

# TO GROW, GUIDE AND GOVERN

THE FA REFEREEING STRATEGY 2023-26



**FOR ALL**

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## ACRONYMS:

You'll see various acronyms used in this strategy. The two most common are CORE and ERDP:

**CORE:** The FA Centre of Refereeing Excellence aims to provide an identified number of referees at various levels of football with quality training, education and development opportunities. You can read more about it [here](#).

**ERDP:** The Elite Referee Development Plan is a major PGMOL project supported by the Premier League, FA, and EFL to improve the standard and diversity of match officials at the elite levels in English football.

# OUR BIG FOUR GOALS

## 1. MAKE REFEREEING AN ATTRACTIVE CHOICE

- Halve the time it takes to reach the top levels
- Slicker, easier online interaction via one system across the game
- Mandate referee training across the men's and women's academy systems

## 2. IMPROVE THE REFEREEING EXPERIENCE

- Reward and recognise our referees
- Explore and implement behavioural change initiatives
- Create community and connections across all levels

## 3. ENHANCE REFEREE PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

- Triple the number of online resources and training
- Double the investment in our development system
- Supercharge FA CORE programme with increased development opportunity

## 4. MAKE REFEREEING MORE INCLUSIVE

- 50% increase in referees from under-represented ethnicities
- 50% increase of women referees
- Create networks to welcome and support under-represented groups



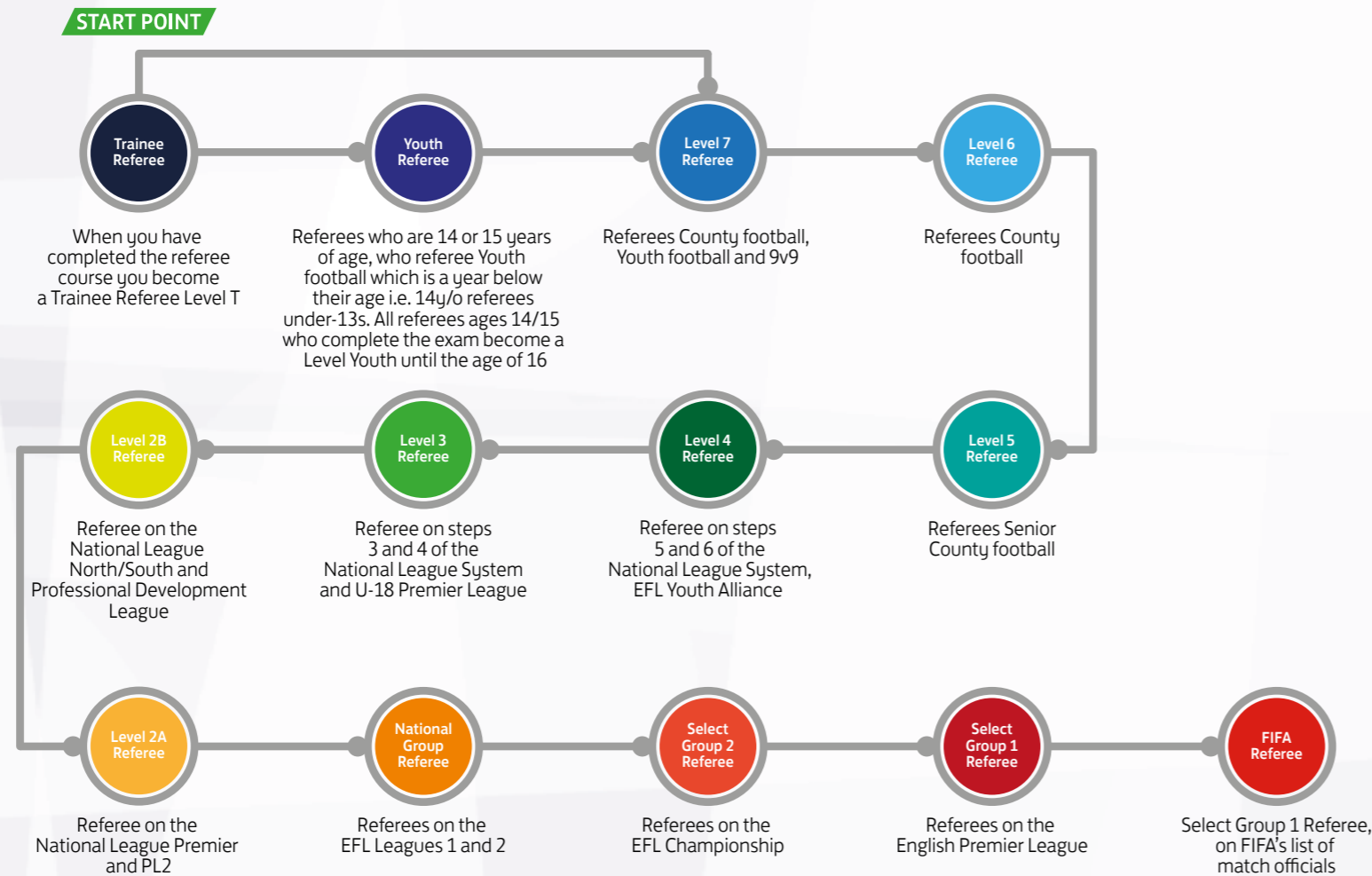
# REFEREEING PATHWAY – THE MEN’S GAME

County FAs are responsible for supporting referees from starting as a trainee right through to the top echelon of the grassroots game.

The FA is responsible for the investment, development and management of match officials from across the National League System (Steps 1-6).

For the professional game, the PGMOL (Professional Game Match Officials Ltd) oversees the appointment, administration, support and development of referees in the Premier League and EFL.

At the top of the ladder are FIFA match officials. Nominated by The FA and selected by FIFA, these referees are offered appointments to international tournaments and fixtures around the world.



# REFEREEING PATHWAY – THE WOMEN’S GAME

The emergent women’s game refereeing pyramid has a six-level system from trainee to FIFA official. County FAs appoint youth and grassroots women’s football referees.

The FA develops and manages officials for the Women’s National League as well as the Women’s Super League (WSL) Academy matches.

The PGMOL is responsible for match officials in the Barclays WSL and Women’s Championship. The pinnacle is attaining the FIFA officials’ list.

## ADDITIONAL AND FUTURE PATHWAYS

There are pathways for other football formats (e.g. Futsal) and we will develop routes for those wishing to progress in disability football, walking football or to become a referee tutor or observer. You can read more about these and other pathways in the professional game in **Appendix 1**.



# TIME TO IMPROVE AND SUPPORT EVERY ASPECT OF REFEREEING



Match officials are critically important to our game. In all levels of competitive football, there is no game without the match officials and unless we attract, develop, and retain a strong pipeline of referees, we will significantly limit the growth of our game.

We have a deep respect and admiration for the work that match officials do and, to ensure we give them the best possible support, we have developed a new Refereeing Strategy, which we are publishing for the first time.

Our aim through this strategy is to grow, guide and govern a new generation of talented referees from all backgrounds and all genders – and ensure that the pathway to officiating at higher levels of the game is clear and attainable, for those who want to progress.

We want to improve the experience of becoming a referee in the grassroots game and to allow all our referees to excel through the pathway – because a thriving game needs a thriving community of match officials.

We look forward to supporting you on your refereeing journey.

**Debbie Hewitt MBE**  
FA Chair

*“This new three-year strategy looks to normalise and humanise refereeing, as we strive to make the sport enjoyable for all. We need to bridge the gap between the current perception of referees and the real people who perform this role week in, week out.*

*In focusing on three areas – Referee Experience, Inclusivity, and Development – this strategy aims to tackle the major challenges refereeing is facing. With the support of the whole game, we believe this strategy can change the picture and make it a far more positive experience for all.”*

**Peter Elsworth**  
FA Head of Refereeing – Operations

*“The opportunities to learn, grow and develop in refereeing have never been better. Whether you are a referee who wants to service and support the grassroots game or seek opportunities to explore your progress to the professional game, this strategy has something for you. Internally and externally, we have a great team of people ready to enhance your journey, your experience and to make a positive difference to the lives of our referees throughout the cycle of this strategy and beyond.”*

**Dan Meeson**  
FA Head of Refereeing – Technical and Development



*“I have been part of the FA CORE programme since I was a level 7, I am now officiating at step 2 on the edge of the professional game.*

*“Without the support, coaching and opportunities provided as part of the FA CORE programme I would not be where I am today.”*

**Harry Warner**  
Referee, Level 2B



“

*I have progressed as a referee by embracing FA CORE values and am honoured that I was the first Black referee to officiate in the Northern Ireland Super Cup Competition in 2022. Then came the icing on the cake: I was assistant referee for Liverpool v Manchester United veterans' game.*

*“Equal opportunities are afforded to all referees. I tell myself every single day to shoot for the stars to be the very best I can be.”*

**Jacob Viera**  
Referee, Level 4

## THREE FOCUS AREAS

We will focus our efforts on three areas to achieve our goals and the targets within them

### 1. EXPERIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

### 2. DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

### 3. PERFORMANCE & DEVELOPMENT



# EXPERIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

We will ensure the safety and continued enjoyment of referees at all levels by reducing abuse and making referees feel truly valued on and off the pitch.

## OUR COMMITMENT

Refereeing can be extremely challenging. Often working alone at grassroots level, referees are the only football participants without club support.

To address this, we will more proactively support and engage with referees and refereeing as a whole. Our job is to tell the positive story of referees as well as reacting constructively to negative events.

From a welfare perspective, it is vital we ensure accountability from all participants towards referees. This starts with clubs creating the right environment and ends with The FA enforcing sanctions when this isn't the case.

We have also heard from many participants about the negative impact of behaviour in the professional game on the experience of referees further down the football pyramid. Aggression and foul language have become normalised. This is unacceptable – and we will lead the drive for change.

Behind the scenes, the systems in refereeing are dated. Lack of cohesion across appointments add to the challenges referees face. In addition, difficulties navigating reporting systems can deter reports of abuse. We need to make everything slicker and easier to use.

## WHAT WE'LL DO

1. Appoint a dedicated Referee Experience Officer to engage with referees, share success stories and build community.
2. With FA Discipline and FA Grassroots departments, review penalties for behavioural issues to create a modern approach to addressing poor behaviour (e.g. manager/coach suspensions for their player behaviour; points deductions etc.).
3. Work alongside FA Leagues' department to utilise National League System clubs as hubs for referee training and education.
4. Support the National League System and women's pyramid leagues/clubs to educate players, workforce and spectators to support the required culture change.
5. Update codes of conduct to make the consequences of poor behaviour clear to all.
6. Trial bodycams for grassroots referees.
7. Challenge the professional game to stamp out poor behaviour.
8. Push for an escalating fine tariff for behavioural sanctions.
9. Create an education and training package to support a welfare officer programme across the grassroots game.
10. Invest in the digital infrastructure to make life easier for referees.



## HOW WE'LL MEASURE SUCCESS:

### Immediate:

1. Assess success of bodycam trial.
2. Implementation of an updated disciplinary approach to address poor behaviour across the professional and grassroots game.
3. Deliver a communications strategy portraying the positive benefits of refereeing.
4. Delivery of reward programmes and initiatives which celebrate and incentivise referees.

### Longer term:

5. Improved Positive Football Environment<sup>1</sup> scores for referees and wider participants across the game.
6. Increased wider game understanding of referee structures and experience.
7. Create an education and training package to support a welfare officer programme across the grassroots game.

See 'Our year-by-year' targets on page 23 for more detail on the above.

## WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR BY 2026:

### From referees:

“ Matchdays have really changed the past few years. I now turn up to games and feel welcomed. There's much better understanding of what it takes to be a referee. I get far less grief and when I do get things wrong I am able to have a conversation rather than getting screamed at by the players, managers and spectators.”

Male Referee, 22 years old

“ The whole experience provides me with support to develop as a referee. I can get training resources on my phone and managing my refereeing work is far less time-consuming. That's because the administration, education and ability to talk to my colleagues is much slicker.”

Female referee, 20 years old

### From other football participants:

“ We seem to be getting to a place where the behaviour of those watching my kid's games is not something I dread on a Sunday morning. People know the boundaries and there are structures in place to stop it and deal with bad behaviour.”

Parent of 12-year-old

WE'VE ALREADY STARTED TO...

## TRIAL BODYCAMS

England is the first country in the world to trial referee bodycams. We're currently trialling their use in adult grassroots football in four locations: Middlesbrough, Liverpool, Essex and Worcestershire.

The work is happening in partnership with local leagues and began in 2022/23. It will run throughout the 2023/24 season. The trial is approved and being run in conjunction with the International Football Association Board (IFAB), who oversee the Laws of the Game.

The goal is to see if deployment of bodycams improves the level of participant behaviour – players and coaches – and to give referees confidence and reassurance of their own safety.

The first trials – in Middlesbrough – took place within the North Riding FA area, whose Referee Development Officer is Ross Joyce: "This trial was clearly a message of intent by The FA to better support and protect match officials, and they deserve credit," he says.

"Having now delivered the trial for around 12 weeks, and within over 100 games, I cannot speak highly enough of the initial positive feedback. Not just from our referees, but from our trial league – the Manjaros Langbaourgh League – their players, spectators, league and club officials.

"There was understandable trepidation at first about what could be captured. However, it was soon clear that they did not need to worry. Bodycams moved into the background as a safety net should anything untoward occur.

"Players have commented that it has impacted on their behaviour and influenced their conduct towards referees, especially around subjective decisions. The result has been a more positive and enjoyable experience for all.

"Feedback has been equally positive from our referees, a diverse mix of the experienced and the up and coming. Every referee on the league panel has commented that they feel more comfortable and safer. All referees have agreed that behaviour towards them has significantly improved due to the bodycam acting as a deterrent.

"I look forward to continuing to support The FA with the trial over the next 12 months. Looking ahead, I believe this could transform grassroots refereeing and play a key role in helping us recruit and retain more match officials nationally to serve the grassroots game and beyond."



# DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

We will build a culture that provides opportunities for all in refereeing by actively addressing barriers to inclusion.

## OUR COMMITMENT

Refereeing has historically been undertaken by white males. Despite progress in recent years, there is still much to do to make refereeing a truly diverse and inclusive activity.

Recruitment is a big part of the challenge. Lack of role models, connections and awareness all contribute to the relative lack of participation in refereeing from historically under-represented communities. In addition, upfront costs can often pose a challenge to people with varying levels of economic stability.

Over the next three years we will strive to increase and enhance our referee support workforce (i.e. coaches, mentors, observers etc) from historically under-represented groups.

Given historic under-representation among referees from various communities, we know there is a challenge ahead of us – one we are determined to tackle.

## WHAT WE'LL DO

1. Deliver national campaigns to drive a 50% increase in the number of referees from historically under-represented backgrounds (by gender and ethnicity).
2. Launch a bursary scheme to fund places on entry-level refereeing courses for referees from under-represented communities.
3. Target proportional representation (gender/ethnicity) on CORE, starting with regional allocation of places to ensure fair distribution between larger and smaller County FAs.
4. Move towards the proportion of referees from under-represented groups being equal across all levels of the pathway.
5. Enhance diversity in supporting roles within refereeing by working with partners such as Kick it Out, BAM RefSupport and REFA (see case study overleaf).
6. Work with key partners to develop and extend peer-to-peer support networks for LGBTQ+ referees.



## HOW WE'LL MEASURE SUCCESS:

### Immediate:

1. Number of courses delivered.
2. Number of new referees from these courses actively refereeing.
3. Number of bursaries allocated.

### Longer term:

1. Net increase of 1,000 referees from under-represented backgrounds (across gender/ethnicity).
2. The proportion of referees from under-represented backgrounds promoted through the referee development pathway to exceed the proportion of referees from the same background across all levels.
3. Equal representation of under-represented groups across all levels of the game.

See 'Our year-by-year' targets on page 23 for more detail on the above.

## WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR BY 2026:

### From referees:

“Refereeing has provided the network and support I needed to not feel isolated. From the initial course through to the friends I've made through refereeing, I have felt part of a community which has increased my confidence, fitness and ability to engage with people. These skills have benefited me away from football.”

Female referee, 28 years old

“As someone who came through the academy system, I always dreamt of being a professional player. I didn't even think of refereeing. However, getting to the professional game as a referee is achievable now – and I can do it by my early '20s.”

Male referee, 21 years old, released by professional club at 18

### From other football participants:

“Playing for a club with a high proportion of Black players, it always felt strange that we only ever got white referees at our games. The last couple of seasons has seen more kids from a Black background turning up to learn their trade. It's great to see refereeing opening up as an option to people from different backgrounds.”

Grassroots Community Club Secretary





“

*I have been involved in FA CORE as a referee, coach and now leader. I'm humbled to be in a position to give back and pass on my experiences to enable other referees to grow and maximise their potential.*

*"I'm thankful to The FA for the fantastic support I receive so I can help make opportunities happen for other match officials."*

**Ruebyn Ricardo**  
EDRP Development Group Referee

WE'VE ALREADY STARTED TO...

## MAKE REFEREEING MORE INCLUSIVE

In 2020 The FA Referees' Committee set up a working group for match officials from under-represented groups with former EFL referee Jarnail Singh part of its executive team. Its remit was to highlight issues and make proposals to make refereeing more welcoming.

Already, this group has supported measures to increase the independence of referee observer schemes, the diversification of the referee development workforce, and delivery of the experiential learning programme. This group is now known as Referee Equality For All (REFA).

"As they say: 'if you cannot see it, you cannot be it'," Jarnail notes. "We have a long way to go to make refereeing – and indeed football – more equal, diverse and inclusive, but as far as refereeing goes, there is now an established route to do just that.

"That's because the establishment of REFA is a sizeable leap forward from the previous EROG (Equality Referee Opportunity Group). REFA has three sub-groups, devoted respectively to the National Game (grassroots/semi-pro), Pro-Game Match Officials and the Professional Game. These groups report to a Steering Group and all share ideas and information."

"With diverse personnel in all the groups, historically under-represented groups can directly inform the decision-making on ways to make refereeing more inclusive – for example, in shaping marketing campaigns to recruit more referees from under-represented communities. This diversity extends to The FA Council and The FA's Referees Committee, giving us a voice and a vote in the key decision-making bodies."

In turn, earlier this year Raj Randhawa was appointed as The FA's Refereeing Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Manager. Raj's initial focus is the recruitment and retention of referees from under-represented groups. There are also now more referee tutors from under-represented communities helping develop tomorrow's referees. In addition, existing referees from under-represented groups now pass on their experiences and knowledge via The FA's CORE programmes and ambassadorial roles.

Jarnail concludes "There's now a physical demonstration that barriers are coming down. It also means personnel are in place to challenge discrimination and inequality from the grassroots level to the professional game. We now have a framework for County FAs, The FA and the professional game to make some measurable progress in this area."



Former EFL referee Jarnail Singh flanked by his two sons. Jarnail is part of the executive team of REFA (Referee Equality For All).

### FOCUS AREA 3:

# PERFORMANCE & DEVELOPMENT

We will provide the tools and resources to help referees at all levels to perform to their maximum ability.

## OUR COMMITMENT

The majority of referees officiate because of a love of the game. However, throughout the refereeing world, there is a fierce determination to put in top-quality performances – regardless of the level of football being played.

This determination extends into self-improvement. Referees cite a range of benefits from optimum performance, such as improved fitness, confidence and decision-making.

Our existing refereeing development pathways provide opportunities for those with talent and ambition to progress up the football pyramids if they wish. However, the process can be long and slow, with progress often resting on relatively few observations.

Alongside striving to grow our pool of referee observers and mentors, we believe technology and data can have a twofold benefit: it can help referees improve – and make progress up the pathway smoother and quicker.

## WHAT WE'LL DO

1. Speed up the pathway from grassroots through the National League System to Step 1 through mid-year promotions.
2. Remove observer scores in grassroots football to promote focus on development.

3. Develop the women's game referee pathway to provide suitable development opportunities for the new cohort of officials entering the game.
4. Further invest in Centre of Referee Excellence (CORE) to reduce the coach : referee ratio providing greater access to coaching, ensuring a strong pipeline of candidates into the PGMOL's Elite Referee Development Programme (ERDP).
5. Triple the volume of continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities available for all referees – even those not looking to progress up the levels.
6. Mandate completion of the New Referee Course across the men's and women's game academy systems.
7. Actively promote the resources we offer to increase awareness of what's available.
8. Assess 'ref-tech' providers to understand the benefits of new technology platforms to referees e.g. technology to provide fitness stats, manage reporting and generally build engagement within the referee community.
9. Ensure the newly-created Regional Development Support Officers support County FAs in identifying and developing talent to progress through to CORE and ERDP.



## HOW WE'LL MEASURE SUCCESS:

### Immediate:

1. Three years as the potential time to progress from Grassroots to Step 1. It's currently seven years.
2. Tracked use of online CPD resources and opportunities.

### Longer term:

1. 25% reduction in the average time for referees to reach National League Premier level.
2. Quicker progression from CORE to ERDP.
3. Create structures which provide a variety of routes to the top of the men's and women's games.

See 'Our year-by-year' targets on page 23 for more detail on the above.

## WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR BY 2026:

### From referees:

“ The systems allow a referee to get up the ladder at their own pace. In my case, I was keen, so was out refereeing twice every weekend, watching the development modules online as soon as they became available, and pestering for coaching visits. Three years down the line and I'm in with a shout of promotion to the National League.”

Female referee, 23 years old

“ I've never really had aspirations to get to the top, but I always want to keep my eye in to be as good as I could be. We only used to be contacted when the County FA wanted my registration money, but now there's loads of opportunity to speak with other refs, discuss clips from other games and put learning into practice on Saturday afternoon.”

Male referee, 44 years old

### From other football participants:

“ The standard of refereeing is clearly on the rise. I'm seeing younger referees covering our games more often and they are better prepared than in previous seasons despite their age. The training is clearly working.”

Grassroots Youth Coach



Agility is to the fore during a Level 4 Referee Development Day at St. George's Park.

WE'VE ALREADY STARTED TO...

## GIVE REFEREES CONTROL OVER THEIR PACE OF PROGRESS

Before the 2022/23 season kicked off, The FA launched a new pathway for officials to self-regulate their move up the men's game refereeing ladder.

Rather than the previous system, based on assessments, the new pathway sees promotion up the levels based on five factors:

1. Number of appointments.
2. Completion of free online referee development modules.
3. Support and advice from a referee developer at some matches.
4. Passing a Laws of the Game exam.
5. Attendance at face-to-face training.

It's given referees greater control over their own progression and embedded personal development at the heart of refereeing at grassroots level. One County FA which exemplifies the benefits of the new pathway is the Westmorland FA, where Peter Leonard is the Referee Development and Designated Safeguarding Officer:

"Referees can now be coached and supported whilst officiating. Shifting to a coaching-based model from an assessment mark is already seeing improved retention and progression," says Peter.

"In Westmorland, we've seen remarkable progress in moving young referees up the ladder. For example, three under-18s started the season only refereeing in youth football. However, having been coached on the progression pathway in competitive and challenging youth games, they all took the step into open-age adult football. The results were amazing and at the end of the season, one of the 18-year-olds, Will Owen, was appointed to referee the Westmorland FA Women's Senior Cup Final in his first season of open-age football."

"In addition, one of our 16-year-old referees, Abigail Greenwood, was voted Westmorland FA Grassroots Match Official of the Year. She's already a level six referee, having just completed her first season refereeing in youth and adult football."

"Overall, the pathway has ignited interest, passion and belief in match officials at Westmorland FA. It's provided tangible evidence that referees can achieve their goals at their pace."

Abigail Greenwood being presented with her award as Westmorland FA Grassroots Match Official of the Year.





“

Taking part in regional and national CORE sessions has improved my confidence, mindset and decision-making – as well as helping my softer skills such as social interactions with my peers. I’ve now been developing my skills since my match official journey began at age 15.”

**Sophie Wood**  
Referee, Level 5

## OUR YEAR-BY-YEAR TARGETS

Focus area	Measure	As at August 1 <sup>st</sup> 2023	Immediate/short-term		Longer-term
			2024 target	2025 target	2026 target
<b>1. ENVIRONMENT &amp; EXPERIENCE</b>	Attain and maintain a Positive Football Environment Survey Satisfaction rating of 70% from our match official workforce	Satisfaction: 66%	Satisfaction: 68%	Satisfaction: 70%	Satisfaction: 70+%
	Improvement in Positive Football Environment Satisfaction scores from other key stakeholders (adult players, parents of youth, club/league officials, volunteers)	67%	69%	72%	75%
<b>2. DIVERSITY &amp; INCLUSION</b>	Achieve a net increase of 1,000 Black and Asian referees by 2026	1,800	2,100	2,500	2,800
	Achieve a net increase of 1,000 women referees by 2026	2,500	2,800	3,100	3,500
	Ensure the proportion of referees from under-represented ethnicities and women operating within the men’s professional game is equal to the proportion of black and Asian/women referees nationally	<b>Black/Asian:</b> 8% Overall vs 3% men’s Pro Game (PG) <b>Women:</b> 8% Overall v 2.5% men’s PG	<b>Black/Asian:</b> 9% Overall vs 5% men’s PG <b>Women:</b> 9% Overall v 4% men’s PG	<b>Black/Asian:</b> 9% Overall vs 7% men’s PG <b>Women:</b> 9% Overall v 7% men’s PG	<b>Black/Asian:</b> 10% Overall v 10% PG <b>Women:</b> 10% Overall v 10% PG
<b>3. PERFORMANCE &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b>	25% reduction in the average length of time it takes match officials to reach the men’s professional game from completing the course	15 years	14 years	13 years	11 years
	Mandate the new Referee Course qualification for all men’s and women’s Professional Game academy	N/A	N/A	Pilot	Implementation

# REFEREEING PATHWAYS IN MORE DETAIL

## THE MEN'S GAME

With the deepest pyramid in world football, the men's game refereeing pathway provides a route to the top of the game for any official demonstrating the commitment and quality to ascend through its levels.

The launch of the New Referee Progression pathway in 2022/23 to a credit-based promotion scheme now means every individual is in charge of how quickly they want to progress. The most keen can now make the top of the grassroots game within 12 months. County FAs are responsible for supporting referees from starting out as a trainee on the New Referee Course through to the top end of the grassroots game at Level 5.

The FA is also responsible for the investment, development and management of match officials across the National League System (Steps 1-6). This is the first stage when officials are part of a national scheme with oversight of appointment, observations, coaching and with development managed centrally. From 2023/24 opportunities for progression to the next level within the scheme will occur twice a year based on independent observer schemes and assessment days.

In the professional game, the PGMOL (Professional Game Match Officials Ltd) takes control. As a separate company, the organisation oversees the appointment, administration, support and development of referees across the Premier League and EFL. The Elite Referee Development Plan (ERDP) has resulted in significant investment in refereeing at the top of the game.

At the pinnacle of the ladder are the FIFA match officials. Nominated by The FA and selected by FIFA, these constitute the best referees from the English game. Such referees are offered appointment to international tournaments and fixtures around the world.

## THE WOMEN'S GAME

The women's game refereeing pyramid remains in its infancy with a six-level system from trainee to FIFA official. This route is available to all officials who have a commitment and passion for the women's game.

County FAs appoint youth and grassroots women's football referees. The most senior grassroots officials will be offered the opportunity to be an assistant referee in the Women's National League (Tiers 3 & 4 of the women's football pyramid).

The FA invests, develops and manages officials for the Women's National League as well as the Women's Super League Professional Game Academy system. Such officials include those with potential to progress to the elite end of the women's game and officials with a commitment to women's football.

As with the men's football pyramid, the PGMOL is responsible for referees and assistant referees operating in the Barclays WSL and Barclays Women's Championship. The pinnacle is also the FIFA list of officials, giving our elite women officials the chance to represent England internationally.

With numbers joining the women's refereeing pathway growing year on year, it provides a great opportunity for those with the quality and commitment to the women's game to reach the top.

# REFEREEING PATHWAYS IN MORE DETAIL (CONTINUED)

## ADDITIONAL AND FUTURE PATHWAYS

The diversification of refereeing requires us to shift from the linear processes in place to date. Pathways already exist for Futsal referees and the observer workforce, but the strategy you are reading will look to develop routes for those wishing to progress in disability football and walking football, as well as becoming a referee coach and/or an observer.

There is also a need to consider alternative routes and specific support mechanisms throughout the game to reflect the needs of individual referees. These routes/mechanisms include:

- The PGMOL's ERDP Development Group for officials who demonstrate potential to become a Premier League official.
- Specific routes for those who move from playing within an elite environment into refereeing.
- Support networks and development groups (e.g Women's Elite Talent Pathway) for under-represented groups to enable greater access to development for those who may face barriers to progression.





“

*From developing my own refereeing career through to the professional game, I am now in the privileged position of being able to help and support those referees within FA CORE.*

*“The satisfaction you have as a coach seeing people fulfil their potential is amazing. We see people grow in so many ways on and off the pitch, hopefully giving themselves the best chance to progress.”*

**Farai Hallam**  
ERDP Development Group Referee

**Image:**

Discussions underway at The FA's referee development course for historically under-represented communities.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

You can read more about The FA's referee development work [here](#).

To find the nearest refereeing training course near you, contact your local County FA. You'll find a full list of contacts [here](#).

“

*FA CORE not only develops talent – it encourages high standards and creates a culture where excellence is always the goal. You are surrounded by groups of like-minded officials, with everyone striving to learn and grow.*

*“It also provided me with one of the best referee coaches in the country, with whom I was lucky enough to work with for three seasons. Without my time in The FA CORE programme, I would not be the referee I am today.”*

**Emily Heaslip**  
Referee – Level 1W (Barclays Women's Super League)



Emily Heaslip collects the matchball en route to refereeing this season's Vitality FA Women's Cup Final.



**FOR ALL**

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