



**ENGLAND
FOOTBALL**



RAINBOW LACES 2021: ACTIVATION PACK

Published: November 2021

**This FA activation pack explains how you can support
Stonewall's Rainbow Laces 2021 campaign,
which is fully endorsed by The FA.**



MAKE FOOTBALL EVERYONE'S GAME.



Contents

- 4 / Introduction**
- 5 / Welcome to the 2021 Rainbow Laces Campaign**
- 7 / Key dates**
- 8 / Activating your community**
- 10 / Key messages**
- 12 / Key statistics**
- 13 / Conversation starters**
- 14 / Top tips for referees**
- 18 / PressBox Graphics: The home of all your #Rainbowlaces content creation**
- 19 / PressBox Graphics: How does it work?**
- 20 / Appendix: Supplementary Guidance Note on Offensive/Abusive Language involving discriminatory comments**

Introduction



We've recently launched our three-year equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, A Game For All, which outlines our long-term commitment to use our influence to create a game free from discrimination. We passionately believe everyone should have the opportunity to be involved in football, and to feel safe and comfortable when they do. One of the ways we show this is by

supporting campaigns which align with our own beliefs, such as the Rainbow Laces campaign. And this year, our collective effort encourages action, under the theme of Lace Up and Speak Up.

Working with Stonewall UK and all across football we are moving the laces on from not only being a symbol of inclusion, but also being a pledge of commitment; a commitment to speak up in the conversations that matter.

By wearing Rainbow Laces, we're asking people to not only show their support, but to go one step further and open up the conversation about why they support the cause. To speak to friends, family, colleagues, teams and clubs because every conversation matters if we are to truly make football everyone's game.



Mark Bullingham
FA Chief Executive



As The FA National Game Board Chair, it's great to see support for this campaign. Over the last five years, we know that more than a million people have laced up to show their support and Stonewall UK have shared that 12 million participants engage with the Rainbow Laces campaign every year. We hope to see this campaign build each year as we continue to recognise and affirm the importance of LGBTQ+ representation across our game at all levels on and off the pitch.



Sue Hough
Chair, The FA National Game Board

Welcome to the 2021 Rainbow Laces campaign

OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS, YOU HAVE LED A HUGE AMOUNT OF SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ+ PEOPLE IN SPORT BY TAKING PART IN RAINBOW LACES.

More than a million people have laced up, and 12 million participants engage every year. Thanks to your support:

- 78 per cent of sport fans who saw the campaign considered that LGBTQ+ people are part of the sport community
- 66 per cent of fans who saw the campaign feel they have a responsibility to stick up for LGBTQ+ fans of the teams and sports they follow,
- result of seeing the campaign, 45 per cent of sports fans believe they would be more likely to challenge anti LGBTQ+ language at live sport fixtures.

Laces have brought the awareness. Now we all need to bring the conversation.

RAINBOW LACES: WHERE WE STAND TODAY

The Rainbow Laces campaign unites everyone who cares about sport and fitness to create a world where every LGBTQ+ person can thrive wherever they train, play or watch sport.

- In 2021, we have refreshed and re energised the Rainbow Laces campaign. Over the last five years, more than one million people have laced up to show their support for LGBTQ+ communities in sport and fitness, from Premier League players and Olympians, to youth cricket teams and Saturday morning runners.
- But for all the progress we've made as sports bodies, as brands and as individuals, there are still those who bully and exclude LGBTQ+ people in sport, and gym by gym, team by team, LGBTQ+ people aren't always supported and respected to participate or spectate.
- So many individuals feel faced with a choice. A choice between loving their sport and being their true selves. But we believe that none of us should feel unable to participate in or enjoy our passion and hold back who we are.
- Rainbow Laces have become a symbol of inclusion in sport, have raised awareness and support. But have they changed the conversation?

LACE UP AND SPEAK UP: HOW THIS DRIVES CHANGE

- By focusing on a simple action, we hope we can make it as clear as possible what we want people to learn, feel and do as a result of engaging with the Rainbow Laces campaign, whether they are interacting with their football club on social media, following coverage of the campaign on TV or getting involved in it with their teammates.
- We know that so many in our sport communities are willing to support LGBTQ+ inclusion, but lack the confidence and knowledge to do so. By focusing on supporting people to 'start the conversation' and providing tools to help them feel confident, we hope we can encourage thousands more people to take that leap of faith and become more confident in speaking up about LGBTQ+ inclusions with those around them.
- This is a significant step forward for the campaign, but one we know that sport fans and participants are willing to make. Encouraging people to take that step together, as part of a wider movement, will help people break through their lack of confidence.



Welcome to the 2021 Rainbow Laces campaign (continued)

Our committee have worked together to make this year's campaign even more accessible and engaging

Each County FA has their own dedicated mentor to pick up any queries related to your planning. The committee would like to thank you for your support and working towards making this campaign the biggest to date, by asking County FAs taking part.

THE FA'S RAINBOW LACES COMMITTEE:

Jehmeil Lemonius, Funke Awoderu, Arran Williams, Ash Slaughter, Andrew Whittaker, Alex West, Kirsty Smith, Gemma White, Conor Ogilvie-Davidson.

YOUR MENTORS

Arran Williams

Arran.Williams@TheFA.com

Areas covered: Amateur FA, Army, Essex, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, London, Middlesex, Norfolk, RAF, Royal Navy

Alex West

Alex.West@ManchesterFA.com

Areas covered: Cumberland, Durham, Isle of Man, Manchester, East Riding North Riding, Northumberland, Staffordshire, Westmorland

Gemma White

Gemma.White@TheFA.com

Areas covered: Berks & Bucks, Guernsey, Hampshire, Jersey, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Match Officials

Andrew Whitaker

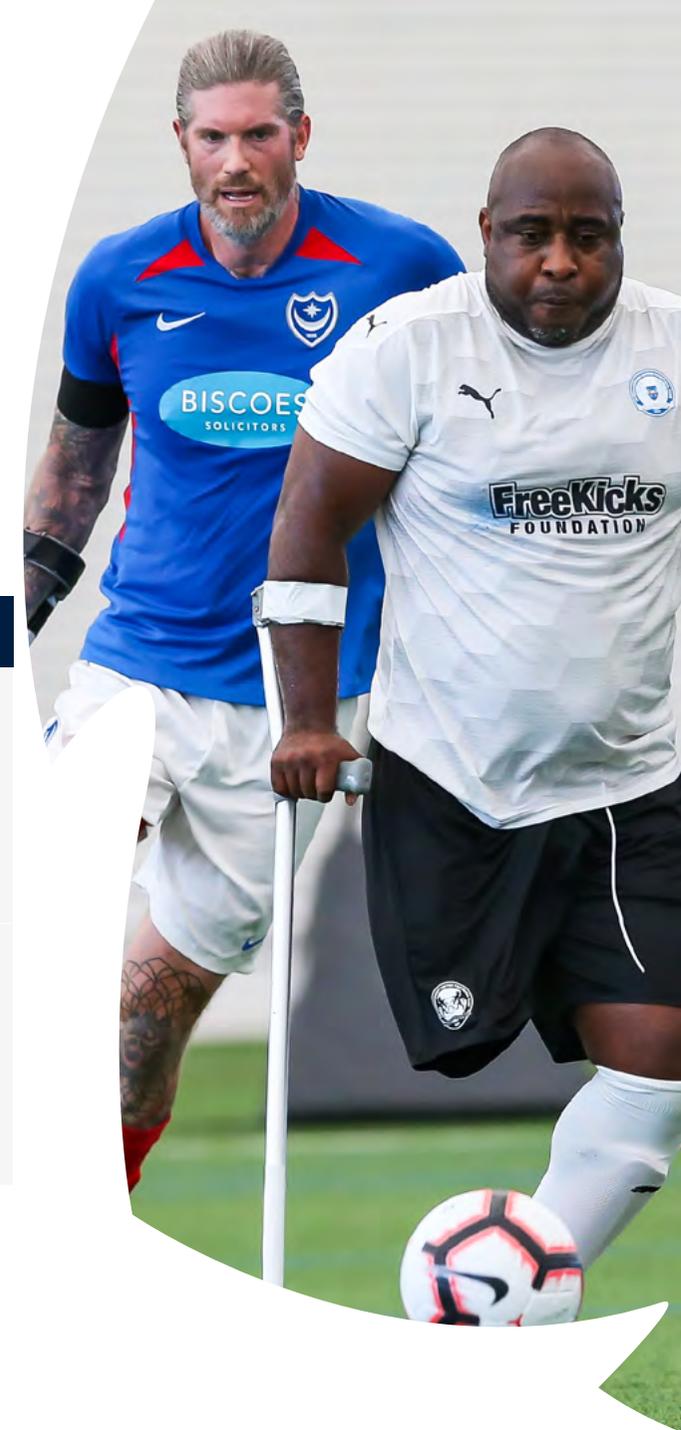
Andrew.Whitaker@LancashireFA.com

Areas covered: Cheshire, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, West Riding, Wiltshire, Worcestershire, Lancashire

Kirsty Smith

Kirsty.Smith@SuffolkFA.com

Areas covered: Bedfordshire, Birmingham, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire & Rutland, Lincolnshire, Liverpool, Northamptonshire, Sheffield & Hallamshire, Suffolk



Key dates

Friday 25 November – Sunday 12 December: Activation weeks

Any days or weekends in the above period work for Rainbow Laces activations – the start and end dates are inclusive.

Think creatively of ways to activate your campaign. From 1 November, you will have access to an incredible range of digital assets through PressBox (see page 18) to use on social media to show your support.

How about using rainbow colours in your Twitter profile image and using #RainbowLaces when posting content?

Wednesday 8 December: **Wear Your #RainbowLacesDay**

Teams, leagues, businesses, schools and leading sports people all over the world will be getting together to wear their Rainbow Laces to work, taking pictures and posting them on social media, showing they are Coming Out for LGBT+ people in sport.

Apart from lacing up, Rainbow Laces Day is the time to speak up too.

We recommend using this day to share content from leaders and high profile individuals in your community, bringing their conversations to your audiences and talking about why LGBTQ+ inclusion matters and what they will do to make a difference.



Other key football dates in the Rainbow Laces activation period:

FIFA World Cup Qualifier: England Lionesses,
Saturday 27th November v Austria and
Tuesday 30th November v Latvia.

Vitality Women's FA Cup Final 2021:
Sunday 5th December

Men's Emirates FA Cup Second Round Proper:
Saturday 4th December

Barclays FA WSL fixtures:
Sunday 12th December

Activating your community

INSPIRING ACTION WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

Over the course of the campaign (25 November to 12 December) we encourage you to take these actions in whatever way fits your schedule. The main activation day is Rainbow Laces Day on 8 December, when everyone will come together online and in our communities to show their support.

The key action this year is to Lace Up and Speak Up. Rainbow Laces have brought the awareness, and now you need to bring the conversation.

SO WHAT DOES THIS INVOLVE?

- Order laces for your communities or encourage them to order laces.
- Organise activations and produce digital content to provoke positive, constructive conversations across your communities about LGBTQ+ inclusion.



AND WHAT DOES SPEAKING UP LOOK LIKE?

- A mass campaign action for your community have a conversation on Rainbow Laces Day (8 December) using 'conversation starters' to talk about why LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport matters and what they can do
- Well known allies or LGBTQ+ people talking about what LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport looks like, featured on your social media channels over the course of the campaign
- Events focused on LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport that give profile to LGBTQ+ people your community whether you play together, train together, support together or work together.

[Click here to let Stonewall know your plans to celebrate to campaign](#)





As a County FA, we're delighted to participate and support this Rainbow Laces. The wearing of laces in clubs, leagues and by officials across Lancashire is promoted and shows how important football can be in promoting inclusion.

Jackie Day-Garner
Director, Lancashire FA

Rainbow Laces is a hugely important campaign promoting inclusion in football and wider society. It helps to raise awareness, start positive discussions, promote fairness and equity for the LGBTQ+ community. As Chair of a County FA IAG, I am proud to wear my rainbow laces and promote fairness and inclusion throughout the work of the County FA and the grassroots game.

Professor Surinder Sharma
Non-Executive Director and
Inclusion Advisory Group
Chair at Leicestershire &
Rutland County FA

Key messages

LONG VERSION

It started with a lace.

We're so proud of our Rainbow Laces, worn in support of LGBTQ+ equality.

With more than a million people lacing up in rainbow so far, we are Team PROUD.

But something's still tied up in knots.

Large parts of the LGBTQ+ community still feel unwelcome at sporting events, where the thrill should be a guaranteed result.

There are still those who bully, belittle and exclude, meaning team by team, event by event, LGBTQ+ people feel out of place.

Reluctant to participate. Uncomfortable to spectate. Nervous to truly be their true selves.

But just think.

How much stronger would we be if we worked together?

We're all part of the same team, and our support is far stronger if we celebrate our differences. Sport is for all, so everyone is welcome, coming just as they are.

Laces have brought the awareness. Now we all need to bring the conversation.

Speak up for someone you know in the LGBTQ+ community.

Someone that matters.

What can we all do to make every person feel welcome?

It's 2021. Let's have the conversations to make the next [INSERT EVENT] event a place for everyone.

Lace up. Make sport everyone's game.

MEDIUM VERSION

Over one million people have laced up in support of LGBTQ+ equality.

But something's still tied up in knots.

Large parts of the LGBTQ+ community still feel unwelcome at sporting events.

Reluctant to participate. Uncomfortable to spectate. Nervous to truly be their true selves.

But just think.

How much stronger would we be if we supported as one unified force, instead of turning on our own?

Sport is for all, so everyone is welcome, free from discrimination.

Rainbows raised the awareness. Now it's time to find your voice.

Think about someone you know in the LGBTQ+ community.

How can we all make every person feel welcome?

It's 2021. Let's make the next [INSERT EVENT] a place for everyone.

Lace up. Make sport everyone's game.

SHORT VERSION

Over a million of us have laced up in support of LGBTQ+ equality in sport. But many in this community still feel unwelcome in sport and fitness. Because people bully, belittle and exclude, making them feel out of place. Sport is for all, and everyone should be welcome.

Laces have brought the awareness. Now we all need to speak up with those around us. And make sure everyone feels empowered to support with pride.

Lace up. Make sport everyone's game.

Key messages (continued)

These should be personalised and included in any of your social media content. It's always much better when it sounds like something you would say yourself.

**Make Football Everyone's Game:
It's down to you to be
an active ally.**

**Most fans want football to be
everyone's game. Wear Rainbow
Laces to show your support for
LGBT+ people.**

**LGBT+ people are part of our club
community. Let's celebrate them,
share their stories, and show
our support.**

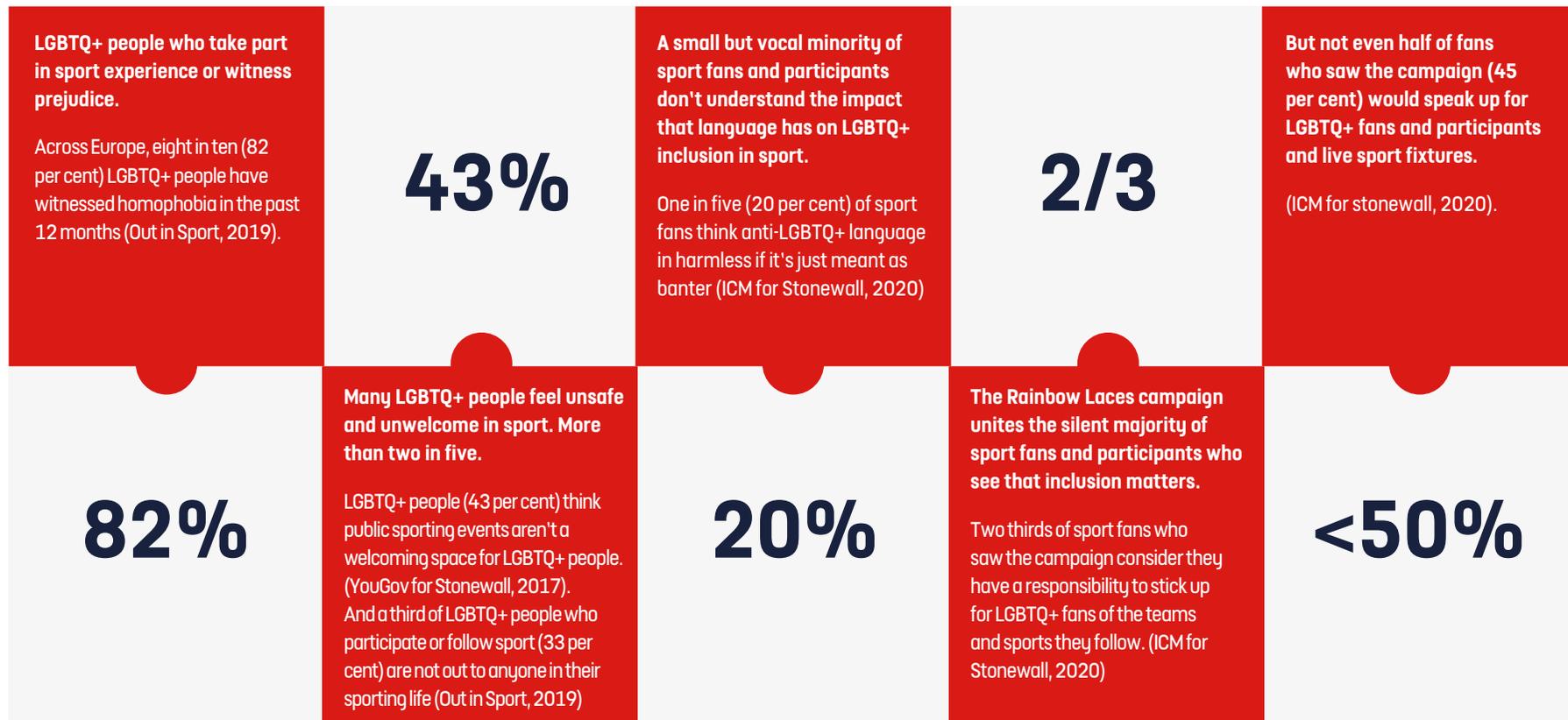
**Abuse isn't banter. Be an active
ally to LGBT+ people: challenge
slurs and report homophobia,
transphobia and biphobia when
you see it.**

**Wear Rainbow Laces and
show your support on social
media by using the official
hashtags #RainbowLaces and
#RainbowLacesDay.**

**Remember: Wearing Rainbow
Laces means you support LGBT+
inclusion, not that you necessarily
identify as LGBT+.**

Key statistics

Here are some key statistics to use on your social channels and to share with friends, family and colleagues. They highlight the significant role and importance of the Rainbow Laces Campaign.



Conversation starters

Supporting LGBTQ+ communities through the power of allyship of conversation

- What can we do to make sports more welcoming for LGBTQ+ people?
- Do you think people perform better when they can be themselves?
- Do you think attitudes are changing towards LGBTQ+ people in sport?
- How can we support LGBTQ+ people to not give up on their sporting dreams?
- Would you challenge someone saying hateful towards LGBTQ+ people?
- What does Rainbow Laces mean to you?

HAVING THE RIGHT MINDSET

- Approach the situation with the right intentions
- Be understanding, interested and willing to learn
- Be happy to make the first move and be curious
- Don't assume anything before you start speaking

OUR RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP

- 10 tips to step up as an ally to LGBTQ+ people in sport <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/10-tips-step-ally-lgbtq-people-sport>
- Listen to LGBTQ+ people's experiences of sport <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/personal-experiences-sport>
- Support for children and young people to engage in LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/rainbow-laces-2020-ideas-schools-and-colleges>





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.

Ryan T Atkin
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.



▮▮ The Rainbow Lace campaign has had an amazing impact. It allows clubs, teams and individuals to visibly support this vital issue, sending a strong message about how we can all play our part to ensure football is open to everyone.

Andrew Cook
Chief Executive, Northumberland FA





The Rainbow Laces campaign is very important to our County and football as a whole as it helps us to demonstrate our support as an ally to our LGBTQ+ community.

Last season's campaign saw more clubs and referees engage with the campaign than ever before, vocalising their support publicly via their own social media platforms, at games and dedicated club events. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community myself, this campaign so important as it enables us to start conversations and educate people around the importance of inclusivity within football so that everyone feels comfortable and welcome to play.

The laces are a great visualisation of the campaign and seeing pictures of players, teams and clubs wearing their laces with pride, sparking conversations has been brilliant to see!

Rachael Lawler-Edwards
Football Development Officer -
Female Participation and Inclusion, Somerset FA

PressBox Graphics: The home of all your #RainbowLaces content creation

You don't need laces to join in

Help us make 2021's activation of Stonewall's Rainbow Laces campaign the biggest and most visual to date by sharing your stories and support of LGBTQ+ inclusion in football.

The FA has worked with its partners at PressBox to create a range of editable digital assets for you to use in the lead-up and throughout the campaign window – **free of charge!**

PressBox is simply a website that you log in to, create your digital assets, save them and post them to social media or use them across your website.

PressBox can be accessed from week commencing 15 November 2021 from the Rainbow Laces page on your website for you to use and share. Simply click the link and register for an account to access the dashboard. Create everything from a fixture list, matchday line-ups, half and full-time scores, plus post-match quotes and pledges of support. You can edit every asset to make it truly yours whilst being part of a national campaign and supporting LGBTQ+ inclusion across the sport of football.



PressBox Graphics: How does it work?

Please note: Anyone with a Playing Surface account will be able to log in to this new platform with the same details as they did for Playing Surface and any bookmarks to Playing Surface will automatically redirect.

1

Select a template

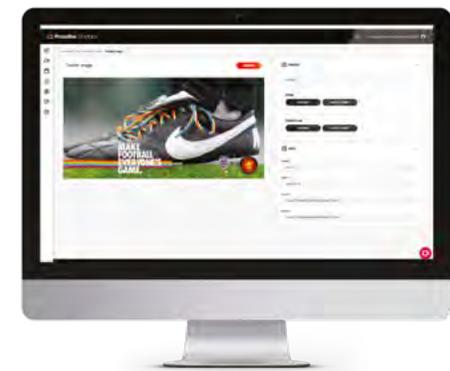
- If you have access to only one project you can do this directly from the dashboard.
- If you have more than one project you can click into the project to see the available templates within it.



2

Customise the graphic on the create page

- Add match text
 - Upload a photo
- TIP:** You can use the blue edit button to zoom in and position your photograph.



3

Download your final image

- The downloaded image can be used in social media or on your website.
- TIP:** A history of the graphics you've created is available via the left menu.



4

Save your canvas

- When you save the graphic you will see a pop up of the final image.
- TIP:** You can close the popup to make adjustments and then save again.



Appendix

Supplementary Guidance Note on Offensive/Abusive Language involving discriminatory comments

IF A MATCH OFFICIAL WITNESSES AN OFFENCE

If a Match Official hears any offensive or abusive comments which include any reference to race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability they must:

- Dismiss the offending player or technical area occupant from the field in accordance with Law 12
- Make full notes of the exact words used as soon as possible. This includes the next stoppage play
- Complete full notes of the incident immediately after the match (e. prior to leaving the changing room). The notes should be retained by all the Match Officials.
- As well as submitting an Extraordinary Incident match report, the Referee should immediately inform their referee appointments officer.

IF A MATCH OFFICIAL IS MADE AWARE OF AN ALLEGED OFFENCE

If a Match Official is made aware of allegations or hears comments from participants or non-participants relating to comments involving race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability they must:

- Make full notes of any discussions as soon as possible. This includes the next stoppage in play. The Football Association encourages players to report any such incidents to the Match Officials as soon as possible. Match Officials may become aware of incidents which they themselves have not witnessed during the course of a game. If this occurs the Referee should ensure that full notes of the incident are made at the time. Again, this may involve discussions with other members of the refereeing team.

- Shortly after the conclusion of the game the referee should then subject to the note below) invite the person who made the allegation, accompanied by a member of their club, into the referee's changing room. The referee should confirm with the player the exact words used in the allegation so that there is certainty on exactly what being reported. The referee should ensure that there is an appropriate environment in the changing room for a discussion of this importance
- Following this meeting the referee should then invite the person who is the subject of the allegation again accompanied by a member of their club, into the changing room. The referee should advise this player of the nature of the allegation. If the player makes any comments these should be recorded. Again the referee should ensure that there is an appropriate environment in the changing room

If an incident occurs and the match officials do not feel suitable security infrastructure is in place we would not expect the referee to put themselves in a position which may impact on their safety. Therefore the sections in red, although ideal, may not be appropriate or advised.

Fundamentally it is important that (a) the referee does not defer responsibility for taking notes regarding the incident until the end of the game, it must be recorded then and (b) you submit an Extraordinary Incident report following the game, irrespective of whether the discriminatory language/behaviour was heard by the referee or reported to the referee.

It is also important that when a Match Official has been made aware of an allegation of discriminatory behaviour that they have not heard themselves, they should also observe and include in their report the behaviours of all involved.

Supplementary Guidance Note on Offensive/Abusive Language involving discriminatory comments (continued)

IF A MATCH OFFICIAL IS ADVISED OF AN ALLEGATION AFTER THE MATCH

Where a Match Official is advised of an allegation after the match they should ensure that full notes of the allegation are made prior to leaving the changing room.

- The notes should include timings and be as accurate as possible including reported speech
- The notes should document all participants in attendance at the meeting or meetings
- The notes should be retained by the Match Officials
- As well as submitting an extraordinary match report the Referee should immediately inform their referee appointments officer
- Match officials are strongly advised not to make any comments to the media regarding any aspect of an allegation of this nature.

POST-MATCH REPORTING

It is incumbent upon the match referee to report any discriminatory behaviour as part of their misconduct reporting process following the game. Any offence which has been heard, seen or any allegation made (irrespective of its origins) must be reported as an Extraordinary Incident following the game.





ENGLAND
FOOTBALL



FOR ALL

The Football Association
Wembley Stadium
London HA9 0WS
T: +44 (0)800 169 1863
F: +44 (0)800 169 1864
E: equality@TheFA.com
W: TheFA.com

21552