

OPEN IFTAR  
2022 X  FOR  
ALL

BRINGING OPPORTUNITIES TO  
COMMUNITIES (PHASE 2):  
THE FA ASIAN INCLUSION PLAN

# PROGRESS REPORT

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Front cover (L-R) - FA Youth Council Chair - Nayim Ahmed, FA Council Member - Yashmin Harun and FA CSR Manager - Saira Mirza



# Tremendous progress has been made. But the hard work continues.

Football is For All, and as the governing body of football in England, this guiding principle runs through everything we do. We recognise that Asian communities make up the biggest ethnic minority community in England. We also acknowledge that they are not represented throughout the football pyramid.

However, we also know that this is changing in the right direction, with the numbers from Asian communities taking part in football rising across all areas of the game. This includes playing football, coaching and refereeing, as well as in 'off the pitch' roles. Our strategy continues to make positive headway in various areas, including increasing pathways into the grassroots game, women's and girls' football as well as raising engagement with Asian communities to promote and maximise inclusivity across the footballing environment.

We continue to have Asian representation in our workforce and committees across The FA, FA Board, FA Council, Professional Game Board, National Game Board, Women's Football Board and in local County Football Associations. Additionally, our FA Asian Women's Football Advisory Group continues to work tirelessly to ensure voices are heard and that football continues to be seen as ever more accessible to all.

Despite the turbulence of the last few years, the Asian inclusion agenda remains one of our strategic priorities. This annual review details our progress as well as a forward looking view on our future activities.

We know every step makes a difference. And we're determined to continue tackling any form of discrimination and make our national sport a Game For All.



**Mark Bullingham**  
FA Chief Executive



**Rupinder Bains**  
FA Main Board Director and  
FA Women's Football Board Director

<sup>1</sup> 2011 census – also see page 4.



# THE NUMBERS

## WHAT'S THE CHALLENGE AND WHAT'S THE OPPORTUNITY?

Asian communities comprise the largest ethnic minority group in the country. The 2011 census reported that the communities make up approximately four million people or **7.8% of the population of England**. This comprises the figures in the chart opposite.

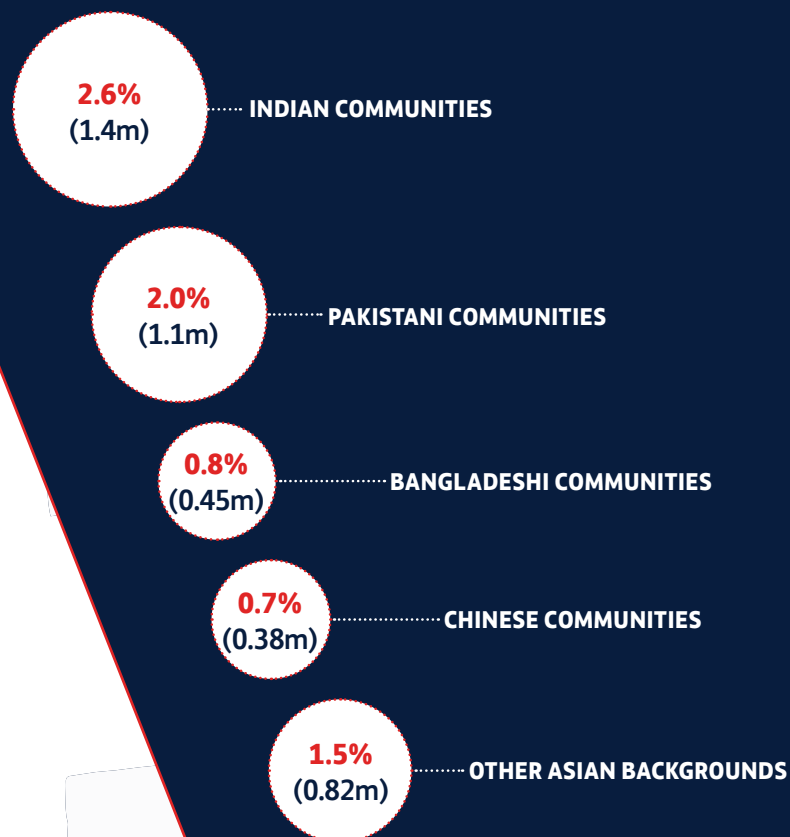
The FA's data sources reveal that the highest participation rates in England (as of June 2022) across the male and female game are by those of Asian communities.

Asian communities comprise the largest ethnic minority group in the UK. Within grassroots football, male and female Asian participation is now rising. The percentage aged 16+ is now at 11.9% (up from 10.7% in 2021) and 15.4% (up from 13.5% in 2021) respectively. However, the number of professional players of Asian heritage is significantly lower. This makes tackling Asian under-representation at all levels of the game a key FA priority.

Under The FA's For All ethos, we adopt a fully inclusive definition of 'Asian' in line with FIFA's football confederations, namely the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and its 46 member countries. We define Asian as anyone with a background or identity aligned to any of the member countries of the AFC. Asian football's governing body is one of the largest of the six confederations which make up FIFA's membership.

## OVER 4 MILLION ASIAN PEOPLE IN ENGLAND

Note: The numbers below are likely to change when the 2021 UK Census statistics are published.



## THE NUMBERS *(continued)*

	Male Players (16+)	Female Players (16+)	Coaches	Referees
Known population size*	7.6 million	1.9 million	141,636	30,697
Ethnicity	%	%	%	%
White (British + Irish)	74.3	74.8	87.4	90.1
Non-White (see breakdown below)	22.6	25.6	11.4	8.1
Prefer not to say	2.6	1.5	1.2	1.8
Ethnicity breakdown:				
Mixed/multi-ethnic (White & Black Caribbean, White & Black African or Other multi ethnic)	2.4	3.4	2.6	1.6
<b>Asian (Indian, British Indian, Pakistani, British Pakistani, Bangladeshi, British Bangladeshi, Chinese, British Chinese, Other Asian, British Asian or White &amp; Asian)</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.6</b>
Black (Caribbean, British Caribbean, African, British African, Other Black or Black British)	7.2	5.3	4.5	2.8
British Arab, Other Arab	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.2
Other	0.5	0.6	1.1	0.9

\* Data sources include: 1. The FA in Numbers March 2022. 2. FA Participation Tracker, May 2022, 12 month rolling average. 3. FA Education Landscape Coaching Dashboard June 2022. 4. ED&I dashboard June 2022. Also please note that male and female player data is 16+, as we don't collect ethnicity data for youth player participation.

Source:



South Asians are the largest minority ethnic community in the country, but recent data from the PFA has revealed that there are just 116 players from British South Asian backgrounds out of almost 15,000 players in academy and professional football.

Across professional football, South Asian players make up 0.45% of total professionals (16 out of circa 3500 players)<sup>1</sup>

Across academies in the men's game, South Asians make up 0.88% of players (99 out of circa 11,300) broken down as follows:

**25** players at the Foundation Development Phase (U9-U11)

**52** are at the Youth Development Phase (U12-U16)

**23** are post-16 scholars

## OUR FIVE STRATEGIC PILLARS

The following pages outline our five pillars and progress made in delivering on our strategy.

### 1. THE FA AND OUR CULTURE

- Our people and accountabilities
- Our culture
- Data and governance

### 2. PATHWAYS

- Player pathways
- Coaching and other pathways
- Financial

### 3. GRASSROOTS

- County FA and Inclusion Advisory Group engagement
- Training and guidance
- Community engagement

### 4. FEMALE FOOTBALL

- Insight
- Role models

### 5. COMMUNICATIONS, ENGAGEMENT & EXPERIENCE

- Targeted communications, networking and sharing
- Asian role model programme
- Matchday experiences and fan engagement
- Annual Asian inclusion update

## PILLAR 1:

# THE FA AND OUR CULTURE

## OUR PEOPLE, WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE DO IT

Despite the ups and downs of the pandemic and the resultant stop-start nature of football at all levels of the game, we're pleased that we can report on many positive outcomes.

Asian inclusion remains a key priority under our equality, diversity and inclusion strategy 'A Game for All'. Selected members of the FA Inclusion Advisory Board (IAB) have worked tirelessly to provide the guidance and support required to deliver on our aims.

The FA Board and FA Women's Football Board member, Rupinder Bains remains in place in as board sponsor for the work on Asian inclusion, working closely alongside The FA Executive team.



The FA's Open Iftar at Wembley Stadium, April 2022

# OUR WORKFORCE

As of July 2022, 14% of our workforce belong to Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnic background (of those that have disclosed). Of this group, 46% are from an Asian background which equates to 6.5% of our workforce. Our target for workforce representation of people from Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnic backgrounds is 17% by 2024. We are, therefore, making good progress across The FA.

Setting targets and holding ourselves to account has made a big contribution to improving the diversity of who we are today, but this will always be underpinned by the principle of meritocracy and a culture of shared values.

Looking ahead: our plans for the 2022/23 season include:

- Ensuring Asian inclusion remains a key priority for The FA, guided by its Inclusion Advisory Board (IAB) as well as being embedded across The FA's core strategies. See - [www.TheFA.com/Asianinclusion](http://www.TheFA.com/Asianinclusion) for more information on these strategies.
- Maintaining board sponsorship of the Asian inclusion agenda.



## CASE STUDY:

### EMBRACING DIFFERENCE WITHIN THE FA

We have been busy exploring the sentiments of our staff to ensure we develop inclusive environments and safe spaces that allow our staff to be at their best.

A recent example of how we have celebrated difference across our workforce includes the launch of our Employee Ethnicity Network (EEN). It's designed to empower our colleagues to discuss workplace ways of working. The EEN plays a critical role in helping The FA celebrate the diversity of its colleagues, with specific focus on both Black History and South Asian Heritage Month.

During the holy month of Ramadan in May 2022, The FA - alongside external provider Nujum Sport – delivered an educational webinar to FA staff to explore the meaning and significance of Ramadan. Our staff were able to explore Islam in greater depth, the importance of fasting, and the best way of supporting Muslim colleagues through the holy month.

**One EEN member said: “It has been fantastic to be involved in The FA’s EEN. I feel I have a voice where I can discuss things that are important to me around people with similar backgrounds. It’s a safe space to address any issues we may have and to bounce ideas off colleagues whom I may not have met had it not been for the Network.”**

## PILLAR 2:

# PATHWAYS

## HELPING TALENT MEET OPPORTUNITY

There are many ways to get into football, whether it's playing, coaching, refereeing or volunteering. And we want to visible and easy to access pathways into the game for all communities. We're making progress through:

### **The mobilisation of our Grassroots Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Coach Development Team**

This team focuses its efforts on developing coaching talent across the country, working closely with County FAs and local coaches in various football settings. Regional and local coach development groups have been set up around the country, with these groups supporting coaches in grassroots, non-league and semi-professional football. Formal and informal learning takes place through face-to-face delivery and online webinars designed to engage coaches of all backgrounds, including a significant proportion of Asian coaches.

### **The setting up of Grassroots D&I Coach Mentors and Community Champions**

- A recruitment drive for new part-time coach mentors and community champions to support D&I coach development work was launched in 2020/21. It was designed to engage with local communities and help aspiring coaches develop. As a result the FA now works closely with:
- 28 coach mentors
- 14 community champions



FA Coach Development Officer, Lawrence Lok (in blue) with stakeholders



## PILLAR 2: PATHWAYS *(continued)*

### Fully-funded places for FA Coaching Awards

As a result of our efforts, 50 fully-funded places have been awarded to coaches, of which a large proportion are of Asian heritage. These coaches are now receiving ongoing support through The FA's Mentors and Coach Development Officers.

The following numbers highlight the ways in which Black and Asian coaches have been supported in their coaching careers over the last 12 months.

**1052** COACHES supported in total | **47 MALE & 16 FEMALE** COACHES have been supported on the coaching talent pathway

**397 MALE & 144 FEMALE** RECREATIONAL COACHES been supported with their coaching career | The Mentee Development Programme

**318 MALE & 119 FEMALE** COACHES have been supported through webinars and online interventions

### The Mentee Development Programme

Delivered in partnership with the Chelsea Foundation, the programme is giving candidates the opportunity to observe England National Team camps and work with the Chelsea Foundation over 20 days during the season. This work is supplemented by personalised development for every programme member. The programme currently comprises 10 coaches (five male/five female).

- 40% of the cohort are South Asian, of which 3 are Asian males and 1 is Asian female.

### Club Placement Programme

This programme is designed to offer coaches the opportunity to gain experience and exposure within the talent pathway. It has enabled coaches to add vital experience to their CVs and make them more attractive to potential employers. At least 50% of placement coaches have gone onto either part-time positions or other positive action programmes, such as the Premier League coach inclusion and diversity scheme. Of the 16 coaches on the current programme, seven are of Asian heritage.

### Professional Game Bursaries

Across The FA's bursary programme the following bursaries were awarded to complete the qualifications shown:

- 7 Advanced Youth Award (one Asian).
- 25 A License (four Asians).
- 8 senior Pro License and 2 Pro License. No coaches of Asian heritage were awarded bursaries at this level. However, it's clear that Asian coaching talent is progressing through the talent pathway.

## PILLAR 2: PATHWAYS *(continued)*

### Asians in coaching

The numbers outlined provide an overview of the levels of Asian representation across the coaching infrastructure

#### NORTH WEST

- 2 of 3 (66%) FA Community Champions (1 male, 1 female)
- 3 of 4 (75%) FA Mentors (Male)
- 20 SA new coaches supported by Community Champions
- 12 SA aspirational coaches being mentored
- 1 Asian male is currently in the final stage of The FA's Mentee Development Programme
- 2 x Asian males are currently in the The FA's club placement programme for 21-22
- 4 x clubs of predominantly SA heritage being supported
- 2 x SA new coach developers for UEFA C (male)

#### WEST MIDLANDS

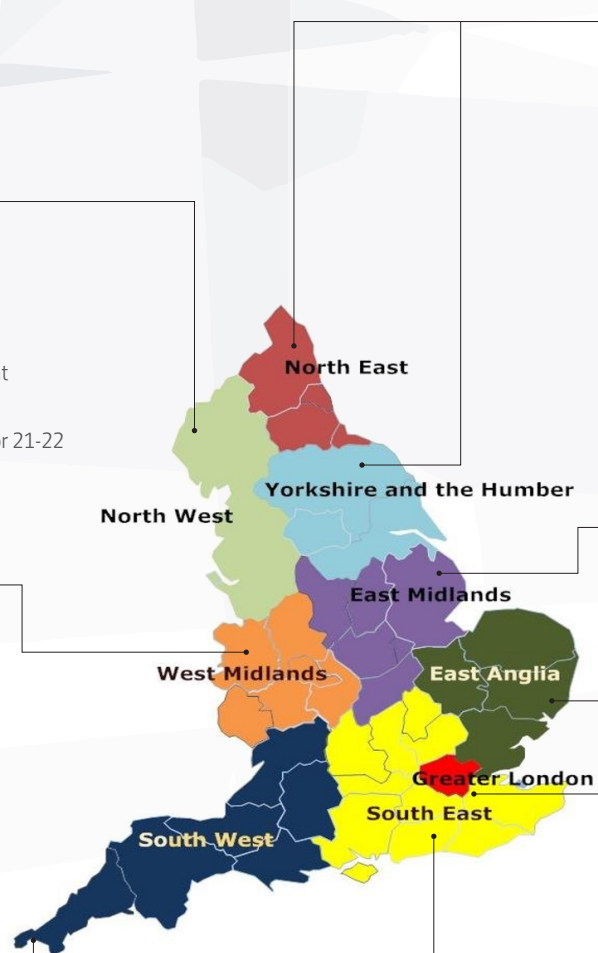
- 2 of 3 Community Champions South Asian (males)
- 2 of 4 Coach Mentors South Asian (males)
- 1 x Newly appointed UEFA C Coach Developer South Asian (male)
- 5 x Clubs of predominantly South Asian heritage being supported (Sporting Khalsa, Leamington Khalsa, Saltey Stallions, Birmingham Impact, Masoomin Sports Club) collective total 60+ coaches (males)
- 10 Coaches (females) involved in W&G Development Group
- 15+ Coaches South Asian receiving coach mentoring support

#### SOUTH WEST

- Our two mentors are South Asian
- 40 Asian coaches in development groups of which 10 are from the South-East Asian community
- 10 Asian female coaches of which 2 are South-East Asian

#### SOUTH EAST

- 2 of 4 (50%) Community Champions are South Asian.
- 1 of 4 (25%) Community champions is East Asian
- 5 of 10 (50%) of our mentors are South Asian
- 22 (80%) of coaches in development groups are south Asian across
- London and the South-East



#### NORTH EAST/YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

- 2 South Asian FA Mentors
- 2 South Asian Community Champions
- 7 COPS set up (up to 60 SA coaches supported informally and engage in coach development)
- 1 X NE Emerging Talent Coach Development Group (including 7 South Asians)
- 1 x Pro game South Asian at Leeds Utd Academy
- 2 clubs in the semi-pro game are of South Asian heritage – Step 5

#### FA Coaching Courses and support from Regional Coach Development Officers

- UEFA B course – 5 South Asian
- UEFA C new course – 10 including 3 Females South Asian

#### EAST MIDLANDS

- 2 of 2 of our Community Champions South Asian
- 1 of 4 of our Mentors are South Asian
- 28 (47%) of coaches in development groups are South Asian

#### EAST ANGLIA

- 1 of 2 male mentors (50%) are South Asian
- 14 South Asian aspirational coaches are being mentored
- 7 x clubs of predominantly South Asian heritage being supported

#### GREATER LONDON

- 1 male south Asian Mentor
- 3 predominantly South Asian clubs being supported
- 1 South Asian female community champion
- 2 South Asian male UEFA C tutors
- 3 South Asian males and females being mentored on UEFA B
- New coaching support network for aspiring coaches being set up consisting of 25% South Asian coaches
- 1 South Asian male in The FA's Elite Mentee scheme

## PILLAR 2: PATHWAYS *(continued)*

### Women's coaching

Our D&I coaching team have been able to work with Premier League and EFL clubs to provide:

- Insights and coach development support to aspiring coaches, to grow their knowledge and increase their experience.
- Opportunities for aspiring coaches to get in front of senior leaders, recruiters and decision-makers, to grow their network.

Across the 2021/22 season the team has worked with:

- 180 female recreational coaches.
- 20 female coaches on the talent pathway 119 female coaches engaged via webinars.

### Support for the launch of the 'Mesut Ozil Football for Peace' Centre in Bradford

On 13 September 2021, Mesut Ozil and Football for Peace (FFP), a UK-registered charity, kicked off a unique initiative in tackling inequalities and creating equalising pathways for youth in Bradford.

Supported by The FA, the programme showcases the power of football in all its forms to contribute to the pressing issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion of ethnic minorities in football across England. The Bradford Mesut Ozil Football for Peace Centre is continuing to create opportunities for the South Asian community by providing a pathway into elite football. While all children may not achieve professional footballing careers, the Centre will become a channel to access better opportunities generally.

This unique programme is a bridge between professional clubs and the South Asian community, which was previously often disconnected with sporting platforms.

- The under 14-15 age group has seen 71 youngsters signed up and the under 12-13 age group currently has 48 youngsters signed up.
- 95% of the FFP Bradford Centre's attendees are youngsters from historically under-represented groups.

### Looking ahead: our plans for the 2022/23 season

- Connect the community via FA programmes such as FA Coach Mentoring and FA Community Champions.
- Continue the club development work of The FA grassroots team through our club consultant network. A business consultant has been assigned to the first British South Asian Club, Birmingham Youth Sports Academy.
- Continue to connect the professional, National League System (male), Barclays Women's Super League and Tiers 1-4 (female) footballers through a British South Asian Mentoring Programme.
- Influence National League Clubs through the Football Leadership Diversity Code to adopt practices focused on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Develop the Emerging Wolves/Lions' programme.
- Continue to support and develop coaches from historically under-represented communities in the elite game through our positive action programmes.

## PILLAR 2: PATHWAYS *(continued)*

### CASE STUDY:

# NORTH-EAST EMERGING TALENT COACHES PROGRAMME AND UEFA B COHORT 2021/22

Across the NorthEast, our South Asian and Black Heritage coaches have accessed the UEFA B Course. These are coaches who have previously had fruitful careers in football such and have had experience in coaching and management with semi-professional (male and female teams), under 23s, 18s, University and local teams.

The FA have been successful in placing these coaches, primarily at no cost into local County FA, on coaching courses in areas such as West Riding, Northumberland & Sheffield. The current cohort will become future mentors, champions, coach developers and regional coach developers. The FA is intent on rebuilding relationships, reconnecting and building confidence with the local coaching community.

Four of the coaches have been on previous bursary programmes, demonstrating how the coaching pathway is successfully developing those who have benefitted from FA programmes. A connected and aligned pathway from grassroots, nonleague, semi-professional and the professional game makes the game better and diverse.

### CASE STUDY:

# IRFAN KAWRI STEPS UP TO COACH THE ENGLAND C TEAM

Apart from coaching, Irfan has been working in the professional football at first-team level in talent ID, as an opposition scout and recruiting players. After receiving an FA coaching bursary, Irfan was able to complete the UEFA A Licence coach qualification to enhance his skills as a practitioner in the elite game.



As a member of The FA's Mentee Development Programme, Irfan has been able to develop his direction and focus as a coach, both professionally and personally. He points to the mentoring, reflection and communication training as being great additions to his skillset.

The Mentee programme can be bespoke, agile and personal, making it particularly relevant for aspiring coaches who want to continue to develop in the elite game.

Irfan recently embarked on a coach placement at Burnley FC. Apart from the elite level experience this gave him, he also became a role model for the South Asian community and more recently, Irfan was one of four South Asian coaches who worked with the England C Team for their match against the Wales C team in Caernarfon in 2022. The England C Team is an official England team managed by The FA and is made up of players primarily from the English National League System.

## PILLAR 3:

# GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

## EMBEDDING ASIAN INCLUSION ACROSS THE GAME

We are committed to breaking down barriers and driving diversity and inclusion across grassroots football. It's from here talent progresses into semi-professional and professional football. We know there is more to do, but our progress includes the following:

### 1. Football Leadership Diversity Code

During the 2021/22 season, The FA launched the Football Leadership Diversity Code (FLDC) for the National League System (NLS), Women's Pyramid<sup>1</sup> and grassroots football. The code outlines a series of principles committing every club or league to focus on diversity across their organisation and ensure that discrimination is challenged.

The Code covers the following areas:

- Club leadership
- Coaching and selection
- Culture
- Reporting discrimination
- Raising awareness

The code covers all protected characteristics as per the Equality Act 2010, with specific focus on gender, ethnicity and disability. Since its launch in October 2021, a large number of clubs and leagues across the football pyramid have adopted the code as part of the process to become England Football Accredited<sup>2</sup>.

Across 2021/22, several online workshops were delivered to the clubs and leagues who adopted the code. The sessions collectively had over 150 attendees. You can view the sessions here to learn more about the FLDC, its aims, and the impact it is making across the sport.

<sup>1</sup>The Women's Pyramid encompasses the level of the women's game immediately below professional level.

<sup>2</sup> England Accredited is the revised and new version of the Charter Standard accreditation in grassroots football.



## PILLAR 3: GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL *(continued)*

### 2. Collaboration with County FA IAGs

We have supported the Chairs of the County FA Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG) by allowing access to central forums where they can share best practice, challenge and seek solutions, with the aim of addressing under-representation in their County FA regions.

There is now an established regional network to allow County FA IAG Chairs to gain access to valuable information. Chairs have also received access to training and development for their County FA staff, Board and Council.

There are now examples across the country of CFA IAGs adding value to their local regions. In Hertfordshire, for example, the CFA have established a new IAG to assist with guiding, supporting and challenging on EDI issues. Throughout the 2021-22 season, HFA also delivered a series of education events to celebrate their EDI work as part of their 'see it, be it' initiative. A Ramadan Cup was introduced, alongside a bursary programme to increase the number of female and ethnically diverse referees within Hertfordshire.



## PILLAR 3: GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL *(continued)*

### 3. Connecting with communities through our 'Faith and Football' programme

We have delivered The FA's 'Faith and Football' programme across England, with events held in the six regions representing the most populous religions/belief groups in the country.

The programme aims to demonstrate that the uniting powers of football are accessible to all communities regardless of background or social status.

Our events have included celebrating religious dates including Ramadan (Islam) at Wembley Stadium, Vaisakhi (Sikh) in the West Midlands and Vesak Day (Buddhism) in Swindon. Our work is supplemented by publication of 'Belief in the Game', an information booklet outlining the significance of each faith and its connection to sport at large and football in particular.

Over 1,000 people from across faith communities, have attended Faith and Football events during the 2021/22 season. By taking the events into communities, with Wembley as an iconic backdrop, the aim is to welcome communities who traditionally may have felt football was not accessible.

### 4. Improving focus on diversity in refereeing

We have worked with The FA's Referee Department to deliver a Referee Observer course for officials from historically under-represented ethnic communities.

**6 out of 7 referees who completed the Observer course were from Asian backgrounds.**

In June 2022, in partnership with PGMOL, Kick It Out, Leicestershire FA and Referee Support group, we supported an event celebrating Black and Asian referees in Leicestershire. Nearly 100 people attended, with 19 individuals from historically under-represented ethnic communities registering their interest in becoming a referee.

You can find more details about the event [here](#).



Referee, **Lisa Rashid**

## **LOOKING AHEAD: OUR PLANS FOR THE 2022/23 SEASON**

**We are continually working to the future and over the next 12 months are determined to:**

1. Work closer with County FAs to engage faith communities through their operations.  
Examples include:
  - Lincolnshire FA creating a Ramadan awareness document in conjunction with their local mosque that is specific to their County FA;
  - Cheshire FA signing up to the Nujum Sport Muslim Athlete Charter through The FA's Faith and Football programme.
2. Conduct a series of visits to many of the most prominent 'Asian' clubs across England. The aim is to engage with these clubs, celebrate their success and co-develop ways to engage Asian communities through football.
3. Grow the support mechanisms for County FA IAGs. This means continuing to deliver the IAG Chair forums, developing greater links between Asian communities and County FAs. All ensuring greater representation across staff, Board and advisory groups for County FAs.
4. Work closer with The FA's Referee Department to develop the new referee strategy. We want to ensure data is used to help refereeing become more reflective of society in areas such as gender and race. We hope the output will provide a wider talent pool for the Elite Referee Development Programme (ERDP).



## PILLAR 3: GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL *(continued)*

### CASE STUDY:

# COUNTY FA INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP (IAG) CHAIRS NATIONAL FORUMS

**County FAs play a crucial role in ensuring grassroots football is diverse and representative of their localities.**

In early 2022, a series of County FA IAG Chair national forums were held online. More than 30 County FA IAG Chairs attended and engaged in discussions about their current role, as well as detailing the equality, diversity and inclusion proposition of their County FA. They were provided with several training, education and development opportunities.

Similarly, a discussion topic proposed by the IAG Chairs was cross-County FA working. This led to a number of County FAs providing examples of their previous work, in turn sharing resources and expertise.

The County FA IAG Chairs national forums will continue across the 2022/23 season. County FA IAG members are voluntary roles that are often advertised. If you want to get involved in your County FA IAG, please contact your local County FA.

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## PILLAR 3: GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL *(continued)*

### CASE STUDY:

# THE FA'S FAITH AND FOOTBALL PROGRAMME

We have delivered a series of faith inclusion events in conjunction with County FAs and local stakeholders. The aim of all these events is to engage with communities and strengthen the links between faith and football. Our faith events have supported communities from the some of the most populous faiths in the UK. Here are some examples:

#### ISLAM:

We hosted an Open Iftar at Wembley Stadium on Thursday 28th April 2022 in partnership with the Ramadan Tent Project. Over 500 people attended to break their fast, listen to faith and football panels and witness the 'adhaan' live call to prayer from pitch side.

#### SIKHISM:

To mark Vaisakhi, we hosted a community football day at the most senior football club with Sikh heritage in England, Sporting Khalsa FC in the West Midlands. Working with local stakeholders and the Birmingham County FA, over 300 people attended to take part in football coaching, and witness live talks with professional and academy players of Sikh background. A 'celebrity' football match was also staged, featuring high-profile Sikhs from across sport, the arts and entertainment sectors.

#### BUDDHISM:

A Vesak celebration day was held on Monday 23rd May 2022 in partnership with the Nepalese Association Wiltshire, Wiltshire FA, Swindon Town FC Foundation and the Football Supporters' Association (FSA). Designed to engage the local Buddhist and Nepalese communities, over 80 people attended to hear talks on Buddhism, refereeing and coaching.

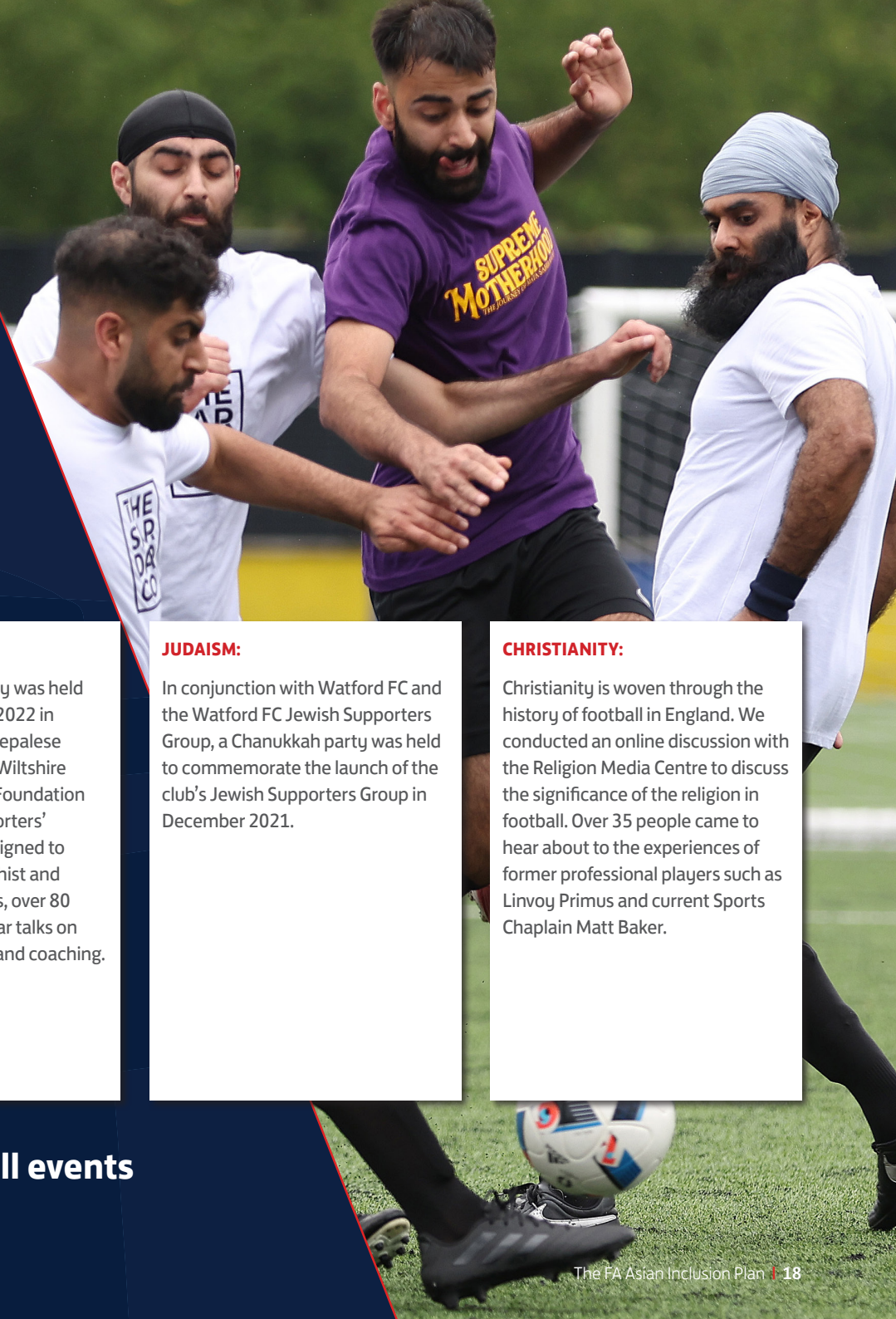
#### JUDAISM:

In conjunction with Watford FC and the Watford FC Jewish Supporters Group, a Chanukkah party was held to commemorate the launch of the club's Jewish Supporters Group in December 2021.

#### CHRISTIANITY:

Christianity is woven through the history of football in England. We conducted an online discussion with the Religion Media Centre to discuss the significance of the religion in football. Over 35 people came to hear about to the experiences of former professional players such as Linvoy Primus and current Sports Chaplain Matt Baker.

Visit [www.thefa.com/asianinclusion](http://www.thefa.com/asianinclusion) for highlights of all events



## PILLAR 4:

# WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

## DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE ASIAN FEMALE PARTICIPATION

We know that women from Asian communities comprise the lowest representation numbers in sporting participation in the country. We're proactively addressing this and are making progress. Here are some of our successes to date:

### 1. UEFA Women's EURO 2022 – Host City Recreational Officers

Thanks to Sport England funding we were able to employ seven adult Host City women's recreational football officers. These talented young women are developing diversity and inclusion programmes in the tournament's Host Cities, increasing increase opportunities for women to play for fun, fitness and friendship. We want this to be a legacy of England hosting this great tournament - and want future hosts to follow our lead. and inspire future host nations to develop similar programmes.

### 2. Greater access for Asian women to various FA participation programmes

These include walking football and projects with older women; LGBTQ+ festivals; disability provisions; programmes for women suffering from domestic abuse; Soccercise in places of religious worship; and much more.

Our key partnerships in this work include links with Khizra Mosque in Manchester; Muslimah Sports Association, Neasden Temple and Afghanistan & Central Asian Association in London; and Shipshape and FURD in Sheffield.



Freestyle footballer, **Kaljit Atwal**

Members of the Buddhist community at  
The FA's Vesak Day celebration in Swindon

## PILLAR 4: WOMEN'S FOOTBALL *(continued)*

### 3. Creating role models

Football needs role models and we remain committed to recruiting, developing, supporting and raising the profile of future female leaders, ambassadors from within the Asian community.

### 4. Club-specific support

Across the country our FA Coach Development Officers have been instrumental in supporting a range of clubs to promote football to Asian women. Those include Frenford FC, Smart Sport FC and Saltley Stallions and there are many more. Below are links to some great examples:

[Samira Ali from Surrey FA](#)

[Madhia Ishaq from West Riding FA](#)

### 5. FA Asian Women's Football Advisory Group

This Group continues to be invaluable in helping us provide more opportunities for Asian women, on and off the pitch, as well as supporting our Asian Inclusion strategy, 'Bringing Opportunities to Communities', Phase 2.

Through this Advisory Group, we have:

- Supported the distribution of 1,200 free Nike Sports Hijabs, as part of our drive to increase the participation of Muslim women and girls in football across the country.
- Supported the Asian Girls' Football Insight pilot in partnership with The Youth Sport Trust. The aims of the pilot were to better understand Asian girls' perceptions and attitudes towards football and leadership in football; to understand why/why not this target group participate; and to understand the barriers to participation.

## LOOKING AHEAD: OUR PLANS FOR THE 2022/23 SEASON

### WE WILL CONTINUE TO FOCUS OUR EFFORTS ON:

1. Recruiting, developing, supporting and raising the profile of future female leaders, ambassadors and role models from within the Asian community.
2. Giving more Asian girls the earliest opportunity to have a fun, enjoyable introduction to the game within their schools, local clubs and community settings.
3. Increasing the opportunities for Asian women to play for fun, fitness and friendship, and to volunteer.

## PILLAR 4: WOMEN'S FOOTBALL *(continued)*

### CASE STUDY:

# KHIZRA MOSQUE SOCCERCISE

Across the Manchester region, participation in football is significantly lower for Asian women. We wanted to show a new group of participants that football was as accessible to them as anyone else in the city.

Khizra Mosque in Cheetham Hill was approached to offer a taster session of Soccercise to the Mosque's female followers. In collaboration with our partner 'Communities 4 All' we hosted an exercise and coffee morning which gave women the chance to spend 30 minutes exercising with a football (Soccercise) and 30 minutes to have tea and snacks whilst socialising with other community members.

The impact of this was huge. As well as seeing an additional prioritising of health, in the six weeks that followed the Manchester FA session, the women were able to identify future session leaders. As a result, two women went on to complete the EE Playmaker coaching course and have since run the sessions. The project has provided a blueprint for how partnerships can deliver localised solutions to a group who may perceived football as inaccessible.



“

**I didn't know there was any space for me in football until I saw how it could be adapted. The women love the exercise each week and have showed an interested in their own health and wellbeing!** ”

**Participant**

## PILLAR 4: WOMEN'S FOOTBALL *(continued)*


### CASE STUDY:

# HELPING ASIAN WOMEN REACH THEIR COACHING GOALS

The FA's South East Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) coaching team has been working with Asian women who aspire to become football coaches.

At clubs such as Frenford FC in East London and Smart Sport FC in Croydon, Asian women have been encouraged to complete entry-level coaching courses including the EE Playmaker and Introduction to Football. In-person continuous professional development (CPD) events, meanwhile, have also provided additional learning opportunities.

FA Mentors and Community Champions also provide personal guidance and act as role models, as part of the Essex and Surrey FA's commitment to ensuring that football truly is for all.



**Manisha Tailor**, Assistant Head of Coaching, QPR

## PILLAR 5:

# COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT AND EXPERIENCE

## IMPROVED COMMUNICATION, AWARENESS AND BETTER CONNECTION TO ASIAN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

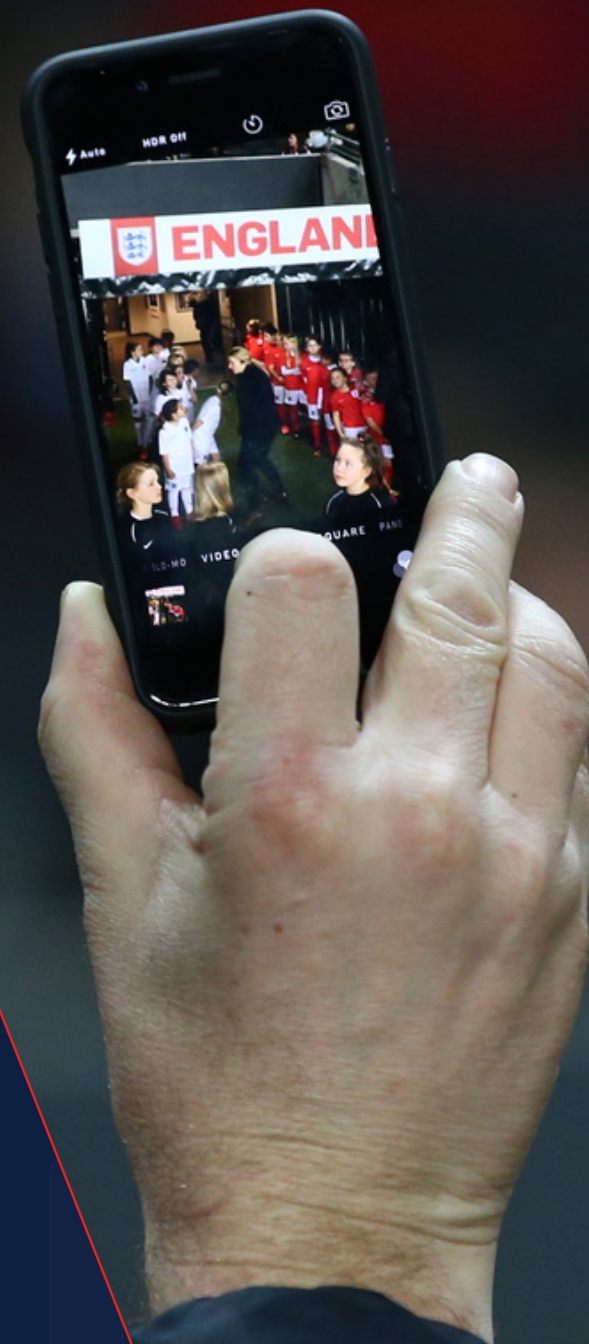
We are committed to communicating and connecting better with Asian communities. Our roadshows and feedback from stakeholders tell us that improving perception and dialogue with people on the ground is vital to success.

### 1. Launch of our award-winning online series 'Football & Me' during South Asian Heritage Month 2021

The FA celebrated South Asian Heritage Month (SAHM) for the first time in 2021. 'Football and Me' was a new online video series focused on Asians in football and featured commentary and perspectives from the England men's senior manager, Gareth Southgate. Having Gareth addressing key issues in football inclusion alongside the country's most established and promising Asian talent made this a genuinely ground-breaking campaign.

The players involved included:

- Hamza Choudhury (Bangladeshi/Grenadian): an English professional footballer and one of the most senior players of South Asian heritage in the men's professional game. Currently playing for Premier League club Leicester City FC, Choudhury is also an FA Cup winner and has represented England at under-21 and under-20 level.
- Professional player Zidane Iqbal (Iraqi) who plays for Manchester United.
- Professional player Maz Pacheco (Filipino), who plays for West Ham United Women and now Aston Villa.
- Professional player Yan Dhanda (Punjabi) of Swansea City.
- Academy player Layla Banaras (Pakistani/English) from Birmingham City Women Academy.
- England Men's senior blind player: Azeem Amir (Pakistani) of the Para Lions.
- UEFA B Coach and Charlton Athletic Women's Assistant Manager, Riteesh Mishra (Indian).
- Sabrina Dale (Punjabi), a UEFA B accredited coach.
- Former referee and first senior Asian and Sikh referee in the Premier League Jarnail Singh, alongside his sons Sunny and Bhups Gill (Indian), who are also current match officials.



## PRIORITY 5: COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT AND EXPERIENCE *(continued)*

The results can't be distilled into figures alone but, to date, include:

**Close to 200,000 views on our native FA social media channels**

**Multiple engagement from high-profile clubs on social media and fan engagement apps, including those from Manchester United, West Ham United and Birmingham City .**

**1.62 million content impressions.**



**Members of The FA and Asian footballers collecting their 'Creative Media Award'**



### **2. Highlighting Asian football role models during South Asian Heritage Month #SAHM**

Our South Asian Heritage Month (SAHM) in August 2021 culminated in a free live online Q&A with Leicester City's Hamza Choudhury.

Delivered in collaboration with EA Sports, FIFA and South Asian Heritage Month, the online session was designed to further engage the Asian diaspora during the #SAHM campaign.

### **3. Supporting the launch of England fan group 'Amar England'**

A new Asian-based supporters' group was established in 2021. Supported by The FSA and The FA, 'Amar England' is an England fan group comprising supporters of English clubs, and is primarily made up of Asian Bangladeshis and Muslims living in diverse cities such as Bradford and London. The group, which was launched at Frenford FC in March 2022, includes many Muslim families and children who want to attend England matches and support the national team in addition to their local clubs.

For more details on Amar England, please see [here](#).

Meanwhile, existing Asian fan group 'Apna England' is going from strength to strength and continues to receive support from The FA to drive inclusivity on England matchdays. In June 2022, the Apna England and Amar England fan groups met at an England senior men's Nations League match to socialise, discuss opportunities for collaboration and to collectively engage in their football passions.





**PRIORITY 5: COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT  
AND EXPERIENCE** *(continued)*

**4. Celebrating the legacy of Frank Soo – England’s first and only senior men’s player to date of Asian descent**

May 9th 2022 marked the 80th anniversary of Frank Soo’s first game for England during World War Two. Born in 1914, Frank Soo was an English professional footballer of dual heritage – Chinese and English. He was the first player of Chinese origin to play football in the English Football League, and the first player from an ethnic minority background to represent England in unofficial wartime matches.

At a recent fan group gathering, a member of Frank Soo’s family – his nephew Ronnie Soo – joined our Asian fan groups. Alongside representatives of The Frank Soo Foundation, they celebrated this landmark event.

Lawrence Lok (FA D&I Coach Development Officer, Grassroots Coach Development Team) has supported the development of coaches who deliver on the Frank Soo Foundation Communities Youth Coaching Programme. As many as 12 coaches have now completed the EE Playmaker coaching course and a further five have completed their Introduction to Coaching Award which was fully funded by The FA. Additionally, a monthly coaching session for as many as 80 children is delivered in collaboration with Watford Community Sport and Education Trust, who provide the use of their training facilities.

For more details on Frank’s legacy, visit [here](#) and [here](#).

**Frank Soo** (circa 1940-50s)

# LOOKING AHEAD: OUR PLANS FOR THE 2022/23 SEASON

Our ongoing work will focus on:

1. Continuing to partner with selected Asian media and broadcasters to challenge perceptions and communicate the impact football can have on the Asian population and beyond.
2. Delivering a second series of 'Football and Me', highlighting Asian role models across the game, including players, coaches, referees, behind-the-scenes staff and fan groups.
3. Engaging with England fan groups across the Asian community alongside the FSA. The aim is to enhance Asian fans' experiences when supporting England men's and women's teams at Wembley and other stadiums.
4. Researching and communicating significant advancements made by Asians in across football in England – and celebrating their accolades.

## CASE STUDY:

### 'FOOTBALL AND ME'

The 'Football and Me' online series has brought together the best in British South Asian talent across football, media, film and music.

By harnessing this creative talent, The FA delivered a successful first-person role model campaign. It featured new and refreshing stories designed to inspire and engage the next generation of Asian footballers, coaches and referees.

South Asian female award-winning and BAFTA-Breakthrough filmmaker Rubika Shah (creator of 'White Riot', 2019) and her organisation Smoking Bear Productions, directed the series. Leading British Asian entertainment TV channel BritAsia TV also assisted with research and online interviews. The series soundtrack was complemented by British Asian music producer Sukh Knight.

In October 2021, the series won the 'Creative Media Award' at the 2021 Asian Media Awards held at the Emirates Old Trafford (home of Lancashire County Cricket Club). It beat stiff competition from national campaigns such as "#TakeTheVaccine: Vaccine Hesitancy Campaign for Ethnic Minority Communities" campaign. Other winners on the night included Good Morning Britain presenter Adil Ray and Eastenders' star Jaz Deol.

Co-founders of South Asian Heritage Month Jasvir Singh OBE and Binita Kane described 'Football and Me' as "An amazing campaign with particularly strong levels of engagement, which elevated the work of South Asian Heritage Month by taking it into the world of sports and shining a light on the stories of British South Asians in football. It raised the profile of South Asian identity in a way never seen before in the UK."

You can watch the award-winning series [here](#).

## REPORTING DISCRIMINATION

To learn more about reporting discrimination across our game, see our reporting pages [here](#)

To find out more about The FA's Asian Inclusion work, visit:

[www.TheFA.com/AsianInclusion](http://www.TheFA.com/AsianInclusion)

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