FSA.

FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS' ASSOCIATION

WOMEN'S GAME STRATEGY

Stronger Together: Supporters at the heart of the game

2024-2027

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Thanks to Ashley Brown, David Rose, Michael Brunskill, Hana Basir, Sarah Smith, Chris Paouros, Jude Morris-King, Rachel Major, Sian Wallis, all the volunteer supporters from our Women's Game Network as well as key stakeholders across the game.

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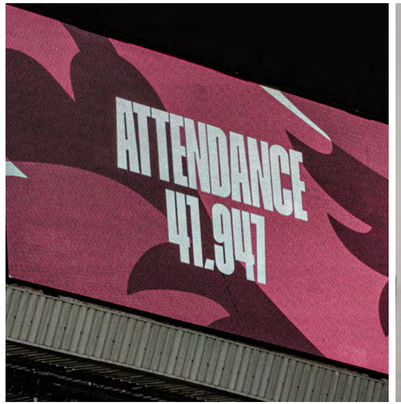

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FSA MISSION STATEMENT

- We are an inclusive, independent, democratic organisation working with supporters, governing bodies, leagues and clubs to drive positive change in football through supporter engagement at every level of the game.
- We nurture and develop supporter networks at local, national and international levels, working with supporters' trusts, clubs and individuals to initiate and support campaigns on issues of concern to football supporters, encouraging good governance, supporter representation on club boards, community-ownership and sustainable stewardship of football clubs.
- A commitment to diversity underpins all of our activity and we oppose all forms of discrimination or violence in relation to football.

FSA MISSION: WOMEN'S GAME

- To develop women's football as a whole.
- To ensure supporters are represented in key decision making processes within the women's game.
- To push for positive change, change narratives and give women's football the profile it deserves.

INTRODUCTION

The launch of this strategy comes at a pivotal time in women's football - and our aim is to put supporters at the heart of positive change as our game flourishes.

We are seeing significant investment and shifts in power as a new organisation covering the top two tiers of the women's football pyramid - NewCo - is established.

There's also more research into women's specific health in sports, as well as a growing focus on the needs of supporters - and it is paramount their voice is listened to as the game around us develops.

The 2022-2024 FSA strategy laid the foundational levels of structured supporter engagement and activism within the women's game, particularly at a national level.

That clear vision has resulted in more collaborative working between supporters and stakeholders across the game, and led to the beginnings of proper consultative discussions with supporter representatives and groups.

There is still much to do within this sphere of football, but as attendances continue to grow at an international and domestic level, it is even more important that supporters have a strong voice advocating for their interests and expectations.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE 2022-24 STRATEGY

The FSA had a number of key indicators of success from the 2022-24 Women's Game Strategy.

We have continued to increase diversity in our Women's Game Network by working with key partners and using the guidance and expertise of Anika Leslie Walker, a senior lecturer in Sports Sociology at Nottingham Trent University, to whom we are extremely grateful.

Supporters = Genuine and key stakeholders

The FSA has been working in the women's game since 2019 and we now have blossoming communities in domestic and international football. When we released our last strategy in 2022 we had 38 member groups on the Women's Game Network - that has now grown to 60.

After running the first ever Fans' Embassy for the Women's World Cup in 2019 we've continued to develop supporter activism on an international level with Fans' Embassies for the Euros in 2022 and the Women's World Cup 2023.

We have become a trusted source, working with stakeholders from across the game to advocate for matchgoers

across all levels. The next couple of years will be huge markers for the women's game with the implementation of the Carney Review and NewCo's launch.

Women's football is growing at such a fast pace and it is our job to ensure fans' voices are heard. We will support, train and develop our volunteers so they are ready to be at the heart of their clubs - and a key stakeholder in decision making at a local and national level.

Deborah Dilworth
FSA head of women's football

We have established consistent and successful national supporter engagement structures with the FA at league and international level and we have been heavily involved in the Carney Review, representing the views of matchgoing fans.

We now have 60 members on the Women's Game Network with supporters' groups becoming democratic, affiliate members where possible, and we have continued to run the Fans' Embassy service for international tournaments

Our Free Lionesses Fans' Embassy service, which we ran Down Under during the Women's World Cup 2023, was a huge success and we would like to thank our sponsors Toyota for their help and support.

Aside from being an amazing event in its own right, the Women's World Cup is such an important showcase for our game highlighting what can be achieved. Our Fans' Embassy team was proud to play its part by helping travelling supporters in cities across Australia.

BOARD REP

Supporters must be at the heart of the continued growth of the game

There has been exponential growth in supporter activism since the first FSA strategy was produced in 2022. The FSA continues to advocate for supporters on a local, national and international level and to drive change around key policies affecting supporters.

We will keep on striving to ensure the supporter voice remains at the heart of decision making. We'll build on the successful foundations we have laid and become more impactful across both the domestic and international game.

Chris Paouros
FSA Board member and FA Council representative

© Hannah J Taylor

NC REPS

The FSA's structure features a democratically-elected National Council (NC) that deliberates on our campaigns and policies between AGMs and it includes fan representatives from our Women's Game Network. Those three elected members to the NC - Jude Morris-King, Rachel Major and Sian Wallis - are chosen by the network to represent them at national level.

© Rach Major

RACHEL MAJOR
(The Gang:England)

WWC 2023

2023 saw the England team's highest ever placing at a World Cup. Of course losing in the final was devastating but I think we all need to recognise what a fantastic achievement it was and we should celebrate our most successful World Cup campaign to date.

Free Lionesses

Speaking of successful campaigns, the FSA's Free Lionesses has gone from strength to strength. The experience at the World Cup was incredible. Life-long friendships born between travelling fans and giving people experiences that they will never forget. People not only watched their heroes at the World Cup but were able to meet some of them too. Jill Scott was a massive hit with everyone! The venues were excellent and a good time was had every time by the hundreds of fans that turned up. A personal highlight for me was the fan walks, singing England songs and waving our flags and scarves as we headed to the games.

Euros 2025

We are really looking to build on this in Switzerland at Euro 2025 (once we escape the group of death qualifiers - in Sarina we trust!). There is a very strong connection to this team from the fans and there is the belief that England can achieve anything they want. Being at a major tournament supporting England goes hand-in-hand with Free Lionesses meet-ups, celebrating women's football and making friends and memories that will last a lifetime.

© Deborah Dilworth

© Jude Morris King

JUDE MORRIS-KING
(Manchester City Women FC Official Supporters Club)

NewCo

NewCo is a new independent company that will run the professional women's game in England. The Women's Super League (WSL) and Championship plus the clubs are the shareholders of the company and it will be a revenue-generating, for profit, standalone entity with a professional and dedicated management team.

Nikki Doucet is the new CEO and her background is investment banking - she was also the Head of Nike's UK and Ireland Women's Business. The ambition of NewCo is to capitalise on the existing growth and opportunity to take the women's game forward. The FSA has met Nikki on several occasions and she has committed to work with us in the same way we have with the FA with structured dialogue being built in the NewCo.

Matchdays

Since winning the Euros, more games are being held in the main stadiums with attendance records being broken on a regular basis. Whether in the main club stadia or, the women's ground, we advocate for a friendly and welcoming matchday experience that continues to be very different from the men's game.

The introduction of WSL away allocations has been embraced by supporters following a successful campaign by the FSA and supporters clubs to the FA and clubs. Allocation is not about segregation but removing the bureaucracy of holding multiple accounts at different football clubs, making it easier to buy a ticket. Away supporters now have the choice of purchasing a ticket from their club, knowing they will be located with their own fans. We have definitely seen and heard better matchday atmospheres and away attendances this season!

Supporters clubs are fundamental in heightening the matchday experience and building the relationship with their football club to be a valued critical friend. The FSA can help train supporters' clubs to provide constructive feedback to their clubs, to discuss what does and does not work, and share ideas as to how to improve the fan experience from the minute they pass through the turnstiles until they leave at the end of the game

Broadcast

The current broadcasting deals with Sky and the BBC continue to play a vital role in raising visibility, awareness and bringing revenue into the game which is very much welcomed. The quality of the programming has significantly improved, especially in areas such as post-match analysis.

However, rumours that the new broadcast deal will include additional Friday and Saturday night fixtures is of great concern to the FSA as this will increase the travel challenges already faced by the match going fans. The FSA are here as the "voice of the supporters" and we will continue to engage and share feedback with the FA, NewCo, clubs and broadcasters.

© Lee Johnson

SIAN WALLIS
(Proud Lilywhites)

Carney Review

We were pleased to play an important role in the Carney Review but it's even more important that we are an effective part of the implementation group. As part of this group we can make sure the voices of fans are heard by key stakeholders across women's football. The threads that make our game unique should not be lost. Until now the stakeholders have seemed to be pulling in broadly the same direction but as the game becomes more significant in terms of visibility and finance it will attract interest from people with different priorities. These people must not be allowed to become the loudest voices in the room and an effective cross-game implementation group is an important part of ensuring this.

More supporters groups

As a network we've grown so much from our early days but there are still clubs who are not represented. We want to represent clubs across the pyramid as we're stronger together, so we want to encourage groups who haven't joined us to do so and supporters whose clubs don't have a group to start one with the support of the FSA to make sure they are heard by their club and that they can have an impact on the wider conversation. Football is about community, the community of your club but also between clubs, in the end we as fans of the women's game have a lot in common. Spending time with others fighting the same battles in their clubs as you are fighting in yours is empowering and rejuvenating.

The year ahead

Women's football is moving so fast every year is an exciting challenge. This year we need to work with our colleagues in the men's game and work with stakeholders throughout the women's game to ensure the success of NewCo - which means making sure fans are involved and heard. We need to work with our clubs to grow the attendance at games across the pyramid and find a way to work with broadcasters to ensure that match-going fans are respected and don't have to choose between their men's and women's teams.

STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

WHOLE GAME APPROACH

PURPOSE	Covering the domestic and international aspects of England and Wales, we aim to assist in the growth and sustainability of the women's game by representing supporters and developing activism to ensure fans are at the heart of decision making at every level of the game.			
PILLARS	**Equality, diversity and inclusion**	**Running the game better**	**Fan representation and engagement**	**Development focused**
PRIORITIES	• Putting EDI at the heart of everything we do. • Empowering fans of the women's game to protect and harness the welcoming and friendly atmosphere. • Making positive change to decision making imbalances.	• Ensuring the FSA and fans in general are considered a key stakeholder. • Creating collaboration across all stakeholders. • Sustainability conscious. • Pursuing high standards of governance internally and externally. • Diversify decision making to lead to better decisions	• Be a global leader in fan engagement in the women's game. • Strengthen local and national fan representation. • Encourage more national and international supporter activism. • Support clubs and leagues to enhance their supporter engagement bespoke to the women's game.	• Be a leader in international away fan travel liaison. • Encourage a collaborative education-centred approach for all. • Keep the pyramid connected at all times. • Support the growth of grassroots for the success of all

KEY ACTIVITIES

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

EDI is at the heart of what we do and who we are

Key activities:

- Increase Fans for Diversity funded projects across the women's game.
- Run a series of focus groups aimed at increasing understanding of the barriers for supporters from diverse communities and offering solution-focused plans.
- Increase the number of ethnic minority women in our Women's Game Network and provide a greater sense of belonging for ethnic minority women.
- Work internally and externally to address barriers for supporters with accessibility needs and ensure that this topic is woven through all work streams.
- Increase awareness around reporting mechanisms within the women's game.
- Pursue better levels of inclusion across the game by working with partners such as Kick It Out, Level Playing Field and Women In Football.

RUNNING THE GAME BETTER

To assist in the growth and development of the women's game

Key activities:

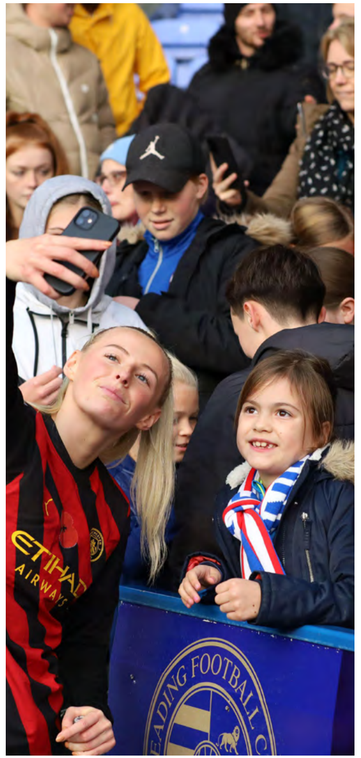
- Continue to develop FSA policy on the governance and structure of women's football.
- Working with the newly-established organisation taking control of the top two tiers of women's football to ensure supporters are embedded in decision-making structures from the beginning.
- Be a key voice within the DCMS implementation group around the Carney Review recommendations.
- Work with sustainability partners such as Pledgeball and support Green Football Weekend to raise awareness of climate issues and encourage fans to take action around the climate crisis.
- Continue to work with stakeholders across the game including the FA, Professional Game Match Officials Limited (PGMOL) and others.

FAN REPRESENTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Global leaders in supporter engagement

Key activities:

- Increase FSA media coverage and social media output.
- Develop supporter engagement, supporter liaison officers (SLOs) and supporter services structures at club level.
- Increase affiliate members in the women's game network.
- Work with FSE to develop projects across Europe.
- Organise club and staff workshops around fan engagement.
- Ensure one to one support is offered to all member groups to help enhance volunteer wellbeing and local support.
- Work with FA Women's National League colleagues to provide a bespoke supporters guide for the women's game.
- Work with the PGMOL to help grow a deeper understanding between referees and supporters.



DEVELOPMENT FOCUSED

Growth of grassroots for the success of all

Key activities:

Domestic

- Execute the FSA women's game survey and increase respondent numbers.
- Support club development on protecting and harnessing the inclusive and friendly environment by working with supporters groups.
- Train and develop supporter volunteers.

International

- Work with partners to provide the best possible possible international experience for Lionesses fans.
- Support the development of a bespoke away travel scheme for Lionesses fans.
- Increase Free Lionesses coverage of away fixtures.
- Free Lionesses Fans' Embassy Projects for Euro 2025 and WWC 2027.
- Work with Wal Goch y Menywod, FSA Cymru and the FAW to create supporter engagement meetings around the Welsh women's national team.

KEY INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

WHOLE GAME APPROACH - INTERNATIONAL, ELITE AND GRASSROOTS

Equality, diversity and inclusion	Running the game better	Fan representation and engagement	Development focused

Funding

Secure funding to continue delivering against our targets

Representation

- Increased levels of diversity in supporter networks across several under represented communities.
- Increased diversification in decision making meetings with stakeholders.

- Supporter representation within the new organisation designed for the top two tiers of women's football.
- Fan representation on the DCMS implementation group for the Carney Review.

- Increased structured supporter engagement at club level.
- Increased the number of respondents in women's game national survey.

- Structured supporter engagement for England Women
- Grow the number of fan groups. following England and Wales national teams.
- Increased number of supporters in the women's game network attending training and development sessions.

Operations

- Run focus groups for supporters from diverse backgrounds to understand obstacles around supporter activism and attending matches and work to provide possible solutions.
- Increased levels of Fans for Diversity projects being executed.

- Increased FSA supporter groups at affiliate membership level.
- Increased FSA members in the Women's Game Network.

- Increased number of supporters groups and clubs across the pyramid.
- Improved matchday experience and reduction in barriers for supporters.

- Securing funding to run the Free Lionesses Fans' Embassy services for England (Euro 2025/ WWC 2027).
- Establishing bespoke supporter engagement for the Welsh Women's national team.
- Supporting new Fans' Embassy services for the international women's game via FSE.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Our Women's Game Network and its member groups are always working hard to support the development of the game, but what does that mean in the real world? We pulled together some facts and figures to tell that story. We don't claim this list is exhaustive - so if you've done something which is worth shouting about then let us know!

INTERNATIONAL

The Free Lionesses Fans' Embassy service has been ran for supporters over three consecutive tournaments now: 2019, 2022, 2023

17 cities visited, 20 games, **28,637** miles travelled

5,000 Free Lionesses guides handed out

250 Bucket hats and key rings handed to supporters

200 plus hours of supporter contact time

NATIONAL

The Network was established in August 2019 and formally constituted into FSA at our December 2020 AGM.

There are **60** supporter group members (and counting)

12 FA WOMEN'S **SUPER LEAGUE** REPRESENTATIVES, SEVEN FA WOMEN'S **CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUE** REPRESENTATIVES, FOUR **NATIONAL LEAGUE PREMIER** (NORTH AND SOUTH) AND MEMBERS ACROSS THE REST OF THE PYRAMID.

As the women's game grows more podcasts, websites and social media accounts are joining the FSA as associate members.

GROWING INFLUENCE WITHIN CLUBS

Alongside the existing groups, we've continued to help set up so many new supporter organisations in the women's game in recent years. The member groups in the FSA Women's Game Network with formalised membership structures have **23,426 members** between them.

Some of those groups are now beginning to develop strong links with their clubs while seeking to influence things for the better.

In 2022 we listed one supporters group (Manchester United Women Supporters' Club) representative who had a place on a **Fan Advisory Board,** we now have seven representatives on these types of committees - Manchester United Women Supporters' Club, Proud Lilywhites, Everton Women Supporters' Club, Arsenal Women Supporters' Club, Liverpool Women's Supporters' Committee, Villa Bellas and Chelsea Pride.

The relationship between Bristol City Supporters' Club and Trust and the club continues to strengthen after signing a **Memorandum of Understanding** in 2022. The club holds meetings specifically around the women's team.

Elsewhere Pride of Irons have representation on the West Ham United Women Official Supporters' Board whilst representation on **Fans' Forums** has increased. In 2022 we listed just Chelsea Women Supporters' Group as having a supporter representative on their Fans Forum, a larger group usually focused on matchday issues. Now we have Arsenal Women Supporters' Club and Manchester City Women Official Supporters' Club being involved in regular dialogue.

SUPPORTERS INVESTING IN THE WOMEN'S GAME

A number of groups including Wycombe Wanderers Trust, The Red Wall, Manchester City Women FC Official Supporters' Club, Chelsea Women Supporters Group and Manchester United Women Supporters' Club support the subsidy and **organisation of away travel** for their clubs. That's great to see as we've always argued that away fans contribute disproportionately - in a positive way - to the atmosphere at football matches.

Groups, including Birmingham City Women Supporters' Club ,Portsmouth FC Supporters' Club (Central Branch), Since 71, Canaries Trust, Bristol City Supporters' Club and Trust, Wal Goch y Menywod / Wales Women's Red Wall, Nottingham Forest Supporters' Trust and Huddersfield Town Supporters' Association have also **invested in player sponsorship.**

Supporter group fundraising

£28,000 to subsidise away travel for matchgoers

£8,100 into the creation of flags and banners

£7,040 on player sponsorship

£5,000 to provide equipment for a fanzone at women's games

£2,000 in charitable donations

£1,050 sponsoring local grassroots girls football

Social media - our associates and affiliates have more than:

- 198,500+ followers
- 89,000+ followers
- 40,900+ followers

LOBBYING, ACTIVITIES AND CAMPAIGNS

DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORTER ACTIVISM

Over the past few years we have helped support the creation of scores of new supporter organisations.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

Women's football is an inclusive and safe space and we want to ensure that remains the case as the game grows. EDI is at the heart of everything we do and the FSA is striving to diversify our organisation and football.

GOVERNANCE

The Fan-Led Review of Football Governance looked at hugely important issues in the men's game and the Carney Review, which looks at specific issues in the women's game, was born out of it. We will lobby to make key recommendations around supporters being at the heart of a game a reality.

MATCHDAY EXPERIENCE

Our members in the women's game want to create a welcoming, vibrant and passionate atmosphere. Supporters' groups are key to this.

POLICING AND STEWARDING

We have extensive experience of policing and stewarding in the men's game. There are core differences in stewarding and policing in the women's game and we seek to grow our knowledge of those requirements.

PROTECTING THE PYRAMID

Whether you follow the biggest club or the smallest, the love is the same, and the FSA supports clubs and fans throughout the grassroots game. This is particularly important given the restructure of the top two tiers of the game.

REPRESENTATION (LOCAL AND NATIONAL)

We have experience in developing supporter engagement locally and dealing with the authorities at the highest level.

SUSTAINABILITY

Football can do better when it comes to the environment and we work with Pledgeball and Green Football Weekend to improve sustainability.

TRAVEL

Fans follow their clubs far and wide and it's crucial that affordable public transport options are available to minimise the environmental impact.

WORKING WITH MEN'S FOOTBALL

The FSA adopts a one game approach. Whether it's grassroots funding, governance, ticket price issues or TV kick-off times there are so many more issues which unite than divide.

SERVICES

FSA support and services include:

- **Bespoke campaigns - e.g. 100 Years Of Supporting Women's Football / #TerraceTalk / My Club My Shirt**
- **Club and supporter mediation**
- **Guest speakers**
- **Promotion of local activities**
- **Survey creation and hosting**
- **Training for volunteers - e.g. board roles, finance, rules**
- **Club liaison and helping to develop supporter engagement**

If you would like to hear more about all our offers and services please contact us.

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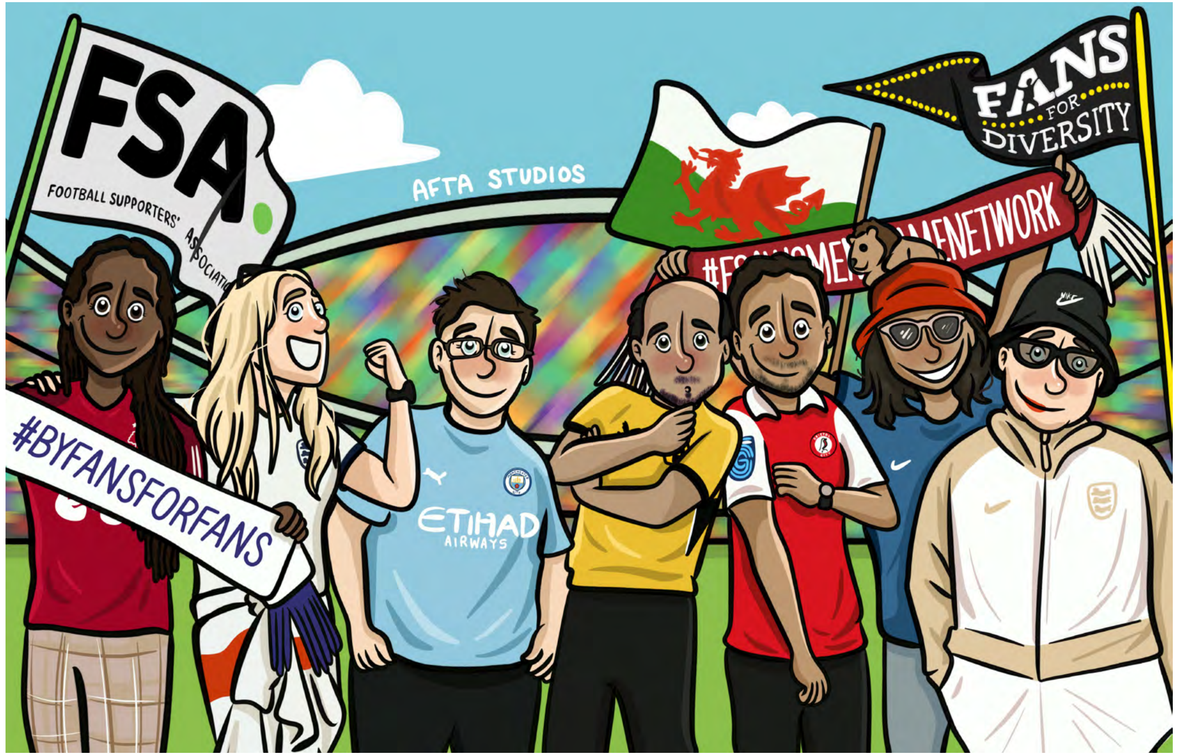

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