



TACKLING

HOMOPHOBIC,

BIPHOBIC AND

TRANSPHOBIC

An Introduction to Just A Ball Game

17 Jun 2021

At GMB Congress 2019 delegates heard that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse still occur for many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in sporting environments. Congress voted to support Just a Ball Game? in combatting this prejudice. JBG? founder Lindsay England tells us more.

Just a Ball Game? (JBG?) is a grassroots campaign organisation with international reach which has a strong focus on football/sport, art, music and event days. JBG? was founded in 2010 by GMB NW&I member Lindsay England.

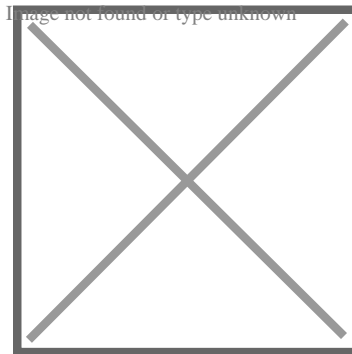
Football - and any sport - is a workplace just like any other you will find in society. It's not just the players, managers/coaches or officials that can earn a living playing the beautiful game - a stadium alone can provide an umbrella for a number of different industries.

Office and ticketing staff are employed along with merchandise sellers, caterers, cleaners, security, safety stewards, technicians, writers, journalists, engineers, joiners and other crafts persons, electricians, grounds personnel, drivers... the list is endless - all coming together to make a special event happen around one 90-minute performance. LGBT+ people exist in all these roles, though they may not be obvious for a number of personal or practical reasons. Much like members of a trade union movement, comrades in arms one and all - but not always displaying their true self for fear of resentment and rejection.

JBG? often delivers educational workshops, charity sporting events, Q&A sessions with our patrons and conferences as either standalone events or in partnership with our supporters or LGBT+ allies.

In doing so we can reach out to LGBT+ people and their friends, raising awareness and visibility of LGBT+ inclusion. Our campaign also challenges homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and educates through tailored presentations and meaningful resources striving to dispel myths and change mindsets.

The majority of this work, subject to funding, can be accessed and completed in partnership with JBG? all year round due to need, as sadly homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying happens every day. Many of our inspiring interactive sessions and presentations happen during our partnerships with trade unions, where we can focus on workplaces and education establishments at the heart of local communities.



GMB President Barbara Plant supports JBG

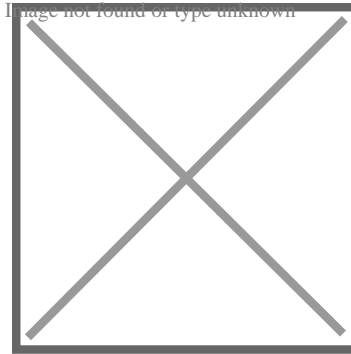
In the past decade with the help of a heavy social media presence, our workload has been seen across the UK and has expanded around the world. Along with raising awareness, the campaign has a strong focus on challenging inequality and implicit bias.

Our four key campaign initiatives are TIME FOR ACTION - THINK BEFORE YOU CHANT! - OUT, PROUD AND KICKING - STRONGER TOGETHER. Through these, and some forward thinking strategic work with other inclusive sporting organisations, JBG? seeks to challenge the stereotypes and misconceptions that exist around Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans people and others (LGBT+) and work towards a future where the visibility of LGBT+ people in football and other sport is accepted and celebrated, whether they are participants or supporters of the game.



To actively challenge any form of prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity we provide interactive, open and honest workshops that look at what it means to be LGBT+, raise the profile of the LGBT+ sporting arena and discuss the damaging impact and effect of homophobia in sport.

The majority of people rarely have the opportunity to discuss the issue of sexuality and gender identity frankly with their peers. JBG? believe that confronting the issue of prejudice as a group and sharing opinions and ideas as a collective helps relieve some of the unnecessary tension and confusion that surround sexuality and gender.



How can GMB members help?

There are a number of ways in GMB members and workplaces can help us expand our partnership work and reach even bigger audiences. Invite us along to do Q&As or presentations for your GMB equalities groups across all strands.

Invite us along to your workplaces, branch meetings or recreational events. Have us as guests on your website or blog. Follow us across social media and retweet and promote our posts. Help us make the changes at government level to keep LGBT+ people safe and feel included.

In doing so you can help us to:

- Raise the participation of LGBT+ people in football at professional and grassroots level
- Foster an environment where professional football players - male, female and trans - can feel comfortable being open about their sexuality and gender
- Engage with young people and adults through the use of sport and education with the aim of eliminating discrimination and prejudice against LGBT+ people
- Work strategically to influence government, policy makers and NGOs to promote healthy

lifestyles and well-being among LGBT+ people

- Creatively challenge the negative stereotypes that surround LGBT+ people
- Deliver bespoke match day staff and steward training and workshops or presentations and hand out resources to help provide a safe and inclusive environment to watch football in.

GMB and JBG? are delivering Stronger Together Online – an event for Pride month 2021 on June 19th. Register to attend now - and bring your sports-fan family and friends.

