



INSPIRING POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGH FOOTBALL



Gloucestershire Football Association Business Strategy
2024-2028

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A foreword from the Chief Executive

Over the period of our previous four-year strategy there was a strong focus on supporting the game to recover to the levels of participation we saw prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Having taken time to listen to feedback and reflecting upon the successes of the previous strategy, it is pleasing to see how the disability game has returned to a sustainable position as well as seeing significant growth in the female game, particularly since the Lionesses lifted the Euro 2022 Trophy. However, we also have seen a very disappointing rise in poor behaviour, discrimination and football discipline across the game and as a result, 'Tackling Poor Behaviour' is one of our 6 strategic priorities through to 2028 and beyond.

The purpose of our 2024-28 County FA Business Strategy is **Inspiring Positive Change through Football – uniting communities, tackling inequalities, and improving health within the County**. Our new strategy has been developed following a period of consultation with the grassroots game in Gloucestershire, our key stakeholders and feedback from The FA Conversation About our Game consultation events.

Over the next four years, the strategy aims to tackle the challenges identified and deliver growth across all grassroots football pathways in Gloucestershire. We will focus on some of the biggest challenges facing the game; improving matchday behaviour, building and improving playing facilities, supporting the volunteer workforce, developing a network of thriving 3* community clubs, whilst continuing to develop, support and grow the number of playing opportunities available for all.

The local network of football volunteers and delivery partners are vital to helping us achieve the ambitious priorities set out in this strategy and we look forward to working closely with our key partners and the stakeholders across the county over the next four years.



David Neale
Gloucestershire FA
Chief Executive
Officer



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Our Values



OPEN



HONEST



PROFESSIONAL



FLEXIBLE



INCLUSIVE

Our values are embedded across the organisation and throughout the recruitment process. In developing our strategy, the existing values were reviewed, and it was felt that they still align with our culture and reflect how we will operate for the duration of the new strategy and beyond.



Review of the Gloucestershire Football Association 'Reset' Strategy 2021-2024



Strategy Outcomes 2021-2024

2021

40,166

Male players

+11%

3,793

Female players

+77%

327

Disability players

+69%

584

Registered referees

+25%

2024

44,749

Male players

6,722

Female players

552

Disability players

727

Registered referees



36 Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund grants awarded

£936k towards improving Gloucestershire grass pitches

171 'Good' or better pitches



177 projects since 2021:

£4.9m

Grant value

£14.4m

Project value

Plus:

£1.46m

Given to NLS clubs (steps 1-6) by the PLSF

£2.14m

Funding awarded for 3G pitches

NEW

Ability Counts Youth League - 8 teams

Women's Walking Football League - 11 teams

Comets Programme - 4 centres offering recreational Disability Football

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Squad sessions
Recreational football for girls aged 12 to 14

24

Wildcats sessions
Recreational football for girls aged 5 to 11.

90.2%

of youth football played within Accredited clubs

100%

of youth teams with a qualified coach

Developing Our Strategy

It is vital that everyone involved in local football benefits from the Gloucestershire FA's strategy and actions. To ensure that this business strategy aligns to the needs and priorities of those in our area, we consulted our community every step of the way.

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Local face-to-face consultation events:

- North and South of the County
- Over 60 volunteers in attendance

419

Adult respondents
to local online survey

719

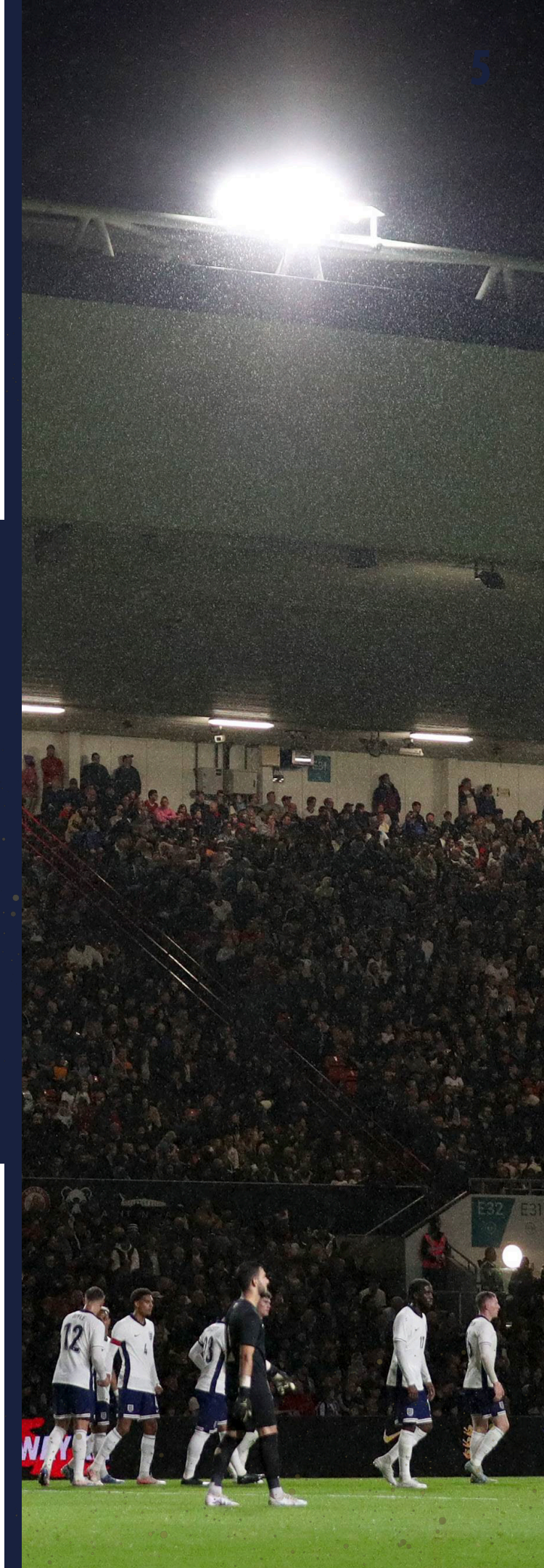
U18 respondents
to local online survey

+ input from our independent Inclusion and Advisory Group (IAG)

+ nationwide 'A Conversation About Our Game' roadshows to hear opinions and ideas

The following priorities were loud and clear:

- **Behaviour in the game**
- **Facilities – lack of and access to good quality facilities**
- **Greater support, reward, and recognition for volunteers**



Social Return on Investment

The FA's new independent report shows the value that football adds to our economy, both nationwide and at a local level within each County.

“As the number one participation sport in our County, football continues to be of great social and economic benefit within Gloucestershire. Our desire to grow and develop the game stems from this positive impact that the game has on our community and the individuals within.”

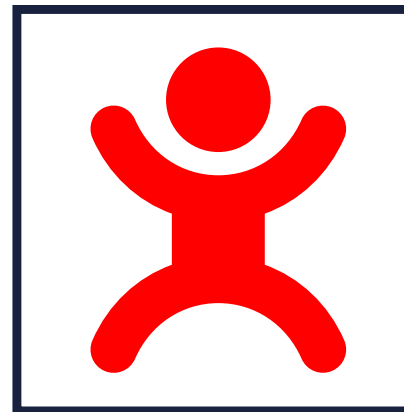
Matt Boucher

Head of Strategy and Delivery

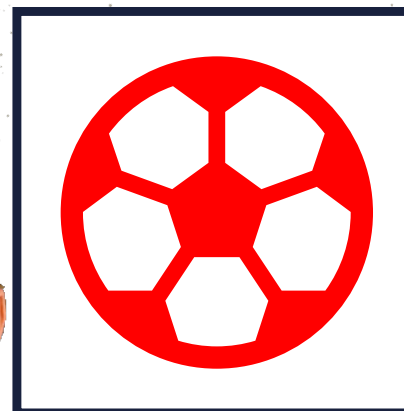


492,500 people play regular football in Gloucestershire, supported by a workforce of **14,845** people.

They contribute a total of **£403 million** to our society.



123,000 regular youth players provide: a value of **£45.9m to our society**, including **£22.88m in social value** thanks to youth education and crime prevention.



369,000 regular adult players provide a value of **£198.1m to our society**, including **£55.11m in health savings** thanks to 4,658 fewer cases of physical and mental health illnesses, including stroke, diabetes & depression.

For more information and detail behind the statistics on this page, please see The FA report: 'The Social and Economic Value of Football in England'.



OUR SIX STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE GUIDED BY INPUT FROM OUR STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE THAT OUR INTERVENTIONS AND AMBITIONS ARE **RELEVANT FOR OUR COUNTY.** THEY ARE ENABLED BY OUR THREE STRATEGIC DRIVERS.

OUR THREE DRIVERS

SUPPORT THRIVING COMMUNITY CLUBS

CONNECT & SERVE PARTICIPANTS

PROGRESS THE GAME'S GOVERNANCE



**IMPROVE PLAYING CHOICE
& OPPORTUNITIES**

1.1 Evolve the Youth Game

1.2 Improve team-based football for adult male players

1.3 Create more opportunities to play safe, inclusive casual football

1.4 Support the disability game to grow and thrive

The GFA supports over 45,000 active male and disability players in Gloucestershire. We will...

- Develop a new small-sided competition offer for teenage players.
- Create exciting and inspiring opportunities for U5s and U6s to play.
- Support young people transitioning into adult football (e.g. by exploring u21 leagues).
- Increase our range of casual football offers, including growing walking football and Just Play.
- Harness and expand the provider network (including Community Trusts, leisure industry and commercial football providers) to deepen the reach of casual football.
- Increase the quality and quantity of team-based opportunities for disabled people to play in grassroots clubs and leagues.
- Provide opportunities for disabled people of all ages to play football casually in fun and safe environments (e.g. through developing and growing the Comets programme).
- Support Accredited clubs to be more inclusive of disability football.



What success will look like...

+11.5% male
players

+60% disability
players



**DELIVER EQUAL
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
WOMEN & GIRLS TO PLAY**

2.1 Sustain and grow more playing opportunities in schools

2.2 Create more team-based playing opportunities

2.3 Extend and enhance casual opportunities to play

2.4 Deliver safe, inclusive environments for woman and girls to thrive

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Female football continues to be a key priority for the GFA. We will...

- Continue to work with the network of Girls' School Football Partnerships to help increase playing opportunities for girls in the school environment.
- Deliver a primary school extra-curricular programme to provide a pathway to Wildcats and community clubs.
- Develop and sustain a range of casual and recreational sessions.
- Improve the transition of girls from youth to open-age football.
- Create more team-based playing opportunities, with a focus on adult teams playing 11 v 11 and alternative small-sided football, such as walking football.
- Improve the awareness of female health and wellbeing for both players and those delivering the grassroots game.

What success will look like...

+60%

**female
players**

ALL

**girls aged 16 and below have
access to a casual football offer**



**BUILD MORE & IMPROVE
EXISTING FACILITIES**

3.1 Transform grass pitch quality

3.2 Build more 3G pitches where strategically needed

3.3 Create inclusive and accessible facilities

3.4 Improve environmental sustainability

Facilities are crucial for enhancing the participant experience and significantly impact enjoyment. We will...

- Empower groundskeepers with workshops, courses, and an online community.
- Partner with key stakeholders to raise awareness of the Grass Pitch Improvement Programme.
- Increase funding to build more 3G pitches.
- Continue to collaborate with clubs, leagues, and other organisations to develop key priority projects outlined in the Local Football Facility Plans.
- Identify priority sites and provide guidance for accessing funding.
- Prioritise funding to help tackle inequalities and support communities with the greatest need.
- Build new PlayZones to grow casual football in urban areas.
- Equip facility providers with innovative tools and support to reduce and manage energy consumption.



What success will look like...

323

**'good' or better
grass pitches**

25%

**of pitches accessing
Grass Pitch Maintenance Funding**



**TACKLE POOR
BEHAVIOUR**

4.1 Apply tougher sanctions

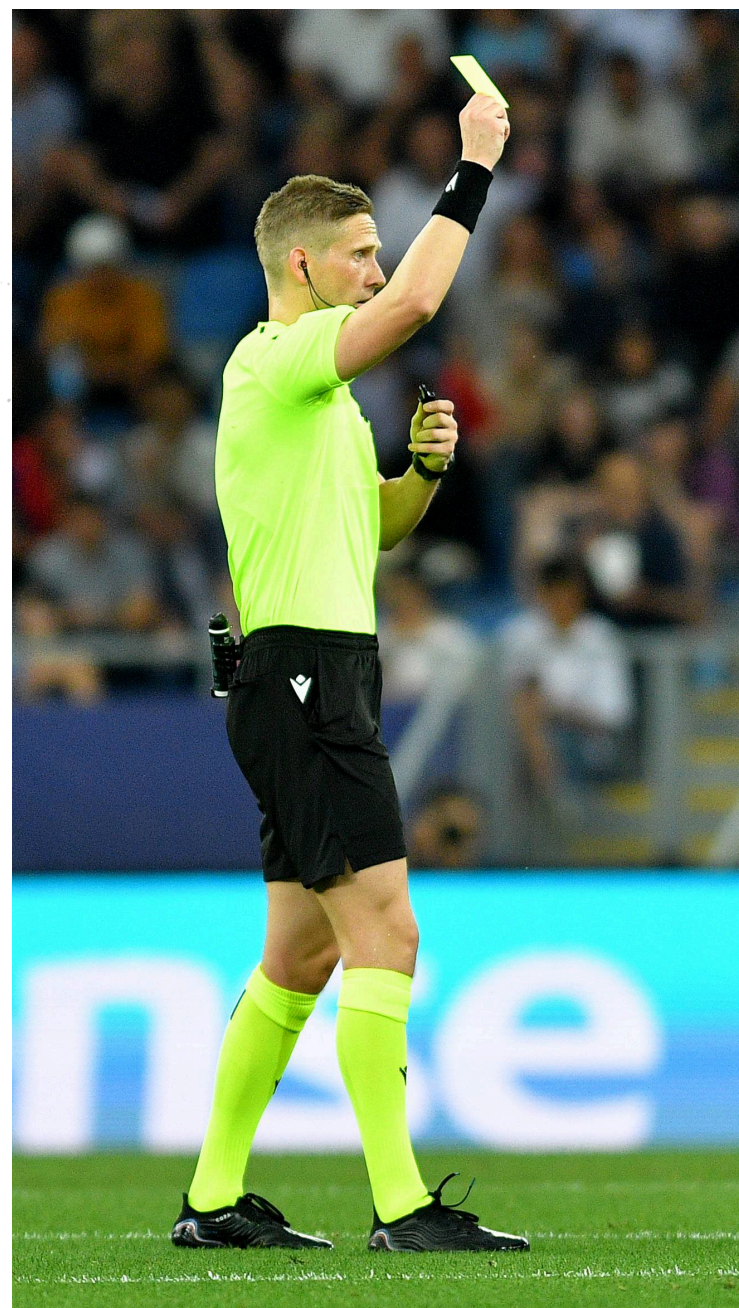
4.2 Promote positive behaviour

4.3 Drive collective responsibility across the game to raise standards

Behaviour in the game was the number one concern raised in our local consultations.

We will...

- Empower and support parents and coaches to set standards and lead by example, e.g. through the Respect the Standard campaign.
- Develop matchday monitoring programme to help raise awareness and improve behaviour.
- Work with leagues to tackle poor behaviour and increase accountability.
- Explore and implement ideas to reward positive behaviour (e.g. fair play points).
- Engage with the worst-behaved clubs to implement positive change.
- Embed communications to amplify best practice, showcase the values of the game, and provide clear messaging on behaviours.



The number of discipline cases during the 2023/24 season increased by approximately

20%

compared to the previous season.



What success will look like...

**FEWER
TEAMS**

**breaching the
behaviour
points
threshold**



**DEVELOP A VALUED
NETWORK OF VOLUNTEERS,
COACHES & REFEREES**

- 5.1 Grow the number of people running the game**
- 5.2 Improve the diversity of those running the game**
- 5.3 Support those running the game to learn and develop**
- 5.4 Celebrate and reward those running the game**

Volunteers, coaches and referees are vital to help the game thrive. We will...

- Deliver an appropriate number of local learning opportunities, to include Continual Professional Development (CPD) events.
- Strategically recruit referees, with an aim of a 50% increase in female candidates and those from underrepresented groups in line with the FA's Refereeing Strategy.
- Convert 60% of newly qualified officials into active youth or level 7 referees.
- Guaranteed access to mentor support for those in the early stages of their refereeing journey.
- Provide a variety of education and development groups and workshops for on and off-pitch volunteering roles.
- Re-launch the Gloucestershire FA Youth Council/Network.
- Expand and build our reward and recognition scheme.



What success will look like...

25% of coaches attending a CPD event	50% more match officials who are female or from an underrepresented group
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DEVELOP & DIVERSIFY THE BUSINESS

6.1 Develop and deliver a new Commercial Strategy

6.2 Resurface the County FA's 3G pitch and refurbish the site

6.3 Develop mutually beneficial commercial collaborations and partnerships with local businesses and organisations

6.4 Improve environmental sustainability

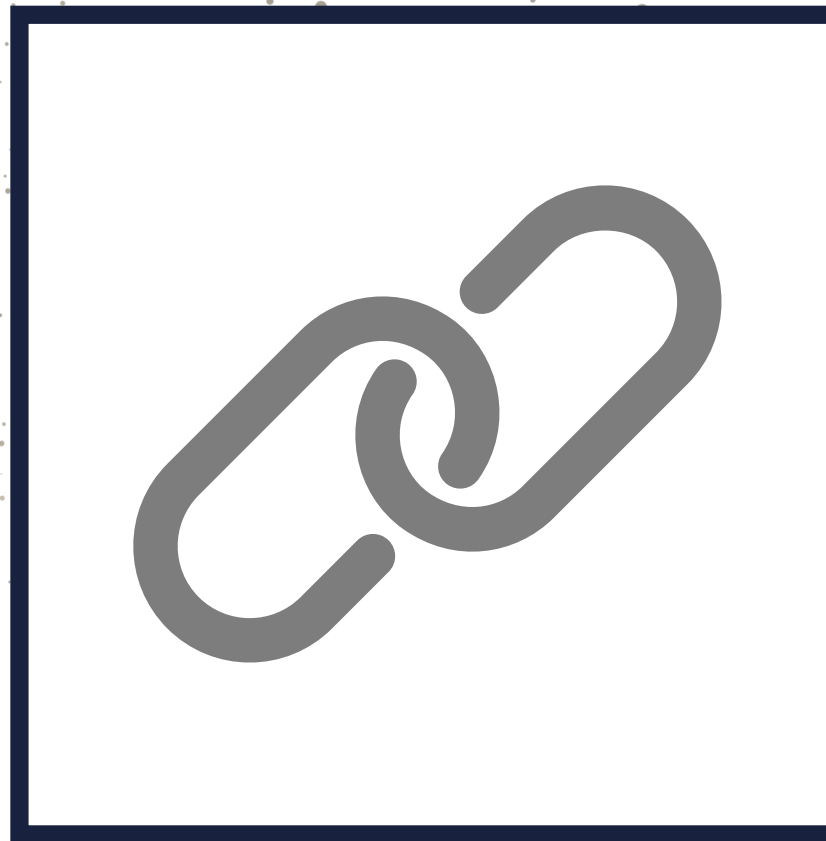
As FA funding remains flat for 2024-28, becoming less reliant on this key income stream is a strategic priority. We will...

- Recruit an independent Commercial and Partnerships director to guide our Commercial Strategy and enhance existing partnerships and commercial relationships.
- Recruit an independent Wellbeing and Safety director to help shape our People Plan.
- Offer businesses a range of mutually beneficial sponsorship packages highlighting the reach and benefits of County FA activities.
- Upgrade the Oaklands Park HQ playing and changing facilities for the benefit of all users, including renewing the 3G pitch to give grassroots football participants the best possible experience.
- Enhance the long-term security of the Gloucestershire FA HQ and improve its environmental sustainability with further investment in solar power generation and EV charging.





Support **thriving**
Community Clubs



Connect and **serve**
all participants



Progress the
Game's governance

These three **STRATEGIC DRIVERS** will enable us
to thrive and achieve our goals within each priority area.



- Ensure clubs grow opportunities and provide a quality experience through England Football Accreditation.
- Support 1*, 2* and 3* England Football Accredited clubs to increase female and disability provision.
- Offer clubs a greater role in supporting the development of coaches, referees, and volunteers.
- Enable more clubs to build and take ownership of facilities, such as 3Gs, grass pitches and clubhouses.
- Provide access to expertise and best practice via communities and subject matter experts.
- Support clubs in creating commercial and sponsorship opportunities.
- Deliver a bespoke club leadership programme recognising their unique responsibilities and opportunities.
- Provide Equality, Diversity & Inclusion training to support clubs in building inclusive environments.
- Identify, support, and develop the club leaders of the future aligned to the volunteering programme.

- Create and implement a high standard of customer service that participants can expect when contacting or working with the County FA.
- Improve the ability of our participants to book pitches and places to play that suit them.
- Provide clear, timely and tailored communications so that participants receive the right information, at the right time and in the right way.
- Improve our overall communications and social media presence to both showcase the brilliance of the grassroots game, but also act as a useful information tool.
- Explore digital opportunities to enhance the football experience (e.g. by developing and promoting partnerships with VEO and TeamFeePay).



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- Achieve The FA's Code of Governance for County FAs.
- Maintain the Equality Standard for Sport Award.
- Work with existing leagues to support them in being modern, progressive, and club/participant-centred.
- Support the appropriate reinvestment of surplus funds held by the County FA and leagues.
- Maintain consistent standards, culture, and practice, e.g., Safeguarding 365 and Anti-Discrimination policies.
- Support clubs and leagues by sharing FA guidance on complaint and conflict management.
- Encourage private coaching providers to support and drive safeguarding standards and quality.
- Provide yearly reports on progress against the strategy.

Glossary

Behaviour Points

Clubs receive points for behavioral offences such as dissent and violent conduct, along with poor overall matchday respect scores. When a threshold of accumulated penalty points is reached, bespoke support will be provided to the club and they will be asked to evidence steps that are being taken to tackle their poor behaviour.

Comets

A programme offering casual, recreational football for disabled players aged 5 to 11.

Grass Pitch Improvement Programme

A programme offering casual, recreational football for disabled players aged 5 to 11.

JustPlay

A programme offering recreational, turn-up-and-play football for all.

Local Football Facility Plan

Detailed reports that map out the football facilities needed across local authority areas.

PlayZones

Safe, inclusive and accessible outdoor facilities that bring communities together through recreational forms of football and a range of other sports.

GFA Inclusion and Advisory Group

A group which reports directly into to the GFA Board and provides valuable advice and guidance around equality and inclusion

Wildcats/Squad

A programme offering casual, recreational football for girls aged 5 to 11 (Wildcats) and 12 to 16 (Squad).



GET IN TOUCH



Support@GloucestershireFA.com



01454 615888

- Option 1 - Safeguarding
- Option 2 - Football Services
- Option 3 - Football Development
- Option 4 - Refereeing
- Option 5 - Oaklands Park Facilities

