



Racism in Football: Tackling Abusive Behaviour

Summary

In recent months, several football matches have been disrupted by racist incidents. This included a Euro 2020 qualifying match between Bulgaria and England in October 2019, which had to be stopped twice due to racist chanting aimed at some England players. Bulgaria were already serving a partial stadium ban after some of their fans had been found guilty of racism previously. In the same month, an FA Cup fourth qualifying round match between Haringey Borough and Yeovil Town was abandoned after the home team walked off the pitch, alleging racist abuse towards their players.

Recent data provided by the Home Office and Kick It Out suggests that the number of racist incidents in the sport is increasing. However, this has been attributed in part to improvements in reporting such occurrences.

Existing legislation covers some incidents of racism in football in the United Kingdom. For example, under the Public Order Act 1986 it is an offence to use abusive, insulting, or threatening words or behaviour that intends to or causes another person alarm, distress, or harassment. In addition, the Football Spectators Act 1989 provides that certain offences be accompanied by a football banning order. This has been used to prevent violence or disorder in and around football stadiums.

The footballing authorities have also introduced measures to combat racism in football. This includes a three-step protocol to tackle discrimination at football matches, which can lead to referees abandoning the matches. More recently, the FA has introduced a ten-match suspension for coaches and players found guilty of discriminatory behaviour.

Football clubs have also acted to tackle discriminatory behaviour from their own supporters. This has ranged from stadium bans to starting their own education schemes. For example, in January 2019, Chelsea started the 'Say No to Anti-Semitism' scheme, seeking to raise awareness of antisemitism and its impact on the Jewish community and wider society. It also provides one-to-one education courses to supporters.

Despite the measures in place, those involved in the sport have called on footballing authorities to do more. In October 2019, Raheem Sterling, who was one of the English players racially abused in Bulgaria, signed a manifesto calling for "fundamental changes" in how football tackles racism. The manifesto called for further sanctions for racism, beginning with a minimum partial stadium closure rising to expulsion from a competition for repeat offences or for mass discriminatory chanting.

Eren Waitzman | 14 January 2020

A full list of Lords Library briefings is available on the research briefings page on the internet. The Library publishes briefings for all major items of business debated in the House of Lords. The Library also publishes briefings on the House of Lords itself and other subjects that may be of interest to Members. Library briefings are compiled for the benefit of Members of the House of Lords and their personal staff, to provide impartial, authoritative, politically balanced briefing on subjects likely to be of interest to Members of the Lords. Authors are available to discuss the contents of the briefings with the Members and their staff but cannot advise members of the general public.

Any comments on Library briefings should be sent to the Head of Research Services, House of Lords Library, London SW1A 0PW or emailed to purvism@parliament.uk.

I. Racism in Football: How Big is the Problem?

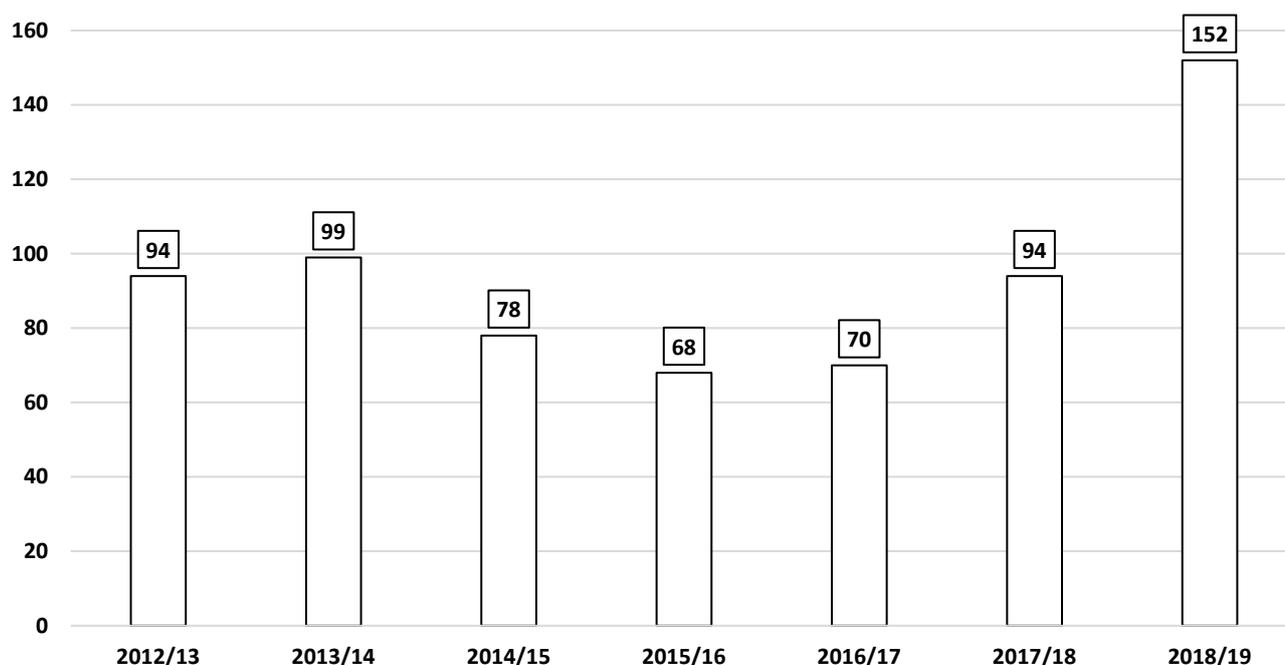
There have been increases in the number of racist incidents reported in professional and grassroots football in recent years.

I.1 Football-Related Racist Incidents Reported to the Police

According to the latest available Home Office data, there was an increase from 94 police reported football-related racist incidents in 2017/18 to 152 such incidents in 2018/19.¹

Data on police reported football-related racist incidents from 2012/13 to 2018/19 is shown in the chart below.

Chart 1: Number of Police Reported Football-Related Racist Incidents, 2012/13–2018/19²



(Source: House of Lords, [‘Written Question: Football: Racial Discrimination’](#), 30 October 2019, HL182)

Organisations such as the Professional Footballers’ Association (PFA) contend that “recent improvements” in the recording of such incidents could “partially explain” the rise in figures.³ For example, in 2017/18, the Home Office’s football policing unit started a new working arrangement with the Football Association (FA) and Kick It Out to ensure police were aware of racist incidents that may not have previously been reported.

¹ House of Lords, [‘Written Question: Football: Racial Discrimination’](#), 30 October 2019, HL182.

² No Home Office data prior to 2012/13 has been made publicly available.

³ Professional Footballers’ Association, [‘Match Football Hate Crime Up By 47 Percent’](#), 19 September 2019.

I.2 Football-Related Racist Incidents Reported to Kick It Out

Incidents of racist abuse can also be reported to Kick It Out.

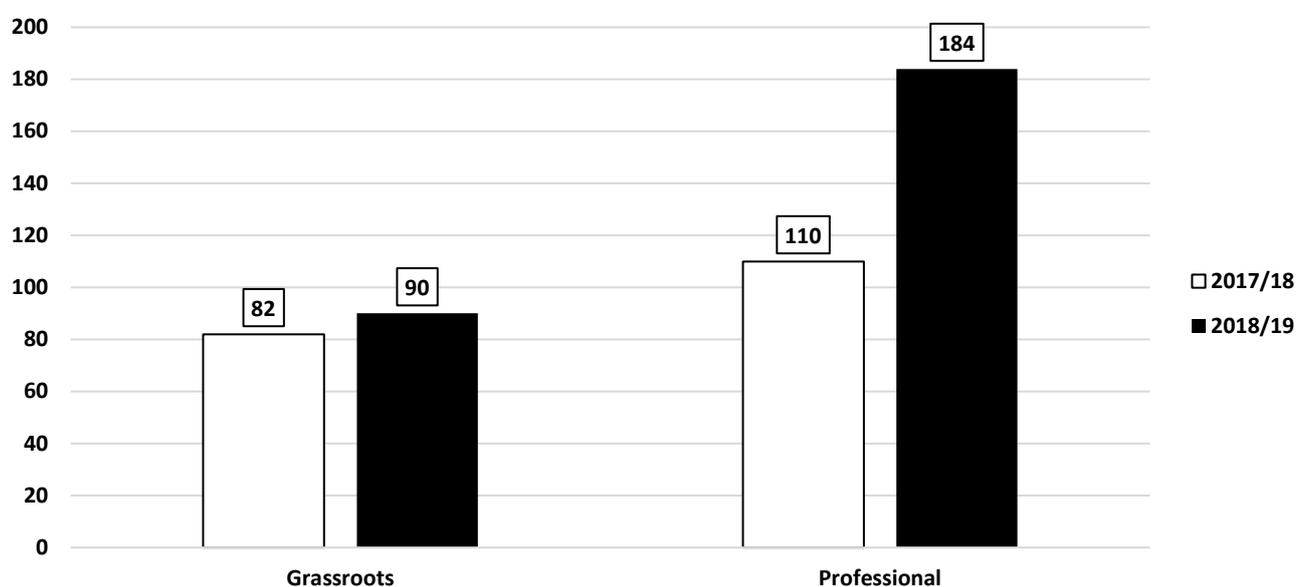
Who Are Kick It Out?

Kick It Out are English football's equality and inclusion organisation. It started as the 'Let's Kick Racism Out of Football' campaign, before becoming an organisation in 1997. The organisation was both established and chaired by former Member of the House of Lords Lord Ouseley. In 2019, Lord Ouseley stepped down as its chair and was replaced by Sanjay Bhandari.

(Sources: Kick It Out, '[About Us](#)', accessed 6 November 2019; and '[Lord Ouseley Announces Intention to Step Down as Kick It Out Chair](#)', 11 December 2018)

According to Kick It Out's latest figures, racist discrimination in both professional and grassroots football increased in the 2018/19 season by 42.7 percent from the previous year.⁴ Comparative data for 2017/18 and 2018/19 can be found in the chart below.

Chart 2: Racist Discrimination in Grassroots and Professional Football Reported to Kick It Out, 2017/18–2018/19



(Source: Kick It Out, '[Reporting Statistics: 2018/19](#)', accessed 6 November 2019)

The organisation also reports on discrimination towards footballers on social media. It found that 62.3% of discriminatory social media posts recorded in 2018/19 had targeted race (99 of 159 cases).⁵

⁴ Kick It Out, '[Reporting Statistics: 2018/19](#)', accessed 6 November 2019.

⁵ *ibid.*

This is compared to 40% of social media posts recorded in 2017/18 (81 of 201 cases).⁶

2. Measures to Tackle Racism in Football

There are several measures that the police, footballing authorities, clubs and social media companies have so far taken to combat racism in football.

2.1 Legislation

Current Offences

In response to football-related disorder in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, many offences were legislated for that can be used in response to racist incidents in football.

Under the Public Order Act 1986, a person guilty of threatening someone with the intent of causing them to believe they are in immediate danger of violence is liable on conviction to imprisonment for up to six months, a fine, or both. Similarly, a person found guilty of intentionally using abusive, insulting, or threatening words or behaviour that intends to or causes another person alarm, distress, or harassment can receive the same punishment. In circumstances where a person is guilty of using threatening or abusive words or behaviour, they are subject to a fine.⁷

Under the Football (Offences) Act 1991, it is an offence to engage or participate in chanting of an indecent or racist nature at a football match. This includes any words or sounds that are threatening, abusive or insulting to a person's colour, race, nationality, or ethnic origins. A person found guilty of this offence could be liable for a fine.⁸

In addition, the Football Spectators Act 1989 (as amended by the Football (Disorder) Act 2000) provides for the making of "football banning orders".⁹ A football banning order is imposed by a court where an offender has been convicted of a football-related offence or on a complaint of violence or disorder. Schedule 1 of the 1989 Act details football-related offences, which includes offences under the 1986 Act such as racial hatred committed prior to, during or after a football match.¹⁰ Under the order, the offender must report to a police station within five days. The order may also require the offender to surrender their passport during designated football matches outside England and Wales. Usually, the term of the order must be between three and five years. However, when the order is imposed in addition to a sentence of immediate imprisonment, the term of the order must be between six and ten years.¹¹ As part of the Football (Disorder) Act 2000, the 1989 Act now combines the effect of domestic and international football banning orders.¹²

⁶ Kick It Out, '[Reporting Statistics: 2017/18](#)', accessed 6 November 2019.

⁷ Public Order Act 1985, sections 4–5.

⁸ Football (Offences) Act 1991, section 3.

⁹ Football Spectators Act 1989, sections 14A–J.

¹⁰ Football Spectators Act 1989, schedule 1.

¹¹ *ibid*, sections 14A–J.

¹² Football (Disorder) Act 2000, section 1.

Review by the Law Commission into Hate Crime Provisions

In September 2018, the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice, Lucy Frazer, announced that the Government had asked the Law Commission to complete a review into hate crime. The review would examine how to make current legislation, such as the Public Order Act 1986, “more effective”. It would also consider whether there should be additional protected characteristics, including age.¹³ The Law Commission announced that other specific offences, such as racist chanting at a football match, would form part of the review.¹⁴ The project started in March 2019, with a final report set to be published in 2021.

Government’s White Paper on Online Harms

In April 2019, the Government published a white paper on online harms. The white paper contained several legislative and non-legislative proposals to make companies “more responsible” for their users’ safety online. This included establishing a new statutory duty of care towards users of the internet and online platforms, which would be overseen by an independent regulator. The scope of the white paper would also cover hate crime online and its impact on individuals and society.

The consultation on the white paper ran from April to July 2019, with the outcome yet to be published by the Government.¹⁵ In August 2019, the Minister of State at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Nigel Adams, said that the white paper would hold social media companies “legally responsible” for tackling “disgusting behaviour”.¹⁶

2.1 Action by the Footballing Authorities

UEFA

In 2009, Europe’s footballing governing body, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), approved official guidelines to support match officials in tackling racism inside stadiums. As part of a three-step procedure, referees were granted the following powers:

- **Step 1:** If the referee becomes aware of racist behaviour, or is informed of it by the fourth official, the referee will stop the game. The referee will then request an announcement to be made over the public address system asking spectators to immediately stop any racist behaviour.
- **Step 2:** If the behaviour continues after the game has restarted, the referee will suspend the match for a “reasonable” period of time, for example, five to ten minutes, and request that both teams go to the dressing rooms. A further announcement is then made over the public address system.

¹³ Law Commission, ‘[Hate Crime](#)’, accessed 7 November 2019.

¹⁴ Law Commission, [Hate Crime: Background to the Review](#), 26 February 2019, p 3.

¹⁵ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, ‘[Online Harms White Paper](#)’, updated 26 June 2019.

¹⁶ Ben Rumsby, ‘[Exclusive: Premier League Stars Told to Sue Social Media Platforms if They Want to Curb Racist Abuse as Marcus Rashford Targeted Following Penalty Miss](#)’, *Telegraph*, 24 August 2019.

- **Step 3:** If the behaviour continues again after a second restart, the referee can definitively abandon the match.¹⁷

UEFA can also act retrospectively to tackle racism and other discriminatory conduct. Article 14 of its 2019 disciplinary regulations states that individuals, including players or supporters, who insult a person or group on grounds including race will incur a suspension either lasting ten matches or a specified period of time, or any other “appropriate” sanction, such as fines.¹⁸ If one or more supporters of a football club or association under UEFA, such as England, engage in discriminatory behaviour, the association or club should be punished with a minimum of a partial stadium closure. In cases of reoffending, a second offence can be punished with one match played behind closed doors and a fine of €50,000. Any subsequent offence to that can result in: a stadium closure; the forfeiting of a match; a points deduction; and/or disqualification from the competition.¹⁹

English Footballing Authorities

In July 2019, representatives from the English FA, the Premier League and the English Football League sent a joint letter to the then Minister for Sport, Mims Davies, outlining their plans to combat racism in football. This included:

- updating the minimum sanctions for discrimination by participants such as players, coaches, referees, etc;
- introducing new education materials for fans who engage in discriminatory behaviour; and
- improving reporting systems and training for officials, such as increasing the use of body cameras for stewards.²⁰

The representatives also stated that they would be developing new sanctions and guidelines for discriminatory incidents before presenting it to the FA Board and the Football Regulatory Authority in September 2019 for approval.²¹

In October 2019, the Minister of State at the Home Office, Baroness Williams of Trafford, announced that the English FA had increased its minimum sanction for individuals responsible for discriminatory behaviour to a ten-match ban.²² At present the Welsh FA’s minimum sanction for discriminatory behaviour is a ten-match suspension.²³ In addition, the Scottish FA’s “lower end” sanction for excessive misconduct in a match, such as discriminatory behaviour, is a two-match suspension from all domestic football. However, the maximum punishment is a suspension from all domestic football, with the length and severity of the punishment set by a tribunal.²⁴

¹⁷ UEFA, [‘Empowering Referees to Act Against Racism: UEFA’s Three-Step Procedure’](#), 15 October 2019.

¹⁸ UEFA, [UEFA Disciplinary Regulations: Edition 2019](#), 27 May 2019, p 15.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Football Association, English Football League, Premier League, [Letter to Minister for Sport](#), 23 July 2019.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² House of Lords, [‘Written Question: Racial Discrimination: Football’](#), 30 October 2019, HL180.

²³ Football Association of Wales, [Know Your Stuff: A Players Guide to On and Off the Pitch Behaviour](#), 30 July 2015, p 6.

²⁴ Scottish Football Association, [Judicial Panel Protocol 2019/20](#), 20 September 2019, p 94.

Action by Clubs

At present, clubs are responsible for the security provisions in place in their stadiums. As part of this, each club that has a stadium capacity of more than 10,000—or 5,000 in the case of Premiership or Football League grounds—is issued stadium security certificates by the local authority. This requires stewards to be trained to a “nationally-recognised standard”. As part of the safety certificate, each club must have CCTV covering important areas of the ground and a stadium control room where officials can communicate by radio to stewards and police. Local authorities can also coordinate a safety advisory group, who provide recommendations for improvement or for the staffing levels in “high-risk” matches.²⁵

To tackle discrimination committed by its own players, football clubs often have their own internal code of conduct.²⁶ These rules are generally not made publicly available. However, in recent years, some clubs have publicly acted against their own players for discriminatory behaviour. For example, in March 2019, Sheffield United sacked Sophie Jones, a striker for the club’s women’s team, after she was found guilty by the FA of racially abusing an opposition player.²⁷

A football club can also conduct its own investigations and impose its own measures on supporters. In July 2019, a Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) investigation into a racist incident at a match between Chelsea and Manchester City in December 2018 did not lead to any criminal action. However, following the decision by the CPS, Chelsea conducted its own investigation and issued a lifetime ban to one of its supporters for racially abusing an opposition player.²⁸

In addition to issuing bans to supporters, some football clubs have required that supporters found guilty of discriminatory behaviour attend the club’s education schemes. For example, in January 2019, Chelsea started the ‘Say No to Anti-Semitism’ scheme, which seeks to raise awareness of antisemitism and its impact on the Jewish community and wider society. It also provides one-to-one education courses to supporters. As part of the scheme, the football club took a group of 150 staff, stewards, and supporters to Auschwitz, Poland, in June 2019 to learn about the Holocaust.²⁹ According to Karen Pollock, the chief executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, the course was “a great example of how we can educate about the past to create a better future”.³⁰

Darren Bailey, a former director of governance and regulation at the FA, stated that clubs are increasingly using their powers against their own fans who act in a discriminatory manner. In an interview with the *Times*, Mr Bailey stated that clubs were “moving towards a zero-tolerance approach”. This includes removing fans’ season tickets and issuing lifetime bans.³¹

However, Melanie Stancliffe, a partner at Cripps Pemberton Greenish who specialises in employment

²⁵ Martyn Ziegler, ‘[How is Security at Football Grounds Supposed to Work?](#)’, *Times* (£), 11 March 2019.

²⁶ For reference, see: Burnley Football Club, ‘[Players Code of Conduct](#)’, 18 February 2015.

²⁷ Lawrence Ostlere, ‘[Sheffield United Sack Sophie Jones After FA Hand Forward Five-Game Ban for Racist Abuse](#)’, *Independent*, 20 March 2019.

²⁸ Matt Law, ‘[Chelsea Issue Lifetime Ban to Supporter Accused of Racially Abusing Raheem Sterling Last Season](#)’, *Telegraph*, 30 July 2019.

²⁹ BBC Sport, ‘[Fans Form ‘Chelsea Together’ to ‘Stand Together’ Against Racism and Intolerance](#)’, 18 January 2019.

³⁰ Holocaust Educational Trust, ‘[Special Visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau with Chelsea Football Club](#)’, accessed 7 November 2019.

³¹ Dan Hayes, ‘[Racism Aimed at Raheem Sterling Sullies Football](#)’, *Times* (£), 28 November 2019.

law, suggested that it “may be time” for clubs to be more responsible for the acts of third parties, such as opposition players or supporters, on its players. Speaking with the *Times*, Ms Stancliffe stated that there “needs to be a culture of trust from the top—the governing bodies—down”, so that clubs could take “positive” action to curb such harassment. This includes mediation, arranging awareness training and counselling and settling disputes “behind closed doors”.³²

Action by Social Media Companies

In protest at the scale of racial abuse online, several footballers boycotted social media for 24 hours on 19 April 2019 as part of a campaign launched by the PFA. The campaign was also supported by football’s world governing body, FIFA, and the world players’ union, FIFPro. In response to the boycott, a spokesperson for Twitter stated that the social media company was “deeply committed” to “improving the health of the conversation [on tackling racism online]” on its platform. It also said it was now suspending three times as many abusive accounts within 24 hours of receiving a report than in April 2018.³³

In September 2019, Kick It Out met with representatives from Twitter UK to discuss the issue further. Following the meeting, Twitter UK published a statement stating it had acted against more than 700 cases of football-related abuse in the previous fortnight. It also stated that it would “continue to take swift action” against those who publish discriminatory posts.³⁴

3. Tackling Racism in Football: What More Can Be Done?

3.1 Increased Sanctions

In the aftermath of recent matches that have featured racist abuse, there has been widespread criticism aimed at football’s governing bodies for failing to properly tackle such behaviour. Following the racist incidents that marred Bulgaria vs England, a spokesperson for the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, condemned the abuse as “vile”. The spokesperson also called on UEFA to “face up to facts” that racism in football was “not being adequately dealt with”.³⁵ In addition, the Leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, argued that “UEFA needs to do far more to tackle this kind of abuse”.³⁶

On 29 October 2019, the Bulgarian Football Union was punished by UEFA with a €75,000 fine. As part of the punishment, UEFA ordered the Bulgarian national team to play its next home match behind closed doors. In addition, it faced the possibility of this extending to two games should its fans behave in the same manner again. The level of punishment was criticised. For example, Football Against Racism in Europe, who had worked with UEFA to develop the three-step protocol, said it was “disappointed” that Bulgaria had not been expelled from the competition. However, the chief football

³² Dan Hayes, [‘Racism Aimed at Raheem Sterling Sullies Football’](#), *Times* (£), 28 November 2019.

³³ Mark Staniforth, [‘PFA Social Media Boycott: Premier League Stars to Stay Off Platforms for 24 Hours in Protest at Racist Abuse’](#), *Independent*, 19 April 2019.

³⁴ Jamie Jackson, [‘Twitter Targets ‘Vile Content’ as Kick It Out Steps Up Pressure Over Racism’](#), *Guardian*, 4 September 2019.

³⁵ Tom Kershaw, [‘Bulgaria vs England Racism: Boris Johnson Condemns ‘Vile’ Abuse and Tells UEFA to ‘Face Up to Facts’](#)’, *Independent*, 15 October 2019.

³⁶ Jeremy Corbyn, [‘Personal Twitter Account’](#), 14 October 2019.

writer at the *Independent*, Miguel Delaney, argued that this could lead to football becoming a “punishment”, rather than a “potential force for good”. Quoting an unnamed source, Mr Delaney claimed that expelling Bulgaria would not make its racist supporters “address their behaviours or views”. Instead, he stated it is “probably” what they want, as it “increases their power” and “shows their leverage” in Bulgarian football.³⁷

Others, such as Troy Deeney, a footballer who has suffered racist abuse, have criticised UEFA’s three-step protocol, instead calling for a “one strike” policy. In an interview with BBC Radio 4, Mr Deeney highlighted his concerns over allowing people to be racist on two separate occasions before the punishment of a game being abandoned.³⁸

In October 2019, Raheem Sterling, who was one of the English players racially abused during the match against Bulgaria, signed a manifesto calling for “fundamental changes” in how football tackles racism. The manifesto, which was drafted by the *Times*, states that there should be consistency when issuing sanctions for racism. The manifesto notes that this should begin with a minimum partial stadium closure (which is already enforced by UEFA), rising to expulsion from a competition for either repeat offences or mass discriminatory chanting.³⁹ Similarly, Kick It Out called on UEFA’s entire disciplinary process to be “overhauled”, urging the association to explain the decision-making process behind its sanctions.⁴⁰

In response to the criticism, UEFA’s president, Aleksander Čeferin, stated that its sanctions were “among the toughest in sport”. Mr Čeferin argued that football associations could not solve the problem of racism alone and called on governments to “do more in this area”.⁴¹

3.2 Education to Combat Discrimination

The *Times* manifesto also called on football authorities to ensure that an “education action plan” was a “key part” of all future sanctions. This includes associations and clubs having to account for measures they will take to avert future incidents.⁴² This idea has been backed by Gareth Southgate, the England manager, who has argued that sanctions were “worthless” if there was “nothing alongside that to help educate people”.⁴³

3.3 Improvements to Surveillance and Reporting

Although CCTV is already required in stadiums where clubs have been issued a safety certificate, some have called for further improvements to surveillance and the recording of offences to reduce racist incidents in stadiums. In October 2019, the president of the Italian Football Association,

³⁷ Miguel Delaney, ‘[Racism Has Consumed Football—The Greatest Challenge is Knowing How to Punish It](#)’, *Independent*, 29 October 2019.

³⁸ BBC Sport, ‘[Racism in Football: Watford’s Troy Deeney Says ‘One-Strike’ Policy Needed](#)’, 6 November 2019.

³⁹ *Times* (£), ‘[The Times Manifesto in Full: Changes Needed Throughout Football to Fight Racism](#)’, 15 October 2019.

⁴⁰ Miguel Delaney, ‘[Racism Has Consumed Football—The Greatest Challenge is Knowing How to Punish It](#)’, *Independent*, 29 October 2019.

⁴¹ UEFA, ‘[Statement on Racism By UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin](#)’, 15 October 2019.

⁴² *Times* (£), ‘[The Times Manifesto in Full: Changes Needed Throughout Football to Fight Racism](#)’, 15 October 2019.

⁴³ Sky Sports, ‘[England Manager Gareth Southgate Says Education is Key to Combating Racism](#)’, 27 March 2019.

Gabriele Gravina, announced that his association was considering fitting stadiums with listening devices to identify racist supporters. However, Mr Gravina noted that this would break privacy law since the devices could listen to private conversations between supporters. Therefore, Mr Gravina contended that the Italian FA “can only do it” with the help of the police and the Ministry of Interior.⁴⁴

In grassroots football (such as lower league or non-league), several organisations have called for an improvement in communication between players at that level and the footballing authorities. According to Tajeon Hutton, who is Kick It Out’s grassroots manager, there is a “huge failure in the system” that has led to a “breakdown in communication and support from the top down”. In April 2019, the FA responded stating that it had a “robust system” in place to ensure “aggravated” breaches of discrimination were reported to county football associations and the FA, who oversee all cases.⁴⁵ In addition, the spokesperson said that the FA had funded two extra grassroots officers, based at Kick It Out. The officers would work directly with the FA’s county network, grassroots clubs, and community groups, to “encourage and raise awareness of reporting discrimination channels.”⁴⁶

Alleged Racist Incident During a Match Between Haringey Borough and Yeovil Town, October 2019

On 19 October 2019, an FA Cup fourth qualifying round match between Haringey Borough and Yeovil Town was abandoned after the home team walked off the pitch, alleging racist abuse towards their players. Following the match, Haringey Borough’s assistant manager, Dave Cumberbatch, criticised the FA. Mr Cumberbatch stated:

“Whatever the FA do, they have nothing in place to deal with this, unless they start moving the goalposts because of the public outcry. But is there anything in place? You can’t even get UEFA to do it properly, so what are we going to get at grassroots level?”

(Source: Ben Fisher, [‘Haringey Chairman Says Walk-Off for Alleged Racism Must Be Watershed Moment’](#), *Guardian*, 20 October 2019)

In response to the allegations of racist abuse in the Haringey Borough vs Yeovil Town FA Cup match on 19 October 2019, the FA stated that it was “deeply concerned”. It announced that it would be working with the match officials and relevant authorities to “fully establish the facts” and “take the appropriate steps”.⁴⁷ Four people were subsequently arrested on suspicion of racially aggravated common assault, with investigations ongoing.⁴⁸

Despite this, the FA was criticised for its reaction to the alleged incident. Following the match being

⁴⁴ Tommaso Fiore, [‘Serie A Will Use VAR Cameras to Tackle Racist Chants, Says Gabriele Gravina’](#), Sky Sports, 17 October 2019.

⁴⁵ Steve Scott, [‘Exclusive: 79 Percent of Asian Grassroots Football Players Subjected to Racism Abuse’](#), ITV News, 1 April 2019.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Football Association, [‘Official Twitter Account’](#), 19 October 2019.

⁴⁸ BBC Sport, [‘Haringey v Yeovil: Two Further Men Arrested After Reports of Racial Abuse at FA Cup Tie’](#), 21 November 2019.

abandoned, the FA announced that it had to be replayed on 30 October 2019. Haringey Borough's manager, Tom Loizou, argued that the match should never have been replayed. Instead, Mr Loizou stated that "a heavier punishment should have happened" and suggested that Yeovil "should have been thrown out the competition".⁴⁹

3.4 Increased Checks on Social Media

There has been widespread discussion about how to combat discrimination on social media. The England and Manchester United footballer Harry Maguire believes a possible solution to reducing discriminatory posts online is to verify social media accounts using either a passport or driving licence. Likewise, Damian Collins, the former chair of the House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, argued that the Government should consider "forcing" social media companies to introduce identification checks.⁵⁰ However, Paul MacInnes, a reporter for the *Guardian*, contends that ending anonymity would present several issues. For example, it would require new systems to verify identification, and would affect everyone, such as whistle-blowers and vulnerable minorities.⁵¹

Others, such as Sanjay Bhandari, have called for further collaboration between social media companies and football's governing bodies to tackle online abuse. In an interview for the *Guardian*, Mr Bhandari argued that there wasn't a "single initiative" to tackle racist abuse online but that there needed to be a "single mindset" which is about "collaborating more".⁵²

⁴⁹ Molly Hudson, '[Haringey Borough Manager Tom Loizou Says Yeovil Town Deserved to Be Thrown Out of FA Cup](#)', *Times* (£), 30 October 2019.

⁵⁰ Ben Rumsby, '[Exclusive: Premier League Stars Told to Sue Social Media Platforms If They Want to Curb Racist Abuse as Marcus Rashford Targeted Following Penalty Miss](#)', *Telegraph*, 24 August 2019.

⁵¹ Paul MacInnes, '[Twitter and Racist Abuse in Football: How Can It Be Tackled?](#)', *Guardian*, 23 August 2019.

⁵² Musa Okwonga, '[Foul Play: How Racism Towards Black Footballers is Moving Online](#)', *Guardian*, 15 December 2019.