

Scottish LGBTQIA+ Manifesto – Sport and Physical Activity

The 2026 Scottish Parliament election is on Thursday 7th May.

LEAP Sports have collaborated with partners across the LGBTQIA+ sector to publish the Scottish LGBTQIA+ Manifesto for 2026-2031. The group consists of Equality Network, Scottish Trans, LGBT Youth Scotland and LGBT Health and Wellbeing. As charities representing and supporting LGBTQIA+ people across Scotland, we know that this election comes at a time of great uncertainty for many in our community, as we face significant setbacks to our equality and human rights against the backdrop of a rising, anti-LGBTQIA+ climate in Scotland.

[The full manifesto is available here.](#)

As Scotland works toward a fairer and more inclusive society, sport can be an influential reflection of our communities, as well as a powerful vehicle to help shape the society we aspire to be.

Below, we have collated all our asks related to sport and physical activity from the full Manifesto. This highlights the stark reality for many LGBTQIA+ people when it comes to accessing sport and staying physically active.

We encourage you to read the manifesto, share with partners and speak to candidates about their commitments to ensuring LGBTQIA+ people can access sport and physical activity in Scotland.

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2.5 Ensure a human rights focus within Scotland's equality in sport work at Scottish, UK and international levels

Scotland has an opportunity to lead the way in embedding human rights principles at the heart of sport. Whilst significant progress has been made in recent years, the global landscape shows that the rights of LGBTQIA+ people in sport remain under consistent pressure, from discriminatory regulations and restrictions on participation to the lack of robust international mechanisms that safeguard equality.

Although the right to sport is recognised under international human rights law [1], Scotland's current equality-in-sport frameworks still operate in a separate continuum from those global rights protections, and we believe that must change [2].

A clearly articulated human rights approach ensures that Scotland's equality in sport work is rooted in internationally recognised standards, and that policy decisions actively protect the dignity, inclusion and wellbeing of all participants.

Domestically, continued collaboration with partners through the National LGBTQIA+ Sports Group is essential to turning human rights commitments into meaningful practice. Reinforcing these partnerships and pushing for stronger engagement at UK and international levels will help ensure that Scotland's approach to equality in sport is coherent, credible, and capable of realising and driving real change.

We are calling on parties to:

- Take a clear position that the UK should join the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) and advocate for this at UK level
- Reaffirm Scottish Government commitment to collaborating with partners on the National LGBTQIA+ Sports Group to drive change
- Use the platform of Cardiff 2027 EuroGames to show a strong commitment from Scotland to LGBTQIA+ participation and equality in sport

[1] Including Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

[2] [LEAP Sports, The time for Human Rights in Scottish sport is now](#)

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4.3 Widen access and participation of LGBTQIA+ people in sport by reducing barriers

LGBTQIA+ people continue to face significant structural and cultural barriers within sport and physical activity. Experiences of discrimination, exclusion, and a lack of visible commitment to inclusion have long limited participation and shaped negative associations with sport for many in our communities [3].

This remains true across all areas of sport, including within youth settings, where many LGBTQIA+ young people continue to encounter barriers in P.E. and school sport. Recent research from sportscotland shows that despite positive shifts overall in Scottish sport, there is still insufficient progress evident when it comes to LGBTQIA+ equality and inclusion, and that it is the equalities area requiring most attention [4].

The UN Committee on ICESCR recommended in March 2025 that Scotland ensure non-discrimination in cultural participation and sport, particularly based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and ensure those groups are included in sports participation [5].

With major sporting moments and ambitions on Scotland's horizon, now is the time for a renewed commitment to inclusive sport that addresses barriers, supports participation, and increases visibility of role models which will ensure that everyone can experience the joy and benefits of being active.

We are calling on parties to:

- Ensure Scottish sport prioritises work on LGBTQIA+ inclusion as it implements the Moving to Inclusion framework
- Use opportunities like the Commonwealth Games 2026 to champion LGBTQIA+ inclusion in sport
- Reduce barriers to participation for LGBTQIA+ people under 18 and young people in school P.E.
- Commit to the Manifesto for Inclusive Physical Education [6].

[3] [LEAP Sports, Outsport Scotland Report](#)

[4] [Sportscotland, Equality sport research 2024](#)

[5] [United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#)

[6] [LEAP Sports: Manifesto for Inclusive Physical Education](#)