



To anyone in football and who does not feel comfortable with their sexuality, wearing rainbow laces is a great way of showing your support as an ally for #LGBTQ+. The more we are vocal and show support, the more people can be their authentic self in the beautiful game.

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FA-Qualified Referee officiating in the EFL and National League - the first openly-gay referee in England's professional leagues.

# Top tips for referees

The role of a match officials is crucial to our game. This is why it's so amazing and important each year, to see match officials get behind the campaign and show their commitment to LGBTQ+ equality in our game. Below are some great tips on how match officials can continue to play their part in the Rainbow Laces campaign and ensure that our game is safe and inclusive for all.

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE CAMPAIGN

- Lace up and show your support by getting your laces [here](#). Being a visible ally may give someone the confidence to speak out or come out.
- Check in with your refereeing team and start the conversation in your pre-match, e.g. ask them if you have rainbow laces and if they're comfortable wearing them?
- Have a conversation this could be on the way to the game, dressing room, warm up or even post-match – see potential conversation starters on the previous page, e.g. "What can we do to make sports more welcoming for LGBTQ+ people?" and "Would you challenge someone saying hateful towards LGBTQ+ people?"

## TOP TIPS TO ALLYSHIP

- **Your language** – Pause, think and consider the impact of what you are about to say. Just because it has always been said, does that make it ok?
- **Don't assume** – Avoid using language that makes assumptions about another person's gender identity or even the gender of their partner. It's far more inclusive to say things like 'going home to your partner?' rather than 'Mr or 'Mrs'.
- **Challenge slurs** – If you don't feel comfortable or don't think what someone has said is right, speak up and take action. For example, you could challenge the person by asking them why they have said that, and if they know what the impact of those words will have on others.

By saying something, you will make others around you feel safe and more supported, even if you don't know it.

- **Educate yourself to understand** – please see LGBTQ people's experiences in sport for some educational resources.
- **Look after your refereeing family** – help create an environment where everyone feels they belong; be approachable and be supportive

- **Be clear on how to report offensive/abusive language involving discriminatory comments** – See the [Appendix](#) to the document you're reading for The FA's guidance on reporting.
  - > Remember reporting includes if you heard the comments and if you have been made aware of the comments from someone else - both are as important
  - > Make sure your report is reflective of the incident and includes all details, even if you don't think they are relevant
  - > Ensure that you support, affirm and try and signpost as much as possible for those who have been victims of discriminatory language.