



Altrincham Football Club Helps Promotes LGBT Issues in Local Schools

A partnership between Altrincham Football Club and the Football versus Homophobia has been working in local schools to improve the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

The first school invited by the partnership to welcome the lecturers was St. Ambrose College in Hale Barns which devoted a day to Football v Homophobia Campaign Director, Lou Englefield to talk to classes about the problems facing the LGBT community, thought to be some seven per cent of the population.



Loe Englefield is pictured during one of her lectures.

Lou explained the idea had come from Altrincham FC's Inclusion Game on Non League Day last October when Altrincham FC made a commitment to get involved in football v Homophobia's Month of Action in February. Last Saturday Altrincham FC designated a game to challenging homophobia with support from FARE, Europe's anti-discrimination network for football. On the day players at Moss Lane wore FvH T shirts in the warm up and messaging was relayed via the speakers, the programme, leaflets and pitch-side banners to promote a positive message of inclusion.

Lou said: "Our message is that football, is for everyone and that everyone should be able to participate regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity and that football stadia, all sports stadia should be welcoming places for everyone."

Lou told the boys that some 74% of the LGBT young people had experience verbal abuse and that 23% had suffered physical attacks, "so although we are making significant progress there is still a very long way to go."

She added: "We want young people to stop and think about the language they are using, stop stereotyping others and be aware of the alienation such behaviour causes. We want them to challenge themselves and see how their behaviour can affect those around them."

She added: "There are only a handful of openly gay sportspeople in professional football, rugby, cricket in Britain and fewer come out while they are still competing."

She continued: "Look at the Winter Olympics: there are openly gay people competing from Australia, the Netherlands, Canada and the USA, but none from Britain, so Britain is not at the forefront of this issue."

St. Ambrose College Assistant Principal Patrick Groves, said: "The campaign run by Altrincham Football Club and Football v Homophobia means our boys can listen to learn from the experts and understand these important issues with greater depth and sensitivity."