



# FOOTBALL WITHOUT LIMITS

THE FA DISABILITY FOOTBALL STRATEGY  
2024-2028



DRIVING POSITIVE CHANGE IN PARA AND DISABILITY FOOTBALL







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**Definitions:**

In the strategy you're reading, you'll see reference to 'Disability Football' and at other times 'Para Football'. Both terms cover all the football formats for Disabled people. However, 'Disability Football' is predominantly used in the grassroots game. Conversely, 'Para Football' is the common term in the elite game, i.e. with the Talent Pathway you'll read about and at international level. For clarity, 'Para' is short for 'parallel', i.e. running alongside the grassroots game.

# WELCOME TO THE NEXT STEP ON OUR JOURNEY



In 2021, our Football Your Way plan for Disability Football in England refocused our efforts to ensure the game can be accessed, enjoyed and played by all.

Three years on, and our inspirational England Para Teams have achieved podium finishes on the world stage. We have also increased participation at grassroots and built an enhanced coaching pathway. But there is still work to be done to match our ambition to take Disability Football to the next level.

Our new strategy is the next step on our journey as we continue to do everything within our power to create a game free from discrimination. To achieve this, we have built our long-term strategy around:

1. Providing Disabled people with greater access to participate in football by increasing the number and variety of opportunities to play.
2. Maintaining The FA Disability Cup as the premier competition across the impairment-specific formats of the game, and a key event in the national football calendar.
3. Increasing the number of players transitioning to England Para Teams while having a positive and impactful pathway experience.
4. Producing 'ready to win' England Para Teams competing in high-quality international competitions.
5. Making England Football Learning the go-to destination for coaches of disabled footballers – and coaches with an impairment – who are seeking personal development.

6. Driving countrywide support and recognition of England Para teams, visibility of grassroots Disability Football, and awareness of grassroots participation opportunities.

7. Securing additional funding and investment to support Disability Football, The FA Disability Cup, and England Para Teams winning major tournaments.

Our message is simple. If you have a disability, there's an opportunity for you to play the game. Whether that's playing for pure enjoyment or aspiring one day to play for England. It is your choice.

We look forward to working collaboratively with our partners including Sport England, wider football stakeholders and commercial partners to unlock groundbreaking change for Disability Football.



**Baroness Sue Campbell DBE**  
FA Director of Women's Football and Strategic Lead for Disability/Para Football



**Yazir Mirza**  
FA Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Director





### AT THE FOREFRONT

**This strategy sets out The FA's commitment to being at the forefront of changing perceptions and social barriers for Disabled people to play football, with the clear message that football is for all.**

Great progress has been made over the last three years and we have already seen the benefits of having a clear framework for Disability Football.

From increasing levels of participation across grassroots, to our England Para Teams shining on the world stage, there has never been such an exciting time to be involved in the game.

I warmly welcome this new strategy and hope it will inspire many more people to get involved and provide a genuine choice for everyone to play, regardless of age, background or ability.



**Colin Chaytors**  
Chair, The FA Disability Football Committee

### HUGE GROWTH POTENTIAL

**Our mission is to make grassroots football more inclusive for Disabled people, on and off the field.**

By providing Disabled people with greater access to participate in football and increasing the variety of opportunities to play, we want to provide genuine choice for all.

We have teamed up with the Activity Alliance to set up training workshops and toolkits to guide clubs on their inclusion journey. That's alongside deploying a network of trained ambassadors to help clubs apply the toolkit and workshop learnings to their own Disability Football plans.

Our innovative sessional football programme – Comets – has been introduced specifically for Disabled children aged 5-11, while The FA Disability Cup goes from strength to strength and is becoming a key event in the national football calendar.

Disability Football still has huge potential for growth. We are committed to turning this potential into reality.



**James Kendall**  
The FA Director of Football Development

# THE DISABILITY FOOTBALL LANDSCAPE IN ENGLAND

**9.8m people**  
 in England (17.7% population) are Disabled  
 = 5.4m (18.7%) females and 4.4m (16.5%) males  
(2021 census)

**A significant 'activity gap' remains:**  
 Disabled people are consistently twice as likely to be inactive compared to non-Disabled people (20.7% vs 40.8%)  
(Sport England, Active Lives)

Only four in 10 (43%) Disabled people feel they have the opportunity to be as active as they want to be, compared to seven in 10 (69%) non-Disabled people. Yet 76% of Disabled people want to do more activity than they currently do  
(Activity Alliance, Annual Disability and Activity Survey 2023-24)

**Disabled people are half as likely**  
 as non-Disabled people to agree that 'sport' is for someone like them (29% vs 64%)  
(Activity Alliance, Annual Disability and Activity Survey 2023-24)

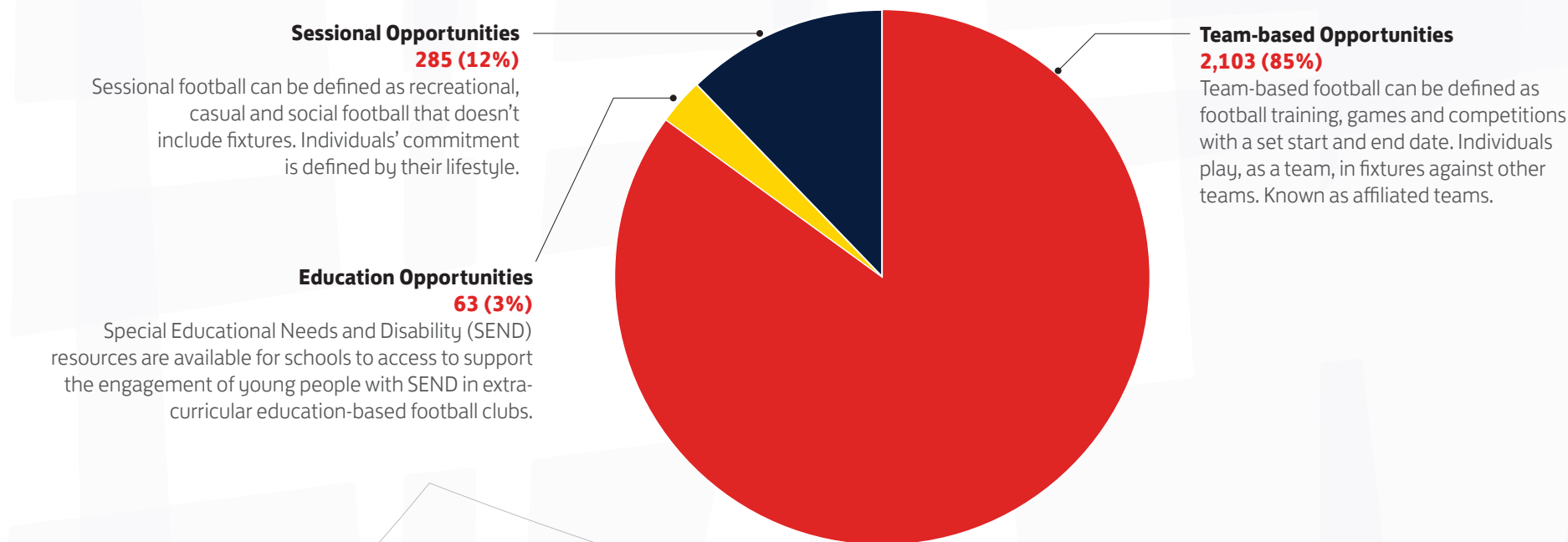
**Covid-19 legacy and the cost-of-living crisis have exacerbated the issues:**  
 Disabled people are more likely to consider sport and physical activity a luxury rather than a necessity. Just over two-fifths of Disabled people (44%) agreed that when money is tight, the cost of being active is one of the first things they look to reduce. Cost of living is disproportionately impacting Disabled women, younger Disabled people, ethnically-diverse Disabled people and Disabled people with five or more impairments.  
(Activity Alliance, Annual Disability and Activity Survey 2023-24)

There are three pathways to play football that are open to Disabled people:

Mainstream	Pan-disability	Impairment-specific
This pathway is for anyone who can play without adaptations to the rules.	This pathway is for players with a broad spectrum of impairments and health conditions.	This pathway is for players with the same type of impairments.

**Breakdown of opportunities to play (March 2024)**

Activities in Sessional, Education and Team-based football comply with The FA safeguarding requirements to create player-centred, safe and positive environments for all.



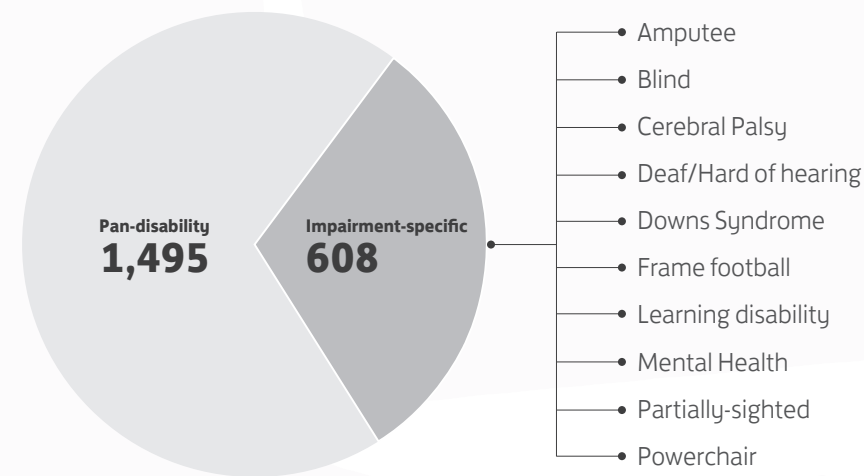


## THE DISABILITY FOOTBALL LANDSCAPE IN ENGLAND (CONTINUED)

Pan-disability is the largest of the two disability-specific pathways. However, impairment-specific football offers opportunities from grassroots through to elite international teams. Impairment-specific football comes in a range of formats, including those shown below, but there are not international teams for every format.

Overall, there are 2,103 affiliated Disability teams (March 2024) which can be broken down as follows:

### Number of affiliated teams



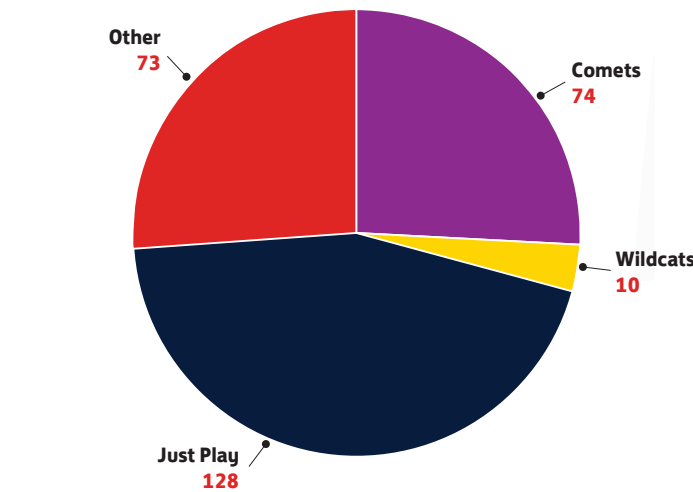
Pan-disability leagues form the foundation of the disability competition structure and there is now a network of 42 such leagues across England, the majority of which are small-sided in format, playing fixtures monthly.

Note: see page 9 for definitions of blind and partially-sighted football.

There are also national impairment-specific leagues for amputee, blind, cerebral palsy, deaf, partially-sighted and powerchair football.

Our national participation programmes provide sessional opportunities for players who are motivated to play purely for fun. There are 285 disability-specific sessional sessions (March 2024) broken down as follows:

### Number of sessional opportunities



## THE DISABILITY FOOTBALL LANDSCAPE IN ENGLAND (CONTINUED)

### England Para Teams' overview

Team	Best World Championship finish (under FA leadership)
Blind <sup>1</sup> Men's	4th
Blind Women's	8th
Partially-sighted <sup>2</sup> Men's	2nd
Powerchair	2nd
Cerebral Palsy Men's	4th
Deaf Men's	10th
Deaf Women's	3rd

There are seven senior England Para Teams in the following Disability Football formats:

**Blind** (men and women), **Partially-sighted** (men), **Powerchair** (mixed gender), **Cerebral Palsy** (men), **Deaf** (men and women)

We also run developmental groups and squads in impairment groups.

Historically, our teams have performed well at major European and World tournaments, with several strong performances in 2023/24. We enter this next strategy cycle with an ambition to reach the podium in at least 70% of the major international tournaments that we enter, across all teams.

<sup>1</sup>Blind football: Players will range from having no light perception to some light perception, but not enough to recognise shapes of different objects.

Internationally, players must be classified as B1 (completely blind).

Domestically, the National Blind Football League have introduced a B1b classification which allows partially-sighted players with a low B2 classification.

<sup>2</sup>Partially-sighted football: Players have some level of sight.

Internationally, outfield players must have a sight classification of B2 or B3.

Domestically, players can also take part if they have a classification of B4 or B5.

Note: 'visually impaired' is a generic term for all sight loss

For more information about sight classification, visit [britishblindsport.org.uk](https://britishblindsport.org.uk)







# OUR SEVEN PRIORITIES AND THEIR GOALS

Priority	2024-28 goal
<b>PRIORITY 1: DISABILITY FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide Disabled people with greater access to participate in football by increasing the number and variety of opportunities to play.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 2: THE FA DISABILITY CUP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain The FA Disability Cup as the premier competition across the impairment-specific formats of the game, and a key event in the national football calendar.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 3: PARA TALENT PATHWAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the number of players transitioning to England Para Teams while having a safe, positive and impactful pathway experience.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 4: ENGLAND PARA TEAMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To produce 'ready to win' England Para Teams competing in high-quality international competitions.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 5: COACH DEVELOPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make England Football Learning the go-to destination for coaches of disabled footballers – and coaches with an impairment – who are seeking personal development.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 6: MARKETING &amp; COMMUNICATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To drive countrywide support and recognition of England Para Teams, visibility of grassroots Disability Football, and awareness of grassroots participation opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 7: PARTNERSHIPS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To secure additional funding and investment to support Disability Football, The FA Disability Cup, and England Para Teams winning major tournaments.</li> </ul>

The FA's safeguarding policies and procedures underpin all objectives and tactics in the seven priority areas. Embedding safeguarding best-practice ensures safe, fun and inclusive football opportunities for all.





Priority 1:

# DISABILITY FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION

2024-28 goal:

To provide Disabled people with greater access to participate in football by increasing the number and variety of opportunities to play.

**Key success measures:**

**Increase participation by 47%** by offering 3,611 opportunities to play for Disabled people of all ages across all Disability Football formats by June 2028.

**Increase the number of players by 37% across all Disability Football formats,** reaching 28,300 registered disabled players by June 2028.

**What the GAME IS SAYING:**

“I have something to look forward to for the weekend, to be part of a team that grows and trains together... you’re there to have fun and there’s no stress.”

Adult disabled footballer

“She’s just such a happy kid playing football. A kid that has so many challenges in life can step onto a football pitch and just be a kid. Just be herself and enjoy herself.”

Parent of Imogen, a deaf and autistic footballer

Objectives	Tactics
Develop FA resources to support the provision of more opportunities for Disabled people to play football in schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise existing programmes in education settings for young Disabled people.</li> <li>Develop a new school programme, leveraging Comets<sup>1</sup>, to increase extra-curricular opportunities to play football in education settings.</li> <li>Review the current ‘School Games’ offer to maximise young Disabled people’s access to school competition.</li> </ul>
Provide opportunities for Disabled people of all ages to play sessional football in fun and safe environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upscale the Comets programme ensuring more Disabled children aged 5-11 can play football in a safe, sustainable and fun environment.</li> <li>Explore demand and conceptualise a new ‘for fun’ programme for 12-16 Disabled children to align with Comets.</li> <li>Evolve the existing Just Play (16+) programme to be a fit-for-purpose, ‘for fun’ football offer for Disabled adults.</li> </ul>
Increase the quality and quantity of team-based opportunities for Disabled people to play in grassroots clubs and leagues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the Disability Training for clubs: Journey to Inclusion training roll out, including deployment of Disability Football ambassadors.</li> <li>Maintain high-quality leagues and create new competition opportunities where gaps exist.</li> <li>Develop an annual Journey to Inclusion fund to address participation gaps across the Disability pathway and to improve Disabled people’s experience in football at a local level.</li> </ul>
Develop and retain a knowledgeable and influential workforce who can champion change and deliver targeted opportunities for Disabled people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect with and upskill existing FA-funded workforce within the football ecosystem to provide knowledge required to champion change and deliver targeted opportunities for Disabled people.</li> <li>Expand impairment-specific participation via FA-funded national partnerships.</li> <li>Utilise The FA Volunteer Gameplan as a catalyst to grow the number and diversity of those running the disability game.</li> </ul>
Harness the power of major football events to inspire participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Influence legacy plans for men’s UEFA EURO 2028 to inspire participation and the creation of new opportunities.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Comets is The FA’s sessional football programme for children aged 5-11.

**Disabled people should have the opportunity to experience and enjoy football whatever their ability level, whether that be in mainstream, pan-disability or impairment-specific football. The important thing is that they have a choice.**

**It’s fantastic to see participation levels are on an upwards trend, but we know there is more to do. Our plans for the next four years will see a further upscale to the roll-out of our recently launched, insight driven programmes such as Comets and Journey to Inclusion training, while we will create new initiatives where gaps exist. We are committed to supporting schools and grassroots football clubs to grow their Disability provision on and off the pitch to ensure that football’s doors are open to all. 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿**

Phil Heap, National Development Manager (Disability Pathway) The FA





Priority 2:  
**THE FA DISABILITY CUP** in association with

**2024-28 goal:**  
 To maintain The FA Disability Cup as the premier competition across the impairment-specific formats of the game, and a key event in the national football calendar.

**Key success measures:**

- Consistently reach The FA Disability Cup attendance capacity with 100% of available spectator tickets issued.
- Explore potential broadcast partnerships for The FA Disability Cup.
- Drive visibility and engagement of The FA Disability Cup by increasing social and media reach each year.
- Include a **female-specific showcase** at The FA Disability Cup by 2028.

What the **GAME IS SAYING:**

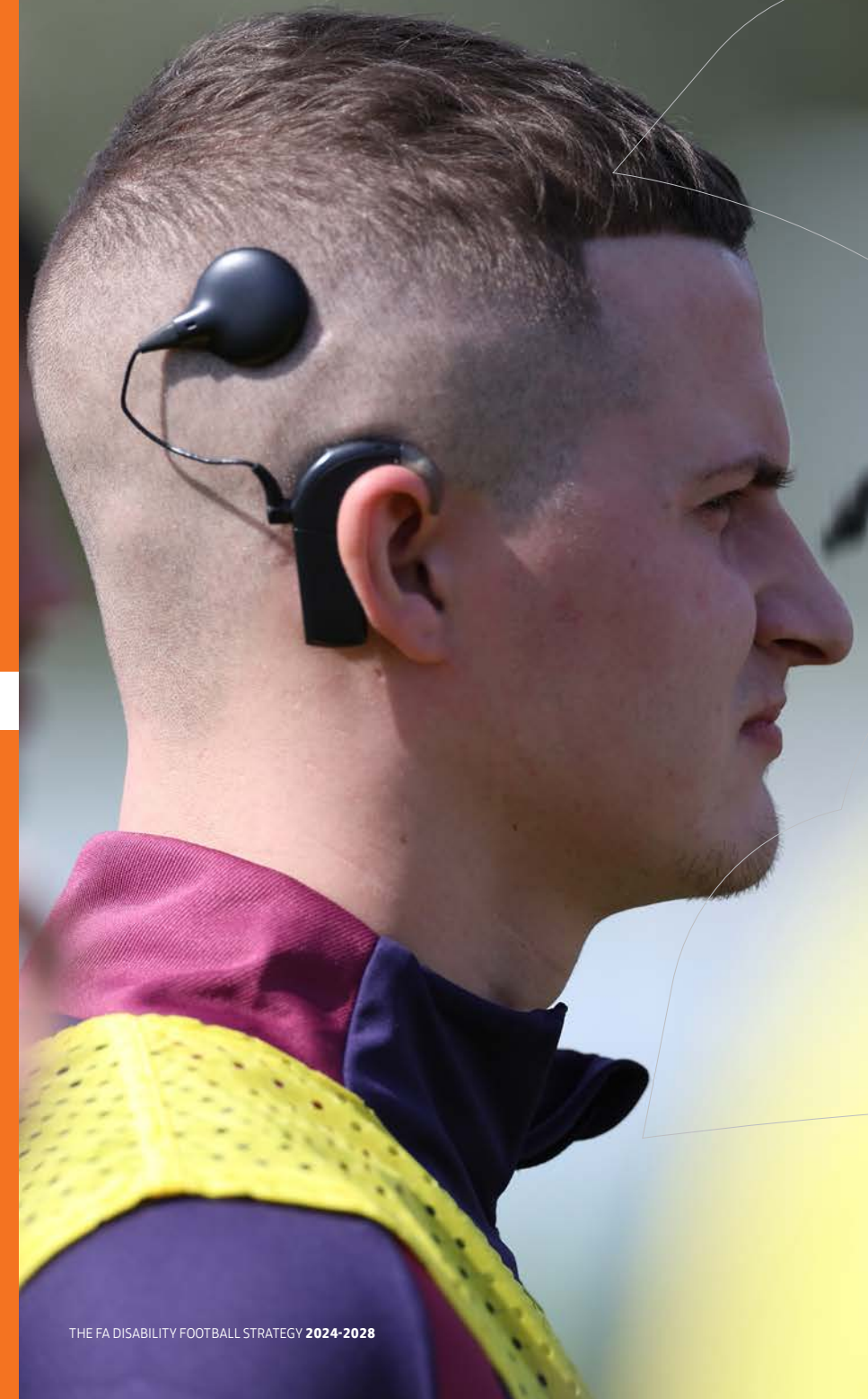
- “It was the best day of my life!”  
Deaf finalist
- “What a special feeling to be part of this event where all impairments groups are playing on the same weekend on live TV.”  
Partially-sighted finalist

Objectives	Tactics
Grow the appeal, awareness, attendance and viewership of The FA Disability Cup.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit The FA Disability Cup brand to realise its full potential.</li> <li>Elevate coverage of The FA Disability Cup in the lead-up to finals weekend across FA-owned channels.</li> <li>Reach out to media earlier in the competition, exploring the ‘journey to the final’ hook.</li> <li>Collaborate with traditional media and digital publishers on opportunities to amplify, from semi-finals to finals.</li> <li>Integrate England senior players to drive further interest and connect grassroots with Para.</li> <li>Develop the matchday final experience at the event and online, to consolidate long-term support of the event.</li> <li>Explore potential broadcast partnerships for The FA Disability Cup.</li> </ul>
Maximise the impact of The FA Disability Cup to inspire the next generation of Disabled footballers, coaches and volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage the visibility of the event to highlight The FA’s commitment to our Para Teams and Disability Football.</li> <li>Celebrate flagship disability programmes via finals weekend – at the event, on digital channels, and on broadcast – signposting where to play and where to follow.</li> <li>Shine a light on the powerful stories of those involved in the event, to inspire and motivate others to participate.</li> <li>Create memorable experiences for spectators by offering unique access to matches (e.g. placing the trophy on the plinth; accompanying captains onto the pitch as mascots, etc).</li> <li>Utilise the event to engage and inspire potential future football coaches across Disability Football.</li> </ul>
Deliver a world-class FA Disability Cup finals event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host and showcase competitive cup finals across six impairment-specific formats at St. George’s Park, for which we have National Impairment-Specific Leagues sanctioned.</li> <li>Provide best-in-class environments exclusive to each impairment-specific cup final.</li> <li>Increase female representation across the event.</li> <li>Maintain the strong safeguarding culture by ensuring the designated safeguarding lead, risk assessments and safeguarding plans are responsive to the growth of the event.</li> </ul>

“We will continue to utilise The FA Disability Cup to showcase the skills and extraordinary passion of players at the top of their game, while also being committed to develop the event further. We will strive to offer everyone involved the best experience possible, while raising awareness of participation opportunities, inspiring others to take their first step into football.”

Wendy Booth, National Development Manager, The FA





Priority 3:

# PARA TALENT PATHWAY

2024-28 goal:

To increase the number of players transitioning to England Para Teams while having a safe, positive and impactful pathway experience.

**Key success measures:**  
**Transition 10 players per season** from talent programmes to England Development and Senior Squads.  
**Increase number of players** from Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) areas in Regional and National Talent Programmes.

What the **GAME IS SAYING:**

“To see our son come through the Talent Pathway and play for his country has made us and our family immensely proud. It’s amazing to see the progress he has made on the Talent Pathway both as a person and a player.”

Parent

“I really enjoyed the coaching sessions and had some great coaches help me. I was getting feedback from both coaches and they were challenging me throughout the sessions. The coaches were trying to improve my game which I felt was important, as I am eager to progress and improve. I felt valued and included in all the discussions and drills. I can’t wait to come to the next one.”

12-year-old player

Objectives	Tactics
Deliver targeted and individualised talent development and player transition programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage best practice which recognises the unique journey of each young player, celebrates their successes and provides a positive environment which safeguards them.</li> <li>Deliver an age- and impairment-specific ‘4-corner’ development curriculum and performance support framework.</li> <li>Provide outstanding feedback to players via individual development plans which is relevant to the age, stage and classification of individuals.</li> <li>Retain the experience and personal qualities of players as coaches, ambassadors and mentors through the delivery of the ‘Para Player to Practitioner’ programme.</li> <li>Maximise holistic player support and safeguarding culture by working in partnership with Sport England, Sports Aid and Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS).</li> </ul>
Develop and deliver innovative talent identification and education programmes to raise awareness and drive player recruitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the ‘Know My Talent’ series to further educate key stakeholders on critical talent pathway topics.</li> <li>Evolve The FA Talent ID course to better represent Para Players, linking into ‘Know my Talent’.</li> <li>Promote talent transfer for Para athletes working in partnership with Sport England, UK Sport and other national governing bodies.</li> <li>Deliver a dedicated Para Game Insight project to enhance understanding of the impairment-specific formats and long-term talent identification and development.</li> <li>Create and share classification-focused educational material to inform stakeholder understanding.</li> <li>Deliver a programme of talent programme focused educational programmes to stakeholders in the Pathway and talent identification workshops to the wider football workforce.</li> </ul>
Increase inclusivity and diversity within the Para Talent System and future England Teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a network of county, regional and national talent development programmes to ensure effective player transition.</li> <li>Use demographic data and insights to deliver talent identification programmes and Talent ID workshops to recruit players in targeted communities.</li> <li>Develop player identification, transition and retention for female Para players with high levels of potential.</li> <li>Create and develop a ‘Player Hardship Fund’ for those most in need of support.</li> <li>Identify and recruit talented practitioners to further diversify the Para programme workforce.</li> </ul>

**“We will create an inclusive and sustainable Talent Pathway, which ensures any and every young player can achieve their potential. The Pathway is open and flexible to accommodating players’ needs, while feeling comfortable asking players about themselves and how we can support them to train and perform optimally.”**

Steve Daley, Talent Pathway Manager – Para Football, The FA





Priority 4:

# ENGLAND PARA TEAMS

2024-28 goal:

To produce ‘ready to win’ England Para Teams competing in high-quality international competitions.

**Key success measures:**

**70% of senior Para Teams achieving medal success** at European and/or World level.

**Achieve greater disability and ethnicity representation** within the Para Football workforce through positive action initiatives.

**What the GAME IS SAYING:**

Being able to meet and mix with the other teams has created the feeling that we are like one big team, even though we’re from different Para squads.

Player, Blind Women’s Squad

“When I play football, I feel so happy and all the stress from the world goes away. I am just happy. Without CP football, I don’t know what I would have ended up doing.”

Player, CP Men’s Squad

Objectives	Tactics
Coach and support players with a player-centred development philosophy to drive elite performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a culture focused on people and performance across the programme, underpinned with robust safeguarding policies, procedures and education.</li> <li>Introduce Player Performance Grants aligned with Individual Development Plans.</li> <li>Provide a relevant CPD<sup>1</sup> programme for Para coaches and Multi-Disciplinary Teams.</li> <li>Deliver a tactical periodisation programme with a focus on games and camps, underpinned by a specific ‘What It Takes To Win’ (WITTW) model.</li> </ul>
Enhance the England Para player environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with other relevant Para sports to develop impairment-specific knowledge.</li> <li>Develop a greater understanding of the England Para player and the psychosocial impact on performance.</li> <li>Design a bespoke performance pathway for ‘Podium Potential’ teams, ensuring right tournament, right time.</li> <li>Support player transitions into life after their playing career, including outside football, by facilitating education/qualification opportunities.</li> </ul>
Collaborate with and influence international federations to raise performance standards, improve governance and safeguarding, and increase support across all Para Football formats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Influence a significant shift in the international football landscape through active involvement in UEFA, FIFA.</li> <li>Strive to raise performance standards across International Federations.</li> <li>Drive more innovative and impactful Para Football events.</li> <li>Explore possibilities for hosting major international tournaments in the next strategic cycle (2028-2032).</li> <li>Ensure appropriate safeguarding plans, risk assessments and designated safeguarding leads support the development of Para events and activities.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>CPD = continuous professional development.

As The FA, we have an opportunity as well as a significant responsibility to make a real difference for Disabled people. Through the ongoing development of a high-performance landscape on the Para Football programme, we want to support our players and coaches to be the very best they can be. We believe that this leads to world-beating performances that can inspire the next generation of ambitious Para footballers to play for England.

Cath Gilby, Head of Para Performance, The FA

Over the last few years, there has been a real shift in momentum in England Para Football, especially from a performance point of view. The programme shows a genuine interest in players and teams, and we have a voice through the Player Rep Group. The biggest change for me is everyone being accepted as individuals, and there being an understanding of our lives outside of football.

John McDougall, Captain Partially -Sighted Men’s Squad





Priority 5:  
**COACH DEVELOPMENT**

**2024-28 goal:**  
To make England Football Learning the go-to destination for coaches of Disabled footballers – and coaches with an impairment – who are seeking personal development.

**Key success measures:**

**Increase the number of Disabled learners** completing an entry-level core coaching qualification (Playmaker or I2CF<sup>1</sup>).

**Increase the number of learners** completing the Introduction to Coaching Disabled Footballers' course.

**Drive the satisfaction and engagement rate** of England Para Team coaches with their high-performance coach development programme.

<sup>1</sup>I2CF = Introduction to Coaching Football course.

**What the GAME IS SAYING:**

"I have been able to access a wide range of support from The FA, most recently through a Disability Coach Mentor who provided me with 1:1 support on the pitch to help me understand the needs of my players. Alongside this, the programmes I have attended were really engaging and helped me understand how to help the players within my own coaching environment."

Volunteer Grassroots Disability Football Coach

Objectives	Tactics
<p><b>Personalised Offer</b> Provide coaches of Disabled players, and coaches with an impairment, access to relevant and transferable skills at point of need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a connected and broad landscape of multi-mode resources and experiences for coaches of Disabled players within Pan Disability, impairment-specific and mainstream contexts.</li> <li>Improve accessibility by ensuring policies and procedures are socialised, reviewed and developed to reflect how we can support learners and enable a request for a reasonable adjustment to their learning.</li> <li>Connect stakeholders to ensure a broad learning landscape, particularly in relation to impairment-specific coaching.</li> </ul>
<p><b>People</b> Deliver a high-quality recruitment, training and deployment programme that enables the development of brilliant coaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed a consistent and connected induction programme for our people that raises awareness and highlights their role in the development of coaches within Disability Football.</li> <li>Deliver a rich and varied ongoing development programme that underpins expert coach development.</li> <li>Deploy our workforce to maximise impact (e.g. mentors, community champions and approved deliverers).</li> <li>Ensure our workforce has safeguarding knowledge, skills and confidence specific to the Disability Football context.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performance</b> England winning teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a player-to-coach programme that supports coach succession planning within the performance programme at all levels.</li> <li>Provide a bespoke elite coach development programme for England teams to enhance performance and support their ongoing individual development plans.</li> <li>Embed the knowledge and skills from the England 'What It Takes To Win' (WITTW) model to enhance coach development across the game (e.g. Player Insights and Managing Multi-Disciplinary Teams).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Profile</b> Raise the profile of coaches working with Disabled players and coaches with an impairment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a marketing campaign to raise the profile of coaches in Disability Football and our Para Teams.</li> <li>Utilise the Para Teams and stakeholders to put a spotlight on coaches working within Disability Football.</li> <li>Develop case studies of coaches with an impairment to promote inclusion, and disseminate across our platforms.</li> </ul>

**Coaching plays a fundamental role across the Disability and Para game and we are committed to supporting coaches by providing a wide range of development opportunities that will allow all players to thrive. Similarly, we will provide enhanced support to coaches with an impairment and continue to drive our work to ensure equal opportunities for all.**

Dan Clements, Head of Coach Development, The FA





Priority 6:

# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

2024-28 goal:

To drive countrywide support and recognition of England Para Teams, visibility of grassroots Disability Football, and awareness of grassroots participation opportunities.

**Key success measures:**

**Double national awareness** of England Para Teams and players.

**Double the engagement** with England Para and grassroots Disability content.

**Double the signposting and promotion** of opportunities for Disabled people to play football.

**What the GAME IS SAYING:**

Thanks to the increased spotlight through media, marketing and communications, The FA has brought Para Football out of the shadows. From showcasing the unbelievable talent across our England teams, to helping find new players wanting to start their footballing adventure, the future is an exciting one.

*Matt Crossen, Captain Cerebral Palsy Men's Squad*

It's brilliant to see young players coming through the pathway being inspired by our England Para players. The increased exposure through the media and on social media through England channels has certainly helped raise the profile of our players, and we're seeing a real desire from the next generation to follow in their footsteps.

*James Watkins, FA Senior Technical Performance Manager*

Objectives	Tactics
<p>Drive 'One England' approach to England Para Teams: <i>Same shirt. Same pride.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Showcase England Para Teams via England channels with a year-round, on-strategy approach.</li> <li>Elevate coverage of key Para milestones (e.g. week-long Para camp; major tournaments).</li> <li>Increase match footage of England Para Teams on FA-owned channels.</li> <li>Maximise opportunities for higher match attendances at England Para fixtures around the country.</li> <li>Collaborate with relevant and supportive digital publishers, influencers, and traditional media to increase reach, recognition, and authentic support of England Para Teams.</li> <li>Amplify England Para and Disability Football through forward-thinking and collaborative partnership opportunities with headline England partners.</li> </ul>
<p>Drive awareness of opportunities to participate in grassroots Disability Football: <i>Same game. Same passion.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signpost opportunities to play through always-on campaigns around our headline programmes (e.g. Comets, Just Play).</li> <li>Ensure clear signposting to inclusive playing and volunteering opportunities in grassroots leagues and clubs.</li> <li>Celebrate the unique stories and role models of those involved in the grassroots Disability game through world-class content and storytelling, motivating others to get involved.</li> <li>Engage external media to amplify opportunities around key campaigns and programme launches.</li> <li>Amplify England Talent Pathway days via FA-owned channel content and signposting.</li> </ul>
<p>Support the growth of Disability Football in grassroots clubs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and drive national campaigns to educate and influence clubs on how to provide safe, accessible and inclusive football opportunities.</li> <li>Shine a spotlight on clubs and providers of Disability Football, utilising England Para players where possible.</li> </ul>

Since launching our Football Your Way plan, we've seen Disability Football go from strength to strength.

Over the last four years, we've elevated our output around England Para Teams, using their stories to inspire the next generation of players, and we've continued to shine a light on the brilliant work throughout grassroots Disability Football, from The FA Disability Cup to Comets.

Through our new ambitious strategy, we want to help take Disability Football to the next level, continuing our journey to inspire others and promoting opportunities for all to play the game.

*Greg Sullivan, Brand Lead - England teams, The FA*





Priority 7:

# PARTNERSHIPS

**2024-28 goal:**

To secure additional funding and investment to support Disability Football, The FA Disability Cup, and England Para Teams winning major tournaments.

**Key success measures:**

**Seek greater investment** from FA commercial partners in Disability Football and Para Teams.

**Partner** with key Government departments and arms-length bodies.

**Establish formal partnership agreements** with England Football Charity and disability organisations.

**What the GAME IS SAYING:**

“The FA’s strategy for developing Para and Disability Football over the next four years is bold and ambitious. The goal to increase Disabled people becoming active through playing football and to create an inclusive Talent Pathway accessible to all players with potential, irrespective of their background or circumstance, is particularly positive.”

**Tim Hollingsworth, CEO, Sport England**

“As lead partner of the England Teams and Wembley Stadium, EE is committed to ensuring football is a sport for all. As Disability Football continues to grow, we are proud to drive positive transformation and make the game more accessible for everyone, by offering more opportunities and greater exposure at every level of the game.”

**Pete Jeavons, Marketing Communications Director, EE**

Objectives	Tactics
Work with Government departments, Sport England and UK Sport to secure partnership funding and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in partnership with Sport England to increase the number of Disabled people becoming active and playing football.</li> <li>• Work with UK Sport to support footballers who qualify for the Paralympic Games.</li> <li>• Establish links with key Government departments to demonstrate the way football can contribute to wider Government policies and strategies.</li> </ul>
Work with FA commercial partners to develop greater support and investment into Para and Disability Football and embed rights within partnership agreements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with EE and other key commercial partners to develop a strong Disability/Para profile and impact.</li> <li>• Work with FA commercial partners to encourage and support a greater focus on inclusivity through investment in Disability/Para football.</li> <li>• Ensure safeguarding is considered in all partnership activity.</li> </ul>
Develop purpose-led propositions for new partners, and endeavour to include shared commitment in supporting Disabled people to be active and to create inspirational role models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and explore companies and categories that may support equal opportunities for Disabled people.</li> <li>• Identify purpose-led areas in Disability Football which link to our broader strategic goals and which partners can amplify (e.g. more grassroots clubs offering Disability Football).</li> <li>• Develop a portfolio of potential areas for investment and growth.</li> <li>• Generate meetings with potential investors to explore partnership working.</li> </ul>
Work closely with the England Football Charity to secure additional investment for Disability Football.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an agreement with the newly-formed England Football Charity to seek ways to promote, support and benefit from the work of the charity.</li> <li>• To meet regularly with the Charity’s executive to ensure collaboration and co-ordination of respective work programmes.</li> </ul>

“Aligned with our partners’ vision, Disability Football serves as a powerful platform for brands to enact meaningful change. Through collaborative efforts between The FA and our sponsors, we are driving forward safe and purpose-led initiatives. The potential for impactful change is immense, with successful programmes not only enriching the game but also touching the lives of thousands.”

**James Gray, Commercial Director, The FA**





## THANK YOU!

Disability Football in England could not flourish without the day-to-day work of our 50-strong County FA network. Collectively, the County FAs are the primary local deliverers of our great game.

The game could also not flourish without the expertise and guidance of The FA Disability Football Committee.

Supporting The FA's central work and that of the County FAs is a roster of organisations who support and/or fund our desire to grow the scope, reach and accessibility of Disability Football.

There are too many organisations to list here, **but we thank you all.**

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

To see what Disability Football opportunities are available near you, visit our 'Find Football' service [here](#).

If you can't find something suitable, get in touch with your local County FA. You'll find contact details of every County FA [here](#).

To read more about all aspects of The FA's current activities in Disability Football and the policy framework around the game, visit [here](#).







**FOR ALL**

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