

# 3. FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

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### FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The FA, through a broad range of strategic investments, aims to increase the quality and quantity of pitches and facilities, providing more opportunities and more enjoyment for all.

A clear objective has been set to 'lead the development of English football at the grass roots, providing the framework and facilities to achieve the highest participation in the world'.

Research demonstrates a clear and immediate need to modernise facilities. Football is changing and The FA is determined to respond to these trends and ensure our facilities meet these needs. Mini-soccer (football for 7-11 year olds), 5-a-side football and women and girls' football are growing and facilities must be developed to support this.

The FA Facility Development Strategy works to address the concerns of the players of today in schools, clubs and park pitches whilst leaving a legacy for tomorrow in the creation of facilities to support FA Community Clubs. This in turn will create a more effective club structure, mirroring best practice from Europe where larger multi-team clubs provide clear pathways rather than the current fragmented provision in England.

Finite investment is available and collective responsibility exists to ensure that this investment is prioritised and targeted to maximise impact.

For more information on facility development projects please refer to the relevant section of TheFA.com - <http://www.thefa.com/Grassroots/>

### 3.1 THE FOOTBALL FOUNDATION

The Football Foundation is a unique partnership funded by The FA, the FA Premier League and the Government. With an annual budget of £45m, the Foundation is the UK's largest sports charity.

The Foundation is playing a key role in revitalising grassroots sport, investing in our parks, schools and playing fields and harnessing the power of the game within our communities, to promote education and social inclusion. The Foundation's mission is to improve facilities, create opportunities and build communities.

Since its launch in July 2000 the Foundation has:

- supported projects worth over £345m
- £67m worth of projects in the pipeline
- secured £165m in additional inward investment
- delivered a £5 return on every £1 invested by each funding partner
- kept bureaucracy to a minimum – since launch, just 1% of income has been allocated to administration costs
- secured £30m funding from Barclays Bank for a grassroots investment programme
- funded 761 facility projects
- funded 763 national/local community and education initiatives
- funded over 100 artificial turf pitches
- funded 220 changing facilities
- given over 100,000 children new football strips

Funding is available from £100 to £1 million for kit and equipment to goalposts through to new pitches and changing rooms. In addition to the creation of a new generation of facilities, The Foundation can demonstrate significant progress in tackling serious issues such as racism, crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Foundation's Junior Kit Scheme has enabled over 100,000 junior players at clubs, schools and local teams to take advantage of free kit and equipment vouchers. The scheme was recently revamped meaning an increase in the value of the vouchers which now provide up to £400 of strips, training equipment, balls and coaching aids. Eligibility for the scheme has been significantly widened with the age limit now raised to 18.

### **INCREASING PARTICIPATION**

A £290,546 grant from the Football Foundation prevented the closure of Buckhurst Hill Junior Football Club after an arson attack at their Roding Hill ground in Essex. The grant enabled the club to purchase their ground from the local council, construct a new clubhouse and provide six new pitches on their ten-acre site.

The club's facilities are now amongst the finest in the country and have transformed the provision of football in the area. Membership has more than doubled with almost 500 players now using the site every week. For the first time the club has a girls' section with teams for players aged 6-16.

The club also now has 25 professionally qualified coaches to take training sessions and provide after-school football for local children.

### **SUPPORTING WOMEN & GIRLS' FOOTBALL**

The Register of English Football Facilities (REFF) survey in 2001 revealed that 94% of pitches have no female changing provision whilst 40% had no changing provision at all. To tackle this the Foundation has provided funding for grassroots projects worth over £200m, funding pitches and changing rooms in parks, schools and local leagues – all of which have fully inclusive facilities for females, encouraging participation from girls and women.

In addition, the Foundation has provided funding worth over £3m for specific women and girls coaching projects. Girls are much more likely to leave organised sports at the end of their school years. It is essential then that girls be given the best possible introduction to the game by providing the very best facilities and professional coaching schemes.



### **BRINGING THE GAME TO YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ETHNIC COMMUNITIES**

A £600,000 grant from the Foundation will allow the Sikh Youth Sports Foundation (SYSF) to transform a disused playing field in Huddersfield into a beacon for integrated community sport with the creation of a new changing pavilion and seven new pitches at the site.

FA Charter Standard Club, Yorkshire Lions FC will use the ground to promote the educational social and cultural benefits of participating in and enjoying sport and developing healthy lifestyles, not only amongst the Sikh community but throughout the Warrenside area.

Meanwhile, young black and Asian footballers in Swindon were awarded £125,000 by the Foundation to allow Swindon Borough Council, in conjunction with Swindon Town FC, to fund an ambitious project using football as a vehicle to tackle social exclusion amongst the town's ethnic youngsters. By targeting youth sports clubs the organisation are now boosting participation rates amongst under-represented groups, fostering a greater sense of community and increasing personal development.

### **PROVIDING FOOTBALL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

The South London Special League (SLSL) provides sport for boys and girls from under 12 to under 19 level with both severe and moderate learning difficulties and has been supported by the Foundation to the tune of £122,191. As a result the programme is now able to provide a broad range of disability awareness training for coaches, trainers, volunteers and helpers to work alongside the scheme.

In addition, Charlton Athletic's Community Scheme has benefited from Foundation funding which has helped to create a series of coaching initiatives and competitive leagues, in schools and through existing disabled networks. The scheme will also provide a number of training and educational initiatives, providing numeracy and literacy courses on top of disability awareness schemes for the community in and around South-East London.

### **USING FOOTBALL TO BOOST EDUCATION**

Premier League Reading Stars is a partnership between the Foundation, the FA Premier League, the National Literacy Trust and receives support from the Arts Council England. The initiative sees top players encouraging football fans to read their favourite books. Each Premier League club nominates a 'Reading Champion' who has selected his favourite book. Reading groups then meet at local libraries to talk about their heroes' recommendations. 90% of the children taking part said the scheme had made them want to read more.

### **TACKLING CRIME**

Unique projects such as the Princes Trust, Positive Futures and individual schemes throughout many of the most deprived areas of the country have received funding of almost £10 million from the Football Foundation to provide a series of tailor-made community sport initiatives.

Each of the projects uses the power and popularity of football to divert offenders, drug users and young people at risk of offending away from crime and provides professional coaching, competitive games as well as educational opportunities, training and health lifestyle information.

By working with local organisations, the police and youth offending teams, the schemes are offering football programmes, individually structured to deal with the issue of drugs, crime and lifestyle choices for thousands of young people.

Further information on the work of the Foundation and details of who is eligible to apply for support can be found on <http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk>

### 3.2 GOALPOST SAFETY

Football should be fun, safe and enjoyable, whether you play in a park, at school or for a local club. The FA has produced Guidance notes and Technical notes and is relaunching this important campaign that sets the standards in GoalPost Safety.

Tragically, several children in England have been killed as a result of falling goalposts since 1991. During the 2001/02 season, The FA carried out a programme of on-site inspection and testing of goalpost sets at a number of sites across the country.

Of all goals tested, 41% of mini-soccer goals, 50% of 5-a-side goals and 22% of junior goals failed stability tests. These types of goals are almost all of a portable type and reliant on secure means of 'holding down', either using anchors or weights. Anchor weights are rarely used properly or to the recommended loading.

Ground conditions can affect the stability of goals, therefore it is important to liaise with manufacturers on the appropriate ground fixings in relation to weather conditions.

Users at every 2nd site were unaware of the safety campaign involving goalposts. Through extending this campaign to the third year - with 250,000 leaflets going out to Clubs, Schools, youth groups, referees, coaches and leisure facilities across the country from the beginning of November 2002 – The FA is committed to raising this awareness and aims to create a safer environment for all football.

51% of users were unaware of how goalposts should be assembled correctly, whilst only 50% of goals inspected and tested had any means of identification and many were pre-PAS or BS/CEN standards

The key message delivered by the GoalPost Safety campaign is ensuring goalposts purchased for clubs, schools or local authorities comply with The FA Technical Parameters and Guidance Notes.