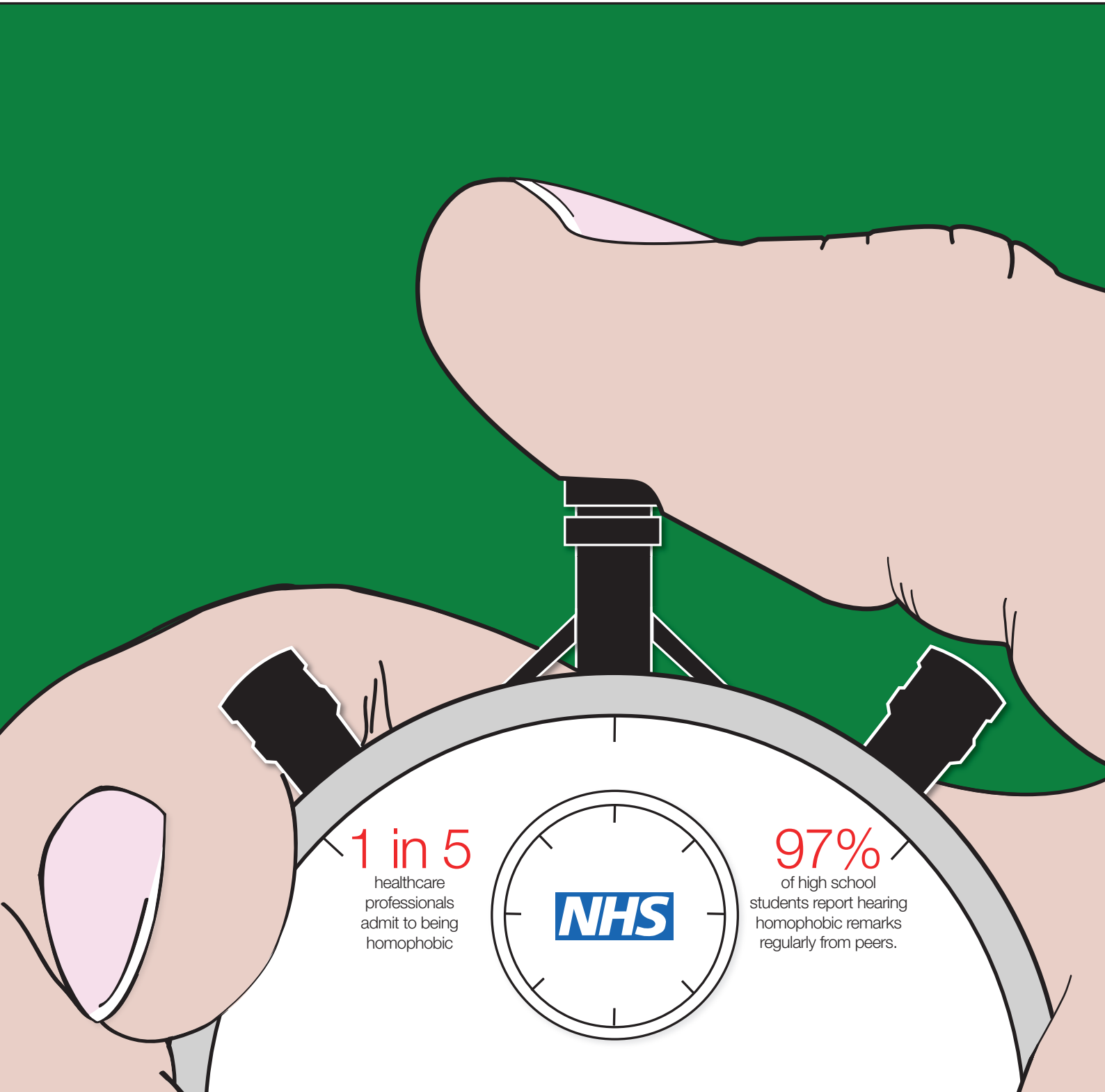


TIME FOR CHANGE



1 in 5
healthcare
professionals
admit to being
homophobic



97%
of high school
students report hearing
homophobic remarks
regularly from peers.



Lesbian, gay, bisexual & trans people in the South West

Time for Change

Public sector organisations working to diminish discrimination on grounds of professionalism and efficiency as well as due to ethical and statutory requirements

Contents

1. Main article
2. Tackling discrimination in sport article

Imagine living through a whole career, unable even to talk about who you went to the cinema with at the weekend, never mind having no soul-mate to talk a problem over with. We'd go bonkers if we lived like that. Those who are unable to open up are most likely to seek help when their needs have become severe. Homophobic bullying is not just the preserve of schools

Studies show that people who are not open about their sexuality will underperform and will be more prone to emotional problems such as depression. Our sexuality is an essential part of our lives. It determines the most important relationships we will ever have. For our own well-being, we need those who matter most to us to give us support and encouragement and approval in our relationships.

Imagine living through a whole career, unable even to talk about who you went to the cinema with at the weekend, never mind having no soulmate to talk a problem over with. We'd go bonkers if we lived like that. Those who are unable to be open are most likely to seek help when they need it most. Homophobic bullying is not just the preserve of schools.

Source: article on the *Kick it Out* website.

NHS and homophobic discrimination

1 in 5 healthcare professionals admit to being homophobic (Source: HMSO, Equalities Review, 2007) and **20% of therapists report having assisted at least one patient to reduce or change their homosexual feelings.** Page 6: (Source: King et al, The Response of Mental Health Professionals, 2009)

<http://www.pfc.org.uk/pdf/LGBT-Partnership-info-and-stats-excellent.pdf>

Regarding LGBT NHS service users:

They may, for example, be reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation to their GP, because they anticipate discrimination, but then fail to receive appropriate health care ... It is therefore likely that if a group of people experience discrimination and social exclusion, they are also likely to experience health inequalities. Research suggests that LGBT people have very specific health concerns (see below) and that the health sector needs to deliver targeted appropriate care to patients on the grounds of their sexual orientation. LGBT people feel that this is not always the case in health care delivery.

Source: http://www.stonewall.org.uk/what_we_do/research_and_policy/health_and_health-care/3465.asp

Health Service inequality: <http://lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/history/health-service-failing-gay-and-bisexual-men-according-to-stonewall/>

Schools and homophobic discrimination

Homophobic bullying is still a major issue in UK schools. Last year, research carried out by the Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) highlighted that two thirds of lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people in England report being bullied. Those that report bullying perform 15% worse at GCSE ... The same [research](#) found that only 1 in 6 English secondary school teachers believe that their school is very active in promoting respect for lesbian, gay and bisexual students.

Source: [Take Action: Make Schools Safer](#)

Stonewall School Champions Programme leaflet: http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/school_champions_programme_2012.pdf

We have seen in the PDF associated with exhibition panel two, an example of the disruption caused by unprofessional conduct arising from unchallenged prejudiced views by a senior level school officer. Although the position of public sector employees, in the grip of prejudice is changing increasingly in positive ways to help them become more professional and efficient, the above indicate the scale of the challenge remaining.

There are significant issues that need to be addressed around these findings which indicate that health and education sectors 'professionals' cannot without national government and professional body and trades unions guidance and re-education be expected to provide actual professional – personal prejudice-free -- services (paid for by the taxpayer, a significant number of whom are from the LGBT community) to their LGBT service users.

As public employees, they are under statutory equality and diversity [E&D] legal and profession related requirements to undertake continuing professional development and E&D training. A start point for this being naturally beneficial -- rather than grudgingly resisted -- is for prejudiced employees to reflect upon the origins of why they fail to act responsibly and professionally towards LGBT people [general public service users] in the day to day conduct of their work.

Not a few may through reflection discover personal issues around a clash between professionalism and influence of inherited beliefs of exclusivist kinds. In this case a further ethical issue around the contradiction of public service (and payment of the same by the state/UK taxpayer) and the latter needs to be addressed by them: **one cannot be professional if governed by discriminatory values!**

The benefits of tackling homophobia in the workplace are enormous and wide reaching since they also directly impact on combating sexism and racism as other major causes of disruption, personnel conflicts, and lost efficiency/productivity.

Since the repeal of the infamous 'Section 28' governments have developed a record of respect for LGBT equality, diversity and anti-discrimination rights that has made the UK one of the most highly regarded countries in the world in this area. The UK far exceeds the record of, for instance, the USA that continues to be plagued by politically powerful fundamentalist homophobic lobby groups of the kind that for many years turned back the clock in the UK through Clause 28, which encouraged homophobic bullying and discrimination and made LGBT people second-class citizens.

The government and trades unions in conjunction with LGBT equality and advisory bodies and educational organisations, as well as local government and local education authorities, higher education, many schools and colleges, the NHS and other public sector employers, sports governing bodies, and many others at local grassroots levels are combining to effect real change in the fight against homophobia.

This is to be welcomed by all, since there are still many areas, not least in public sector organisations (that by extension set best working practice standards for private sector businesses), where there is much to do to help those discriminated against as either LGBT staff or service users of public sector organisations.

Fear, anxiety and depression don't make for effective functioning of employee, organisation or business. There is clearly a correlation between the employee who spends time oppressing colleagues who don't fit his/her prejudiced opinions and stereotypes, and time that he/she could be concentrating on actual work: such people are costly burdens to the good names of the organisations that pay them.

Prejudice is always in irrevocable opposition to professionalism and efficiency!

Tackling Discrimination in Sport

An approach by a UK university sports faculty

Article contributed by **Dr Ian Jones** (Associate Dean of the Bournemouth University Sports Faculty)

The role of UK higher education institutions in promoting greater awareness of the importance of understanding and implementing equality and diversity perspectives and requirements in sport at both sports practitioner and supporter/fan levels, to make sport more inclusive; how they are assisting with this in their relationships/partnerships with professional and amateur sports associations/governing bodies/clubs.

Sport has been, and remains a popular subject at Higher Education, with over 7000 places being offered in sport related studies every year. Whilst often accused of being a 'micky mouse' degree, sport programmes actually provide a strong theoretical grounding that underpins our understanding of sport behaviour at all levels from Sunday league football to the Olympic Games. This understanding, we would argue, is crucial to the development of equity and diversity in sport. One way to examine the role of degree programmes in understanding issues of diversity is through an exploration of Blooms taxonomy of learning, which, although arguably dated, does provide a useful outline of how such understanding develops. We can outline this through looking at the various cognitive levels within this taxonomy, and relate them to the understanding of diversity within sport.

The first level is that of **Knowledge**. Knowledge is the very basic level of learning, and focuses upon the ability to 'know' or memorise facts and definitions, for example a student being aware that there are issues of equity and diversity within sport, for example, by being given statistics regarding lower levels of participation by key groups, or being made aware of issues of homophobia in a certain sport. This would generally be at lower levels of study.

The next stage is to develop **Comprehension**. Comprehension goes beyond mere recall, towards the demonstration of understanding, through, for example being able to describe the significance of homophobia in sport, or to be able to compare levels of discrimination in two or more sports. Again, this would be at the lower levels of study.

As the degree programme progresses, so will the student's ability to use knowledge and comprehension. This is done through the next stage of the taxonomy, that of **Application**. Application refers to the ability to use knowledge in new situations, to solve problems, or to resolve issues. Thus, through developing a knowledge and comprehension of strategies that have reduced discrimination in other contexts, the student will be able to apply such solutions to their own environment. Many sport programmes will now, for example, include an event management unit, often using such application to deliver successful events for minority groups.

The next stage of the process is that of **Analysis**. This is often a difficult term to define, but essentially involves the student being able to develop an understanding of the causes and effects of a phenomenon such as discrimination within sport. This is a crucial element for higher education programmes, in that we would argue that an understanding a phenomenon is the only way of being able to address the causes of an issue, rather than the outcomes. Thus, a student would go beyond mere description of the nature and extent of discrimination, and develop an understanding of the role and importance of stereotyping within society, its causes, and its outcomes, specifically the concept of prejudice. This would be developed through an understanding of the link between prejudice and subsequent discrimination. This allows the student to develop a clear understanding of the theory underpinning issues such as racism and homophobia.

The next element of the taxonomy is that of **Synthesis**, or the ability to use the previous levels of the taxonomy to develop new, alternative or innovative solutions to issues. Thus, through examining things in a new way, alternative solutions to issues of equity and diversity can be proposed. One way in which this has been delivered at Bournemouth University, for example, is through a consultancy project where groups of final year students are assigned to an industry partner (such as a local sport organisation, or an NGB) with the intention of developing a new and innovative solution to a problem. These are strongly theoretical, and allow the synthesis of theory with 'real life', an essential skill for any sport graduate.

The final element is that of **Evaluation**. Essentially, the student needs to have the skills and ability to make judgements about the worth of any solution or strategy, based on empirical evidence. This is, perhaps, the most difficult element of the taxonomy to demonstrate in Higher Education. Often, students simply do not have the time to be able to assess any interventions that have been made, having graduated before the evidence can be obtained.

The ways in which this is put into practice in HE to support equity and diversity in sport within the UK are varied.

The key issue, however, is to ensure that sport graduates develop this understanding of the key issues so that they, as the key decision makers of the future, are able to address the causes of discrimination in sport.