

Kent FA

KENT FA STRATEGY

2024-2028

Play. Protect. Promote.



ENGLAND FOOTBALL

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INTRODUCTION

Our strategy for the next three years continues with our overarching ambition to *Play Protect Promote* football in the County.

The Kent FA Board and the Senior Management team met earlier this year to review the past three years and actively discussed and developed this vision for Kent Football for the next three years.

The following document sets the direction for the association over the next three years and highlights how we have utilised the key pillars and drivers of the FA Strategy while ensuring it is localised and relevant to the County of Kent and its football members, whether that's a player, a match official, a volunteer, or a spectator.

It also demonstrates how we will build on the past three years' success to deliver thriving grassroots football communities throughout Kent.



DENISE RICHMOND
Chair



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024-2028 Kent FA *Play Protect Promote* Strategy is a high-level document that sets the direction for the association over the next four years. The strategy sets bold targets for how we will grow participation and develop new formats of the game, support our volunteer, coach, and referee networks, ensure that we continue to safeguard football across Kent, and tackle on-field and off-field behaviour.

Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding, People Development, Partnerships, and Education are the golden threads running through this strategy and are integral to its success.

Our strategic pillars and objectives have been developed through extensive consultation with the Kent Football community. This collaborative approach ensures that the *Play Protect Promote* strategy is a true reflection of the game in Kent and is closely aligned with the FA's Grassroots Football Strategy. We believe that this strategy provides a comprehensive roadmap for Kent Football for the next four years, addressing local needs and challenges while building on the successes and achievements of the past three years.



DARRYL HADEN
Chief Executive Officer

WHO IS THE KENT FA?

OUR VISION

To unite, inspire and develop a better football experience for all.

OUR MISSION

To safeguard, govern, protect and develop football across Kent.



KENT FA VALUES

INCLUSIVE

- Champion and ensure that football is, and will remain, a game for everyone
- Openly collaborate with partners in the game
- Provide equal opportunity to people of different backgrounds, experience and perspective
- Seek out and embrace new ways of thinking and working

PROGRESSIVE

- Embrace new thinking in pursuit of delivering an excellent service
- Indentify the need for change in directions, practice, policy or procedure
- Continually question the way things are done, and consistently try to achieve more
- Implement new ideas and different ways of working to achieve improved perfomance

PASSIONATE

- Through increased visibility within Kent, we demonstrate our enthusiasm to drive and grow football in the County
- Work creatively to achieve goals
- Delivering a holistic approach to development projects from agreed goals to project completion
- Showcasing the projects in the community to develop a sense for grassroots football in Kent

INNOVATIVE

- Embrace new and creative thinking in pursuit of continuous improvement
- Identify new and different ways to overcome problems, thinking creatively to develop solutions
- Continuisly seeks to improve efficiency and performance.

KENT FOOTBALL 2021-2024

Following the conclusion of our last strategy, we are proud of our progress which is highlighted below and will continue to enhance our support and development of the Kent game.

69,339
PLAYERS

32
SANCTIONED LEAGUES

£11.34M
FACILITY INVESTMENT

757
CLUBS

25
KENT CUP COMPETITIONS

13,000
VOLUNTEERS

1,764
MATCH OFFICIALS

3,790
ENGLAND ACCREDITED TEAMS

4,302
TEAMS





THE FA: A THRIVING GRASSROOTS GAME

The FA launched their strategy, A Thriving Grassroots Game: The FA Grassroots Football Strategy 2024-28, in October 2024.

Developed in collaboration with the County FA network, the strategy allows County FA's to shape the national direction using their local knowledge. The grassroots game plays an important role in delivering three of the four FA 'game-changer' priorities over the next four years. These are:

To create equal opportunities for women and girls

Transform the pitch landscape nationally

See a game free from discrimination.

In addition, three of the four drivers of The FA's Strategy 2024 are mirrored in the Grassroots Football Strategy, namely the push to create thriving community clubs, developing a participant-led approach and the push for progressive governance.

As a result, County FAs have adopted the same strategy framework and will share The FA's strategic priorities over the four-year period to ensure that together, we meet the needs of the game locally.

In addition, the Kent measures of success also align with the national measures, ensuring that we collaboratively deliver the priorities within this strategy and inspire positive change through football.

Together we will unite communities, tackle inequalities and improve the health of the nation.

DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY: THE PROCESS

Consultation and collaboration have been key themes in the strategy's development.

The Kent FA Board has been engaged and collectively agreed on the strategy's key themes throughout the process.

CONSULTATION WITH KENT FOOTBALL

SWOT & Pestle Analysis

This review, conducted together with our Board of Directors, allowed us to understand what we did well, identify areas for improvement, and establish and mitigate any risks to ensure Kent Football is in the best possible place.

The Kent FA Board has been engaged and collectively agreed on the strategy's key themes throughout the process

Stakeholder Survey

In November 2023, we conducted a robust survey to understand the challenges and needs of our stakeholders with targeted questions to suit their specific area of the game. The survey produced 1,106 answers. We also sought the views of young people within the Kent game, seeking opinions from children aged 5-11 and 12–18 through age-appropriate questions.

In-person Consultation

We consulted with a wide variety of key stakeholders on Kent Football and the challenges they face.



2024-2028 STRATEGIC PILLARS OBJECTIVES

Following the consultation process and utilising the key pillars and drivers of the FA Strategy, we are proud to launch our latest strategy.

This strategy not only continues alongside the themes of *Play Protect Promote* but also maintains a strong continuity with our previous strategy. It is underpinned by our local strategic priorities, with key golden threads intertwined throughout the strategy to ensure success



Improve Playing Choice & Opportunities

- Sustain and develop the adult male game by improving team-based opportunities for 59,000 players.
- Develop and grow casual football with 70 new playing opportunities.
- Develop and grow disability football to 1,150 participants by providing 42 playing opportunity sessions.
- Develop the youth game to provide new pathway formats.



Deliver Equal Opportunities for Women & Girls To Play

- Grow female participation to 11,298 players by providing more team-based playing opportunities across all formats of the game.
- Increase the number of casual playing opportunities for women and girls by providing 160 sessions.
- Provide a player pathway from grassroots to elite football, including our Emerging Talent Centre provision.



Build More & Improve Existing Facilities

- Improve the quality of 471 grass pitches.
- Support the development of 10 new 3G pitches.
- Create inclusive and accessible football facilities by ensuring equal access for females.
- Secure £15m of investment into Kent Football facilities.



Tackle Poor Behaviour

- Ensure mutual respect across the game by promoting positive behaviour on and off the pitch.
- Deliver a targeted campaign across Kent Football to address poor behaviour, including within CPD sessions.
- Continue to provide trusted regulation by consistently applying FA sanctions.



Develop A Valued Network of Volunteers, Coaches & Referees.

- Retain 1,764 match officials and recruit an additional 500 into the game
- Retain and grow the 5,000-strong volunteer coaching workforce by engaging 25% in CPD sessions.
- Recognise and reward those running the game.

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

Support Thriving Community Clubs

- Supporting 37 clubs to become 3* England Football Accredited organisations.
- Develop sustainability in clubs via education and providing networking opportunities, culminating in 20 thriving community clubs.
- Support clubs in sharing positive experiences and becoming representatives of their local communities.
- Create better club experiences by driving 93% of youth teams with a qualified coach.

Connect & Service Participants

- Strive for Customer service excellence in all our operations.
- Develop digital solutions to support the running of the game.
- Ensure all information is accessible and easy to locate.
- Devise inclusive communications to ensure Kent communities can digest the content.

Progress the Game's Governance

- Diversify our income to ensure maximum reinvestment into the game.
- Shine a light on environmental and sustainability initiatives, such as targeting 60 club sign-ups to Kent Green United.
- Promote improved standards to ensure a safe and well-run sport.
- Cascade governance into the club and league environment.

GOLDEN THREADS KEY TO STRATEGIC SUCCESS

Uniting our strategic pillars, objectives, and drivers are our golden threads, which are paramount to the success of the 2024-2028 strategy:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Activate the Kent FA DIAP to ensure our game is inclusive and diverse.
- Engage with the vast number of different communitites.
- Drive inclusive and accessible communications.

Safeguarding

- Maintain and embed safeguarding standards across the game.
- Drive a child-centred approach.
- Ensure safeguarding is at the heart of all our activities.

Partnerships

- Provide a best-in-class, purpose-based partnerships approach.
- Build on the existing solid partnership portfolio developed.
- Utilise the Kent FA brand to access partnerships, ultimately driving high investment into the game.

People

- An environment that understands the needs of its employees.
- Creation of an ambitious people strategy.
- Extend development opportunities to members and volunteers.

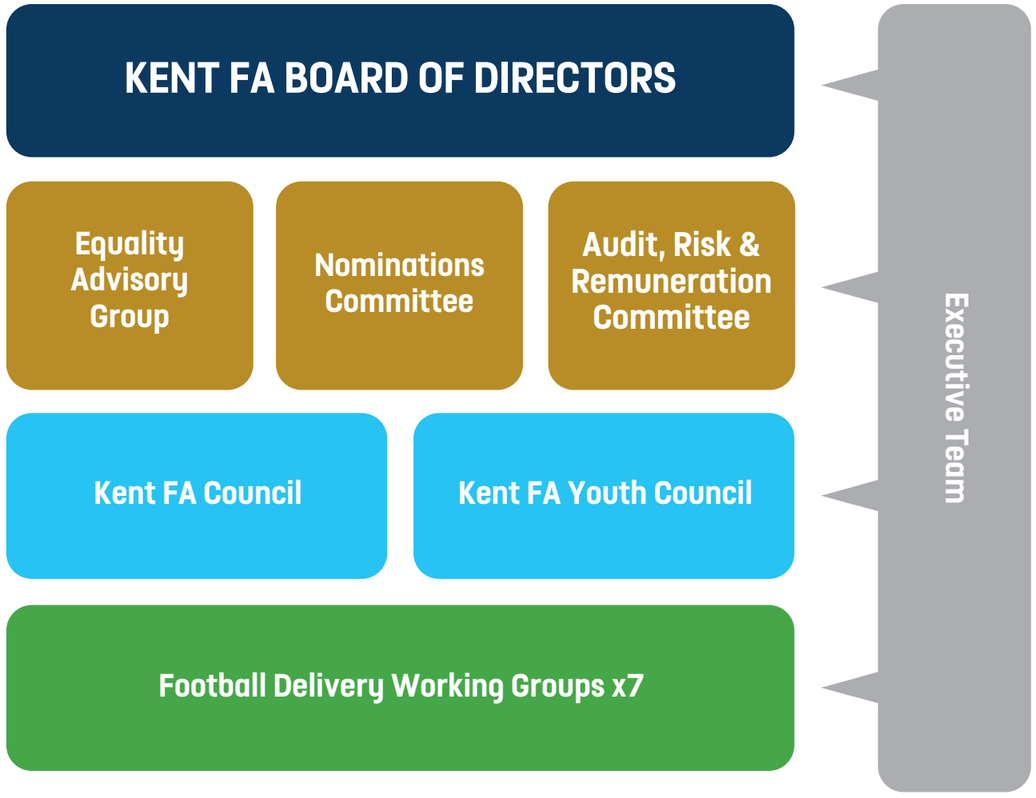
Education

- Utilise education opportunities to upskill our volunteer workforce.
- Drive a culture based behavioural change in Kent Football.
- Maintain high standards and spotlight those who promote positive behaviour.

KENT FA GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Changes to the Kent FA Council structure have made the Board of Directors the ultimate decision-making body.

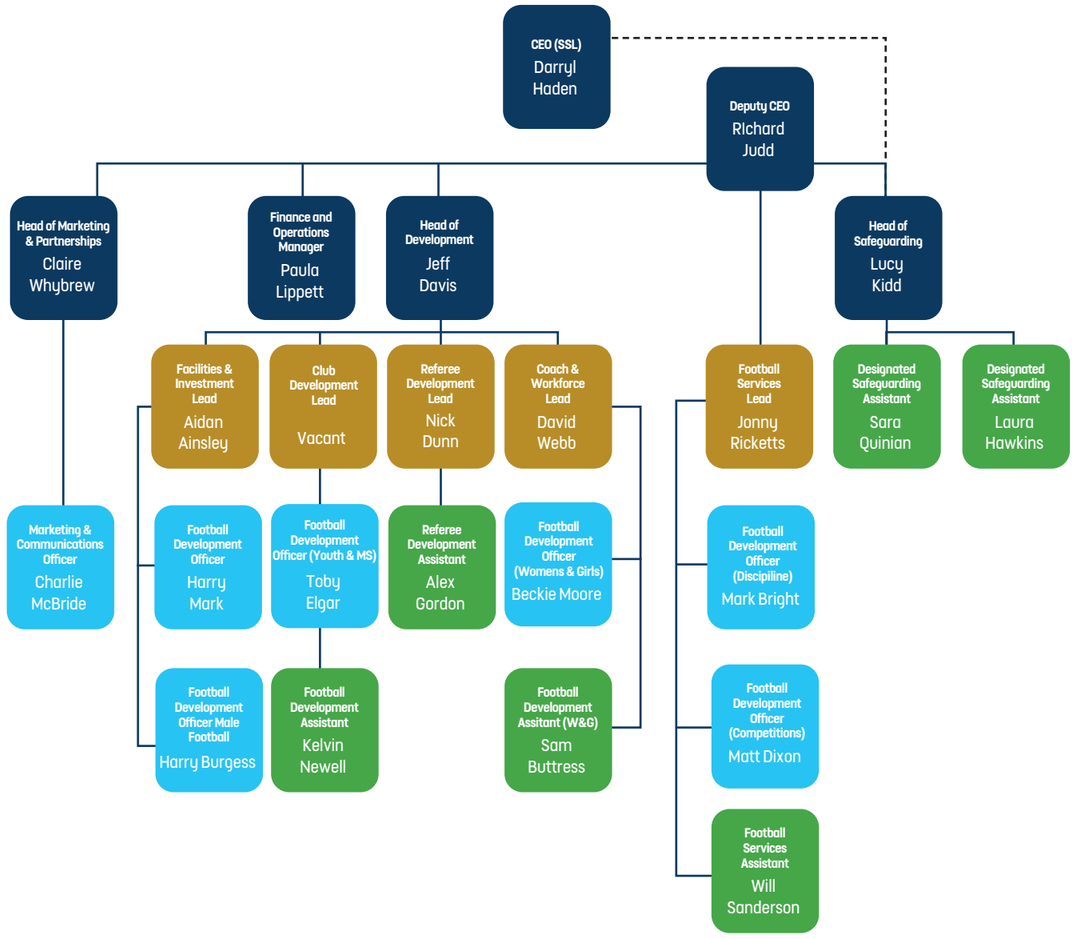
The main Council body will form a more consultative role, with the right to constructively challenge on any key decisions. Through this streamlined structure, the Kent FA will ensure that it is making quick and effective decisions on the grassroots game across the County. Our new dynamic working groups will support the delivery of the strategy's key pillars, ensuring that the Kent FA Board, Council, and Youth Council are aware of development, challenges, and successes across the game.



Decision making body
Board sub committees
Consultative body
Working groups
Staff engagement

PEOPLE FOCUSED DELIVERY

Our people are at the heart of our success. Within our new strategy, we are committed to empowering our team, fostering an inclusive culture and nurturing talent. By investing in personal growth, well-being and collaboration, we will unlock the full potential of our workforce and create a people-driven environment where everyone can thrive and positively contribute to Kent Football.



Senior Managers
Lead Officers
Officers
Assistants

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



DENISE RICHMOND
Chair



DARRYL HADEN
Chief Executive Officer



LEE DYSON
Finance Director



BILL STONEHAM
Director



ARNIE VAN ORSOUW
Director



NICOLA RABSON
Senior Independent Non-Executive Director



JENNY COGGER
Independent Non-Executive Director



NATALIE BENVILLE
Independent Non-Executive Director



DANIEL MCCARTHY
Independent Non-Executive Director



DAVID RAINFORD
Independent Non-Executive Director

MEET THE TEAM



DARRYL HADEN
Chief Executive Officer



RICHARD JUDD
Deputy CEO and Head of Football Services



PAULA LIPPETT
Finance and Operations Manager



JONNY RICKETTS
Football Services Lead



MARK BRIGHT
Football Services Officer (Discipline)



MATTHEW DIXON
Football Services Officer (Competitions)



WILL SANDERSON
Football Services Assistant



JEFF DAVIES
Head of Football Development



NICK DUNN
Referee Development Lead



ALEX GORDON
Referee Development Assistant



AIDAN AINSLEY
Facilities and Investment Lead



DAVID WEBB
Coach & Workforce Lead

VACANT
Club Communities Lead



TOBY ELGAR
Football Development Officer (Youth & Mini Soccer)



REBECCA MOORE
Football Development Officer (Women & Girls)



HARRY BURGESS
Football Development Officer (Adult)



HARRY MARK
Football Development Officer (Inclusion)



SAM BUTTRESS
Football Development Assistant (Women & Girls)



KELVIN NEWELL
Football Development Assistant



LUCY KIDD
Head of Safeguarding



SARA QUINLAN
Designated Safeguarding Assistant



LAURA HAWKINS
Designated Safeguarding Assistant



CLAIRE WHYBREW
Head of Marketing & Partnerships



CHARLIE MCBRIDE
Digital Marketing Officer

KENT FA
YOUTH COUNCIL

The Kent FA Youth Council comprises of passionate young people from across the County. Formed in 2011, it is made up of individuals aged 14 – 25 who want to empower more young people in the Kent game, provide a voice for all children and young people to influence change, and develop a lasting legacy to football.

The Youth Council meet four times across the season to discuss key issues within football. Their reach and impact extend far beyond these meetings, with individuals from the group playing an active role across the organisation, with members ensuring the views of young people are considered and heard by attending various working groups and committees. These include:

- **The Board Working Group**
- **Youth Male Pathway Working Group**
- **Female Pathway Working Group**
- **Disability Pathway Working Group**
- **Referee Development Committee**
- **Coaching Working Group**
- **The Football Development Committee**

Their contributions within these Working Groups and Committees have provided vital feedback that has contributed to this strategy, showcasing how they will continue to positively impact and influence the decisions that directly affect young people playing football in Kent.

VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE:
OUR PROMISE

With over 13,000 volunteers supporting the grassroots game in Kent, we recognise and are grateful for their work for the local game. This volunteer workforce is crucial to football across the county, ensuring over 62,000 people can continue to enjoy the game regardless of age, gender and ability. All these volunteers bring unique skills, passion, and community connections that enhance a club or league's impact, making it more responsive and adaptable. However, they cannot do it alone, and we are here to support them every step of the way.

As we move forward into the 2024-28 strategy, our promise to the Kent volunteering workforce is to:

- *Provide CPD courses and workshops in all areas of the game: safeguarding and welfare, marketing, pitches and facilities, football development, club and league forums, refereeing, and coaching.*
- *Unite, inspire, and support our female volunteers: Through the Female Volunteer Forum, we will provide a safe environment for female volunteers to come together, share challenges and good practices, and learn from female leaders in the game.*
- *Celebrate your success: This may be through the Grassroots Workforce Awards, the Kent Football Show or the Volunteer Recognition programme.*
- *Provide excellent customer services: We will support our workforce with enquiries as quickly and efficiently as possible in line with our Customer Service Charter.*

SAFEGUARDING PROMISE

Safeguarding remains our key priority, and we will continue to ensure that it is embedded at the core of all our football activities in Kent.

To achieve this, we will:

- *Ensure we continue to achieve and maintain The FA's 365 Safeguarding Operating Standard.*
- *Continue to support the growing Club and League Welfare Officers network across youth, open age and disability football to ensure that football is safe for all.*
- *Increase and improve our safeguarding and welfare-related education offering for all those involved in the grassroots game, including parents/carers, club officials, coaches, referees and players.*
- *Foster a culture across grassroots football that encourages listening to and responding to the voices of young people to ensure we have a supportive and safe game for all participants.*

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

For everyone who participates in the beautiful game across Kent, whether as players, coaches, volunteers, and/or referees, we must ensure that they can progress in a safe and enjoyable environment that is inclusive for all.

We are committed to fostering an inclusive culture within Kent Football, and the production of a Diversity, Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) provides a road map of how we will achieve this.

This will be a "live" document to reflect changing priorities and meet the needs of the Kent Football landscape. Our community is a diverse, cosmopolitan mix of cultures, religions, backgrounds and abilities; Kent FA will strive to ensure diversity and inclusion in everything we do.

- **WE WILL** set standards and values for the game.
- **WE WILL** embed equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the organisation and all policies and programmes we deliver.
- **WE WILL** aim to recruit and retain a diverse Board and Workforce.
- **WE WILL** continue to work towards Kent Football being diverse to reflect the needs of all those who participate in the game.
- **WE WILL** continue to create new partnerships with diverse communities and historically underrepresented groups to meet the needs of Kent Football's playing community.

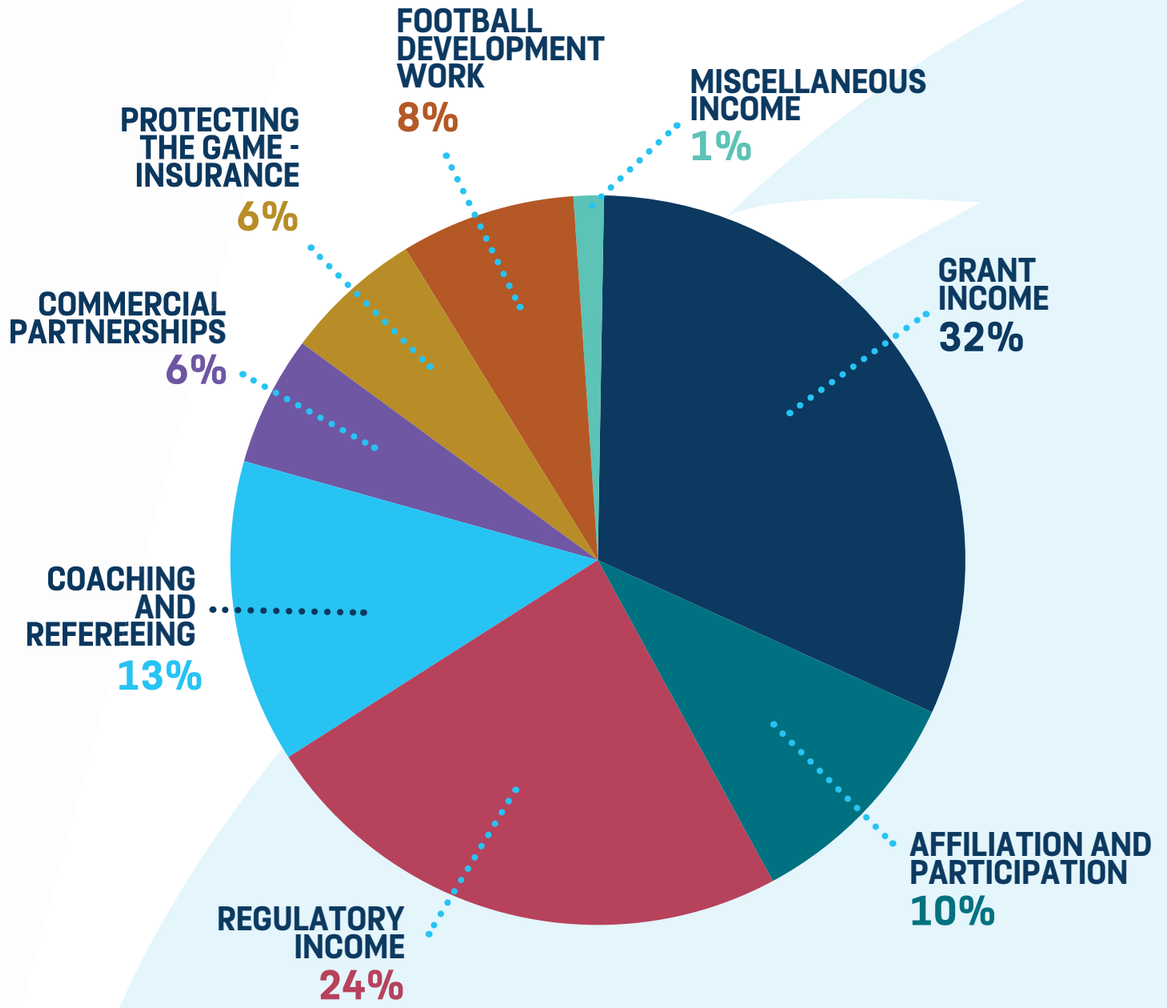




SUSTAINABLE COUNTY FA

We take pride in the service that we offer and consequently, the majority of our investment (70% of our turnover) is in our workforce resulting in a people focucsed approach for delivery.

We continue to support the Kent FA Foundation in their objectives, with a recent sum of £31,000 being paid to clubs supporting the development of 62 new teams in the County. Depsite the cost pressures, we continue to provide value for money to our members and offer significiant investment into developing our game. We have break even budgets for this 4 year strategy to strike the balance between maximising the level of investment into Kent Football, whilst maintaining the principles of sustainable financial management. Kent FA are compliant against all 11 pillars of The FA's 11 Financial Management Operating Guidance Manual.



KENT FA OFFICIAL PARTNERS

Kent FA partners stand as a dedicated and passionate network of businesses that, together, help shape and deliver tangible impact into our football community.

With a diverse array of organisations, charities and not-for-profit organisations, our network enriches all aspects of the Kent game. Each partner contributes unique expertise and resources from innovative technology to educational services to propel the Kent game. Together, we amplify football's reach across the County, upskill the dedicated volunteer network and foster a sense of community.



A&H International
Referee Equipment Partner

Aford Awards
Trophey Partner

BAE Systems
Community Investment Partner

Ballerz
Social Partner

Bellway
Grassroots Awards Sponsor

Darenth Print & Design
Print Partner

DFDS
County Cup Partner (Adults)

Discount Football Kits
Kit & Equipment Partner

EasyFundraising
Shopping Platform Partner

High5
Women's Rep Team Sponsor

Kent Reliance
Kent Football Show Sponsor

KoolPak
Medical Supplies Partner

MyClubPro
Club Website Partner

PlayerData
GPS Analysis Partner

Shapes
Accounting Partner

Sleeping Giant
Digital Media Partner

Sports Labs
3G Testing Partner

Technical Surface
3G Pitch Maintenance Partner

The Merit Group
County Cup Partner (Youth)

UKGlobal
Insurance Partner

Veo
Camera Technology Partner

Veolia
Kent Green United Partner



KENT FOOTBALL IN 2028

By 2028, we hope to reach the following landmarks:



*Relates to registered players



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ENGLAND FOOTBALL