

# TIME FOR CHANGE

THE FA STRATEGY 2020-2024



# INTRODUCTION

## FOOTBALL IS A GAME FOR ALL, WHERE ANYONE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.

That might seem a bold claim. But we know it is true. Just look at how football steps up when times are tough. It provides education and empowerment, escapism and enjoyment. Promoting health and well-being, and the power of teamwork. And with our new strategy for 2020-2024, we have a plan for all. Positively impacting every community across the country. Everyone can win if we build on the progress made over the previous four seasons.

We've moved forward in every area, modernising our organisation to serve a game for all. We have a great platform to build on. We will keep pushing forward.

**It's time to deliver real change.**

**FIND OUT MORE IN OUR MANIFESTO**



Since 2016, we doubled the number of women and girls playing and watching.



And saw encouraging performances from young and exciting England teams.



We created more youth teams, helped build more facilities - driving record investment back into football.





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Part one

# CEO FOREWORD



Mark Bullingham

**We are ready to change  
the game for the better.  
It's time.**



**O**ur new strategic plan through to 2024 aims to take The FA and English football forward with bold leadership and ambitious targets to build on the progress of the past four years.

We cannot do it alone. Our vision remains to bring all parts of the game even closer together and leave a nation inspired. We have a unique ability to unite all parts of society – just cast your mind back to Russia 2018 or France 2019, when men's and women's FIFA World Cup fervour gripped the nation.

Using our people and culture as the catalyst, we achieved some amazing things on our mission to rebuild The FA as a world class organisation - from doubling participation in the women's and girls' game to registering more than one million of our grassroots players online – a material step into the digital age. Looking towards 2024, our strategic plan builds on those strong foundations.

**W**e have set out our six Game Changer objectives and eight Serve the Game objectives. These demonstrate our determination to substantially change the fabric of the game and address key societal issues.

In England, football must be a game where the opportunities for every girl to play are the same as for every boy.

A game in which, wherever you live, you have easy access to a great, affordable facility on which to play.

A game run by the latest digital tools – easily administered from a phone as part of everyday life, lessening the burden on our wonderful volunteers.

**F**ootball must be a game which embraces diversity and battles discrimination. Everyone must be made to feel welcome on our pitches and our terraces. Discrimination is an unacceptable societal issue that football must play a key role in tackling.

A game where our competitions, led by the Emirates FA Cup, Vitality Women's FA Cup and the Barclays FA Women's Super League, continue to be valued and revered at home and abroad.

Nothing would unite the country more than celebrating a major tournament victory by a senior England team. We must create the best chance for this to happen, through world class support and a seamless player pathway.

**I**n delivering this strategy, we'll seize on the remarkable togetherness and resilience our national game has shown in the face of COVID-19 and use it as a force for good.

As a not-for-profit governing body, we've had to make difficult financial decisions to future-proof ourselves from the impact of the pandemic, yet with this strategy we are reaffirming our intent to shoot for these ambitious goals which, if achieved, will improve the health and wellbeing of millions of individuals.



Impacting communities, realising the benefits that come with a healthier and more engaged population - football can deliver huge positive change across the country.



**Mark Bullingham**  
Chief executive, The FA



Part two

# STATS OF THE GAME





# TOTAL PLAYERS

14.1m

WOMEN

3.4m

10.6m

MEN

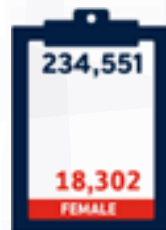
# TOTAL AFFILIATED TEAMS



102,410

# TOTAL COACHES

since 2010



9%

FROM A BAME BACKGROUND

# TOTAL REFEREES

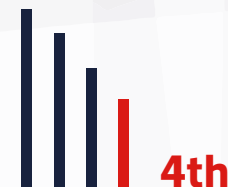


27,451

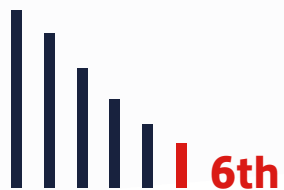
1,718 FEMALE

FROM A BAME BACKGROUND 9.5%

# MEN'S SENIOR FIFA RANKING



# WOMEN'S SENIOR FIFA RANKING



# VOLUNTEERS DBS CHECKED TO WORK IN FOOTBALL



75,427

# GOOD QUALITY PITCHES



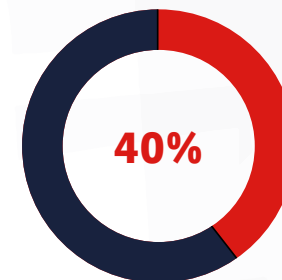
# HIGH QUALITY GIRLS' LEAGUE OFFER IN COUNTY FAs



56%

# SCHOOLS OFFERING FOOTBALL TO GIRLS

EXTRA-CURRICULAR



# TV AUDIENCES

## EMIRATES FA CUP (2018-19)

121.4m

## VITALITY WOMEN'S FA CUP (2018-19)

3.9m

## BARCLAYS FA WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE (2018-19)

2.4m



Part three

# **STATE OF THE GAME**

We enter this strategy in one of the most challenging periods for The FA, football and indeed society.



**T**he COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to all areas of our game, requiring us to make difficult decisions to recover from an anticipated £300m loss.

However, thanks to the strong base created over the last four years we are better positioned than many to weather the storm.

**O**ur England teams have experienced a renaissance, rekindling the nation's love for the national game.

We secured record broadcast and commercial deals enabling us to double our redistributions back into the game. We've seen the women's and girls' game double both on and off the pitch (spectators and viewers).

We evolved our governance structures and modernised our administration of the game, building trusted relationships with our stakeholders.

We've developed our people, our culture and have taken some important steps on our journey for greater diversity and inclusion.

We invested in the infrastructure of Wembley and St. George's Park to retain their world class status while also moving our digital footprint forward with the introduction of a suite of new products such as Matchday.

**Y**et COVID-19 and its longer-term impact remains the most pressing threat. No one can be certain when we will once again experience a 90,000 sell-out crowd at Wembley, or courses and classrooms full of learners, or clubhouses bustling with volunteers to support the return of many hundreds of thousands of players that have not toggled out since February 2020.

Depending on how long this ambiguity remains, it may restrict what we can achieve over the next four years. Yet, we remain steadfast in our belief in the objectives outlined in this strategy, even if they end up requiring longer to achieve.

**E**ven before the onset of the pandemic, we could see other challenges on the horizon. The future structure of the professional club game, both domestically and internationally, is in flux.

The linear broadcast market is widely expected to have peaked. The technology that underpins the administration of the game in England is creaking and needs replacing. The 'Black Lives Matter' movement prompted us to self-reflect and acknowledge, like many other institutions in society, that we can do even more to tackle discrimination.

Safeguarding failings of the past continue to remind us that we cannot relent in the protection of current players. The importance of mental health and wellbeing in the game is ever more pressing, and we must continue our search for answers on why there is a link between football and neurodegenerative disease - adapting where required.

**A**s we enter a new cycle full of major milestones including 150 years of our England teams and the Emirates FA Cup, ten years of St. George's Park and 100 years of Wembley, we're ready to remind the nation of football's remarkable power as a force for good.





Part four

# OUR STRATEGY





# VISION

## UNITE THE GAME, INSPIRE THE NATION

# MISSION

CHANGE THE GAME TO MAXIMISE ITS IMPACT

SERVE THE GAME TO DELIVER FOOTBALL FOR ALL

### GAME CHANGER OBJECTIVES



WIN A MAJOR  
TOURNAMENT



SERVE 2M+ THROUGH  
A TRANSFORMED  
DIGITAL PLATFORM



ENSURE EQUAL  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
EVERY GIRL



DELIVER 5,000  
QUALITY PITCHES



A GAME FREE FROM  
DISCRIMINATION



MAXIMISE THE  
APPEAL AND REVENUE  
OF THE FA CUPS AND  
BFAWSL

### SERVE OBJECTIVES



TRUSTED,  
PROGRESSIVE  
REGULATION AND  
ADMINISTRATION



SAFE AND INCLUSIVE  
FOOTBALL PATHWAYS  
AND ENVIRONMENT



PERSONALISED  
AND CONNECTED  
LEARNING  
EXPERIENCES



MAXIMUM  
INVESTMENT INTO  
THE GAME



DIVERSE,  
HIGH-PERFORMING  
WORKFORCE AND  
INCLUSIVE CULTURE



WORLD CLASS  
VENUES AND  
EVENTS



STRONG  
REPUTATION AND  
CLEAR BRAND  
IDENTITY



TECHNOLOGY  
ENABLED AND  
INSIGHT DRIVEN

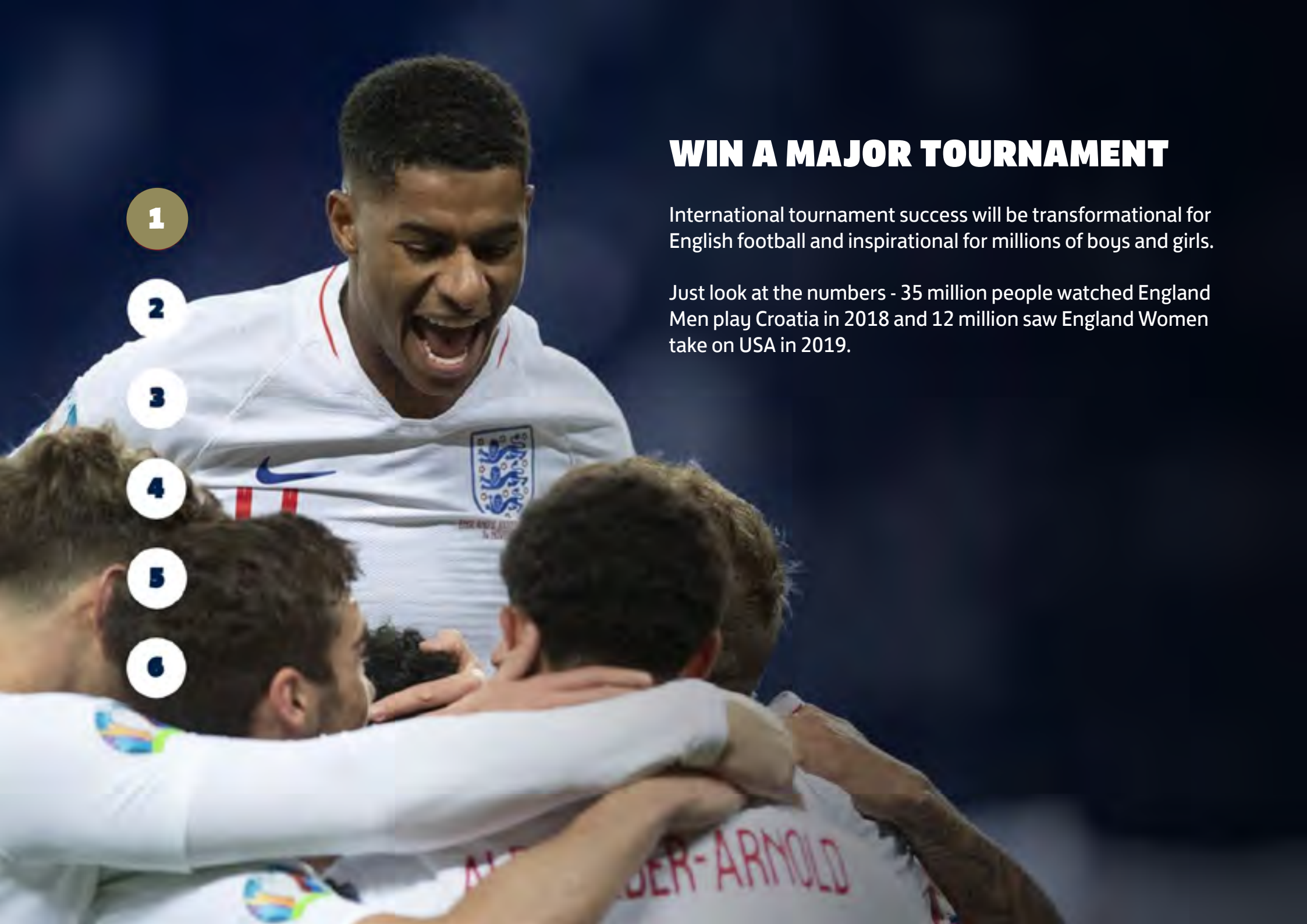


Part five

# GAME CHANGER OBJECTIVES

Our new strategy and its six Game Changer objectives reflect our purpose. We believe we can change the fabric of the game and tackle long-term issues, to make the largest possible impact in the years ahead. These issues are unlikely to be solved within four years, but working collaboratively with clarity and conviction we can make a material step in the right direction.





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## WIN A MAJOR TOURNAMENT

International tournament success will be transformational for English football and inspirational for millions of boys and girls.

Just look at the numbers - 35 million people watched England Men play Croatia in 2018 and 12 million saw England Women take on USA in 2019.



A female football player in a white England kit is celebrating with her arms outstretched. The kit features the England crest and a Nike logo. The background is a blurred stadium scene.

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To achieve our ambition by 2024, we'll strive to deliver the best possible international team operations, coaching and development environment at St. George's Park; continue to work with our partners in the game to enhance a talent pathway that gives players the best development opportunities; and foster an inclusive and empowering culture among winning England teams.

**FIND OUT MORE HERE**





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## SERVE 2M+ THROUGH A TRANSFORMED DIGITAL PLATFORM

In a modern digital world, playing and volunteering in football should be made as easy as possible. Saving hours spent in administration will allow for more time on the pitch or touchline enjoying the game itself; and more direct digital interaction in the game will allow us greater insight with which to meet the needs of all.

To achieve this ambition by 2024, we will ensure over two million individuals benefit from a transformed and easy-to-use digital platform to help them participate in and run the game.

**FIND OUT MORE HERE** 





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## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERY GIRL

In the last few years we've seen tremendous growth in women's and girls' football, but there is so much more to do. Ensuring every girl has the same chance as every boy to play football both at school, and in a local club, is an absolute must.

To achieve this ambition by 2024, we will work in partnership with schools and teachers to provide tailored programmes and training; we will ensure all girls (5-16 years of age) have easy access to an inclusive club with an appropriate competitive pathway (including our innovative Wildcats programme, supported by new partner Weetabix).

**FIND OUT MORE HERE**



# DELIVER 5,000 QUALITY PITCHES

Without a good quality pitch to play on there can be no game. The poor quality and availability of our pitches remains the number one frustration in grassroots football and an embarrassment for our country. Significantly improving the quality and durability of our grass pitches and building more artificial pitches is a necessity.

To achieve this ambition by 2024, we will work with the Premier League and Government, and through our delivery partner the Football Foundation, to build and improve 5000 pitches across England, including using new digital methods to support ground staff up and down the country.

**FIND OUT MORE HERE**







## A GAME FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION

For any individual or group to suffer discrimination is just not acceptable. We cannot solve a societal issue on our own but as the national governing body we promise to bring the full weight of our influence to deliver a game free of discrimination.

The positive steps demonstrated through our In Pursuit of Progress initiative since 2018 and creating the Football Leadership Diversity Code are just the start and, we will build on this momentum.

To achieve this ambition by 2024 we will ensure everyone in the game can be confident of reporting abuse irrespective of where it takes place (on or off the pitch), while our updated sanctions framework will give us the ability to accurately reflect the severity of each incident.

We will continue to build a diverse workforce from the inside out and work with partners to promote positive behaviours and empower visible diverse role models across the game. For example, we will continue to develop our industry leading Elite Coach Placement Programme in collaboration with the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) to continue to grow the talent pipeline of historically underrepresented coaches working at the top level of the game.

**FIND OUT MORE HERE**





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## MAXIMISE THE APPEAL AND REVENUE OF THE FA CUPS AND BFAWSL

The Emirates FA Cup, Vitality Women's FA Cup and the Barclays FA Women's Super League are exciting and inspiring competitions whose influence and commercial values are essential to our ability to invest and develop the game. A source of pride to us all – growing their reach and maximising their value will enable us to deliver so much across all our ambitions.

To achieve this ambition by 2024, we will work collaboratively with clubs, broadcasters and commercial partners to ensure that the reach both domestically and internationally of each competition is maximised, in turn driving revenue that can help to deliver our game-changing investments. For example, we are rolling out a global marketing programme to deliver bespoke live clips to fans via social media, reaching beyond our borders to engage hundreds of millions of people across the globe.

**FIND OUT MORE HERE**





Part six

# SERVE OBJECTIVES

These Game Changers are underpinned by our eight Serve objectives, ensuring we maintain brilliant business-as-usual services to support the growing and evolving needs of the game. These objectives are at the heart of any progressive national governing body.

**FIND OUT MORE HERE**



# TRUSTED, PROGRESSIVE REGULATION & ADMINISTRATION

Every player, club and competition requires an FA it can trust – to regulate and support them with transparency and consistency, ensuring integrity and fairness for all.

We will continue to serve the game, by ensuring that the rules, regulations and disciplinary processes continue to meet the highest standards. Through our new refereeing strategy, we will continue the development of our world class refereeing workforce.

We will progress with the introduction of dedicated anti-discrimination officers at grassroots level to ensure that cases are thoroughly investigated and prosecuted at the same level as they are in the professional game. We will maintain a focus on fostering the sustainability of clubs and leagues across the men's and women's game.

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## SAFE & INCLUSIVE FOOTBALL PATHWAYS & ENVIRONMENT

Football should always feel like a fun and safe experience for every participant at any level. This is our core responsibility and central to how we serve the game.

By 2024 we will support every County FA, club, league and programme to ensure they offer participation and opportunities with the highest standards of inclusivity, safeguarding and respect.

We will continue to champion, along with the domestic and international football authorities, the search for answers and, where required, solutions to the troubling incidence of neurodegenerative disease in ex-professional footballers.

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A man and a young girl are looking at a tablet together. The man is on the left, looking at the tablet. The girl is on the right, holding the tablet and looking at it. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a car and some buildings.

## PERSONALISED & CONNECTED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The way we educate and learn is changing rapidly. We must ensure the football family of coaches, technical experts and volunteers have the best opportunities to continuously learn and practice their skills so they can serve the game to the best of their abilities.

By 2024, we will deliver a personalised digitally-inclusive learning pathway and platform to ensure every participant has the opportunity to maximise their potential and enhance the experience of others.

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## MAXIMUM INVESTMENT INTO THE GAME

We are a not-for-profit organisation that is fortunate to operate from a strong financial and commercial base, affording us the opportunity to invest in the game where it needs it most.

We can best serve the game by maximising our partnerships, identifying new and protecting existing revenue streams, and delivering sound management to ensure we can continue to invest strategically back into the game.

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# DIVERSE, HIGH-PERFORMING WORKFORCE & INCLUSIVE CULTURE

We have a fantastic team of capable, well-motivated and resilient experts. We need to invest in these brilliant individuals to continue to build our positive, inclusive culture, that develops leaders and supports the County FAs and our growing women's game. Our work with the Football Leadership Diversity Code demonstrates a commitment to improve the diversity throughout all areas of the game.

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## WORLD CLASS VENUES & EVENTS

Wembley Stadium and St. George's Park are two iconic venues for elite performance and major events. They deliver memorable moments and inject innovation to fuel the success of our England teams and football itself.

By 2024, we will continue to ensure they serve the game by investing to optimise their facilities and service, to ensure every experience for fans and players is special, and by bidding for and hosting some of the most iconic events in world football.

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# STRONG REPUTATION & CLEAR BRAND IDENTITY

A strong reputation is vital to enable us to achieve our objectives. We recognise the breadth of our remit and role, which can lead to a lack of understanding of all the work that we do. It's our responsibility to change that by having a clearer brand structure and narrative.

We have an opportunity to serve the game by telling our stories well to inspire others, using the phenomenal power of our brands.

By 2024, underpinned by a clear brand structure, we will have improved the reputation of the organisation and increased direct engagement with fans and participants.

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## TECHNOLOGY ENABLED & INSIGHT DRIVEN

Technology to make the experience of all participants relevant and easy is already at the heart of how we can serve the game.

By 2024, we will upgrade and simplify our core football administration system (moving from Whole Game System to Platform for Football) and provide enhanced capability to England teams.

We will continue to strive to know more about the game, driving evidence-based decision-making through the use of data-led insight across the organisation.

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To learn more about the work we are doing to serve the game, while changing it for the better, **head to [TheFA.com](https://www.thefa.com).**