



England men's paceman Mark Wood launches the #Funds4Runs initiative at his home Ashington Cricket Club

Nov 03, 2020 12:00 GMT

£1million #Funds4Runs initiative launched by ECB and LV= General Insurance to support areas of recreational cricket hit by Covid-19

- England and Wales Cricket Board has partnered with LV= General Insurance to financially support focus areas of the grassroots cricket community that have been impacted by COVID-19 with a £1million investment fund
- #Funds4Runs will directly help four key areas recover and

rebuild - children from deprived backgrounds, diverse communities, disability groups and women and girls' programmes

- **England stars Mark Wood, Lauren Winfield-Hill & Jordan Williams helped launch the partnership at a unique virtual media event hosted by Isa Guha & Michael Vaughan today**
- **The partnership continues LV= GI's long-standing association with cricket, which stretches back to 2002**
- **You can register your interest in applying for #Funds4Runs at www.ecb.co.uk/funds4runs**

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and [LV= General Insurance](http://lv.com/gi) (LV= GI) have today launched #Funds4Runs – a pioneering initiative aimed at helping the grassroots cricket community recover and rebuild financially following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The £1m investment, jointly funded by the ECB and LV=GI, will focus on key areas where access to cricket support or cricket itself has been limited - children from deprived backgrounds, diverse communities, disability groups and women and girls' programmes

The initiative, and LV=GI's support, will also help deliver against three wider ECB objectives – delivering the purpose of 'connecting communities and improving lives' through cricket, increasing the relevance of cricket locally and growing long-term engagement with the game in these communities.

Financial support from the initiative will be accessible to affiliated clubs, All Stars cricket centres, Community organisations, County Cricket Boards and Cricket Wales. Interested parties can register their interest in #Funds4Runs funding at ecb.co.uk/funds4runs or find out more information at lv.com/gi/cricket now.

The ECB Participation and Growth teams will oversee the administration and determine final financial approval while working collaboratively with local county cricket boards to ensure priorities in their local areas are met.

The fund will show initial financial support with two live projects – expanding the existing All Stars programme and a new partnership with the British Film Institute.

All Stars Cricket provides a first experience for children aged 5-8 years old through eight 60-minute sessions, held over eight weeks of fun, activity and skills development. The programme is designed to introduce children to the sport, teaching them new skills, helping them make new friends and have a great time doing so.

All Stars Cricket is a paid for programme but #Funds4Runs will fund facility hire in areas of deprivation and subsidised places for underprivileged children, in the first instance in Hayes and Canning Town in London, and Thurmaston just outside of Leicester.

This funding of All Stars Cricket projects will be extended to urban areas in every County region going forward.

#Funds4Runs will also provide cricket clubs across England and Wales with the opportunity to apply to enrol in a filmmaker programme – titled *First Run* – delivered exclusively in partnership by the British Film Institute (BFI).

Successful applicants will undertake a course led by some of the country's leading film professionals. The training will allow them to create compelling films showing the unique character of their community and club as well as equipping them with editing, communication, digital and planning skills, enabling them to create a variety of exciting video content on behalf of their club – whether that is a YouTube channel or digital storytelling through the club's social channels.

The successful applicants will receive professional level training to better promote themselves and their club's activities, including other #Funds4Runs activity, as well as creating more links with the local area. Furthermore, they will also receive training on how to pass on their newly acquired skills to the wider club and community.

Details on how to apply for the filmmaking course will be released later this year, with the course starting in 2021.

LV= General Insurance and its parent brand Allianz Group have a longstanding heritage and association with cricket. LV='s involvement dates back to 2002 and includes three separate stints as title partner of the County Championship – 2002-05 (Frizzell County Championship), 2006 (Liverpool

Victoria County Championship) and 2007-15 (LV= County Championship). Allianz Group, through its Cornhill brand, also sponsored Test cricket for 23 years between 1978 and 2001.

#Funds4Runs was launched today at a virtual event hosted by Isa Guha & Michael Vaughan with professional cricketers from England's men's, women's and disability teams - Mark Wood, Lauren Winfield-Hill & Jordan Williams

With approximately 2.5 million male and female recreational cricketers across the UK, Mark Wood highlighted the importance of grassroots cricket across the UK after beginning his own journey to national honours at Ashington Cricket Club in Newcastle.

He said: "I am delighted to help launch #Funds4Runs. I know from my experiences as a young cricketer that grassroots cricket is the heartbeat of the sport and being given that opportunity to access cricket is crucial in building a love for the game. Like many other players, I've been concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the game so thank you to everyone at ECB and LV= for providing much needed support that will help English cricket to recover and thrive."

Lauren Winfield-Hill added: "It really is amazing to see this level of support being made available to grassroots cricket across the country from the ECB and LV=. There was a real danger that the impact of COVID-19 could have caused a whole generation of young girls to slip through the cracks through lack of access. But it is a great that this has been recognised with this initiative and its genuine focus on projects aimed at female cricketers."

Jordan Williams said: "Cricket is a game for everyone and it's fantastic that ECB and LV= are working together to ensure the game remains open to the most vulnerable during the pandemic. There are some brilliant projects out there that will benefit hugely from this funding and I'm sure the benefits will be felt throughout the game whether that is through men's, women's or disability cricket."

Heather Smith, Managing Director of LV= GI said: "The impact of COVID-19 has been felt by everyone and the efforts of the cricket community to get the professional game up and running has been immense. However, at a local level, cricket has been less readily available or fundamentally more challenging to get involved in due to the pandemic. Having had such a long

association with cricket, we felt very conscious of the need to do what we can to help rebuild the lives and future of cricket communities across the UK.

“Our aim with #Funds4Runs is to support the ECB in connecting communities, building better lives through cricket and increasing the relevance of the sport in traditionally non-cricket communities. Ultimately this will help engage communities with cricket, either through participation, attendance or support. Community projects like this allow LV= to live out our brand purpose of looking after what you love and furthering our commitment to positive wellbeing, rebuilding communities as well as inclusiveness and togetherness. These values have never been more important than now which is why we’re so delighted to be working with the ECB on this initiative.”

Tom Harrison, ECB Chief Executive Officer said: “As an organisation and a sport, we are hugely dependent on the role which cricket clubs play in their local communities. At every level of the game, COVID-19 has presented some of the toughest challenges we’ve ever faced.

“I am both incredibly grateful and proud of the work put in by thousands of volunteers across England and Wales, in order to get the recreational game back on in the summer. What they managed to achieve was outstanding and will be important in helping safeguard the future of our game.

“However, I am mindful that in many areas the pandemic has taken its toll. That’s why I am really excited that through this new partnership with LV= we will be supporting the areas hit hardest, either through boosting participation or by helping clubs connect with their communities. Both LV= and the ECB are delighted to be working with the BFI to bring the latter to life.”

- ENDS -

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Liverpool Victoria General Insurance

- LV= General Insurance provides car, home, pet, travel, landlord breakdown and home emergency insurance to over 7 million customers in the UK.
- We're the UK's third largest personal lines insurer with just over £2 billion in annual premium income.
- We offer our products and services directly to consumers as well as through intermediaries, including brokers, affinity partners and IFAs.
- LV= General Insurance uses the LV= brand under licence from the Liverpool Victoria Financial Services Group and the L&G brand under licence from the Legal & General Group.
- We are part of the Allianz Group, one of the world's leading insurers and asset managers with more than 92 million retail and corporate customers.
- The LV= General Insurance [newsroom](#) includes links to our news release archive and image library.
- For an introduction to what we do and how we do it, please click [here](#).
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About ECB

ECB is the national governing body for cricket in England and Wales. It is dedicated to supporting the game at every level, from our international

teams, the First Class Counties and domestic cricket through to disability cricket, grassroots clubs, schools and junior cricket and recreational programmes.

Last year ECB launched Inspiring Generations, a game-wide strategy to grow cricket in England and Wales from 2020-24. The five-year plan sees the whole game united behind a clear purpose: to connect communities and to inspire

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