

Focus area 1:

DISABILITY PARTICIPATION

Our 2024 Goal:

‘To support grassroots disability football to return, thrive and grow, working towards a local and accessible offer of PAN and impairment specific community football and driven by an inclusive approach to developing the game’

Disability football has been impacted more than other areas of the game in Greater Manchester as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic with our immediate priority to support a safe return to football for participants with a disability. Greater Manchester Ability Counts League, winner of Manchester FA Grassroots League of the Year in 2020, has set the foundations to grow and develop structured and competitive football for PAN-disability teams. Supporting the league to maintain their previous levels and quality of provision is key, whilst developing new opportunities to reach a wider audience and make football even more accessible, with junior (U12 & U16) and female disability football as particular areas of focus.

Increasing connectivity across the SEND school network in Greater Manchester provides us with an excellent opportunity to connect school and community football provision. We will prioritise connecting each SEND school in Greater Manchester with an accredited club partner to provide smooth transitions for young people with a disability into grassroots football.

In order to ensure that transition we will work closely with existing clubs with the potential to achieve Accredited two star and three-star club status, to grow their existing offer and develop new provision for players with a



We will continue to support the Para Talent pathway, contributing to the recruitment and delivery of regional England Talent Days and local delivery of Talent Identification workshops, with 40 new volunteers and professionals attending the online training in 2021. Developing impairment specific provision locally will be a focus area for the period of this strategy and working with City in the Community and Manchester United Foundation to achieve FA Para Talent Hub status.

Our success in developing disability football will be driven by embedding equality and inclusion of people with a disability across all areas of the game. Ensuring there are accessible recreational turn up and play opportunities across all of our local authority areas, utilising Wildcats to inspire more girls with a disability to try football and ensuring the Accredited Clubs and Leagues network take a For All approach, embedding disability football in their development plans.

We will support the disability football workforce of coaches, referees and volunteers to sustain provision for the future and we will drive our own governance to ensure the voice of disabled people is heard, through our Inclusions Advisory Board, Our Game in Manchester Working Groups and a Disability Football Steering for Greater Manchester.

Strategic Objectives:

- Work collaboratively with Greater Manchester Ability Counts League and accredited clubs to grow junior PAN-disability (focus on U12s age group) providing an entry route for young players to structured football.
- Support the Para Football Talent Pathway through FA Para Talent Hubs, Talent ID workshops and increasing localised impairment specific clubs.
- Develop a female only disability football offer within our accredited club pathways and a competition structure to support their participation.
- Connect every SEND school across our local authorities with a two star or three-star accredited club partner and build links with wider support organisations for people with a disability.
- Work with accredited clubs and partner organisations to develop a PAN-disability recreational football offer in each of our local authority areas from juniors to adult.
- Develop a disability football steering group ensuring inclusive and equal opportunity to access the game.

Key Success Measures:

1012 disabled players across all formats of the game by 2024.

10 FA Accredited Clubs with a full disability female pathway by 2024.



Disability football is increasingly recognised in Greater Manchester with a growing amount of girls participation, increased number of clubs offering disability football and an appropriate level of competition for all abilities making football more inclusive and accessible

Disability is not a barrier to enjoying football in Greater Manchester, whether you're a player, coach, referee or volunteer, getting involved and accessing the game is possible