

why
start an
lgbtq+
climbing
club?



welcome



to be covered

- What is a club?
- definitions and language
- why did we start our clubs?
- lgbtq+ & community
- lgbtq+, sport and the outdoors
- tips and ideas for adding to or starting your own group
- members snapshots

What is a club?

BMC affiliated club

- Climbing, hill-walking or mountaineering principal activity, HQ in the UK, controlled by its members, min 10 members

Other clubs

- Unaffiliated e.g. Austrian Alpine Club UK, corporate clubs, climbing wall clubs
- Regulated but not affiliated to BMC e.g. Outdoor Lads – registered charity promoting outdoor activity for GBT people
- GOC Climbers North and Scotland (part of Gay Outdoors Club membership body and a federation of local specialist groups)
- “Informal” e.g. Brixton Climbers Private facebook group plus WhatsApp – 421 members, committee, weekend trips. No fee!

BMC club processes and challenges

Why

- Public liability insurance cover for club committee members, meet leaders and other volunteers
- Advice
- Access to training (running a club, for members)
- Opportunity to influence BMC

How

- Club constitution (BMC model)
- Club rules
- Balance sheet/annual report (if available)
- Minimum 10 members
- If members <18 safeguarding policy/lead, DBS etc

lgbtq+ definitions & language

- gender: an internal sense of how one identifies, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed to match the sex assigned at birth. Gender can't be determined by looking at a person.
- sex: assigned to a person based on primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions.
- sexual orientation: a person's sexual attraction to other people, or lack thereof. along with romantic orientation, this forms a person's orientation identity.
- pronouns: words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation – e.g., 'he' or 'she'. some people may use gender-neutral language and use pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir.

lgbtq+ definitions & language

- lesbian: a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women. some non-binary people may also identify with this term.
- bi: an umbrella term used to describe a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender. bi people may express themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, bisexual, pan, queer, and some other non-monosexual and non-monoromantic identities.
- gay: a man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. also, a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian. some trans & non-binary people may also identify with this term.

lgbtq+ definitions & language

- trans: an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.
- transgender man: a term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. this may be shortened to trans man, or ftm, an abbreviation for female-to-male.
- transgender woman: a term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. this may be shortened to trans woman, or mtf, an abbreviation for male-to-female.

lgbtq+ definitions & language

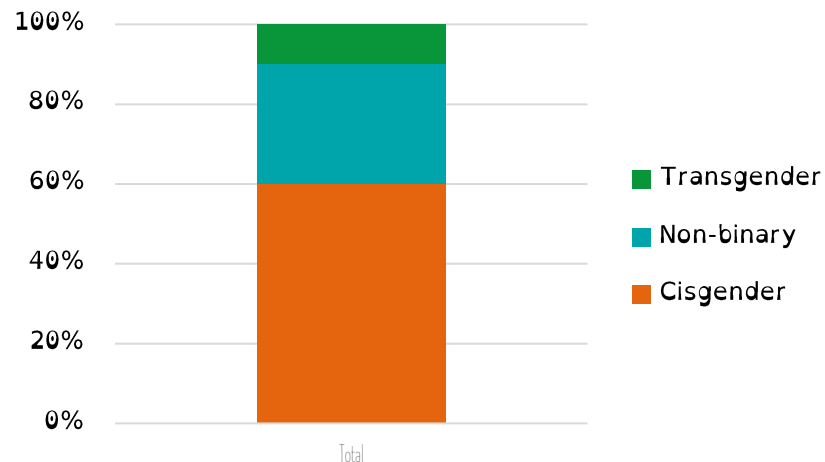
- transitioning: the steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. each person's transition will involve different things. for some, this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this.
- Chest binding: a compression top that is used to flatten chest tissue. Often used to create a more 'masculine' silhouette.
- non-binary: an umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.
- cisgender or cis: someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. non-trans is also used by some people.

Our club demographics and geography

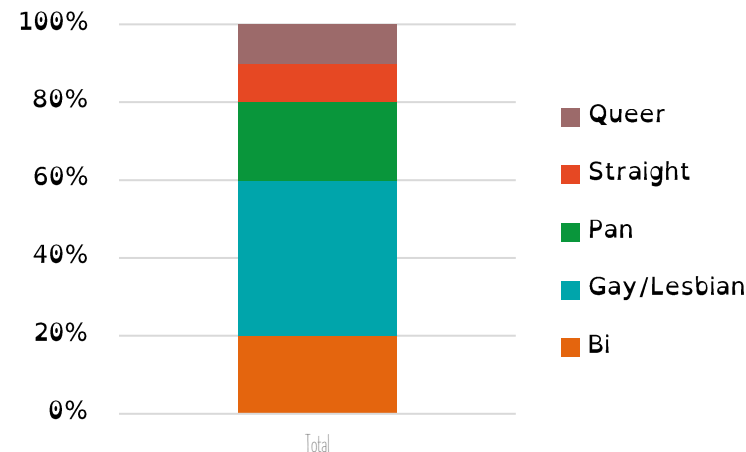
Lets Go Belay and Boulder Together

- Devon based
- 117 members of our Facebook group with 23 active members

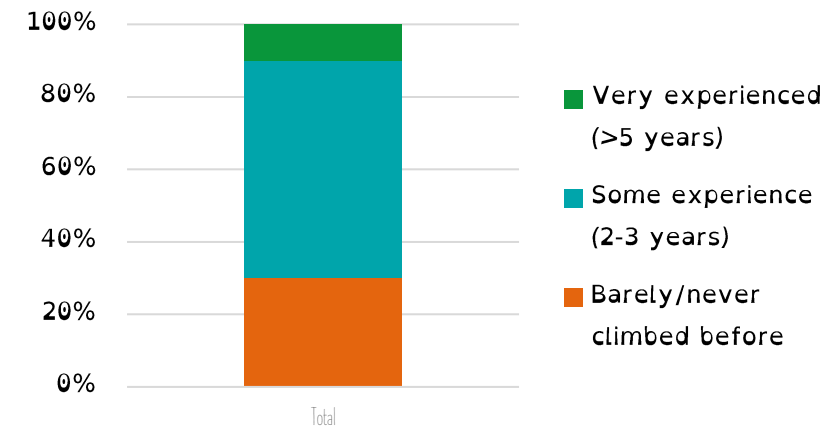
How would you describe your gender identity?



How would you describe your sexual orientation?



When you joined the club, what was your climbing experience?



Our club demographics and geography

NotSoTrad

- **Where:** largely based in London but with members spread across the south of England and further afield.
- **Demographics:**
- **Gender:** 48 men, 39 women, 9 non-binary women, 2 cis men, 1 unknown
- **Age:** < 30 = 15, 30-35 = 23, 35-40 = 19, 40-45 = 16, 45-50 = 12, 50-55 = 8, >55 = 6

why did we start our clubs?

mike (lets go belay & boulder together cc)

“after joining an lgbtq+ choir, a safe community that wasn’t sex or alcohol focussed, and finding friends interested in starting climbing i realised there wasn’t any opportunity to have the same for climbing nearby.”

why did we start our clubs?

robert (not so trad)

- "We were already a group of friends climbing together as part of Gay Outdoors Club. We set up NotSoTrad because we wanted a distinct identity as a climbing club and affiliate with the BMC. We also wanted to raise the profile of LGBT people within the wider climbing community. For some members, NotSoTrad is a safe space, but for others, it's more about being part of a club where you don't feel any expectation (even if it's self-imposed) of representing the whole LGBTQ community, having to explain/educate (or being asked to do so) or even having to decide whether and how to come out, when all you want to do is just climb!"

being an ally

ally: a term used to describe someone who is actively supportive of lgbtq people. it encompasses straight and cisgender allies, as well as those within the lgbtq community who support each other (e.g., a lesbian who is an ally to the bisexual community).

- familiarise yourself with the language
- accept that you will still make mistakes
- educate yourself on the history of LGBT activism
- discover the challenges facing the LGBT community today
- get involved in the community and show your support
- stand up for what you believe in
- admin

lgbtq+ people & community

- LGBT in Britain: Trans report (Stonewall/YouGov) “Two in five trans people (41%) and three in ten non-binary people (31%) have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months”
- “Scottish Trans survey ‘Nonbinary people’s experiences in the UK’ received the following responses to their question: ‘Have you ever avoided any of the following situations because of a fear of being harassed, being read as nonbinary, or being outed (people finding out you’re non-binary)?’ Gyms: 42.2% Clubs or social groups: 39%”
- LGBT+ Sports and Physical Activity Groups: Coronavirus Lockdown Survey “[When] asked whether groups would choose physical or social activity if they could only provide one of these during lockdown, the vast majority (22 out of 32) said that they would prioritise social activity”.

lgbtq+ people, sport and outdoor activity

- “A Bournemouth University (2013) study found homophobic language to be a major issue within sport. In a predominantly heterosexual (80%) group of research participants, homophobic ‘banter’ was used by over a third of people within a sport setting (34%)”.
- Non-Binary People, Sport & Physical Activity “In the UK Government LGBT Survey, nonbinary people scored as one of the lowest groups against ‘Average Life Satisfaction’, averaging only 5.5 out of ten, compared to lesbians and gay men at 6.9 and the wider population at 7.7 respectively.
- The National LGBT Partnership in 2016/7 found that people who identified as something other than male or female were some of the most inactive people amongst LGBT+ populations:
 - 56% of LGBT women were not active enough to maintain good health, compared to 45% of women in the general population
 - 55% of LGBT men were not active enough to maintain good health, compared to 33% of men in the general population
 - 64% of LGBT people who identified as something other than male or female (e.g., genderfluid or genderqueer) were not active enough to maintain good health”

lgbtq+ people, sport and outdoor activity

- **Your Movement Matters survey**

- “Looking at the overall respondents for outdoor climbing, gender fluid, non-binary, trans-male, trans-female and others account for 3% of our outdoor climbing respondents”.
- “18% of indoor climbing respondents identified as being from the LGBTIA+ community, compared to 79% identifying as heterosexual”.
- “15% of outdoor climbing respondents identified as being from the LGBTIA+ community, compared to 82% identifying as heterosexual”.
- “...Indoor climbing respondents are the most diverse in their sexual orientations of all the activity types, the YMM survey investigated”.
- “When asked “What motivates you to participate in the activity that you are most passionate about?”, 71% of our indoor climbing respondents and 66% of our outdoor climbing respondents told us that they participate for their mental health”.
- “For all genders, trad climbing is the activity with the largest participation desire from people who told us they indoor climb”.

Thoughts from members

“It was a nice combination of being able to learn climbing and getting more involved in the local LGBTQ+ community. It felt like it would potentially be a more open and supportive group, and a nice way to find out more about the local LGBTQ+ community. It's definitely made me more confident in climbing. If they are thinking of setting one up then definitely do, as it's been a really nice way for me as a novice climber to get into the activity.” Adam

“I am down staying in Exeter working through a difficult period and thought it would be an excellent challenge as I am scared of heights and a good opportunity to meet people from the local LGBTQ+ community. I identify as a gay man I wanted to hopefully meet some open minded people in a friendly environment. Everyone has been very welcoming which has been appreciated. Give it a try and you never know you may find a new hobby.” Philip Cooper (he/him)

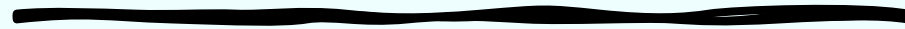
“My partner and I were climbing together, and we wanted to climb with others in the LGBTQ+ community. I love sports and the outdoors. But as a trans man in a same-sex relationship, I felt intimidated about taking part in these activities because they are dominated by cisgender heterosexual men. An LGBTQ+ club allowed me to take part because I was surrounded by others like me who understand the experiences of being in a minority. My climbing has progressed in leaps and bounds; I'm physically stronger, more skilled and have better headgame since joining. I'm more confident socially from feeling like part of a community and making friends. It has been fantastic for my mental health. I didn't think climbing would be for me. I thought I wouldn't be strong enough and wouldn't enjoy it. Now it is my favourite hobby! Climbing is physically and mentally stimulating, and it's all the better for being able to do it with others in the community.” J.C. (he/him)

“To find friends and community who share my love of climbing. I wanted to engage more with my local LGBTQ community and this felt like a less intimidating way to do it. I feel I can show up more fully as myself. Being part of the group helps me feel safe and supported, which makes it easier to try new styles of climbing or venues, things I may feel nervous about.” Matilda (she/ they)

tips and ideas for adding to or starting your own group

- Lots of advice on BMC website (New clubs pack) and from BMC Clubs office Jane Thompson
- Publicise at climbing walls, online forums (e.g. post on UKC)
- Start informally and build your community
- Don't feel you have to follow a format, think about your community.
- Think about simple steps:
 - e.g. pronouns on emails, badges, consent forms.
 - Ask peoples pronouns on meeting.
 - Actively think about how people can be included in your spaces & what barriers there might be?

Questions and comments



Links and resources

- Definitions and Language
 - [List of LGBTQ+ terms \(stonewall.org.uk\)](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/learn-more/terminology)
 - [Binding Information Leaflet – Spectrum Outfitters](#)
 - [Chest Binding: A Physician's Guide | Pride in Practice](#)
- Being an ally
 - [BBC Sounds - Pride & Joy - 10 Ways to Be An LGBTQ+ Ally](#)
 - [ComingOut-Ally-Resource-2020.pdf \(hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](#)
 - [Come Out For LGBT: Becoming an active LGBT ally \(stonewall.org.uk\)](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/learn-more/being-an-ally)
- BMC Club resources
 - [Essential club know-how \(thebmc.co.uk\)](https://www.thebmc.co.uk/essential-club-know-how)
 - [Clubs FAQ](#)
 - [How to affiliate your club with the BMC](#)

Links and resources

- LGBTQ & Outdoors research
 - [pride-sport-sport-physical-activity-and-lgbt-report-2016 \(sportengland\)](#)
 - [Pride Sports | A UK organisation for LGBT+ sports development and equality](#)
 - [Covid-Survey.pdf \(pridesports.org.uk\)](#)
 - [Non-binary.pdf \(pridesports.org.uk\)](#)
 - [Improving equity and diversity in outdoors activities | Leeds Beckett University](#)
 - [Stonewall Research](#)
 - [Stonewall | LGBT in Britain - Trans Report \(2017\)](#)