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**Press Release**

**£1.5m funding boost for grassroots football**

* ***Grow the Game scheme open for applications***
* ***Grants available for two underrepresented groups***

Aspiring grassroots footballers from two underrepresented groups will soon have the opportunity to play in more teams thanks to the Grow the Game programme, a £1.5m investment by The FA.

Grow the Game, which is delivered by the Football Foundation and first launched back in 2010, offers grants to grassroots football clubs that wish to create new teams. This year, applications are being encouraged from clubs who want to start:

* Women and girls teams
* Disability teams

Grow the Game grants help to reduce the costs associated with starting new grassroots football teams by making £1,500 available for each that a club creates. Expenditure that the funding can help a club pay for includes: FA coaching courses; FA league affiliation costs; referees’ fees; first aid kits; and even football kit and equipment through a bespoke voucher.

The application window for Grow the Game applications is now open and closes on **Thursday 29 March**. Clubs seeking more information on the programme should contact Shaun Waite at Leicestershire & Rutland County FA on [shaun.waite@Leicestershirefa.com](mailto:shaun.waite@Leicestershirefa.com) , or visit [the Football Foundation website](http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/apply/grow-the-game/).

Grow the Game is inclusive of players from different genders, ethnic backgrounds, faiths, ages, sexual orientations and those with disabilities. Applications that originate from, or provide for, underrepresented communities are being encouraged.

England Men’s Senior Manager and Football Foundation Ambassador, Gareth Southgate, said: **“I am delighted that the Grow the Game programme is back. It means the pool of players in this country continues to widen, unearthing talent from all backgrounds in the process."**

Danielle Carter, England and Arsenal Women’s striker, backed the scheme: **“As a footballer, one of the most rewarding things is seeing young supporters at the game and hoping that they too take up football after watching England play. I was lucky when I was a young girl as I joined Leyton Orient at the age of 10, but for many of my teammates they were playing in boys teams until they were older. It’s great that Grow the Game will mean that more girls teams will be created and give more people the chance to play and enjoy football.”**

Brandon Coleman, England Blind footballer, said: **“By recognising areas of the game where playing opportunities are really limited, and focusing on developing them by providing funds that could make all the difference, Grow the Game plays a big part in making sure that football in England is open and accessible For All.”**

In addition, male teams of Under-17s-and-upwards that already exist will soon be able to apply for support from a new FA, retention-focused scheme called ***Retain the Game,*** which will offer £1m to successful applicants and launch in April. It will allow open-age male teams to apply for financial support to aid their continued participation in the game.

Last year the Football Foundation, England’s largest sports charity, and FA initiative

supported:

* 2,047 new teams
* 10,016 female footballers
* 18,941 male footballers
* 7,407 new coaching qualifications

As well as Grow the Game, the Football Foundation delivers the Premier League & The FA Facilities Fund on behalf of the Premier League, The FA and the Government, through Sport England. Since 2000, the Foundation has supported over 15,000 grassroots projects worth more than £1.4bn.

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For more information on Grow the Game 2018, please contact:

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For media enquires only, please contact:

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