



2024/25 STRATEGY





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FOREWORD

As we enter our 5th season as Sheffield United's official, affiliated and award-winning LGBTQ+ & allies supporters' group, we remain determined in our goal.

We will continue to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion, support and engage our members, continue to foster a sense of belonging, create safe spaces for fans, work on campaigns and be the leader in our field.

Rainbow Blades, Sheffield United & Sheffield United Community Foundation have undertaken significant work in this area and I am proud of what we have collectively achieved to date.

This new strategy builds on the past 4 seasons and the work already carried out and the activity and initiatives in place.

Our work will continue to centre around our members, socials, community engagement and campaigns.

I look forward to seeing what we can all achieve as we work together to ensure we are United for All.

James Laley

Founder & Chair, Rainbow Blades



INTRODUCTION

Rainbow Blades has established itself as a credible and respected football supporters' group. This was recognised in 2022 when we won a national award. The Fans for Diversity award from the Football Supporters Association. We have helped at least half a dozen new LGBTQ+ supporters' groups in their early days and have become one of the largest LGBTQ+ supporters' groups in the country and football pyramid in just 4 seasons standing at over 750 members.

Now we are established, we must continue to the same high standard, consolidate what we already do and have that as normal practice every season, whilst always looking at new ways to promote Diversity & Inclusion.

The 2024/25 strategy will demonstrate this whilst looking at new ideas, it will also incorporate a long term vision.

We will also continue to work with our closest allies, Sheffield United & the Community Foundation. It's important this remains an open, honest and transparent relationship built on respect for one another whilst also having the reassurance that we have the freedom to challenge when it is needed.

We are very excited about the season ahead and what we can all achieve. We hope our membership is just as excited and positive about the future.



MISSION

Empower LGBTQ+ Blades & Allies

To celebrate diversity and inclusion, drive positive change in attitudes and increase LGBTQ+ visibility whilst ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for all at Sheffield United Football Club



VISION

United for all

Create a fully inclusive environment where all LGBTQ+ Blades can be their authentic selves

MEMBERSHIP



2020/21



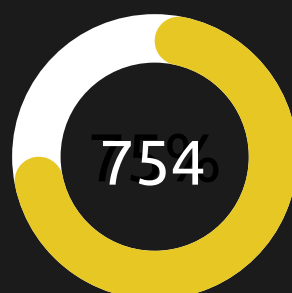
2021/22



2022/23

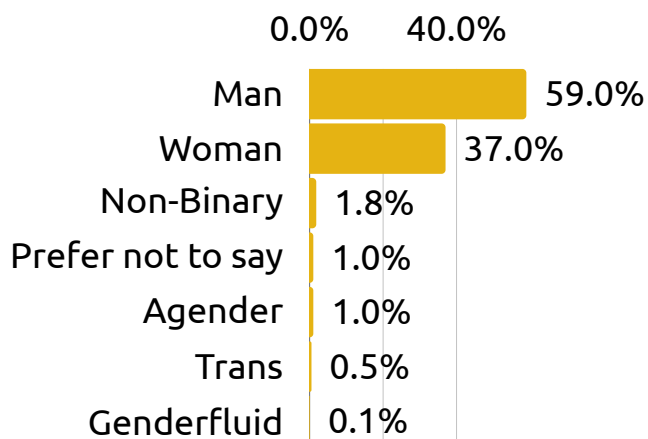


2023/24

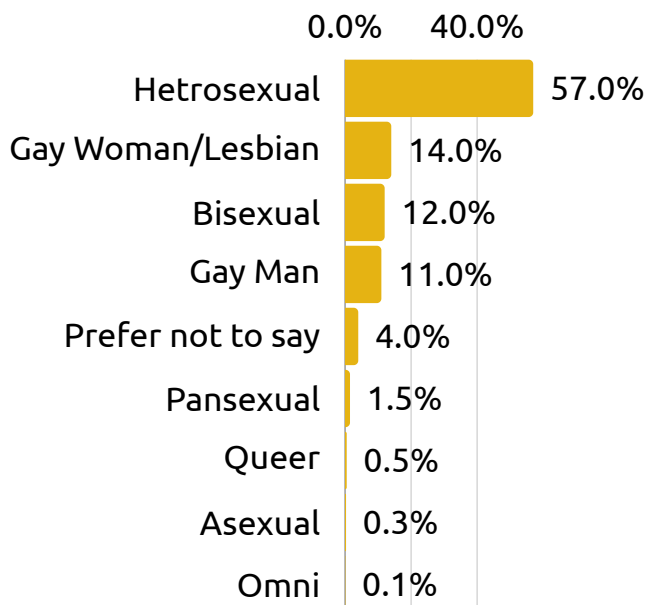


MEMBERSHIP

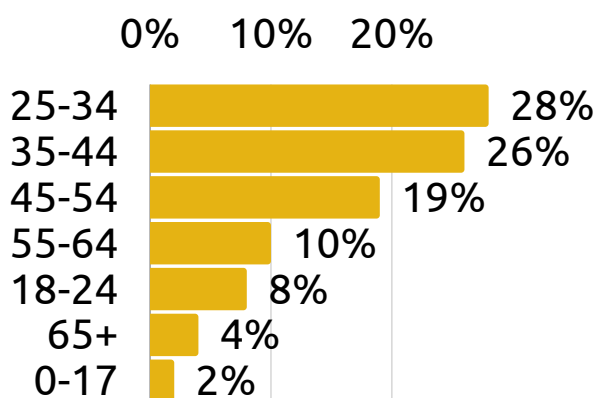
GENDER IDENTITY



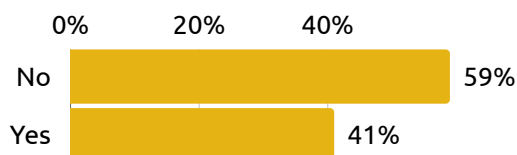
SEXUAL ORIENTATION



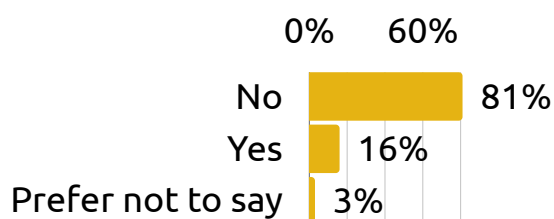
AGE



SEASON TICKET HOLDER



DISABILITY OR IMPAIRMENT



ETHNICITY



THEMES



Social

Events for our members. Matchday & non-matchday.



Campaigns

Nationally recognised such as Rainbow Laces & Football v Homophobia and any outside of this that Rainbow Blades decide to develop such as Play your Part.



Community

City wide activity such as IDAHoBIT & events that fit the groups ethos. Whilst also maintaining the regional alliance and wider footballing community.



Partnerships

Preserving the sponsors we have whilst identifying new ones, Supporting our charity partner, SAYiT, continue to have a strong relationship with SUFC & SUCF and continue our agreement with matchday social venue, LYKKE.



Results

Grow our membership, improve key metrics and encourage award participation.



SOCIAL



SOCIAL	DESCRIPTION
Matchday & non-matchday socials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to run a matchday social at LYKKE for all home games.• Start to invite opposition LGBTQ+ supporters' group.• Trial a women's matchday social.• Continue to have a rolling programme of non-matchday socials (Ideas from the member survey)• Advertise the matchday socials in advance.
5th Birthday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold a 5th Birthday event.• Potentially tie in with a Rainbow Blades fundraiser at the Double Tree.



CAMPAIGNS



CAMPAIGN	DESCRIPTION
Rainbow Laces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to mark Rainbow Laces as the gold standard of LGBTQ+ football campaigns. • Raise the bar on 2023/24 with new innovative ideas to mark the campaign. • Continue with selecting 2 to 3 new key activities. • Rainbow Laces campaign will be planned in a working group with SUFC & SUCF. • Rainbow Laces week of activity.
Football v Homophobia month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FvH campaign is more widely adopted in the EFL alongside LGBT+ History Month. • If this is the case for 2024/25, RB will work with SUFC & SUCF to find ways to mark the campaign.
Rainbow Blades campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rainbow Blades committee will choose select dates during the year to highlight the Proud Allies, Play your Part & Trans awareness campaigns.
Away game campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an 'away games for all' message across EDI.



COMMUNITY



INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
Regional Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review after first 12 months. • Continue to support and develop groups. • Work on any joint campaigns.
Pride in Football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use 2024/25 to assess direction of PIF, influence change to benefit all groups & review benefits of membership.
Community LGBTQ+ events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote and partake in city wide LGBTQ+ events such as IDAHOBIT, Pride, Trans Day of Remembrance.
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to encourage members to get involved in Rainbow Blades activity and find new ways to involve our members. • Investigate working with the club on a RB membership benefits package.



PARTNERSHIPS

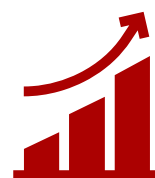


INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
Limited edition Pride jersey & Rainbow Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Sheffield United to develop a limited edition Pride jersey for Retail. • Create effective marketing with retail, media & players. • Try to secure a % of profits to go to SUCF Empower LGBT+ • Aim to launch for Rainbow Laces, early December 2024. • Consult with Retail on the current Rainbow Range.
Rainbow Blades fundraising event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the first ever Rainbow Blades fundraising evening. • Work in partnership with either Compass/BL or Double Tree hotel. • Paid ticketed event with dinner, bar, DJ, auction, entertainment, etc. • Potentially tie in with 5th Birthday.
POTY & HOF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the annual POTY vote & HOF awards.
Fans Summit/AGM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review how the 2023/24 Fans Summit went & either deliver the same for 2024/25 or look to move online only.
Double Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a partnership with the new Double Tree & look to work on some key deliverables such as advertising.

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
Sponsors & sponsorship pack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with our sponsors including them in events and campaigns. • Quarterly updates to sponsors. • Refresh the sponsorship pack. • Renew sponsors in Q1 2025 and always be open minded about securing new sponsors. • Look at ways for growing sustainable support from donors.
SAYiT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support SAYiT through promoting and engaging with events. • Continue dialogue to see what new opportunities there are.
SUFC/SUCF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to have an open, honest and constructive relationship with both Sheffield United & the Community Foundation. • Work together on staff & player engagement. • Be innovative and find new ways & ideas to work on LGBTQ+ diversity, inclusion & visibility. • Continue to encourage Ambassador engagement with Rainbow Blades activity.



RESULTS



KEY METRIC	DESCRIPTION
Financial Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set a 2024/25 forecast by 31/7/24.• Renew sponsors in Q1 2025 and/or by April 2025.• Attract new sponsors into the sponsorship family.
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to increase membership through the strategy and RB activity.
Member's zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a members only zone on the website to publish AGM record, committee action record, etc.
Survey results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share key highlights from the member survey and use the results from the survey to help shape the strategy and future activity.
Award participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to participate in awards that are linked to our work. Keep a high standard so national recognition continues.



2025/26 GOALS

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
United for All Charity Match	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Propose to hold this biannually so the next date would be 2026.



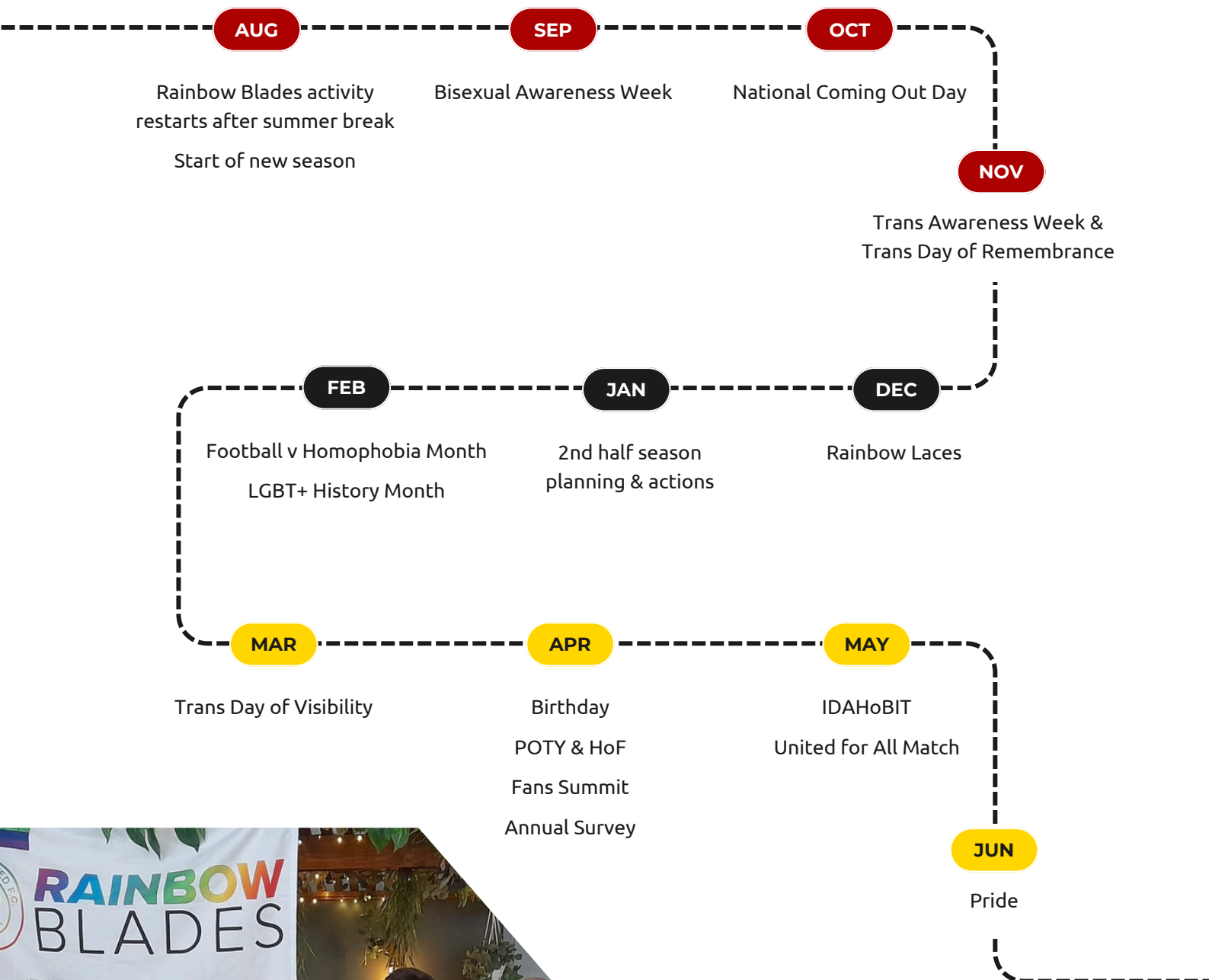
MEMBER SURVEY ACTIONS

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	AREA
Behind the Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on ways we can share BTS content (social, blog, newsletter, etc) 	Comms
Club updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with SUFC EDI manager to see how best to communicate club updates and areas of work with RB. 	Comms
AGM/Committee/ Founder updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at creating a 'member zone' online for AGM minutes, etc. • Share through newsletter. • Look into the feasibility of a Founder/Committee quarterly blog/vlog. 	Comms
Member stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to see if there is appetite for a 1-2min member film on experiences of being a member and why others should join. 	Comms
Club actions to help people feel welcome and safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More signposting for safe spaces. • QR codes on seats. • Communicate reporting more, positive action and results. Build confidence amongst fan base. • Better education on Homophobic words, what is acceptable, fans using outdated terminology. 	Club
Club actions on reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the options of reporting more visible on the website. • Move away from an email process. • Online system in the stadium to instantly notify someone. • Provide WiFi in the ground. • More notices on how to report round the stadium with QR codes. (Concourses, toilets) 	Club

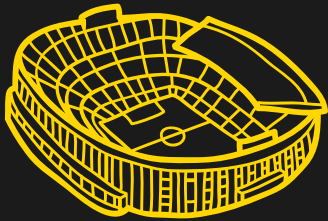
TIMELINE

Ongoing:

Socials, Campaigns, Community,
Partnerships & Results

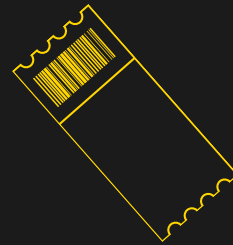


LONG TERM GOALS



A UNITED STADIUM

10% of the capacity of
Bramall Lane to be
Rainbow Blades (2,800)



SEASON TICKET

Have a higher percentage of
season ticket holders than
non-season ticket holders



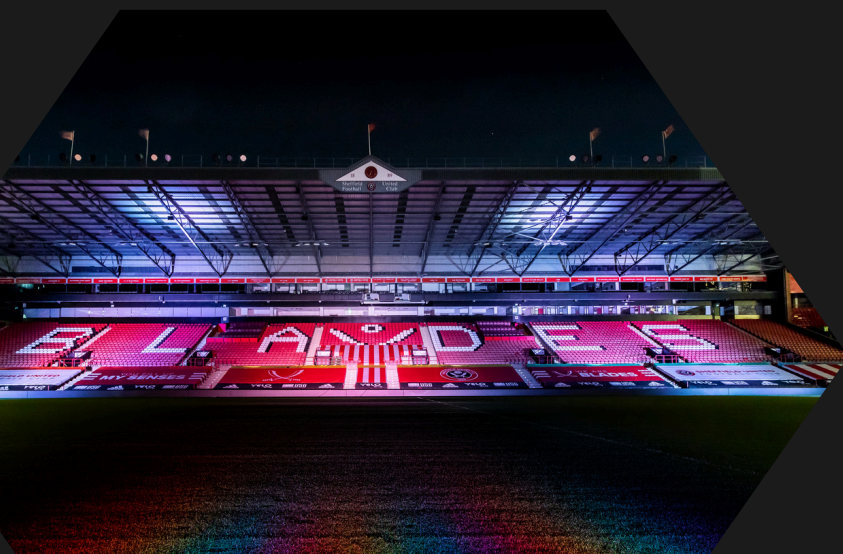
REPORTING

100% confidence in
reporting discrimination



REPRESENTATION

Increase representation
from other minority groups



OUR PARTNERS



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION





RAINBOW
BLADES

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