LEAP Sports works across Scotland to break down the structural, social and individual barriers which prevent lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people from accessing, participating and excelling in sport, physical, or outdoor activity. We believe that sport is for everyone and we are dedicated to making our community a proud leader in the ongoing campaign to recognise and celebrate diversity in sport.

LEAP Sports works closely with a network of around 30 community sports groups through local forums to support improved LGBTI equality in sport. Our policy work is based upon consultation and ongoing work with those groups and with our network of individual LGBTI activists across the country, and represents the issues, views and concerns they have raised. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this submission.

**Participation**

**Festival Fortnight**

Festival Fortnight has run in Scotland now since 2013 with an annual two week programme of sports events, tournaments, and come-and-try / taster sessions available as well as other cultural, academic and celebration themed events with LGBTI equality in sport as their central theme. This year’s programme has just concluded with over 60 events taking place. This included 23 taster/acess events, 22 different sports and 10 tournaments.

Some key ingredients to make this successful include:

- **Reach**: Events happening in communities right across Scotland.
- **Funding**: Offering very small grants to community grassroots sports initiatives who otherwise struggle to access funding hugely enhances the offering and participation rates.
- **Collaboration**: Having key partners willing to put on events is a crucial part of the strategy.

**Boxing in Aberdeen**

Aberdeen University Boxing Club established an access to boxing programme for LGBT
people in 2017. This initiative introduced boxing to over 30 LGBT people who had never tried boxing with 2 people then successfully taking the step into joining the local club thereafter and over 20 others indicating an interest in continuing a programme. Factors which contributed to the success of this were:

- Consultation: There was initial consultation with local LGBTI community groups and members.
- Collaboration and reach: The work was supported by Boxing Scotland and LEAP Sports.
- Leadership and motivation: The boxing club and Boxing Scotland were committed to driving this.

Seahorses swimming

A full consultation was undertaken by community activists prior to setting up Seahorses swimming club in Glasgow. [Link to the full report here](#). The consultation sought to identify very specific barriers for trans people participating in swimming. Seahorses then started life as a regular swimming club. Two years on, Seahorses no longer runs as a regular club, but offers a network which organises access to swimming sessions for trans people in a safe environment. Factors which contributed to the success of this were:

- Explicit removal of barriers: A full understanding of the barriers to participation were explored with targeted solutions offered (e.g. private swimming space; all-gender changing rooms).
- Training: Venue staff, lifeguards and coaches were given training to enable the sessions to run smoothly.
- Rule changes: Acceptance that some pre-existing norms and rules would have to vary or change (e.g. allowing a variety of different swimwear options to be worn)

LGBTI specific clubs

There are many community sports groups and clubs which exist to offer inclusive environments for any combination of LGBT or I people. [A full list of these are available on our website](#). Some key ingredients which make these successful include:

- They are explicitly supportive and inclusive.
- These environments are not heteronormative, that is to say that there is no need to come out and no assumptions to have to tackle such issues.
- They are viewed as safe places to try or to reconnect with sport either for ongoing participation or for an access point on a sports pathway. There are high numbers of members who then go on to join other sports initiatives.

We have published a short resource which highlights 11 such clubs and shows the many varied reasons why people choose to take part in sport in such specific environments. [This can be read or downloaded here](#).

LGBTI specific clubs are currently more likely to exist in centres of high population and are currently almost exclusively within the central belt of Scotland. Location and costs of
travelling to participate remain a barrier for many people. Such clubs share similar barriers to other groups with access to facilities, equipment, cost and travel.

**Pride Youth Games**

This event brings LGBTI young people in Scotland together for organised weekends of access to sports. The Games have followed a pattern of mixing newer sports with more traditionally organised team sports. Young people have enjoyed activities such as basketball, orienteering, archery, quidditch, dance, football, rugby, climbing and kayaking. The Games have had success in inspiring young people to take up sport following the weekends with some positive examples including a young person joining a wheelchair basketball club, another young person starting an archery instructors coaching course, and a young person who now enjoys regular powerlifting in their own community.

**Other good examples:**

Trans Sports Initiative in Dundee: [More information here](#).

Powerlifting: [More information here](#).

**Visibility and explicit support**

The overwhelming message from LGBTI people in relation to mainstream community sports groups is the reluctance to participate if you don’t necessarily know that there’s a commitment to you having a positive experience as an LGBTI person and therefore having something visible on your website, in your material or supportive messages within your media goes a long way towards this.

There are good examples of where a high visibility of LGBTI support or inclusion leads to successful engagement and participation. A clear example of this is within roller derby which enjoys high numbers of LGBTI women participating in the sport due in part to the forward thinking WFTDA gender inclusion policy. A report for Sport England last year (see below) found similar results with sports such as Handball and Floorball gaining popularity for LGBT communities in England.

**Targeted initiatives**

Examples such as the aforementioned boxing in Aberdeen initiative have had good successes in providing access points to LGBT people as a way into a sport or club. These can be done through festivals such as events at Festival Fortnight or through the LEAP Sports ‘Pride Active’ spaces at Pride events, or standalone initiatives. There are a number of upcoming initiatives such as a squash programme in Dundee or badminton in Inverness which will explore this further.

**Commonwealth Games Legacy**

Our full evaluation report on the impact of Pride House Glasgow [can be viewed or downloaded here](#). There has not been any specific longer term evaluation undertaken or completed. A
consultation we carried out recently as part of our Festival Fortnight highlighted the key themes to us that LGBTI communities outwith the central belt of Scotland feel less connected or engaged with the Games legacy.

**Additional Resources**

The 5 principles of the Scottish LGBT Sports Charter are a useful framework for LGBT participation in sport.
http://www.equality-network.org/sports-charter/

Sport England commissioned a report last year which has useful recommendations for community sports participation amongst LGBT people.

Stonewall have produced a toolkit for community sports groups.