



# THE GAMEPLAN FOR GROWTH

THE FA'S STRATEGY FOR WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FOOTBALL: 2017-2020

# YEAR 1 REVIEW AND REPORT



# YEAR 1 HIGHLIGHTS

## Participation:

- 6,767 affiliated teams for 2017/18 season (up c13% on baseline).
- 15.9% year-on-year increase in girls-only Mini-Soccer teams.
- 199 SSE Wildcats Centres established – 772 more in 2018.
- 60 new school/football partnerships established.

## Awareness:

- National engagement in Lionesses' run to semi-finals of UEFA Women's Euro 2017.
- 3.9 million viewers for Euro 2017 semi-final v. Netherlands (Channel 4). UK record for women's football viewership.
- 994,000 peak viewing figures for BBC Women's Football Show.
- Formed a three-year partnership with Disney to engage and encourage greater girls' participation.

## Performance and infrastructure:

- Head of Performance appointed, plus support staff.
- Tiers 1-4 of the Women's pyramid restructured and ready for 2018/19 season.
- Commitment to human resource with 49 full-time staff now devoted to women's and girls' game. Was 30 in 2016. A 63% increase.

## Coaching and refereeing:

- Eight Women's High-Performance Football Centres (WHPFCs) established.
- Eight Coach Development Officers (CDOs) appointed and based within new WHPFCs.
- Eight 'A' licence coaching bursaries awarded to female candidates.
- 100 'B' licence coaching bursaries awards to female candidates.
- Appointment of female match officials to England female youth international fixtures.

## England:

- Lionesses' now ranked no.2 in the world – up from 4th in 2016.
- Semi-finalists in UEFA Women's EURO 2017.
- Phil Neville appointed new England head coach.
- Bid in motion to host 2021 UEFA Women's Championships.



# 'WE'RE ON TRACK, BUT IT'S EARLY DAYS'



It's one thing to write a plan – it's another to turn it into well-executed action on the ground.

So one year on from launching our ambitious plans ('The Gameplan for Growth') I am glad to report we are on track to deliver the big goals we set – but it is still early days.

Progress has been driven by a collective effort across the football family – The FA, the County FAs, clubs, leagues and the education sector. Much-welcome increased investment by The FA Board has also helped turbo-charge our efforts.

We are striving to ensure that ALL girls and women are welcomed and valued as players, coaches, referees and administrators. Our new initiatives in schools and our SSE Wildcats Centres have opened up opportunities for many more girls to enjoy football for the first time.

We aim to sustain that interest by ensuring we have safe and well-lead sessions in our clubs and communities.

That's why we're delighted that our initial programmes for the development of grassroots coaches and referees have been so well received. Our newly-established eight Women's High-Performance Football Centres based in universities around the country will be central to this work – and to our new FA WSL Academies for 16-20 year olds.

Competition is an important component for many players at all levels. We have reviewed the top end of our competition pyramid working in partnership with our FA WSL clubs to create a new Tier 1 and Tier 2 structure. This is a bold step but one we hope will provide all players with an appropriate high-quality playing environment and create a stronger more attractive product for broadcast and commercial partners.

The England teams continue to develop at every age group. After a challenging six months, 2018 is unfolding positively, with the clear ambition of being one of the main contenders for the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2019.

Finally our marketing and communications teams have worked tirelessly to get the message out and to build new perceptions about the women's game. We want to reach a wider fan base through different channels and in a variety of ways and to ensure the match day experience is a great one for the whole family.

You will see we have made a good start in every area but we are only in the foothills – there is still a mountain to climb. We have the desire and aspiration to drive this game to new heights but it will take creativity, courage and a constant willingness to challenge the status quo.

*Sue Campbell*

**Baroness Sue Campbell**

Director of Women's Football  
The Football Association



**FOR ALL**

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# THE BIG THREE GOALS:

## 1. DOUBLE PARTICIPATION

### 2020 TARGET

Increase number of affiliated teams from 6,000 (2016/17 season) to 12,000

### HOW WE'RE DOING

- 6,767 affiliated teams for 2017/18 season
- 15.9% increase in girls' Mini-Soccer<sup>1</sup> teams within affiliated teams
- Participation numbers supported by establishment of 199 weekly SSE Wildcats Centres<sup>2</sup>. Average attendance 28-30. A further 772 due to open April 2018.

### SUMMARY

**ON TRACK**

## 2. DOUBLE FANS

### 2020 TARGET

*Increase attendances:*

- Senior international matches 11,000 to 22,000 (peak)
- FA WSL 1,047 to 2,020 (average)

*Increase peak viewing:*

- FA WSL 46,000 to 92,000

### HOW WE'RE DOING

*Increase attendances:*

- 15,000 ticket sales to date for England v Wales (6 April 2018)
- FA WSL1: Down 11% to 953
- FA WSL2: Up 7% to 365

*Increase peak viewing:*

- BT Sport peak viewing: 103,000
- BBC red button peak viewing 130,000.
- BBC Women's Football Show peak viewing 994,000

### SUMMARY

*Increase attendances:*

**ON TRACK FOR INTERNATIONAL MATCHES. FA WSL FIGURES ARE MID-SEASON.**

*Increase peak viewing:*

**ALREADY FAR EXCEEDED**

## 3. CONSISTENT SUCCESS ON THE WORLD STAGE

### 2020 TARGET

- Within top three countries across all age groups
- Potential to win 2023 FIFA World Cup

### HOW WE'RE DOING

To be assessed at end of this strategy (2020), based on delivering Priorities 1 and 2:

1. Build a sustainable and successful high-performance system;
2. Build a world-class talent pipeline.

### SUMMARY

**ON TRACK WITH WOMEN'S SENIOR TEAM NOW RANKED NO.2 IN THE WORLD**

<sup>1</sup> Mini-Soccer = an introductory form of the game for children, with smaller teams and modified rules to maximise fun for all ability levels.

<sup>2</sup> SSE Wildcats Centres = venues throughout the country where 5-11-year old girls can get into football, often for the first time, learn new skills, make new friends and have fun. For more info, visit: [TheFA.com/ForGirls](http://TheFA.com/ForGirls)

# THE EIGHT PRIORITIES

## AND HOW WE'RE DOING

### **PRIORITY 1: Build a sustainable and successful high-performance system**

Action	Planned to start in Year 1?	Expected progress achieved?	Ongoing in Years 2, 3 and 4?	Commentary
Appoint a Head of Performance	✓	✓	○	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Performance (David Faulkner) appointed, with Head of Performance Services (responsible for sports science and sports medicine) starting May 1 2018.</li> </ul>
Create a well-rounded 'England experience'	✓	✓	✓	<p>Two priorities set under the new senior team management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment of technical and performance services to national teams and pathway.</li> <li>Delivery of a programme to embed a common England culture in all national teams.</li> </ul>
Develop a 'winning edge' at the game's elite level	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced professionalism of performance and technical services.</li> <li>Greater integration and access to the men's national teams' support services.</li> </ul>
Review the competition pyramid and define the role and purpose of each level (from The FA WSL to the County Leagues)	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review completed by external consultancy across every tier of the game.</li> <li>Purposes defined for top four tiers, e.g.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 1: full-time professional;</li> <li>Tier 2: part-time semi-professional;</li> <li>Tiers 3 &amp; 4: competitive grassroots.</li> </ul> </li> <li>New branding to be developed and launched for Tiers 1-4 for 2018/19 season.</li> <li>Further work to be completed on Tiers 5 and below.</li> </ul>
Develop strong partnerships with FA WSL1 and FA WSL2 clubs	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular contact and visits with individual FA WSL club as well as league-wide meetings.</li> <li>Centralised professional development programme ready for delivery to club General Managers.</li> <li>Club support services and guidance established including marketing, plus commercial workshops.</li> </ul>



## PRIORITY 2: Build a world-class talent pipeline

Action	Planned to start in Year 1?	Expected progress achieved?	Ongoing in Years 2, 3 and 4?	Commentary
Ensure every talented player in England has access to the talent pathway, and the opportunity to develop within it	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talent ID Manager appointed.</li> <li>Regional Development Programme restructured to ensure opportunity and access to football for any young talented girl in England.</li> <li>Partnership with EFL Trust to appoint a full-time Inclusion Talent ID Project Lead.</li> </ul>
Establish a comprehensive competition structure to support player development	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baseline work completed.</li> <li>Tier 1 FA WSL Academy programme to be implemented in 2018/19 season.</li> </ul>
Create 10 FA Women's High-Performance Football Centres to support player and coach development	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eight Higher Education Institutions have been appointed as Women's High-Performance Football Centres (WHPFCs).</li> <li>Eight Coach Development Officers (CDOs) also appointed (to support Priority 3 below). All based in WHPFCs.</li> </ul>

## PRIORITY 3: Increase the number and diversity of women coaching, refereeing and administering the sport at all levels

Action	Planned to start in Year 1?	Expected progress achieved?	Ongoing in Years 2, 3 and 4?	Commentary
Develop our coach development structure	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eight CDOs appointed (as above).</li> <li>To support and develop coaches at grassroots level.</li> <li>24 coaches from women's/girls' football accepted on FA/UEFA 'A' licence course.</li> <li>Eight 'A' licence bursaries awarded to female candidates.</li> <li>100 'B' licence bursaries awarded to female candidates.</li> <li>Two BAME female coaches completed FA Elite Mentee programme.</li> <li>Three FA Talent coaches gained a place on UK 'Coaching Women into High Performance' programme.</li> <li>'Player to Coach' programme launched – four former England women's players selected to be part of this new programme to support their transition from playing into coaching.</li> </ul>
Develop our refereeing structure	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support group for FA WSL and FAWPL referees established.</li> <li>Appointment of female officials to England female youth international fixtures.</li> <li>National Day for girls' grassroots officials held at St. George's Park.</li> </ul>
Encourage more women from all backgrounds to administer or serve as board members	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two new female members (Rupinder Bains and Kate Tinsley) recruited to The FA Board in late 2017.</li> <li>Female representation more than doubled on FA Council since March 2017 – from seven to 16 members.</li> </ul>







# THE EIGHT PRIORITIES

## CONTINUED

### PRIORITY 4: Develop participation opportunities and infrastructure

Action	Planned to start in Year 1?	Expected progress achieved?	Ongoing in Years 2, 3 and 4?	Commentary
Develop localised inclusive women's football strategies	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growth of women's and girls' game now embedded in all County FAs development plans.</li> <li>188 specific locations identified for their growth potential and additional FA support.</li> </ul>
Create a national network of programmes for girls to take up and continue to play football	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>199 weekly SSE Wildcats Centres established in summer 2017.</li> <li>772 more due to open in April 2018.</li> <li>902 more Centres operating weekly through Premier League and EFL.</li> </ul>
Launch an introductory programme for voluntary organisations and create start-up clubs in areas of deprivation	✓	Partial	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Street-based girls' football schemes piloted in six locations.</li> </ul>
Create new programmes for primary and secondary schools	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60 new FA Girls' Football/School partnerships established.</li> <li>Three new programmes rolled-out in primary and secondary schools through the above partnerships.</li> </ul>
Invest in Further and Higher Education	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 young women recruited as part of an FA 'Football Apprentices' programme to promote participation and hopefully join the women's football workforce.</li> <li>See also establishment of Women's High Performance Football Centres under Priority 2.</li> </ul>



## PRIORITY 5: Change perceptions and social barriers to participation and following

Action	Planned to start in Year 1?	Expected progress achieved?	Ongoing in Years 2, 3 and 4?	Commentary
Create an engaging brand proposition and narrative to attract diverse young girls to football	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work started to create new, appealing brand, calibrated with existing FA women's and girls' programmes.</li> <li>'Salute'/Little Mix campaign launched pre- UEFA Women's EURO 2017.</li> </ul>
Co-ordinate messaging and promotions across partners and stakeholders	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing work with all partners to women's and girls' game, where commercial or public sector.</li> </ul>
Use diverse influencers and advocates to change perceptions	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above, partnership with Little Mix to boost support for Lionesses pre-UEFA Women's EURO 2017.</li> <li>Social media influencer campaign launched.</li> </ul>
Make the women's game affordable and accessible for families	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All existing ticket prices frozen to women's matches under direct FA control (i.e. internationals and Cup Finals).</li> <li>Free entry maintained for children to the SSE Women's FA Cup Final.</li> </ul>

## PRIORITY 6: Increase profile and value of the England team and players

Action	Planned to start in Year 1?	Expected progress achieved?	Ongoing in Years 2, 3 and 4?	Commentary
Build the Lioness brand into one of the iconic national team brands	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National engagement in Lionesses' run to semi-finals of UEFA Women's EURO 2017.</li> <li>Peak viewing of 3.9 million for semi-final v Netherlands (Channel 4).</li> </ul>
Improve engagement with elite players and build relationships	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Player relationships improving with appointment of dedicated Player Liaison Manager.</li> <li>Regular meetings and updates.</li> </ul>
Engage and encourage commercial partners and broadcasters to activate the women's game	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full-time Broadcast Co-ordinator – Women's Football appointed.</li> <li>Increasing use of current and former internationals as TV pundits on men's game.</li> <li>Three-year partnership with Disney to engage and encourage greater girls' participation.</li> </ul>
Develop an engaging and interactive Lionesses' Supporters Programme	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development work in place with collating of databases across women's game.</li> </ul>
Ensure we tap into the experience and profile of England players	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>England 'legends' programme now in place to involve former internationals (e.g. Kelly Smith, Rachel Brown-Finnis).</li> </ul>

# THE EIGHT PRIORITIES

## CONTINUED

### PRIORITY 7: Signpost opportunities to participate, watch or follow

Action	Planned to start in Year 1?	Expected progress achieved?	Ongoing in Years 2, 3 and 4?	Commentary
Develop a clear season-long narrative for the women's game	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full women's football fixture calendar published for the first time.</li> <li>Ongoing coverage and narrative via FA channels and media (online, printed and broadcast).</li> <li>Full-time women's football communications resource.</li> </ul>
Deliver relevant content at relevant times on relevant platforms for target audiences	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated social media content producer now appointed.</li> <li>Co-ordinated content strategy in place.</li> </ul>
Create exciting, affordable, accessible, quality, family-friendly football experiences	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family fanzones extended at these FA matches: internationals, FA WSL Continental Cup Final and SSE Women's FA Cup Final.</li> <li>Bespoke family experiences at all FA-managed matches.</li> </ul>

### PRIORITY 8: Improve the commercial prospects in women's football

Action	Planned to start in Year 1?	Expected progress achieved?	Ongoing in Years 2, 3 and 4?	Commentary
Create a dedicated women's commercial programme, with separation of men's and women's international rights	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial structure agreed, with defined rights around all women's and girls' properties.</li> </ul>
Create innovative broadcast and event propositions	○	○	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will kick-off in Year 2.</li> </ul>

# THE YEAR AHEAD

Our ambitions for the next 12 months as we work towards our three big goals:

- 1. DOUBLE PARTICIPATION**
- 2. DOUBLE FANS**
- 3. CONSISTENT SUCCESS ON THE WORLD STAGE**

## PLAYING THE GAME

- Grow the number of entry points to the game for girls – through schools' partnerships and increasing number of SSE Wildcats Centres.
- Launch a formal pathway for women and girls to progress, calibrating age, ability and ambition.

## REFEREEING

- Regional training for female referees, working with Women's High-Performance Football Centres.
- Enhanced professionalism of refereeing at the top level of the women's game.

## COMMERCIAL/MARKETING

- Win the right to host 2021 UEFA Women's EURO Championships (decision being made December 2018).
- Attract new commercial partner(s) to the women's game – specifically The FA WSL.

## COMPETITIONS

- Make the 2018/19 domestic season the most competitive to date – based on new-look leagues underpinned by new licensing structure.
- Launch The FA WSL Academy programme in time for the 2018/19 season.

## PERFORMANCE

- Pathway established to and through the age-level women's teams, including a learning curriculum at each stage.
- Develop a Talent ID strategy integrated across the women's performance pathway, allowing us to identify and confirm potential elite-level talent and manage accordingly.

## COACHING

- Support 100 female/BAME coaches in the women's and girls' game to be awarded a bursary to take The FA Level 3 (UEFA 'B') coaching qualification – and achieve it during 2018/19 season.
- Support 12 female/BAME coaches in the women's and girls' game to be awarded a bursary to take The FA Level 4 (UEFA 'A') coaching qualification.
- 30 additional coaches to gain a place on The FA Level 4 (UEFA 'A') course in the 2018/19 season.
- Embed a new women's coach development workforce within The FA Education National Coach Development (NCD) team to support coaches through their UEFA 'A', UEFA 'B' and Pro Licence qualifications.
- Identify coaches in the women's game at performance/talent level and provide a bespoke programme to develop them.



# KEY PARTNERS TO THE WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' GAME

We would like to thank all the partners to the women's and girls' game. Their input is vital to grow and sustain the game.

Such organisations include 'internal' partners to the game such as all the clubs and Community Trusts in the game's current structure – as well as the pivotal role played by County FAs.

'External' non-commercial partners include educational bodies at primary, secondary and tertiary levels – and of course, the various government departments and agencies, whose remit the girls' and women's game can help fulfil.

## Partners



## Broadcast partners



## Non-commercial partners





**FOR ALL**

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In March 2017, The FA published 'THE GAMEPLAN FOR GROWTH', its four-year strategy for women's and girls' football. To read more about the women's and girls' game, visit:  
[TheFA.com/womens-girls-football](https://www.thefa.com/womens-girls-football)