

FOOTBALL FOR EVERYONE

COACHES TOOLKIT

A coach's guide
to LGBTIQ+ inclusion
in youth football



WHY HAS THIS COACHES' TOOLKIT BEEN CREATED?

This toolkit has been created by young LGBTIQ+ people for the benefit of coaches in grassroots football, as part of LEAP Sports Scotland Youth Activist Academy, in partnership with the Football v Homophobia Youth Panel.

We believe football should be accessed by anyone, no matter their age, class, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or religion.

LGBTIQ+ terminology and discussions move quickly, so we appreciate the subject can feel daunting!

We want this toolkit to provide you with a greater confidence and understanding of LGB and gender identities.

LGBTIQ+ issues are being understood and discussed from a younger age. Many of these young people will be players, coaches, referees, volunteers and fans. It is important we all play our part to ensure football is a fun, safe and inclusive environment for these participants. This toolkit amplifies the voices of young LGBTIQ+ people in football, so their stories are heard.

We have gathered positive experiences, some negative experiences and some advice for coaches.



WHY IS LGBTIQ+ INCLUSION IMPORTANT?

41% of trans young people said that they would not join a sports club (Metro Youth Chances Survey, 2014)

4 in 10 gay and bi men, and 3 in 10 lesbian and bi women would expect to experience homophobia if they participated in a team sport while being open about their sexual orientation. (Gay in Britain, 2013)

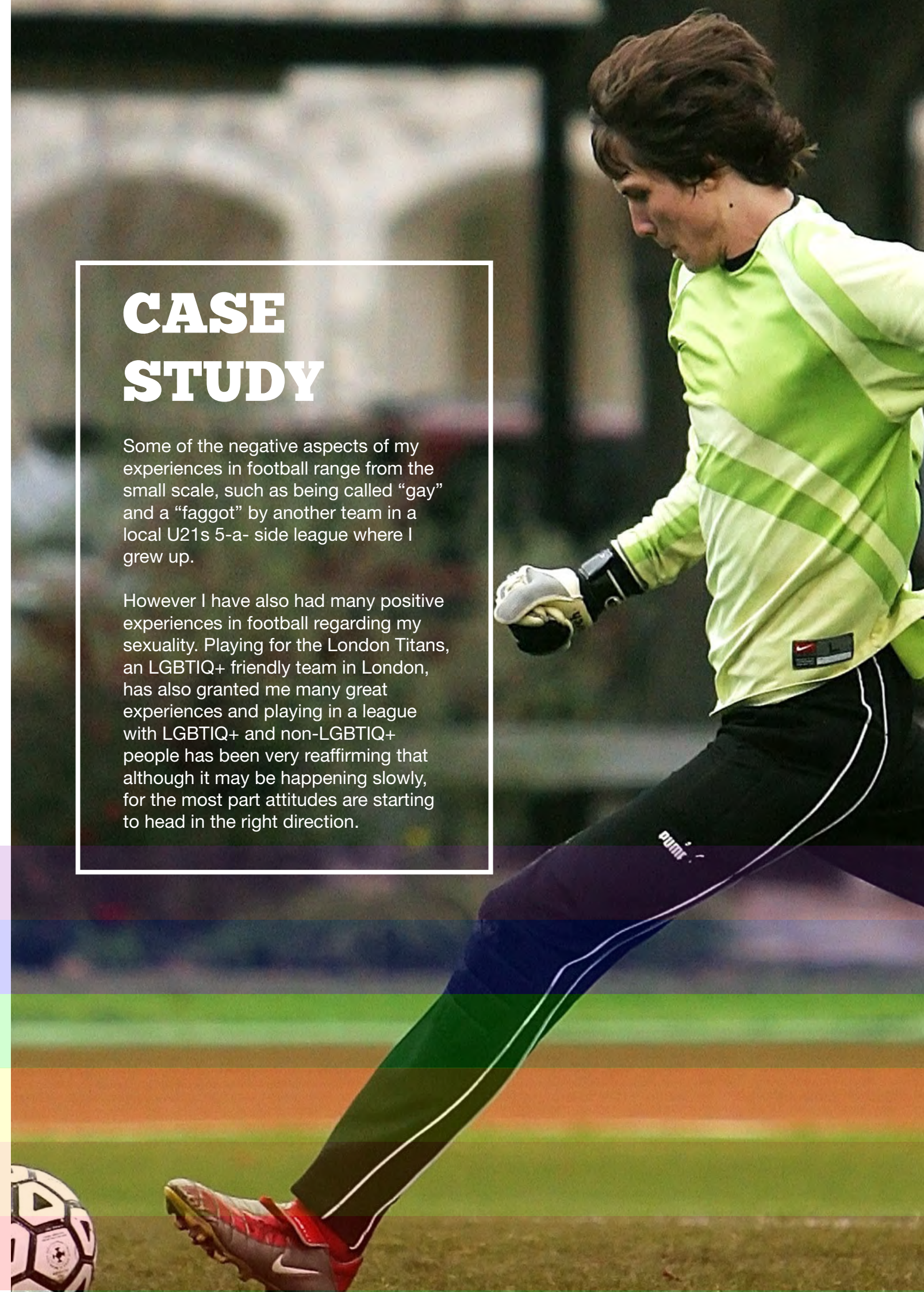
47% of LGBT students experienced sport culture as “alienating or unwelcoming” (NUS, 2012)

72% of football fans have heard homophobic abuse (Stonewall, 2016)

CASE STUDY

Some of the negative aspects of my experiences in football range from the small scale, such as being called “gay” and a “faggot” by another team in a local U21s 5-a-side league where I grew up.

However I have also had many positive experiences in football regarding my sexuality. Playing for the London Titans, an LGBTIQ+ friendly team in London, has also granted me many great experiences and playing in a league with LGBTIQ+ and non-LGBTIQ+ people has been very reaffirming that although it may be happening slowly, for the most part attitudes are starting to head in the right direction.



INTRODUCTION TO LGB IDENTITIES

LGB is the beginning of the initialism LGBT+ and refers to the different sexual orientations within the community.

L- Lesbian

A woman who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to other women”

G - Gay

A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to people of the same gender. Some women prefer to refer to themselves as gay women rather than lesbian, although the word gay is most commonly used in reference to men.”

B - Bisexual

A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to people of more than one gender, regardless of gender.”

The T in LGBT+ refers to Transgender, which will be covered in the next section as part of ‘Gender Identities’. For information about the ‘+’ check our Additional Resources page at the end of this toolkit.

“Coming Out”

Some people will reveal their sexuality and/or gender identity, however many people choose not to. This might be because they are uncomfortable to tell people, are not ready to share this information or may be in danger if they tell others.

If someone discloses their sexuality or gender identity to you, you should consider this confidential unless they give you permission to share this information. As a coach, your priority must be safeguarding them as a vulnerable young people.

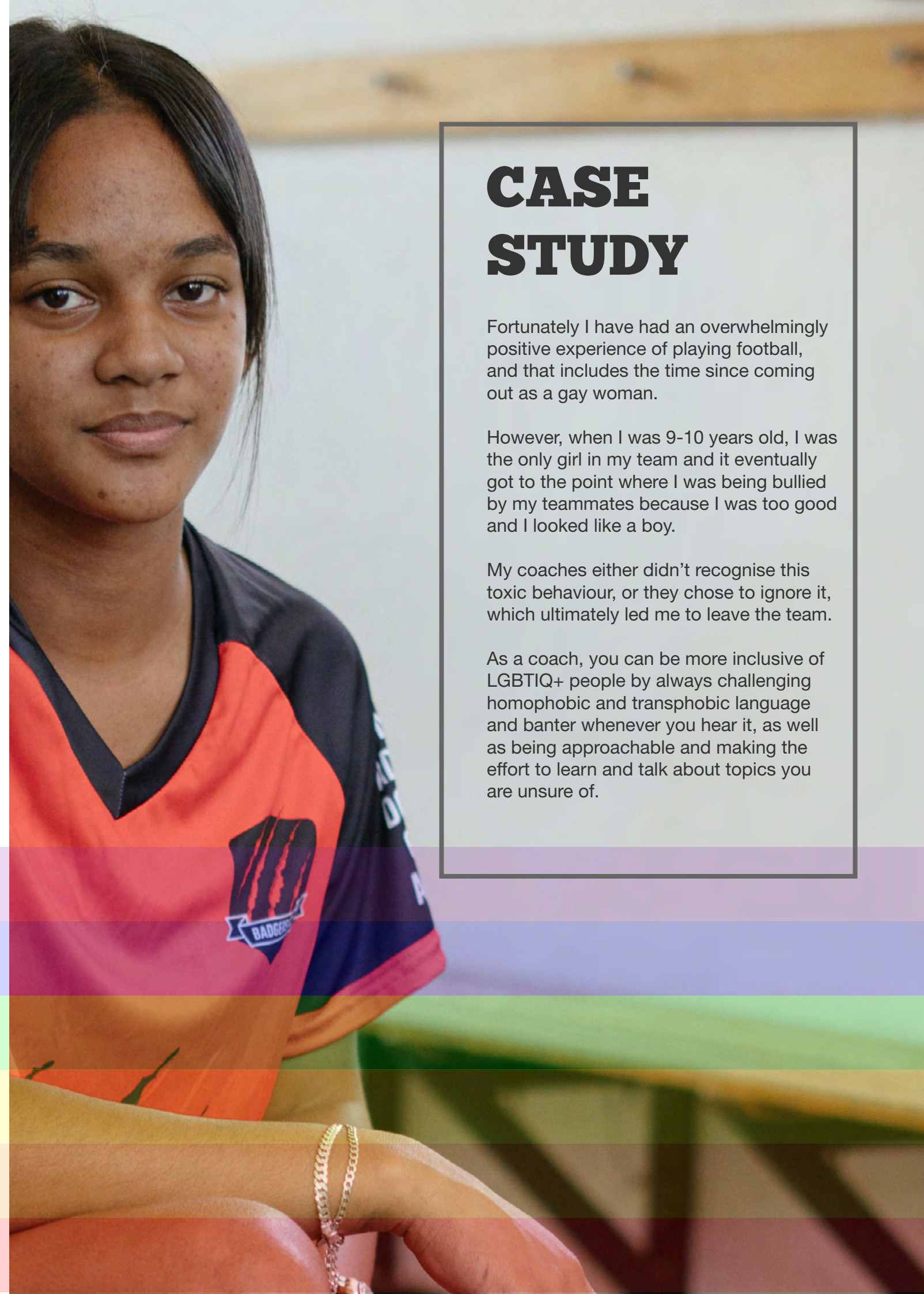
CASE STUDY

Fortunately I have had an overwhelmingly positive experience of playing football, and that includes the time since coming out as a gay woman.

However, when I was 9-10 years old, I was the only girl in my team and it eventually got to the point where I was being bullied by my teammates because I was too good and I looked like a boy.

My coaches either didn’t recognise this toxic behaviour, or they chose to ignore it, which ultimately led me to leave the team.

As a coach, you can be more inclusive of LGBTIQ+ people by always challenging homophobic and transphobic language and banter whenever you hear it, as well as being approachable and making the effort to learn and talk about topics you are unsure of.



INTRODUCTION TO GENDER IDENTITIES

WHAT IS GENDER IDENTITY?

Gender Identity is a person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Cisgender (or Cis)

Someone who has a match between the gender they were assigned at birth, their bodies and their personal identity. In other words, those who are no, or do not identify as transgender.

Transgender (or Trans)

An umbrella term for those whose gender identity or expression differs in some way from the gender assigned to them at birth and conflicts with the 'norms' expected by the society they live in.

There are some terms which may come up when discussing gender that can be unfamiliar.

Dysphoria

An uncomfortable feeling when someone feels a mismatch between the gender they were assigned at birth, and the gender they identify as.

Non-binary

Gender identities that are not exclusively male or female are identities, which are outside of the gender binary. People can be both male and female, neither, or their gender may be more fluid (i.e. unfixed and changeable over the course of time).

Personal pronouns are used to describe one another. They refer to someone's gender and the most common pronouns are he/him or she/her.

You may also hear they/them, which are non-gendered. Pronouns can be a significant part of a trans person's identity. You may be asked to use different pronouns for someone and it is important to support and respect them no matter how difficult you personally find it.

Using the wrong pronouns can be hurtful and offensive, but if you have made a mistake, just apologise to the person and try to remember the correct pronoun next time.

It is very important to be conscious of pronouns (he, she or they) and other gendered language used towards transgender people. Misgendering (calling them a gender they do not identify as) and deadnaming (using a name an individual no longer uses, often a name given before transitioning) can cause pain and distress.

Often, a simple way to navigate other people's pronouns without causing offense, is to simply state your pronouns when you state your name to someone.

This can be an easy way to normalise variations in pronouns, while making trans people feel comfortable in social situations.



POLICIES ON TRANS PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

ENGLAND FA

The FA state that gender identity should not be a barrier to participation in football. In youth football, children can play football together up until the age of 18. This means that any individuals within your club who are questioning their gender, will still be able to participate.

www.thefa.com/

SCOTTISH FA

The Scottish FA's Trans Policy has been adopted across the Affiliated National Associations. Scottish FA policy is that boys and girls are permitted to play together until the age of 15. Most youth football is covered by these rules so trans players can play in any team. Any trans players over the age of 15 will have to go through a process in order to participate.

The Policy specifically mentions non-binary individuals, however they will need to decide whether they want to participate in male or female competitions, as Scottish FA does not offer mixed gender competitions.

www.scottishfa.co.uk

FA WALES

Trans people have to apply to the FA Wales in order to play in their affirmed gender. This may mean you have to support a player through this process.

Once the FA Wales have confirmed they are eligible to play in their affirmed gender, they should be included in the relevant team.

www.faw.cymru/en/

Note: The status of a transgender person is confidential and protected against discrimination, under the Equality Act 2010.

**Information correct at time of writing, but subject to future change*

IRISH FA

The Irish Football Association is currently working on its policy for trans players. They support trans individuals on a case by case basis.

www.irishfa.com

CASE STUDY

As a trans man playing football has had it's ups and downs for me. My team has always been super supportive as have my coaches especially with pronouns as they can be difficult to get right all the time but as a team everyone got there with reminders here and there.

When I play with my team I just feel like one of the lads and that's a great feeling.

I think one of the reasons my experience has been so good is through my coach always picking people up if they maybe use the wrong pronouns as I don't always feel comfortable doing that I think if other coaches did this it would be very helpful.



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FURTHER RESOURCES

This toolkit has offered a brief introduction to LGB and gender identities.

We have created a list of organisations with further support and resources for you:

Football v Homophobia

<http://www.footballvhomophobia.com>

Stonewall

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk>

Pride Sports

<https://pridesports.org.uk/>

LGBT+ Youth Scotland

<https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk>

Scottish Trans Alliance

<https://www.scottishtrans.org/>

LEAP Sports Scotland

<https://leapsports.org/>

If you are supporting a young LGBTIQ+ person, you might like to point them in the direction of these organisations which will provide them with further support:

Gendered Intelligence

<http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>
Support for young trans people

LGBT+ Switchboard

<https://switchboard.lgbt>
an LGBTIQ++ helpline

LGBT Foundation

<https://lgbt.foundation/>
Advice, support and information

Mermaids

<https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/Supporting>
young trans people



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