



● ● ● **BRINGING
OPPORTUNITIES TO
COMMUNITIES**



A PLAN TO INCREASE ASIAN INCLUSION IN FOOTBALL





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“As an Asian player and manager from East London I see both under-representation in the game but also lots of potential talent. We need the game to work together to make opportunities more visible, especially to young people. They will do the rest themselves”

Anwar Uddin

Former player at West Ham United, Bristol Rovers, Dagenham & Redbridge, and Barnet. Current assistant manager at Maldon & Tiptree

1

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades CFAs, voluntary groups, governing bodies, individuals and campaigns collectively have made positive efforts towards addressing the underrepresentation of Asians across all levels of football.

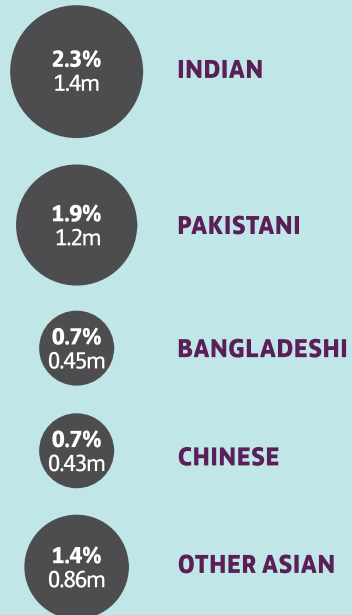
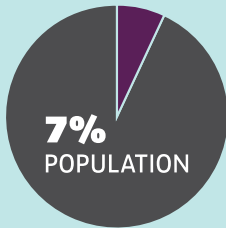
The issue of the underrepresentation of Asian communities in football has been well recognised and documented over the last few decades. In 1996, author and activist Jas Bains, on behalf of the National Asians in Football Forum, published a seminal report entitled 'Asians Can't Play Football'. This report gave an in-depth narrative on the issue from key community football clubs at the time, such as Albion Sports and Punjabi Wolves. In 2005, he penned a follow-up report entitled 'Asians Can Play Football' which stated that after a decade of activity to address the situation there was still very little representation in terms of the number of professional players, individuals within the hierarchy and structure of the game and active match-goers from Asian communities. The women's game had also been recognised as being unrepresentative of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, especially so of Asian women and girls.

In 2005, The Football Association (FA) published a document entitled 'Asians in Football', outlining what work was being done at that time, including examples of good practice to raise awareness of this issue

across the game. In 2009, The FA commissioned Dr. Jim Lusted to co-ordinate a research project on the work, understanding, engagement and knowledge that County Football Associations (CFAs) had around Asian and Muslim women and girls in football. Over the last two decades CFAs, voluntary groups, governing bodies, individuals and campaigns collectively have made positive efforts towards addressing the underrepresentation of Asians across all levels of football.

These and other flag bearers for change, such as Kick It Out, the National Asians in Football Forum, Sporting Equals, the Muslim Women's Sports Foundation, the Black and Asian Coaches Association, Show Racism the Red Card, the Asian Football Awards and the Asian Football Network to name but a few, should be recognised for raising awareness of this issue and influencing the mind-set of the game, although it is generally agreed that there is still a significant journey ahead. The following pages will go some way to confirming this notion but also highlight the steps being taken to create positive change.

OVER
4
MILLION
ASIAN
PEOPLE
IN THE UK



According to 2011 census data

2

THE ISSUE AND THE OPPORTUNITY

The Asian communities make up the largest ethnic group in the country. With over 4 million people, these groups constitute 7% of the population. This includes:

Indian 2.3% (1.4m), Pakistani 1.9% (1.2m), Bangladeshi 0.7% (0.45m), Chinese 0.7%, (0.43m), Other Asian 1.4%, (0.86m)

Football is widely considered England's national sport, yet only a small proportion of Asian communities participate in the structured game – whether as players, coaches or referees.

Over recent seasons only 5-10 professional Asian players have played in the professional leagues.

The FA has set a target of 10% of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) FA registered referees and 10% BAME Level 1 and Level 2 coaches. Currently the number of people 'self-declaring'* as BAME is 4% for referees and 6% for coaches (2013-14). At the higher levels of coaching qualifications, the COACH bursary programme, supported by all the football bodies has provided a vehicle to increase the number of BAME coaches seeking to work at the elite end of the game.

* Within affiliated football The FA carries out equality monitoring, where referees and coaches are asked about age, ethnicity, gender, faith, sexual orientation, disability and gender reassignment, known as 'self-declaring'. Currently there is a considerable number of people who do not self-declare their background for various reasons therefore BAME representation could be higher. We aim to increase people's confidence in providing us with this data, so that we have accurate data in place.

The opportunity to bridge this gap will provide several benefits:

- Create a platform for cross-community integration through football;
- Deliver a healthier lifestyle choice for individuals and families through football, against the trend of higher health risks across Asian and other BAME communities;
- Develop a wider talent pool for English football to track all the way up to men's and women's national senior teams;
- Provide better representation from Asian communities and more confidence that structured football is an inclusive environment.

Today, many Asian communities have adopted football as their sport of choice. However, The FA must help ensure divisions are not created or reinforced, and football played by Asians is part of the mainstream game.

3

WHAT GUIDES THIS PLAN?

Much positive work has been undertaken to create an inclusive environment in football for people from Asian and other BAME communities. This has been achieved by individual organisations and not as part of a wider coordinated approach. The FA is now looking to help create a network of projects across the country and to consolidate some of the good work that already exists.

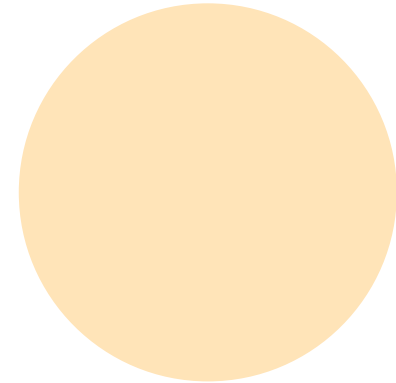
This plan is aligned to other programmes currently under way including English Football's Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Action Plan and The Chairman's Commission. The Chairman's Commission encourages the development of home grown players across all communities and better grassroots and community access to facilities. This makes Asian inclusion particularly relevant.

Within English Football's Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Action Plan the specific targets relating to Asian Inclusion are:

- implementing programmes to increase the number of Asian boys and girls playing football;

- implementing talent development programmes aimed at Asian women, girls, men and boys through Community Development Centres (CDCs) alongside County Football Associations (CFAs);
- promoting Asian male and female role models and diversifying the pool of recruitment officers responsible for talent identification, from within the Asian community;
- supporting the recruitment and talent development of Asian boys and girls;

The lack of professional Asian players is often the most talked about area of Asian representation; however this plan is focused on the *grassroots game*. Professional football is only a very small part of the game, making up less than 1% of the player base. Supporting grassroots football will naturally support more representation into the professional game over the longer term and this is an area which The FA can have greater impact on, therefore where efforts have been focussed.



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VISION, OBJECTIVE, STRATEGY AND OWNERSHIP

THE VISION

For Asian communities to be proportionately represented throughout structured football in England.

THE OBJECTIVE

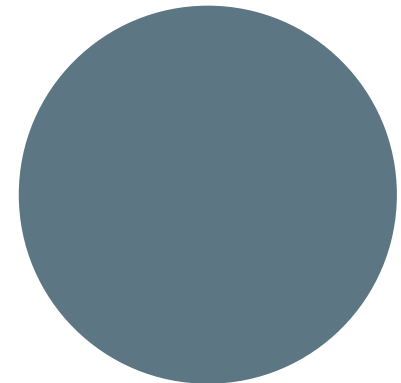
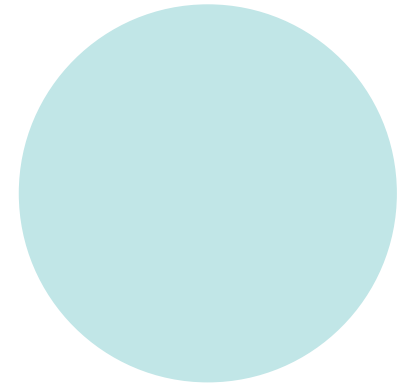
Initially from 2014-2018, to provide practical initiatives, support and guidance which break down barriers – real or perceived – and bring more equal opportunities for Asian communities across mainstream football, and to see positive measurable change.

THE STRATEGY

To create projects and programmes nationally which enable CFAs and existing clubs and organisations to develop their infrastructure and participation levels, often known as ‘capacity-building’. The FA will also build and consult with a monitored network of contacts across the game to encourage self-development and determination. The FA has adopted a holistic approach to this work to be carried out in partnership with stakeholders across the game as there is no single solution or reason for Asian underrepresentation.

OWNERSHIP

Although The FA will lead and co-ordinate much of this work, it will be delivered on a day-to-day basis by local stakeholders who will ultimately be the benefactors of its success.



5

CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK

In August through to September 2014, The FA delivered eight consultation forums in the most densely populated Asian communities in the country*. These were held in east London, west London, Luton, Leicester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Burnley and Bradford.

Each consultation lasted around 90 minutes and began with The FA presenting some general ideas around how football could collectively affect the underrepresentation of Asians in the grassroots game. At the forums, with the help of discussion group facilitators from local communities who were familiar with the structure of the game, face-to-face consultation with a total of 402 people took place and 1,236 pieces of feedback collated.

Each forum was split into four discussion groups looking at:

- women's and girls' participation centres
- communications
- a grassroots club support programme
- Talent ID Best Practice Days
- Community Development Centres (CDCs).

It is this feedback (summarised in the following pages) that has ultimately shaped and informed this document.

*Information based on the Office of National Statistics (ONS) data.



CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK

REPRESENTATION

Feedback...

Asians want to compete on merit in mainstream football and not via a specific Asian pathway.

Response...

None of The FA's activities will be Asian only. They will be inclusive, but will target Asian communities, CFAs and professional clubs. Capacity building will be within mainstream leagues and in partnership with CFAs.

COST

Feedback...

Ensuring that football is affordable is very important.

Response...

The FA will share details of relevant funding streams with community partners and will work to make sure that partnership activities are sustainable and supported by other local stakeholders.

COMMUNICATION

Feedback ...

You want more communication from The FA, so you are in the loop with developments and opportunities within the game such as funding, football development, job opportunities and so on.

Response...

As well as an e-newsletter, there will be increased communication through other channels – and more frequently – such as via Twitter and a bespoke web page.

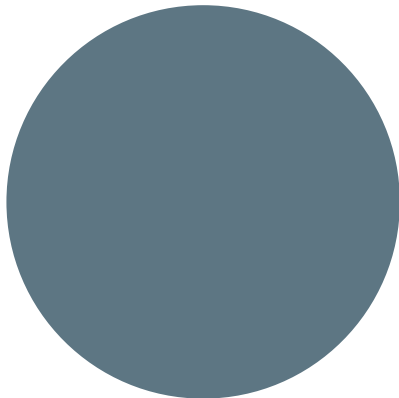
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Feedback...

That ensuring Asian parents are made aware of football's structure is an important factor in attracting and retaining Asian participation.

Response...

All proposed programmes will have a parental element within which will feature education on the structure of the grassroots game to give a better understanding of how they can get more involved and to best help support their children's development. This information will come via literature, online and at CDCs.



CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK CONTINUED

EDUCATION AND SIGNPOSTING

Feedback...

Informing Asian communities about the unclear structure and pathways within football is critical to talent development.

Response...

Proposed programmes, initiatives and pathways within the game will be actively promoted through local and national networks.

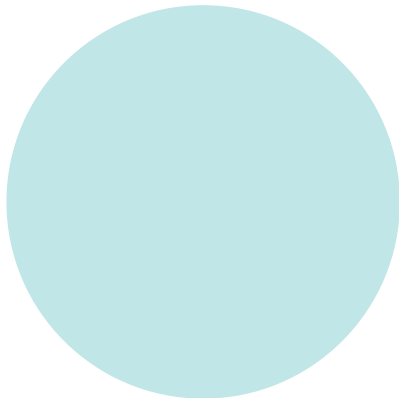
PROFESSIONAL GAME SUPPORT

Feedback...

Although plans shared at grassroots level are understood, the involvement of the professional game is crucial to the Talent ID activities.

Response...

Active efforts to engage professional football voluntarily with this work will be made, at both performance and community levels. Within these activities we will be networking community contacts and professional clubs to form longer term local relationships.



At each forum attendees were given the opportunity to post comments on the proposed activities. Feedback was categorised into:

- Positive - generally in favour of - for example CDCs
- Negative - generally against the Idea
- Alternatives - suggesting a different version of that activity
- Don't Know - factors not directly related to that activity but still things that need to be addressed

Approximately 75% of this feedback was positive, with lots of suggestions as to what priority areas should be or how our activities could be tweaked. The statistics are based on the feedback attendees gave as an average across the country and the images have been taken from initiatives The FA has been involved in aimed at increasing inclusion from the Asian community. All quotes were taken anonymously.

QUOTES FROM THE CONSULTATIONS

Quotes taken from undisclosed feedback forms.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

“Pro clubs won’t come to see our kids, without them you will never make a breakthrough.”

Consultation at West Ham United



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

“It doesn’t matter how good your centre is or how many trials you get at an academy, if the parents aren’t on board, the kids going nowhere.”

Consultation at West Bromwich Albion

ADULT PARTICIPATION

“There are opportunities at youth level for participation but adults struggle with commitment of time.”

Consultation at Burnley

TALENT ID BEST PRACTICE DAYS

“Your activities shouldn’t be Asian only, we need to progress within the mainstream, otherwise it’s counterproductive.”

Consultation at QPR

CLUB DEVELOPMENT

“We need better transitions...there are hundreds of young Asian people in Bradford who play football, however transition to clubs is tiny.”

Consultation at Bradford City

VOLUNTEERS

“We need more support for clubs run by volunteers, especially when numbers drop in winter.”

Consultation at Luton



WOMEN AND GIRLS’ CENTRES

“The women running the session don’t necessarily have to be Asian, but certainly knowledge of the local community would help hugely.”

Consultation at Sheffield



E-NEWSLETTER

“You cannot underestimate the positive impact a role model can have... they will bring home what can be achieved and that there is an opportunity if you work for it.”

Consultation at Leicester City

“The underrepresentation of Asian communities across the game is a long standing concern for football. It’s a collective problem the football family all need to work together on. We don’t need to re-invent the wheel, just do things differently”

Brendon Batson, OBE



Throughout the forums, The FA linked up with Sporting Equals to act as an insight partner and a critical external voice.* The group delivered independent focus groups for forum attendees. During these focus groups Sporting Equals sought to record some of the broader perceptions that Asians had of football, Asian underrepresentation and the reasons behind it. Interviews were conducted in groups and individually.

Here is a summary of Sporting Equals’ findings:

NO INDIVIDUAL OFFER

The general feeling was that Asians had made huge steps forward towards breaking into mainstream football. Having the ‘Asians in Football’ theme brought up just created more negativity and ill feeling. Young Asian players want to mix with other groups and play against the best to earn the right to play at the highest level.

ROLE MODELS

There are not enough Asian role models making headlines in football to inspire the next generation and help combat some of the misconceptions that “Asians can’t play football”. There needs to be an increase in profile-raising of key influencers and highlighting of upcoming talent.

PARENTS

Parental and family support is a key requirement to allow Asian players to progress and be part of the footballing structures. Greater involvement and education for parents will allow an understanding of what football offers and how they can make the difference.

SCOUTING

The current scouting system is not effectively addressing the lack of Asians in football. Scouts need more stringent monitoring and equal opportunities for Asian players to get picked up. The mentality of many scouts puts Asian players at a disadvantage as they are perceived to be inferior technically and physically. Coaches and scouts need to work collectively to build understanding of what players need to demonstrate.

* Sporting Equals is an independent charity funded by Sport England. The FA does not fund Sporting Equals and had no influence over their focus groups or their past or future funding.



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ACTION PLAN

To provide focus, The FA's plans have been built around the next four football seasons.

Seasons One and Two (2014-15 and 2015-16)

Focus:

To design and pilot projects to increase the wider inclusion of Asians across the game. These projects will develop templates which can be adapted to run bespoke programmes locally.

Season Three (2016-17)

Focus:

To produce a series of tools to enable stakeholders, including CFAs and professional clubs, to deliver Season One activities independently*.

Season Four (2017-18 onwards)

Focus:

The programmes designed and piloted in Seasons One and Two will be delivered as part of normal business by all stakeholders. The FA will act in a support role for CFAs, professional clubs and community groups**.

*Although this is initially a four-season plan, within the overall framework there is scope for any learning from Seasons One and Two to be embedded into Seasons Three and Four.

**The end of Season Four will not be the end of this plan. Further consultation will influence the direction of this work after 2017.





SEASONS ONE AND TWO

FOCUS

To design and pilot projects to increase the wider inclusion of Asians across the game. These projects will develop templates which can be adapted to run bespoke programmes locally by County FA's and other local stakeholders.

PILOT PROJECT

Identifying Asian talent

The FA will deliver Talent ID Best Practice Days, where predominantly Asian coaches and club officials will network with other stakeholders. They will gain insight into the criteria, culture process and procedures of Talent Identification. They will also be encouraged to access The FA's new Talent ID modules in 2015. The FA will deliver a minimum of three Talent ID Best-Practice days per season until The FA's Talent ID modules are fully embedded.

What does this mean?

More upskilled Asian Talent ID officers who are able to signpost Asian players, plus a network of Asian Talent ID officers.

PILOT PROJECT

Club support programme

The FA will meet, assess and provide capacity-building support for grassroots 'Asian' clubs, including coach development. The FA will look to engage with a minimum of 50 clubs in the first season.

What does this mean?

That clubs will be supported to identify and utilise all of the relevant opportunities and support mechanisms available to them in the game.

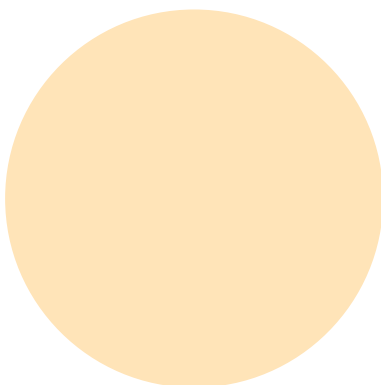
PILOT PROJECT

Women's and girls' centres

Specific Asian female participation centres, in addition to the female element of CDCs. The FA will work in partnership with local stakeholders to deliver accessible, female only opportunities and female Asian coach development to raise participation levels. The FA will also deliver two women's and girls' development sessions per season for male Asian clubs. Once again cultural and faith sensitivities will be a factor in the development and delivery of these sessions.

What does this mean?

A network of supported Asian female participants who have visible and accessible pathways into the game.



SEASONS ONE AND TWO CONTINUED

PILOT PROJECT **Profiling Asian success**

The FA will profile, through various channels, successful Asians from within the game. The FA will profile at least one role model per month on average in the first season. These role models will cut across all areas of the game as well as all ethnicities, faiths and genders.

What does this mean?

An active pool of visible male and female role models who may also become a link between Asian communities and local/national partners.

PILOT PROJECT **Community Development Centres (CDCs)**

The FA will support the set-up of Community Development Centres (CDCs) which will be lead by local communities. CDCs are regular coaching session that will bring together and develop predominantly young Asian players and ideally Asian coaches, give them access to appropriate coaching and create visible

pathways into structured football. Centres will also focus on increasing participation, coach, referee and volunteer development and parental information.

What does this mean?

Male and female players will have a positive and comprehensive football experience – and see clear pathways to progress.

PILOT PROJECT **Communications**

The FA will showcase best practice and opportunities in football in a quarterly e-newsletter. This will be distributed across mainstream and Asian football networks. The FA will also develop a web page, highlighting best practice, posting resources and sharing opportunities within the game.

What does this mean?

More awareness of opportunities for Asian communities and more awareness of Asian success stories for the mainstream game.

“Asian communities have as much appetite and hunger for football as any other, sometimes more so, but this hasn’t translated into representation for a number of reasons. The issue has long been recognised but outside of pockets of good local projects, no coordinated plan has been put in place to affect the statistics. This plan, on paper, makes sense both strategically and practically, but it needs all stakeholders to play their part for it to be successful.”

Hanif Malik

Sport England main board member
for equality

SEASON THREE

Sharing Best Practice

The first two seasons of The FA's work will pilot and develop programmes and direct interventions that support increased Asian representation across football. Once these programmes have been successfully tried and tested, the third and fourth seasons will seek to embed these templates into the wider football family.

How we will do it

The FA will produce tools to enable stakeholders, including CFAs and professional clubs to deliver Season One activities locally. This will include details on Community Development Centres (CDCs), Talent ID Best Practice Days, women's and girls' centres, club support days and programmes. These resources will be produced in partnership with partner stakeholders across the game and will include:

A Guide to working with Asian communities in football

To support the practical implementation of this resource The FA will concurrently deliver:

Eight Asians in Football Regional workshops

The role of CFAs

County Football Associations will be instrumental in the delivery of The FA's plans. As the gatekeepers to grassroots football they hold a unique and integral position in the game. Within Season One and Two of this plan The FA will work in partnership with CFAs to deliver pilot activities, especially those CFAs with large Asian communities within their boundaries. In Seasons Three and Four, The FA will produce resources and support that will enable CFAs (and their Inclusion Advisory Groups) and other stakeholders to take ownership of and deliver aspects of this plan locally. Regional CFA development sessions will be delivered to coincide with the County FA County Planning process, further enabling CFAs to embed this activity and further involve their Inclusion Advisory Groups (IAG).

“Within Birmingham County we have some really significant Asian communities, engaging meaningfully with them through football is one of our biggest priorities”

Chad Ehlertson

Chief Executive, Birmingham County FA

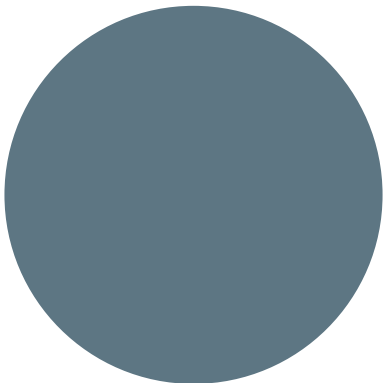
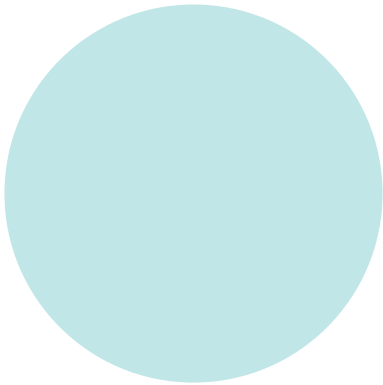
The role of professional football clubs

Professional football clubs are a key partner in delivering a change in the perception of Asian participation. In Season One and Two The FA will work alongside professional clubs to deliver pilot activities, and in Seasons Three and Four will also produce resources and provide support to enable professional clubs to embed this work into their plans.

“Through programmes such as the Asian Star initiative Chelsea Football Club and the Chelsea Foundation are using the power of football to inspire the next generation of Asian players and coaches. We believe our national sport should reflect all of the communities it represents, and at all levels of the game. As a club we are fully committed to making football a game for all.”

Simon Taylor

Head of the Chelsea FC Foundation





SEASON FOUR

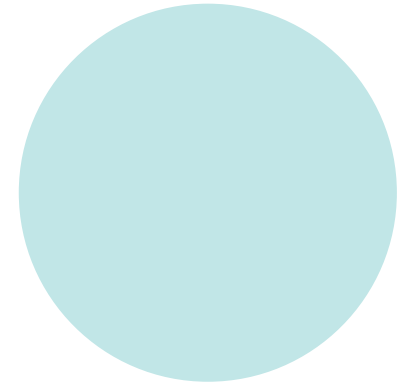
Making good practice the norm

The FA will support the maintenance of existing programmes. Within Season Four, The FA and other stakeholders will coordinate a national event and regional training, as well as provide support to CFAs, professional clubs and community groups. At this stage a collective vision of these plans will be understood and embedded across all stakeholders.

The FA will deliver an annual progress report as part of English Football's Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Action Plan and deliver a national networking event to bring all stakeholders together. In addition, The FA will continue to deliver the e-newsletter, maintain the web page, as well as seed-funding a selection of projects that specifically support this plan's objectives.

What does this mean?

That proven and supported interventions will be embedded across the whole game, generating real and measurable change and building local, long-term relationships.



7

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

The FAs Inclusion Advisory Board (IAB) will monitor the success of this work annually through a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which are linked to the Asian specific targets in English Football’s Inclusion & Anti-Discrimination Action Plan (see page 7). They will be:

KPI One	Participation	The number of playing opportunities for boys and girls created through Community Development Centres (CDC) - for example one Asian player playing in one session at a CDC will equal one playing opportunity.
KPI Two	Talent Development	The number of male and female players who go through a Talent Assessment process and their improvement as part of this work, whether at a CDC, club or assessment day.
KPI Three	Role Models	The number of male and female Asian role models who are profiled through the reach of this work. This can be in print, online, through broadcast media or by personal appearances.
KPI Four	Talent ID Officers	The number of Asian Talent ID/Recruitment officers who access FA CPD days, attend FA Talent ID modules or register as Licensed FA scouts.

OUR TARGETS

In line with the above KPIs, below are the targets to be reached by the end of the 2017-18 season:

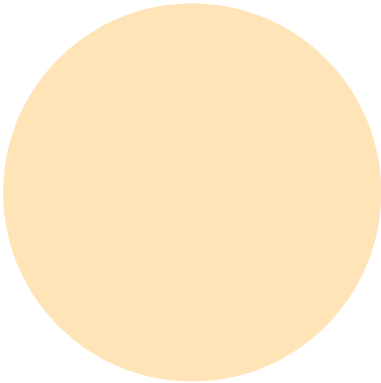
Target One	Participation	50,000 playing opportunities for boys and girls via CDCs
Target Two	Talent Development	2,000 male or female players completing a Talent Development Assessment through this work
Target Three	Role Models	100 Role Models profiled
Target Four	Talent ID Officers	200 new Asian Talent ID/Recruitment Officers

Currently there are more Asian males than females playing football. Whilst this plan seeks to increase the number of Asian women and girls the statistics are likely to reflect current participation trends

YOUR OPINION

Throughout this plan being delivered, the views and opinions of Asian communities will be sought to give full ownership of this work.

PARTNERSHIPS AND CONSULTATION



The FA has and will continue to consult and work with the organisations below as part of this area of work:

1. [CFAs](#)
2. [Kick It Out](#)
3. [Show Racism the Red Card](#)
4. [Sporting Equals](#)
5. [Women in Sport Network](#)
6. [Sport England](#)

The FA has and will continue to work and consult with football clubs, community groups and individuals in this area as part of our ongoing work. As such The FA encourages anyone with relevant knowledge or experience in this area to contact us, to share and contribute where appropriate. Should you want to do this or receive regular updates on this work, please email equality@thefa.com

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Community Development Centre (CDC)

A regular grassroots football development session aimed primarily at young Asians and supported by The FA and local stakeholders

Talent Identification (Talent ID)

The process of assessing and developing appropriate training, usually for young football players.

Capacity-building

The process of evaluating and developing the infrastructure of a football club or organisation.

‘Asian club’

A term specific to this plan describing a grassroots football club that is either populated by predominantly Asian players, is within a densely populated Asian area, or has originated from within the local Asian community.





The Football Association

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