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ECB reports further progress to promote equity across cricket

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is today (29 September 2022) setting out the continued progress that cricket is making in its commitment to promote equity, diversity and inclusion at all levels of the game.

Since the announcement of cricket's game-wide action plan in November 2021, the ECB has continued to work with County organisations and other partners to combat racism and ensure that the sport is welcoming to all. The fourth public update on the implementation of the game-wide commitments provides details of action taken and progress achieved since the start of June

2022, including:

- a significant increase in the level of ethnic diversity of young cricketers receiving support and development through cricket's talent pathway programmes
- confirmation of the location of six new Community Talent Champion roles as the game builds stronger links with diverse local communities
- action to help County organisations to drive improvement in their recruitment processes to attract the best candidates who reflect the communities they serve
- welcoming 60 new County directors to the sport, through an event at the Royal London Cup Final at Trent Bridge on 17 September
- the launch of a pilot programme of anti-discrimination training for players, coaches and volunteers across the recreational game
- investment in upgraded stadium facilities to create welcoming environments for all fans
- strong progress in the ongoing review of dressing room cultures in professional cricket.

Clare Connor, Interim CEO of the ECB, commented: “Our ambition is for cricket to become a truly equitable, diverse and inclusive game. The publication of the game-wide action plan in November 2021 brought additional focus to our efforts and helped accelerate the rate of progress. We are really encouraged by the results that we are seeing across the game and we are determined to drive the continued improvement that we know is needed to ensure that everyone feels that they belong in cricket. Nothing matters more.”

Full details follow in the update below, which builds on the progress reported in previous updates in [January](#), [April](#) and [May](#) of this year. A further update will be published before the end of the year.

September 2022 update on action to combat racism and all forms of discrimination

Increasing diversity in the Talent Pathway (Action 6)

The latest figures for cricket's talent pathway programmes show that work by

the ECB and Counties is helping to increase the diversity of young players receiving coaching and development support.

Analysis of 2022 County Age Group (CAG) programme data indicates a significant improvement in the level of ethnic diversity in the boys' talent pathway since the creation of the ECB's South Asian Action Plan in 2017.

In 2022, an average of 23% of boys taking part in the U13-U18 CAG are from diverse backgrounds, compared with 17% in 2017. This means that 100% of Counties exceed the ethnic diversity of their local populations and 89% exceed the diversity of their local cricket playing population.

The positive trend of increasing diversity is also reflected among the boys taking part in the Academy programmes delivered by the First-Class Counties for players between under 15 and under 18. In 2022, 27% of boys' Academy players are from ethnically diverse backgrounds, up from 16% in 2017.

Data for the Girls' CAG programmes shows that 14% of participants are from ethnically diverse backgrounds in 2022, compared with 10% in 2021. Work is continuing to drive further progress in this area and will benefit from learnings gained in the Boys' CAG through the delivery of the South Asian Action Plan.

To help maintain this strong progress, the ECB is increasing investment in talent identification through the expansion of the Community Talent Champion (CTC) programme (as announced in the April 2022 update). By building stronger connections with diverse local communities, talented girls and boys in non-affiliated cricket environments will be identified and connected to the talent pathway at age-group level.

Following consultation with Counties, the ECB has now selected the first of the additional locations for the programme. Three new Community Talent Champion roles will be created in Lancashire, Leicestershire and Yorkshire following the success of the initial roles in each of those counties. In addition, new Community Talent Champions will be established in Warwickshire, Staffordshire and the Cricket East region. Further details of the continued expansion of the programme will follow.

Strengthening the culture of professional dressing rooms (Action 4)

EY Lane 4 is making good progress with the ongoing review of dressing room cultures across professional cricket in England and Wales. To date, 25 dressing rooms from the men's and women's domestic environments have participated in the review, with the remaining sessions due to be completed in the coming weeks. EY Lane 4 has begun to provide feedback to Counties to support their ongoing commitment to creating healthy environments that actively prevent any form of discrimination. A game-wide overview of findings and recommendations will be provided as part of the next update.

As a result of scheduling challenges related to the international fixture calendar, it has taken longer than anticipated to progress the review with the England Men's and Women's teams in red ball and white ball formats, as well as the England disability teams. This section of the review will be completed by early 2023.

Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) (Action 2)

Since March 2022, the ICEC has continued to gather extensive evidence from stakeholders in the game including through oral evidence sessions, an open Call for Written Evidence and a survey of cricketing organisations including First Class Counties, County Cricket Boards and Women's Regional Teams. Content provided is being examined alongside insights from over 4,000 people's lived experience of the game in England and Wales (covering the time period from 2016 to 2021). This was provided through an online listening survey and follow up qualitative interviews with an expert research team. Additionally, the Commission has researched developments and trends in the game informed by sports and equality organisations, campaigners, academics and others with relevant expertise and experience.

The ICEC's independent report is now being written. Publication details will be shared in due course.

The ICEC operates as an independent body. Its research and decision making are entirely independent of the ECB. It is examining equity in cricket principally in relation to race, gender and class. Its work is focussed on five themes: the talent pathway and progression into professional cricket; culture; good practice; complaints and discipline (discrimination-related); and governance and leadership.

Establishing fairer recruitment processes (Action 11)

To ensure that cricket's workforce reflects the communities served by the game, the ECB has commissioned two specialist executive search firms, SRI and Perrett Laver, to develop and deliver a scalable approach to fairer recruitment in cricket.

The project will provide guidance and resources for organisations across cricket with the aim of helping them to attract and recruit candidates who reflect the communities they serve. This work is currently in the evaluation phase with plans to be developed further following consultation with Counties. The rollout will follow in 2023.

The focus on recruitment processes across the game builds on significant progress achieved by the County cricket network to increase diversity at Board level. Following publication of the action plan in November 2021, at an aggregate level the County network has surpassed the targets of 30% female representation and locally representative ethnicity.

To welcome them to their roles, the ECB hosted 60 new directors from County organisations at the Royal London Cup Final at Trent Bridge on 17 September. The celebratory event thanked them for their efforts since joining cricket this year and included Q&A sessions with further discussions on the opportunities to grow and diversify the sport. Of those attending, 40% were female and 35% were from diverse backgrounds.

Providing EDI training for all those who work or volunteer in cricket (Action 3)

Around 2,200 people have completed anti-discrimination training since the course was made available across the ECB staff and the cricket network in January 2022. This represents 71% of the total combined workforce. In addition, more than 1,700 stewards and ground staff have received anti-discrimination training or briefings as part of efforts across the game to ensure a positive experience for all fans attending matches.

Following the completion of work to map existing education programmes across the recreational game, the ECB begun the roll-out of a new anti-discrimination programme for players, volunteers and coaches. The aim of the programme is to ensure that all those involved in recreational cricket understand and champion diversity and inclusion. The programme will be rolled out further in the off-season.

In parallel, the ECB launched a new online content hub, Raising The Game, to give greater visibility to work across the game that is driving meaningful change in EDI. Raising The Game is a platform that allows cricket organisations and delivery partners to showcase their initiatives and share stories from across the game, as well as providing resources for people to learn more about specific topics.

Creating welcoming environments for all (Action 8)

As anticipated in May 2022 update, professional cricket venues across England and Wales have improved provision for families and under-served communities over the course of the 2022 season.

The ECB is making available £2.5million of funding to support development. Examples of new or upgraded facilities include:

- Warwickshire County Cricket Club have introduced additional multi-faith facilities, new changing facilities and a sensory room.
- Yorkshire County Cricket Club's trial of a temporary sensory room received positive feedback from community groups and was used during the Test Match to support families with additional needs.
- Accessible toilets, unisex toilets and new changing facilities have been delivered across venues at Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, Yorkshire County Cricket Club and Glamorgan.
- Derbyshire County Cricket Club have appointed a Disability Liaison Officer and have created 31 wheelchair and carer car parking spaces to support spectators and guests.

Driving further progress through localised EDI action plans

The ECB published its [2021-2023 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Action Plan](#) in November 2021 in parallel with the game-wide anti-discrimination action plan. Since then, the ECB has worked with its members to create or revise their own localised EDI plans with clear actions and targets.

The ECB will publish an annual update on its EDI Action Plan in November.

All 56 County organisations across the game have now published their EDI action plans. Of these, 21 Counties have now set EDI objectives for senior

executives to drive leadership accountability for continued progress.

-ENDS-

Notes to editors

Community Talent Champion Programme

The Programme was set up in 2021 to help build stronger connections with diverse local communities through identifying talented girls and boys in non-affiliated cricket environments and connecting them to the existing County talent pathways at age-group level.

The Programme was successfully piloted in Lancashire, Leicestershire and Yorkshire during 2021.

Asmi Shembekar's story is one example of the Programme in action. Asmi was featured in the [ECB's Annual Report 2021/22 on page 15](#).

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