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ECB publishes State of Equity in Cricket Report 2025

Today the ECB has published a State of Equity in Cricket Report which provides a comprehensive update on progress happening across the sport to make it more accessible and inclusive.

The report focuses on key areas of cricket, such as the game's culture, people and leadership; broadening access to talent pathways; state school support; work to engage ethnically diverse communities; and action to tackle discrimination.

With the stated ambition of becoming the most inclusive team sport in England and Wales, the ECB has decided to publish the report a year ahead of the recommendation by the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket to help highlight the progress being made, but also reiterate the areas that require further, ongoing work.

The ECB's work has been assessed by EDI consultants Sport Structures to provide independent oversight, with a statement of their findings contained at the top of the report. Sport Structures help sports organisations embed equity, diversity, and inclusion through strategy, audits, training, and engagement, and have worked with numerous sporting organisations and governing bodies.

In collaboration with the wider cricket network - including counties, charities and commercial partners - notable areas of progress include:

- **Opening-up access to the talent pathways** through reducing financial barriers; a new Early Engagement Programme (EEP) which will provide 7,000 young people with a free-to-access trial, coaching and match play; and 50% extra training for state school players in County Age Group programmes. South Asian representation within pathways has increased significantly, with increased representation now also seen in younger players in the professional men's game.
- **Growth of the women's and girls' game** with the number of women's and girls' teams doubling since 2021 through investment in the recreational cricket workforce, facilities and coaching at all levels. The professionalisation of the women's game has resulted in a new domestic structure supported by £19m of funding per year by 2027, and significant increases in the number of professional women's players and their pay.
- **More diverse Boards across the county game**, with more ethnically diverse and female non-executive directors. Female representation on Boards across the professional and recreational game is now 37% compared to 11% in 2019; while 18% of non-executives are ethnically diverse, compared to 5% in 2019.
- **The introduction of a Cricket Regulator**, ring-fenced from the rest of the ECB, which independently investigates and tackles discrimination when it does occur as well as educating and supporting cricket organisations to prevent it happening.

- **Increasing opportunities for state school children** through a new secondary school teacher training programme which aims to reach more than 160,000 students in 2025-26 and train more than 1,000 teachers by 2030; continued delivery of free cricket in thousands of state primary and special educational needs schools; and a renewed focus on competitive cricket with a new softball schools competition format being developed while the MCC offers state school teams the chance to compete for a place in a final at Lord's through its new Barclays Knight-Stokes Cup.
- **£50m has been invested in facilities since 2023** to create more inclusive places to experience cricket and improve access to the game, particularly in urban areas, including the first two state-of-the-art all-weather cricket domes.

The State of Equity in Cricket Report 2025 also addresses those areas where the sport has not yet come far enough, including:

- **Ethnic diversity in senior leadership roles across the game requires further action** and there remains a lack of Black representation on Boards.
- Coaching course data shows **more diversity is required in the Specialist programme** which feeds the professional game.
- **There is further to go to ensure the recreational game has the capacity and expertise to deal with discrimination issues.** The Cricket Regulator has been given additional powers to investigate some more serious cases of misconduct, including discrimination, in the recreational game while a newly-formed Recreational Discipline Panel of independent experts is in place to hear the most serious and complex cases.
- **Disability cricket requires deeper integration** within county and club systems, and more work is needed to develop disability cricket for women and girls.

The full State of Equity in Cricket Report 2025 can be read [here](#).

Richard Gould, ECB Chief Executive Officer, said: “The State of Equity in Cricket Report holds us to account in relation to our ambitions to become the most inclusive team sport. It shows us some areas of excellent work and progress, as well as where we need to go further. I am grateful to Sport Structures for their work in assessing this, and for everyone across the game

who is playing their part in this work.

“It is pleasing to see notable progress in a number of areas to provide more opportunities to get into, and progress through, the sport. For example, the extensive work to open up the talent pathway to young people from every background is a great example of the changes that can be made when cricketing organisations join forces to break down barriers and deliver systemic change. It shows the real impact the sport can have in every corner of England and Wales.

“We know there is still a great deal of work to do, and a number of areas where more action is needed to address structural issues. We said from the start there could be no quick fix, but we committed to delivering meaningful and lasting change, and that will remain our absolute focus in the months and years ahead as we build on the progress we are setting out today.”

Phil Smith, Executive Director, Partnerships at Sport England added, “Sport England welcomes the ECB’s State of Equity in Cricket report and acknowledges the progress made across several areas of the game. We recognise the significant effort that has gone into this work, and the shared understanding that more remains to be done. We will continue to work closely with the ECB to help make cricket more inclusive and accessible so everyone, regardless of their background, can enjoy the many mental and physical benefits of playing the sport.”

Kath Percival, Chief Executive, Sport Structures, said, “Over the past few months, we’ve listened to people from every level of cricket, from ECB leaders to county boards, league organisers, club volunteers, and community partners. What we heard reflects a game in motion; one that has accepted the findings of the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket and moved from acknowledgement to action.

“The ECB’s State of Equity in Cricket report, informed by interviews, desk research and insight gathered by Sport Structures, captures that progress and the continuing work needed to embed inclusion and fairness across the whole sport.

“There is now visible leadership for equality, diversity and inclusion, and structures that once lacked clarity or accountability have been reshaped with stronger governance, transparent decision-making, and independent

oversight.

“Across cricket, there is a growing recognition that culture change cannot be achieved by policy alone. Inclusion is strongest where diverse voices are not just heard but empowered, and where local leaders are supported to turn strategy into practice. Cricket is not yet where it aspires to be, but the tone has changed, inclusion is now seen as central to the game’s health and future.

“The challenge now is to sustain this momentum, connect national ambition with local reality, and ensure that fairness, trust, diversity, and belonging are truly part of every club and community.”



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