inclusion - this could be discreet. If there are single sex classes, show that trans people are welcome in the description.”

“Gender neutral changing stalls for those of us who aren't male or female, or at very least making both male and female changing rooms inclusive for those who don't have cis-normative bodies; perhaps one person who you can go to if you need help with cis people harassing you, an inclusive code of conduct”

“Have an awareness of trans issues, have gender-neutral toilets/ shower/ changing facilities and specifically state on their website that they are trans friendly.”

“Provide private cubicles for changing.”

“Mixed changing rooms (changing villages).”

“Personal cubicles for changing, rather than just a changing room.”

“Explicitly welcome me! Run gym sessions for wider LGBTQ+ groups, and be clear all trans people are welcome.”

“Think about language, both in advertising and in sessions. Have Trans Awareness training. Think outside the binary. Have a buddy system to help tentative new participants to attend their first session. More trans and non-binary folks leading sessions. Be more inclusive - think about older folks, POC, differently-abled people, make effort to engage trans-feminine folks.”

“Using less gendered language for example referring to everyone as girls. Sporting bodies have clear guidance for clubs so they feel supported.”

“Be more flexible with clothing requirements e.g. have a list of acceptable clothing and leave it up to participants to choose which items they wear - rather than saying 'this is what men need to wear and this is what women should wear'.”

“Have on their websites and social media that trans and non-binary people are welcome. If they explicitly said that, and could be proven to uphold it, I'd feel more welcome.”

“Visibility of women and trans athletes as role models.

“On a practical level it is always good to have things like individual shower cubicles and changing rooms. This is one of those things that I'm sure most people would prefer anyway.”

“Provide activities that are mixed gender.”

“I would like them to include more mixed gender teams in sports; if changing rooms are needed, try to include gender neutral changing rooms or encourage the use of cubicles and allowing people to go into the changing rooms without being policed. Having LGBT training for coaches would also be great, and allowing people to self-identify for the gender specific teams.”

"Open teams up to people of any gender. This would make it so that non binary people feel more able to take part and not feel like they can't because they don't identify as male or female. And people wouldn't feel like they had to put themselves as trans."

"Non-gendered/mixed teams, trans-only groups, specific inclusivity, gender neutral changing rooms"

"Less emphasis on single sex sports clubs and teams and make effort to refer to people as the gender they are."

"More all gendered sports"

"More queer/trans only events"

"Just let me get on with it. Be inclusive and ignore my being trans."

"Accept who people say they are."

"Treat me like they'd treat others and not underestimate my ability to complete tasks."

"Just be friendly and constructive with any problems encountered."

"Just see me as no different from any other woman."

"Accept me as a boy. Stand up for me against people who don't from other teams or parents etc. Not treat me any differently to the other boys on the team."

Is there anything else you would like to tell us / any other comments you would like to make?

"Lots of trans folks are happy! Lots of us participate in sport regularly and want to encourage others to join. Lots of the reasons which keep trans folks out of sport are similar to the reasons that cis people don't participate. It's a human issue, not just a trans one."

"The whole thing of 'but self ID would allow men to say they're women and invade female spaces!' which is so often being used to 'excuse' transphobia - make sure that any inappropriate behaviour from anyone in any changing room is dealt with seriously. I kind of wish now that I'd complained about the women who harassed me in the changing rooms when I used to go to a gym."

Thinking about different life experiences such as (but not limited to) the ones listed in "About You", have any of these other aspects of your identity and lived experiences also impacted on your relationship to sport?

"I can see that being white and able-bodied have made things easier for me to participate in a way that others may not have that privilege."

"Because I'm reasonably comfortably off, it means that I was able to play a more costly sport such as roller derby. Because I'm a man, very few would question my rights to participate on a men's team - this would perhaps be different for trans women."

"Fatphobia and homophobia have negatively affected my experience, as well as the fact that my doctors have tried to prescribed me medications to try to regulate my atypically high natural testosterone levels although it isn't affecting my health in any way and the implications that this might have for me in sports (especially in relation to all the discourses in place regarding hormone regulations for people assigned female at birth in sports)"

"I now have zero relationship to sport when I desperately want one and I want my life back to normal - sports was a part of my life since [I was] a little child."

Focus Groups

Example Focus Group Quotes: Adult trans and non-binary people (18+)

"I always loved sport, but puberty triggered stress in sport environments.

I haven't had surgery, so if changing rooms are binary then this makes swimming impossible without outing myself to the receptionist, which I would rather not do. I have used sport to cope with dysphoria. ... Men's hockey teams are very alpha male environment, with a big drinking culture. I left for this reason but really miss it."

"From the age of 2, I did ballet. But the classes were badly organised, so I left. Ballet is also very cis-feminine, and very related to weight-loss. Where are sports for fat people? Also, the lack of gender-neutral changing rooms made it hard to change. There were also some gender-neutral dance classes but those have been closed. Before top surgery, I avoided movements which would create jigging."

"I played lots of different sports, individual sports, but the near-constant bullying stopped me from continuing. When I came out, I found it difficult to fit within different sports. At Uni I had already given up on sports. But I attended feminist self-defence classes, which were awesome. I later became the LGBT officer for uni, and started becoming interested in trans inclusion in sports. I was impressed by women's rugby, and how inclusive they were. They were even some non-binary people on the team. I am now the president. Playing rugby has become a big part of who I am. I think it's really important to be able to play rugby on campus. Being part of a team sport can be really competitive, which I hate. But it's impressive to think I might be the first person to be an out president of the rugby team."

"When I was young, being trans wasn't really a thing. I was picked by the girls' team at 5 or 6, but my father was not supportive, there was violence and sexual abuse. So the affirmation from netball didn't last. Later, I went to an all-boys school, and was made to play rugby, which I hated. However, I had a rich friend who took me horse-riding. This was very affirming because it was not gendered. My later teenage years intensified the gender dysphoria. I then went through electro-shock therapy. At some point, I got a new partner. They are disabled. Through my partner, I got into wheelchair rugby, and ended up captaining the team. I eventually had to leave because of some transphobia. But now, if there are issues with transphobia, I am consulted as a player of wheelchair rugby. I now feel very affirmed, going from needing to appear very feminine, to accepting that I am a 'low maintenance' woman."

"I think transmasculine people and non-binary people really struggle to find a good place to be. Especially in sports like rugby, and especially trans masculine people who have fully transitioned. I feel very lucky that I am non-binary but feel comfortable in a women's team."

"I think in terms of joining a culture too, you can't tell what the culture will be from the outside. There are some groups that look like they might be OK, but nothing says they are explicitly trans-inclusive. I'm often too nervous to join some groups, since a lot of LGBT sports are predominantly gay cis male."

"Some LGBT sports places don't actually have trans provisions, like changing rooms. I looked at some LGBT groups, but when I enquired, they said they didn't have any trans members or provisions."

"Some places want to be able to do stuff, but not sure how to do them. There are some groups who want to be accepting but don't know what to do, they feel like they don't have the ability to make their spaces inclusive. So it often falls on trans people to do work to change these places."

"When I decided to play rugby union, I had to produce blood tests, certificates, etc. In some spaces, I still do that. It is really invasive. It makes you feel very vulnerable. My testosterone levels don't make any difference. I'm quite a big person but I still get my arse smashed around the place, literally. A lot of people still don't understand the difficulties trans people face in sport. Then you have people like Sharron Davies on the TV... It can make us feel very vulnerable when TERFs get involved. I feel tired trying to explain this to people."

"I think toxic masculinity plays a big role too. There's a whole attitude of 'I'm the biggest, my dick is bigger than yours'. I'm not a big alpha male guy, I'm quite a sensitive, gentle person. But sport 'hypes up' the idea of what a man should be. And it really is not what a man should be."

"There was an interesting thing that happened at my university where one of the smaller guys was recommended for the girls' team because he was apparently not big enough. Gender reinforces lots of myths around hierarchies too."

"I looked into playing mixed hockey, and they have limited spaces for different genders. There's a binary, of how they can fill these quotas, so I'm not chosen for the men's [quota] because I'm smaller."

"I wish some institutions could even just advertise that they are trans inclusive. Even if they're not sure how to go about it, I want some reassurance that they know what 'trans' means."

“Wheelchair Rugby League is great because it’s not about gender, it’s about ability. The conversations on hierarchy are around skill, size, power and so on. Not gender.”

“For me, being at university, which are quite progressive places, people are improving in their understanding of non-binary identities all the time. Now local clubs come to the university clubs to ask us about our thoughts on gender, for example. So I have given them some advice on how gendered their forms are. And these are cis-het rugby playing men, and they’re still interested in being more inclusive. They also held a pronoun session, and there were lots of people there trying hard to understand.”

“Now, SU rules and regulations have been set, so if sports teams don’t comply they can lose their funding. Or the right to play. So it’s a bit of an incentive.”

“[Trans only] spaces can be really empowering. It’s not just sport, it’s about finding a place where you feel safe and you can talk to other trans people.”

“Roller-derby also seems very inclusive. A lot of trans people I know are big fans of the sport. Roller-derby teams are no strangers to trans people. And it’s a pretty badass sport.”

“Swimming was common when I was a young person. More recently I’ve been trying to get back into sports, went to TAGS [*trans-only swimming*], and swimming lessons, ‘out to swim’. This was after coming out, so I feel a bit more comfortable in changing rooms now. But I still don’t feel 100% comfortable using changing rooms. I always make sure I have a private place to change.”

“TAGS is a really important trans only space.”

“Swimming with TAGS is really affirming, being able to swim how I want. If I swim in a normal pool, then I need to wear a baggy t-shirt, and that’s obviously not ideal for swimming fast, I need to be streamlined.”

“There was recently a question on Twitter about what would we do if cis people didn’t exist - the most common answer was: go swimming!”

Example Focus Group Quotes: Young trans people (<18)

“I was forced to do typically masculine sports, and by the time the school accepted my gender identity I had grown to hate all gendered sports. Being made to use the gym with what the school called the “other boys” made me not like sports. Notable exceptions: these were sports I was introduced to outside with my parents and brother: badminton, cycling, swimming, gymnastics and were gender neutral. Changing rooms were not fun, but they’re probably never going to be.”

“Changing rooms: it depends whether they have cubicles – if there’s no cubicles I can’t use them. Even with cubicles I just don’t like undressing. Badminton is the only one I still do. Now that I’m not being forced to do gendered sports, I’m more open to getting more active.”

“Being part of a team and getting a medal.”

“Felt sad and judged by being put on the girls’ team.”

“Now allowed to play as a boy on the team and it feels amazing – new school is much better because they call me a boy.”

“A lot of my bad experiences in sport haven’t been to do with specific people – and my bad experiences with individuals at school weren’t to do with sport. A lot of sports are a very masculine environment which is traumatic.”

“I found a room that was its own small changing room in school and used that, no one knew about it.”

“Rugby was grouped by enthusiasm and ability – I was put in the “D” team with other people who didn’t want to play. It included people who were bullied at school, people who had asthma, and me.”

“The environment of school football was really toxic. I had people shouting at me for just standing by the goal and not doing anything. No one ever actually explained to me how to play football – they just assumed everyone would know. There’s an expectation that you know your gendered sports.”

“After social transition at school, started doing hockey and netball but everyone assumed that I would know how to play – I didn’t because I hadn’t played before.”

“The positives for me are things that aren’t specifically gendered like racket sports, which can just be fun and not gendered. I hate doing things competitively – much prefer casual swimming, casual badminton, because I don’t need to care if I’m winning or losing.”

“Difference between team sports and individual/pair sports. Team sports are a more negative experience; individual or pair sports are more positive.”

“Leisure centres in general should do trans inclusive or even trans only sessions. Gyms aren’t great for trans people either because everyone’s judging each other all the time.”

“Physical features might attract disdainful looks – a lot of trans young people don’t tend to do much exercise due to the gendered attitudes towards it. Now when it comes to being healthier, it’s harder to get into it because you haven’t been doing it.”

“Trans-only sessions would be great because it could be a social opportunity and it would also mean trans people could feel comfortable doing sport. To make it an inclusive space, the leisure centre would have to do staff training, this is the core of fixing all of these problems.”

“How would they enforce it – women only sessions are probably done by appearance, but that doesn’t work for trans people.”

“It would help cis people too if anyone of any gender was allowed to do any sport in school.”

The following was received from a young person who couldn’t attend:

“Before I came out to my club as FTM transgender, I found that there were a lot of complications around training for me. I had to compete at competitions as female, and still do. I had to change in a female changing room. Sparring weigh-ins require you to be weighed in your underwear - impossible if you are transitioning. Your opponent must be of the same gender, still female. In patterns, you compete in your gender category with your name appearing on an electronic board, as female. Pairs are always male/ female. Teams are always same sex. In the black belt category for patterns, you must wear the correct trousers for your gender. Red for females, blue for males.

I often have to change in the car, or wear my taekwondo kit to the event. Many events are in the summer and so this can be hot and uncomfortable. In patterns competitions you lose points for having creases on your uniform. Another downside.

On a positive note, my club has been amazing. They all use my preferred name and my preferred pronouns ‘he/ him’. My coach has changed my name on the British Taekwondo hub and is very supportive.

There is still that little pink female sign, next to my name though. I can’t wait for that to change.”

Example Focus Group Quotes: NGBs, APs and Selected Other Organisations

“We had someone who transitioned... and we consequently made changes for the better for the club. Before this, we had some vague policy, hidden on a website somewhere. But after working with [the person], we have normalised this as part of something which just might happen in sports. I think a lot of clubs are in this situation, but haven’t yet reached a point where they have to change because they’re working closely with a trans person.”

“We’ve been having these discussions around reporting. We’ve been asked to report on trans members with us, but our portal only allows male/female, so that misses a lot of people out. So we can’t even report on it to even begin to show how many trans people are involved.”

“There is a lot of talk about trans inclusion in sports at the moment. But policies can be ambiguous, some NGBs have them, some don’t. And if policies do exist, they’re very focused on adults, and on competitive play.”

“There is a whole thing about non-gendered competition at the moment. But in primary schools, everyone plays the same sports. In secondary school, sport suddenly becomes gendered. Maybe we should be stronger and say schools can only be included in the national group if they are inclusive. ... People may not like that, there will be resistance. But people actually like mixed sport. Dodgeball is a big mixed sport, for example. This wouldn’t just include non-binary people, everyone would benefit. It would be an opening for so many children who like to play mixed sport.”

“It’s an interesting culture though. Now, it’s a trend in itself, people in their 20s do mixed sports, like mixed netball.”

“There are things like school games doing mixed abilities, mixed games. From this, we’re able to reflect on what does work well, and implement these policies more formally.”

“It’s been interesting to have the topic discussed, it makes it exciting to think about the possible changes to sport, but it does mean a total overhaul of the system. We’re talking about some very major changes. It’s very hard, culturally, to get people to change their thinking about it.”

“We should look at cultural change and best practice. We’ve been looking at putting our pronouns in emails and using pronoun badges, this makes a big difference to welcome trans people. There should be a pot for inclusion, to help fund this stuff.”

“We are interested in intersectionality too, how do equality partners support trans people, whilst understanding other intersections? We understand the

importance of intersectionality. Like how does disability interact with being trans? It's not an isolated issue."

"The people who do the organising, do the decision making, come from very competitive sports backgrounds. We need to be attracting children who are not active, and some of those children are not attracted to sport because it's so gendered. This question of LGBT inclusion brings other important questions of inclusion of all children."

"We want to show we are doing this because we want to include people. We want to do it because culture is changing, not to just 'tick the box'. I think we need to say that to help people understand. We want to be part of a movement, not something that is isolated from society."

"There is a lot of discussion of societal change. And how sport is often a bit behind cultural values. But kids don't see the challenge. It's like playing with gay friends, kids don't see that as an issue at all. So then it becomes a structural issue."

"I think the problem with all this, whenever there is a change, NGBs will try and get money but it only goes through depending on what the government wants to do. We need a bit of long-term consistency. I wish it wasn't just about funding The changes take years. I remember how backwards they were when I joined, they told me I couldn't join a meeting because I'm a girl [laughs], so they've come miles - but it takes years."

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Trans Inclusion in Sport - Survey for Trans People 16+

About you - your age

1. Are you aged:
 - Under 16 [Exit survey]
 - 16-17
 - 18 or over?

About you - your gender

2. Is your gender different from the gender you were assumed to have based on your sex assigned at birth or in early childhood?
 - Yes
 - No [Exit survey]
 - Questioning

About you - your Location

3. Where do you live?
 - England
 - Wales
 - Scotland
 - Northern Ireland
 - Another country [Exit survey]

Your experience of Sport / Physical Activity

None of the following questions are compulsory. You need only answer the ones you are comfortable with / where you feel you have something you would like to say. The entire survey can be completed anonymously if you wish.

We appreciate that some trans people have had distressing experiences around sport and physical activity. If at any point, completing the survey raises upsetting feelings for you, please exit the survey.

If you are feeling worried, anxious, or distressed and would like to talk to someone, please call: Childline: 0800 11 11 (U18) or Samaritans: 116 123

Both call lines offer FREE immediate, 24-hour, confidential support and listening from trained workers.

4. What **positive experiences** have you had regarding being trans and taking part in sport or physical activity?

This might be about how important sport is to you, or how it has helped you transition, it might be something a club or centre did that made you feel welcome; it might be about how your identity has been supported and celebrated; it might be about feeling part of a team – or anything else. These stories will help organisations understand what trans inclusion can look like

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

5. What **negative experiences** have you had regarding being trans and taking part in sport or physical activity?

This might be about having to leave a team; being outed or harassed; being made to feel there is no place for you – or anything else. These stories will help organisations understand the impact of certain actions.

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

6. Which best describes your engagement with sport / physical activity:

- I currently participate in sport / physical activity
[Go to question 6a (1)]
- I used to participate in sport / physical activity
[Go to question 6a (2)]
- I have never participated in sport / physical activity
[Go to question 6a (2)]

- 6a (1) Please tell us briefly what sport / physical activity you do (e.g. I go to the gym 3x a week; I play badminton once a week)

[Go to Q7]

- 6a (2) Has being trans influenced your decision not to take part?

- Yes
- No

- 6b. If yes, please tell us how you have been affected

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

6c. If providers were more inclusive, would you like to take part in future?

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

How Can Sports / Physical Activity Providers Make You Feel Welcome?

7. What would you like sport / physical activity providers to do, that would make you as a trans person feel welcome and able to take part?

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

8. From the range of things you have mentioned in question 7, which is/are the most important to you (list a maximum of three)?

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

Other Comments

9. Is there anything else you would like to tell us / any other comments you would like to make?

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

[Q10 = Establishing permissions]

About You - Pronouns

Pronouns are words like 'he', 'she' or 'they' that sometimes stand in place of a person's name in speech or writing

11. We would like to make sure we get your pronoun right if we need to use it (for example, in relation to a quote you have authorised us to use). How do you like other people to refer to you?

If you do not use any of the pronouns listed below, or use a combination, please write your choice(s) in the "Other" box.

- Please use male pronouns to describe me (he, him, his)
- Please use female pronouns to describe me (she, her, hers)
- Please use gender neutral pronouns to describe me (they, them, theirs)
- Other: [OPEN TEXT BOX]

[Q12-15 = Questions re focus groups, supply of images and follow up]

About You - Life Experiences

We ask about the wider life experiences you may have so we can see if the range of trans people completing the survey is diverse and broadly reflective of the general population, and to ensure we reflect diverse experiences in the guidance. You only need to complete the questions you are comfortable with. None are compulsory.

16. What is your age range?

- 16-25
- 25-34
- 35-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to say

17. How would you describe your gender identity?

You are welcome to use multiple terms

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

18. How would you describe your sexual orientation?

You are welcome to use multiple terms

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

19. Are you a person of intersex experience?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

20. What is your ethnic group?

Ethnic group is about the group to which you perceive you belong. It is not about your legal nationality, place of birth or citizenship.

- Arab
- Asian or Asian British: Indian
- Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British: Chinese

- Other Asian background
- Black or Black British: African
- Black or Black British: Caribbean
- Other Black background
- Mixed/Multiple: White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed/Multiple: White and Black African
- Mixed/Multiple: White and Asian
- Other Mixed/Multiple background
- White: British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish
- White: Irish
- White: Gypsy, Roma or Traveller
- Other White background
- Not known
- Other: [OPEN TEXT BOX]

21. Do you have a religion, faith or belief?

- No religion, faith or belief
- Bahai
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jain
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Spiritual
- Other: [OPEN TEXT BOX]

22. Do you have a disability, health condition or learning difference that has a substantial or long term impact on your ability to carry out day to day activities?

- Yes
- No

23. Do you have any caring responsibilities?

- None
- Primary carer of a child or children (under 18 years)
- Primary carer of a disabled child or children
- Primary carer or assistant for a disabled adult (18 years and over)

- Primary carer or assistant for an older person or people (65 years and over)
- Secondary carer (another person carries out main caring role)
- Other: [OPEN TEXT BOX]

24. What is your highest level of qualification?

- None
- GCSE or Equivalent
- A Level or Equivalent
- Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent
- Master's Degree or Equivalent
- Doctorate or Equivalent

25. How would you describe your socioeconomic (class) status? [OPEN TEXT BOX]

Life experiences and sport/physical activity

We recognise that being trans interacts with other life experiences to create a person's overall experience in sport / physical activity. This is an opportunity for you to tell us about how that affects you

26. Thinking about different life experiences such as (but not limited to) the ones listed in "About You", have any of these other aspects of your identity and lived experiences also impacted on your relationship to sport? If so, please tell us here: [OPEN TEXT BOX]

[Closing pages, information about support and thanks]

Trans Inclusion in Sport - Survey for NGBs/APs/Other Organisations

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your input will help shape the forthcoming guidance.

About You

The first 6 questions are compulsory. They enable us to contextualise your answers and get in touch if we need to clarify anything and/or to follow up if you indicate your organisation would be willing to offer a good practice example for the published guidance.

As completion of this survey is by invitation only, your details also enable us to identify any completers who are not on the original invitation list.

1. Name
2. Organisation
3. Your role in your organisation
4. Contact email
5. Contact number

About Your Organisation

6. Is your organisation:
 - A National Governing Body (NGB)
 - An Active Partnership (AP)
 - Another type of organisation

7. If your organisation is an NGB, which sport(s) do you regulate?
[OPEN TEXT BOX]

About Trans Inclusion

Thinking about including trans people in sport(s) and/or activities, how important is it that the guidance addresses the points listed below?

There is a text box at the end for you to enter any other points you would like the guidance to cover. You can also add any detail or specifics you think it might be useful for us to know in the same space.

8. How important is it that the guidance addresses the points listed below?

	Not at all important	Fairly important	Essential
Fairness of competition (below elite level)			
Safety			
Single sex / gendered sports and activities			
Language and terminology			
Including binary identified trans people (trans people whose gender is either always 'man' or always 'woman')			
Including non-binary people (people whose gender is not exclusively 'man' or 'woman')			
Including gender fluid people (people whose gender is not fixed as 'man' or 'woman')			
Including gender questioning people (people who are currently exploring their gender)			
Working with young trans and gender questioning people			
Tackling discrimination			
Supporting someone who transitions (takes steps to make their gender identity more visible to others, such as changing name and/or pronoun, how they dress)			
Updating records, documentation and ID			
Confidentiality			
Safeguarding			
Residential			

Sports kit			
Moving onto an England talent pathway (although elite sport is outside the scope of this guidance, it could address the point at which someone is identified as having the potential to compete at that level)			

Please list any other areas you would like the guidance to address and / or feel free to expand on specifics relating to any of the topics.

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

9. Have you encountered any difficulties around the inclusion of trans people in sport and physical activity that you think it would be useful for us to understand? If so, please describe them here

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

10. Do you have any examples of good practice, or ways in which you have approached trans inclusion that other organisations could learn from? If so, please describe them here

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

11. Can we use these good practice examples in the guidance?

- Yes, attached to my organisation's name
- Yes, but please use them anonymously
- No, please don't use them in the guidance at all – they're for info only
- Please contact me to discuss

Further Involvement

12-15 – Focus group invitations, request for images & case studies

Gender Affected Sport

Please complete this section if your organisation is a National Governing Body

16. Do you consider your sport to be a 'gender affected activity' as set out in the Equality Act 2010

("A gender-affected activity is a sport, game or other activity of a competitive nature in circumstances in which the physical strength, stamina or physique of average persons of one sex would put them at a disadvantage compared to average persons of the other sex as competitors in events involving the activity.") Yes / No

17. If 'yes', how have you determined this? Is there any supporting evidence that you refer to?

18. If 'no', how have you determined this? Is there any supporting evidence that you refer to?

Final Comments

Is there anything else you would like to tell us / any other comments you would like to make / any questions you would like to raise relating to the guidance we will be putting together regarding the inclusion of trans people in sport and physical activity?

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

[Closing pages and thanks]

Gendered Intelligence:

Expanding understandings of gender and improving trans lives

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