

Debate Pack

Number CDP 2022/0161

By Joe Tyler-Todd,
Lulu Meade,
Maria Lalic,
John Woodhouse

8 November 2022

2022 UEFA European Women's Football Championship and participation of girls and young women in sport

1	UEFA Women's Football Championship	4
1.1	Legacy of Euro 2022	4
2	Women's football	7
2.1	Wider engagement initiatives	9
2.2	Funding	10
3	Pitches and facilities	13
3.1	Access and safety	14
4	Media	16
4.1	Press releases	16
4.2	News articles	16
5	Parliamentary material	20
5.1	Ministerial statements	20
5.2	Debates	20
5.3	Parliamentary questions	20

5.4	Early Day Motions	25
6	Further reading	27

Summary

A Westminster Hall debate has been scheduled for Wednesday 9 November 2022 on the 2022 UEFA European Women's Football Championship and the participation of girls and young women in sport. The debate is in the name of Munira Wilson (Liberal Democrat).

UEFA Women's Euro 2022 was won by England's Lionesses after a 2-1 victory over Germany in the final at Wembley Stadium. The final was viewed by a record 87,192 fans at Wembley and 17.4 million people at home.

The Lionesses' victory has prompted discussion about the participation of girls and young women in sport. Broadly, these responses have focused on two areas:

1. access to football coaching in school PE lessons.
2. availability of pitches and facilities. This includes the potential impact of school playing field sales and safety concerns linked to accessing community grassroots facilities.

The [Football Association](#) (FA) is the governing body for the game in England. Its plans to increase participation amongst women and girls include ensuring equal access to football coaching for girls in 90% of schools by 2024.

In September 2022, the Government announced a [Future of Women's Football review](#). The review's call for evidence will close on 1 November 2022 and its report is due to be published early next year.

1 UEFA Women's Football Championship

[The UEFA Women's Championship League](#) is a European women's football competition that occurs every four years. Often referred to as the Women's Euro, UEFA established the competition in 1982.¹ In 1984, Sweden defeated England 4-3 on penalties to become the inaugural UEFA European Women's Champions.

Euro 2022

[UEFA Women's Euro 2022](#) was hosted by England and ran from 6 to 31 July 2022, having been delayed a year by the pandemic. The Championship was won by England's Lionesses after a 2-1 victory over Germany in the final at Wembley Stadium. The final was viewed by a record 87,192 fans at Wembley and 17.4 million people at home.²

1.1 Legacy of Euro 2022

Renaming grassroots facilities

Following the success of the Lionesses, the Government announced plans to name grassroots football facilities in honour of the teams' players. The new facilities were named after the 23 team members and located near each of their respective hometowns or areas that shaped their careers:

As part of the Government's £230 million investment to build or improve 8,000 grassroots football and multi-sport facilities by 2025, alongside the stipulation that they must provide access for women's and girl's football, the move will cement the team's legacy for generations to come.³

Girls football in schools

The success of England's Lionesses has prompted a conversation around access to football for girls in schools.

¹ [How the UEFA Women's EURO was born](#), UEFA News [online], 2 July 2022 (accessed 3 November 2022)

² [A record-breaking final for a record-breaking tournament](#), UEFA News [online], 28 July 2022 (accessed 3 November 2022)

³ [Government plans to name grassroots football facilities in honour of Lionesses class of Euros 2022](#), DCMS press release [online], 31 July 2022 (accessed 3 November 2022)

Ian Wright, the BBC commentator and former England player, commented: “if girls are not allowed to play football just like the boys can in their PE lessons after this tournament, then what are we doing?”⁴

According to an October 2022 FA news item, [63% of schools in England offer girls' football in PE lessons](#). The FA's ambition is to have 75% of schools providing equal access to football for girls in PE lessons by 2024.⁵

In August 2022, England's Lionesses wrote an open letter to the two candidates for Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss, asking them to commit to allowing all girls to play football in schools. The letter stated:

We want every young girl in the nation to be able to play football at school. Currently only 63% of girls can play football in PE lessons. The reality is we are inspiring young girls to play football, only for many to end up going to school and not being able to play...

We have made incredible strides in the women's game, but this generation of school girls deserve more. They deserve to play football at lunchtime, they deserve to play football in PE lessons and they deserve to believe they can one day play for England. We want their dreams to come true.⁶

When questioned on this, a Department for Education spokesperson said:

The success of the Lionesses in the Women's Euro 2022 will inspire a generation of girls to get involved with football...

Schools can decide what sports they offer and should aim to take their pupils' views into account on which activities they want to be able to do.⁷

On 27 September 2022, in response to a written question, Jonathan Gullis, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Education, [set out the Government's position on increasing girls' access to football in schools](#):

The Department's expectation is that a school's starting point should be to offer the same sport or physical activity to both girls and boys, including football.

The Department is funding the 'Your Time' Programme, which gives girls aged 8-16 access to competitive sport and sport leadership opportunities, including football. The PE and Sport Premium of £320 million a year will continue to help primary schools to make sustainable improvements to their PE and sport offer.

⁴ Quoted in: [Concern over Lionesses' legacy as Government refuses to ensure all girls can play football at school](#), iNews [online] 2 August 2022 (accessed 3 November 2022)

⁵ [We have launched a new campaign to give all girls equal access to football by 2024](#), FA News [online], 11 October 2021 (accessed 4 November 2022)

⁶ Lionesses (@Lionesses). ““We see this as only the beginning.” An open letter from our #Lionesses...” (Twitter). 3 August 2022 [accessed 3 November 2022]. Available from: <https://twitter.com/lionesses/status/1554829482757828617>

⁷ As above

The Government wants to increase opportunities to take part in all types of sport and physical activity and has committed to update the cross-government School Sport and Activity Action Plan to support all pupils to take part in a wide variety of sport and activities through PE, extracurricular sport and 30 minutes of physical activity every day in school.⁸

⁸ [PQ 45454 \[Schools: Football\], 27 September 2022](#)

2

Women's football

Women's football is currently the largest participation sport amongst girls and women in the UK.⁹ [The Football Association](#) (FA) is the governing body for the game in England. In this capacity, the FA is responsible for the international women's team, domestic competition, and elements of amateur grassroots provision.

The FA's plans to increase the participation of women and young girls in football are laid out in three strategies:

- [Time for Change: The FA Strategy 2020-2024](#) (PDF).
- [A Game for All: The FA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2024](#) (PDF).
- [Inspiring Positive Change: The FA Strategy for Women's Football 2020-2024](#) (PDF).

Time for Change: the FA Strategy 2020-2024

Time for Change was introduced in January 2021 and [sets out the FA's ambitions for football in England as a whole](#). Its focus is to create a national game which, "embraces diversity and battles discrimination."¹⁰ The focus is underpinned by 14 objectives, including:

Gamechanger Objective 3

Equal opportunities for girls (5-16 years of age) within football at both school and at local clubs.

A Game for All: the FA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2024

To supplement the objectives outlined in Time for Change, the FA launched an equality, diversity and inclusion strategy in October 2021. The strategy has three core aims: [to challenge discrimination, build a more diverse workforce, and promote football as an inclusive game](#).¹¹

⁹ FA website, [About women's and girls' football in England](#) (accessed 3 November 2022)

¹⁰ [The FA's 2020-2024 strategy 'Time for Change' presented by CEO Mark Bullingham](#), FA News, [online] 12 January 2021 (accessed 3 November 2022)

¹¹ [We're proud to announce a new equality, diversity and inclusion strategy for 2021-24](#), FA News [online], 8 October 2021 (accessed 3 November 2022)

Inspiring Positive Change: the FA Strategy for Women's Football 2020-2024

The FA set out its newest four-year strategy for women's football in October 2020.¹² This aims to [create a sustainable future for girl's and women's football in England](#). The strategy creates eight core objectives for women's football, each to be achieved by 2024. The objectives are supplemented by specific access targets for girls and young women:

5-11: Early Participation

- Equal access to football for girls in 90% of schools (primary/secondary).
- All girls to have access to a Wildcats session within easy travelling distance of their home.

11-14: Development Participation

- In addition to the 90% target, 75% of schools to deliver football in PE or after school.
- A female-specific offer in 75% of clubs nationally.

14+: Football for All and Club Player Pathway

- Increase the presence of ethnically diverse women within football through Leadership programmes.
- Generate more England-qualified players in FA Women's Super League (WSL) and FA Women's Championship teams.

The FA will publish a review of these strategies upon their completion in 2024.

Fan-Led Review of Football Governance: securing the game's future

In April 2021, Oliver Dowden, then Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [announced an independent review of the English football system](#).¹³ The final report was published in November 2021.¹⁴ This highlighted several issues that could impact the future of the women's game including:

¹² [New FA women's football strategy unveiled](#), FA News [online], 19 October 2020 (accessed 3 November 2022)

¹³ GOV.UK, [Statement by Oliver Dowden on the European Super League](#), 19 April 2021 (accessed 3 November 2022)

¹⁴ DCMS, [Fan-Led Review of Football Governance: securing the game's future](#), November 2021 (accessed 3 November 2022)

“Establishing the value of women’s football, its financial structure, support from the Premier League, and league structure”.¹⁵

Due to the complexity of the issues, the report recommended that the future of women’s football should receive its own dedicated review.

Future of Women's Football review

In April 2022, the Government’s response to the November 2021 report [agreed to conduct a separate review of women’s football](#).¹⁶

In September 2022, it was announced that [Karen Carney would act as Chair](#). The review has three themes:

1. Audience and growth. Assess the current visibility of women’s and girl’s football in England. Consequently, establish the how the game’s fanbase will grow in the future, and what impact this growth might have on the game’s infrastructure.
2. Commercial and broadcasting. Explore the financial health of the game through a consideration of its financial health and the potential commercial opportunities available to the game (for instance, broadcast revenue).
3. Structures and governance. Examine the structures within the women’s game (for instance, the links between men’s and women’s teams), and also assess the pitches and facilities available for women’s and girl’s football.¹⁷

The review’s call for evidence closes on 1 November 2022 and its final report is due to be published early next year.

2.1

Wider engagement initiatives

National Plan for Sport and Recreation Inquiry

The report of the House of Lords National Plan for Sport and Recreation Inquiry was published in December 2021. The report [highlighted the need for a “new ambitious national plan for sport, health and wellbeing” to address the issue of high levels of inactivity at the grassroots level](#). Women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and those with long-term health conditions, the

¹⁵ DCMS, [Fan-Led Review of Football Governance: securing the game’s future](#), November 2021, p128

¹⁶ DCMS, [Government response to the Fan-Led Review of Football Governance](#), April 2022 (accessed 3 November 2022)

¹⁷ DCMS, [Future of Women’s Football review- terms of reference](#), 3 October 2022

elderly, and people from less affluent backgrounds were highlighted as groups of concern.

Changes needed in the education system, especially the lack of emphasis on physical literacy and the value placed on PE lessons, was also noted:

Attitudes towards sport and physical activity develop when we are children and often track into adulthood. Currently PE is not valued highly enough and teacher training time devoted to PE is inadequate. We want to see PE made a core subject with greater emphasis on physical literacy and making PE and school sport a fun, enjoyable and inclusive experience.¹⁸

The Government's response to the Committee's report was published in February 2022, [outlining its agreement with the Committee's overarching recommendation on a need for a new ambitious national plan for sport](#).¹⁹

This Girl Can

[This Girl Can](#) is a nationwide campaign run by Sport England, which [seeks to get "women and girls moving, regardless of shape, size, and ability"](#):

The campaign celebrates active women who are doing their thing no matter how they look, how well they do it or how sweaty they get. We want to challenge the conventional idea of what exercise looks like and reach out to women of all backgrounds and ethnicities who feel left behind by traditional exercise.²⁰

The campaign invests in a wide range of projects (for instance, advertising campaigns) to address the physical activity gender gap.

According to Sport England research, 2.8 million women described themselves as more active because of the first phase (January-July 2015) of the campaign.²¹

2.2

Funding

Multi-sport grassroots facilities programme

In the Autumn 2021 budget, the Chancellor announced [£205 million investment](#) over three years (2022-2025) for the improvement or creation of 8,000 grassroots multi-sport facilities throughout England, Scotland, Wales

¹⁸ House of Lords National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee, [A national plan for sport, health and wellbeing](#) (PDF), HL Paper 113, December 2021, p5 (accessed 3 November 2022)

¹⁹ DCMS, [Government response to the House of Lords National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee report: 'A national plan for sport, health and wellbeing'](#), February 2022 (accessed 4 November 2022)

²⁰ Sport England website: [This Girl Can](#) (accessed 4 November 2022)

²¹ Sport England, [This Girl Can: Campaign Summary](#) (PDF)[online], 2021, p21 (accessed 7 November 2022)

and Northern Ireland. This added to the [£25 million package \(2021-2022\)](#) for grassroots facilities announced in the Spring 2021 budget. An initial [£39 million of this was allocated to 116 grassroots facilities](#) in England on 25 March 2022. In the 2021/2022 financial year, Scotland also received a total of £2 million, Wales £1.3 million and Northern Ireland £700,000.

Projects were selected for the scheme based on their ability to:

Deliver improved facilities in deprived areas, support multi-sport use and increase participation among currently under-represented groups, including women, girls and disabled players.²²

The Football Foundation

[The Football Foundation](#) is the delivery partner for the DCMS programme's grant allocation in England.²³ The Football Foundation is a charity funded by the Premier League, Football Association and Government (via Sport England).

The Football Foundation's investment strategy is driven by [Local Football Facility Plans \(LFFPs\)](#). Beginning in 2018, the Football Foundation conducted consultations with local authorities to create 318 bespoke plans for grassroots footballing facilities.²⁴ These aim to deliver new pitches, while also investing in the improvement of existing grass pitches and off-pitch facilities across the country. LFFPs only outline funding priorities and do not guarantee the success of future funding applications linked to these priorities.²⁵

The Football Foundation also funds smaller projects outside of stated LFFP priorities. The organisation is also committed to ensuring that: "by 2030, grassroots football has 20,000 'good' quality pitches to enjoy".²⁶

The Football Association

The FA's "[Survive. Revive. Thrive](#)" strategy was launched in March 2021. Among other things, the strategy aims to add "5,000 good-quality pitches" to the current number by 2024.²⁷

²² [116 Grassroots football facilities across England to be regenerated through UK government investment](#), DCMS press release [online], 25 March 2022 (accessed 4 November 2022)

²³ The DCMS programme was delivered by the Football Associations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

²⁴ Knight, Kavanagh and Page website, [The FA National Football Facilities Strategy: delivering a nationwide set of local football facility plans](#)[online], 14 February 2022 (accessed 4 November 2022)

²⁵ [Local Football Facility Plans](#), Cornwall FA News [online], 6 December 2019 (accessed 3 November 2022)

²⁶ Football Foundation website, [Grass Pitch Improvement](#) (accessed 3 November 2022)

²⁷ [FA Launches long-term strategy for grassroots football as millions ready to return](#), FA News [online], 27 March 2021 (accessed 4 November 2022)

The scheme is delivered with the Football Foundation, and grant allocations are linked to evidence of applicants' commitment to the FA's equal participation goals.

Sport England

[Sport England](#) is responsible for encouraging sporting activity in England. It invests National Lottery and Government money to fund grassroots sport across the country.

In addition to their regular funding activities (including This Girl Can), in 2020 Sport England announced £1 million of funding for the [UEFA Women's Euros Legacy Programme](#). This programme will run in each 2022 Women's Euro host city until 2024, with "ambitions across participation, coaching and refereeing".²⁸

²⁸ FA website, [Inspiring Positive Change Across Our Host Cities](#) (accessed 3 November 2022)

3

Pitches and facilities

There has been long-standing parliamentary and media interest in the sale of school playing field land.²⁹ Discussions around the legacy of the Lionesses' 2022 victory has led to renewed interest in these transactions.³⁰

School playing fields

Changing the use of school playing field land and the sale of playing field land requires the Secretary of State's consent under [section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#).

The Department for Education's background information states:

The government will only give permission to dispose of school playing fields if the sports and curriculum needs of the school and its neighbouring schools can continue to be met.³¹

Approval was given to the disposal of 246 playing fields between November 2001 and April 2010.³² The list of approvals since May 2010, last updated in June 2022, is available on the [GOV.UK website](#).

Government guidance, updated in August 2022, [sets out the relevant legislation and procedure for the disposal of school playing fields](#).³³

The Government's position on the disposal of school playing fields was set out by Baroness Barran, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Education, in response to a written question on 27 April 2022:

In instances of schools wishing to sell playing fields, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, requires applicants to demonstrate a sporting and/or playing benefit as part of any mitigation measures, and that any loss has been minimised both in quantum and quality of the land disposed of. No open school has been allowed to sell all its playing fields.

The Secretary of State for Education is keen to protect school playing fields. Schools are only able to sell or otherwise dispose of playing fields when they can demonstrate to the Secretary of State that they have explored all possible

²⁹ See, for example, [HC Deb 22 June 2000 c269W; Ministers attacked over school fields sale](#), Guardian [online], 30 March 2008 (accessed 3 November 2022)

³⁰ See for instance Gabby Logan, [Lionesses are heroines showing my daughter's generation that nothing is off limits to young women](#), Mail on Sunday [online], 30 July 2022 (accessed 3 November 2022)

³¹ DfE, [Transparency data: Decisions on the disposal of school land](#) [online] (accessed 3 November 2022)

³² DfE, [Transparency data: Decisions on the disposal of school land](#) [online] (accessed 3 November 2022)

³³ DfE, [Submit a school land transaction proposal – guidance](#) [online], August 2022 (accessed 3 November 2022)

alternatives to the disposal, and that the disposal does not adversely impact upon the school's curriculum.³⁴

Responses to school playing field sales

In 2019, GMB Union commissioned research which suggested the sales of school playing fields stemmed from cuts in 'education funding'.³⁵ This was linked to Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) data which suggested that total per student school funding in England had [fallen by 8 per cent](#) in real terms from 2009-2010 to 2017-2018.³⁶

More recent analysis conducted by the Liberal Democrats suggested that the ability to replace outdoor playing fields with indoor facilities does not guarantee that 'these other facilities will serve the same purpose'.³⁷ This could put the next generation of women's footballers at risk.³⁸

3.1 Access and safety

Access to facilities and safety issues linked to outside spaces have been raised as potential barriers to women's participation in sport:

- [Women in Sport's March 2022 report, Reframing Sport for Teenage Girls: Tackling Teenage Disengagement](#) (PDF), funded by Sport England, surveyed 4,000 teenage girls and boys. The charity found that 43% of teenage girls who had considered themselves sporty in primary school had become disengaged.³⁹ 43% of these respondents then suggested that they "don't feel safe exercising outdoors in their area".⁴⁰
- Sport England's 2015 review, [Go where women are](#) (PDF), highlighted the need for women's sports offers to be in the, "Right place: close to where women are, that feel safe and with adequate facilities".⁴¹

Similar concerns have been mentioned specifically in analyses of women's football:

³⁴ PQ HL7931 [[Schools: Playing Fields](#)], 27 April 2022

³⁵ [More than 200 school playing fields sold off since 2010](#), GMB News [online] 3 April 2019 (accessed 3 November 2022)

³⁶ Institute for Fiscal Studies, [2018 Annual Report on Education Spending in England](#) [online], September 2018, p8 (accessed 3 November 2022)

³⁷ [Nearly 100 school playing fields sold off in seven years 'putting Lionesses legacy at risk'](#), iNews [online], 5 August 2022 (accessed 3 November 2022)

³⁸ As above

³⁹ Women in Sport, [Reframing Sport for Teenage Girls: Tackling Teenage Disengagement](#) (PDF) [online], p13 (accessed 7 November 2022)

⁴⁰ As above, p19

⁴¹ Sport England, [Go where women are: insight on engaging women and girls in sport and exercise](#) (PDF) (online), 2015, p17 (accessed 7 November 2022)

- [FIFPRO](#), a global professional football trade union, released a 2020 report [Raising Our Game](#) (PDF). It surveyed women's professional footballers and stakeholders linked to the game. "The lack of sporting infrastructure" was listed as a challenge by most of the respondents to the FIFPRO stakeholders survey.⁴² FIFPRO's surveys were conducted on a global scale, and the specific responses of stakeholders in England are unavailable.
- After the England Lionesses' victory in 2022, commentators suggested that safety concerns linked to playing at night or lack of available pitch space stood as two potential barriers for female grassroots participation.⁴³

A comprehensive series of statistics on women's access to grassroots football facilities in England is not currently available. However, the forthcoming review of women's football is due to take evidence on and analyse the "adequacy, quality, accessibility and prevalence of the facilities available for women's and girls' football".⁴⁴

In a [September 2022 response to a written question](#) Nigel Huddleston, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the DCMS, set out the government's response to these access concerns:

Each year, the government invests £18 million into community sport facilities via the Football Foundation, alongside the English Football Association and the Premier League. A further £21 million was invested in England in 2021/22, supporting a range of projects to deliver improved facilities in deprived areas, support multi-sport use and increase participation among currently under-represented groups including women and girls and disabled players. The Government has committed another £205 million between 2022 and 2025, with plans for this investment due to be announced in the Autumn.

We are working with the FA to build on the momentum created by the Women's Euros to ensure there is a legacy of growth in women and girls, including 500,000 new football opportunities to engage women and girls across the nine host cities by 2024, and 20,000 more women playing for fun across the country. To raise the profile of facilities in the UK, and to commemorate the Lionesses, the Football Foundation is working with facility owners to name pitches/facilities in towns and cities that have a strong link to each tournament winning squad member.⁴⁵

⁴² FIFPRO, [Raising our game: women's football report](#) (PDF), 2020, p.59

⁴³ [Women's football: The state of the game - from pitches and access to pathways](#), Sky News [online] 12 June 2022 (accessed 3 November 2022); Forbes H and Tucker E, [How to champion women's football? Give us access to your pitches](#), iNews [online], 3 August 2022 (accessed 3 November 2022)

⁴⁴ [Karen Carney to lead major review of women's football](#), DCMS press release [online], 2 September 2022 (accessed 3 November 2022)

⁴⁵ [PQ 45355 \[Football: Females\], 20 September 2022](#)

4 Media

4.1 Press releases

[Karen Carney MBE to lead major review of women's football](#)

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 2 September 2022

[Football Foundation funding boost for multi-sport facilities](#)

Sport England, 24 August 2022

[Congratulations to England's Lionesses – Inspiring Muslim girls to play football too](#)

Muslim Women's Network UK, 1 August 2022

[Government plans to name grassroots football facilities in honour of Lionesses class of Euros 2022](#)

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 31 July 2022

[Welsh grassroots football facilities receive regeneration funding](#)

Office of the Secretary of State for Wales, 25 March 2022

4.2 News articles

[The review into women's football is for everyone. Help me make it a success](#)

By Karen Carney

Guardian, 8 September 2022

[England through to Women's World Cup after unbelievable 10-0 victory: 'All hail the Lionesses'](#)

Pink News, 7 September 2022

[A new era for women's football](#)

F.T., 5 August 2022

Nearly 100 school playing fields sold off in seven years 'putting Lionesses legacy at risk'

inews, 5 August 2022

[Stark figures reveal girls' limited access to football, rugby and cricket in UK schools](#)

inews, 4 August 2022

[What you need to know about PE and access to football on the curriculum](#)

Education Hub Blog, Department of Education, 3 August 2022

[Let all girls play football at school, say Lionesses after Euros victory](#)

Schools Week, 3 August 2022

[The legacy of the Lionesses: A game-changer for Women's football](#)

University of Wolverhampton blog, 1 August 2022

[The Times view on the victory of the England women's football team: Lioness Legacy](#)

Times, 1 August 2022

[Not another false dawn: Lionesses did their part, now football chiefs must make legacy last](#)

Evening Standard, 1 August 2022

[The Lionesses have done it. This Euros win will change women's football for ever](#)

Guardian, 31 July 2022

[Women's Euros: Will tournament leave a lasting legacy for female football in England?](#)

Itv News Insight, 29 July 2022

[Football inequality revealed as just 44% of secondary schools teach girls same lessons as boys](#)

Inews, 28 July 2022

[The Euros prove it: women's football is not like men's – and that's good](#)

Guardian, 27 July 2022

[Multi-million investment to engage girls with football](#)

Sport England, 18 July 2022

[Tackling inequities and the gender activity gap through football](#)

Sport England, 06 July 2022

[Euro 2022: why women's football remains dominated by the men's game](#)

The Conversation, 30 June 2022

[Government's plans for reform welcomed by Women in Football](#)

Women in Football, 26 April 2022

[Decisions on the disposal of school land](#)

Department for Education, last updated on 8 June 2022

[Women's football: record crowds and soaring popularity – here's how to keep it this way](#)

The Conversation, 20 April 2022

[How fans fall in love with women's football](#)

The Conversation, 11 April 2022

[Professional female footballers given increased job security in 'landmark' changes](#)

Telegraph, 1 February 2022

["When it's gone, it's gone": Why do schools keep selling off their playing fields?](#)

New Statesman, 2 March 2020

5 Parliamentary material

5.1 Ministerial statements

[DCMS Update](#)

Statement about launch of the future of women's football review

5 Sep 2022 | Ministerial statements | House of Commons | HCWS284

[Fan-led Review of Football Governance Final Report](#)

25 Nov 2021 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS417

5.2 Debates

[Women's Football](#) - HC Deb 26 January 2022 cc400-18WH

5.3 Parliamentary questions

[Football: Females](#)

Asked by: McGovern, Alison

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans her Department has to increase support to women's football, following the success of the lionesses at Euro 2022 and the open letter the Lionesses wrote to the Prime Minister in August 2022.

Answering member: Stuart Andrew

We are determined to support more women and girls to get active and football is the most popular team sport in terms of participation for women and girls.

The Lionesses' fantastic performance at the 2022 Women's Euros has truly inspired the nation with a record breaking crowd of over 87,000 attending the final and 23.3m UK viewers tuning into the BBC's coverage. It is essential that we take the opportunity to capitalise on and build on the success and legacy of the tournament and the team to secure a long lasting and sustainable future for the women's game.

To raise the profile of facilities in the UK, and to commemorate the Lionesses, the Football Foundation is working with facility owners to name pitches/facilities in towns and cities that have a strong link to each tournament winning squad member. We will also continue to invest in grassroots sport to bring on the next generation of Lionesses and continue to work with the Department for Education to ensure girls have equal access to sports. The Prime Minister and the DCMS Secretary of State were delighted to meet the Lionesses earlier this month who are extraordinary ambassadors for sport. They reconfirmed their commitment to reviewing the barriers to girls accessing two hours of PE.

The recently announced Women's Football Review will look at how to deliver bold and sustainable growth of the women's game at elite and grassroots level. We would encourage all interested stakeholders and organisations to come forward and contribute views to Karen Carney's review. It is vital that we hear from a variety of voices across the game.

25 Oct 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 65737

Date tabled: 18 Oct 2022 | **Date answered:** 25 Oct 2022

Football: Females

Asked by: Knight, Julian

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to provide more pitches and facilities for women's football teams.

Answering member: Nigel Huddleston | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Each year, the government invests £18 million into community sport facilities via the Football Foundation, alongside the English Football Association and the Premier League. A further £21 million was invested in England in 2021/22, supporting a range of projects to deliver improved facilities in deprived areas, support multi-sport use and increase participation among currently under-represented groups including women and girls and disabled players. The Government has committed another £205 million between 2022 and 2025, with plans for this investment due to be announced in the Autumn.

We are working with the FA to build on the momentum created by the Women's Euros to ensure there is a legacy of growth in women and girls, including 500,000 new football opportunities to engage women and girls across the nine host cities by 2024, and 20,000 more women playing for fun across the country. To raise the profile of facilities in the UK, and to commemorate the Lionesses, the Football Foundation is working with facility owners to name pitches/facilities in towns and cities that have a strong link to each tournament winning squad member.

20 Sep 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 45355

Date tabled: 2 Sep 2022 | **Date answered:** 20 Sep 2022

Schools: Football

Asked by: Anderson, Lee

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has plans to help increase access to football training for girls in schools.

Answering member: Jonathan Gullis | **Department:** Department for Education

The Department's expectation is that a school's starting point should be to offer the same sport or physical activity to both girls and boys, including football.

The Department is funding the 'Your Time' Programme, which gives girls aged 8-16 access to competitive sport and sport leadership opportunities, including football. The PE and Sport Premium of £320 million a year will continue to help primary schools to make sustainable improvements to their PE and sport offer.

The Government wants to increase opportunities to take part in all types of sport and physical activity and has committed to update the cross-government School Sport and Activity Action Plan to support all pupils to take part in a wide variety of sport and activities through PE, extracurricular sport and 30 minutes of physical activity every day in school.

27 Sep 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 45454

Date tabled: 02 Sep 2022 | **Date answered:** 27 Sep 2022

Football: Females

Asked by: Leadbeater, Kim

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that girls have equal access to football in schools.

Answering member: Nigel Huddleston | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

The Government is absolutely committed to supporting girls' sport at every opportunity including pushing for greater participation. The Government is looking forward to hosting the rescheduled women's UEFA European Championships in 2022. The tournament's National Promotion Programme will help to deliver on the Football Association's commitment to ensure equal access for all girls to play football in school and clubs.

Other activities to inspire more women and girls to take up the sport include signposting to women's and girls' participation opportunities, a pre-tournament nation-wide 'activity' challenge for all ages and backgrounds and a pre-tournament host city Roadshow. In addition, as part of the Spending Review, £205 million of funding for grassroots football and multi-sport facilities was announced, which will help to contribute to ensuring girls across the country have the football facilities they need in their community, including in schools.

02 Mar 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 128483

Date tabled: 23 Feb 2022 | **Date for answer:** 25 Feb 2022 | **Date answered:** 02 Mar 2022

[Football: Females](#)

Asked by: Jarvis, Dan

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support girls and women pursue careers in football.

Answering member: Nigel Huddleston | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

We are absolutely committed to supporting diversity in sport at every opportunity including through employment.

We support the Football Association's work in encouraging more women and girls into football. On 19 October 2020, the Football Association published its new women's and girls' football strategy 'Inspiring Positive Change: FA Women's Football Strategy 2020-24'. The strategy includes a commitment to developing a diverse, well supported and highly skilled workforce including coaches, referees, sports development officers and administrators at every level of the game. An example of how they plan to achieve this by 2024 is by encouraging more coaches in the women and girls' game, with a greater proportion being female and from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

In addition to this, in October 2020 the FA launched their Football Leadership Diversity Code to increase diversity and inclusion across English football. This included the target of 30% of new hires being female in senior leadership and team operation roles.

UK Sport and Sport England's Code for Sports Governance (published in 2016) seeks to improve the diversity of governance structures in sport and applies to any organisation seeking public funding for sport. Latest figures show that women now account for 40% of board members across bodies funded by either Sport England or UK Sport.

09 Jun 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 10394

Date tabled: 04 Jun 2021 | **Date for answer:** 09 Jun 2021 | **Date answered:** 09 Jun 2021

[Football: Females](#)

Asked by: Jarvis, Dan

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2021 to Question 163699 on Football: Females, how much and what proportion of the funding under Sports England's (a) Uniting the Movement strategy and (b) Community Emergency Fund has been allocated to (i) women and girls football teams and (ii) men and boys football teams.

Answering member: Nigel Huddleston | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

The Government remains committed to encouraging more women and girls to get active and helping women's sport emerge from the current crisis stronger than ever. This is an important opportunity to create a long-lasting legacy for women's and girl's sport and the Government is determined that women's sport is protected as we emerge from the pandemic.

Sport England's new strategy, Uniting the Movement, has already committed an extra £50m to boost grassroots sports clubs and organisations - including women's and girl's football. Sport England expects to build on this investment as the implementation of the strategy progresses.

Sport England is also investing £24.6m in The Football Association over the course of 2016-21 for its work on grassroots participation, the football talent pathway, and coaching programmes. Within this, £2.6m is specifically reserved for women and girls talent programmes.

The Community Emergency Fund - part of Sport England's COVID-19 support package - has delivered more than £5.38m of National Lottery funding for Association Football supporting both men's and women's football, and across Sport England's COVID Support Package, £10,488,255 has been provided for 1,558 Association Football projects, benefitting all ages and genders.

27 Apr 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 185370

Date tabled: 21 Apr 2021 | **Date for answer:** 26 Apr 2021 | **Date answered:** 27 Apr 2021

[Football: Females](#)

Asked by: Jarvis, Dan

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions his Department has had with Ministerial colleagues of the Department for Education on plans to provide support to help increase participation in girl's football in primary schools.

Answering member: Nigel Huddleston | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Sports and physical activity are crucial for our mental and physical health. The Chief Medical Officer is clear that being physically active is important to long-term health and crucial for keeping people healthy. That's why we have continued to make sure that people can exercise throughout the national restrictions, and why we have ensured that grassroots and children's sport was at the front of the queue when easing those restrictions.

My department works closely with the Department for Education on school sport provision. Schools are free to organise and deliver a flexible, diverse and challenging Physical Education curriculum that suits the needs of all their pupils, which can include football for girls.

The Secretary of State for Education and the Culture Secretary jointly hosted a school sport roundtable in March where the English FA were represented. This roundtable launched our ongoing work to bring together a sports sector offer to support schools through an active summer recovery term, and on into the summer holidays, in order to get children and young people active again.

Minister Gibb and I also recently met with Baroness Sue Campbell, Director of Women's Football at the FA, to discuss PE and school sport including the work that Baroness Campbell is doing to increase the numbers of girls playing football in schools.

26 Apr 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 185369

Date tabled: 21 Apr 2021 | **Date for answer:** 26 Apr 2021 | **Date answered:** 26 Apr 2021

5.4 Early Day Motions

[England women's national football team](#)

That this House wholeheartedly congratulates the Lionesses, England women's national football team, and their manager Sarina Wiegman, for their victory in this summer's UEFA Women's EURO competition; recognises the work of the FA in ensuring a successful home tournament with a lasting legacy for the future of women and girls' football; pays tribute to the Lionesses for their work as role models for aspiring footballers across the country, and wishes the team the best of luck for next summer's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

07 Sep 2022 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 366 (session 2022-23)

Primary sponsor: Hobhouse, Wera

[Launch of Bath City Women](#)

That this House celebrates the launch of Bath City Women, Bath City FC's new women's team who will wear the famous black and white striped kit and play their home games at Twerton Park;

09 Jun 2022 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 147 (session 2022-23)

Primary sponsor: Hobhouse, Wera

[Scottish Women's Premier League Cup Final 2021](#)

That this House congratulates Celtic Football Club's Women's Team on their success in the 2021 Scottish Women's Premier League Cup Final against Glasgow City, played at Firhill Stadium in Glasgow on Sunday 5 December

2021; notes that this is the first silverware for the team since 2010, and the first since that year not be won by either Glasgow City or Hibernian; believes that the record attendance of 3,645 indicates a growing interest in the women's game;

06 Dec 2021 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 741 (session 2021-22)

Primary sponsor: Grady, Patrick

[Carol Thomas, England football captain](#)

That this House celebrates the achievements of Carol Thomas as a pioneer of modern women's football in England; notes she was the first captain to lead out an England Women's side on a Football League First Division ground; further that she was the first captain to lead an England Women's team outside of Europe;

02 Nov 2021 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 612 (session 2021-22)

Primary sponsor: Hardy, Emma

[Women in Football](#)

That this House welcomes Women in Football's new campaign #GetOnside; echoes the campaign's call for better gender equality in the football industry; notes Women in Football's success in representing women at all levels in the football industry; further notes the positive effect that the 2018 #WhatIf campaign had on equality in football; celebrates the work done by women at all levels of football, from the pitch, to the back rooms, to the boardrooms;

20 Sep 2021 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 453 (session 2021-22)

Primary sponsor: Elliott, Julie

6 Further reading

FA website, [The FA Girls' England Talent Pathway](#) (accessed 7 November 2022)

DCMS, [Guidance: Future of Women's Football review - terms of reference](#) [online], September 2022 (accessed 7 November 2022)

DCMS, [Government Response to the Fan Led Review of Football Governance](#) [online], April 2022 (accessed 7 November 2002)

DCMS, [Fan-Led Review of Football Governance: securing the game's future](#) [online], November 2021 (accessed 7 November 2022)

FAIR Game, [The Gender Divide That Fails Football's Bottom Line: The Commercial Case for Gender Equality](#) (PDF)[online], March 2022 (accessed 7 November 2022)

Disclaimer

The Commons Library does not intend the information in our research publications and briefings to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. We have published it to support the work of MPs. You should not rely upon it as legal or professional advice, or as a substitute for it. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any errors, omissions or misstatements contained herein. You should consult a suitably qualified professional if you require specific advice or information. Read our briefing '[Legal help: where to go and how to pay](#)' for further information about sources of legal advice and help. This information is provided subject to the conditions of the Open Parliament Licence.

Feedback

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Please note that authors are not always able to engage in discussions with members of the public who express opinions about the content of our research, although we will carefully consider and correct any factual errors.

You can read our feedback and complaints policy and our editorial policy at commonslibrary.parliament.uk. If you have general questions about the work of the House of Commons email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

The House of Commons Library is a research and information service based in the UK Parliament. Our impartial analysis, statistical research and resources help MPs and their staff scrutinise legislation, develop policy, and support constituents.

Our published material is available to everyone on commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

Get our latest research delivered straight to your inbox. Subscribe at commonslibrary.parliament.uk/subscribe or scan the code below:



 commonslibrary.parliament.uk

 [@commonslibrary](https://twitter.com/commonslibrary)