



A THRIVING LOCAL GAME

**SUFFOLK COUNTY
FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Achieving Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan**

Seasons 2023/24 – 2025/26

(updated 18th December 2023)

1. County Workforce & Leadership

Aim: Recruit, reward and develop the paid and volunteer workforce to represent the diversity within the Suffolk County.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Increase Gender and Ethnic Diversity on the Board
- 1.2 Recruitment processes ensure applications are representative of the County
- 1.3 Equip workforce to promote Equality.
- 1.4 Ensure IAG is represented on the Board and reports regularly

| Tasks | Action | Responsibility | Target Date | Progress Update |
|---|--|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Understand makeup of Suffolk FA staff, board, council, and volunteer workforce and identify gaps | Complete an equality profile audit of Suffolk FA Staff, board, council, and volunteer workforce | CEO/FDO(G) | September 2023 | Completed |
| | Analyse data to create a report on makeup of Suffolk FA workforce to identify potential gaps and report to Board with view to incorporate plan to fill gaps. | CEO/FDO(G) | November 2023 | Completed |
| Increase gender diversity on the Suffolk FA Board from current 27% to 30% | To increase female membership of Suffolk FA Board by recruiting additional board members | Chair | July 2025 | Ongoing |
| Increase Ethnic diversity on the Suffolk FA Board | To increase ethnic diversity of Suffolk FA Board to ensure that the Board is representative of the communities it serves | Chair | July 2025 | Ongoing |
| Ensure staff with recruitment and selection responsibilities are appropriately trained to complete a fair recruitment process | CEO to complete appropriate recruitment training, e.g. NCPCC safer recruitment training | CEO | July 2024 | Ongoing |

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|--|--|-------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Ensure recruitment and selection processes are fair and transparent | Review recruitment and selection processes to ensure they are inclusive from application stage through to induction; track diversity of applications | CEO SID | October 2024 & annually thereafter | Completed |
| Ensure staff and board have thorough understanding of EDI and where applicable receive appropriate training around Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. | Perform audit review of workforce and board trustees EDI training and skills. | FDO (Growth), SID | November 2024 | Completed |
| | Implement required FA EDI training & education for all Workforce and Board Trustees to ensure good and maintained understanding of EDI. | CEO, SID | March 2024 | Trustee Training to be launched January 24 |
| | Embed EDI in all staff/Board committee meetings by reflecting in meeting Agendas. Include in staff/trustee annual appraisals and reflect EDI as key objective in County FA Business Plan | CEO, SID | July 2024 | Implement EDI standing agenda item for Board/Committee Mtgs. CFA Bus Plan still to be undertaken |
| Inclusion Advisory Group in place reporting into the board | IAG Member appointments, schedule of IAG Meetings, IAG Chair attending Board Mtgs | IAG Chair | August 2023 | Completed |
| Equality working group in place leading Equality Standard Prelim application for submission 31 st December 2023 | EWG members (CEO, FDO(Growth), Trustee (Equality) and SID meetings/online communications in place) | CEO/FDO(Growth) | December 2023 | Completed |

2. Participation

Aim: Provide a broad programme of playing opportunities For All to ensure that football participation represents the diversity of Suffolk County

Objectives:

- 2.1 Collate data from a variety of sources and analyse for validity
- 2.2 Utilise data to identify priority communities and develop specific football offerings.

| Tasks | Action | Responsibility | Timescale | Progress Update |
|---|---|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Understand player population of Suffolk football | Complete equality audit of players; create a report from the findings and share with Board & IAG. | FDO (Growth) / Trustee (EDI) | Dec 2023 | Completed |
| Ensure affiliated football is offered For All in the county | Offer affiliated football across all formats – mini-soccer, mixed youth, girls, men’s, women’s, disability, walking | CEO | July 2024 | |
| Look at ways to remove barriers, understand the demand and consult on developing and promoting alternative formats to the game. | Review recreational football opportunities: Women’s Rec division; Wildcats; Walking Football | CEO/IAG Chair | July 2024 | |
| | Consultation with Club/Groups as to what barriers there are and how/what can be developed to help promote alternative formats to the game. Report to be presented to the Board together with action plan. | IAG Chair & Committee | July 2024 | |
| Achieve 100% target of player registrations | Staff attendance at league club meetings; one to one support for clubs/leagues as requested | CEO | July 2024 | |

3. Partnerships

Aim: Work effectively with external partners with expertise in equality to ensure football is available **For All** in Suffolk

Objectives:

- 3.1 Review IAG membership annually
- 3.2 Utilise expertise on IAG to inform planning and decision making
- 3.3 Develop and sustain local and national partnership to support equality and diversity in football

| Tasks | Action | Responsibility | Timescale | Progress Update |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Regular IAG meetings in a format appropriate to the membership | Minimum 3 IAG meetings per season | IAG Chair | August 2023 | Completed |
| Clear understanding of IAG members' knowledge, skills and expertise | Complete skills audit with new IAG members | IAG Chair | March 2024 | To be launched |
| Work with national partners to promote inclusion campaigns | Promotion of campaigns annually including: Kick it Out: Refugee Week; Stonewall Rainbow Laces; Football v Homophobia; Football Welcomes; World Down Syndrome Odd Socks; Show Racism the Red Card; Refugee Local Organisations | FDO (Growth) SFA Mktg & Comms Officer | July 2024 | Several partnerships already in progress |

4. Coach & Referee Development

Aim: Deliver an accessible coach and referee development programme to ensure that the workforce represents the diversity of the Suffolk

Objectives:

- 4.1 Track coach and referee data
- 4.2 Utilise data to target priority communities

| Tasks | Action | Responsibility | Timescale | Progress Update |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Understanding coaches and referee demographics | Use FA data reports to understand current breakdown and demographics of Coaches and referees | SFA Workforce Development Manager | December 2023 | |
| Ensure coach/referee education and development is inclusive For All | Deliver an inclusive CPD workshop programme offering targeted support to coaches with disabilities/female/under-represented communities signposting coaches to The FA for education courses. | SFA Workforce Development Mgr | July 2024 | |
| | Explore delivery of female only referee courses | SFA Workforce Development Mgr | July 2024 | |
| Continue to build links with local community groups, to raise the profile of coaching courses and further opportunities within football | Ensure these groups are aware of the opportunities available for them to access coaching courses. Explore 'how' this can be achieved eg Campaigns | CEO | July 2024 | |

5. Marketing & Communication

Aim: Visible locally as a champion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in football

Objectives:

- 5.1 Promote good news stories
- 5.2 Establish, maintain and disseminate Equality Standard
- 5.3 Monitoring communications to ensure inclusivity

| Tasks | Action | Responsibility | Timescale | Progress Update |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Presence on SFA website for equality, diversity and inclusion football | Inclusion page on SFA website – one click through to reach it – includes Equality statement and policy, information on IAG and national partner links | SFA Mktg & Comms Officer | July 2024 | Completed |
| Sharing of positive new stories celebrating football for all | Capture good news stories and promote through website, e-news and social media | SFA Mktg & Comms Officer | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| FA events to promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the county | Mini-Soccer Festival, Inclusion Cup, Refugees Festival – promote through build up, delivery and post event through all media channels | Event Lead; SFA Mktg & Comms Officer | Ongoing | Numerous Events regularly organized. |
| Promotion of national initiatives around Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion | SFA to actively promote sport and non-sport sector inclusion campaigns, e.g. Rainbow Laces, Kick it Out, Refugees week | SFA FDO (Growth) | Ongoing | Promoted via website/Socials |
| Ensuring communications are accessible, and that our communications continue to promote diversity. | Review current methods of communication and distribution network. | SFA Mktg & Comms Officer | March 2024 | Ongoing |

6. REPORTING

Aim: Suffolk football community understand how to report discrimination, and have confidence in SFA

Objectives:

6.1 Ensure that robust and transparent reporting procedures are in place.

| Tasks | Action | Responsibility | Timescale | Progress Update |
|--|---|--|----------------|-----------------|
| Promote the safety and seriousness of reporting by ensuring players, coaches, volunteers, parents and referees are aware of FA anti-discrimination reporting processes | FA reporting processes visible on SFA website and shared through social media | SFA Designated Safeguarding & Services Mgr | September 2023 | Completed |
| Dedicated discipline@ email | 3 staff members receive discipline@ emails | CEO | September 2023 | Completed |
| Relationship with national partners as appropriate | Liaise with The FA and Kick it Out as appropriate on live cases | CEO | Ongoing | |