



LGBT History Month School Packs 2021

Many UK schools look for resources to acknowledge and celebrate LGBT History Month (February). The two key providers of these resources are **Stonewall** and Schools OUT UK, who have produced a resource in conjunction with **The Proud Trust**.

We have reviewed their materials and found a number of very concerning aspects in both resources. The materials are not compliant with [the latest DfE RSE guidance](#), nor are they safeguarding compliant.

We found that the school resources from one or both of these providers:

- Teach children that they can be born into the wrong body or have a boy 'inside' and girl body outside (or vice versa).
- Teach children that their parents and other trusted adults can be wrong about something as fundamental as the sex of a child - whether they are a boy or a girl.
- Teach a belief held by a minority of people as if it were a fact.
- Teach an incorrect and harmful definition of sexual orientation, which is likely to harm lesbian and gay young people (or children who would grow up to be lesbian or gay) the most.

THE PROUD TRUST

[The Proud Trust Toolkit in collaboration with Schools OUT UK](#)

This resource is based on the LGBT history month theme of Body, Mind, Spirit and was written and produced by The Proud Trust.

DEFINITIONS

The toolkit begins with a discussion about the importance of history and of highlighting LGBT history but then moves onto a game encouraging children to match certain words with their definitions. The words are Ally, Asexual, Bisexual, Cis/Cisgender, Gay, Straight, Intersex, Lesbian, Non-binary, Pansexual, Queer and Trans/transgender.

'Gay' is defined as "a person who is attracted to other people of the same gender" and 'Straight' as "a person who is attracted to people of a different gender": note the use of 'a different gender', which implies that there are more than two genders. This shows that that it is not same sex or opposite sex attraction that is being referred to here.

THE PROUD TRUST

Their definition for 'Bisexual' also demonstrates this: "a person of any gender who experiences attraction to people of their own gender, and other genders." As does the definition of 'Pansexual' as 'A person of any gender who is attracted to people of all genders'.

These definitions are likely to be harmful to children who are starting or struggling to understand their sexual orientation and especially harmful to children who are same-sex attracted.

Another concerning definition to teach children is 'Asexual', as it is likely that many children have not yet experienced sexual attraction. This is not something that children should feel the need to label, as for most it is simply a normal part of their stage of development.

The definitions for 'Transgender' and 'Cisgender' both refer to the "gender" children are "assigned at birth" and do not explain that it is your sex that is observed at birth. The definition for 'Non-binary' seeks to tell children that they can be more than one gender or have no gender at all.

There are no definitions which explain what 'gender' or 'sex' is, which is likely to exacerbate the confusion for children, especially as the lesson continues.

'ALLYSHIP' AND INDOCTRINATION

The resource looks at the life of Mark Ashton: An Ally to the Miners. An 'Ally' is defined by this resource as a "person who fights for, and supports others in their fight for equality, despite not being a member of the marginalised group, e.g. a heterosexual and/or cisgender person who believes in, and fights for equality for LGBT people."

Mark Ashton certainly was an ally to the miners. It is however quickly apparent that children in the next part of the resource are being heavily encouraged to be 'allies' for LGBT people, and who wouldn't want to fight for equality? Unfortunately, some of the allyship that the children are being encouraged towards is contrary to their rights and will leave them at increased risk of harm: this is especially true for the girls, as described below.

The part titled 'Body' begins by teaching children about UK LGBT sportspeople. It offers a selection of bios of these athletes and points out there are no bios of transgender people. It reminds children that sport is for everyone and asks them to reflect on whether they have ever been prevented from doing a sport because of their 'gender'.

What barrier to taking part in sport have you identified? (Circle your answer)

- Gendered lessons, e.g. 'boys' and 'girls' are split
- Gendered activities - you are unable to try a sport because it is not taught to your gender
- Gendered PE/sport kit
- Gendered changing rooms
- Gendered toilets
- LGBTphobia from staff/parents
- LGBTphobia from class/teammates
- Other

THE PROUD TRUST

There is then a particular focus on the challenges that trans people might face and the children are asked to imagine a year 9 pupil (age 13/14) returning to school after the summer “as their true self” and trans.

CONT...

Split your group into teams of four. Ask them to imagine a Y9 student returning to school after summer, but they return to school as their true self. They have come out to the school community as trans, and now their gender expression matches their gender identity.

Give each group paper and pens and ask them to list the challenges that student may face in their PE lessons or in joining a local sports group.

The children are asked to imagine the issues that this child might have in accessing changing rooms, toilets and lessons where ‘boys’ and ‘girls’ are split. They are then encouraged to come up with solutions to enable this child to continue to access sport including unisex toilets and mixed ‘gender’ lessons.

Possible changes they may suggest:

- Unisex kits
- Unisex toilets
- Mixed gender lessons
- Zero tolerance policy for LGBTphobia
- LGBT+ inclusion training for staff
- More LGBT+ visibility in adverts and examples they use

The children are not encouraged to explore any perfectly legitimate concerns they have about sharing changing spaces or sports with a child they know is the opposite sex. It is then suggested that further information can be accessed about how to include LGBT people in sport - this resource contains the statement that young trans people should be supported to use the changing facilities and toilets of the gender in which they present.

The children are then directed to ‘Take Action’, possibly as a mass stance, and a template letter is provided. Using this they can write to their headteachers, head of PE or local sports groups to explain that toilets, changing rooms and sports split by sex are a barrier to LGBT people and should be changed to mixed ‘gender’, or in other words, mixed sex. By doing this the children will be able to feel good, as though they are an ally in the fight for equality.

THE PROUD TRUST

CONT...

Ask them to use the Sport for Everyone template to describe the barrier to sport they have identified, and suggest changes before taking it to their headteacher, the head of PE, a trusted staff member, or leader of the sports group.

Ask your group:

- What might happen if there was a mass stance against casual discrimination?

Throughout the toolkit there is no consideration of the fact that sports are often split by sex for a reason - fairness and safety, or that [toilets are legally required to be split by sex](#) for safeguarding reasons and privacy.

There is no consideration of the fact that forcing girls to change or toilet beside males may put them off sport altogether - and we already know that the rates of [girls participating regularly in sport plummet once puberty begins](#) (and never recover). There is no consideration of girls who may feel intimidated or scared by post puberty males taking part in a football or rugby match beside them or what impact there may be on girls who have persevered at a sport only to find that once it is mixed sex then they no longer do well as they cannot hope to compete fairly against boys, who are faster, stronger, taller and heavier. The toolkit features Nicola Adams who is a retired professional and Olympic gold medal-winning boxer - no mention is made of her comments [that transgender athletes should not be permitted in female competitions](#) and should have their own category.

STONEWALL

[Stonewall's LGBT History Month Pack](#)

Stonewall declare that their 2021 resource is focusing on "the lives and work of some courageous LGBT women". It is good to see them rectifying one of the issues with the [Stonewall school resource](#) which we previously reviewed: our analysis showed that the resource contained no real life positive lesbian role models, despite managing to show positive role models who were gay men and bisexual and transgender people.

In this LGBT History Month pack, Stonewall features the life Catherine Duleep Singh for children in KS1, and in KS2 bios of Gail Lewis and Jan Morris are added. This means that 1 out of 3 of the people that children are learning about are male.

[Jan Morris stated in an interview in 2018](#) "I think of myself as both. Both man and woman. Or a mixture of both...I thought I was going to be distinctly on one side. I realise now, not so. I'm both." It is therefore irresponsible of Stonewall to declare Jan a woman, when even Jan as a more mature person was reflecting on whether or not they could be declared a woman.

STONEWALL

[The latest DfE guidance](#) states that “teachers should not suggest to a child that their non-compliance with gender stereotypes means that either their personality or their body is wrong and in need of changing”. Stonewall goes against this by informing children that when Jan Morris was born in 1926 “everyone thought she was a boy” and that “her parents raised her as if she was a boy.” This misrepresents the fact that everyone thought that Morris was a boy because Morris was a boy.

Jan Morris was born in Somerset in 1926. She was trans and didn't tell anyone she was a woman until the 1960s. For this reason, her parents raised her as if she was a boy.

This is likely to be very confusing to young children who will be led to believe that parents and the adults they trust are not even able to tell if their own child is a boy or a girl.

This also introduces the ideological belief that inside each child is a boy or girl, which is separate to the boy or girl body that this inner boy or girl inhabits. This will lead children to the conclusion that people can be born into the ‘wrong body’ and that a person’s inner identity can be disconnected from their body. Indeed, in Stonewall’s secondary school pack children are directly educated about Morris’s belief about this: “I was three or four years old when I realized that I had been born into the wrong body.”

This is a deeply harmful concept to teach children who often will be unable to understand that this is simply the belief of a minority of people. SSAUK have heard many examples from parents of children who are confused or upset by the idea. Even more troubling is what is happening in the minds of the children who have not talked to their parent(s) about their confusion following lessons about ‘being born into wrong bodies’.

Stonewall then goes on to explain that (James) Morris was allowed to marry Elizabeth because Jan hadn’t told anyone “that she was a woman” and that their marriage was allowed because it was “seen as a marriage between a man and a woman” and as a “heterosexual marriage”.

When she was 22, Jan had a job working for the ‘Arab News Agency’ in Cairo. It was there that Jan met her wife Elizabeth. As this was before Jan’s transition, their marriage was seen as a heterosexual marriage at first. In

However the fact is that it was a marriage between a man and a woman; it was not an early example of a marriage of two lesbians or bisexual women. It is wrong to misrepresent the struggle that LGB women and men faced to be allowed to marry in a same-sex relationship, which in the UK didn’t happen until 66 years after the marriage of Elizabeth and James Morris.

STONEWALL

In the secondary school resource Stonewall also presents a bio of Vita Sackville-West which is used to introduce children to Stonewall's belief about sexual orientation, which is that it is based on sexual attraction to people on the basis of gender rather than sex.

The resource makes it clear that Stonewall is not just using same or different gender attraction as a politeness way of saying same or opposite sex attraction. Vita Sackville-West and her husband are both described as "bi, which means they were attracted to people of the same gender as them and people of different genders to them". Note the 's' at the end of 'different genders'.

It is far more likely that Vita considered herself as being attracted to people of the same sex and of the opposite sex. Stonewall is misrepresenting the protected characteristic of sexual orientation in their LGBT History Month pack, causing confusion in children. This will especially apply to girls who are developing sexual feelings towards other girls, including girls in their school year who may be struggling with gender dysphoria and identifying at the time as a boy.



Safe Schools Alliance UK

RESOURCES