

Tackling Homophobia



**FOOTBALL
FOR ALL**

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Tackling Homophobia

The FA is leading the campaign against homophobic abuse in football in England. As part of our Football For All programme, The FA is publicly committed to making football inclusive and open to all.

Last year The FA staged its first open summit on combating homophobia in football and has promised to provide clear guidance.

The undertaking was given by Simon Johnson, The FA's Director of Corporate Affairs, speaking at The FA's Moving Football Forward convention at the Ricoh Arena, Coventry.

Background



In 2001 The FA Board approved the production of an overall strategy to combat all forms of discrimination and harassment in football and to promote equality. This also ensured that The FA was legally compliant with the various Acts dealing with discrimination (including the Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act, and Disability Discrimination Act).

In 2002, The FA's overall strategy to tackle discrimination and harassment and promote equality was developed as The FA Ethics and Sports Equity Strategy.

This was produced following considerable consultation, including with gay and lesbian campaigners in England and in Europe.

Sports equity means:

- Treating people fairly and with respect
- Ensuring equality of access and opportunity
- Recognising that inequalities may exist
- Taking steps to address those inequalities.

Tackling homophobia is implicit in the Strategy as a form of discrimination and abuse that needs to be tackled.

The Strategy also covers all equality issues:

- Women and girls
- Disabled people
- Ethnic minorities
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities (LGBT).

Broader social inclusion issues are also included, such as:

- Single parents
- People living in rural areas, inner city areas or areas of deprivation
- Low income families
- Combinations of those excluding factors.





The Strategy outlined the main areas for The FA to focus on, which were:

- Education and training
- Rules and regulations
- Communication and awareness raising
- Opportunities to participate and progress.

All these areas can, and should, tackle homophobia. We believe that treating homophobia as another form of abuse is the right way to approach this. The FA is serious about tackling homophobia in all its forms.

It is not about 'outing' players in the professional game, as some have suggested. Our job is to ensure that if a gay player or manager chooses to 'come out', The FA has done as much as it can to ensure there are no barriers to this in the football environment.

In 2004 we held an initial LGBT summit meeting inviting various people to tell us what they thought The FA should be doing with regards to tackling homophobia.

The group included Members of Parliament – Tony Banks, Angela Eagle and Evan Harris – the Women's Sports Foundation, Brighton and Hove Albion FC, the European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation, the Metropolitan Police, Stonewall (the campaigning organisation), Stonewall FC, FA staff and Council members, Kick It Out, PFA, LMA, and the British Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation.

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The group identified some key areas for The FA to address which were:

1. The FA to take leadership and ownership of the issue
2. Build a culture and climate of respect using the power of The FA and football
3. Conduct research into the issue
4. Promote The FA's work in equality using the business case as well as the moral, social and legal responsibility
5. Have a zero tolerance campaign – include in referees' training for definitions of offensive, insulting and abusive language; Reporting Abuse – Freephone number for discrimination can include homophobic abuse
6. Education and training – child protection and best practice workshop could be used to raise issues and awareness; training for all personnel in football with Academies and Centres of Excellence as a priority
7. Communications strategy – gain external support and raise awareness
8. FA to lobby UEFA to recognise there is an issue and to inform of The FA's work; work with the Government to change legislation
9. Monitoring and evaluation
10. Funding – FA to support through equality strategy, consider seeking up European funding

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Education and training

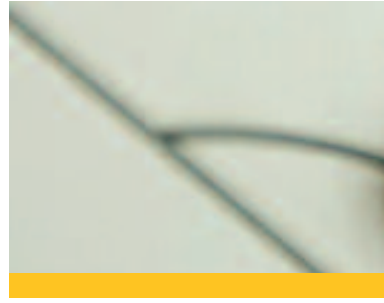
- Cross football authority plan for diversity training
- Diversity and sports equity workshop being delivered to FA staff and grassroots clubs – includes reference to tackling homophobia and sexual orientation
- Training for coaches, managers and administrators
- Referees training homophobic abuse is embedded in Law 12 training along with other forms of abusive and discriminatory language and gestures
- Embedded in other training eg child protection
- 16-19 scholars training
- Pro clubs staff training

Rules and regulations

- Review against Football For All principles
- Reporting Abuse and Discrimination 0800 085 0508
- Freephone number
- E-mail reporting
- Review of procedure



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Communication and awareness raising

- Leaflets
- Ambassadors
- TheFA.com
- Conferences – European, national and local
- LGBT Summit
- Presentations to Board and Councils
- Press and publicity campaign – considerable TV, radio and printed press coverage of our stance on tackling homophobia
- Accessible publications

Opportunities to participate and progress

- Stonewall FC and many others
- Manchester County FA ran a tournament for eight gay teams and nine lesbian teams during Manchester Pride
- Support from clubs



A number of professional clubs in England have offered statements in support of The FA's campaign

Coventry City

"Coventry City Football Club believe that no fan, player or anyone associated with the game should be abused in any circumstance – no matter their sexuality, religion or the colour of their skin. Coventry City underlines that football clubs such as ours have an obligation to break down barriers and stamp out prejudice."

Manchester City

"Manchester City fully supports The FA's campaign on homophobia and works actively to eradicate all forms of abuse or discrimination in the game, whether it be grounded in race, religion or sexual orientation.

The club has established the 'One City' initiative to encourage social inclusion and is very proud of the positive work we undertake with diverse communities throughout Greater Manchester.

"Manchester City works with the local lesbian and gay community by offering football coaching for Village Manchester FC and tours of the City of Manchester Stadium during the city's annual Pride event. We are therefore delighted to support this long overdue initiative in tackling homophobia in football."

**Manchester City fully supports
The FA's campaign on homophobia
and works actively to eradicate all
forms of abuse.**

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Manchester United

"Manchester United is fully in support of The FA's campaign on homophobia. There is no place for homophobic chanting, abuse or discrimination in football and we are delighted to support not just The FA and other football authorities, but other clubs who take a stand on this issue.

As a club we believe passionately that all forms of abuse - racial, religious and homophobic are just examples - are unacceptable.

Manchester United is proud to have a diverse and passionate following that cuts across all boundaries and we give our support to any campaign or programme that seeks to ensure football is free from all forms of abuse and discrimination."

Brighton and Hove Albion

"Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club fully supports the Football Association's initiative on homophobia, which aims to promote a tolerant footballing society and to make the spectator experience as exciting and all-embracing as possible.

The club is actively working to eradicate all forms of abuse or discrimination in the game, whether it relates to race, religion or sexual orientation. Brighton & Hove Albion is proud to have a diverse and passionate following from all walks of life, and we fully support any campaign and programme that seeks to ensure football is totally inclusive and available to all".

Burnley

Burnley Football Club fully supports the FA's anti homophobia campaign. The club has recently re-branded itself as 'the Club for its People' and this means that the club is seeking to place itself as a focal point of the community. The community is one which Burnley Football Club recognises as totally and socially inclusive. The club has received recognition for its 'Developing Futures Programme' and is actively engaging young people to develop into model citizens who do not tolerate barriers, prejudice or discrimination at any level of society."



For more details on The FA's Campaign please go to:
www.TheFA.com/FootballForAll or email FootballForAll@TheFA.com

Report Abuse and Discrimination on 0800 085 0508

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