



Feb 18, 2026 11:59 GMT

Major new investment into grassroots facilities to boost access to cricket

Around £45m of money from investment into The Hundred teams will fund new and improved grassroots facilities as part of a major cash injection into recreational cricket.

It is hoped that additional funding and support from other partners including Government, developers and other investors in communities, will mean that projects worth a combined £150m can go ahead over the next 10 years.

The new Fund for strategic facilities will be targeted at projects across

England and Wales which benefit women and girls, disabled participants, lower socio-economic groups or ethnically diverse communities as part of making cricket the most inclusive team sport.

It is expected to support the development and creation of a wide mix of facility types - reflecting the differing needs, geography and populations of local areas – and is aimed at strategic projects such as cricket domes, indoor halls, multi-use games areas, non-turf facilities, upgrades to community cricket venues or hybrid community sport hubs.

The new Fund, which will support larger strategic projects, is part of a significant broader injection into grassroots cricket facilities. The ECB is also:

- Doubling investment in smaller grants for new and upgraded facilities at individual clubs, with £5m being made available this year for projects to create welcoming environments or provide enhanced playing or changing facilities this year, with a focus on developing women's and girls' cricket.
- Increasing the amount available to grassroots clubs in interest-free loans to help them fund improvements. Clubs will now be able to apply for up to £75,000, up from £50,000.

Overall, the ECB's direct investment into recreational facilities will now exceed £14m per year, with support for projects led by clubs, local authorities and a range of other partners.

Richard Gould, ECB Chief Executive Officer, said: "This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for grassroots cricket thanks to the investment we've received into The Hundred.

"With more children playing, the rapid growth of women's and girls' cricket, and our desire to become the most inclusive team sport, new and improved facilities are vital to open up access to cricket for communities across England and Wales.

"This additional investment into facilities will be a real game-changer, and I hope other local and national partners will come on board to support these community projects so that we can get much more bang for our collective buck."

Leshia Hawkins, ECB Managing Director, Recreational Game, said: “Over the past year we’ve worked closely and collaboratively with the whole of the recreational game to agree how the investment from The Hundred should best be used to support and grow our sport.

“Every Recreational County Board will be able to apply for support for projects through this Fund, meaning we can enable projects across the length and breadth of England and Wales which will have the biggest impact for local communities. With increased funding available to individual clubs as well, this marks a huge injection into improving and expanding facilities for grassroots cricket.

“The ECB already invests millions of pounds every year into new and upgraded facilities, and that work can now be turbocharged. We also know from existing projects how communities can realise the biggest benefits when multiple partners come on board, so I’m looking forward to seeing the difference we can make by working together.”

Funding strategic facilities through The Hundred proceeds

The £45m strategic facilities Fund is being established using the recreational game’s 10% share of proceeds from investment into The Hundred teams.

Boards will be able to bid for money from the new Fund, which has been designed in collaboration with Recreational County Boards and is expected to run for at least ten years. Applications will open in April.

Recreational County Boards and local stakeholders will be encouraged to work in partnership to attract other funding and support in order to boost the value of projects even further. It is hoped that this will mean that projects generate at least £3 of economic value for every £1 invested.

As well as additional funding, partners will be sought who can add value in other ways such as access to land and space, long-term usage agreements, favourable lease or rental terms, in-kind contributions such as planning support, community access commitments or reduced commercial rates.

The Fund will be reviewed after two years to ensure it is having the fullest impact. It will operate in addition to existing facilities funds which have

helped deliver hundreds of improvements and new build projects over recent years.

In addition to the £45m, a further £6m from the recreational game's share of investment into The Hundred will be used over the next three years to support the Recreational County Board network to support the delivery of their own strategic plans.

Increased funding for smaller grants for grassroots clubs

Investment through the County Grants Fund has been doubled for 2026 to £5m. The fund is now focussed on Women's and Girls' cricket, developing teams and clubs.

It is intended this level of funding will continue for at least the next three years to support the drive towards having at least 6,000 girls' teams by 2028.

Around 300 projects are expected to be delivered in 2026 as a result of the funding.

Larger interest-free loans for club improvements

The amount available to grassroots clubs through interest-free loans is being increased from £50,000 to £75,000.

The scheme provides finance to clubs for capital projects to help them build and ensure a sustainable future, supporting projects such as building improvements; equipment such as machinery, covers or nets; or grounds work and non-turf practice facilities.

Additional funding

In addition, the ECB is also investing £1m a year on recreational cricket grants to tackle the impact of climate change, and £2m on Grass Pitch Improvement projects, supported by Sport England.

ends



Contacts



Jonathan Reed

Press Contact

Head of Media & Publications

media@ecb.co.uk

+44 (0) 7525 596 621



ECB Press Office

Press Contact

media@ecb.co.uk