

**SETTING UP
A LGBT+
FRIENDLY
CLUB**



Setting up an LGBT+friendly club

Do you wish there was an LGBT+ friendly club closer to where you live or work? Or perhaps you want to make LGBT+ friendly football more available and accessible in an area? If your answer is 'yes' to either of these questions, perhaps you could start up your own club?

All of the UK's roughly 25 LGBT+ friendly football clubs started with one or two people deciding to set them up. They made the decision and they made it happen. You can too.

But perhaps you don't know where to start or you are daunted by the effort that will be involved or you think you may not succeed.

This is where the Amateur Football Alliance and London Unity League can help.



Within the London Unity League, there are many people who have either set up an LGBT+ friendly club or have helped to develop and sustain a club. If you've never set up a football club before or not been much involved with organising football, there are a few things that you will need to consider whilst doing so as Brian Silk, founder of Bexley Invicta FC (now Charlton Invicta FC) explains:

“When I started up Bexley Invicta, I thought of obvious things like footballs and somewhere to begin playing. But then things I hadn't thought of had to be considered, such as getting a First Aid kit early on (and identifying people with First Aid skills), and when and how to start up a committee.”

The LUL and AFA can tell what you will need to think about, and advise you when and how to address everything. We know the pitfalls, and we what works and what doesn't.

The good news is that, once others want to help, building the club gets a lot easier. Brian: “Getting potential players together for the first kickabout was the hardest part (closely followed by getting people to return!). Once other people got involved and wanted to see the club succeed, they started to provide their experience, good ideas and willingness to take on tasks or roles.”

Getting started: hints and tips

- Give your club a name and identity before you get going. This will give people something to namecheck, start to believe in and to champion
- Set up a website and/or social media presence, such as a Facebook and Twitter page, to use for communication.
- Use social media to proactively contact potential players based on what they put in their profile, such as an interest in football or sport. Be prepared for a very low return rate on this activity (perhaps one in 100 contacts will lead to someone actually coming along would be typical) but also recognise that it is a key way you will start off and grow the club.
- Another way to find players is through 'find players' noticeboards, such as Gumtree.
- Try to get a mention of what you are trying to do in the LGBT+ media or other media, such as local news sources.



- Choose somewhere to start playing football that is easily-accessible to lots of people. Bexley Invicta FC started off with a kickabout in a park with plenty of parking and with somewhere to go for a drink afterwards.
- LGBT+-friendly football is distinctly social, so think of venues to go for a drink after football and perhaps to build the social side of the club. London Titans FC is closely linked to The Two Brewers pub in Clapham, for example.
- Pick a date and time to start playing football, and let everyone know. Weekend afternoons may be best for this, but a mid-weekday evening could also work, subject to finding a suitable lit venue at times of the year when the sun sets by the evening.
- For your first get-together of players, make sure you or someone else is there early to meet people.

Once you get going

- Within a couple of months, if not weeks, some players will want to start playing as a team against other teams. Options for this include: playing friendlies against other LGBT+-friendly football teams, such as LUL clubs, and joining a local league. There is advice on playing matches, on our [Setting Up a Club](#) guidance.
- As you start to play games, get a First Aid kit and identify First Aiders. There are [FA courses](#) available. Football is a contact sport and unfortunately players will get injured or hurt. We are partnered with [Koolpak](#)
- You / the players will want and need a kit. At first, you will be able to get by with getting the players to wear the same colour shirt, such as those of professional football clubs with roughly the same colour. Then you might be able to get hold of an old kit from another club. Eventually, though, the club will want its own new kit. There are several options for purchasing a kit: the club buying a kit with funds built from membership fees and/or fundraising, players paying for their own kit (with the attraction of their name on the back) or sponsors paying for a kit. We are also partnered with [Discount Football Kits](#) for all your equipment and kit needs.
- Start up training as soon as you can. This will improve people's skills and confidence as well as start to build a team. You'll need someone to run training sessions, and a time



and place. The latter can be tricky, as training sessions are typically mid-week evenings and you will need to find a floodlit venue when it gets dark in the evenings.

- If you can get a qualified or experienced coach to run the training, that would be preferable. However, a player with experience of training can also do a good job. For coaching courses, see the [AFA website](#).
- After a month or two, you might set up a committee. This is partly to start to share the workload, but also as a way that people can get involved. See the AFA's [Setting Up a Club](#) guidance for a comprehensive list of possible committee roles. Many of these roles won't be needed at first. At a minimum, you need a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, and many LGBT+ friendly clubs have Social Secretaries. You can contact the LUL for advice on what might work best for your club.
- As you set up a committee, this may be a good point to adopt a constitution and hold a meeting to formally constitute the club, but you could also do this a bit later on. Too much formal responsibility too soon can put some people off getting involved. The [Setting Up a Club](#) guidance includes a template Club Rules / Constitution / Code of Conduct. The LUL can also provide examples of appropriate club documents.
- As the club's activities grow and there is need for expenditure on things such as equipment and fees, you will need to consider charging players to take part (unless you have funding or are lucky to have a sponsor). At first, you should be able to do this on a pay-as-you-go basis i.e. those who play in matches pay towards the costs. After a while, you may want to supplement this way of paying for things with a membership fee. This will give the club some financial underpinning as well as being a way to establish who is a member of the club and therefore has rights and responsibilities. Having a paying membership is a time to adopt a constitution, if you hadn't already.
- The AFA offers access to various schemes and grants to help clubs with funding. See the [Setting Up a Club](#) guidance, for a list of possible funding sources.
- With money coming into the club and also the need to make payments, you should set up a bank account. Some banks offer accounts for community groups.
- As you put your club on a more formal footing, this is probably also a time to think about insurance cover, such as for public liability and personal injury. Should your club be in a position to affiliate to a county FA, this will give you access to appropriate value-for-money, insurance. Otherwise, alternative insurance is available at a higher cost than through a county FA.

- There are numerous other advantages to affiliating to a county FA, see the [Setting Up a Club](#) guidance.
- Think about how to nurture and retain those players who haven't played much football in the past or haven't played for a while - this is quite common for LGBT+ people. Providing training and practice matches is very important. Also, having football that is less formal, such as kickabouts or beginners' training, alongside the formal football can help
- Make links with other LGBT+ friendly and other football clubs. The social side of LGBT+-friendly football extends beyond the individual clubs, with friendships and relationship across clubs.
- Most of all, good luck and let us know how you get on. By now, you may be thinking of joining a league. The London Unity League is an amateur football league based in London, designed to unite LGBT+ footballers and others in a competitive but friendly sporting environment.

