

FA x FSA Women's Game Structured Dialogue Report
12th April 2023
10am-12pm

In person and Online

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Actions from the last meeting
3. Independent Review into the Women's Game
4. Fan Led Review
5. CEO Working Group
6. England
7. WSL/WC
8. FAWNLI
10. AOB

Attendees

Kelly Simmons (KS)	Director of Women's Professional Game	FA
Holly Murdoch (HM)	Head of Operations, Pro Game	FA
Nick Frith (NF)	Women's Leagues Operations Manager	FA
Heather Cowan (HC)	Head of League Operations	FA
Hannah Gascoigne (HG)	Secretariat, Women's Game Review	FA
Sophie Levin (SL)	Public Affairs	FA
Lewis Rice (LR)	Memberships and Operations Manager	FA
Nikki Doucet (ND)	Independent Consultant	FA
David Rose (DR)	Deputy Chief Executive	FSA
Deborah Dilworth (DD)	FSA Head of Women's Football	FSA
Anika Leslie Walker (ALW)	Senior Lecturer Sport Sociology, Nottingham Trent University	FSA
Eva Georgiou (EG)	Clapton Community FC	WNL
Mark Rose (MR)	Watford Women Supporters Club	WNL
Tamara Dragze (TD)	Fulham Lillies	WNL
Jude Ball (JB)	Southampton Women Supporters Club	WCL
Bik Singh (BS)	Blues 4 All	WCL
Sian Wallis (SW)	Proud Lilywhites	WSL
Rach Major (RM)	The Gang/Arsenal Women Supporters Club	INT/WSL
Jude Morris-King (JMK)	Manchester City Women's Official Supporters Club	WSL
Sarah Breslin (SB)	Villa Bellas	WSL

Apologies: Lauren Kreamer (Charlton Supporters Trust)

Chair: FSA

1) Introductions

DD introduced the meeting and welcomed all attendees.

All attendees were invited to introduce themselves.

2) Actions from the last meeting

DD detailed all actions as completed or in progress. All attendees agreed everything was in order.

3) Karen Carney Review into the women's game/CEO Working Group/Fan-led Review

Participants raised the Karen Carney Review and Club CEO Working Group, asking how the two are working together and where the FAWNLL fits in.

The FA confirmed they are supporting Karen Carney in a secretariat role, and are ensuring that there is crossover between the CEO Working Group and the progress of the Review.

ND confirmed she is working with ten club CEOs as part of a Working Group to issue recommendations for the professional game.

Participants also discussed how the women's game sits within the newly proposed Independent Regulator, and agreed to a separate meeting to discuss.

ACTIONS

- FSA and FA to set up a meeting to discuss application of Fan Led Review matters onto the women's game.

4) England

OneLove armbands

Participants stressed that the OneLove armband was important to supporters, and asked what the FA are doing to support players in wearing it at the upcoming World Cup.

There was agreement that fans wanted to support activity, with ideas suggested that fans could wear armbands or t-shirts in support. Participants also raised

concerns about FIFA making a last minute refusal as per what happened in Qatar, and asked what the FA was doing to mitigate this.

The FA confirmed that discussions are ongoing with FIFA re the OneLove armband. They are encouraged by what the FIFA President has said recently on the topic and that both organisations are keen for a clear resolution ahead of the tournament.

ACTIONS

- FA to feed back about what supporters can do around the OneLove Armband.

School curriculum

Fans were pleased to see the announcement following the Lionesses' campaign for equal access for girls at school. However, participants raised that in the highest deprivation areas many children can not access teams at school, and provision within clubs is just as important.

The FA confirmed their ambition to have more participation opportunities across the board, with investment going on in every sector of women and girls football. Work in schools will be focused on the ambition for equal access, and ensuring that the Government's promise is now delivered. The FA suggested that Louise Gear, Head of Development, could give an update on progress at the next meeting.

ACTIONS

- FA to ensure an invitation to Louise Gear for the next meeting is sent.

England kits

Participants asked when players and numbers for printing would be available to ensure that travelling supporters can order their merchandise in enough time. Fans flagged it is more expensive for supporters if printing needs to be purchased later.

The FA confirmed kits should be on sale on 5th June and that the FA could provide a more detailed timeline for supporters around kit, player name/number releases.

The FSA showcased the recent FSA song sheet that had been published and given out to supporters ahead of the recent Lionesses games at Wembley as a direct action out of the England Consultation meeting between the FA and the FSA in December.

ACTIONS

- FA to provide a timeline of kit, player name and number releases.
- FSA to put QR code for the programmes and on our website.
- FA and FSA to determine a date for the next England consultation meeting.

5) WSL/WSC

Integrity team

The FA explained how the integrity team is separate from the league team within the organisation. They offered an education session with the Integrity team to help inform supporters of their remit across the women's game. Fans were keen for better understanding and engagement on how the process works.

ACTIONS

- FA and FSA to plan an education session with the integrity team and supporters.

Away ends guidance

The FA confirmed work is being carried out with clubs re away ends. Bespoke new guidance has been discussed with all BWSL and BWC clubs ahead of the new season. This is happening alongside a separate dialogue on segregation happening with clubs and safety officers.

Participants supported this work and were keen to keep collaborating to ensure fans' voices are heard in this area.

ACTIONS

- FA to notify FSA of the next safety officer forum, supporter representatives to be invited onto these forums in future.

Supporters with disabilities

The FSA detailed some of the recent findings from a survey conducted by Level Playing Field (LPF) around supporters with disabilities who follow the women's game, amongst the top barriers for fans were physical access to stadiums, and anxiety levels and attitudes of others.

There was agreement that more parity is needed for disabled support in the women's and men's games, including support for blind and deaf attendees. The FA agreed to a separate meeting with LPF to discuss the findings in detail.

ACTIONS

- FSA, LPF and FA to organise a meeting on the survey along with Nick and Hannah Buckley

Broadcast

Participants stated that Sunday evening games predominantly feature top four sides and based on the season average attendance for each of these attendances are 50% down for these games.

Midday kicks offs are more popular unless one team has to travel long distances, which can lead to 25% drop off from the season average attendance. Supporters are still waiting for TV picks for May, despite this being only three weeks away.

The FA confirmed they know how difficult it is on this topic and that they will continue to hold dialogue with broadcasters and report supporter feedback to them. The FA encouraged supporter groups to give feedback to clubs on a local level and to ask to be involved in decisions around fixture times.

ACTIONS

- FSA to ask supporters group to lobby locally on poor KO times
- FA to look at target dates to be shared around broadcast fixtures
- Talk through some of feedback on non-broadcast fixtures to clubs

FFD x Women's game guidance booklet/Nottingham Trent University research

ALW talked through her research and accessibility and barriers. ALW informed the group of a recent initiative by Manchester City which involved Muslim mother and daughters initiative. The supporters were allowed to go to the prayer room but they stated they wouldn't access it if they were on their own. They usually didn't feel the stadium was a safe place. ALW stated more work needed to be done to ensure women's football was welcoming to all.

Ticketing review

The FSA asked if there is a ticketing review happening at the minute, and how best supporters can be involved. The FA confirmed the last ticketing review was being carried out by the FA in 2019, with a new review being carried out.

The FA confirmed that clubs need to set their own pricing policies, but they can issue central guidance to support. The FSA stressed that supporters must be consulted by clubs and there needs to be greater transparency.

Competitions review

The FSA requested an update on the FA competitions review. The FA issued an update and confirmed this will link in with the CEO Working Group and the Carney review.

Next season start dates

Participants asked the FA to confirm when the WSL/Championship 2023-24 season would start, given the Premier League have already confirmed their start date. The FA said this has been drafted, but cannot be released until the international calendar is confirmed.

6) FAWN

Fixture Movement and Notice

Participants expressed that fixture movement and notice given made planning for supporters really difficult. Currently the league only has to give clubs five days' notice of a fixture, leaving fans limited time to plan. Communication is also poor with no announcement of changes by the league.

The FA realises the difficulty and confirmed that work is ongoing to avoid situations like this, particularly at the back end of the season when the impact of pitch issues are felt more.

FAWN Budgets

The FSA expressed concern over some FAWN club budgets, stating that there seems to be wildly differing budgets. Whilst supporters and the FSA want to see investment in the women's game, there is a worry over the clubs overextending themselves.

The FA want to encourage investment, but there will be minimum standards set for next season where clubs will have to monitor and report on budgets.

Specific FAWN supporter engagement session

FA and the FSA have discussed this and believe it is appropriate to keep all leagues together to ensure learning and fluidity across the pyramid. The supporter engagement meetings will carry on as is for now.

ACTIONS

- FA and FSA to organise an operational meeting with the FAWN.

7) AOB

Under 5's/Babies policy research

Participants introduced research being undertaken by members of Fulham Supporters Trust board into access to football matches for under 2s and under 5s. They want a central unified policy across men's and women's games in all stadiums.

ACTION

- FSA and Fulham Supporters Trust to send across research and to indicate next steps

FA match experience forum

The FSA informed the FA of a recent online fan forum that the FSA partnered with the EFL to produce. The FSA would like to work on a similar event with the FA for the start of the next season for the women's game.

The FA welcomed this idea and felt it would be a positive event to work on.

ACTION

- FSA to send across the EFL video for FA staff to watch
- FA and FSA to work on a plan and date for the event.

Date of next meeting - TBC (circa October 2023)