

Lincolnshire FA Inclusion Advisory Group

Lincolnshire FA Office, 6pm-8pm, 11/05/2022

1. There were no apologies with all members present - five online via teams and five at the LFA offices. Today's meeting was chaired by Jordan Mason.
2. JM introduced and welcomed members. He then looked at minutes of the meeting held on the 11th of May which were accepted. All had completed the diversity survey.
3. JM introduced Alistair Hayes who began by explaining his role in the LFA along with Hayley Cain in charge of discipline issues.

AH gave a comprehensive presentation looking at Discipline in Lincolnshire, including Cases, Statistics, The Discipline process, Investigations, Hearings, Regional discipline panels and National discipline panels. AH defined serious and non-serious cases and how they are dealt with. He then gave us statistics for Lincolnshire in the 2021-22 season and the group discussed reasons for worsening statistics - particularly in the male game. AH talked about specific cases and it was noted there are very low numbers of offences in female football. Aggravated breaches were looked at for a variety of discrimination offences. In comparison on a national scale there has been 129% increase in offences, and a 169% increase in misconduct charges. One in every thousand games.

AH then talked about the suggestion of funding of Respect officers for persistent offenders offering education on what is acceptable. AH then went through the processes for dealing with charges. There is a focus on finding consistency in all panels whether serious on non-serious offences. AH talked about the makeup of national case panels to ensure representation of all communities. AH then explained how the FA now have counselling through 'Sporting chance' for victims of abuse in football. There was discussion on how this can be taken up and how clubs and individuals can be supported. AH talked about 'kick it out' support.

There were questions as to how we support young referees. AH said they are encouraged to go back to more friendly clubs. AH talked about how we can try to ensure processes are fair, accessible and inclusive. The change from personal hearings to virtual hearings has improved the diversity of panels.

IAG members asked questions about sanctions, repeat offenders, the nature of support offered and attending Respect courses before suspension can be lifted. AH then talked about spectators and whether we can sanction them or not after abuse. Clubs can be made to play without spectators. But young grassroots spectators are more difficult to sanction. It was then asked if sanctions can be made public for offending clubs or individuals. AH explained this is not done due to GDPR. AH then mentioned the discipline Roadshow on Monday, the 18th of July at 7 pm on Teams.

The question was raised of how the IAG can have an input on the discipline process. This is to be revisited in a future meeting.
4. JM then discussed the election of officers and it was agreed that: Chair would be Angela Westley and Vice-Chair would be Emma Olivier-Townrow.
5. The group then looked at the Business creative and the Lincolnshire FA Project brief.

It was proposed we should conduct an audit to assess how the County FA engages with members, considering equality diversity and inclusion. This should inform the IAG's next steps.

Following JM slides questions were asked as follows: Is the demographic of Lincolnshire going to be considered - EOT said it is a changing landscape. Results will help with tweaking the website so it is transparent, should make it fully accessible.

6. JM then showed us slides on the Equality standard for sport framework.
After updates on the progress of the audit, it was highlighted that we need to prioritise areas we are behind in - for example coaches and referees.
Outcome Two will be achieved through training with 'Just Lincolnshire' which focuses on general EDI training, discrimination, unconscious bias and setting a foundation for further training.
The proposal utilises JUST Lincolnshire's bespoke 'courageous conversations' model - possible cost £2325.
EOT felt it was an incredible price - it can be done professionally, it can be cascaded, there could be county wide conversations.
The group agreed the training brief was suitable and fit for purpose. JM to take the proposal for approval.
JM suggested mixing the workshop groups up so that different sub-groups within Lincolnshire FA get to network.
Outcome Four (Recruitment practices and policies seek to advance equality) will be discussed at a future meeting.
 7. JM provided an update on his key work areas (Disability and Inclusion) for the 2022/23 season. This included impairment specific growth:
 - blind football
 - power chair football
 - cerebral palsy football
 - deaf and hearing impaired
 - Down's syndrome (There are already teams in Bottesford and Lincoln)JM discussed the Ability Counts League and running costs – as the league is currently running at a loss. Members offered to find out about sponsorship sources.
JM talked about developing an accessible disability specific newsletter – such as in yellow and black for visual impairments.
Campaigns/events where the IAG may support include Football versus Homophobia event, Mental Health Awareness week at the end of next May and a Football versus Transphobia digital workshop.
- JM stated he was developing a LFA LGBTQ+ accredited club scheme, providing a framework for clubs to demonstrate their inclusivity. Criteria includes a workshop for club officials, an equality statement, and the use of inclusive posters.
Members questioned if clubs would have the capacity. JM pointed out you would never get all clubs to join. The first season - grow it slowly and it will be a trial.
It was suggested using social media and using a badge to promote the accreditation.
Marc asked about youth teams - we have to be careful as there may be backlash from parents at younger ages. EOT suggested using the national curriculum guidelines for sex and

relationships as a starting point. Marc offered to approach Waddington as a pilot scheme. JM to finalise proposal and send to Marc.

8. IAG early objectives.

Discipline on the agenda for the next meeting.

Ideas that have been discussed.

Charlotte said we need to monitor objectives for example sponsorship and the piloting scheme.

EOT suggested a strategy of finding speakers who will help with diversity in football - she will email names to JM.

9. AOB

Members commented that the discipline presentation was scary with the nature of the charges and the amount of abuse and violence in grassroots football. Steve said about education needed in the process. SJ talked about FA awareness of discipline problems increasing and will hopefully act on it. Comments were made on the huge drop out of referees at grassroots level.

Naomi talked about playing a trans goalkeeper - it would be good to liaise when considering the Trans Inclusion workshop.

Steve talked about mixed gender tournament he played in at Charlton Athletic for Football v Homophobia. Could this be a possibility at Lincoln City for example?

10. Next meeting is Wednesday September 28th from 6pm to 8pm, again using the hybrid model.

Actions:

- Discipline review/feedback to be an agenda item at a future meeting.
- EOT and JM to undergo the Business Creative/Lincolnshire FA audit.
- JM to action the JUST Lincolnshire Training.
- Members to look into sponsorship sources for the Lincolnshire Ability Counts League.
- JM to finalise LGBTQ+ Accredited Club proposal and collaborate with Marc and Waddington to trial.