



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

FOR MEDIA

2026-27



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INTRODUCTION

This Media Essentials Guide is produced at the start of each football season to support print, broadcast, and online journalists in understanding the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association (The FA). It is also intended to help ensure that any reporting around these guidelines is accurate for viewers, readers, or listeners.

The FA's general on and off-field regulatory and disciplinary processes that apply to football 'participants' during the 2026-27 season are explained in the form of step-by-step guides and timelines where applicable.

Any questions about these topics should be directed to The FA's Corporate Communications team in the first instance by using the following email address:

Media.Relations@TheFA.com

The FA's Rules and Regulations are available in full via:

www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/lawsandrules

NB: *The 2026-27 Media Essentials Guide does not alter or replace The FA's Rules and Regulations, and they should be referred to for the comprehensive provisions relating to any disciplinary matters.*

PARTICIPANTS

Any affiliated association; competition; club; club official, which for the avoidance of doubt should include a director; agent; player; official; manager; match official; match official observer; match official coach; match official mentor; management committee member; member or employee of a club; and all persons who are from time to time participating in any activity sanctioned either directly or indirectly by The FA in English football are defined as 'participants'.

Any misconduct or breaches of The FA's Rules and Regulations by 'participants' can lead to disciplinary charges and sanctions where appropriate.

THE FAST-TRACK PROCESS

The FA's 'fast-track' process expedites the timescales of disciplinary proceedings for certain incidents that occur on or around the field of play. Some cases considered under the 'fast-track' process can be investigated, charged, and heard before the relevant 'participant' plays in their next competitive match. An example of cases that would be considered under the 'fast-track' process would be most retrospective 'not seen' incidents.

CHARGES

The FA considers most on-field incidents as either 'standard' i.e. typical or 'non-standard' i.e. more serious/unusual or where the 'participant' has committed similar misconduct over a recent period (usually 12 months).

In 'standard' cases, The FA offers a pre-determined sanction for the type of misconduct with the charge, and the 'participant' can accept it without a Regulatory Commission hearing. Early admission of 'standard' charges can also lead to reduced penalties.

A 'participant' can also admit a 'standard' charge without accepting its pre-determined sanction if it is felt to be disproportionately harsh. A Regulatory Commission would then go on to consider written documentation in relation to the case during what is known as a 'paper' hearing.

If a 'standard' charge is denied, and the pre-determined sanction is not accepted, the 'participant' can choose either a 'paper' or 'personal' hearing involving a Regulatory Commission. The sanction is likely to be higher if the case is subsequently found to be proven.

In 'non-standard' cases, The FA doesn't offer a pre-determined sanction with the charge. A Regulatory Commission will go on to consider the case and any penalty ultimately imposed for proven or admitted charges will be solely at its discretion.

REGULATORY COMMISSIONS

If a misconduct charge leads to it being determined by a Regulatory Commission, The FA's Regulatory Legal department will act as prosecutors at a hearing against the 'participant' in question.

The appointment of a Regulatory Commission to hear a case is the responsibility of the Judicial Panel Chair (or nominee) through The FA's Judicial Services department.

A Regulatory Commission consists of three Judicial Panel members selected from distinct pools:

- **The Chairs Panel** – Consisting of suitable personnel from the Council Panel, the Football Panel, or the Specialist Panel;
- **The Council Panel** – Consisting of members on The FA Council with appropriate experience;
- **The Football Panel** – Consisting of former players, managers, or other independent football people with appropriate experience in the sport that can provide expert opinion, including EDI or anti-discrimination and/or anti-doping expertise;
- **The Legal Panel** – Consisting of independent barristers and solicitors with expertise in sport and/or regulatory matters (all of whom may also sit as a Chairperson);
- **The Specialist Panel** – Generally reserved for complex or unusual cases but consisting of independent barristers or solicitors with seven or more years' standing (all of whom may also sit as a Chairperson).

Judicial Panel members undergo continual training and education, and anyone with a conflict of interest in a particular case will not be selected. The Judicial Panel Members will assess all the evidence in a case and decide a relevant sanction where necessary.

The Standard of Proof

The 'standard of proof' used is the civil standard. It means that cases will only be proven if the appointed Regulatory Commission is satisfied that the event in question occurred on the 'balance of probabilities'. This standard of proof is widely used in civil and regulatory forums including the civil courts, family courts, and professional regulatory bodies. It is the most appropriate option for the tribunal-based forum used to determine The FA's cases, and other National Governing Bodies of sport across the industry also utilise this standard.

Written Reasons

'Written reasons' are a detailed record of how a Regulatory Commission reached a particular decision. These documents are generally produced by the Chairperson and agreed with relevant 'wing members'. Subject to the facts of the case, it is normal practice for them to be published below:

www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/discipline/written-reasons

PUBLICATION POLICY

The FA's general policy is to publish the details of misconduct cases involving 'participants' from the Premier League, EFL and down to Step 4 of the men's football pyramid, as well as the Women's Super League (WSL), WSL 2 and down to Tier 4 of the women's football pyramid.

The details of misconduct cases involving 'participants' from the Premier League, EFL, WSL and WSL 2 are posted on The FA's official spokesperson X account below:

@FAspokesperson

The details of misconduct cases involving 'participants' from the Premier League, EFL and down to Step 4 of the men's football pyramid, as well as WSL, WSL 2 and down to Tier 4 of the women's football pyramid – including any written reasons – are published on The FA's website below:

www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance

The FA believes that publication helps to uphold the values and ethics of football, holds football 'participants' accountable for their actions, and maintains transparency in an area of high public interest. This is just one aspect of a holistic approach to encourage all football 'participants' to abide by the rules and The FA feels that it is necessary to discourage misconduct.

If The FA didn't consistently publish these details, there is a risk that it would appear as though some misconduct does not warrant discipline or action hasn't been taken in certain examples and that particular football 'participants' are not being held to the same standard as others.

ON-FIELD MATTERS

RETROSPECTIVE ACTION

The FA can take retrospective disciplinary action if video evidence clearly shows that a player has committed a dismissal offence that wasn't seen by the match officials or reviewed by a Video Assistant Referee (VAR).

Typical Process:

- The FA can become aware of such an incident in a variety of ways;
- A match referee may file an extraordinary incident report detailing that an incident was 'not seen' by the match officials or reviewed by the VAR;
- The FA will ask the match referee whether they or any of the match officials saw the incident before considering whether to initiate proceedings for retrospective action;
- If a VAR was active, the match referee or the VAR are also asked whether the incident was reviewed;
- No further action is taken in almost all cases where it is confirmed that the specific act of misconduct was seen or reviewed at the time;
- If it is confirmed that the specific act of misconduct was not seen or reviewed, a panel of three ex-professional match officials is convened and asked to review all the available video footage independently;
- The FA will only issue a charge if the panel is unanimous, and the player in question is then asked whether they admit or deny it;
- If the charge is admitted, an automatic suspension is imposed to mirror the penalty that would have been applied if the incident had been seen or reviewed at the time and the player had been dismissed subsequently;
- If the charge is denied, the case goes before a Regulatory Commission where video and/or written evidence can be submitted;
- If the Regulatory Commission agrees that it was a dismissal offence, an automatic suspension is imposed to mirror the penalty that would have been applied if the incident had been seen or reviewed at the time and the player had been dismissed subsequently;
- The Regulatory Commission may also increase or decrease the suspension in exceptional cases where either The FA has submitted that the standard punishment would be 'clearly insufficient' or the player has submitted that the standard punishment would be 'clearly excessive'.

TIMELINE	
Deadline for The FA to issue a charge:	Within two business days of the incident
Deadline for the player's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the business day following the charge
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	Prior to the player's next competitive match

SUCCESSFUL DECEPTION OF A MATCH OFFICIAL

The FA can take disciplinary action in situations where a match official may have been deceived. This process is not for debatable decisions but only where there is overwhelming evidence to indicate that a player intentionally deceived a match official.

Typical Process:

- If The FA believes that there may be a case to answer, the incident is referred to a three-person panel consisting of one ex-match official, one ex-manager and one ex-player;
- Each panel member then reviews the footage independently of the others;
- A charge is only issued in circumstances where the panel members are unanimous;
- A player will receive a two-match suspension in accepted and/or proven cases of simulation and/or feigning an injury;
- Attempts to deceive a match official through simulation and/or feigning an injury are normally cautionable offences for unsporting behaviour. However, the fact that the simulation has succeeded and led to a penalty and/or dismissal justifies a more severe penalty that is also intended to act as a deterrent;
- If the player contests the charge, a Regulatory Commission hears the case and only written and/or video evidence would be considered;
- If a charge is found proven, the Regulatory Commission would also decide whether to rescind a caution or dismissal which was received by an opposing player.

TIMELINE	
Deadline for The FA to issue a charge:	Within two business days of the incident
Deadline for the player's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the business day following the charge
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	Prior to the player's next competitive match

SURROUNDING MATCH OFFICIALS

Match officials are empowered to take robust action if they are confronted, surrounded or their personal space is invaded by multiple players.

The FA will investigate any reported incidents where two or more players of a club approach a match official in a 'confrontational manner'. The offending club would be charged and sanctioned instead of its players, and any similar offences within the previous 12 months can also lead to increased penalties.

Typical Process:

- A match official reports such a 'surrounding' incident to The FA;
- A charge, warning or no further action can follow depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the incident;
- Any charges can be treated as either 'standard' or 'non-standard'.

TIMELINE	
Deadline for The FA to issue a charge:	Within three business days of the incident
Deadline for the club's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the third business day following the charge
Deadline for The FA's response to the reply:	By close of play on the third business day following the club's reply
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than 10 business days after The FA's response

MASS CONFRONTATIONS

The FA will investigate any reported incidents where two or more players or club officials are involved in a confrontation with opposing players or club officials.

The offending clubs would be charged and sanctioned instead of their players, and any similar offences within the previous 12 months can also lead to increased penalties.

Typical Process:

- A match official reports a 'mass confrontation' incident to The FA;
- A charge, warning or no further action can follow depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the incident;
- Any charges can be treated as either 'standard' or 'non-standard'.

TIMELINE	
Deadline for The FA to issue a charge:	Within three business days of the incident
Deadline for the club's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the third business day following the charge
Deadline for The FA's response to the reply:	By close of play on the third business day following the club's reply
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than 10 business days after The FA's response to the club's reply

TECHNICAL AREA MISCONDUCT

Match officials are empowered to issue technical area occupants with yellow or red cards for caution or dismissal offences. If an offender can't be identified, the card will be given to the team's manager or most senior coach in this area. These individuals can also receive automatic touchline bans for the accumulation of yellow cards and the suspensions for certain numbers of cautions are below:

NUMBER OF CAUTIONS	SUSPENSION
Three	One match
Six	Two matches
Nine	Three matches
12	Misconduct charge and Regulatory Commission

Similar to players, technical area occupants now have a cut-off point for three cautions in a season. If they receive a further technical area caution after this cut-off point, they will receive a suspended one-match touchline suspension. There are no cut-off points for six, nine or 12 technical area cautions.

LEAGUES	CUT-OFF DATE (INCLUSIVE)
Premier League	32 matches
EFL and National League	37 matches
National League System (NLS) Steps 2-4	The second Sunday in March

Any technical area cautions or dismissals are added to club's total for that game, which includes any received by its players, and a financial penalty is imposed where six or more cautions are received.

Play off matches (semi-finals and finals) in the EFL and NLS Steps 1-4, as well as finals of the Emirates FA Cup; EFL Cup; EFL Trophy; FA Trophy; Women's FA Cup; and the Women's League Cup are exempt from any automatic touchline ban for the accumulation of cautions by technical area occupants.

Typical Process:

- If an individual is dismissed from the technical area, they are no longer permitted to observe the remainder of the game, return to the field of play post-match, conduct post-match media interviews, or press conferences;
- The match referee subsequently reports the incident to The FA, and this could also lead to a charge, warning, reminder of responsibilities or no further action taken depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the incident;
- These charges can be treated as either 'standard' or 'non-standard';
- 'Standard' charges for any confrontational behaviour towards match officials can include touchline bans being offered at this stage.

TIMELINE	
Deadline for The FA to issue a charge:	Within three business days of the incident
Deadline for the club's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the third business day following the charge
Deadline for The FA's response to the reply:	By close of play on the third business day following the club's reply
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than 10 business days after The FA's response to the club's reply

TOUCHLINE BANS

As well as automatic touchline bans for the accumulation of yellow cards, misconduct in the technical area can lead to The FA issuing a charge and a Regulatory Commission imposing a touchline ban. The following restrictions apply in these instances:

- The individual may only communicate with those in the dugout by either phone or a 'runner'.
- The individual cannot be on the touchline before, during or after the match, and this includes participating in the team's warm-up.
- The individual can communicate with the team in the changing room prior to the game and at half-time unless an 'extended' touchline ban has been imposed.
- An 'extended' touchline ban can be imposed by a Regulatory Commission if misconduct is deemed serious enough to warrant further measures.
- The individual cannot communicate with the team from 30 minutes prior to the game until 30 minutes after the game if an 'extended' touchline ban is imposed.

STADIUM OR GROUND BANS

Misconduct in the technical area and charges being issued can lead to a Regulatory Commission imposing a stadium or ground ban. The following restrictions would apply in these instances:

- The individual cannot enter a ground or stadium that their team is playing at on a matchday.
- The individual cannot enter or use any facilities on the site of the stadium or ground that their team are playing at on a matchday.
- The individual cannot take any position immediately outside the perimeter of the stadium or ground that would give them a direct view of the pitch.
- Any breach of the terms of a ban may result in further disciplinary proceedings.

INCIDENTS OUTSIDE THE JURISDICTION OF MATCH OFFICIALS

There are certain incidents that fall outside the jurisdiction of match officials which can lead to The FA issuing charges. Examples may include:

- An individual committing an act of misconduct or refusing to leave the pitch after being sent off.
- Two dismissal offences being committed before a red card is shown.
- An individual committing an act of misconduct after the match has ended and the match referee has left the pitch.

TIMELINE	
Deadline for The FA to issue a charge:	Within three business days of the incident
Deadline for the club's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the third business day following the charge
Deadline for The FA's response to the reply:	By close of play on the third business day following the club's reply
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than 10 business days after The FA's response to the club's reply

CLAIMS OF WRONGFUL DISMISSAL

If a club believes that it can prove a player's straight red card was an 'obvious error' by the match official/s, it can submit a claim of 'wrongful dismissal' for consideration by a Regulatory Commission.

Typical Process:

- The player's club must notify The FA of its intention to submit a claim by 13:00 on the first business day following the game;
- The player's club must submit any evidence to support its claim by 13:00 on the second business day following the game;
- A Regulatory Commission will hear the case, and the onus is on the player's club to demonstrate via video and written evidence only that the match official/s made an 'obvious error';
- In incidents involving a VAR, the player's club must demonstrate via video and written evidence only that the match referee's decision was an 'obvious error' following the involvement of the VAR;
- A Regulatory Commission will decide whether the claim of 'wrongful dismissal' will be upheld – and the player's suspension is withdrawn with immediate effect – or dismissed and the player's suspension would therefore remain. Notwithstanding the outcome of a claim of 'wrongful dismissal', the relevant sending-off offence will remain on the record of the club and the player. However, should the player be dismissed again during the season, this dismissal shall not be counted;
- The Regulatory Commission would go on to consider whether the player's punishment should be increased if the claim of 'wrongful dismissal' is dismissed;
 - The Regulatory Commission has the discretion to increase the punishment by up to twice the standard amount if it considers that the dismissed claim 'had no prospect of success' and/or 'amounts to an abuse of the process';
- Where there are no or insufficient working days between fixtures – with Boxing Day or New Year's Day being key examples – there are further expedited timeframes to ensure the claim of 'wrongful dismissal' is heard before the next applicable fixture.

NB: A club can lodge a claim of 'wrongful dismissal' at the same time as a claim of 'clearly excessive' punishment.

CLAIMS OF CLEARLY EXCESSIVE PUNISHMENT

Clubs may also attempt to limit the suspension for a player's straight red card by submitting a claim of 'clearly excessive' punishment for consideration by a Regulatory Commission.

Typical Process:

- The player's club must notify The FA of its intention to submit a claim by 13:00 on the first business day following the game;
- The player's club must submit any evidence to support its claim by 13:00 on the second business day following the game;
- A Regulatory Commission will consider whether there are truly exceptional circumstances, and the standard punishment would therefore be clearly and obviously excessive. The intention is that the standard punishment will be appropriate in most cases and that these provisions to reduce the sanction will only cater for any clear and obvious cases;
- If the club's claim is upheld, the Regulatory Commission would also decide the player's new punishment;
 - At least a one-game suspension would be enforced as only a claim of 'wrongful dismissal' can withdraw a player's suspension entirely;
- If the club's claim is rejected, the Regulatory Commission would also consider whether the player's punishment should be increased;
 - The Regulatory Commission has the discretion to increase the punishment by up to twice the standard amount if it considers that the rejected claim 'had no prospect of success' and/or 'amounts to an abuse of the process'.

NB: A club can lodge a claim of 'clearly excessive' punishment at the same time as a claim of 'wrongful dismissal'.

CLAIMS OF CLEARLY INSUFFICIENT PUNISHMENT

If The FA thinks that a dismissal offence is 'truly exceptional', it can seek to increase the associated sanction by submitting a claim of 'clearly insufficient' punishment that would be considered by a Regulatory Commission.

Typical Process:

- The FA must submit a claim and evidence to the player's club by 13:00 on the second business day following the game;
- The club or player has until 18:00 on the second business day following receipt of The FA's claim to submit any evidence supporting their case that the punishment is 'clearly sufficient';
- A Regulatory Commission hears the case and its only consideration would be whether the standard punishment should not be imposed;
- If The FA's claim is successful, the Regulatory Commission would also decide the player's new punishment;
- If The FA's claim is dismissed by the Regulatory Commission, the player would serve the usual punishment for the type of dismissal offence.

CLAIMS OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Clubs can submit a claim of 'mistaken identity' on the behalf of their players and technical area occupants if they believe that other players or technical area occupants committed an offence that they have been cautioned or dismissed for incorrectly.

Typical Process:

- The club must notify The FA of its intention to lodge a claim by 13:00 on the first business day following the game;
- The club must submit any evidence to support the claim by 13:00 on the second business day following the game, including a signed statement from the 'participant' originally reported for the offence confirming they were not responsible and identifying the name of the person who committed it as well as any video footage of the incident;
- A Regulatory Commission will hear the case before any suspension would be served and either uphold or dismiss the club's claim;
- If the claim is upheld, the standard punishment will be transferred to the appropriate offender;
- If the claim is dismissed, the Regulatory Commission would also consider whether the punishment should be increased for the player or technical area occupant;
- If the Regulatory Commission considers that the dismissed claim 'had no prospect of success' and/or 'amounts to an abuse of the process', it can increase the punishment by up to twice the standard amount;
- If the club of a player or technical area occupant does not submit a claim, The FA reserves the right to request that a Regulatory Commission reviews an incident where evidence clearly shows a case of 'mistaken identity';
- If there is evidence to show that a club sought to gain an advantage by not submitting a claim, it can be charged with misconduct.

CAUTIONS

Leagues and cups will have 'competition-specific' suspensions during the 2026-27 season for yellow cards accumulated by players.

The cut-off dates for yellow cards accumulated by players in league matches are as follows:

NUMBER OF CAUTIONS	CUT-OFF DATE (INCLUSIVE)
Five (Premier League, EFL and National League)	19 league matches
10 (Premier League)	32 league matches
10 (EFL and National League)	37 league matches
15 (All leagues)	*End of the season

**This applies to the last day of the respective league's season and before any play-off matches.*

If a player is yellow carded 20 times during a league season, they will be charged with misconduct.

The WSL and WSL 2 do not have cut-off dates. Players will be suspended automatically at any stage of the season if they accumulate five, 10, 15 or more yellow cards.

If a player receives two yellow cards in a cup campaign, they will be suspended for the next fixture in that competition. However, any single yellow cards are expunged following the quarter-final stages, and a suspension in the Women's FA Cup may require four yellow cards, rather than two, depending on the player's point of entry.

SUSPENSIONS

All suspensions are served immediately in the category of match that they were received in, unless stated otherwise. For example, any player sent off in a first-team competitive match would only be able to play in reserve team matches during their suspension.

Typical offences and their corresponding suspensions include:

OFFENCE	SUSPENSION
A second yellow card	One match
Denying a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity	One match
Using offensive, insulting or abusive language or gestures	Two matches
Violent conduct or serious foul play	Three matches
Spitting	Six matches
Five yellow cards within the cut-off date	One match
10 yellow cards within the cut-off date	Two matches
15 yellow cards within the cut-off date	Three matches

Players who are dismissed for a second time in a season will receive a one-match ban in addition to the suspension for their offence. Players who are dismissed for a third time will receive two additional matches; and a fourth time will receive three additional matches etc.

CROWD MANAGEMENT

The FA doesn't have jurisdiction over individual spectators at fixtures unless they're 'participants' in football, so any disciplinary action for crowd management issues such as discriminatory behaviour, missile throwing or incursions onto the pitch is taken against the relevant club/s.

Typical Process:

- The FA investigates almost all crowd management issues at fixtures;
- The FA's investigations usually involve seeking observations from the club/s concerned and agencies such as the Police;
- The FA works closely with the club/s and any agencies to ensure that those responsible are identified and dealt with appropriately by the club/s and the criminal courts where appropriate;
- The FA may issue disciplinary charges if its investigations conclude that the club/s did not do enough to prevent and/or deal with the misconduct of spectators.

To challenge the totally unacceptable presence of football tragedy abuse, regulation changes and tough new measures were introduced from the 2023-24 season which have seen people who are found to have committed offences face stadium bans and potential criminal prosecution. This issue is focused on offensive chanting, gesturing, and displaying offensive messages based on football-related tragedies which cause significant distress to the victims' families, survivors, and affected club supporters. Football authorities, supporter groups and law enforcement organisations, including the Police and Crown Prosecution Service, have united to crack down on fans who participate in this vile form of abuse.

NB: Further information in relation to discriminatory behaviour by crowds is on the following [anti-discrimination page](#).

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The FA is committed to creating a game free from discrimination. The organisation embraces the unique diversity of England and continues to use football to drive inclusion. The FA's 2024-2028 equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy, A Game Free from Discrimination, outlines how it is striving to unite football, and key work from the 2025-26 football season included:

- **The FA's Workforce** – The FA delivered gender and ethnicity pay gap results that remain below the national average despite an increase this year. The organisation has also seen its highest proportion of females employed and created an FA Women's Network;
- **Uniting Stakeholders** – The FA ran two Professional Game Summits at Wembley Stadium in partnership with the EFL and Premier League: one with club CEOs in 2024, and one with respective EDI leads in 2025 to discuss and tackle cross-industry challenges;
- **Grassroots Football** – The FA developed and delivered its new A Game for All standard. For the first time, this provides a single, comprehensive framework for EDI across all 50 County FAs, continued Inclusion Advisory Group support, and the fourth year of its Community of Practice;
- **Faith and Football** – The FA hosted events at Wembley Stadium which included Vaisakhi, Ramadan, and Chanukah to engage underrepresented communities across all major faiths and continues to oversee the Faith and Football Network. The Building Bridges antisemitism taskforce will also continue to meet at points during the coming season;
- **Campaigns** – The FA developed and delivered new messaging to influence bystander behaviour which gave added impetus to multiple campaigns including its new safeguarding initiative Flag It and refreshed Enough is Enough campaign;
- **South Asian Inclusion** – The FA is in the second year of its South Asians in Football Plan with a focus on grassroots parent support networks and regular roadshows to bring people together to discuss particular themes, best practices, and challenges;
- **LGBTQ+ Inclusion** – The FA marched in Leeds Pride and Brighton Pride for the first time and participated in London Pride for the fifth year in a row. LGBTQI+ toolkits have also been produced to support County FAs for the first time;
- **Disability Football** – The FA successfully hosted the EE Disability FA Cup for the tenth time, which included partially sighted, amputee, blind, cerebral palsy, powerchair and deaf football finals, and also saw a 25% increase in the number of players in disability football since the launch of its disability football specific strategy for 2024-2028, Football Without Limits;
- **Coaching** – The FA continued to grow the Elite Coach Placement Programme in line with coaching developments to improve representation at the elite level in collaboration with the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA). Black, Asian, Mixed or Other backgrounds in the England men's coaching staff increased from 19% to 42% from 2024 to 2026 aligning with increased participation from historically underrepresented groups for the Introduction to Coaching Football and UEFA C Diploma courses;
- **Refereeing** – Since The FA launched its To Grow, Guide and Govern refereeing strategy in 2023, significant progress has been made to improve the environment, experience, performance, development, diversity, and inclusion of refereeing. An example is a 45% increase in the number of registered female referees since 2023.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

While significant progress has been made in recent years to tackle discrimination, this abhorrent misconduct continues to be a challenge across the game.

'Participants' and spectators who believe that they have been the subject of, or witness to, discriminatory abuse are actively encouraged to report it through the appropriate channels – The FA, the County FA network, or key partners such as Kick It Out – and all allegations are investigated thoroughly.

From the start of the 2026-27 season, The FA's sanction guidelines will now require Regulatory Commissions to impose a standard suspension of at least 10 matches on players, managers, or technical area occupants for any 'aggravated breaches'. Regulatory Commissions may also impose a sanction above this standard suspension if they are satisfied that there are significant aggravating factors present.

Regulatory Commissions may consider imposing a sanction below the standard 10-match suspension if they are satisfied that a mitigating factor or mitigating factors of significant number or weight is/are present. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the individual has to admit the breach at the earliest reasonable opportunity available, and a suspension of no less than six matches must still be imposed in these circumstances.

If the 'aggravated breach' takes place 'in writing only or via any communication device' and a further prescribed mitigating factor is present, a Regulatory Commission may consider imposing a suspension below six matches. However, any such decision must be in the best interests of tackling discrimination in football, and a Regulatory Commission must impose a suspension of no less than six matches in these cases.

Regulatory Commissions can impose time-based suspensions on any individual 'participant' where match-based sanctions would not be appropriate based on their role and responsibilities within the game.

An 'aggravated breach' by a 'participant' in private or outside of a standard football setting can also result in disciplinary sanctions.

Regulatory Commissions will impose mandatory education courses for all 'aggravated breaches' in addition to any sanctions that they deem appropriate.

In cases where there is clear evidence of discriminatory chanting by supporters, The FA will act against the relevant club/s and recommend that a Regulatory Commission imposes an 'action plan' for a first offence. While a range of financial penalties are possible, 'action plans' implement practical and measurable improvements to matchday operations that can come at a significant financial cost to offending clubs. Any subsequent offences will be treated with the utmost seriousness. Partial or full stadium closures and financial penalties will always be considered, but Regulatory Commissions can impose any sanctions they deem appropriate in such circumstances.

Points deductions can also apply to any clubs at Step 7 and below of the men's game and Tier 5 and below in the women's pyramid that commit cumulative incidents of serious misconduct including discrimination.

The FA continues to support any player who wishes to take a stand against discrimination in a respectful manner and will always condemn the behaviours of anyone who chooses to actively oppose these values. The FA also continues to work with the appropriate bodies to ensure that supporters are dealt with if they are deemed to behave in an actively discriminatory manner.

OFF-FIELD MATTERS

INTEGRITY

The FA is committed to ensuring that the integrity of football is maintained in partnership with stakeholders from the wider game and other industries. A dedicated team supports ‘participants’ to understand and follow The FA’s Rules and Regulations, and is also responsible for undertaking investigations into alleged breaches and providing evidence if there is a case to answer. Education is a key focus of this team’s overall approach, and regular club visits, educational films, literature, and a ‘player essentials’ app are provided alongside materials from the PFA, leagues and partners in relation to betting, inside information, match-fixing, anti-doping and media activities.

Any ‘participants’ who are approached to bet; accept a bribe; share inside information; influence an event; fix the outcome of a game or competition; aware of possible breaches of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code or The FA’s Anti-Doping Regulations are obliged to report it.

Dedicated and anonymous reporting lines are available on [0208 795 9640](tel:02087959640) or Integrity@TheFA.com

BETTING

The FA’s Rules and Regulations prohibit all ‘participants’ involved with clubs in the Premier League, EFL, WSL, WSL 2, and NLS from betting on any football or football-related activity.

The simple and straightforward message to ‘participants’ is that ‘all bets are off’. This includes gambling on matches; match events; competitions; manager markets; players transfers and so-called novelties.

The FA’s Integrity team works closely with statutory bodies and law enforcement agencies and shares data with betting operators to ensure a bespoke intelligence handling system. In addition, this team ensures that all betting markets on English football are monitored to identify any suspicious activities.

Any investigations into unusual betting patterns are also supported by partnerships with the Gambling Commission’s Sports Betting Integrity Unit and UK betting operators. The Integrity team also has representation on the national Sports Betting Group and the Sports Betting Integrity Forum.

INSIDE INFORMATION

Inside information is defined as a ‘participant’ having knowledge about a football matter due to their position in the game that is not publicly available. Examples can include a team selection for a specific fixture, a player’s transfer status, or the arrival of a new manager.

All ‘participants’ involved with clubs in the Premier League, EFL, WSL, WSL 2, and NLS are prohibited from passing any inside information for the purpose of either betting or instructing someone else to bet on their behalf. Even if a ‘participant’ is unaware that inside information may be used for betting, it could still be treated as a breach of The FA’s Rules and Regulations.

MATCH-FIXING

All ‘participants’ are prohibited from seeking to influence the result, progress, conduct or any other incident in a match or competition for an improper purpose. This is to prevent any attempt to fix not just a result but spot-fixing of any incidents that can occur in or around a fixture or competition. An example would be deliberately seeking to receive a caution.

Any ‘participant’ who is approached to get involved in match or spot-fixing but then doesn’t report it could also be in serious breach of The FA’s Rules and Regulations.

MEDIA COMMENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

The FA's Rules and Regulations are designed to strike a balance between allowing freedom of speech while also protecting the integrity and reputation of the game. However, 'participants' may be charged if any comments in the media or on social media are deemed to breach FA Rule E3.

FA Rule E3.1 states: 'A participant shall at all times act in the best interests of the game and not act in any manner which is improper or brings the game into disrepute or use any one, or a combination of violent conduct, serious foul play, threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting words or behaviour'.

Typical examples where The FA may take action for comments made in public can include:

- **Implication of Bias** – Any comment which implies or appears to allege bias on the part of a match official.
- **Questioning Integrity** – Any comment that questions the integrity of a match official. Examples can include, but are not limited to, suggestions of cheating, calling a match official a 'cheat' or commenting upon a match official's purported allegiance to another club.
- **Personal/Offensive** – Comments that are capable of being personally offensive, particularly in relation to match officials. This may include, but not be limited to, repeated negative and/or inflammatory comments in respect of a match official's performance.
- **Threatening/Abusive/Insulting/Indecent** – Comments that fall into these categories, whether intended or not, may be subject to disciplinary action.
- **Discriminatory** – Any comments that are improper, indecent, abusive, or insulting and include a reference to ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, or disability.
- **Detriment to the Game** – The concepts of 'disrepute' and 'best interests of the game' are inherently broad and cannot be precisely defined. Charges may be brought where comments cause, and/or may cause, damage to the wider interests of football and/or to the image of the game.

The test to be applied to the above type of public comments is an objective one, i.e. The FA may take disciplinary action even in circumstances when the comments were not intended to imply bias; question integrity; be personal/offensive; be threatening/abusive/insulting/indecent; or be discriminatory. Whilst disagreements with, or criticisms of, decisions of a match official are permitted, they should be done so in a respectful manner.

Typical Process:

- The FA may contact a 'participant' to seek their written observations or issue a charge within three business days of being made aware of comments in the media or on social media;
- If observations are requested, the 'participant' would have three business days to respond;
- The FA would then have three further business days to decide whether to issue a charge, issue a formal warning, remind them of their responsibilities, or take no further action;
- If a charge is issued, the 'participant' would have three further business days to reply;
- A Regulatory Commission hearing would take place within 10 business days of the reply by the 'participant';
- There are no set sanctions for FA Rule E3.1 breaches in relation to media comments or social media activity, so any penalty ultimately imposed for proven or admitted charges would be solely at the Regulatory Commission's discretion.

NB: Any cases involving discriminatory comments are not subject to the above timelines, and any posting that remains on the social media account of a 'participant' that is in breach of The FA's Rules and Regulations can be subject to disciplinary action, irrespective of when it was made.

ANTI-DOPING

The FA is fully compliant with the National Anti-Doping Policy of the UK Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.

Players are strictly liable for any breaches of The FA's Anti-Doping Regulations, which align with the WADA Code, and they are educated regularly about their responsibilities.

The FA funds one of world sport's most comprehensive anti-doping programmes, which is constantly reviewed to make improvements where possible, and it inputs into testing that is directed and delivered independently by UK Anti-Doping (UKAD). Key features of the programme include:

Testing

Targeted, researched, and intelligence-led drug testing is undertaken across the England men's, women's, and development teams, as well as clubs in the Premier League, EFL, WSL and WSL 2.

Both 'in-competition' and 'out-of-competition' drug testing are carried out on matchdays immediately after games and on non-matchdays, respectively. Examples of 'out-of-competition' drug testing can include at a club's training ground or at a player's home address.

A player can be tested anywhere and at any time on a 'no advance notice' basis, regardless of whether they have or haven't been absent from training that day. They can also be subject to blood and urine drug testing, including an Athlete Biological Passport programme.

While some banned substances on WADA's Prohibited List might not be detectable in blood, most are detectable in urine. The FA works closely with UKAD to ensure that the drug-testing programme is as effective as possible, and UKAD employs a flexible approach to decide testing depending upon any doping risk.

Whereabouts

If a player isn't going to be at training; is leaving early; or arriving late, they must notify The FA in advance and provide a one-hour time slot and address for that day when they will be available for testing. Any player that fails to adhere to these requirements may incur a missed test 'strike', and three 'strikes' within a 12-month rolling period would trigger a suspension from football for at least 12 months.

Clubs must also inform The FA of their training schedules and any changes to their timings or the location/s that players are attending, as well as a list of addresses where each player regularly resides. Clubs that fail to adhere to these requirements on three occasions within a 12-month rolling period will be charged under The FA's Anti-Doping Regulations.

Adverse Analytical Findings

An 'adverse analytical finding' in a player's sample, which is otherwise known as a positive test, does not automatically lead to an 'anti-doping rule violation' (ADRV) and a suspension.

Substances of Abuse

'Substances of abuse' are defined in the WADA Code as 'those prohibited substances which are specifically identified on the Prohibited List because they are frequently abused in society outside of the context of sport'. Cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, and cannabis are designated as 'substances of abuse' under the Anti-Doping Regulations. If an athlete can demonstrate that their use was out-of-competition and unrelated to sport performance following an in-competition 'adverse analytical finding', any suspension will just be for three months, and it may also be reduced to one if they complete a treatment programme. From 1 January 2027, under the revised WADA Code a first violation will result in a two-month period of ineligibility. For any subsequent violation involving any substances of abuse, the period of ineligibility will be four months which may be reduced to two if the athlete enters a treatment programme for this.

Suspensions

If one or more of the below ADRVs is committed, it can lead to a suspension from the game.

- **Acts to Discourage or Retaliate Against Reporting to Authorities** – Acts that threaten or seek to intimidate another person to discourage them from sharing information about doping (also referred to as whistleblowing) or retaliating against another person for doing so.
- **Administering or Attempted Administration** – Administration or attempted administration to any player of any prohibited substance or method.
- **Complicity or Attempted Complicity** – Complicity in helping someone to commit an ADRV or avoid detection.
- **Evasion, Refusal or Failure** – Evading, refusing, or failing to submit to sample collection.
- **Possession** – Possession of a prohibited substance or method.
- **Presence** – The presence of a prohibited substance or its metabolites or markers in a player's sample.
- **Prohibited Association** – Associating in a professional or sport-related capacity with a person such as a coach, doctor, physio, or trainer who is serving a ban or who has been found guilty of a criminal or disciplinary offence equivalent to a doping violation.
- **Tampering or Attempted Tampering** – Tampering or attempted tampering with any part of doping control. This includes engaging in fraudulent conduct i.e. submitting falsified documents to an anti-doping organisation or asking a witness to lie in their witness statement.
- **Trafficking** – Trafficking or attempted trafficking of any prohibited substance or method.
- **Use** – The use or attempted use by an athlete of a prohibited substance or method.
- **Whereabouts** – Failure to notify The FA in advance that they are not going to be at training, are leaving early, arriving late or failure to provide a one-hour time slot for that day when they will be available at their home address to be tested.

Publication

The FA doesn't discuss or disclose details of the anti-doping testing programme and any 'adverse analytical findings', and in general will only publish the outcomes of specific cases once they are fully concluded.

SOCIAL DRUGS

The FA also operates its own dedicated social drugs programme to safeguard the physical and mental wellbeing of players, protect the image of football, and uphold its values and ethics. The FA's Social Drugs Regulations are in place voluntarily and separately from the WADA Code, and recreational drugs are always prohibited.

The FA's social drugs programme focuses on education and rehabilitation with key features including:

Testing

- Hair testing is the primary method of sample collection, and this leads to both a faster collection process and increased detection window.
- Urine testing can be collected on occasion as a secondary method of sample collection.
- Testing numbers are spread more evenly across the professional leagues.

Sanctions

- For a first offence, a player would receive a warning, fine and must undergo a mandatory course of education and/or counselling/treatment.
- For a second or subsequent offence, a player will receive a three-month suspension that can be reduced to one month if the player agrees to complete a course of education and/or counselling/treatment. This mirrors the WADA Code's 'substances of abuse' provision.
- For refusing to be tested or evading sample collection, a suspension in the range of 4 to 12 months would be imposed.

AGENTS

The FA's Football Agent Regulations provide the regulatory framework for governing the activity of football agents within its jurisdiction and apply alongside the FIFA Football Agent Regulations. The latest version of The FA's Football Agent Regulations can be found below:

www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/policies/player-status---agents

An individual wishing to perform football agent services on behalf of a player, coach or club in England must be registered with The FA. To register, they are also required to be a licensed football agent with FIFA, which can be achieved by passing the FIFA Football Agent Exam. A football agent registered with The FA who wishes to represent minors must receive authorisation in advance by providing an up-to-date, role-specific criminal record check that is reviewed by The FA.

English clubs are required to declare every football agent involved in a transaction to The FA and checks on this information form part of the registration process for every player registering with one of them. All representation agreements between football agents and players, coaches or clubs are also required to be lodged with The FA within 14 days of being signed.

The FA publishes a list of every football agent registered in England as well as a list of all disciplinary sanctions imposed against them, and both can be seen below:

www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/policies/player-status---agents/fa-registered-football-agents

The FA also publishes the total fees paid to football agents by each club and details of transactions involving a football agent annually. The latest lists are available below:

www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/policies/player-status---agents/football-agent-transactions

GOVERNING BODY ENDORSEMENTS

Players and non-playing staff who require the right to work in England must obtain a Governing Body Endorsement (GBE) from The FA. Once a GBE has been provided, the club must also complete the Home Office visa application process for the individual to be able to participate in English football.

In 2026, The FA proposed updated GBE criteria for men's and women's football to the UK Government alongside the Premier League, EFL, WSL and WSL 2, which the Home Office subsequently approved.

Male and female players without the right to work freely in England must meet certain requirements to obtain a GBE automatically, and some specific examples from the criteria of how they can achieve points are detailed below:

- Number of international appearances.
- Number of domestic minutes played.
- Number of continental minutes played.
- Final league position of their last club.
- Continental progression of their last club.
- League quality of their last club.

Players who fall short of the automatic threshold within the men's game have the ability to apply via the Elite Significant Contribution (ESC) Criteria. As of the 2026-27 season, an ESC applicant must be born on 1 January 2003 or after to be eligible for an ESC Place. Clubs in the Premier League and EFL Championship are eligible for up to four ESC Places, and those in the EFL League One and Two are eligible for up to two. These depend on the percentage of minutes played by their English Qualified Players (EQP) over the reporting period, and clubs who fail to reach the maximum of ESC Places through EQP minutes can receive additional places if they contribute players to the England Men's Seniors, Under 21 or Under 20 teams.

Clubs in the women's game can apply for an Exceptions Panel to review applications for players aged under 21 who do not meet the automatic points criteria. This panel is chaired by a legally qualified individual and contains subject experts (e.g. former players and/or coaches). Clubs must evidence that a player shows significant potential and are of elite quality to enhance English football's development.

For non-playing staff there are specific experience and qualification requirements that must be met in order to achieve a GBE automatically.

Should an individual not meet the automatic requirements set out in the criteria for players or non-playing staff, there is the potential for their club to request an Exceptions Panel.

The full men's and women's criteria are available below:

www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/policies/player-registration/points-based-system

SAFEGUARDING

English Football takes the safety and welfare of children, young people, and adults ‘at risk’ extremely seriously.

For many years, English football’s leadership authorities across the game have worked collaboratively on safeguarding. The shared and unequivocal goal has always been to ensure the game is safe, fun, and inclusive for all. Across every level of English football, The FA implements a programme of preventative safeguarding measures and all referrals into The FA are handled in line with its rigorous case management policies and procedures.

The FA’s 2024-2028 safeguarding strategy, *An Ever-Safer Culture*, outlines the ongoing work to drive safeguarding customs and practice across the game. The major stakeholders across the game, the Premier League, EFL, WSL Football, PFA, League Managers Association (LMA), Pro Ref, County FAs, leagues, and clubs, are all signed up to work to a common framework to:

- Provide effective governance and standards in safeguarding, overseeing the implementation of preventative safeguarding measures to deliver fun, safe, and welcoming football environments via policies, standards, and safer recruitment and practice guidance;
- Deliver impactful education programmes and activity to raise awareness, empower and create ever-safer football environments at all levels;
- Make the reporting of concerns as easy as possible, ensure concerns are investigated at the appropriate level and escalated to The FA where thresholds are met to be dealt with swiftly and thoroughly in conjunction with statutory agencies.

The FA employs a significant number of full-time safeguarding professionals. Some of these personnel drive preventative measures via policy, procedures, standards, safer recruitment, education and sharing guidance on safer working practice. These individuals also:

- Support the national network of those in designated safeguarding roles who work across the grassroots game, as well as working with the Premier League, EFL and WSL Football to support their respective designated safeguarding officer;
- Oversee safeguarding at The FA’s venues and events, across England teams and talent pathways, and all programmes and activities;
- Support safeguarding work in the NLS and The FA Women’s Football Pyramid.

The FA’s Safeguarding team manages all referrals and reported concerns and comprises safeguarding professionals with significant experience in social work, policing, the probation service, legal, and child protection in sport. They also work with statutory agencies and the relevant club or County FA in relation to investigations where appropriate. They assess people who pose, or may pose, a risk of harm to children and/or adults ‘at risk’, and put safeguards in place, including any suspensions from football and making referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service where necessary.

All County FAs operate to The FA’s Safeguarding 365 Standard, which is independently assessed. The County FAs also drive preventative safeguarding measures across the grassroots game; undertake safeguarding visits to clubs; make referrals to the appropriate authorities; and manage lower-level concerns.

The Premier League, EFL, and WSL Football undertake vital roles in guiding and supporting their clubs to meet the safeguarding standards. They also oversee and guide club safeguarding provisions. The 92 professional clubs, their respective club community organisations and County FAs are independently assessed against the respective safeguarding standards. Alongside this there are other audits that are undertaken across the men’s and women’s professional game, with the Premier League Charitable Fund and EFL in the Community overseeing and supporting safeguarding policy and practice across the vast network of club community programmes and activity.

The FA's processes are independently reviewed by NSPCC Sport to ensure that they meet the highest standard, and there's also scrutiny from The FA's Survivor Support and Safeguarding Advisory Group. This group offers essential learnings, checks, and challenges to this often-complex landscape, and forms part of The FA's proactive activities with victims, survivors, and those with 'lived experience'. The FA also provides access to counselling through Sporting Chance, offering practical assistance via a Benevolent Fund, and also co-funds a survivor advocate support service at the PFA.

Why Does The FA Not Publish Details on Safeguarding Cases?

The FA has the power to investigate any safeguarding concerns or allegations that take place within a football environment, or where there may be a transferrable potential risk of harm to children and/or adults 'at risk' in football. However, safeguarding cases are treated differently from The FA's football disciplinary cases and, as a result, it does not ordinarily comment publicly about individual safeguarding cases or investigations.

This policy is in place because safeguarding measures can be imposed for a wide range of reasons, and the publication of details can have serious consequences. This includes re-traumatising victims and/or causing them to re-live harmful abusive experiences. Vigilantism can also have harmful effects on innocent people connected to those involved in safeguarding cases.

The standard of proof required in The FA's safeguarding cases is based on the 'balance of probabilities', as opposed to the criminal requirement of 'beyond reasonable doubt'. Therefore, publishing details of safeguarding cases involving an individual who may not have been charged or convicted in a criminal case could lead to negative consequences. It is also important to remember that safeguarding suspensions do not always mean that sexual or serious abuse has taken place, but the public stigma is such that people often immediately link the two things.

Whilst The FA doesn't comment on individual safeguarding cases or investigations, it does ensure that the required action is taken in all cases and applies proportionate safeguards within its jurisdiction and in accordance with its Safeguarding Regulations.

The FA takes all safeguarding allegations and concerns very seriously and investigates each case within its jurisdiction thoroughly. Appropriate action is always taken against individuals who pose or may pose a risk of harm to children and adults 'at risk' in football. Risk management measures can include issuing safeguarding suspensions in accordance with our regulations.

The 2024-2028 strategy, An Ever-Safer Culture, and more information is available at:

www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding

COUNTY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS

There are 50 County Football Associations (FAs), and they are shown below:

- Amateur Football Alliance
- Army FA
- Bedfordshire FA
- Berks & Bucks FA
- Birmingham FA
- Cambridgeshire FA
- Cheshire FA
- Cornwall FA
- Cumberland FA
- Derbyshire FA
- Devon FA
- Dorset FA
- Durham FA
- East Riding FA
- Essex FA
- Gloucestershire FA
- Guernsey FA
- Hampshire FA
- Herefordshire FA
- Hertfordshire FA
- Huntingdonshire FA
- Isle of Man FA
- Jersey FA
- Kent FA
- Lancashire FA
- Leicestershire & Rutland FA
- Lincolnshire FA
- Liverpool FA
- London FA
- Manchester FA
- Middlesex FA
- Norfolk FA
- Northamptonshire FA
- North Riding FA
- Northumberland FA
- Nottinghamshire FA
- Oxfordshire FA
- RAF FA
- Royal Navy FA
- Sheffield & Hallamshire FA
- Shropshire FA
- Somerset FA
- Staffordshire FA
- Suffolk FA
- Surrey FA
- Sussex FA
- Westmorland FA
- West Riding FA
- Wiltshire FA
- Worcestershire FA

46 of these County FAs are geographically based, including three islands (Guernsey FA, Isle of Man FA, and Jersey FA), and four are non-geographically based (Amateur Football Alliance, Army FA, RAF FA, and Royal Navy FA).

Each County FA is responsible for delivering local football in its area. This can include promoting participation; ensuring accessible opportunities across all formats; growing diversity and inclusion; ensuring equal opportunities to play; and creating a fun and safe environment for all. County FAs, like The FA, are not-for-profit, and any surplus money generated is reinvested in football.

County FAs govern the game within their local area by affiliating clubs; sanctioning leagues; running local cup competitions; and implementing The FA's Rules and Regulations. This includes administering yellow and red cards and investigating, charging, and appointing a disciplinary panel to hear misconduct cases. They are also responsible for recruiting disciplinary commission members who possess the correct attributes to maintain the integrity and perception of the disciplinary process. 70% of the County FA network now outsource their discipline function to an external provider, with 23 County FAs outsourcing to The FA itself.

The FA was the first national governing body in English sport to introduce a Regional Code of Governance. Tier 3 of Sport England's Code of Governance is the current gold standard for national governing bodies across England, but The FA's Regional Code of Governance builds upon this and sets a higher precedent. It lays out several diversity and inclusion requirements – including gender and ethnic diversity of County FA boards – to ensure those leading and working at these organisations better reflect the communities that they serve, and it has been mandatory for County FAs to be compliant with this from the 2025-26 season.

The respective County FA contact details can be accessed at:

www.EnglandFootball.com/explore/county-football-associations

