



ENGLAND
FOOTBALL

THE BEATING HEART OF OXFORDSHIRE FOOTBALL

OXFORDSHIRE FA

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 / 2028



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INSPIRING POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGH FOOTBALL

2024 marks the 140th anniversary of the Oxfordshire Football Association. From 11 founding football clubs in 1884 we now have 200 affiliated ones. We cherish that heritage and are fully focused on ensuring an enduring legacy.

2028 sees football coming home as the UK and Ireland host the UEFA European Championships. This new Strategic Plan summarises our goals through the next 4 years, co-designed and created with our stakeholders.

We have carried out extensive consultation including gaining participant survey feedback from players, coaches, clubs, leagues, match officials, welfare officers and local volunteers. We have held BBC Radio Oxford Q&A sessions and worked in conjunction with our new Inclusion Advisory Group and Youth Leadership Team whilst also gaining valuable input from over 200 local Gen Z students, local authorities and activity-based strategic partners.

We are the **beating heart** of Oxfordshire football. We are one team. Our volunteers are our lifeblood. We believe in creativity, collaboration and continuous improvement. Our mission is to sustainably grow the local grassroots game for the benefit of the whole community.

***We share Our values are those of the wider Football Association:
to aim high, embrace difference and achieve together in being.***

Progressive

- Embracing new thinking in the pursuit of continuous improvement.

Respectful

- Setting the standards for respectful behaviour across the game.

Inclusive

- Championing and ensuring that football is, and will, remain a game for everyone.

Driven

- Determined, tenacious and accountable to each other in serving the whole game and doing the right thing.

Excellent

- The very best outcome can only be achieved by sustained excellence in performance.





MAKING A DIFFERENCE - OUR REACH AND IMPACT

Oxfordshire is a much more mixed and diverse county than is generally appreciated. It combines centres of academic excellence with areas of outstanding natural beauty. However, it also has areas of rural and urban deprivation.

A lack of affordable housing is an acute issue throughout the county. 22% of people living in Oxfordshire have disabilities or long-term health conditions. The Director of Public Health confirms that there are 10 local authority wards in Oxfordshire which include areas ranked among the 20% most deprived in England.

OXFORDSHIRE AND ITS COMMUNITIES



725,300

people live in
Oxfordshire
(2021 census)



18%

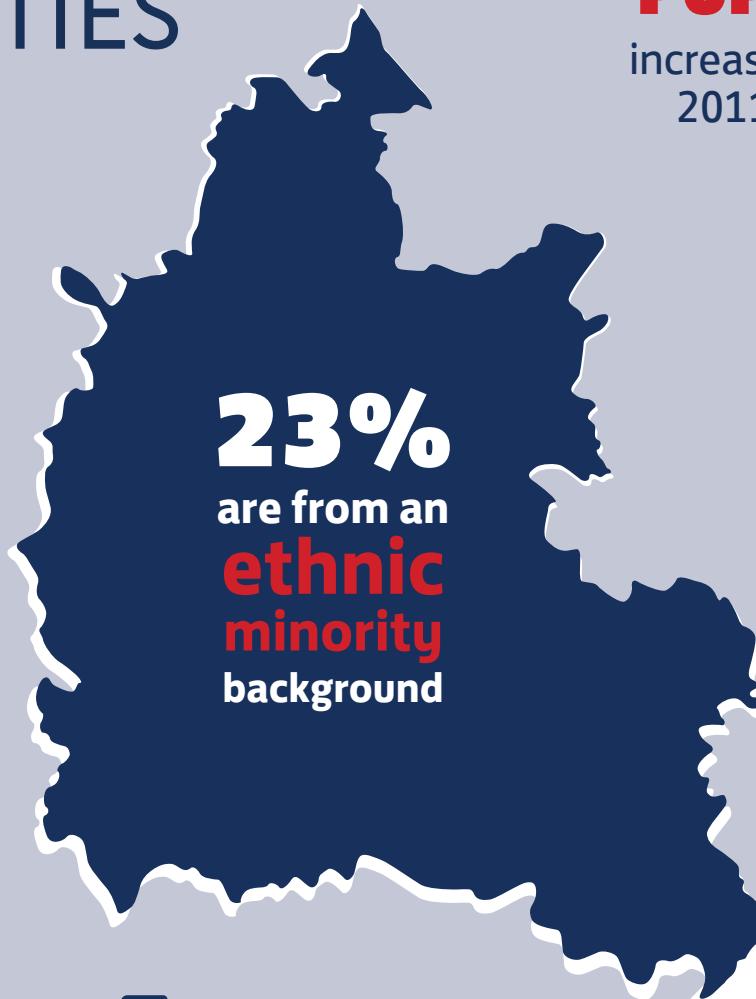
are aged
over 65

35%

live in
rented
accommodation



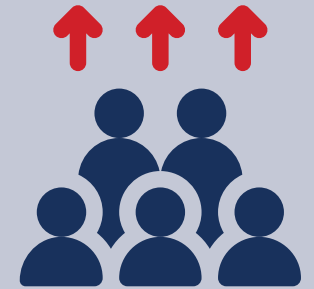
Primary schools in
Oxford have over
100 different first
languages



23%
are from an
**ethnic
minority**
background

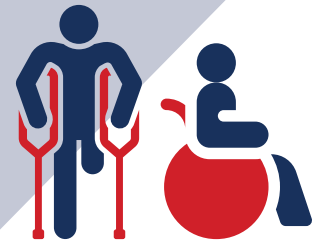
POPULATION

increased by 11% since
2011, above national
average of 7%



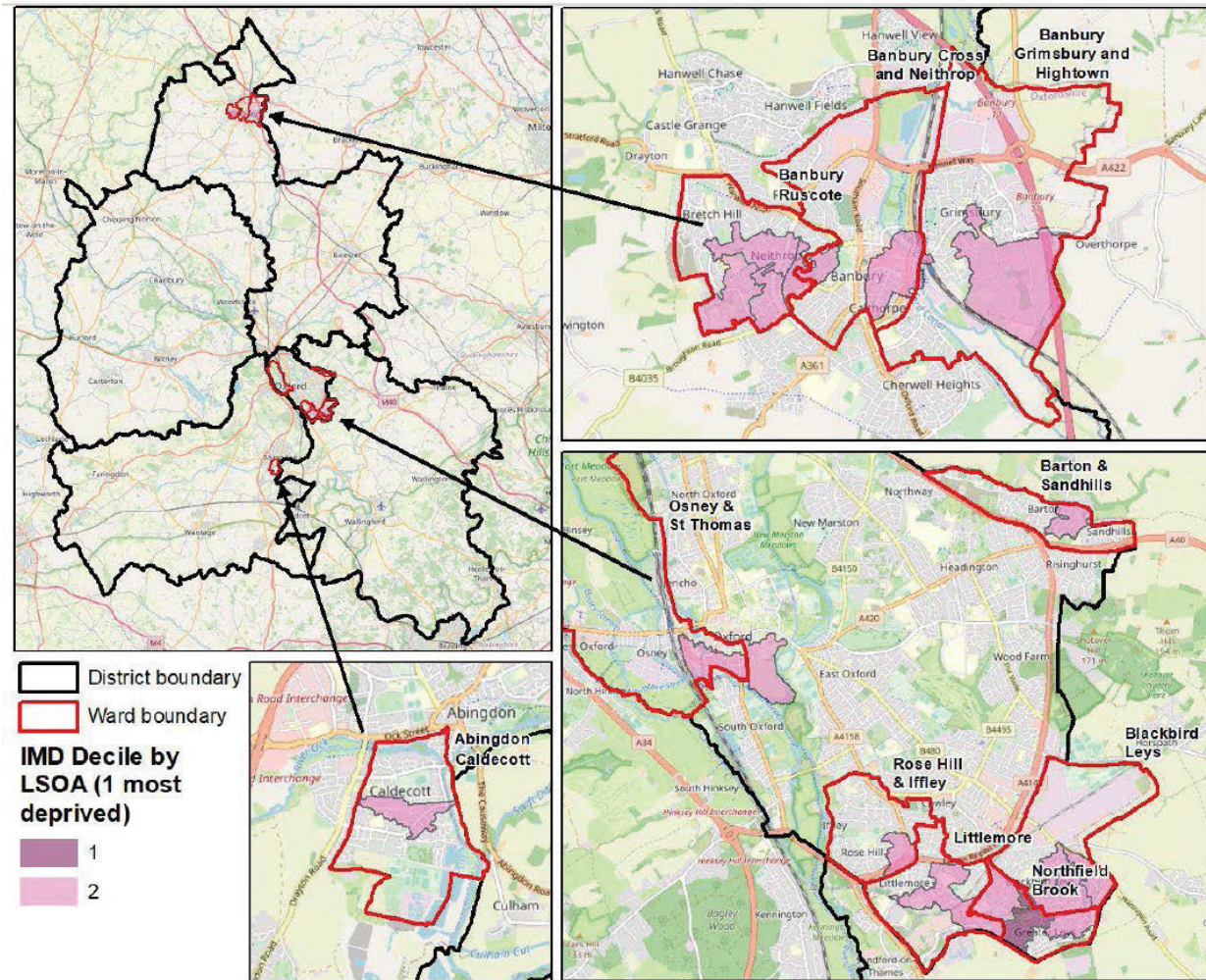
22%

are disabled or
have a long-term
health condition



live in small town
and villages

We are keen to focus our community support in partnership with Active Oxfordshire on the following most deprived local authority wards:



Over the next 4 years we will continue to create, develop and strengthen key strategic alliances. Some of our existing Oxfordshire-wide strategic community partners already include Age UK Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire Youth, YMCA, Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA), Oxfordshire Community Foundation, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Oxfordshire Mind, Oxfordshire County Council and all of the other local authorities.

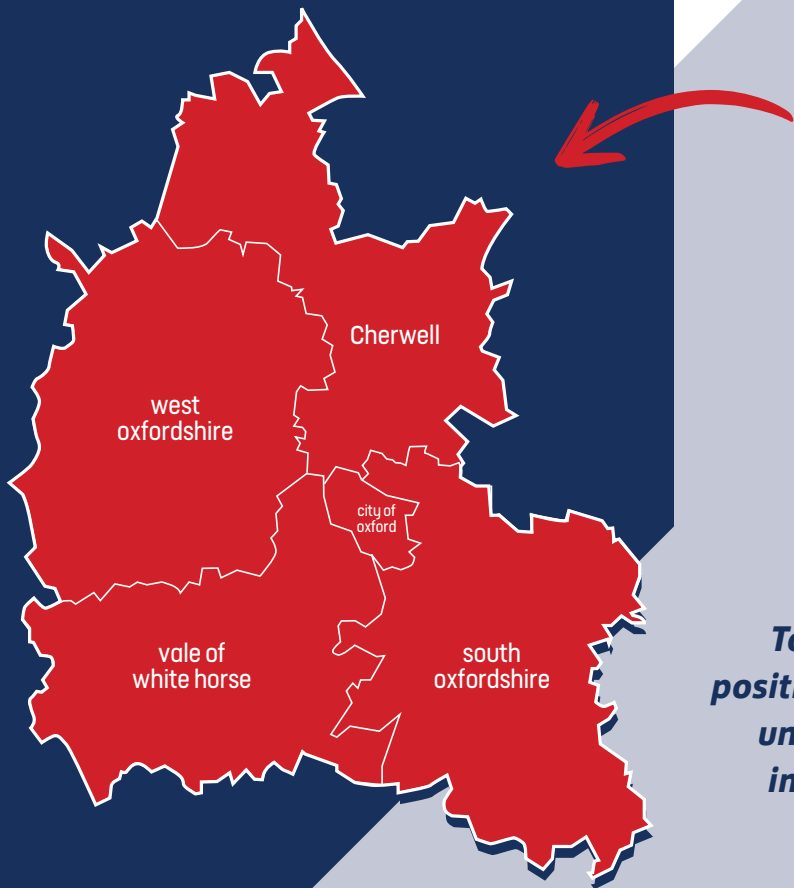
We are always keen to help local businesses with their own corporate social responsibility and everything that we do with our commercial partners provides more sustainable community benefits. There is a misconception though that the Oxfordshire Football Association has substantial resources and is awash with cash. That is not the case. Our team of only 10 employees serve 450 match officials; 200 clubs; 1,330 teams and 21,000 players. We are keen to progress from what was a traditionally transactional approach to a truly transformational one, supporting local recreational football clubs as centres of their communities. Any future resource growth must always be sustainably affordable.

Our revenues and reserves never recovered from the Covid pandemic. For over 4 years, the Oxfordshire Football Association has been loss-making, and it was only a change of leadership and direction at the start of the 2023/24 season which saved us from insolvency.

Over reliance on nationwide online centralised coaching courses and referee development programmes has stripped away opportunities for local growth. Our systems are over-stretched. If we overcommit we risk underdelivering, and we would never want to do that. We need fresh income streams to survive.

Any FA funding currently accounts for up to 40% of the income we need to survive and is fixed for the next 4 years, so the value will be significantly eroded by inflation. In 1974 the county boundaries were legally changed and yet 50 years later large parts of Oxfordshire still remain outside the current Oxfordshire Football Association remit. Nor do we understand why the 1991 Oxfordshire District Boundaries legislation was not followed by The FA. We will continue to encourage the FA to duly implement the legislation in the interests of ensuring greater clarity and consistency for our strategic community and commercial partners to benefit everyone who supports and plays Oxfordshire football.

We cannot work to best effect with all the Oxfordshire local authorities and strategic delivery partners without having proper access to football provision throughout the whole of Oxfordshire, and if we are given what we need in terms of appropriate county-wide reach then our long-term sustainable impact will be so much greater and more impactful.



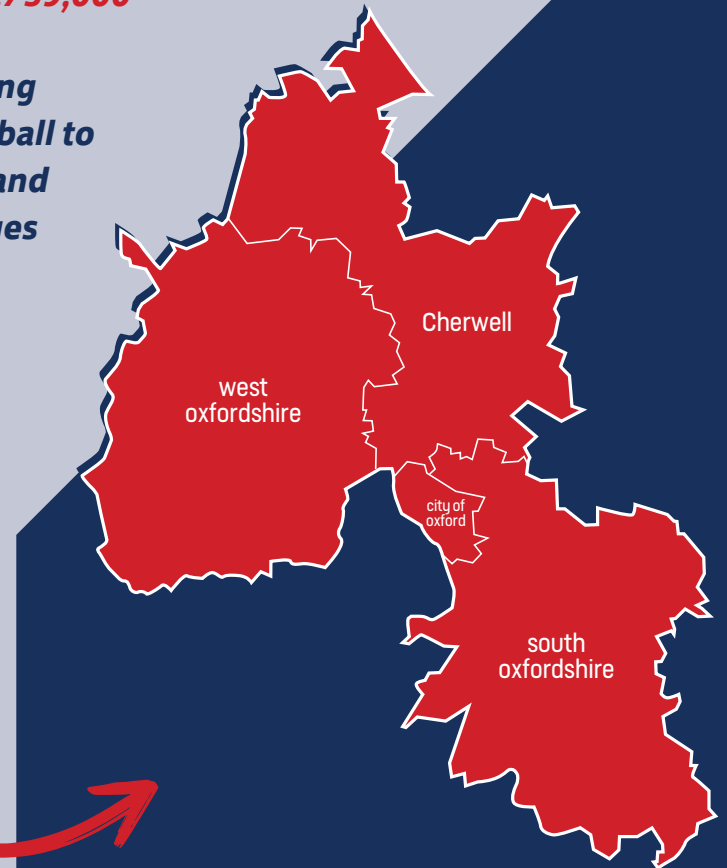
THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC VALUE OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE

CHERWELL	£27,147,000
CITY OF OXFORD	£27,499,000
SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE	£25,624,000
WEST OXFORDSHIRE	£19,957,000
VALE OF WHITE HORSE	£24,532,000
OXFORDSHIRE TOTAL	£124,759,000

Together we can inspire and drive lasting positive change through the power of football to unite communities, tackle inequalities and improve health and wellbeing for all ages throughout Oxfordshire.

CHERWELL	£27,147,000
CITY OF OXFORD	£27,499,000
SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE	£25,624,000
WEST OXFORDSHIRE	£19,957,000
OXFORDSHIRE TOTAL	£100,227,000

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC VALUE OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL IN THE CURRENT OXFORDSHIRE FA REMIT



Our strategic priorities over the next 4 years dovetail into, and help to deliver, the overall goals of The FA National Grassroots Strategy, in focusing together with them on:

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Improve playing choice and opportunities



Deliver equal opportunities for women and girls to play



Build more and improve existing facilities



Tackle poor behaviour



Develop a valued network of volunteers, coaches and referees

IN DOING
SO WE WILL:



STRATEGIC DRIVERS



Support thriving community clubs



Connect and serve participants



Progress the game's governance

Our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan sets out a clear and compelling new vision for the future, across 4 mutually supportive principles which align with and implement those 8 overall goals of the FA National Grassroots Strategy to underpin everything we do:

OPEN PLAY (including improving player choice and delivering equal opportunities for all)

FAIR PLAY (tackling poor behaviour and promoting respect)

TEAM PLAY (helping community clubs to thrive, serving and connecting people, ensuring a one team approach of valuing all volunteers including, welfare officers, coaches and match officials)

SAFE PLAY (including inclusive facilities and improving governance throughout the game).

OPEN PLAY - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Open Play means equal opportunities for all. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a golden thread that runs throughout everything we do. EDI is in our DNA. Oxfordshire football for all is our aim. We care about the community. We want everyone to enjoy the game whatever their background. We want to use the power of football to break down barriers and bring people together. Our ambition is to be recognised as wholly inclusive, where everyone is welcome and enjoys playing together. In 2024 we published our new Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and want every club and league in the county to download that from the Inclusion section of our **website** and use it as a resource for developing their own local versions.

Our own new Inclusion Advisory Group and Youth Leadership Team demonstrate the vital contribution that including diversity in the decision-making processes can bring. We would like all local clubs and leagues to have their own EDI Champions and ensure they have locally representative and reflective diversity on their own committees.

EDI is a standing agenda item on every Oxfordshire Football Association Board Meeting and Monthly Team Meeting. By 2028 we want to have successfully secured more FA funding to appoint additional part-time Equity Ambassadors to work alongside both of our current ones, and to be well on our way to achieving the Advanced Equality Standard.

With support from Oxfordshire County Council, we recruited a 24 month fixed-term Inclusion Football Officer who is working hard to help refugees resettle here and feel part of the local community through membership of their local football club. Over the next 4 years we will look to build on that initial pilot programme and ensure a sustainable ongoing legacy in making a positive difference to local community football throughout Oxfordshire as part of delivering our new Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

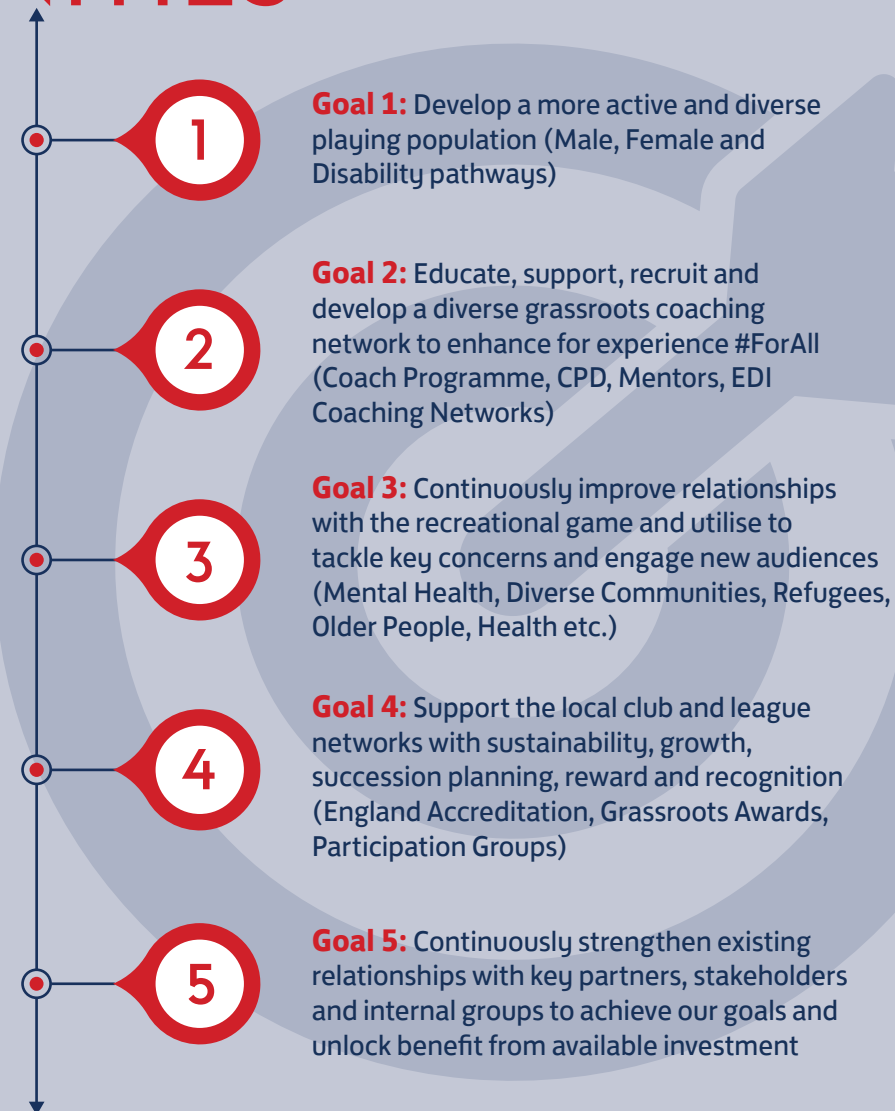
OPEN PLAY - IMPROVE PLAYING CHOICE AND OPPORTUNITIES

Providing a broader range of affordable playing opportunities throughout all player pathways is crucial to the long-term growth and sustainability of our game. We need to see more inclusive opportunities for players to play beyond the more traditionally structured competitive team-based approach.

We want to grow the youth game to ensure a positive start to the journey exploring the introduction of informal youth formats to engage new audiences and re-engage others. We also want to continually improve the transition from youth to adult football. As well as continuing to support adult 11-a-side formats we will encourage more smaller-sided football and turn up and play opportunities. We want to see more flexibility in affiliated football.

We will continue to increasingly support football throughout all age ranges, including more Walking Football for older players, as well as stronger club partnerships in areas of Oxfordshire with gaps in disability football provision.

We have 5 clear goals for promoting participant-led football development through strategic delivery partnerships:



OPEN PLAY - DELIVER EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS TO PLAY

Embracing smaller-sided and casual football includes Wildcats, Comets, Squad, JustPlay, Disability and Walking Football. A new extra-curricular disability programme based on Comets will work alongside existing Shooting Stars SEND resources to help schools provide more opportunities for disabled children to play. Barclays Girls' Football School Partnerships will support girls progressing to community club teams, and from smaller sided to 11v11 football, alongside career pathways for women who are looking to join football clubs and play in their local teams. Our consultation process, which gathered insight and feedback from local young female footballers, established that they would like to see a much closer alignment of female and male youth leagues, and we want to build a closer relationship with the Oxfordshire Youth Football League in an integrated partnership.

Our focus continues to be on creating the right opportunities for women and girls to play football casually and for fun, whilst making delivery easy, appealing and rewarding. We are keen to introduce more girls to the game and ensure women of all ages have access to play, learn and be physically fit through football in a way that best suits them.

We will work more closely with the Oxfordshire Schools Football Association to promote football as a key part of the curriculum in helping ensure the health and wellbeing of children whilst developing confidence and teamwork.

We will also continue work closely with The FA and Football Foundation to ensure equal access for women and girls is prioritised on all new funded facilities as well as working with existing ones towards this aim.





TEAM PLAY - PROVIDE SUPPORT TO ENSURE THRIVING COMMUNITY CLUBS

England Football Accreditation for all leagues and clubs is a key component of our strategic approach. This year 100% of our accredited clubs and leagues successfully renewed their status. We want every club and league to be proud to achieve and maintain England Football Accredited status and benefit from the increased incentives we will help provide for achieving, continuously improving and successfully keeping this key kitemark. We need all clubs to be inclusive, safe, welcoming, supportive and encouraging environments at the centre of their local communities. We need every club and league to appoint their own EDI Champions, Youth Leadership Teams and Welfare Officers to share and spread best practice. We encourage everyone to use and share the mental health and other resources which are freely available on the wellbeing webpage of our website.

The percentage of teams in accredited clubs is a key performance indicator set us by The FA. We all want thriving community clubs. By 2028 our vision is to have an accreditation culture where everyone plays their part in embracing England Football Accreditation as a driver to support our club network and strengthen, sustain and grow player pathways by promoting shared best practice behaviour and standards, with:

- ✓ 100% of all Oxfordshire Football Association affiliated youth teams to be England Football Accredited.
- ✓ 85% of all Oxfordshire Football Association affiliated adult teams to be England Football Accredited.
- ✓ All 9 leagues to have reached the 85% quota to apply for Accreditation.
- ✓ All other leagues applying the same approach as the Oxfordshire Youth Football League to mandated Accreditation.

BY 2028 WE WILL ALSO AIM TO HAVE:

- ✓ Built new strategic partnerships that will provide us with funding, resources and capacity to achieve our strategy objectives
- ✓ Built a strong club and league network through England Football Accreditation that is sustainable and has a positive impact on their local community and provide an opportunity #ForAll
- ✓ Through our Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG) to have built key relationships with local partners, community organisations and groups to engage with new audiences
- ✓ Grown the number of male, female and mixed playing opportunities
- ✓ Ensured opportunities for disability players of all ages throughout the county
- ✓ Developed more strategic partnerships to deliver our coach development support offer to coaches across the county
- ✓ Mainstreamed youth leadership consultation into everything that we do

DISABILITY FOOTBALL

- ✓ Our Disability Football Ambassador supporting ambitions to double disability participation across all affiliated and recreational formats
- ✓ Grown the number of local disability footballers
- ✓ Be helping our accredited club network provide pan-disability football opportunities in county gaps
- ✓ Be supporting accredited club partnerships to grow provision leading on good practice in agreed target areas including Oxford, Banbury and Witney

MALE FOOTBALL

- ✓ Grown the number of registered male players and the progression from youth to adult football
- ✓ Be working with key strategic delivery partners and stakeholders to grow further provision for participants aged 50+

FEMALE FOOTBALL

- ✓ Grown the number of female players and the progression from youth to adult football
- ✓ Increased girls and women's sessional opportunities across FA Wildcats, FA Squad and FA Just Play
- ✓ Offered a complete pyramid for girls' football by establishing an Under-7s league
- ✓ Doubled mini soccer participation across the Under-7s and Under-10 girls pathway
- ✓ Increased the retention of players at older age groups, resulting in an increase of participation and teams at Under-18s
- ✓ Increased the number of opportunities for women to play 11v11 football in their local community
- ✓ Introduced a year-round small-sided recreational league in the county
- ✓ Grown the number of Walking Football team and sessional opportunities in the county and established a Women's Walking Football competition in partnership with the Oxfordshire Walking Football League



ACCREDITED
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL

TEAM PLAY - COACHING CULTURE

Our local consultation also called for more in-person local coach development rather than a nationwide reliance on online learning. We will therefore introduce a new membership-based Coaching Club to provide coaches with high-quality learning opportunities throughout the season in partnership with key strategic delivery partners.

We want the Oxfordshire Football Association to be the go-to facilitator of coach development throughout the county, and to provide our coaches with key skills, knowledge, insight and practical support, whilst helping those wanting to get into coaching take their first step on that ladder especially from under-represented groups of role models.

Greater diversity of coaches as positive role models helps to ensure a more inclusive game, and we encourage everyone to take advantage of the England Football Learning, Stepping Over The Sidelines, EE Playmaker by England Football, and Introduction to Coaching Football (I2CF) as well as our local coach development programmes.

We are keen to develop closer relationships with licensed football delivery partners and professional football coaches to expand accredited football throughout Oxfordshire. We can thereby help ensure that best practice safeguarding standards are upheld through clear and consistent service level agreements which help private sector coaching companies promote excellence in an encouraging and educational way.

We will introduce the Oxfordshire FA Officially Licensed Coaching Partners programme as a quality kitemark people can trust on a three-tiered Bronze, Silver and Gold affiliated basis, with random safeguarding validation visits to ensure they continue to maintain standards and provide a safe and inclusive environment.



TEAM PLAY - THRIVING VOLUNTEER NETWORKS

We rely on the amazing and hugely appreciated army of volunteers who provide so much support and share our love for local football. Together we are one team.

Whilst The Football Association have committed to a longer-term nationwide recruitment campaign that raises the profile and seeks to boost the growth of volunteers with a focus on young people and volunteer needs, at the Oxfordshire Football Association we are already ahead of the game.

Our strategic partnership with Oxfordshire Community and Volunteering Action (OCVA) already includes initiatives to encourage and promote local volunteering, guiding people to where they can get involved and be part of the team off the pitch as well as on it. Volunteering is not solely focused on being a member of your local league or club committee. The wider range of volunteering opportunities there are at clubs and leagues then the more it becomes a team effort rather than relying too much on a handful of people. From fundraising to simply sharing social media posts, it all helps. The OCVA Oxon Volunteers website provides an accessible portal for people to find out about volunteering opportunities throughout Oxfordshire, and links into our own webpage which can then feed through to the websites of accredited local clubs and leagues. This is supported by partnerships with Oxfordshire Youth and the local YMCA.

Our Youth Leadership Team have created an innovative #OXFANextGen volunteer development programme for 14 to 24-year-olds aimed at recruiting, developing and inspiring youth leaders throughout Oxfordshire and help young people as coaches, referees and committee members whilst also better equipping them for future career paths in partnership with local colleges and employers to provide education, qualifications and employment opportunities.



OXFORDSHIRE FA
STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028



We will build on this by promoting careers through football, signposting people to local sports apprenticeships and football-based job opportunities such as physiotherapy, performance analysis, ground staff and turf management as part of our strategic alliances with Velocity, Elite Sportsturf and other partners.

We appreciate that current online modules from the Football Association get a mixed reaction locally although they will continue to create learning opportunities to support volunteer development, which we will help promote.

Whilst The Football Association are increasingly encouraging all registered volunteers to become My England Football members, here at the Oxfordshire Football Association we will have already launched our own new Oxfordshire FA Rewards programme, providing access to online shopping discounts and cashback from over 4,000 local and nationwide retailers. It is available to everyone at our accredited clubs, with additional discounts for rewarding best practice.

It had been five years since the Oxfordshire Football Association had hosted an awards evening, and this has been revived from 29 June 2024 onwards as a way of honouring the unsung heroes who are the lifeblood of local football.

FAIR PLAY - TACKLING POOR BEHAVIOUR

We fundamentally believe in fair play. Everyone should always feel safe, welcome, supported and treated with dignity and respect - whether they play, watch, referee, coach, volunteer or have other roles within the sport.

We're dedicated to continuing our proactive promotion of positive behaviours and shared best practice by players, captains, coaches and spectators, as well as supporting match officials. Our commitment to effectively tackling any disrespect, discrimination and poor discipline, which goes against the spirit of our game, remains as strong as ever.



OXFORDSHIRE FA
STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

RESPECT - TACKLING POOR BEHAVIOUR

Over the coming seasons, the Football Association have promised to introduce increasingly tougher sanctions in delivering a game free from discrimination, which is safe and inclusive for all; to focus on promoting positive behaviour across the game and reward and celebrate that positivity at both a local and national level. All clubs, leagues, referees, coaches, captains and spectators need to support those national and local interventions to promote best behaviour and a positive culture on and off the pitch.

We applaud and will tangibly reward those who clearly create a positive atmosphere and conducive culture at their clubs. Club Welfare Officers care deeply about helping to ensure that and work closely with us to share best practice. Not only during Silent Weekend but also throughout the season, we ask those watching not to shout at young players and applaud good football by both sides in every match. Some clubs already have Respect Marshals. We would like to see all leagues and their clubs promote greater consistency. Everyone should treat others in the same way that they wish to be treated themselves. Over the next 4 years we will increasingly recruit and train local Respect Ambassadors who will help to encourage and promote best practice behaviour at matches.

Everyone needs to have fun playing football. Carers, parents and guardians of young players need to let their coach be the coach. The players do not need mixed messages shouted from the sidelines, it only distracts and confuses them. It affects their focus and self-confidence; it can put them off playing which is the last thing anyone would want.

What someone sees as dressing room banter can unwittingly really upset others. Disappointingly poor discipline and disrespectful behaviour by players, coaches, spectators and others can ruin the beautiful game for everyone. If you see something that is inappropriate then you should feel able and right to challenge it and supported in doing so. We have a zero-tolerance approach to any intimidation, discrimination, harassment, bullying, or other belittling behaviour. With the full backing of the Football Association, we will not hesitate to instigate formal disciplinary proceedings and deliver tougher sanctions wherever needed as a deterrent to unacceptable acts. Where necessary we will work with the leagues to deduct points, remove fixtures, suspend people and permanently remove opportunities to play or spectate.

We urge everyone not to force us to have to take any such disciplinary action and instead to always uphold the proud traditions of community football throughout the county out of respect for the spirit of the game and all participants.



FAIR PLAY - MATCH OFFICIALS

Our ground-breaking new refereeing app was piloted through our strategic partnership with the Oxfordshire Youth Football League in the 2023/24 season. Over the next 4 years it will be rolled-out throughout Oxfordshire football.

By 2028 our vision is to have:

- ✓ Cultivated an environment where referees are showcased and celebrated across a variety of platforms, both online and via face-to-face interaction (coaching, development, mentoring, awards and rewards)
- ✓ An aimed for 50% increase in the number of referees from historically underrepresented backgrounds (both gender and ethnicity) therefore creating role models to shape the future of refereeing
- ✓ Increased the number of referees aged over 18
- ✓ Work towards achieving at least 80% of our referees are retained season on season
- ✓ All new referees receiving at least 1 mentoring visit during first 5 games
- ✓ All promotion candidates to be allocated to, and supported by, a referee coach
- ✓ Regional fitness training sessions and level specific in-service training sessions during the season
- ✓ More 11v11 games with a qualified referee
- ✓ Central appointing across all Oxfordshire Football Association leagues
- ✓ Reinstatement of the Referee Academy and CORE (Centre of Refereeing Excellence) group with annual pre-season and mid-season practical seminars and a new Laws Of The Game test
- ✓ Referee working group club visits, especially to those with poor discipline, and supporting their coaches and colleagues in ensuring best practice behaviour



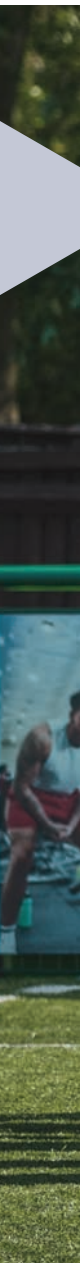
SAFE PLAY

The safeguarding, safety and wellbeing of everyone involved in the game will always be an essential priority for us, and everybody in the game has a role to play. We are dedicated to supporting our leagues and clubs to share best practice in ensuring an inclusive, safe, welcoming, respectful, friendly, fun and supportive coaching environment for everyone. DBS criminal record checks and mandatory FA safeguarding training are vital and non-negotiable. We will not hesitate to escalate concerns to the appropriate authorities and stamp out inappropriate or unlawful behaviour.

We will always seek continuous improvement in the provision of care and support for all children and adults at risk.

The FA Safeguarding 365 Standard is going to be reviewed and updated, and by 2028 our vision is to have:

- ✓ Continuously improved support for Welfare Officers with regular drop-in surgeries for youth and open-age clubs, and more training targeted on the areas of greatest need
- ✓ More safeguarding visits and every club randomly receiving a safeguarding assessment over the next 4 years
- ✓ Greater awareness of inappropriate behaviour, whistleblowing and the need for effective risk management
- ✓ All League Welfare Officers trained and leading on the promotion of best practice bystander behaviour





HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We support the Greater Game and other football-led programmes specifically designed to encourage the health and wellbeing of young people by doing some healthier activity every week. We want to encourage healthy diets and more exercise. We are keen to be at the forefront of this strategic partnership with Nuffield Health in promoting educational workshops and practical exercises which encourage healthy lifestyle choices for 12-to-16-year-olds; less than half of whom on average across the UK regularly exercise for an hour a day. Mental and physical health support each other in ensuring self-confidence and happiness. We take an integrated approach in providing resources for our Welfare Officers and will continue to develop our webpage toolkits. Carers, parents and guardians also have a key role to play in encouraging and supporting your people by encouraging exercise and good habits. Smoking kills, it causes more preventable deaths than anything else. We all hope our children can grow up safely, living healthy and active lives. Smoking or vaping in front of them whilst they are trying to stay fit and have fun playing football is unacceptable and we will always fully support and continue to promote the Smokefree Sidelines campaign throughout Oxfordshire.

#smokefreesidelines

Why parents and other spectators are being asked to refrain from smoking tobacco or e-cigarettes when watching youth football...

Kids copy behaviour. Please don't make smoking look 'normal'.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in Oxfordshire

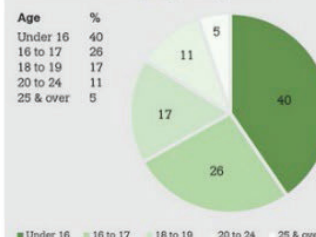


64% Support a Smokefree Oxfordshire
#SmokefreeOxon

Approximately 12% of people in Oxfordshire are Smokers



Age at which adults in England started smoking regularly, 2011



Why smoking is harmful

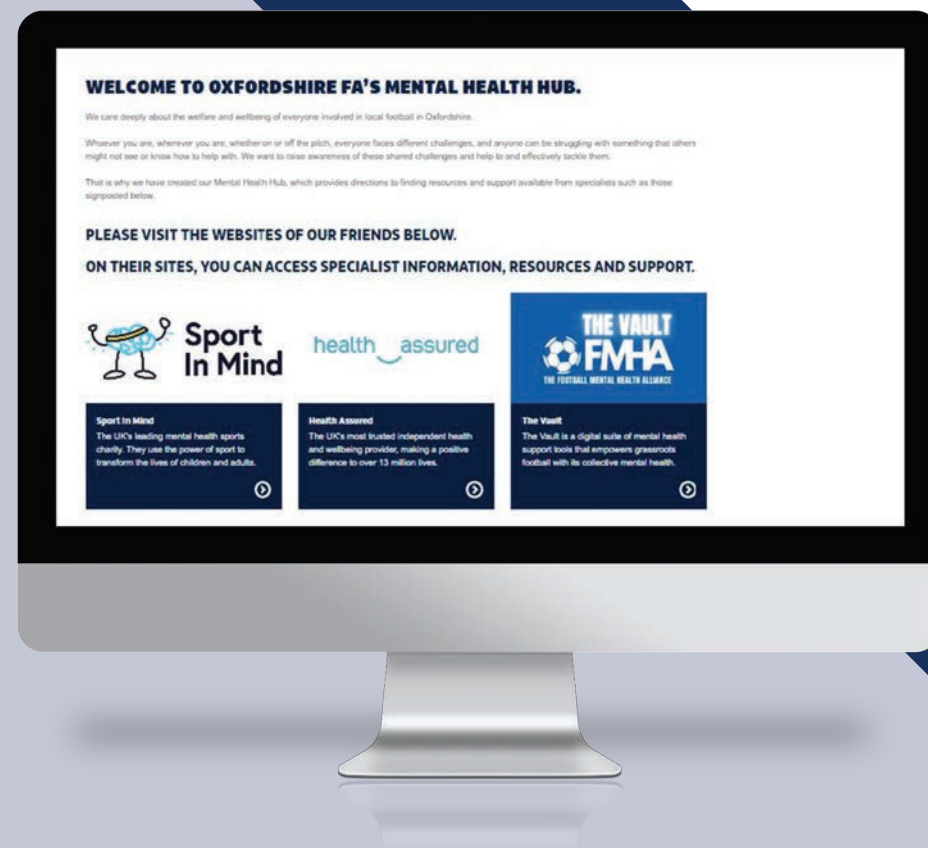
Cancer	Heart and Circulation
Mouth/Lips	Coronary Heart disease
Throat	Heart attack
Voice box (larynx)	Stroke
Oesophagus	
Bladder	Lungs
Kidney	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
Liver	Pneumonia
Pancreas	
Stomach	



Children who grow up with a parent or family member who smokes are **3X** more likely to start smoking themselves.



Quit support contact **smokefreelife** 0800 246 1072
Oxfordshire



We will increasingly seek support from public and private healthcare providers - and look to clearly and convincingly demonstrate the positive impact which football can have for everyone of all ages through greater fitness and reduced medical care costs. Through our new strategic partnerships, we will increasingly focus on first aid training provision and coaching techniques which support and help with injury prevention as well as accessible local physiotherapy services.

PLACES TO PLAY: BUILD MORE FACILITIES AND IMPROVE EXISTING ONES



We need greater opportunities to play with more flexible facilities, as well as flourishing quality grass and artificial playing surfaces, alongside a broader range of ways for everyone to play affiliated football. By utilising PitchPower for pitch improvement recommendations, leveraging the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund for maintenance grants and equipment, and empowering local groundkeepers through training and support, we will take the next big step to transform the pitch landscape. Recognising the rapid ggrowth in female participation; ensuring equal access to facilities remains paramount. This extends beyond pitches, encompassing inclusive and accessible off-pitch amenities.



Additionally, we will continue to seek targeted investments that tackle a broader range of inequalities within football, including prioritising support for communities facing greater deprivation and lower activity levels. Environmental sustainability is a growing concern, and we will support local clubs to reduce and manage energy consumption whilst exploring renewable energy options for their own long-term financial viability and well as benefitting the environment.



By 2028 our vision is:

- ✓ To have an affordable masterplan for establishing our own football hub with quality grass and artificial turf pitches, as well as ideally an outdoor PlayZone as a home for community football in Oxfordshire. This will need substantial investment and support, although it will then provide high-class revenue-generating facilities for inclusive player, coach and referee development in sharing best practice. As we then head from 140 years to marking 150 years since the founding of the Oxfordshire Football Association we also want to have successfully created an inspiring museum housing memorabilia collected and curated from throughout that period and commissioned an updated history book written in recognition of that cherished legacy.
- ✓ To have refreshed, re-activated and delivered against the 4 Local Football Facility Plans in line with FA and Football Foundation targets, as well as addressing current and future needs identified through the Local Authority Playing Pitch Strategy process to support the development of our local game both on and off the pitch whilst trying to secure support for more flexible football facilities.
- ✓ To have assessed and improved the quality of grass pitches across the county with a realistically achievable target for for FA-rated enhanced pitches. Although it is always counter-intuitive to only focus any KPI on simply measuring quality grass pitches whilst at the same time expecting increased affiliated football participation without also harnessing the additional flexibility offered by more indoor and all-weather facilities, we will always also continue to support and develop our clubs and stakeholders who have received Grass Pitch Maintenance Funding to ensure improved standards are reached and maintained.
- ✓ We will also have implemented an agreed programme with our clubs, leagues and local stakeholders to continue to address the local shortfall of high-quality football turf training and playing facilities as well as working alongside The FA and Football Foundation to seek and deliver alternatives to rubber crumb for existing 3G pitches as required. We will also ensure the current stock of football turf pitches continues to meet FIFA Quality Standards and retains their positions on the Football Foundation's 3G register.
- ✓ To have successfully continued to drive funding into clubs for smaller scale projects such as pitch maintenance machinery, goalposts, and pavilion improvements via the Football Foundation and other opportunities.



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- ✓ To have successfully continued to protect existing football facilities and represent the future needs of football in partnership with Sport England through the Local Authority Planning process, and access to funding for schools to open-up facility access.
 - ✓ We will look to work in closer collaborative partnerships with Active Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council as well as the other 4 local authorities to identify the areas of greatest need and where we can make the biggest difference.
 - ✓ We will continue to have successfully championed more equal access for girls and anyone with disabilities or infirmities whether through existing facilities or in the development of innovative new ones - including improved changing rooms - to support the continued development and growth of football for all.
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COUNTY CUP COMPETITIONS

We will continue to offer opportunities to host our County Cup Finals and develop additional competitions with fun football festivals and new social media campaigns such as local crossbar challenge, Live County Cup fixture broadcasts, guest presenters and positive role models.



COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

By 2028 to help connect and serve everyone we will have:

- ✓ Ensured cleaner data and streamlined systems that are better integrated and easier to use for everyone.
- ✓ Helped the local football community to better understand our role and what we stand for in being seen as a trusted, relevant, inclusive and supportive facilitator of football for all across Oxfordshire (including the sustainable growth of youth, female, male, disability, walking football and reach into diverse communities).
- ✓ Established OxfordshireFA.com as a one-stop-shop for the football community to access everything they need.
- ✓ Promoted more high-quality, engaging content for use across our digital channels (website, social and email) which celebrates local football to raise the profile of the game, champion our initiatives and that of our partners and communicate opportunities for participation/involvement.
- ✓ Refreshed the Oxfordshire Football Association badge and brand identity based on feedback from our recent strategic plan consultation.
- ✓ Increasingly developed our relationship with the local football community through relevant, educational, timely and engaging communications that offer value to our audiences.
- ✓ Be collaborative and proactive with the support of our strategic partners stakeholders to maximize our reach and impact in attracting new audiences and growing our football community throughout Oxfordshire.



OXFORDSHIRE FA
STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028



GOVERNANCE OF THE GAME

Before the end of 2024 we aim to have successfully achieved FA Code of Governance accreditation. All local leagues need to apply those principles and we will develop an increasingly closer partnership with all of our leagues through progressive good governance and a consistent proactive approach to sharing best practice across our affiliated clubs.

More information on the FA Code of Governance accreditation can be found on our **website**

BEYOND 2028...

These are bold ambitions. To achieve them and ensure the inclusive and sustainable growth of grassroots football we need a team effort. Inclusive continuous improvement and people development are key to successfully supporting the coaching culture we are committed to creating. Everyone has a part to play and the progress we make over the next 4 years will ensure that we can best build on the proud legacy of our 140 years so far for the lasting benefit of our local community long into the future.

Thank you for your support.

Jonathan Duckworth, Chief Executive, Oxfordshire Football Association
31 July 2024





ENGLAND
FOOTBALL

THE BEATING HEART OF OXFORDSHIRE FOOTBALL

OXFORDSHIRE FA

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-28