



OPPORTUNITIES IN WOMEN & GIRLS FOOTBALL



ENGLAND
FOOTBALL



HampshireFA



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Women's football is undergoing a remarkable transformation, with rapid growth in participation, visibility, and support across all levels. This momentum was significantly boosted by the Lionesses' historic victory at the UEFA Women's Euro 2022, which inspired a surge of interest in the sport.

Since then, the impact of initiatives like the Inspiring Positive Change Strategy, launched in 2020, has been reflected in key statistics:

- ◆◆ **56% increase in women and girls playing football**
- ◆◆ **265% increase in girls in the talent base within Emerging Talent Centres (ETCs)**
- ◆◆ **239% rise in Barclays Women's Super League (WSL) attendances since 2021**
- ◆◆ **113% increase in female referees**
- ◆◆ **88% more female coaches actively developed**
- ◆◆ **14% increase in schools offering equal access in PE for girls**

Building on this success, the FA has announced a new women's and girls' football strategy called "Reaching Higher". This will be implemented from 2024-2028 to further sustain and accelerate this progress.

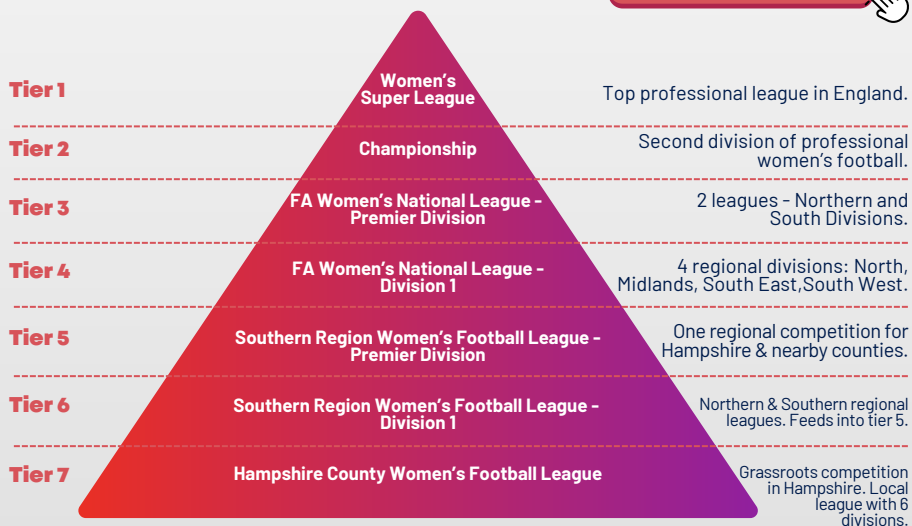
Why Get Involved in Football?

For girls and women, football offers a wide range of benefits, both on and off the pitch. It provides a fun and healthy way to stay active, build confidence, and develop teamwork and leadership skills. Football is also a fantastic way to make new friends and be part of a supportive community. Whether you're looking to play casually or pursue a professional pathway, football has something to offer for everyone. With more opportunities and better facilities than ever before, now is the perfect time for girls and women to get involved in the game.

Leagues and Tiers

In Hampshire, opportunities for women and girls to play football range from grassroots and youth levels to more competitive adult leagues. The exact number of divisions or teams can vary season to season, but the Southern Region Women's Football League, Hampshire County Women's Football League, North East Hampshire Girls Youth League and Hampshire Girls Youth Football League are the main organised leagues that cater to various age groups and levels.

Find football near you



This pyramid shows how players and teams can progress from the Hampshire County Women's Football League (Tier 7) up to the professional levels at the top of the women's football pyramid in England.

Key Contacts

Hampshire County Women's Football League

Barbara Watts | watts699@btinternet.com

Hampshire Girls Youth League

Adee Chant | hgyflsec@gmail.com

North East Hampshire Girls Youth League

Suzanne Swan | girls@nehyl.org.uk

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Emerging Talent Centres

Girls' Emerging Talent Centres (ETCs) provide accessible, high-quality training environments to identify and develop future talent. With up to 73 centres nationwide, ETCs allow players to train locally while still playing for grassroots clubs, schools, or representative teams, enhancing their playing experiences. Run by clubs, organisations, or County FAs, ETCs offer weekly 1.5-hour technical training sessions for 30 weeks, including strength and conditioning and goalkeeping development.

Emerging Talent Centres in Hampshire

Southampton FC

Employing Body Status

Southampton FC

Lead Name

Geoffrey Gulzar

Lead Email

ggulzar@saintsfc.co.uk

Training Venue

Testwood School
SO40 3ZW

AFC Bournemouth

Employing Body Status

Community Trust/Foundation

Lead Name

Andrew Battison

Lead Email

andrew.battison@afcb.co.uk

Training Venue

Slades Park, BH10 4HG

Pompey In The Community

Employing Body Status

Community Trust/Foundation

Lead Name

Kirsty Pearce

Lead Email

kirsty.pearce@pompeyitc.org.uk

Training Venue

Anson Road, PO4 8TB

FA Programmes

Our FA programmes offering fun, non-competitive football sessions.



Open to 5-11 year olds

Find Opportunities



Open to 12-14 year olds

Find Opportunities



Open to 16+

Find Opportunities



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Wildcats



Wildcat sessions are a non-competitive, recreational way to get involved in football for young girls aged 5-11 years old. Whether it's for girls who have played before, or for those giving it a go for the very first time, the main aim is to have fun and meet new people. Due to the easy-going nature of the sessions, Wildcats allows young girls to develop core football skills at their own pace.

Benefits to providers and clubs looking to set up a Wildcats provision:



Equipment pack including balls and bibs.



Access to online training to help support the development of the program.



Online platform with Q&A opportunities and session plans.



Marketing resource packs to assist with recruitment for the sessions.

Mark Stupples - AFC Stoneham Chair

What motivated you to start up Wildcats sessions?

When I became chairman, there was no provision for females at the club. I saw Wildcats as a great way to get girls involved in football in a fun, enjoyable, and safe environment. Back then, the government aimed to double girls' participation by 2020, and I believed Wildcats could help achieve that. It started as recreational, but now we have 32 female teams and 400 female players, showing how Wildcats can lead to competitive play.

How long have you been running Wildcats sessions?

We've been running Wildcats sessions for 9 years now, with one session every Monday.

What would you say are the benefits of running Wildcats sessions to providers and to participants?

For the club, Wildcats has been a stepping stone for growth, improving our accreditation and standards. Many girls who started with Wildcats have joined our teams, showing the clear pathway, we offer.

For participants, it gives them the chance to play football and make friends. I've seen firsthand the impacts Wildcats can have on player development for example a girl who started in Wildcats, is now in Southampton FC's academy.

Do you have any tips for potential providers in terms of setting up Wildcats sessions?

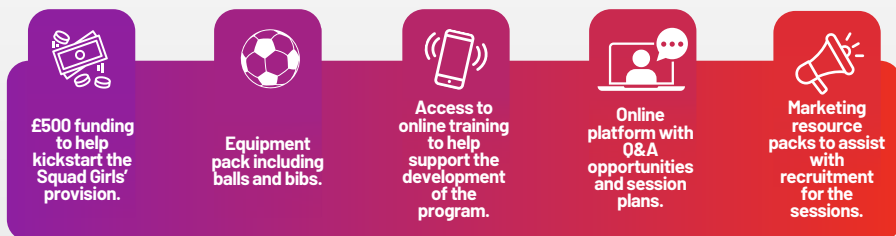
Find someone consistent and committed to running the sessions. Girls don't want to feel second rate, so it's important the sessions aren't treated as an afterthought. Having a female lead helps too, as they tend to connect better with the children. Finally, keep the sessions organised and fun—think of it as an engagement process, not a performance test.

Squad Girls



Squad Girls' football offers an enjoyable, non-competitive way to play football locally for girls ages 12-14 years old. Sessions are designed for those completely new to the sport, those transitioning from Wildcats, or those who simply want to give recreational sport a go. With no commitment required, Squad gives the perfect opportunity for girls to develop comfortably within their own time.

Benefits to providers and clubs looking to set up a Squad Girls provision:



Mel Honess - Head of Girls Football Development at Fleetlands FC

What motivated you to start up Squad Girls sessions?

Having played football as a child and into my early adult years, I have witnessed and been a part of sport in which girls were not exactly welcomed, given the funding or the support for football. Now, being head of girls football, I have the ability to provide girls with the opportunities I missed out on as a child.

How long have you been running Squad Girls sessions?

We have been running our sessions since July, but also have a Wildcats session and now an U8's girls team which had been created from our Wildcats.

What would you say are the benefits of running Squad Girls sessions to providers and to participants?

Seeing the girls develop, have fun, make friends and feel a part of something regardless of their abilities or background.

Do you have any tips for potential providers in terms of setting up Squad Girls sessions?

Make sure you cater for the needs of all girls, get to know them and their abilities. Make sure you take time for questions/teaching so they can fully understand it for themselves.

Find Your Feet



Our Find your Feet sessions are an opportunity for women 16+ who are wanting to get involved in some open ability, fun and friendly football sessions. These sessions typically take place on a weekday evening and are coach led. Additionally, Find Your Feet Festivals bring together participants from current Find Your Feet sessions for a series of friendly competitive fixtures. These events offer a fun and relaxed atmosphere, with plenty of time for players to enjoy socialising and sharing a meal afterwards.

Benefits to providers and clubs looking to set up a Find Your Feet provision:



£200 funding to help kickstart the FYF provision.



Invitation to monthly Find Your Feet Tournaments

Jess Cutler - JC Coaching

What motivated you to start up Find Your Feet (Just Play) sessions?

I decided to set up a ladies session on the Isle of Wight because although we are seeing a huge growth in the girls game on the Island we don't seem to be seeing the same with the ladies. We only have 2 ladies teams and both are in the Hampshire league, which involves a lot of travelling and giving up a whole Sunday which lots of women, especially with kids struggle to do. I recently joined a ladies recreational cricket session which had ladies of all abilities, ages and experience and it has been great fun. There is no pressure and it's very much a social fitness thing. I wondered if something along similar lines could be done for ladies football and after a bit of research found this initiative and applied to run a centre on the Island.

How long have you been running your Find Your Feet sessions?

I have been running sessions for 2 weeks. In that time, I've had 9 ladies at the first session and 10 at the second with a total of 15 individuals across both weeks. I've had many messages from women who are interested but a bit nervous as well.

What would you say are the benefits of running Find Your Feet sessions to providers and to participants?

The benefits for participants are huge. Beyond fitness and socialising, there's a significant mental health boost, particularly for women struggling with anxiety or depression. Many feel more comfortable exercising in a supportive, all-female, non-judgmental environment rather than traditional gym or fitness class environments. As a provider, it's really rewarding to create a space where women can just enjoy football without pressure or judgment.

Do you have any tips for potential providers in terms of setting up Find Your Feet sessions?

Take as many photos/videos as you can. I've had a lot of ladies contact me who would like to come but are nervous. If they can see what to expect it isn't so scary. We play music at our sessions; I find it helps people relax and can stop awkward silences. Really push the fun element as well, lots of the ladies have fed back that there's nothing else on our area that provides fun fitness. Lastly the childcare element is important with lots of ladies wanting to come but not having someone to look after their children. We are looking at how we can run a junior session alongside our ladies session to make it more accessible for young mums.

Futsal

Futsal is an exciting, fast-paced form of the game that originates in South America. Played on hard pitches with small-sided teams, Futsal places emphasis on technical skill in restricted spaces. The ball is smaller and heavier than a normal ball meaning play usually stays on the ground. While many become Futsal specialists, others enjoy playing to improve their technique and control for eleven-a-side football.

Along with playing opportunities, coaches and referees are much needed in this sport!

Will Wilson- Southampton Aztecs

Can you provide a brief history of your futsal club and how it was established?

I started the club in May 2021 as a women's team, after noticing little futsal activity locally. Initially, it was supposed to be a bit of fun, and the players saw it as fitness. They then enjoyed it so much; we sent off an application to the National Futsal Series and were accepted. Five months after our first session, we won our first game on TV.



What is your club's overall mission and how does it support women and girls in futsal?

Our mission is to provide futsal opportunities for all abilities and motivations, whether players aim to play for England or just enjoy a casual game. We face challenges like limited facilities, funding, and qualified coaches, but we want futsal to be accessible to everyone.

How many women and girls currently participate in your club and what age groups do you cater for?

On the women's side, we're the only club in the country to have a women's first and reserve team. The two women's teams have a combined squad of more than 26 players aged 16-36.

What are the benefits for women and girls participating in futsal?

The benefits of playing futsal include that players are more involved, it feels like there is more freedom and responsibility than football, you get way more of the ball, and for people like me, I don't want to be outside in the cold rain, getting muddy. It's a sport we can play all year round, as the court protects us from the weather. Futsal games are high scoring, end-to-end and you don't get stuck in a position that hardly sees the ball. I think you get around six times more touches in futsal than in football. The rolling subs of futsal also allow for players to take breathers. We know that futsal greatly improves your fitness, and your intelligence, due to the speed of the game.

Do you have any advice for new players and coaches wanting to get involved with futsal for the first time?

If anyone does want to get involved, they should reach out to us, or whichever club is near to them. Most people within the futsal community want to see the game grow, and we're always looking for more coaches and more players. Even those without experience will be welcomed into the game, as we all remember our first time. Watch a game, as there's lots of good stuff for free on YouTube. Follow some teams and players on social media. And make sure to come along and watch in person. And just to reiterate, if anyone wants to get involved, just send us a message!

Walking Football

Play the game you love for longer

Where there's a will, there's always another way to play. Ideal for anyone who just wants to play football for fun, Walking Football opens the door for players who want to continue playing, or want to return to the game, or who haven't played that much before. The slower pace and reduced physical contact makes Walking Football a great way to display your touch, passing and shooting. For all kinds of people across England, Walking Football means getting together, having fun, and keeping fit.

Hampshire FA currently has two Women's Walking Football Leagues. Each league consists of a monthly match day where teams all play each other once.

Along with playing opportunities, coaches and referees are much needed in this sport!

Division 1

Eastleigh WFC

Southampton Women's Walking FC

Bournemouth WFC Women

Basingstoke WFC

Division 2

Fleet WFC

Eastleigh WFC div 2

Basingstoke WFC

Bournemouth WFC div 2

Portsmouth WFC

Andrea Shiels – Fleet Walking Football Club Women

What motivated you to take up walking football?

I was motivated to take up walking football because a good friend, who played football, encouraged me to join her. I had doubts about joining as I had never played football before, however because I had enjoyed playing Hockey previously and being part of a team, I eventually decided to join her. As soon as I started participating, I found that I loved being part of a team again. Over time, as my skills developed, I found the experience increasingly rewarding. My competitive spirit began to emerge, and I started enjoying not only the social aspect of going to sessions with friends but also the thrill of competing and having a shared objective amongst teammates.

When did you start playing and often do you play?

I started playing in my early 50's (I'm now 59). I started playing once a week, which is now twice a week. We also compete in two leagues, the Thames Valley Walking Football League and the Hampshire FA Women's Walking Football League.

What aspects of the sport do you find most meaningful?

The most meaningful aspect of the sport for me is being part of a team—the sense of working together and feeling like I've contributed to our success. Walking football offers a variety of levels to play at, which means it's accessible to everyone. In our team, we do have some very experienced players who have just transitioned from the running game, but there is a real diversity of ages, fitness levels, and abilities. I think Walking Football brings a sense of community, a 'girlhood', where women from all different backgrounds, sexualities, and experiences come together to play the sport. We've also seen the benefits that this sport has for people with mental health issues, Parkinsons and other conditions, showing how inclusive this sport is! Walking football is also a great outlet for me, and I think for many other women, too. When life gets busy or difficult, these sessions give us a chance to disconnect from that and just enjoy the game.

What advice would you give to someone looking to start playing walking football?

Just give it a go! Don't worry about what you can or can't do because you will be able to fit in at any level. Find a team near you and attend a session, it's very likely you will go again. We don't have many people that don't come back, as once you've caught the Walking Football 'bug' you will want to come back for more!

Play On Leagues



Hampshire FA's Play On Leagues are a casual and flexible way to participate in adult female football. League fixtures typically take place midweek and are either shorter, or less frequent than ordinary weekend league fixtures, meaning less commitment is required.

You can get involved in a Play On League as an individual looking to join a team, or as a full team looking to join one of our leagues below.

Southampton POL

📍 Stoneham Lane Football Complex

- ✓ 7-A-Side Format
- ✓ Fixtures every 3-4 weeks on Fridays
- ✓ Kick-off times: 7:10pm, 8:10pm
- ✓ 40 Minute Matches
- ✓ £45 Per Team Per Match

Basingstoke POL

📍 Winklebury Football Complex

- ✓ 7-A-Side Format
- ✓ Fixtures every 3-4 weeks on Fridays
- ✓ Kick-off times: 7:10pm, 8:10pm
- ✓ 40 Minute Matches
- ✓ £45 Per Team Per Match

The Women's Play on League is a great opportunity for women to get involved in fun, recreational and flexible football matches.

The small, sided format allows a group of women to enter a team and play with other like-minded women of similar abilities. It's always a great atmosphere and I recommend it highly! Please reach out if you would like to find out more!

Hannah Humphreys - Female Pathway Lead Football Development Officer

[Find Opportunities](#)



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Hampshire FA Academy



The Hampshire FA Football Academy Programme offers school leavers aged 16-18 the chance to combine full-time education with football development. With separate pathways for male and female participants, the programme is delivered in partnership with SCL Education to help students achieve their best while preparing for a career in the sports industry.

Students benefit from daily training sessions with FA-qualified coaches and compete in the SCL Development League. All activities are hosted at the £9 million Stoneham Lane Football Complex, providing access to top-quality facilities designed to enhance their football skills.

Participants will study for an NCFE Diploma in Sport and Physical Activity, which combines practical and theoretical learning. The course leverages Hampshire FA's industry expertise and connections to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in football or other sports and leisure careers.

Future career paths include professional playing, coaching, refereeing, sports science, media, journalism, and events or facility management, allowing students to tailor their journey to their passions and goals.



Course Details

Length

2 years

Cost

FREE for 16-18 year olds

Entry Requirements

4-5 GCSEs Level 9-4 including English or Maths, or both.

Location

Stoneham Lane Football Complex

You will need to be 16 years old by 31st August, ready to start the programme in early September.

[More Information](#)



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Coaching Opportunities

At Hampshire FA, we are committed to supporting women and girls in their football coaching journeys by promoting the wide range of opportunities offered by England Football Learning. Whether you're just starting out or looking to advance your skills, there are comprehensive coaching qualifications available for every stage. From introductory courses like EE Playmaker and Introduction to Coaching Football to advanced pathways such as the UEFA C, B, A, and Pro Licences, you can tailor your development to your ambitions. Additionally, there are specialised courses for those interested in Futsal or Goalkeeping qualifications.

In addition to formal qualifications, ongoing learning and CPD opportunities are available. These programs will equip you with the knowledge and skills to inspire and lead the next generation of female players.

Mentoring

Get support from our coach mentors who aim to provide personalised, one-on-one guidance help you grow in confidence and develop your skills.

Community Champions

Get support from our Community Champions who aid the development of new coaches and volunteers in the grassroots game, in particular coaches from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

Stepping Over The Sidelines Workshops

Stepping over the Sidelines is a local workshop, designed to offer mums, female guardians, helpers, assistants and young leaders the opportunity to have a first look at how you might be able to get involved in football.

	Football	Futsal	Goalkeeping
Beginner	EE Playmaker	Introduction to Futsal	National Goalkeeping Course
	Introduction to Coaching Football	National Futsal Course	UEFA A Goalkeeping B Licence
	UEFA C Licence	UEFA A Futsal B Licence	UEFA Goalkeeping A Licence
	UEFA B Licence		
	UEFA A Licence		
Advanced	UEFA Pro Licence		

Get Involved



Or contact Jake.Ashton@HampshireFA.com

OPPORTUNITIES IN WOMEN & GIRLS FOOTBALL



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Funding

To support football being truly a game for all, England Football Learning offers partially funded places on popular coaching courses as part of the Partially Funded Places Programme. Furthermore, in partnership with Chase, the Official Banking Partner of England Football Learning fully funded places are also available.



Partially Funded Places Programme

The Partially Funded Places Programme has been developed to support coaches who may be facing barriers to getting involved. We want to create a more inclusive coaching workforce and will be offering funding for 20% of all places on Introduction to Coaching Football, UEFA C Licence and UEFA B Licence as part of the programme. This means that the cost of these courses for successful applicants will be:

Introduction to Coaching Football

Course cost: £160

You pay: £24

UEFA C Licence

Course cost: £650

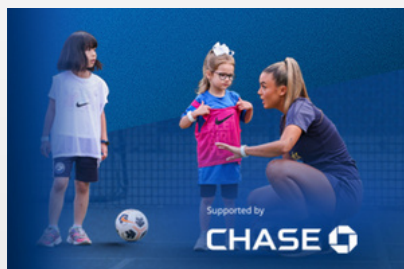
You pay: £95

UEFA B Licence

Course cost: £1,200

You pay: £180

[Check Eligibility](#)



Chase Fully Funded Places

Chase fully funded places have been created to provide funding opportunities for coaches who would benefit from financial support towards completing either the Introduction to Coaching Football, UEFA B Licence or UEFA A Licence.

The programme is aligned with England Football's wider aims of helping to increase participation within the game, as well as Chase's ongoing investment in community-based programmes. By fostering diversity and inclusion within our coaching workforce we aim to: Increase participation, break down barriers and create role models.

[Check Eligibility](#)



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Referee Opportunities

The FA Referee Course

The FA Referee Course equips individuals aged 14 and over to officiate grassroots football, including mini soccer, 9v9, and 11v11 matches. The course includes online learning on the Laws of the Game, which takes around 90 minutes, and 11 hours of face-to-face training combining classroom and practical sessions. Participants must complete online safeguarding training and referee five games with County Football Association support to qualify and receive their certificate. Further training opportunities are available to advance their refereeing career.

Progression

After completing the FA Referee Course, referees under 16 become Level Y1, officiating youth matches, while those 16 and older achieve Level 7, the entry level for adult football. Progression through referee levels requires meeting criteria such as match appointments, Laws of the Game exams, and online modules, with guidance from Match Day Coaches. Advancing to higher levels includes additional requirements like face-to-face training, with criteria becoming more rigorous at each stage.

[Find Out More](#)



Female Referee Development Programme



The Female Referee Development Programme aims to provide much-needed varying levels of support for both new and existing female referees across Hampshire. Upskilling our female workforce across the grassroots game is our aim! The Programme includes the FA Referee Course as part of the programme itself but a specific female-only course. Participants complete this standard course to become qualified referees, but the programme goes beyond that by offering extra support, such as mentoring, workshops, and additional development opportunities tailored for female referees.

£75 (50% off regular Referee Course price)

“ Participant feedback from our most recent course:

I liked the course because it was very fun and a great opportunity to meet new people and expand my knowledge around the rules of the game to become more involved in football. The workers were nice and helped us to understand with different ways of teaching us. I am excited, as being a ref now opens many opportunities to get more involved and earn myself some money whilst doing so.

”

[Find Out More](#)



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Volunteering

Volunteers are the backbone of grassroots football

In Hampshire alone, we have 15,000 volunteers, from all walks of life committed and dedicated to the sustainability and development of our game. Volunteers are the very lifeblood at the heart of our game. Anyone can be a volunteer, there are roles to suit everyone outside of the traditional roles of Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman etc. Other volunteer roles can be marketing & communications officers, Press Officers, Videographers, Photographers, Event Organisers, Sponsorship & Fundraising Officers and much more.

Benefits to volunteering

- ✓ Building your CV
- ✓ Making new friends from all walks of life
- ✓ Working as a team towards a goal
- ✓ Providing opportunities in the local community
- ✓ Personal development
- ✓ Giving something back
- ✓ Creating a legacy
- ✓ Reward and recognition
- ✓ Influence and positive change

Need volunteers or are you looking to volunteer?

Our Noticeboard group on Facebook is a great platform to connect teams, clubs and leagues with players, coaches and volunteers.

Join over 4,000 members of the local grassroots football community in sharing news, information and opportunities with each other!



Join!



OPPORTUNITIES IN WOMEN & GIRLS FOOTBALL



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Key Contacts

Female Pathway Football Development Officer

Hannah.Humphreys@HampshireFA.com

Coaching & Workforce Football Development Officer

Jake.Ashton@HampshireFA.com

Referee Development Manager

Andy.Moisey@HampshireFA.com

Football Development Manager

Pedro.Viveiros@HampshireFA.com

Academy Head Coach

Joe.Lea@HampshireFA.com



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