



Rt Hon Damian Green MP
Chair, DCMS Select Committee
House of Commons
London
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31st March 2023

Dear Damian,

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee's session on football governance on 28th March. As I expressed to the Committee, The FA supports independent financial regulation of football clubs, and we look forward to working closely with the Government on next steps.

I committed to send the Committee additional Information on two subjects.

Current Diversity Statistics for The FA

Rupa Huq MP asked if The FA is a diverse and inclusive organisation, and I said that I would be happy to share our data with the Committee.

By way of context, Diversity and Inclusion is at the very heart of delivering our core purpose of Uniting the Game and Inspiring the Nation. Our EDI Strategy for 2021-24 ('A Game For All') can be found here: <https://www.thefa.com/news/2021/oct/08/a-game-for-all-fa-equality-diversity-inclusion-strategy-2021-2024-20210810>. It includes three key commitments:

- 1) Lead the Change – by actively tackling discrimination on and off the pitch;
- 2) Be the Change – by building a diverse workforce from the inside out;
- 3) Inspiring the Change – by promoting an inclusive and united game which is for all.

To BE the change, we are striving to ensure that our own organisation is representative of the diversity of our country. As an employer, we want to create a safe, healthy and inclusive environment where everyone can be themselves. In our general workforce, 39% of staff are female, 8% have a disclosed disability, and 15% are from Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnic backgrounds. In our leadership, 38% are female and 7% are from Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnic backgrounds.



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In terms of the FA Council, 19% of members are female, 16% have a disclosed disability, and 15% are from Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnic backgrounds and the Board is 33% female, and 33% are from Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnic backgrounds. We have yet to appoint someone with a disclosed disability.

Whilst we still have some way to go to reflect society's diversity, we have seen demonstrable progress against our targets over recent times – and have set ourselves some ambitious targets going forward. In our general workforce, by 2028, we have set a target for 50% of our staff to be female and 20% to be from Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnic backgrounds. In terms of our leadership roles, by 2028, we have a target for 50% to be female and 18% from Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnic backgrounds. For all employees, by 2028, we have a target for 13% to have disclosed disabilities. In terms of the FA Council, by 2028, we have a target for 40 % of members to be female and 18% to be from Black, Asian, mixed or other ethnic backgrounds (we will agree a target on disclosed disabilities in due course). We have made good progress with the diversity of our Board in the last 12 months, albeit it needs progress in female representation and disclosed disability.

Whilst we do not have a specific target for LGBTQ+ in our organisation, we do monitor our progress here too. We also don't yet capture socioeconomic factors across any of these categories and are giving consideration as to how we best do that.

We have several programmes to accelerate our progress, for example, we partner with specialist diversity recruitment agencies to ensure a broader range of candidates consider us as their future employer. We have also implemented initiatives such as reverse mentoring, positive action programmes and high potential development groups.

I hope you can see that setting targets and holding ourselves to account has made a notable contribution to improving the diversity of who we are today. It is also important to note that this will always be underpinned by the principle of meritocracy and a healthy culture where difference is appreciated and understood.

FA Investment in Grassroots

During our session on football governance, we also discussed the importance of redistributing money through the entire football pyramid, and I committed to Clive Efford MP that I would provide some further detail on the £81m that The FA invests into the grassroots game every year. This figure includes:

- £18m to support the development of grassroots facilities through the Football Foundation;
- £14m to support participation in male, female, and disability football;
- £13m to support the football workforce and safeguarding; and
- £36m net investment in and through Country Football Associations and Education Partners

We wholeheartedly support Tracey Crouch's comments during the earlier session when she said that wealth distribution to the grassroots is exceptionally important. Grassroots football is the most popular team sport in the country, with over 14 million people playing every year. Research shows grassroots football contributes £10bn to society annually, including £1.6bn in healthcare savings.

We know that it can have a transformative impact on people's physical and mental wellbeing, and on tackling obesity in children. Without a reset in its financing, and a monitoring of the quantum of funds directed to grassroots, we run the risk that it gets left behind, and in the long term, this will detrimentally impact the success of our professional game too.

Be assured that we will continue to play our part in bringing football together to ensure that the redistribution is across the whole of the pyramid, from the top to the bottom.

I do hope that this information is helpful. I am copying this letter to all members of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee and should there any further points of clarity required please do not hesitate to let us know.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie Hewitt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'D'.

Debbie Hewitt MBE
Chair
The Football Association