



01 November 2023

Dear Members,

The newly established Inclusion Advisory Board (IAB) of Northumberland FA met for the first time on Thursday 24 August 2023, it was a pleasure to finally see the group come together and thanks must go to Dean Buckle (Head of Compliance & Inclusion, Northumberland FA) (DB) for his work in bringing this group together. The current membership of the group is as follows:

- Adeel Bashir
- Mehzeb Chowdhury
- Zoë Hingston
- Hassan Kajee
- Callum Milburn
- Jon Niblo
- Helen Rowland
- Elaine Slater
- Dean Thomson

In the absence of an appointed Chair, Dean and I took it upon ourselves to co-Chair the first meeting. It was outlined to members that in line with the County FAs Governance framework it was hoped an Independent Chair of the group could be appointed before the CFAs AGM on 28 September 2023, and that I was interested in discussing the role with all group members if it was of interest to them. I am delighted to confirm that since the meeting Zoë Hingston has been recruited as the Independent Chair of the IAB and will also serve as a Director/Trustee at Northumberland FA. Zoë is the current Head of Inclusion at Newcastle United F.C. and will bring a wealth of experience and skills to the role over an initial term of the next three years.

DB and I used the meeting to introduce the IAB members to Northumberland FA and the journey the County FA has been on since 2019. We took time to explain where we saw the IAB fitting into the Governance framework of the CFA and the key functions that we wished the IAB to play in the coming years. DB went further to introduce the group to the world of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in grassroots football and provide some context regarding the CFAs progress against the Equality Standard for Sport.

The main bulk of the meeting discussion centred on how the CFA could meaningfully engage stakeholders – both inside and outside of the game with a view to creation of the CFAs next Grassroots Football Strategy from July 2024 to June 2028. The IAB were keen to see the CFA lean on existing partnerships to widen the funnel of views into the CFA as well as utilising community spaces such as libraries and/or grassroots clubs to reach people on the ground. The IAB felt there were key learnings from other sectors that Northumberland FA could benefit from engaging with however, most importantly, what message and key questions the CFA was/is trying to ask should be decided before any wider engagement takes place. DB and I were tasked with going away and considering how these remarks could be factored into the CFA engagement process.



There were two further agenda items that would be progressed online due to the expansive discussion on other parts of the agenda. Dean would be contacting IAB members for their input into the CFAs recently reviewed recruitment policy as well as ideas as to how the CFA could better use its benevolent fund to best serve the local community. Any actions/decision regarding said items, it was agreed, would be fed back into the next meeting in November 2023.

Overall, we felt it was an excellent first meeting with a group of people who will a wealth of skills and experience to the CFAs forward trajectory.

Andrew

Andrew Rose-Cook  
Chief Executive Officer  
Northumberland FA