

**Press Release**

Embargo: 09:30 am on 10 June 2019.

**England Futsal Captain and Head Coach support new bespoke funding scheme from The FA**

* **The FA to invest £300,000 into the development of Futsal in England**
* **Grants of £1,500 available towards the creation of new Futsal leagues**

The leaders of England’s Futsal team are hoping new investment from The Football Association [The FA] will help to oversee a boom in the sport across the country.

A new funding scheme, which is being delivered by the Football Foundation, will see £300,000 made available to County Football Associations, FA-affiliated clubs, youth and adult football leagues looking to create either one or two new Futsal leagues within their local areas.

Applicants will be eligible for grants of £1,500 per league and able to use the money towards associated costs such as facility hire; equipment; referees and FA-affiliated courses.

**Michael Skubala, Head Coach of the England Futsal team**, said: “The FA recognises Futsal’s increasing importance and popularity, so this scheme is a fantastic way to help continue its growth up and down the country.

“We’re extremely excited at the prospect of even more players and coaches in England being given the ways and means to take up and benefit from the sport.”

**Raoni Medina, Captain of the England Futsal team**, said: “In the past, there simply weren’t that many opportunities to play Futsal competitively in England or to realise the positive effects the sport can have on your playing technique.

“It’s great to see The FA acknowledge Futsal’s value and growing interest by giving people of different ages and abilities more chances to play in leagues across the country.”

Futsal is a variant of association football, normally played on a hard indoor pitch with hockey-sized goals and a harder ball with reduced bounce. Considered a version of 5-a-side, the exciting, fast-paced game is played across the world and is officially recognised by both UEFA and FIFA with progression to national teams in European Championships and World Cups.

A number of football’s biggest names credit Futsal as playing a significant role in their professional football development, with Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Xavi Hernandez and Ronaldinho having all played the sport in their younger years.

***To apply for a Futsal grant, please visit*** [***the Football Foundation website***](https://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/scheme-closed/)***.***

*ENDS*

For media enquires only, please contact:

* Dan King, Football Foundation, on 0345 345 4555 Ext: 4275 or daniel.king@footballfoundation.org.uk
* Tom Everett, The FA, on 0844 980 8200 Ext: 4684 or
tom.everett@thefa.com

**Notes to editors:**

Founded in 2000, the Football Foundation is the largest sports charity in the UK funded by the Premier League, The FA and Government, via Sport England. It develops new and refurbished grassroots sports facilities in order to improve the quality and experience of playing sport at the grassroots level. Since it was launched in 2000, the Foundation has awarded over 16,100 grants worth more than £669m towards improving grassroots sport, which it has used to attract additional partnership funding of £878m – totalling over £1.5bn of investment into the grassroots game.

By providing more high-quality facilities, coupled with coaching at the appropriate age group, the Football Foundation aims to improve the experience for regular players as well as attracting new players to the game. Many of the new state-of-the-art facilities will serve to strengthen the connection between professional football clubs and their local communities, particularly in the most deprived areas of the country, through the professional clubs’ community trusts’ outreach work.