

WHAT YOU CAN DO



**An LGBTIQ+ inclusion
guide for Scottish
football clubs**

Month of Action



February is our Month of Action. You can support the campaign by dedicating one or more fixtures. You could:

- Use screens and tannoy to announce that the match is dedicated to the campaign.
- Invite your club's LGBTIQ+ Supporters Group to walk out with the players, to speak at half time, or to access free/discounted tickets.
- Include campaign information in your programme.
- Post about the campaign on your social media platforms, using the FvH Scotland logo.
- Take a team photo with the FvH Scotland signage, to be shared in press releases and on social media.
- Have players wear FvH Scotland campaign bibs during warm up and on the bench.
- Organise a pre-match game between LGBTIQ+ stakeholders and groups associated with your club.
- Host a hospitality event on your dedicated match day that invites LGBTIQ+ leaders to speak.



These are just suggestions! There are many ways your club can dedicate a match. Our team are here to support you with ideas, but you know what is best for your club.



Develop Your LGBTIQ+ Fanbase

To encourage LGBTIQ+ supporters to attend matches you could:

- Support your fans to establish an LGBTIQ+ Supporters Group if one doesn't exist already.
- If an LGBTIQ+ Supporters Group does already exist, engage with them and celebrate them.
- Be loud and proud about supporting the community on social media and address any incidents of discrimination in a strong and timely manner.
- Get involved in LGBTIQ+ inclusion campaigns, such as the Month of Action in February and Football v Transphobia Week of Action in March.



Fundraising

We ask that clubs involved with the campaign make a concerted fundraising effort during the Month of Action. This could include:

- Buckets and QR codes for donations on match days, shared around the stadium and in your programmes.
- Social media promotion of fundraising.
- Collaborating with us to make your own club merchandise that uses the FvH Scotland branding.





Policies and Procedures

Not having the correct policies and procedures can open your organisation up to scrutiny. Having clear and accessible guidance means that everyone can feel confident in dealing with a situation. Furthermore, it provides the LGBTIQ+ person with the comfort that comes from being heard, and having an appropriate procedure in place.

Reporting

It is our vision that no homophobic incident goes unreported. No matter your organisation's size or impact, you should have clear and robust reporting mechanisms in place. Information on your organisation's reporting mechanism should be readily available if someone observes or is targeted by LGBTIQ+phobia. We see a future where victims and witnesses know where to turn; are supported not interrogated when they report; and have their reports treated with the utmost sensitivity.

Being Proactive

It is best to be proactive rather than reactive. It is important that throughout documentation and communications, a strong stance against LGBTIQ+phobia is made clear. Such statements encourage people to assess their own language and behaviour, and they make LGBTIQ+ people feel safer knowing that discrimination and abuse will not be tolerated.

Being Responsive

A strong response to incidents of LGBTIQ+phobia plays a huge role in eradicating its ugliness from the beautiful game, and it shows that your organisation stands on the side of inclusion. Some people see football as a space to make derogatory comments. Football is an emotional game, but culprits should know when they are stepping out of line and should be educated on the impact of their words and actions.

Trans Inclusion

We strive for a future in which trans people are able to gain the same benefits from football as everyone else. Because football is categorised as a gender affected sport, trans participation as a competitive player can be limited by certain conditions set by leagues and other administrators. It's important that your organisation understand these restrictions and remains inclusive outwith the rules of competition.



Education

Education is central to creating a long term culture shift. We encourage you to educate yourself and those in your organisation so that they are aware of the issues which may arise, are alert and responsive to discrimination and abuse, and are proactive in creating an inclusive environment. A comprehensive education on this topic will give people the confidence to speak up about LGBTIQ+ equality related issues, and provide them with the skillset to respond to LGBTIQ+phobia in the most effective way.

On LGBTIQ+phobia

Although considerable progress has been made in wider Scottish society, many people view football as a space in which it is still fair game to use homophobic language. Some people use this language as ‘banter’ without thinking that what they are saying has an impact on those around them. This is still homophobic, and may in fact be illegal (Equality Act 2010). Education is the key to shifting people’s attitudes and behaviours. And it is important for knowing where your organisation’s services sit in regard to the law and legislative framework.

On LGBTIQ+ Inclusion

LGBTIQ+ inclusion requires more than just the absence of homophobia. It is important to be aware of other barriers faced by LGBTIQ+ people and understand how these impact on access to and satisfaction with football. For example, stereotypes surrounding football and lesbian people create a complex terrain, whilst facilities can cause problems for trans and non-binary people. Familiarising those in your organisation with these issues can make you more approachable and give you food for thought on how best to remove these barriers.

Training Opportunities

There are a selection of organisations which offer training sessions, you may also find some useful material online. Whatever the method, we encourage you to choose educational routes which suit your organisation’s audience and effectively cover areas where improvement is possible. Football v Homophobia Scotland offer a range of training options which may be of interest.



Communication

Perfecting policy & procedure and educating your workforce can make a big impact on those in your organisation, but can often go unnoticed by the wider community. So, clear external communication as an important part of LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

Shout About It!

Visibility of the work you have done not only encourages others to do the same, but it shows LGBTIQ+ people outside your network that you are making an effort to include them. Showing solidarity with the LGBTIQ+ community is central in gaining trust and combatting prior discrimination. For many LGBTIQ+ people football has been a negative experience. Whether through playing as a young person, spectating on match days, or working in the world of football, there are wounds to be healed.

Look out for campaigns which can help your organisation with promotion, particularly those with exposure to an LGBTIQ+ audience. Football v Homophobia Month of Action takes place every February and Football v Transphobia Week of Action takes place in March. These campaigns give your club an opportunity to showcase your good work and take your place in an international, united stand against LGBTIQ+phobia in football.

Responding to Incidents

Unchallenged LGBTIQ+phobia discourages people from participating in football. It creates an unsafe environment for LGBTIQ+ people, their families, and their friends, and it damages the reputation of the sport. Failing to respond to LGBTIQ+phobia encourages further discrimination. It is on this aspect of communication that many football stakeholders fail, as they do not see this as their responsibility or are scared of a critical response from fans. However, in the circumstances where teams, clubs, leagues, coaches, players and bodies have publicly communicated their disapproval, the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

Collaboration

Plenty of LGBTIQ+ community groups exist in Scotland, many of which can be found at equality-network.org/resources/directory/ and leapsports.org/clubs. By building links with these groups your organisation can harness local knowledge and expertise in LGBTIQ+ inclusion, and reach new communities. And they may even be happy to work in partnership with you on a campaign to tackle LGBTIQ+phobia.