



Mar 12, 2026 09:14 GMT

Women's cricket changemakers join forces to drive the continued growth of the sport

Around 250 cricket changemakers have come together for a star-studded event focused on upskilling, engaging and empowering leaders across the women's and girls' game and seizing the golden opportunity of England and Wales hosting this year's ICC Women's T20 World Cup.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), in collaboration with champion partner of women's and girls' cricket Metro Bank, proudly staged the two-day *Metro Bank Girls in Cricket Fund Network Live 2026: Leading the Future of*

Women's Cricket conference this weekend.

Delegates from the cricket community came together at the East Midlands Conference centre at the University of Nottingham to connect and gain practical knowledge and information to take back to their clubs, leagues and communities. It is part of a programme of activity to capitalise on the power of hosting the World Cup to turbocharge the women's game throughout 2026 and beyond.

Hosted by Sam Hurst – a rising star in sports presenting – delegates also got to hear from keynote speakers including Sara Davies MBE; Wing Commander Nicola Lofthouse – the first female Commanding Officer of 99 Squadron at RAF Brize Norton; and Kate Richardson-Walsh OLY OBE – the Olympic gold-medal-winning Great Britain hockey captain.

Alongside these inspiring leaders, the conference also provided a diverse range of workshops, panels and practical sessions, from coaching and officiating to leadership and inclusion.

On Saturday night, delegates were treated to a special evening celebration looking ahead to the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 and how it will firmly place women's cricket at the heart of mainstream conversation. This was followed by an International Women's Day wellness programme on Sunday, recognising and supporting the people powering progress on and off the pitch.

Leshia Hawkins, ECB Managing Director, Recreational Game, said, "From start to finish it was a joyous, upbeat, positive, progressive conference.

"This year, we have the opportunity and power of a home World Cup to attract even more female players, leaders and volunteers into our sport, whilst celebrating the men and women involved in cricket who already inspire others to get involved.

"This conference has brought together the absolute best of the women's and girls' cricket community and put the game in an enviable position, primed and ready to seize our moment in 2026."

Sara Davies MBE, Founder of Crafter's Companion said, "You know the thing I

love about cricket is it's just such a community sport. It was brilliant to see such a varied lineup of speakers to really inspire people and equip them with the tools they need to go out and build success in our sport from the grassroots upwards."

Kate Richardson-Walsh added, "Women's and girls' sport need these networks, it needs that curiosity, it needs people who are prepared to give their time to take this forward. It's been a really positive weekend."

Danielle Lee, Director of Brand and Marketing at Metro Bank said, "What stood out wasn't just the quality of the speakers or the practical coaching sessions, but the shared ambition in every room. The passion, commitment and sense of community was unmistakable, and at the heart of what our Metro Bank Girls in Cricket Fund is about. By empowering coaches, volunteers and role models at club level, we're helping create environments where girls feel encouraged, supported and inspired to pick up a bat and to stay in the game for years to come. The momentum around women's and girls' cricket is building and this year is set to be its biggest yet."



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