

Race & Religion in Grassroots Football

Report on Hampshire FA's Inclusion Advisory Group Community Event (May 2023)



Engaging with local communities

In May 2023, Hampshire FA's Inclusion Advisory Group hosted a Community Event at Rushmoor Community F.C. in Farnborough. The event focused on race and religion in grassroots football, and aimed to understand the barriers faced by ethnically diverse and religious communities and their impact on participation.

Guest speakers included Anwar Uddin (*FA Diversity & Inclusion Manager*), Hannah Kumari (*writer, performer, and producer of 'Eng-Er-Land'*), and Rita & Sachana (*committee members of Ma Khelchu, a local organization promoting footballing opportunities for Nepali women and girls*).

The event included group discussions facilitated by IAG representatives and Hampshire FA staff. The findings from these discussions are summarised in this report and will inform the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion plan for the next Hampshire FA Business Strategy (2024-28).



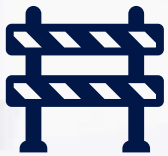
Emerging Themes:



All groups recognised the importance of community engagement and the role of diverse representation in grassroots football.



The discussions emphasised the importance of collaboration, transparency, and delivering against community feedback.



Barriers such as lack of awareness, access, and cultural considerations were mentioned in multiple discussions.



Insights from Group 1:



Emphasised the importance of community engagement and identifying the 'gate-keepers' of the community.



Highlighted the challenge of promoting affiliation to teams that are unaffiliated and recruiting volunteers from diverse backgrounds.



Identified the need for more football role models, representation, accessible sessions, and closing the information gap.

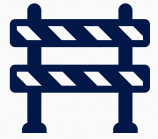


Recommended that diverse communities should lead the conversation, with the CFA supporting rather than driving it.



Discussed discrimination reports and the need for transparency and awareness of the discipline process.

Key Takeaways from Group 2:



Explored the barriers limiting people's participation in grassroots football (e.g., period inequalities, accessibility)



Questioned whether clubs check the needs of incoming players, especially around disabilities and religious requirements.



Addressed the importance of building trust and representation across the game.



Highlighted the lack of visible mechanisms in stadiums to tackle discrimination, particularly at lower levels of the game.



Explored the need for more support and opportunities for volunteers, coaches, and referees.

Observations from Group 3:



Participants shared personal experiences and expectations, emphasising the need to enhance football accessibility for children with additional needs.



Explored barriers and challenges in football, including cultural and religious factors hindering participation of certain groups.



Discussed the importance of diverse role models, community engagement, and robust reporting systems to address discriminatory abuse.



Explored strategies for engaging young people, including diversifying the youth network and utilizing peer-to-peer messaging.



Highlighted the significance of fostering enduring relationships with local diverse community groups and involving them in decision-making processes.

Community feedback and recommendations:

Engagement	Foster community engagement and inclusion to promote diversity in grassroots football in Hampshire.
Education	Increase awareness and provide education to address barriers and challenges faced by ethnically diverse and religious communities.
Representation	Promote diverse representation, role models, and accessible sessions to encourage participation in football.
Trust	Build trust, promote transparency, and address discrimination reports to create a more inclusive environment in Hampshire's football community.