

A GAME FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION

THE FA EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION STRATEGY 2024–2028





FOR ALL

INTRODUCTION

Football is the nation's favourite game, with more than 30 million spectators, over 100,000 grassroots teams and around 15.7 million participants. It has the power to unite communities, improve lives and inspire positive change, on and off the pitch.

We recognise that when it comes to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), not everything is within our remit or reach – or our control. However, at The FA, our commitment to creating a game free from discrimination is as strong as ever. We must embrace the unique diversity of our country and continue to use football as a force for good.

This 2024 - 2028 EDI strategy sets out how we will deliver on this commitment, and in an ever demanding and complex space, the choices we have made on where to focus our resource and effort.

Through our two previous strategies (A Game For All and In Pursuit of Progress), we've achieved much the organisation can be proud of. We have learnt how to be both more reflective and agile with our plans, focus on clear goals and move quickly when necessary to respond to world events.

From grassroots right through to the elite level of the game, we want to be more ambitious with tackling the challenges that we face. We are working with our key partners to support these aims as well as embedding a real spirit of inclusion within The FA ourselves.

Over the next four years, we will work hard to continue to unite football. Collectively we can make a huge difference to boost representation, drive inclusion, and remove discrimination from our game. We hope that by setting the standard in what we do and the way we do it, we can inspire positive change in wider society too.



Yasir Mirza
Director Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Rachel Brace
HR Director

THE FA'S TOP FOUR GAME CHANGER OBJECTIVES



**A GAME FREE FROM
DISCRIMINATION**



**WIN
TOURNAMENTS**

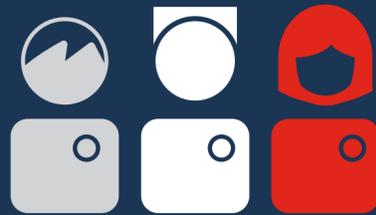


**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
FOR WOMEN & GIRLS**



**TRANSFORM THE
PITCH LANDSCAPE**

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-24



INCREASED DIVERSITY ACROSS ALL FA COACHING COURSES



AMBITIOUS RECRUITMENT PLAN FOR MORE DIVERSE REFEREES



INTRODUCED THE FOOTBALL LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY CODE



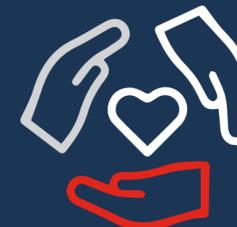
CAMPAIGNED FOR BETTER ACCESS TO FOOTBALL FOR GIRLS IN SCHOOL



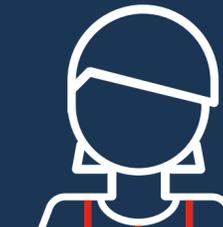
CONTINUED OUR SUPPORT FOR RAINBOW LACES AND LGBTQ+ CAMPAIGNS



CAMPAIGNED FOR THE ONLINE SAFETY ACT 2023



INTRODUCED AMBASSADOR NETWORK IN LOCAL DIVERSE COMMUNITIES



INCREASED THE % OF WOMEN AT EACH LEVEL OF THE FA BY AT LEAST 30%



INCREASED BLACK, ASIAN, & OTHER FA EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION TO 17%



A RECORD NUMBER OF BLACK, ASIAN, MIXED AND OTHER ETHNICITY PLAYERS



ENGAGED THOUSANDS OF FANS THROUGH OUR 'FAITH AND FOOTBALL' SERIES



SIGNIFICANT INCREASES OF FEMALE PLAYERS AND COVERAGE OF THEIR GAME

THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Recent years have seen much progress across the football landscape.

- A record number of people from Black, Asian, Mixed, and other ethnic backgrounds playing the game.
- A significant increase in the coverage and viewership of the women's game, as well as more women and girls playing.
- Increased representation of Women, Black, Asian, Mixed, and other ethnic backgrounds within coaching and refereeing.

Despite these achievements, we have also seen a 47% rise in racist abuse across all levels and a 44% rise in reports of sexism and misogyny. We actively encourage more reporting, but the root cause of these challenges remains core to our work and that of our partners in the game.

The wider context in which we exist shapes what we do and how we feel about this – from societal issues adversely affecting certain groups to global politics and conflict, the world around us inevitably reflects back into the game.

It's a complex, dynamic and rich landscape. In this context we all share the responsibility to use football as the force for good we know it can so powerfully be.



DELIVERING EDI FOR FOOTBALL

Three fundamental pillars to our EDI strategy:



BOOSTING REPRESENTATION

Improving diversity of officials, players, coaches, volunteers and employees.



DRIVING INCLUSION

Making everyone involved in the game, in whatever capacity, feel welcome.

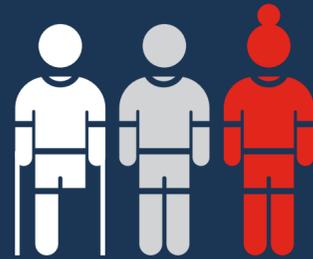


TACKLING DISCRIMINATION

Creating a culture where prejudice and abuse are routinely challenged and addressed.

KEY DELIVERABLES

We will focus on several key deliverables over the next 4 years and beyond.
By the end of the 2028 season, we aim to:



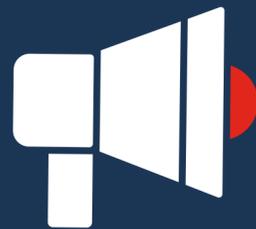
INCREASE THE NUMBER
OF **PLAYERS** FROM
UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS
IN GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL



INCREASE **COACHES AND REFEREES**
FROM UNDER-REPRESENTED
GROUPS AT ALL LEVELS
OF THE GAME



DRIVE FURTHER
EDI BEST PRACTICE
INTO OUR COUNTY
FA NETWORK



DELIVER
MEANINGFUL AND IMPACTFUL
CAMPAIGNS ACROSS THE GAME



UNITE LEADERS ACROSS
PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL
TO TACKLE THE **BIG EDI**
CHALLENGES



CONTINUE TO **INCREASE**
THE **DIVERSITY OF THE FA**
WORKFORCE AND LEADERS

Under represented groups are defined as: Women, Black, Asian, Mixed and other ethnic background, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+, and lower socio-economic backgrounds.

PILLAR ONE: BOOSTING REPRESENTATION

We know that more diverse teams are better performing teams.

Boosting representation needs to be supported with initiatives that encourage and enable those from under-represented communities to get involved in officiating, playing and volunteering.



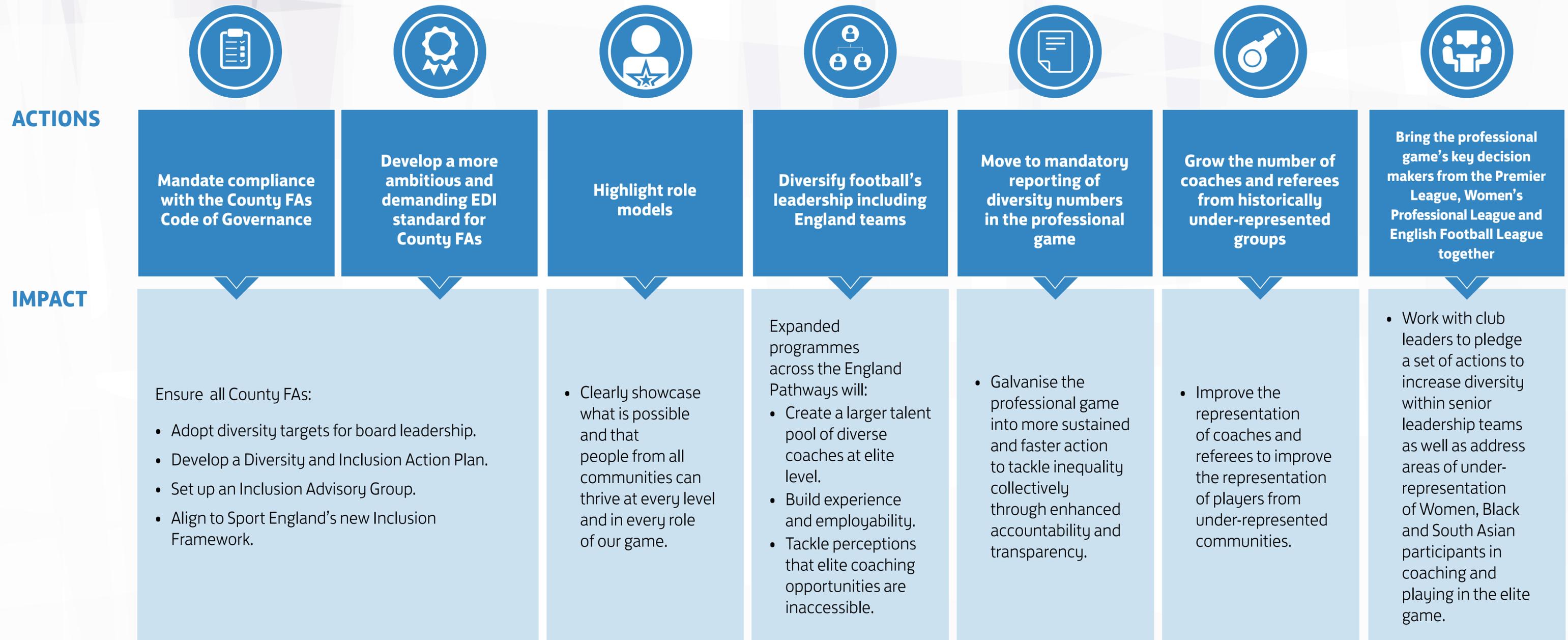
BOOSTING REPRESENTATION

Improving diversity of officials, players, coaches, volunteers and employees.



BOOSTING REPRESENTATION

Improving diversity of officials, players, coaches, volunteers and employees.



PILLAR TWO: DRIVING INCLUSION

Player or spectator, employee or volunteer, grassroots or elite... we are committed to making sure everyone involved in football feels safe and welcome.

As the National Governing Body of football, we drive inclusion by supporting initiatives that reach those who can still be made to feel 'different'. We can only affect culture change by role modelling good behaviours through education and outreach.



DRIVING INCLUSION

Making everyone involved in the game, in whatever capacity, feel welcome.

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ACTIONS

Expand our Faith and Football series

Upskill County FAs and strengthen our EDI ambassador network

Collaborate with stakeholders to run campaigns to tackle misogyny and empower women in football at all levels

Enhance the way we deliver the Rainbow Laces campaign across the country

Run Respect campaigns across the game

IMPACT

- Celebrate major faith dates and provides educational resources on faith and football.

- Strengthen the connection between The FA and local communities particularly in the most diverse regions across the country.
- Support County FAs to drive diversity and inclusion in grassroots football, instilling best practice and collaboration across the network.

- Celebrate and empower women and girls who work in football.
- Call out misogyny and highlight the impact it can have on the game.
- Support women and girls in their career prospects, and educate boys and men on how to become effective allies.

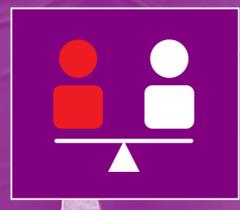
- Continue to create a football environment that is for everyone.
- Build on this success, working with regional partners to tackle LGBTQ+ cultural challenges within grassroots football through education.

- Provide tools for leagues, clubs, coaches, referees, and players to help create a fun, safe and inclusive environment.

PILLAR THREE: TACKLING DISCRIMINATION

We want a football environment that is free from prejudice and abuse – whatever form it takes.

We believe the best way to tackle discrimination is by taking preventative action. We will run multiple initiatives that will improve the way incidents are reported, apply the appropriate sanctions, support victims, and develop behaviour change campaigns to ensure we effectively deal with the root causes of discrimination.



TACKLING DISCRIMINATION

Creating a culture where prejudice and abuse are routinely challenged and addressed.



TACKLE DISCRIMINATION

Creating a culture where prejudice and abuse are routinely challenged and addressed.



ACTIONS

Launch new
Anti-Discrimination
Standard for grassroots
football

Build on Enough is
Enough campaign

Continue to enforce Serious
Misconduct Action Plan

Work with the Football
Supporters' Association
to ensure Football is
enjoyable for all

Challenge the 'bystander'
effect with a new strategic
initiative – Flag It

IMPACT

- Address the under-reporting of discrimination in the game and encourages proactive initiatives to reduce discrimination in the game.

- Raise awareness of discriminatory behaviour in grassroots football and the significant consequences that perpetrators face.
- Make it clear to everyone what behaviours are discriminatory.
- Focus on the importance of reporting incidents and how to do so.

- Increase awareness of serious incidents and how to report them.
- Make the reporting process clearer and more accessible.
- Address lack of reporting among ethnic minority groups, sexist attitudes and inconsistency of handling incidents by match officials.

- Ensure all fans from historically under-represented communities have a positive experience when they attend a game.
- Reduce discrimination by fans against England players.

- Reinforce the need for action when an individual sees, hears or senses a behaviour that is not right.
- Educate people about the range of actions they can take.
- Encourage people to talk more freely about things they see.
- Signpost individuals to appropriate services and support.

THE FA: WHO WE ARE

EMPLOYEE	GROUP	2017	CURRENT (JUNE 2024)	2028 TARGET	STRETCH 2028 TARGET
All employees	Female	30%	42%	50%	50%
	Black, Asian, Mixed or other ethnic background	13%	17%	20%	23%
	Disability	Not recorded	10%	12%	15%
	LGBTQ+	Not recorded	12%	14%	16%
Leadership roles	Female	27%	38%	45%	50%
	Black, Asian, Mixed or other ethnic background	3%	7%	15%	18%
England coaching staff – women’s game	Female	22%	42%	50%	60%
	Black, Asian, Mixed or other ethnic background	Not recorded	4%	7%	15%
England coaching staff – men’s game	Black, Asian, Mixed or other ethnic background	10%	19%	25%	30%
FA Council (The 92 elected representatives from across English football. The Council meets to decide the major policies of The FA)	Female	Not recorded	20%	30%	N/A
	Black, Asian, Mixed or other ethnic background	Not recorded	13%	16%	N/A
	Disability	Not recorded	15%	18%	N/A

HOW TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION

To ensure we create 'A Game Free from Discrimination' we all have a responsibility to step up and report discrimination.

If you want to report discrimination in the professional game whatever your involvement, please follow this guidance:

[Reporting Discrimination in the Professional Game \(thefa.com\)](#)

If you want to report discrimination at either Wembley Stadium and St. George's Park, please follow this guidance:

[Reporting Discrimination at Wembley Stadium Connected by EE and St. George's Park \(thefa.com\)](#)

If you want to report discrimination in the Grassroots game whatever your involvement, please follow your guidance:

[Reporting Discrimination in the Grassroots Game \(thefa.com\)](#)





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