



A short guide to

ALLYSHIP

for LGBTQ+ Allies

#proudally



RAINBOW
BLADES

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Founder & Chair, Rainbow Blades

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and gender identity



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Thank you for joining Rainbow Blades Sheffield United's LGBT+ & allies supporter group



Welcome from James Laley Founder & Chair of Rainbow Blades and Sheffield Rainbow Laces

Rainbow Blades was founded in March 2020 at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Allies of LGBTQ+ people should never underestimate the significant difference they can make to LGBTQ+ people's lives through positive support. This involves recognising that individuals deserve respect and equality, and are able to be themselves openly and honestly with their friends, colleagues and family without fear of their reactions.

One of the hardest things many LGBTQ+ people find difficult, especially early in their lives, is the need to keep 'coming out' i.e. telling another person; family, friend, colleague or acquaintance that they are a LGBTQ+ person. It takes courage and resilience to be so open, especially as others can be less than accepting and even actively discouraging.

The growing number of allies have transformed the experience of LGBTQ+ people. You should never underestimate what you give to LGBTQ+ people by being an ally and an advocate for them. I know many LGBTQ+ people are enormously grateful - allies have helped transform our life experiences.

In deciding to become an ally for LGBTQ+ you are contributing to major societal change, creating a safe environment where all football fans feel safe and empowered. We can all champion this change on our journey to equality in football. On behalf of all LGBTQ+ fans, I would like to thank you for helping us tackle homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Together we can continue to transform LGBTQ+ people's lives, where there are no assumptions about sexuality or gender identity and individuals are valued as a person and for the contribution they make, to society, to our club, and to sport in general.

I look forward to working with my other committee members on your behalf in continuing to build a supporters' group, a club, and a society, where all people can be honest about who they are and what they want to achieve personally and professionally.

James

Your Committee



James Laley
Founder & Chair

We believe that **allies** are instrumental in achieving a **safer** and more enjoyable match day experience for all **Blades**.

Anna Kent
Marketing &
Communications



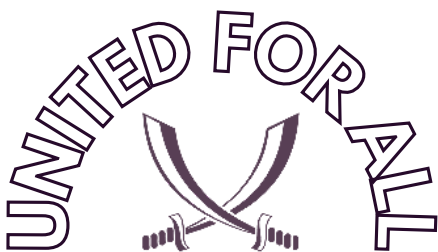
Adam Murray
Sponsorship



Callum Mackay
Events



Michelle Parks
Admin



Tips for being a top **LGBTQ+ Ally.**

- Be there to talk + listen
- Stand up + speak out
- Get involved, join us
- Be open to learning
- Be visible. Stand in **solidarity.**



**PROUD
ALLIES**

Mythbuster: **LGBTQ+ Allyship**

Don't worry. This is why:

- **You don't need to be an expert to be an ally.**
Most LGBTQ+ people aren't experts!
- **We all make mistakes.** *Don't be afraid to ask questions.*
- *You're not stepping on the toes of LGBTQ+ people by being an ally. **Allies are important to the LGBTQ+ community.***
- **LGBTQ+ people can be allies too.**
A gay man might be a trans ally.
- **Anything** you do to pledge your allegiance
is better than nothing.



**PROUD
ALLIES**

RAINBOW BLADES IS A SUPPORTERS' GROUP FOR LGBTQ+ SHEFFIELD UNITED FANS AND PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT AND ADVOCATE FOR THE EQUAL TREATMENT OF ALL THOSE IN THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY.

It provides a forum for fans who identify as LGBTQ+ to get together, and also works with the club on policies affecting LGBTQ+ fans, staff and players. We coordinate and support activities and events to recognise and raise awareness of LGBTQ+ issues. We are passionate about involving and working with allies at Rainbow Blades.

WHAT IS AN ALLY?

An ally is an advocate, supporter and friend. Someone that stands up for their friends, fellow fans and helps to create an environment where LGBTQ+ people feel welcomed and included. An ally stands up for and champions LGBTQ+ equality and challenges homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

An ally is someone who believes that LGBTQ+ people should experience full equality in their everyday lives. Good allies recognise that LGBTQ+ people can perform better if they can be themselves and allies use their role to create a culture where this can happen. Some LGBTQ+ individuals fear that if they come out, their good relationships with family, friends, colleagues and other football fans will change and they may be treated differently. Allies help to create a safe environment for everyone to be able to live their true and authentic lives. Allies can see and influence how the day-to-day experiences of being out as LGBTQ+ actually play out.

IT MATTERS IN FOOTBALL BECAUSE:

7 in 10 Rainbow Blades have experienced or witnessed an incident of LGBT+ discrimination or phobia whilst at Bramall Lane.

65% of Rainbow Blades have viewed incidents of LGBT+ discrimination or phobia around Sheffield United's social media posts or online events.

Three in five fans believe anti-gay abuse from fans dissuades gay professional players from coming out.

66% of LGBT+ people feel that problems with homophobia and transphobia in sport act as a barrier to LGBT+ people taking part.

One in eight LGBT people avoid participating in sports groups because of fear of discrimination and harassment.

*sources: Rainbow Blades & Stonewall

**Allies really can make a difference,
so please do get involved.**

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN LGBTQ+ ALLY AT RAINBOW BLADES

By signing up as an ally you are committing to the following:

BE VISIBLE

The single most important thing you can do as an ally is make yourself visible, so everyone knows that Sheffield United and Bramall Lane is a football club and a stadium where fans feel safe and enjoy being themselves, not hiding it. There are lots of things you can do to show your visible support. You can wear a Rainbow Blades pin badge, Proud Allies pin badge or one of our t-shirts.

Being visible means that LGBTQ+ fans know that you are positive about LGBT+ inclusion.

GET TO KNOW THE ISSUES

If they are happy to, make time to talk to LGBTQ+ fans, family members and friends about their experiences, as well as staying informed about LGBTQ+ issues. There are number of ways you can do this. You can read articles and information, attend Rainbow Blades social events or use the resources section on the Rainbow Laces website: shefflplaces.com. We'll help by sending you regular email updates. You can also visit external websites such as www.stonewall.org.uk. The more active you are as an ally, the more people you'll meet and the more you'll learn about the LGBTQ+ spectrum. If you have any questions, please email us at: rainbowblades@outlook.com.

DON'T 'OUT' PEOPLE WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT

Coming out is personal and different for everyone. Some people are out to the world, others only come out to a select few. It is not your place to divulge someone else's sexual orientation or gender identity, unless you have their consent to do so. Coming out can be hard enough, choosing who to come out to is another dimension of this. Even if you are well intentioned, it is not your story to tell. It can be unsafe to out LGBTQ+ people.

EMBRACE THINGS EVEN IF YOU DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND THEM

Every person is different and that means we all come across things that we might not understand or that are new or different to us. It's okay to not fully understand a person's identity as long as you don't judge them - curiosity will get you further than judgement.

CHALLENGE HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOUR

Many of us have heard homophobic slurs when at football matches being directed at players or match officials. This needs to be addressed. Before challenging the inappropriate behaviour, you should also check to see if the person affected is okay and ask if they feel that it was inappropriate, as people can have different opinions on what they find offensive.

If you believe that what has happened needs to be challenged, this can be done in a way that is non-aggressive. If you don't feel comfortable challenging this behaviour, the best thing you can do is to report this to a steward. You can also report any abuse or threats to the police or let the club know what you have experienced. The key aim is to ensure that everyone feels safe on match days and that we call all attend matches without fear or hesitation, being comfortable with who we are and not hiding any part of us.

Reporting to Kick It Out.

<https://www.kickitout.org/forms/online-reporting-form>

Reporting to Sheffield United.

complaints@sufc.co.uk

AVOID MAKING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SOMEONE'S ORIENTATION OR IDENTITY

This can be hard to remember, but can make a real difference to people. It's as simple as remembering to ask 'do you have a partner?' instead of 'do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife?' Do not make assumptions about the pronouns that an individual uses.

CHAMPION BEING AN ALLY AND GET OTHERS INVOLVED

It is really important that as many Sheffield United fans are aware of the allies programme, what it means to be an ally and why this is important in promoting an inclusive club.



#proudally



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The list below includes some of the most common terms used when people talk about their sexual orientation or gender identity. However, this is not an exhaustive list and more information and the latest version of this glossary can be found at www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/glossary-terms

These terms relate to a person's sexual orientation - their emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person.

ALLY

A (typically) straight and/or cisgender person (see definition on the next page) who supports the LGBTQ+ community. It could however be a bi-person being an ally to their lesbian friend or acquaintance.

ASEXUAL (OR ACE)

Someone who does not experience sexual attraction.

BISEXUAL OR BI

Refers to a person who has an emotional and/or sexual orientation towards multiple genders.

COMING OUT

When a person tells someone/ others about their identity as a LGBTQ+ person. This is something LGBTQ+ people do again and again as they "come out" to different people throughout their life.

GAY

Refers to a man or woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards the same sex/gender. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality. Some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.

HETEROSEXUAL/ STRAIGHT

Refers to a person who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards people of the opposite sex/gender.

HOMOSEXUAL

This might be considered a more medical term used to describe someone who has an emotional romantic and/or sexual orientation towards someone of the same gender. The term 'gay' is now more generally used.

LESBIAN

Refers to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women.

LGBTQ+

The acronym for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer and other minority sexualities or genders.

OUTED

When an LGBTQ+ person's sexual orientation or gender identity is disclosed to someone else without their consent, as opposed to the individual coming out.

QUEER

In the past a derogatory term for LGBTQ+ individuals. The term has now been reclaimed by some LGBTQ+ people in particular who don't identify with traditional categories around gender identity and sexual orientation, but is still viewed to be derogatory by some.

The terms below refer to a person's gender identity, that is, their internal sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else (see non-binary below). Individuals may identify differently to what's on this list and a person's gender identity and pronouns may change over time.

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.

SEX

Assigned to a person on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are interchanged to mean 'male' or 'female'.

INTERSEX

Non-typical hormonal, chromosomal or physical features for their sex

NON-BINARY

An umbrella term for a person who does not identify as a man or woman exclusively.

TRANS

An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) Transgender, Transsexual, Gender-queer (GQ), Gender-fluid, Non-binary, Gender-variant, Genderless, Agender, Nongender, Third gender, Two-spirit, Bi-gender, Transman, Transwoman, Trans masculine, Trans feminine and Neutrois.

TRANSGENDER WOMAN

A term used to describe someone who was not assigned female at birth but identifies as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female.

TRANSGENDER MAN

A term used to describe someone who was not assigned male at birth but identifies as a man. This may be shortened to trans man or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.

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 a medical transition, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing appearance.



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