



Herefordshire Football Association
SSAFA County Ground
Widemarsh Common
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Tel: 01432 342179

Date: 12th December 2024

CHAIRMAN
S.J. Willmot

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
C Oakley

2023/2024 Annual Report

Another exciting and action-packed year has been completed across our County, with the team working tirelessly to deliver against all set targets in the final year of our 2021-24 strategy.

The club development team of Kyle Williams and George Leyshon-James have seen a number of growth areas across multiple programmes.

In terms of registered playing numbers, we have seen increases across all areas of the game. **4641** male players were involved in football in Herefordshire in 2023/24, an increase of over **300** players vs 2022/23, almost exactly meeting our target for 2024.

The women and girls game also continued to grow in our County with **1077** registered female players in 2023/24, an increase of **70** players (**+7%**) vs 2022/23.

There was an increase in the number of Women's teams in the Herefordshire FA Women's League, seeing **11** teams take part (vs 6 teams in 2022/23). This meant **347** female players took part in the league (vs 182 in 2022/23).

36 female players also took part in the newly formed 30+ veterans league launched in 2024, which will again be continued in 2025.

Across our disability clubs and programmes headed up by Scott Russell, there were **125** registered players. This was an increase of **53** players vs 2022/23 and above our 2024 target by 17%. This was seen due to NHS referrals at our walking football in Hereford, through the Herefordshire men's mental health group and 3 Counties Ability Counts League.

Growth in programmes has also seen a need for better facilities. There were **50** good grass pitches in Herefordshire in the 2023/24 season (**+22%** vs target). Clubs engaging with both online and in person CPD, as well as increased use of the pitch Power has driven this increase.



**GIRLS' EMERGING
TALENT CENTRES**
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL



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In officiating supported by Jack Shepherd, **28** referees were recruited in 2023/24 with **75%** converted to qualified referees. **100%** of referees were also retained from 2022/2023 into the season.

We saw **4** referees in the County progress onto different levels. Two from level 7 to level 5 and level 6 respectively, one from level 6 to level 5 and one female referee from level 4W to level 3W. Congratulations to all.

There was further growth in our community programmes led by Scott Russell. Our refugee programme saw over **50** participants engage with the project, which included cross programme football matches against other teams from our Armed forces and Blue light service programmes.

Over **50** participants also engaged in our Armed forces and Blue light service programmes last year, in partnership with Help for Heroes and local Armed forces charity First Light Trust. This programme gives currently serving, veterans and/or people who have family members in the forces an opportunity to play recreational football every week and be part of a community off the pitch. On average there were **20** participants attending the sessions each week.

Our Ukraine project was run with support from Herefordshire Council and continued to use the power of football to engage with Ukrainian families living in Herefordshire. Over **40** people engaged with the programme including **20** under 18's. 20 pairs of football boots and kit were donated to the children attending the programme, which culminated with a trip to Swansea City FC to watch a Championship match for all of the families involved.

Across our boy's development centre in 2023/24 there were **92** boys aged between 11-16 taking part. In a positive step for the County, an inaugural girl's development centre was also set up, with **113** girls aged 6-16 taking part in the first year.

We continue to focus on the importance of safeguarding through the work of Danielle Harris. Our independent safeguarding 365 assessment from the NSPCC highlighted examples of best practice and positive feedback from the assessors.

This best practice led to Danielle being invited to join the National Strategic Safeguarding Consultation Group. This group meets throughout the year to discuss new strategies and offer feedback to the Safeguarding leadership team at the FA.

We have also seen a growth in the number of clubs in Herefordshire entering interacting with the annual FA play safe campaign through our play safe picture competition. **40** clubs (+**18** clubs vs 2022/23) took part with positive interaction and events in the important National campaign.



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All the results featured throughout the report wouldn't be possible without the hard work and dedication of the team and board at HFA. In the short amount of time I have been here, I can see the passion and commitment of all the team on a daily basis ensuring football for all across our County.

Thanks go to not only our staff, but to our board of talented and driven directors. We must not forget that you are all volunteers selflessly giving up your time to support and lead our game in Herefordshire.

Finally, thank you to our council, partners, clubs, communities and volunteers throughout our County. Without you, football simply does not happen, and people would not have the opportunity to take part in our great sport.

In November, we were delighted to announce our new 2024-2028 strategy which aligns with the FA and will continue to grow and develop grassroots football throughout our County. I look forward to continuing the hard work already being undertaken to support further growth across all our programmes and areas of focus as we move into the 2025 season and beyond.

Craig Oakley

Chief Executive Officer