

# [***Costa Coffee Latest Victim Of Anti- Woke Anger Over Design Featuring Trans Person***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68VM-H0N1-DXVP-515B-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 1017 words

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**Highlight:** The British coffee chain included an illustration of a trans person who has top surgery scars on a company van.

**Body**

**Topline**

Costa Coffee, the U.K.-based coffee chain which has long been an LGBTQ ally, is facing some backlash from right-wing social media users (and praise from the LGBTQ community) for a mural on one of its vans that features an illustration of a trans person who received top surgery, becoming the latest brand targeted for being woke.

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Costa Coffee has historically been a vocal LGBTQ ally. (Photo by Matthew Horwood/Getty Images)

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Pictures of a Costa Coffee van, in which an illustrated character is depicted with chest scars indicating they received gender-affirming top surgery, circulated on social media this week.

The illustration went viral after James Esses, a cofounder of Thoughtful Therapists (anorganizationcampaigning against the impact of gender identity ideology on children ), shared an image of the van onTwitter, which has received more than 8 million views.

Esses criticized the illustration as glorifying irreversible surgery performed on healthy breasts of women for a mental health condition.

The image became the subject of debate on social media, with some right-wing users planning to boycott the coffee company while LGBTQ allies praised Costa Coffee for positive representation of transgender people.

Costa Coffee s controversy resembles another anti- woke social media campaign that unfolded this week: Dr. Martens similarly cameunder firefor including an illustration on a pair of boots the company is raffling off of a trans person who received top surgery (the shoes are not mass produced for sale).

Costa Coffeedefendedthe illustration following backlash, stating it was intended to celebrate the diversity of our customers, team members and partners and to encourage people to feel welcomed, free and unashamedly proud to be themselves.

The company has long been a vocal LGBTQ ally: ItsellsPride-themed reusable cups whichsupportan LGBTQ charity, it hassupportedthe London Pride March and it has a commitment to its LGBTQ customers and team members on itswebsite.

**Chief Critics**

Kellie-Jay Keen, an anti-trans activist and founder of the anti-trans group Standing for Women, appeared on GB News tocriticizeCosta Coffee s illustration, calling it a real insult to women who through no fault of their own have ended up having to have their breasts removed. Laurence Fox, an actor and founder of the United Kingdom s right-wing Reclaim Party, alsocriticizedthe depiction of a double mastectomy as gender-affirming surgery, considering it mutilation a descriptor of top surgery oftenusedby anti-trans activists. Oli London, a British right-wing media personality, called for the full Bud Light treatment for Costa Coffee, referring to the most famous anti- woke boycott from this year, accusing the company of pushing sex change surgeries on customers that just want to drink coffee. Some critics flooded the comment sections of Costa Coffee s social media posts with negative remarks, with somesaying go woke, go broke a frequent catchphrase of anti- woke social media users targeting companies with boycotts.

**Contra**

Some social media users celebrated Costa Coffee s inclusion of trans people. Trans people exist, and might drink coffee. Anyway, as a trans man with similar scars, thank you Costa for the representation, YouTuber and LGBTQ advocate Jamie Rainestweeted. Other users called out the online vitriol as dangerous and transphobic: Seeing the response to Costa Coffee s mural is something that folks who are post-top surgery are all too familiar with. This is what trans masculine people have been trying to explain; that anti-transmasculinity is real and violent and dangerous, one user, whose bio states he is trans,tweeted. British artist Fox Fisherwrotein an op-ed for**Attitude** the illustration was a breath of fresh air for the trans community, praising the depiction of top surgery scars as symbols of liberation and a testament to our self-love and bodily autonomy.

**Tangent**

Though the term woke hasAmerican originsand many of the boycotts and online outrage that occurred this year impacted American companies, some boycotts spreadgloballyto the United Kingdom and elsewhere. This summer, South African retailer Woolworths drew online anger for making posts in support of Pride month, New Zealand retailer The Warehouse was called woke for selling items from Disney s pride collection and**Glamour UK** angered conservatives by featuring a pregnant transgender man on the cover of its Pride issue.

**Key Background**

Costa Coffee is just the latest in along lineof companies that have been targeted by right-wing social media users and pundits this year for outreach to the LGBTQ community or celebration of diversity, equity and inclusion all of which have been criticized as woke. Boycotts and online anger against these companies ramped up after Bud Light famously faced outrage from conservatives after a brief marketing partnership with Dylan Mulvaney, a transgender TikTok star known for documenting her gender transition. The company sent Mulvaney a customized can with her face on it, but despite the can not being available to the public, it faced boycotts and adip in sales. Mulvaney then alleged its parent company, Anheuser-Busch, failed to stand behind her as she faced condemnation, also making it a target of left-wing anger. Some companies became victims of boycotts for selling trans-friendly or Pride merchandise, likeTargetand Kohl s, or for collaborating with trans influencers or drag queens in marketing materials, like Nike and The North Face. Though these woke boycotts have slowed down since Pride month, the cosmetics brandMaybellinewas a recent target in July for casting a bearded LGBTQ influencer for a makeup ad.

**Further Reading**

Doc Martens A Vocally Pro-LGBTQ Company Receives Woke Backlash For Shoe Design Featuring Trans Character(Forbes)

What Does Woke Even Mean? How A Decades-Old Racial Justice Term Became Co-Opted By ***Politics***(Forbes)

Definitive Guide To The Anti- Woke Protests: From Bud Light To Target To The U.S. Navy And Everyone Else(Forbes)

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