

# Bedfordshire FA



## Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2025

## Introduction

Bedfordshire FA is pleased to present our submission of the Preliminary Level of the Equality Standard for Sport. Our mission has been to “Support Bedfordshire Football in delivering a high quality, inclusive and safe football environment” throughout our existing (2021-2024) strategy and we are proud of the values that our workforce display whilst they represent Bedfordshire FA:



The body of work that is presented has been ongoing since 2022 and combined with the successful re-establishment of the Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG) has seen some brilliant initiatives delivered to date. The Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), effectively acted as a working document that will now be reviewed annually by the Board to monitor the impact of the plan. This will happen with the support of the IAG, who have been pivotal in acting as a sounding board to shape the document and priorities mentioned within it.

We look forward to continuing to build on the excellent work that has taken place to further embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across Bedfordshire as we enter a new strategy between 2024-2028.

**Alan Young**  
**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

## Overview

Bedfordshire FA analysed the data presented in the Equality Profile Audit and used the findings to put together a DIAP based on the recommendations. The process of data analysis and the earliest version of the DIAP had started before the beginning of the 2022-2023 season. The data that was previously collected for Staff, Board, Players, Coaches and Referees became older than 12 months as the work on the DIAP progressed during this time and there was further clarity from The FA around data collection using Power BI.

This elongated some of the processes in terms of data collection to analyse but it was vital that more recent data from 2024 was collected and analysed to provide purposeful insight to use when making recommendations and informed decisions to implement and focus on. This not only satisfies the data requirements as outlined in the Preliminary submission but also helped us to obtain accurate and up to date data given that changes within Board and Staff had also occurred in that period.

The production of the DIAP complemented and integrated within the annual operational planning process that staff use as their works programme to deliver against Key Performance Indicator's and objectives that contribute towards the overall business strategy. There is also an appreciation that additional measures and interventions may be required on top of those agreed with The FA to achieve this whilst also aligning with the business plans.

The DIAP will also contribute towards the Code of Governance, whilst the strategies and tactics as outlined in the operational plans will continue to be delivered by the staff through the IAG and various partners and stakeholders that help to drive EDI initiatives across football in Bedfordshire.

Ultimately the DIAP aims to address the areas where better representation can be achieved through interventions and campaigns to positively impact Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across Bedfordshire.

The priority areas to be delivered through the DIAP are based on the recommendations of the Equality Profile Audit and are based around the following:

- 1) Staff/Board of Directors**
- 2) Women and Girls**
- 3) Disability**
- 4) Under-Represented Groups**
- 5) Facility Development**

Each of the 5 areas has been broken down in line with football season targets and timeframes, along with outcomes, progress updates and budgets where appropriate.

<b>Focus Area – Staff/ Board of Directors</b>					
<b>Area of Intention(s)</b>	<b>Year 1 (2022-2023)</b>	<b>Year 2 (2023-2024)</b>	<b>Year 3 (2024-2025)</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Progress/Budget</b>
Commitment to achieving greater diversity in all its forms at Staff, Board and Senior Leadership	Re-establish IAG <b>Chair</b>	To appoint an independent Board member to lead on equality, diversity and inclusion matters. <b>Board</b>		Staff and Board to complete ongoing training as part of the Learning and Development Plan.	IAG re-established (March 2022)
Develop a culture of inclusion through CPD/ Learning Opportunities	Standing agenda item on Board, Council and committee meetings ongoing <b>Chair/Council</b>	To complete online modules on unconscious bias and equality in the workplace <b>All Staff and Board</b>	Attend face to face workshop delivered by independent providers on EDI <b>All Staff and Board</b>	Improved awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion matters.	Learning and Development Plan in place and ready to be delivered. (February 2024)
To increase gender diversity on the Board to 30% of each gender.	Recruit at least one female Board member. <b>Board</b>	Recruit at least one female Board member. <b>Board</b>	Recruit at least one female Board member. <b>Board</b>	Recruit three female Board members	We have recruited two female Board members to date. (December 2023)
To increase the ethnic diversity of the Board to ensure it is aligned to the ONS Census 2021 data	To ensure that the Board includes one member from historically under-represented groups. <b>Board</b>			Recruit an under-represented group member to the Board.	We have recruited two Board member from an under-represented group (January 2024)

<p>To ensure the Board reflects the population experiencing long-term health conditions or disability in relation to ONS data 2021</p> <p>To support young people to have their voices heard</p>	<p>To ensure that the Board includes one member to represent the population. <b>Board</b></p> <p>Beds FA Youth Council Chair continues to sit on the Council to provide representation and views reflective of the young people ongoing. <b>MDC</b></p>	<p>Surveys carried out to capture the voices of young people in a range of playing formats (boys, girls, mixed football) regarding matchday experience. <b>JG</b></p>	<p>Continue to capture the voices of young people on a range of subjects (behaviour, matchday experience) <b>JG</b></p>	<p>Recruit a Board member to represent the population.</p>	<p>419 respondents from young people regarding the survey that was completed with the support of their parent/guardian/carer (February 2024)</p>
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**Focus Area: Women & Girls**

Area of Intention(s)	Year 1 (2022-2023)	Year 2 (2023-2024)	Year 3 (2024-2025)	Outcomes	Progress / Budget
<p><b>Female Coaching/Referee Workforce.</b></p> <p>Develop the representation &amp; progression of female coaches and referees, particularly within the female game.</p>	<p>1A. Deliver 2 ‘Stepping over the Side-lines’ – targeted at a female audience. The workshop is aimed at individuals who are new/considering coaching football. This workshop will be delivered by the FA Coach Developer (Women’s) &amp; the regional Women &amp; Girls mentor. <b>JG</b></p> <p>1B. Establish ‘Mentee’ Roles at the Emerging Talent Centre to develop recruited female coaches. This will provide season long placements where coaches are able to access mentoring aswell as qualification support. The aim is to support every mentee coach into become a paid member of staff within 3 seasons. <b>MDC/AB</b></p>	<p>2A. Deliver 2 coaching CPD’s at venues that have existing female provisions (utilising Women’s or Girls teams) that are targeted towards female coaches. Targeting locations based on clubs/facilities. <b>JG</b></p> <p>2B. Introducing the programme "Player to Coach", supports clubs to engage young players to start their coaching journey. Provide up to 9 fully funded places to complete Introduction to Coaching Football. <b>JG/MDC</b></p>	<p>3A. Deliver 3 ‘Bolt on’ female specific coaching CPD that are delivered before the main coaching CPD’s. <b>JG</b></p> <p>3B. Deliver and utilise the ‘fair play’ festival as a tool for the visibility of Female role models.</p> <p>3C. Support a new Bedfordshire female coaches’ group that acts as an engagement tool (supporting 15 female coaches). <b>JG/IAG</b></p>	<p>Increase the number of Female Coaches in Youth Football by 1% (21 Coaches). <b>JG</b></p> <p>Increase the number of Female Coaches in Adult Football by 2% (10 Coaches). <b>JG</b></p> <p>Increase the number of Female Coaches in the Beds FA Girls league by 5% (15 Coaches). <b>NS/MDC</b></p> <p>Increase the number of UEFA C/B qualified coaches by 5 female coaches. <b>JG</b></p> <p>Target 24 female coaches (20%) attending face to face across CPD opportunities by the end of the 2024/2025 season. <b>JG</b></p> <p>Target 30% of female coaches to attend online CPD opportunities. <b>JG</b></p>	<p>4 female coaches completed the Playmaker and 2 completed the I2CF (July 2023)</p>

<p>Female playing opportunities</p>	<p>1C. Introducing the program "Player to Ref", supports clubs in engaging young players to start their referee journey. The programme will provide 23 places for females to uptake refereeing. <b>MDC/IB</b></p> <p>Recruit an Equal Games Ambassador who will support local clubs to start new female provision. <b>MDC</b></p> <p>Transfer from Advanced Coaching Centre to an Emerging Talent Centre (Year 1) following The FA's 3-year agreement. <b>MDC</b></p>	<p>Establish 'Mentee' Roles at the Girls' Development Centre to develop recruited female coaches. This will provide season long placements where coaches are able to access mentoring as well as qualification support. The aim is to support every mentee coach into become a paid member of staff within 3 seasons. <b>MDC/AB</b></p> <p>Delivery of 3 'Get into Refereeing' workshops which are delivered at 3 schools (North, Central &amp; South of the county) to girls only. Use this as an opportunity to promote referee courses, particularly female-only course. <b>IB</b></p> <p>Deliver a new Player Development Centre for Girls (U10, U12 &amp; U14) in addition to the Emerging Talent Centre (Year 2) <b>MDC</b></p>	<p>3D. Host a female only referee conference in March 2025 at the Beds FA where we provide a development session for our female referees. Engage with the national FA and the PGMOL to get a guest speaker for the event which will help to inspire the referees. Offer the event out to neighbouring County FA's. <b>IB</b></p> <p>Renew contract to maintain an Equal Games Ambassador. <b>MDC</b></p> <p>Deliver the final year of the Emerging Talent Centre with a view to extending with The FA. <b>MDC</b></p>	<p>Increase the percentage of female referees to 10% (51 referees). <b>IB</b></p> <p>Increased numbers of participants to provide greater accessibility and opportunities for girls to join the programme. <b>MDC</b></p>	<p>13 females attended a female referee only course in 22/23 (February 2023)</p> <p>£1250 (25 x 50 hours) for an Equal Game Football Ambassador - Budget</p>
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	<p>To support the 3 new Squad Girls providers following successful applications to start delivery in 2023. <b>MDC</b></p> <p>Maintain existing Weetabix Wildcats providers (35 existing providers). <b>MDC</b></p> <p>To support Leighton-Linslade School Sport Partnership as the first and pilot deliverer of The FA 12-14 Squad Girls Football Programme in the County <b>MDC</b></p>	<p>Aim to recruit/ support 3 'Squad Girls' providers. <b>MDC</b></p> <p>Recruit 6 new 'Wildcats' providers in the season <b>MDC</b></p> <p>Support School Sports Partnerships (Bedford, Leighton/Linslade and Redborne) to deliver School Games Programmes to raise profile of local club progression. <b>MDC</b></p>	<p>Aim to recruit/ support 6 new 'Squad Girls' providers. <b>MDC</b></p> <p>Support Ameina Centre to deliver a Wildcats Centre. <b>MDC</b></p> <p>Encourage and support other SSPs (Luton SSP) to deliver and sign up to become FA Girls' Football School partnership. <b>MDC</b></p>	<p>Establish 12 'Squad Girls' programmes which have 120 girls aged between 12-14 playing recreational football. <b>MDC</b></p> <p>Achieve 41 Wildcats providers <b>MDC</b></p>	<p>£600 per new Squad Girls provider- Budget</p> <p>£600 per new Wildcats provider- Budget</p>
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Focus Area: Disability					
Area of Intention(s)	Year 1 (2022-2023)	Year 2 (2023-2024)	Year 3 (2024-2025)	Outcomes	Progress/ Budget
Recreational Opportunities	Establish new recreational playing opportunities across the county. <b>JG</b>	Working with Leighton Woodside and Kids in Action to provide FA Snickers Just Play. <b>JP/MDC</b>	Support Leighton Woodside to affiliate a new team. <b>MDC</b>	Achieve 226 players by 23/24 season	239 players registered (October 2023)  Beds FA facility (in kind) for 10 weeks (startup costs) - Budget
	Transition all existing adult disability recreation provision into FA Snickers Just Play programme. <b>JG</b>	Support Leighton Park Rangers to provide football for 5-11 year olds <b>MDC</b>	Increase representation from 0.95% of total players <b>MDC</b>	1 x Comet Programme delivered	£1000 for the Comet Programme to be delivered - Budget
Club Development	Work with current 2 & 3 star England Football Accredited clubs to provide new disability provision within their clubs. <b>MDC</b>	4 clubs selected to provide new disability provision <b>MDC</b>	4 clubs selected to provide new disability provision. <b>MDC</b>		£400 x 8 clubs (£3200) to start new provision. (September 2023)
Workforce	Start a steering group to lead the support, growth and development of a new Disability league for Bedfordshire FA clubs that are delivering across Bedfordshire. <b>JG</b>		Recruit a Disability Ambassador who will support local clubs in starting disability provisions. <b>MDC</b>		Steering group created (August 2023)
Coach Education	Deliver two specific Inclusion CPD events focusing on supporting players with additional	Work with The FA to deliver a CPD event "Coaching Disabled			£1250 (25 x 50 hours) for Disability Football Ambassador- Budget £150 x 2 = £300 for the delivery of the CPD events. - Budget

<p>Competitive/ Pathway Opportunities</p>	<p>learning needs and raising awareness of the support for players outside of PAN football inclusion of players with learning difficulties, hearing/ visual and cerebral palsy / powerchair football. (Independent delivery) <b>JG</b></p> <p>Deliver Ability Counts Festival over 2 days (1 day for Youth disability children aged 12 to 16) and (1 day for adults aged 18 years and above). 6a-side format focusing on 12 youth teams and 12 adult teams) <b>JG</b></p>	<p>Footballers as part of their CPD programme to CFA's <b>JG</b></p> <p>Identify 8 new clubs to deliver new provision with the aim of growing from 240 players during 23/24 season <b>MDC</b></p>	<p>Identify 4 new teams to join a newly founded Ability Counts League by June 2025. <b>JG/MDC</b></p>		<p>Three CPD events delivered in Year 1 (May 2023)</p> <p>£2000 to deliver festival in August 2024 (July 2023)</p>
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Focus Area – Under-Represented Groups					
Area of Intention(s)	Year 1 (2022-2023)	Year 2 (2023-2024)	Year 3 (2024-2025)	Outcomes	Progress/Budget
Events/ Celebrations	Supporting the IAG in delivering a South Asian Heritage Month Event (July-August). <b>IAG</b>	IAG to identify 2 events to be delivered – BHM/South Asian Heritage Month <b>IAG</b>	IAG to review DIAP in view of Year 1 of new strategy (24-28) <b>IAG</b>		£350 per event - Budget  Successful delivery in August 2022 and 2023.
	Ensure the judging panel is diverse for The FA Grassroots Awards. <b>JP</b>	Encourage a greater number of applications across all categories through a variety of promotion tools. <b>JP</b>	Maintain a diverse judging panel and diverse range of applications across all categories. <b>JP</b>		2 National Award Winners at The FA Grassroots Awards (The Bobby Moore Award & Groundsman) - August 2023)
Coaching	Deliver 2 'Stepping over the Sidelines' – targeted at a South Asian audience. <b>JG</b>	Promote funded coaching qualifications available via The FA. Utilise key networks through the IAG to provide 'outreach' <b>JG</b>	Identify and support new coaches and those who are interested in becoming qualified to run a team locally. <b>JG/MDC</b>		4 female coaches from Bedfordshire have benefitted from a fully funded UEFA C bursary in 23/24 (January 2024)
Refereeing	Promote tutor opportunities when The FA open the recruitment process	Provide 12 fully funded places to individuals from South Asian backgrounds on the	Diversify the Referee Mentor support through targeting 3 South Asian Referees to	2% increase in referees from under-represented groups (12 referees) <b>DC</b>	12 x £100 bursary = £1200 towards referee course. - Budget

	to ensure a diverse range of applicants. <b>IB</b>	referee course and support them into becoming fully qualified referees. <b>IB</b>	become mentors and deliver appropriate training. <b>IB</b>		20 individuals have benefitted from a Referee Course bursary. (October 2023)
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Focus Area – Facility Development					
Area of Intention(s)	Year 1 (2022-2023)	Year 2 (2023-2024)	Year 3 (2024-2025)	Outcomes	Progress/Budget
Girls and Women's user-friendly pavilions		Support Howdens Gamechanger application from Luton Town Ladies to install a new kitchen facility at Lancaster Avenue. <b>JP</b>	Develop Lancaster Avenue to become a female-friendly venue by modifying the existing pavilion. <b>JP</b>	Improved facilities for female users that meet the needs of the participants at female only club. <b>JP</b>	Howdens Gamechanger applied (January 2024)
Equal Access for new 3G pitch developments		Support Bedford Academy to provide equal access to Bedford Ladies for training and match hire. <b>JP</b>	Ensure Bedford Academy deliver equal access once the 3G pitch is open. <b>JP</b>	Football Development Plan and Programme of Use submitted by Bedford Academy with equal access for Bedford Ladies (G&W teams).	Football Foundation grant awarded (January 2024). Works due to start (March 2024) with 3G pitch ready for use in (September 2024)
Girls and Women's Hub Site		Identify appropriate sites to be reviewed and put forward. <b>JP</b>	Explore opportunity to develop Girls and Women's hub site. <b>JP</b>	Prime time match day and training slots dedicated to G&W teams	

Reviewed By: **Board of Directors**

Date: **19<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

Next Review: **19<sup>th</sup> February 2025**