



The funding will enable over 900,000 young people to play cricket over the next five years. Photo: Getty Images

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Prime Minister announces multi-million pound boost for grassroots cricket

- **£35 million package to deliver the construction of 16 new urban all-weather cricket domes within cities due to host ICC Women's T20 World Cup in 2026 and ICC Men's T20 World Cup in 2030**
- **Funding will extend the ECB's partner programmes for young people through Chance to Shine and Lord's Taverners in schools, and the ACE Programme**
- **Funding will enable over 900,000 young people to play cricket over next five years, including 80,000 children with special educational needs**

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has announced a £35 million investment in grassroots cricket facilities and widening access to the sport within state schools, enabling over 900,000 young people to play cricket over the next five years.

The investment, to be delivered across a period during which England and Wales host the 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup, the 2030 ICC Men's T20 World Cup and cricket returns to the Olympics for the first time in over 120 years, includes a major capital programme that will see 16 state-of-the-art all-weather cricket domes built within host cities across England.

The domes are covered and wind-protected and will allow for participation in cricket throughout the year – connecting school, community and talent programmes. Each dome will be built within diverse communities where figures have indicated low levels of physical activity. It follows the [first cricket dome opened in Bradford in November last year](#).

The funding package will enable an extension to the ECB and Chance to Shine's in-school cricket partnership. This will have a particular emphasis on children from lower socio-economic groups, and ensure that every school child in inner-city locations from across the 16 World Cup host cities will access the programme.

A further investment to the charity Lord's Taverners will have a focus on access to cricket provision for 80,000 children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The total investment is expected to deliver around 2,500 pieces of new equipment across schools involved in the programmes, and help to get 930,000 pupils playing cricket over the next five years.

In addition, the ACE Programme will receive additional funding to support their work in reconnecting the Black community with cricket.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said: "I first experienced the magic of cricket watching Hampshire play at my local ground in Southampton as a child.

"For young people watching their first match today, the draw of getting outside and enjoying the game is just as strong, particularly as we look

forward to hosting the Women's and Men's T20 World Cups.

“There remains huge potential to grow the sport even further and open it up to everyone, from all backgrounds and in all parts of the country, building on the great work of organisations such as ACE and Chance to Shine.

“That is why I am so proud we are making a major £35 million investment in grassroots cricket today, to widen participation in schools, encourage healthy lifestyles and provide world class, all-year-round facilities for local communities.”

ECB Chair Richard Thompson said: “We are delighted by this investment from the Government. It's our ambition that cricket becomes the most inclusive sport in the country and that starts by giving children the chance to play from an early age and from whatever background or community they come from.

“It is vital that cricket is available in as many state schools and SEND schools across England and Wales as possible, and across diverse communities. This support from Government represents a seminal moment in enabling the game to invest significantly in areas that up until now have not had the support they deserve.

“Cricket is a diverse sport and our game has a unique reach across the UK's population. Hosting both a women's and a men's Cricket World Cup between 2026 and 2030, and the inclusion of cricket in the Olympics for the first time in almost 130 years, gives us a platform to reach more young people than ever before and we're really excited about that as a game.”

England Men's cricketer James Anderson said: “I know from first-hand experience that accessing cricket from a state school is not always the easiest route into the game, so it's fantastic to hear that today's announcement will support state school students.

“Chance to Shine, Lord's Taverners and the ACE Programme all play a huge role in helping to take cricket to young people. It's important that they are supported by the ECB and the Government in delivering their programmes across England and Wales, and I'm sure today's announcement will help bring more young people into cricket.”

Chance to Shine CEO Laura Cordingley said: "This is absolutely fantastic news not just for Chance to Shine, but for cricket as a whole. We know that when given the opportunity to play, young people do fall in love with this game - regardless of their gender or background. This funding will give our expert coaches the opportunity to inspire hundreds of thousands more children through cricket and in turn, use the sport as a vehicle to teach vital life skills and help young people to build a positive future."

Lord's Taverners CEO Mark Curtin said: "So many young people with a disability have limited access to sport. But our life changing work with young people living with a disability and those in SEND settings in partnership with the ECB is providing free and inclusive cricket sessions in a school and community setting. It gives participants the chance to thrive, be valued, become more resilient and gain skills for life both on and off the pitch."

We're seeing daily the difference cricket is making to the lives of those we work with either through increasing their self-confidence, feeling more included, or providing a safe space to play a sport that they wouldn't have otherwise.

"The fantastic news of this Government funding will allow us to continue to grow our reach and have an even greater impact - giving more opportunities to demonstrate that young people living with a disability can thrive."

ACE Director of Programmes Chevy Green said: "We are greatly appreciative of the new Government funding for cricket. It will contribute to our growth as a charity, notably increasing our national programme support in London, Bristol, Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester and Nottingham with academy, community hub and school engagement."

"ACE aims to give its players the very best opportunity to continue their cricket development. The academy helps players to fulfil their potential in advancing into the professional game. Cricket allows them time to focus mentally, physically, tactically and socially. Not only do players develop their cricket skills but their social development integration skills too. This is very important for the young people who attend ACE, so they can express themselves and truly be themselves in a cricket environment."

ENDS

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